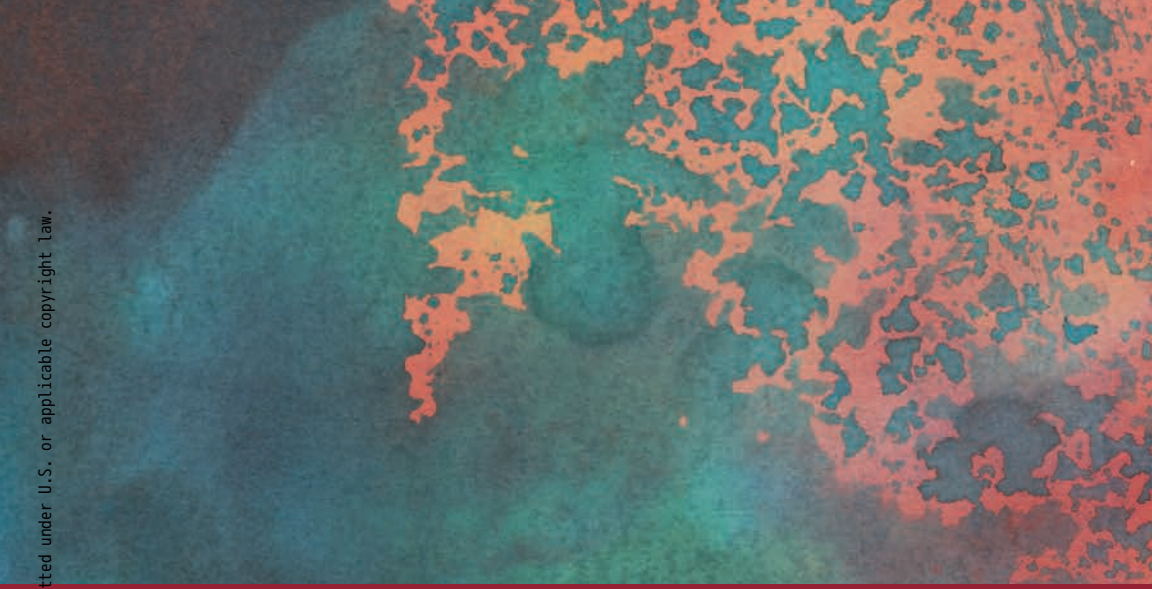
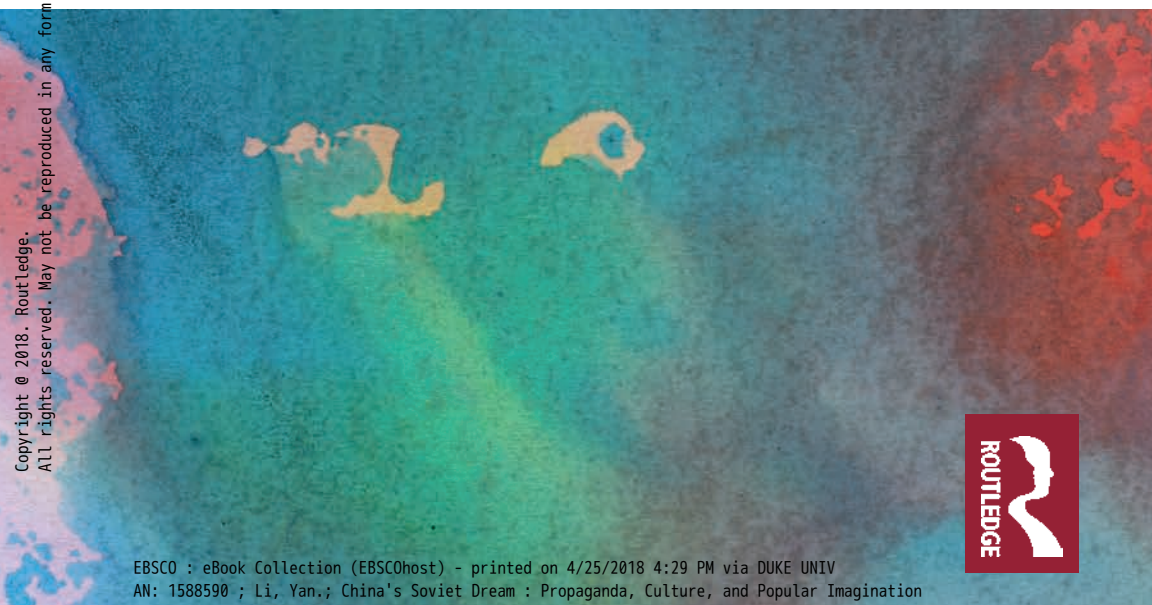


Routledge Contemporary China Series

CHINA'S SOVIET DREAM

PROPAGANDA, CULTURE, AND POPULAR IMAGINATION

Yan Li



China's Soviet Dream

This book examines the introduction of Soviet socialist culture in the People's Republic of China, with a focus on the period of Sino-Soviet friendship in the 1950s. The vast state initiative to transplant Soviet culture into Chinese soil has conventionally been dismissed as a tool of propaganda and political indoctrination. However, this book demonstrates that this transnational engagement not only facilitated China's broader transition to socialist modernity but also generated unintended consequences that outlasted the propaganda.

Drawing on archival findings, newspapers, magazines, media productions, and oral interviews, the book delves into changes in Chinese popular imagination and everyday aesthetics contingent upon Soviet influence. It proposes a revisionist view of the Soviet impact on China, revealing that Soviet culture offered Chinese people the language and imagery to conceive of their future as a dream about material abundance, self-determination, and the pleasures of leisure and cultural enrichment.

Written with a transnational, interdisciplinary, and thematic approach, this book is aimed at scholars and students in the fields of Sino-Soviet relations, international socialism, modern Chinese history, cultural studies, and mass communication. It will also be of interest to anyone seeking to understand the nature, significance, and repercussions of Sino-Soviet cultural engagement.

Yan Li is an Assistant Professor of History at Oakland University, USA. She received her Ph.D. in World History from Northeastern University, with a concentration in Modern China. Her research focuses on China's cultural interactions with the socialist world and the impact of foreign culture on Mao's China. She is interested in cultural history, women and gender studies, and cinema studies related to the period of modern China. She teaches introductory courses on Chinese history and culture, as well as upper-division courses on Chinese women, the Qing Dynasty, Chinese revolutions, and contemporary China.

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To Chris and Peter

Contents

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Since this book is based on my Ph.D. dissertation at Northeastern, thanks are due to Professors Harlow Robinson, Tom Havens, and Laura Frader, whose probing comments were most helpful in guiding my writing. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Zach Scarlett, Sam Christiansen, James Bradford, Ethan Hawkley, Colin Sargent, and Burleigh Hendrickson, who laboriously read the dissertation piece by piece and made insightful comments.

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Introduction

> To me, youth is about revolution, about love, about literature, and about the Soviet Union . . . The Soviet Union is my nineteenth year, my first love, and the beginning of my literary career.[1]
>
> Wang Meng

> Seeing this colorful scene [of Russian dances], my eyes became wet. I thought of a childhood dream, a rainbow-like dream of studying in the Soviet Union. I felt as though I was once again seeing that bobbed-hair girl who was singing 'Moscow-Peking' together with her little friends.[2]
>
> Ge Xiaoli

In 1950, the People's Republic of China (PRC) allied itself with the Soviet Union and set in motion a program of socialist modernization based on the Soviet blueprint. Following Soviet experience and directly supervised by Soviet advisers, China launched its first five-year plan built around industrialization and the socialist transformation of the economy. For better or worse, the results profoundly changed China and geopolitics as well. That is sometimes taken as the whole story. What is equally striking but often overlooked, however, is that China was culturally Russified at the same time: school education was reformed; Russian became the foreign language of choice; new architectural styles emerged; film and literature were revolutionized; people's tastes changed in everything from music, dance, and fine arts to food, clothes, and hobbies; and new concepts of gender, youth, family, and social relations gained traction, all along Soviet lines.

Focusing on the intense years of Sino-Soviet alliance, this book examines how the introduction of Soviet culture in the PRC shaped the ways Chinese people imagined China's future. It also places popular perception of Soviet culture in China alongside the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) oscillating attitude toward the Soviet Union. Following an active decade of friendly exchange, a rift between the two countries opened up in the early 1960s. Polemics and occasional military confrontations continued until the end of the 70s. Then came the calmer 80s, when both cooled down and moved toward rapprochement. A renewed friendship in a strategic partnership has been maintained since the 1990s, but the Soviet Union

is long gone, and China has been rapidly distancing itself from the socialist principles that had been its bedrock. Despite these political upheavals, Soviet culture remains a cherished item in the collective memory of the Chinese who struggled through the turbulence of Mao's era. The epigraphs to this introduction express nostalgia for the bittersweet days of Sino-Soviet friendship, as well as yearning for particular values and sentiments of the revolutionary times.

How did Soviet culture take root in the Chinese psyche? What accounted for its lasting influence? These are the central questions explored in this book. While Soviet culture certainly engrossed a number of Chinese intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century, it was in the 1950s, the opening decade of the PRC, that this culture became widespread, captivating the hearts and minds of millions. There is little doubt that the popularity of Soviet culture in China during this time was closely related to the CCP's pro-Soviet stance. More directly, it was the result of an extensive propaganda campaign initiated by the CCP to put Sino-Soviet friendship into familiar everyday terms which people could warm to. As a movement that swept the whole nation – from urban centers to the countryside, from intellectuals to workers and peasants – Sino-Soviet friendship propaganda, or *ZhongSu youhao xuanchuan*, was perhaps the largest drive by the CCP to control information and mobilize the population in the formative years of the regime. Overall, the propaganda succeeded in persuading most Chinese to welcome the Soviet Union as a new "friend" and, even more importantly, as a "big brother" to learn from. This certainly smoothed the way for popular acceptance of Soviet culture.

But the relationship between friendship propaganda and Soviet culture was more complex, because pushing that culture was also a key feature of the propaganda. The purpose of using various Soviet cultural products was to appeal to the people and bring them closer psychologically and perceptively to the Soviet Union. Therefore, the popularity of Soviet culture significantly contributed to the success of the propaganda. Here we see points of intersection and a reciprocal relationship between culture and propaganda. Yet, they were not the same. China's pro-Soviet propaganda served state politics and was subject to party dictates. It represented the CCP attitude to the Soviet Union. When that generally positive attitude changed, friendship propaganda ceased. Soviet culture, by contrast, had qualities independent of politics, even though it was used for political purposes. And once internalized, it lasted much longer in people's consciousness than didactic propaganda did. All in all, Chinese fascination with Soviet culture was inextricably bound up with friendship propaganda, but, in the end, it is what this culture meant to people that mattered.

Rather than dismissing the introduction of Soviet culture as a tool of propaganda and political indoctrination, I contend that this transnational engagement not only facilitated China's broader transition to socialist modernity but also generated unintended consequences that outlasted friendship propaganda. Probing into the ways that Chinese people's worldview and everyday life changed under Soviet influence, this book shows that Soviet culture offered Chinese people the language and imagery to conceive of their future. On the canvas of Soviet culture, the Chinese painted their own "Soviet dream," a dream about material

abundance, self-determination, and the delights of leisure and cultural enrichment. This dream, fusing collective aspirations and private desires, has sustained the Soviet legacy in China long after the Chinese government repudiated the Soviet model at the end of the 1950s.

The turn to culture

Existing literature on Sino-Soviet relations has conventionally focused on areas of "high politics," such as Cold War geopolitics, ideological disparity, and economic rivalry.[3] In the past decade, more scholars have turned their attention to the cultural and personal dimensions of Sino-Soviet interactions. Their works have offered more nuanced interpretations of this transnational involvement and brought to surface the undercurrents in apparently ordinary affairs.[4] Building on such new scholarship, this book, with its focus on popular Chinese reception of Soviet culture, attempts to shed new light on the nature of Sino-Soviet engagement, its significance, and its repercussions. It would be a mistake to overlook the importance and durability of the Soviet legacy and its manifestations, as many of them have remained active in China to this day.

The term "Soviet culture" needs to be defined at the outset. Literally, it refers to the culture of the Soviet Union, or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), during its existence between 1922 and 1991. The starting point can be pushed back to 1917 to include the years of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, established by Lenin after the October Revolution. In China, "Soviet culture" can have this narrow implication but it also carries a broader one. In this broader sense, Chinese use it interchangeably with "Russian culture" as an umbrella term for the culture of Russia from ancient times on, regardless of the regime changes in the twentieth century. The reason is that when China developed an interest in this northern neighbor and started to look at its culture as a possible alternative to Western modernity, Russia was Soviet Russia. Although in the 1920s, some leftist writers, like Jiang Guangci, stressed setting the "old Russian" culture apart from the "new Russian" culture which began in 1917 and rejecting it, in practice no clear line was drawn.[5] For example, in literature, nineteenth-century Russian literature was translated into Chinese throughout the Republican era. The writings of Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Gogol, Turgenev, and Chekhov were published alongside the more "revolutionary" works by Gorky, Nikolai Ostrovskii, Fadeev, and Sholokhov.[6]

In the PRC, the translation of nineteenth-century Russian fiction continued, until official publication of foreign literature halted. Also, the word "Soviet culture" continued to be used for all Russian culture broadly defined. When Zhou Yang, known as CCP's "cultural tsar," called on Chinese writers to learn from Soviet literature, he had in mind not only socialist realist model works from recent Soviet years but also the aesthetics of nineteenth-century Russian critics such as Belinskii, Chernyshevskii, and Dobroliubov. In ballet and symphonic music, the Chinese learned from their Soviet advisers the Russian repertoire of imperial times – sometimes, it was impossible to ignore the legacy of the past.

When possible, however, more emphasis was laid on Soviet-era cultural stock. The CCP needed a new culture befitting its socialist ideology to mold the populace. While the Soviet economic model was adopted as the path of development most in tune with China's socialist modernization, Soviet culture was perceived to be the best foundation and source of inspiration for China's new culture. Rich in socialist ideals and conforming to the party line, the culture produced under the auspices of the Soviet regime presented an alluring vision of socialism in "politically correct" terms. At the same time, it spelled out the hallmark qualities that a socialist citizen was expected to possess. It was thus favored by the CCP and introduced into China to facilitate popular understanding of socialism and to mobilize public enthusiasm in building Chinese socialism on the Soviet experience. For this reason, and for the fact that this endeavor of the CCP started in the early 1950s, the culture that China borrowed from its ally had Stalin's stamp. After Stalin's death in 1953, the culture of Khrushchev's Thaw was introduced cautiously in an attempt to stimulate domestic public speech. But it was carefully controlled and quickly faded in the Anti-Rightist storm. With Sino-Soviet relations turning sour in the early 1960s, cultural exchanges lost momentum. Eventually, Soviet culture was attacked in China and removed from public circulation. Although publication of foreign literature resumed in the less confrontational 1980s, China's cultural engagement with the Soviet Union never recovered the volume and range of the 1950s. It is in this sense that for those coming of age in Mao's China, the term "Soviet culture" is usually associated with the culture that China borrowed from the Soviet Union in the 50s, in essence official Stalinist culture from the 1930s to the early 50s.[7] This body of Soviet culture is the main concern of the present book.

While parameters for the Chinese understanding of what was "Soviet" are set by the nature and purpose of Chinese borrowing, "culture" is broadly conceived in my discussion. It ranges from official ideologies and worldviews to the beliefs, knowledge, and lifestyles of the people. It can also refer to the various means of shaping the mind, such as education, training, and propaganda. In a more concrete form, culture includes the products of human work and thought, such as novels, poems, films, songs, dances, paintings, sculptures, fashion and architectural designs.[8] Culture in such broad sense had a special place in Stalin's rule. As Katerina Clark points out, Stalin's emphasis on "culture" should be understood in light of the English definition of "cultivation," with the efforts extended to things well beyond learning and the arts.[9] Sheila Fitzpatrick identifies three levels of Soviet culture in the 1930s. The first was basic hygiene and elementary literacy. The second emphasized appropriate public behavior and basic knowledge of Communist knowledge. The third demanded a higher degree of social propriety and some appreciation of the high culture.[10] After World War II, the third level of culture, which was once frowned upon as "bourgeois" or "petty-bourgeois," was emphasized as the Soviet regime sought to secure support from the rising managerial-professional "middle class."[11]

In the 1950s, China's socialization program embraced an array of ideas and things from the Soviet Union that fall under the broad definition of culture. Although not all of the three levels of Soviet culture made their way to China,

the Chinese selection did include at least a sample of almost everything – from newspapers to comic strips, from dress designs to home furnishings, from high art to mass entertainment. With its relative inclusiveness, Soviet culture exerted a strong influence on Chinese lifestyle and ways of thinking during a decade of Sino-Soviet friendship. This cultural influence on societal level, as the book argues, was different from the influence of Soviet political and economic models on China as a whole. While the book is not a comprehensive coverage of all types of Soviet culture that China borrowed, the topics covered aim to provide sufficient depth and detail to enable understanding of how new China marked out its path, as well as to indicate the changes in mass perception that occurred simultaneously.

Although this book draws on scholarship in Soviet culture, it is not a study of Soviet culture per se. Rather, Soviet culture is viewed as a "contact zone,"[12] on which Soviet socialist ideology was introduced into China, reinterpreted and propagated by the CCP, and then internalized by the Chinese people. I examine how the interests and values of the Soviet Union, the Chinese party-state, and the Chinese masses contested, negotiated, and sometimes colluded in the process of translating Soviet culture into the Chinese context.[13] After World War II, the Soviet Union pushed a heavy-handed cultural policy in the Eastern Bloc to ensure its dominance and impose Communism in the region. Soviet cultural policy toward China, by contrast, was more benign, despite the occasionally arrogant and patronizing attitudes of Soviet leaders and some Soviet advisers working in China.[14] In fact, the CCP willingly and actively set out to emulate the Soviet Union, and its policy played a decisive role in the selection of Soviet cultural imports for domestic consumption. Often in the Chinese rendering, certain values in the originals were highlighted or downplayed to fit the CCP requirements. As such, I view the effort to introduce Soviet socialist culture as a process by which the CCP propagated its own socialist ideology among the populace. I discuss the use of Soviet culture as an indispensable strategic part of the early PRC's pro-Soviet propaganda, which primarily served the interests of the party-state. As a result, more attention is given to the interaction between the CCP and the Chinese people in the propagation of Soviet culture.

The lean to one side

Before we delve into the significance of Soviet culture in the PRC, it is instructive to situate the Chinese introduction of Soviet culture in the broader context of Sino-Russian relations prior to the 50s. Direct contact between China and Russia did not start until both were conquered by Mongols in the thirteenth century. They became more involved diplomatically in the seventeenth century with tsarist Russia's eastern expansion to the Qing China frontiers, resulting in growing exchanges in language, religion, literature, art, medicine, and crafts. The Russian court was fascinated by the latest trends in Chinese taste.[15] By contrast, Chinese interest in Russian culture was held back by concerns over territorial disputes and the thinking that nothing outside the "middle kingdom" was needed. The situation on the Chinese side changed noticeably in the early twentieth century,

especially after 1917. The Russian Revolution spurred enthusiasm for Soviet culture among a group of revolutionary-minded Chinese intellectuals, many of whom later became Communists. In the following four decades, China would eventually develop an extensive network of cultural exchange with the Soviet Union.

Although here I use the word "exchange," the point must be made that the flow of culture between the two countries in the twentieth century was asymmetrical. The difference was so conspicuous that Chinese writer Guo Moruo compared the Chinese introduction of Russian culture to a torrent and the Russian introduction of Chinese culture to a stream.[16] Because of Soviet dominance in the 1950s socialist camp, the flow of culture from the Soviet Union to China was significantly greater.

The Chinese introduction of Soviet culture after 1917 followed the ups and downs in bilateral relations roughly but not always simultaneously. From 1917 to 1949, Chinese intellectuals who strove to enlighten the nation with perceived positive values in Russian culture introduced a fair number of Russian-language literary works, songs, and films. Chinese official attitude toward the Soviet Union, by contrast, remained low-key before the 1930s, due to the divided political situation in China and the Soviet government's "sitting on the fence" diplomacy towards various Chinese political entities.

With the mounting Japanese threat in the 30s, the Nationalist Party (GMD) re-aligned itself with the Soviet Union. Under GMD auspices and supported by the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), the Sino-Soviet Cultural Association (SSCA) was set up in 1935 to facilitate cultural exchange and diplomatic relations between the two countries.[17] The CCP was also involved in SSCA daily operations – several members of the Executive Council, such as Guo Moruo, Ge Baoquan and Cao Jinghua, were either underground Communists or pro-Communists. However, the entangled relations between the Soviet regime, the GMD, and the CCP hindered the promotion of Soviet culture in China. Overall, Soviet culture had a limited effect on the general public in this phase.

After the PRC was established in 1949, the CCP openly admired and emulated the Soviet Union until around 1956, when Mao started to criticize mechanical copying of Soviet experience. With Khrushchev's de-Stalinization as a wake-up call, Beijing saw an urgent need to break with the Soviet model and develop an independent Chinese path. By 1958, the divergence between the Chinese and Soviet parties was obvious; tensions brewed over a series of issues, such as China's Great Leap Forward and Moscow's request to base submarines in the Chinese Pacific. Bilateral relations went steadily downhill as a result. In effect, the alliance foundered in 1963 when open polemics between the two parties unleashed past grievances. These changes were reflected in cultural exchange. Starting in 1949, the Soviet Union became China's foremost supplier of socialist culture, leapfrogging Western countries to take up the majority of New China's foreign cultural imports. A wide spectrum of Soviet cultural products in far greater quantity than before steadily entered China, hitting a high point exactly when bilateral relations worsened. Then the volume contracted, lingering until the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

The radicalism in the Chinese adoption of Soviet culture during this time holds a special place in China's modern history of assimilating foreign cultures. From the early nineteenth century, when China was dragged willy-nilly into a reorganized world system until the formative years of the PRC, how to make use of the foreign for national development remained high on the national agenda. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Self-Strengthening Movement made an attempt to reenergize the declining Qing Empire by installing Western military and technological innovations. The May Fourth New Cultural Movement in the early twentieth century went further by advocating Western science, democracy and culture. However, neither movement had the strong government patronage of the PRC's Soviet-leaning frenzy in the 1950s. The only analogue is the process of opening China to the world during the reform era from 1978. China has since been spinning in a whirl of intensified globalization that draws its energy from American and Western European cultures, just as in the 50s it did from the Soviet Union.

To understand the CCP endeavor to introduce Soviet culture wholesale, it is necessary to briefly describe the international and domestic conditions that shaped Chinese foreign policy. In the Cold War confrontation between the USSR and the United States, China stood at a critical point in the Far East strategy of both superpowers. When the PRC was founded in 1949, the new Communist regime was facing a multitude of challenges from Washington, such as hostility, a trade embargo, and diplomatic isolation. By contrast, Moscow quickly extended a hand to Beijing. Under these circumstances, Mao proclaimed the "lean to one side" policy – entering the game on the Soviet side – to curb the risk of American aggression. However, the policy was not simply a reaction forced by foreign pressure; rather, it was based on a pragmatic consideration of Chinese national interests. China needed a strong ally to help with its reconstruction. As a world heavyweight and the leader of the socialist camp, the Soviet Union could offer aid crucial to building a new China.

Yet Chinese leaders did not view the international environment surrounding China only through the prism of national interests; rather, they had an international vision. The decision to forge an alliance with the Soviet Union meant that "the PRC was conceived as a state in the broader framework of the 'socialist camp' from its very first hour."[18] For Beijing, "the issue was not simply a threat to China's security, but a global confrontation developing between the two camps which permitted no Chinese dalliance with the imperialist United States."[19] This was why Mao and his colleagues "actively sought and indeed, expected such an alliance."[20] For the same reason, they attached such great importance to the "friendship rhetoric" that the Chinese propaganda machine promptly cranked up for promoting the Sino-Soviet alliance. Soon, a campaign to learn from the Soviets was launched in earnest, as discussed in Part I of this book. Even when open rifts appeared between the two parties in the late 1950s, the propaganda was still maintained until the mid-1960s (though substantially reduced), assuring the world that socialist solidarity was unbreakable and that China would remain its defender. Such efforts did pay off. In the first half of the 1950s, an amicable atmosphere grew between

Beijing and Moscow, helping China win a great deal of much-needed economic, military, and technological support from the Soviet government.

To nurture Sino-Soviet friendship, China set before the Chinese people a cornucopia of Soviet art and literary works, and at the same time turned hostile towards American and Western European cultures. These steps were a forceful demonstration of Chinese political stance in the Cold War, and were intended to woo Soviet favor. In cinema, for example, Chinese filmmakers turned to Soviet films for ideas and techniques ranging from scriptwriting to shooting angles. Soviet movies were shown across the country, attracting both urban and rural spectators. The increase in Chinese film importation through Sovexportfilm (the film export department of the USSR) and the popularity of these films with Chinese audiences pleased the Soviet Union, which attached much importance to maintaining the Soviet image via the distribution of its cinema. Overall, the prestige of Soviet culture in China enhanced the Sino-Soviet alliance, and the warm relationship in turn gave China the feeling that it belonged in the socialist world. Both meant a lot to China when the capitalist world was cold-shouldering it.

Through the Soviet Union, China also tied itself to other members of the socialist bloc by importing their cultural products, though in far smaller quantity. Books were translated, films were dubbed, and exhibitions were brought in from East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria. In this way, China joined a massive effort coordinated by the Soviet Union to circulate across the bloc new works created in the socialist spirit (mainly by Soviets).[21] Despite deep internal divisions, the cross-borrowing of culture within the socialist camp fostered "a border-crossing consciousness emphasizing coherence and simultaneity."[22] The widespread Stalinist architecture that still looms over cities like Warsaw, Berlin, and Bucharest is one pointed reminder of this concerted effort. Soviet-style buildings – symmetrical, imposing, and grandiose – gave emerging industrial cities in China an instant identity as both socialist and international, a radical break with China's former image. This type of new identity not only set the socialist outlook apart from the capitalist one but endowed the former with more legitimacy and potency, so the CCP was eager to project it onto the minds of its citizens.

Cultural connections with the Soviet-led socialist camp also expanded the PRC's international outreach. By sending its writers, artists, athletes, model workers, and students on exchange visits or to large-scale conventions in other socialist countries, China began to extend its political influence abroad. This endeavor can be seen as an early effort by China to become an international player; it set up the network of relationships through which the country tried more aggressively to spread Maoism beyond its borders during the Cultural Revolution.[23]

So the Chinese encounter with Soviet culture is best understood in the context of China's relationship with the world. It is true that Western culture was tolerated to a certain extent, and in metropolises like Beijing and Shanghai, people had access to some Western literature critical of capitalism, such as Balzac's *Père Goriot*, Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir*, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, and Mark Twain's *The Gilded Age*.[24] Although American music was generally regarded as "sappy" and

"decadent," African American spiritual songs and some Broadway musicals like *Old Man River* were introduced for the purpose of denouncing capitalist oppression and exploitation.[25] However, in other places, Soviet culture was often the only cultural import available. For those growing up without alternatives, Soviet culture encompassed the entirety of their international exposure. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the Soviet Union meant the whole world to them.[26] Only later, when China started to reject the Soviet model, did knowing the world beyond the Soviet Union begin to matter. Zhou Yang had to warn writers in 1956 that "Soviet things are not all but only a part of what we need to learn."[27]

New China, new culture, new citizens

From a domestic point of view, China's radical taking-on of Soviet culture stemmed from an urgent need to build a new culture compatible with the new socialist order. The birth of the PRC ended domestic feudalism and foreign colonialism, but their effects were still entrenched. Along with campaigns to dissipate the influence of Euro-American cultures, measures were taken to root out traditions from China's feudal past. In the process, a new culture with a new set of values and concepts was to be established to produce the new kind of citizen that the CCP desired. However, creating a new culture from scratch in the formative years of the PRC was not a realistic option, nor was it necessary when a prototype could be readily imported from abroad and modified to suit the needs of New China. The Chinese regime, like many other socialist states, turned to the Soviet Union – the prototype of socialism – for a handy model in all aspects of nation building and social engineering. Soviet culture was looked on as representing socialism par excellence and therefore the most suitable exemplar for molding China's "socialist new man."[28]

Chinese cultural authorities immediately aligned themselves to the Soviet paragon. In an article written for a Soviet literary magazine and republished in *People's Daily* in 1953, Zhou Yang praised Soviet literature: "From this literature, we see the most advanced and wonderful social system ever existent in the world that truly reflects the happiness of life; we see the sublime qualities and the highest moral standard of humankind." Zhou further stated that the best works of Soviet writers, as well as the decrees and speeches regarding literature and arts given by Stalin, Zhdanov, and Malenkov, were "the richest and the most valuable experience for the progressive culture in China and the world" and therefore should serve as the most important guides for Chinese writers. Moreover, as Zhou emphasized, Sino-Soviet cultural exchange "is not only important for [Chinese] literature but also has political significance" because "the great Sino-Soviet friendship is the most important force in defending the East and world peace." For such reasons, Zhou Yang concluded that the immediate task of Chinese writers and artists was to "further popularize Soviet literature, art, and film among Chinese people."[29]

In no time, Soviet cultural norms set the standard in China. The switch to Soviet criteria brought fundamental and, to a large extent, devastating changes to Chinese cultural circles, primarily due to the Soviet doctrine of socialist realism that was

officially endorsed in China as "the only correct principle" for artistic creation and criticism. Functioning in the socialist system, socialist realism was often formulaic and doctrinaire, dictating that writers and artists must follow the party line. Such negative aspects were further enhanced when the doctrine was institutionalized in China. Scholarly attention to Soviet impact on Chinese art and literature has given rise to a number of publications in Chinese and English.[30]

By contrast, grassroots changes remain a less studied aspect of the Soviet impact on China. Circulation of Soviet cultural imports was not confined to writers and artists, though they were the most directly affected; rather, it was carried out on the mass level and could not have maintained itself without popular acceptance. Ultimately, this endeavor targeted what ordinary citizens thought and did, and their acceptance of Soviet culture was essential to the success of Chinese modernization along Soviet lines. Examining the effects of Soviet culture at the popular level, then, will shed light on the ways and forms in which Chinese society changed during the first decade of Communist rule.

Of course, changes did not happen uniformly to everyone everywhere in China. In the countryside, friendship propaganda helped peasants gain a better understanding of the Soviet Union, but covert resistance and mechanical copying characterized their practice of learning from Soviets. For example, when urban women went for a Soviet dress style known as *bulaji*, rural women saw it as an embarrassment when they had to bend down a lot while working. To push this "advanced" Soviet fashion, one village made it mandatory that at least one woman from each household wear *bulaji*, and that female cadres and party members take the lead. Under pressure, some women put it on, but only during an inspection. Similarly, in some places, peasants were told to bake their bread because that was how the Russians made it. Not knowing how to bake or what an oven was, peasants first steamed their cornmeal buns as usual and then toasted them on the stove, claiming to be cooking Soviet-style.[31] Obviously, this kind of forced practice did not last long. As for Soviet art and literature, only film gained currency, since it relied less on literacy and was entertaining. But peasants still found Soviet cinematic language and techniques hard to comprehend, and some saw Soviet movies as just a bunch of entangled extramarital affairs.[32]

Generally speaking, the transformations due to Soviet influence were more obvious in cities than in the countryside. Friendship propaganda and the spread of Soviet culture were carried out on a grander scale in cities. The higher literacy of urban dwellers and their more diversified cultural life nurtured a better appreciation of foreign culture. With their extensive exposure to propaganda and Soviet culture, and sometimes even direct contact with Soviet people, city people were influenced in more profound ways. For this reason, this book concentrates on the urban population. In some cases, such as the discussion of Soviet literature, the main subjects are those who had received some formal education.

In the years before the establishment of the PRC, there existed a diversity of ideologies in China. It was during the 1950s that the socialist ideology of the CCP became dominant. The promotion of Soviet culture under the auspices of the CCP contributed a great deal to this process. Despite scattered doubt and rejection, the Chinese

gradually developed a keen interest in a wide spectrum of Soviet cultural forms. Translations of Soviet bestsellers filled shelves in every bookstore and library, scoring record sales and lending rates. Soviet personages such as Pavel and Zoya (two heroes idolized in novels and films) became pop icons and role models for young people. Parents even adopted attractive Russian names for their children or named them after Soviet heroes. Whenever possible, people threw themselves into learning Russian; even those with low levels of literacy were able to mix some pidgin Russian words into daily practice, showing off their "newness."

It was in this context that Soviet culture exerted a marked impact on the collective consciousness of those whose worldview was still rudimentary. While this effect certainly attested to the merit of Soviet culture, it also showed the CCP's propaganda skills, because the introduction of Soviet culture was mediated by the CCP via friendship rhetoric. The gap between what the CCP wanted people to learn from Soviet culture and what people actually retained provides a means of assessing how effectively the party shaped public opinion. To measure that distance, this book asks two sets of questions that are also crucial to understanding the Soviet legacy in China. First, what was the image of the Soviet Union that the CCP presented through the propagandist use of Soviet culture, and what did the CCP expect to achieve? Second, what was the image of the Soviet Union in the eyes of ordinary Chinese people, and to what extent did their understanding of Soviet culture agree with the official interpretation?

Rethinking state propaganda

To the CCP, inducing people to accept the Soviet Union as a political ally was only a preliminary. The reason for praising the Soviet Union was to cement the Communist hold on power in China, secure popular identification with the socialist ideology, and encourage mass participation in socialist projects. For these purposes, friendship propaganda spread an elaborate rhetoric about the happy life in the Soviet Union. While the early Soviet regime had to paint pictures of a wonderful future to whip up popular support and mass enthusiasm for building socialism, the Chinese government could show its people something more concrete. Its propaganda about Soviet "achievements" presented a just-around-the-corner bright future, and along that, a very persuasive idea: if China took the Soviet path, what was happening in the Soviet Union at the time would happen later in China. As a popular slogan of the time proclaimed: "The Soviet today is our tomorrow."

As this book shows, to a large extent, popular response met official expectations, at least that was the way it seemed. From the PRC government's perspective, the propaganda did its job. Popular understandings of the world, socialism, and China's future were shaped according to the party line, firing up mass enthusiasm for the first five-year plan. The convergence between official intention and popular reaction may be attributed to the CCP's heavy-handed propaganda and political pressure. Indeed, the Chinese government never took cultural activities simply as a matter of entertainment or personal development, especially in view of the intense Cold War antagonism abroad and the absence

of a well-established new value system at home. Under the "lean to one side" policy, accepting Soviet culture or not was tied to a person's political position and was punished or rewarded in political terms accordingly. At the height of the Sino-Soviet alliance, one was either a "Russophile" or an "anti-Soviet, anti-socialist, anti-revolutionary rightist."[33] Whether someone loved the Soviet Union and supported Sino-Soviet friendship was a criterion for judging if the person had the right international spirit, loved New China, and supported socialism. By contrast, "worshiping the US, fearing the US, and being friendly with the US" incurred severe punishment and ostracism.[34] Scholars, translators, writers, and artists whose professions involved Euro-American cultures were forced to abandon their previous work and switch to new tasks related to the "progressive" Soviet culture. Many who received training in Europe and America were victimized in political campaigns. Under such pressure, dissonance regarding the government's pro-Soviet rhetoric abated. Less and less did people publicly admit to a liking for Hollywood movies or English poetry.

However, coercion from the regime alone cannot explain the popularity of Soviet culture. If so, the Soviet legacy would not have been so resilient after the CCP stopped patronizing Soviet culture in the 1960s. To view Communist-controlled China as a totalitarian state and its citizens as docile subjects would only perpetuate Cold War biases. In fact, the decade-long Soviet-leaning craze offers a unique vantage point from which to rethink the state-society relationship in the early PRC. It is true that state cultural authorities not only decided what was suitable for introduction but also wove official definitions of state, citizenship, and socialist ideology into the translation and interpretation of imported Soviet culture. And it was solely up to the CCP to decide when to engage the nation in the "learn from Soviets" campaign and when to pull out. All the same, we cannot assume that the state was oblivious of its citizens. The Communist experimentation in China was dependent on extensive mass mobilization, and the government was fully aware of the limitations of ideological indoctrination toward that end. The Chinese word *xuanchuan*, unlike its Western equivalent "propaganda," is a neutral term simply meaning the official promulgation of ideas and policies. In official discourse, it even carried positive connotations, meaning to "guide" and "educate" the people in party policies.[35] I will pinpoint two salient aspects of the friendship propaganda to illustrate how the CCP influenced the populace.

First, the propaganda offered an alluring vision of up-to-date socialism to a population desperately awaiting a lift in living standards. The Soviet Union was acclaimed as a country that had wonderfully, almost miraculously, improved its people's material well-being: it had the world's most extensive and comfortable subway system; many families owned cars; factory-based assembly lines replaced raw human labor, and in the vast countryside, farming was entirely mechanized; fashion items, beauty products, and luxury goods filled the shops; people were well fed and well dressed; they lived in spacious houses or apartments with hot water, radios, telephones, washing machines, and other home appliances powered by electricity. In short, as the propaganda proclaimed, the Soviet Union had

matched the material life of the West and had produced an equally (if not more) robust economy, an alternative modernity.

To a contemporary reader with a basic knowledge of the former Soviet Union, this rhetoric is obviously a spoonful of fact in a bowl of fantasy and falsification. In China, then, it was also challenged by those who knew about the Soviet Union and the West first-hand. However, for people who had no personal way of verifying the information, and that was nearly everyone, the propaganda was compelling. In his 1995 dissertation, Julian Chang attributes the propaganda's success in persuading people to its effective language and mechanisms. He focuses on the role of language in creating the "myth of the Soviet Union" and transcribing the myth into the Chinese consciousness to form lasting perceptions about the Soviet Union.[36] The present book stresses that the propaganda also provided material proof, particularly by holding exhibitions to enable people to see with their own eyes concrete evidence of Soviet-style socialism. Together with Soviet novels, songs, posters, and films that portrayed (with embellishments) "the Soviet today," the Chinese government invited the masses to imagine "the Chinese tomorrow" of an equally powerful and advanced socialist nation. The power of collective imagination shall not be underestimated, because these shared visions of the future had a role in shaping everyday experiences in the present.[37] Viewing poverty and hardship through the lens of future affluence and comfort, it is likely that many people gained more confidence in the new regime and the plan of socialist modernization.

Another important aspect of friendship propaganda was that, amid Cold War isolation, it fed the desires of Chinese people, particularly the intelligentsia, for the foreign and exotic, even though few openly acknowledged such. At a time when international travel was unthinkable for most Chinese, thousands went on "mental tours" by reading Soviet novels, watching Soviet films, listening to Russian music, or dressing themselves in pseudo-Russian style.[38] More importantly, cultural imports from the Soviet Union opened a window to the world and offered a much-needed means of learning about Western countries. Although for centuries, it has been debated whether Russia is part of Europe or not, in Chinese eyes during the 1950s (and even today), Russia culturally was the exotic "West" personified. Its arts were rooted in Western traditions, and its people were similar to Europeans in almost everything from food and clothing to manners and etiquette. The connection with the Soviet Union thus allowed the Chinese to experience in politically legitimate terms what was otherwise off-limits because of China's confrontation with the West. For many Chinese in the 1950s, the Soviet Union was the West without capitalism. To modernize China on the Soviet model was to Westernize without borrowing from the West.

Indeed, at a time when even eating "Western food" (*xican*) was rejected because of its association with capitalism, Moscow Restaurant was opened in Beijing as the first "Western food restaurant" (*xican ting*) in the PRC that served meals with knives and forks. When "Western suits" (*xizhuang*) and dresses were at odds with New China's proletarian ethos and thus despised, the Lenin jacket, originally a modified Western suit jacket, was at the fashion forefront for its connection with Lenin, widely admired in China. Similarly, a dress design imported from the Soviet

Union that was a virtual replica of the same style found in American and Western European catalog retailers in the 30s and 40s, was taken onboard by Chinese women and fondly called *bulaji*. In architecture, when Euro-American designs were under attack, Stalinist buildings endowed the Chinese urban landscape with a neoclassical flavor. In performing arts, ballet gained official endorsement because of Soviet influence, and under Soviet tutelage, Chinese ballet made its magical takeoff in the 50s. These choices, though mainly appealing to urban intelligentsia, were not without influence on the other layers of the populace.

These two aspects demonstrate that the friendship propaganda took popular demands into account. This, in turn, had a huge effect on the CCP. In using Soviet achievements to motivate the Chinese populace, the CCP tolerated the use of material incentives and the concept of consumption, even though it remained suspicious of, if not totally hostile to, the bourgeois lifestyles Stalin encouraged and the consumerism Khrushchev sought to stimulate.[39] It is true that Chinese arts and literature suffered from slavishly copying Soviet theory and practice, but under Soviet influence, the CCP also allowed a certain amount of freedom in these areas, as evidenced by the Hundred Flowers Campaign prompted by the Khrushchev Thaw. Altogether, the result was a relatively liberal time open to a modest degree of personal gratification and artistic pluralism. Part II of this book uses architecture and fashion to illustrate this dimension of the Soviet impact that proved to be liberating to the Chinese. It alerts the reader to the complexity of Soviet influence in China and the subtlety in the CCP's relationship with its people. It invites the reader to rethink conventional wisdom that views Soviet influence and the CCP propaganda as always and everywhere repressive. The cloud of China's Soviet-leaning craze also had a silver lining.

Grassroots agency

It is important to bear in mind that China's Soviet makeover was a cultural experiment in which the whole population participated. While the people of Mao's China had no control over what the authorities proclaimed, they did determine to various extents what they wanted to absorb and how they wanted to use it in their lives. Under the calm surface, there were currents of defiance. Although these were hidden in the mainstream media of the 1950s due to state censorship and people's self-censorship, they showed themselves in the turbulent waters of the Cultural Revolution and personal memoirs of the post-Mao era. They tell us that while people outwardly responded to the lofty ideals and morals that the CCP emphasized in Soviet culture, what they took to heart and retained for years was often the less sublime.

Scholars have noticed this point in an intriguing Chinese phenomenon of reading *How the Steel Was Tempered*, a model work of socialist realism published in Stalin's time.[40] In the Chinese translation, the translator's note, representing official interpretation of the novel, stressed the theme of whole-hearted devotion to the party-state. Thousands of Chinese boys and girls responded enthusiastically to the revolutionary ideals and high morality of the Soviet hero. Yet privately, they were

more attracted to Pavel's romances and Tonya's petty-bourgeois sentiments, for discussions of humanism were rare in Chinese literary works of the time. Mainstream literature in China shied away from "unrevolutionary" topics, such as love, intimacy, desires, and fantasies. As a result, readers' personal preferences departed widely from the official line. Part III of this book, focusing on literature, shows that this bifurcation existed in the Chinese reading of almost all Soviet socialist realist fiction, and that the distance between official and personal interpretations reached its height in the Cultural Revolution. In readers' private imaginations, the Soviet Union took the image of a country allowing a greater degree of personal freedom, in addition to that of a wealthy, modernized nation.

A few more words are in order to justify the focus on Soviet literature in Part III. It is an understatement to say that literature occupied a prominent place in Chinese and Soviet societies. Both countries had a tradition in which "the voice of the writer carried moral weight – and was assumed to be entitled to instruct and edify those to whom it spoke."[41] For this reason, literature received enormous state patronage and was used as a primary tool of propaganda in both countries. Compared with other forms of Soviet culture that China borrowed, fiction left an influence that was much deeper and more far-reaching. First of all, it was "popular," in the sense that it was intended for the average reader. Second, unlike painting and film, it was not dependent on complicated media. A book could be read anytime and anywhere. Thus, when Soviet culture was banned after the Sino-Soviet split, Chinese people could still read Soviet fiction privately – when they could find it, that is. This allowed the influence of the Soviet novel to continue among those coming of age during the Cultural Revolution, a point we now turn to.

In the early 1960s, as the alleged "unbreakable friendship" between the two socialist brothers turned into venomous political bickering, the CCP had to take back its fulsome tributes to the Soviet Union. This was a task as daunting as teaching people to befriend the Soviets in the 50's, despite the party's experience in controlling the media after a decade of rule. Many Soviet cultural forms were denounced as "role-models" of "bourgeois humanism" that were politically "reactionary" and artistically "formalist." As China entered the Cultural Revolution in 1966, no more prize-winning Soviet novels were sold in bookstores or displayed on library and household bookshelves. Most Soviet films disappeared from Chinese cinemas, except a few that idolized Lenin and Stalin. The Soviet education model was criticized. Unisex army uniforms replaced Lenin jackets and the colorful *bulaji*. And the Soviet Exhibition Center in the capital had already been renamed the Beijing Exhibition Center.

The destructive power of Khrushchev's secret speech, the rupture between the Chinese and Soviet leaderships, and the severing of bilateral ties smashed the perfect image of Soviet life in prior CCP rhetoric. Although people started to discard or conceal every item suggestive of a Soviet connection, their fondness of Soviet culture was not easily erased. When orders were issued to criticize the Soviet Union, many felt reluctant to turn against the "Soviet big brother" they had enthusiastically admired in the formative years of their lives. In part, this was because the CCP's anti-Soviet propaganda mainly targeted the culture under

Stalin's "revisionist" heirs and not that of previous times, but more importantly, it was the outcome of a decade's close interaction between Soviet culture and the private lives of millions of Chinese. The rich, profound, and humanistic Russian cultural tradition captivated the Chinese and left among them a legacy that even political sledgehammers could not destroy. In retrospect, perhaps the biggest irony was that the CCP's 1950s pro-Soviet propaganda had built up such momentum that it could not manage a U-turn when, a decade later, the CCP wanted people to unlearn what they had been taught.

Soviet influence continued to haunt China. In the second half of the Cultural Revolution, it cast another spell, with effects more unexpected and unsettling. For the CCP, the Soviet Union was still the most important frame of reference, except that now it was viewed as negative. To make use of the "counter-example," China translated a selective list of Soviet publications that featured the literature of Khrushchev's Thaw. This was the only form of culture that China introduced from the "revisionist" Soviet Union amidst full-scale extraction of Soviet culture. Given the lethal power of the Thaw literature, the Chinese translations – the so-called "poisonous weeds" – were strictly controlled and were only intended for distribution in a small circle of high-ranking party officials and intellectuals. But, in reality, they reached a much larger readership in the chaos of the Cultural Revolution.

It was for the unintended readers – young people looking for guidance more meaningful than the Maoist ideology – that the ideas of the "poisonous weeds" the CCP intended to weed out became much-needed spiritual nourishment. Many of these books revealed the purges, power struggles, and social injustices in Stalin's time. They called for humanity, spiritual freedom, and political liberalization, which the disillusioned youth of China found enlightening, healing, and empowering. In the last few years of the Cultural Revolution, many of these "forbidden" books, along with the Soviet novels that survived, were ravenously devoured. Die-hard music fans secretly hummed melodies they remembered from previous Soviet films, and to them, a copy of a previously published book about foreign (mainly Soviet) songs was dearer than life.[42] These activities nourished a Cultural Revolutionary subculture, in which secret consumption of Soviet culture became a form of personal resistance. By rejecting official interpretations and turning away from the lofty slogans and speeches of the Cultural Revolution, people demonstrated their defiance against the thought control in Mao's China. Once again, Soviet culture manifested its huge liberating potential in the Chinese context.

This way Soviet culture helped bring an end to the Cultural Revolution, at the same time opening a window through which the Chinese could look outside their country. Without this limited but extremely valuable connection, it would have taken the Chinese much longer to plug back into the world after the Cultural Revolution. As many writers and artists resumed their careers, their new works finally unleashed the delayed impact of Soviet culture on their youthful years. Meanwhile, the post-Mao government restocked the book market with previously published Russian and Soviet works. Until the dissolution of the USSR, Soviet culture continued to be a source of inspiration for China's social engineering,

though it was increasingly marginalized by American and Western European cultural imports.

In a nutshell, this is a book about Soviet influence in China. It rejects the negative connotation of the word "influence" that suggests passive reception. "[T]rue influence is always the liberation of latent forces," as Georg Lukács observed in his discussion of Tolstoy's influence on Western European literature.[43] The present book shows how Soviet culture roused latent energies in China. It highlights the active role of the CCP in assimilating Soviet culture, but, more importantly, the Chinese people's discrimination in accepting Soviet culture. This discriminating agency showed itself in the ways people chose what to keep private. Behind the facade of a pro-Soviet nation in the 1950s, individuals decided what they wanted to believe in and hold onto. They found in Soviet culture something that resonated with them, something typically unavailable in domestic culture. Therefore, they were less resistant to this foreign culture and the invasive propaganda package. By enjoying what was otherwise forbidden, people found a way to take advantage of state propaganda and carve out space for themselves. They came to form their own image of the Soviet Union, one that was neither the Soviet Union in reality nor the Soviet Union depicted in Chinese propaganda. As an unintended consequence of the propaganda, this popular image of the Soviet Union, together with the Chinese dream about such a country, outlived the professed "unbreakable" alliance between the two countries.

Sources and structure

In the Mao era, culture and political identification were built up on an array of propaganda materials that engaged the people on a daily basis. Propaganda for Sino-Soviet friendship forms one source basis for this book. It includes directives by state leaders and cultural authorities found in archives or party organ newspapers, as well as in state-sponsored journals relaying official instructions to target groups. Other examples of propaganda are slogans, posters, pamphlets, reader's guides, film posters, as well as reports on a wide range of activities – lectures, exhibitions, dance classes, film festivals, and commemorations of Soviet anniversaries – organized by the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association (SSFA) across the country. These materials reveal the official intent in promoting a pro-Soviet attitude among the populace and also demonstrate the scope of state efforts to achieve that.

Whether state propaganda was effective must be measured by public reaction. That is the central puzzle this book tries to solve. While the complete picture is yet to be revealed, this book presents a few pieces gleaned from popular magazines and journals during the Mao era, and post-Mao memoirs. The information is often random and trivial, but can reveal the emotions and sentiments of the time – for example, an SSFA member's reflections after a meeting, a reader's thoughts on a Soviet novel, a movie fan's review of a Soviet film, and a diner's experience at the Moscow Restaurant in Beijing. There are two main challenges here. One is related to censorship on the state and personal levels during Mao's time, and the

other has to do with remembering the Mao era from post-Mao perspectives. Both can obscure our understanding of the past. Additionally, these sources may lead to a bias toward the intelligentsia. After all, it was this group of people whose level of literacy allowed them to read, write, and publish. Relatively speaking, they were influenced the most by Soviet culture. However, I give attention only to how Soviet culture shaped their worldviews and behaviors as ordinary citizens, not how Soviet culture predisposed them to a certain path of professional development that made some of them into celebrities. Thus, the changes in the intelligentsia can be seen as an indication of the new trends in society, since the intelligentsia was the vanguards of the populace as a whole.

Beyond textual sources, this project benefits from continuous attention to the experiences of individuals who were the targets of propaganda and lived through the tumultuous early period of the PRC. In many conversations, I have been struck by people's eagerness to share a memory of a particular Soviet novel, film, or song that marked their lives. In this "collective memory," Soviet culture has become a signifier of youth, revolution, inspiration, and true human emotions. I add these personal touches to the study of Sino-Soviet relations because I believe it is time to humanize a subject that has been over-politicized in historiography. Yet, fully aware of the limitations of interviews as historical sources and the restricted number of samples, I handle the interview results in cross-reference with previously mentioned sources. Although only a few interviewees requested anonymity, I have chosen not to reveal any names in order to protect privacy and for the sake of consistency.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I sets the stage for the entire book. Chapter 1 examines the CCP rhetoric on Sino-Soviet friendship. It looks into the content of the rhetoric and the various methods that the SSFA employed to engage the nation in forging international socialist solidarity. It also includes a discussion of the Chinese education reform along Soviet lines to reveal the social dynamic in the campaign of learning from the Soviets. Focusing on foreign language education and script reform, Chapter 2 illustrates the immediate results of the propaganda with a widespread Chinese craze for Russian and the linguistic changes made to internationalize the Chinese language. Together, these two chapters present a textured picture of how the Chinese party-state extended its pro-Soviet policy within society and what changes of perception were generated in the process.

Part II continues the impact of the friendship propaganda, investigating the transformations in cityscape that followed the introduction of socialist modernity into urban life. Chapter 3 traces the development of a quasi-Soviet architectural style which served both as the physical manifestation of Sino-Soviet friendship and as a central stage in the advance toward modern cities. Chapter 4 discusses Chinese adaptations of Soviet clothing that filled cities with a variety of fashions and cheerful optimism about socialist prosperity. These two chapters jointly address how Soviet-inspired trends in Chinese cities altered popular tastes, energized everyday life, and encouraged a positive outlook about the modernization of China.

Part III, moving to mass reading in Mao's China, deepens the discussion of Soviet influence on Chinese society by probing into the desires, fantasies, and

"dream worlds" of citizens nurtured by Soviet literature. While the chapters of the previous two parts are organized thematically, the two chapters of this part follow a chronological order. Chapter 5 deals with the honeymoon period of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1950s, and Chapter 6 with the subsequent break-up. They reveal the continuity and discontinuity in the ways Soviet fiction was read across times and generations, as well as the various energies people derived from reading.

Notes

1 Wang, *Sulian ji*, i, 21.
2 Ge, "Sulian gequ he women," 100.
3 The literature on the political, diplomatic, military, and economic aspects of Sino-Soviet relations in the Cold War is too large to cite here. For some recent representative publications in English, see Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*; Zhang, *Economic Cold War*; Heinzig, *Soviet Union and Communist China*; Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*; Lüthi, *Sino-Soviet Split*; Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens*; Shen and Li, *After Leaning to One Side*; Shen and Xia, *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Partnership*.
4 Pioneering works dealing with some alternative aspects of Sino-Soviet engagement include an account of the Chinese model of factory management and organization adapted from the Soviet one between 1949 and 1953, see Kaple, *Dream of A Red Factory*; for a comparative study of the mechanics of propaganda work in the PRC and the USSR, see Chang, "Propaganda and Perceptions"; for an examination of the impact of Soviet films on China, see Chen, "Internationalism and Cultural Experience," 82–114, and Chen, "Socialism, Aestheticized Bodies, and International Circuits of Gender," 53–80; for a revisit of Sino-Soviet relations incorporating new archival material and focusing on the cultural and scientific exchanges, see Jersild, *The Sino-Soviet Alliance*; for a monograph exploring how the CCP used propagandist media such as novels, textbooks, songs, and films borrowed from the Soviets to shape Chinese citizens, see Yu, *Xingsu "xinren"*; for a historical narrative of how the lives of thousands of Chinese who traveled to Soviet Russia became caught up in the relations of the two countries, see McGuire, *Sino-Soviet Romance*. An edited volume on China's acceptance and ultimate rejection of Soviet practice includes a few important chapters touching on education, student life, gender relations, literature, and cinema, see Bernstein and Li, *China Learns From the Soviet Union*.
5 For Jiang Guangci's view on Russian literature, see Jiang, *Eluosi wenxue*.
6 For a list of the Russian works translated into Chinese before 1949, see, Tian, *Minguo shiqi Zhong Su guanxi*, 281–292.
7 I acknowledge that this was a culture contributed by people of various ethnic origins from all 15 republics. However, to most Chinese people in the 1950s, Soviet culture meant the official culture dominated by Russian traditions. Since this study focuses on the Soviet cultural products that China imported, the ethnic diversity of Soviet culture is outside its scope.
8 Of particular importance to my definition of "culture" is Richard Stites's works on Russian popular culture. See Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*; and Von Geldern and Stites, *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia*.
9 Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 197.
10 Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 80.
11 Dunham, *In Stalin's Time*.
12 Pratt, "Arts of Contact Zone."
13 Other scholars call this "transculturation," a process that is more than translation or transition from one culture to another; rather, it merges concepts and additionally entails the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena. See Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint*; Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion*.

14 On leaders, see Rodchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens*. On advisers, see Jersild, *Sino-Soviet Alliance*.
15 Lim, *China and Japan in the Russian Imagination*, 17–75; Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon*, 7–16.
16 Guo, "ZhongSu wenhua zhi jiaoliu," 3.
17 The VOKS stands for "Vsesoiuznoe Obshchestvo po Kulturnym Sviaziam," established in 1925 and replaced in 1958 by the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. For the role the VOKS played in Soviet foreign affairs, see Barghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive*.
18 Volland, "Translating the Socialist State," 51.
19 Goldstein, "Nationalism and Internationalism: Sino-Soviet Relations," 231.
20 Ibid., 232.
21 Volland, "Inventing a Proletarian Fiction for China."
22 Reed, "Editor's Note," 3.
23 For internationalization, see Guang, "Realpolitik Nationalism"; Kirby; "China's Internationalization."
24 Xu, *Xingxing sese de zaofan*, 49.
25 Interview with an English professor, Beijing, June 30, 2010.
26 Chen, *Wuzhi de youli*, 218–220.
27 Zhou Yang, "Guanyu dangqian wenyi chuangzuo shang de jige wenti."
28 Yu, *Xingsu "xinren."*
29 Zhou, "Shehui zhuyi xianshi zhuyi: Zhongguo wenxue qianjin de daolu," [Socialist realism: the path for Chinese literature,] Renmin ribao, January 11, 1953.
30 For the impact on Chinese literature, see Note 3 in Chapter 5 of this book. For the impact on Chinese music, see, e.g., Melvin and Cai, *Rhapsody in Red*, 198–213. On film, see e.g., Hong, *Sulian yingxiang yu Zhongguo*.
31 Qiao Hanyan, "Naxie bei yiwang de waiguo laoge," [The forgotten old songs,] *Wall Street Journal* (Chinese edition), September 8, 2010.
32 Interview with a factory director, Beijing, August 20, 2008.
33 *Current Background*, No. 213, October 1, 1952, cited from Plunkett, "China Views Her Russian Tutor," 100.
34 Plunkett, "China Views Her Russian Tutor," 100.
35 Chang, "Mechanics of State Propaganda," 76–80; Johnson, "Cinema and Propaganda During the Great Leap Forward," 219–221.
36 Chang, "Propaganda and Perceptions."
37 Ott and Aoki, "Popular Imagination and Identity Politics," 394.
38 For "mental tourism," see Rajagopalan, *Indian Films in Soviet Cinemas*, 38–45.
39 On consumerism in the early PRC, see Gerth, "Compromising with Consumerism in Socialist China."
40 He, "Coming of Age in the Brave New World"; Yu, "Sulian yingxiong Baoer Kechajin dao Zhongguo."
41 Gamsa, *Reading of Russian Literature in China*, 1.
42 The book is titled *Waiguo mingge erbai shou* [Two hundred famous foreign songs]. See Ge, "Sulian gequ he women," 97–98.
43 Georg Lukács, "Leo Tolstoy and Western European Literature," 245.

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Figures

Note on transliteration and translation

Except in the case of established usage (Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Gorky, and Dostoevsky), Chinese names and words are transliterated according to the pinyin system, and the Library of Congress system without diacritical marks is used for Russian names and words.

Unless an English source is cited, all translations are by the author.

Part I

The avowed internationalism

1 The propaganda of friendship

Before Mao proclaimed the "lean to one side" pro-Soviet policy in 1949, official and unofficial efforts to promote Soviet revolutionary culture in the Republican period had already acquainted some Chinese with the USSR and inclined them toward Soviet-style socialism. However, far more Chinese were still partial to the West, especially the United States. Intellectuals admired American democracy, freedom of speech, and constitutional government; the majority of them, educated in Europe or America, were more familiar with literary, philosophical, and scientific works written in English, French, or German. Steering a middle course was more popular among them than leaning to one side. At the grassroots level, most people were grateful for American aid during the war against Japan, especially the two atomic bombs that forced Japan to surrender. Aware of American military power, some also feared the consequences of breaking with the US.

By contrast, the prevalent attitude towards the USSR remained ambivalent. Most Chinese knew little about the country but believed it was nothing more than tsarist Russia repackaged, and those who had heard about Stalin's ruthless liquidation of political dissidents distrusted it. In particular, residents of Northeast China harbored a deep grudge against Russians. Historically, Russia had constantly encroached on that region, and memories of mass rape and pillage by the Soviet Red Army at the end of World War II were still fresh.[1] During that time of Soviet military occupation, direct confrontations between Chinese civilians and Soviet soldiers were not uncommon. In Harbin, people marched in the streets with slogans such as "Down with Red Imperialism!"[2] Student protests broke out in 1946, when the Soviet presence was perceived as dire a threat as Japan's 1915 "Twenty-One Demands."[3] The demonstrations raised anti-Soviet sentiment to a new intensity. Despite regime changes on both sides, the bitter past seriously affected Chinese public opinion of the Soviet Union. When referring to Russians, Chinese often used racially insulting nicknames such as "Old Hairy" (*lao maozi*) and "Big Noses" (*da bizi*).

To correct such "misjudgment" of New China's "friend," the PRC government launched a propaganda campaign to promote popular understanding of the importance of international camaraderie in the socialist world. "Sino-Soviet friendship," or *ZhongSu youhao*, became a catchword in everyday Chinese speech and in public commentaries on domestic and international affairs. A verbal device employed

to humanize a political undertaking, Sino-Soviet friendship had nothing at all to do with promoting personal relationships between the two peoples, despite the rhetoric and organized activities to that effect. Instead, friendship diplomacy, signifying a strategic relationship at the state level, was used as "a means to neutralize opposition psychologically and to reorder reality" in response to the external challenges of a polarized world.[4] In an increasingly tense Cold War atmosphere, it was clear that winning support from Moscow, not Washington, was of strategic importance to the CCP. With an eye to the present and also to the future, the Chinese regime decided to put away past grievances in the name of internationalism and in the hope of Soviet assistance. The result was high-flown rhetoric brushing aside past difficulties, as well as tendentious redefinitions of the gray areas in bilateral relations.

Constructing friendship rhetoric

Given the fraught history between China and Soviet Russia, the first thing in promoting Sino-Soviet friendship was to recount and reinterpret Soviet involvement in China. Friendship propaganda thus constructed an idealized image of the Soviet Union, hoping to incline Chinese people to respect, admire, and learn from the Soviet Union. The Soviet party-state was celebrated as China's "selfless" mentor, supporter, and ally throughout the entire course of the Chinese revolution. Soviet aid was highlighted, while historical conflicts were either sidestepped or made innocuous. Overall, Chinese propaganda represented the past relationship as one of consistent Soviet assistance to China and genuine friendship with Chinese people since the October Revolution, in an effort to prepare the Chinese public for an "unbreakable" Sino-Soviet alliance.[5]

This new representation of Sino-Soviet history was fleshed out with a huge number of pamphlets, handbooks, and other reading matter published in the early 1950s under the directives of the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee. These propaganda materials often skimped on bilateral history before 1917, claiming that the Chinese and Russians had a long history of mutual exchange and support despite constant disruptions by the reactionary forces ruling both countries.[6] By attributing past military confrontation to the rapacious appetite of the ruling class for territorial expansion, the rhetoric skillfully smoothed over the sore spot of tsarist intrusions on Chinese land.

Most writings on Sino-Soviet history during this time concentrated on the period after the October Revolution in 1917 to highlight the differences between the Soviet regime and the tsarist autocracy preceding it, and to accentuate the new type of relationship it had with China. In the words of Liu Shaoqi, "everything completely changed after the October Revolution. Under the great leaderships of Lenin and Stalin, Soviet people have extended unprecedentedly friendly policies to the Chinese people, and Chinese people have since accepted their friendship with an unprecedentedly friendly attitude."[7] In line with Liu Shaoqi's remark, friendship rhetoric turned a blind eye towards the imperialist behavior of the Soviet Empire after 1917. For example, the Soviet Union provided direct assistance to support

the independence of Outer Mongolia from China in 1921. Although in 1924, the Soviet government pledged under "the Sino-Russian Agreement on Resolving Pending Issues" to annul all previous treaties that tsarist Russia signed with China and acknowledge Chinese sovereignty over Outer Mongolia, it failed to enact the terms. In the same year, the newly formed Mongolian People's Republic was declared as a Soviet satellite state. For issues like this in Sino-Soviet relations, the Chinese rhetoric chose to remain silent. It instead declared that the Soviet Union was the first country to sign an "equal treaty" with China, and that the 1924 Sino-Russian Agreement was "the first equal treaty" in modern Chinese history.[8]

Another embarrassing fact that friendship propaganda chose to gloss over involved the treaties signed between the Soviet government and rivals of the CCP, including the Beiyang Government and Chiang Kai-shek's Nanjing regime. The rhetoric urged Chinese to see Soviet collaboration with the two "reactionary" regimes from an international angle. For example, one book explained: "The reason that the Soviet Union signed treaties with the warlord regime and the reactionary Nationalist government was to extend sincere friendship and sympathy to the Chinese people."[9] The Nationalist Party was said to have betrayed Soviet good intentions about stopping Japanese aggression in China, whereas the Soviet Union was portrayed as continually lending China economic and military help against Japan.[10] As a result, the 1937 Sino-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, the 1939 Sino-Soviet Trade Treaty, and the 1945 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, all of which were signed between the Soviet Union and the Nanjing Government, were all interpreted as evidence of "disinterested" Soviet assistance.[11] While it is true that China benefited considerably from these treaties during wartime, it is also true that the Soviet Union profited no less, because collaboration with the Nationalist government buttressed Soviet security in the Far East. It was therefore ingenuous to call it "entirely altruistic," "with no strings attached," or "purely for the sake of love of humanity." However, propaganda materials of the time were filled with comments of this sort.

The rhetoric also exaggerated Soviet contributions to the Chinese revolution. For instance, some writings listed in great detail how the CCP benefited from the ideological guidance of the Soviet Communist Party in the early stages of its development, and others claimed that the Soviet government gave strong assistance to the first united front between the Communist and Nationalist parties. Concerning Chinese resistance to Japan, the Soviet entry into Northeast China was said to have played a decisive role in forcing the invaders to surrender. With regard to the Civil War, the line was that the Soviet Union unwaveringly sided with the CCP and lent valuable support to the Chinese people's struggle for liberation from Nationalist control and independence from foreign dominance.[12] Although these claims have some limited basis in fact, they would not have convinced anyone conversant with the mistaken advice given by Soviet advisers that led to a series of deadly setbacks in the early days of the CCP. Also, they would not have swayed those who had some knowledge of Stalin's deep skepticism about the CCP and his attempt to maximize Soviet interests, both laid bare in the Soviet mediation during China's Civil War between the Communists and the Nationalists. Of course, the

rhetoric also steered clear of the notorious atrocities that the Soviet army committed in Northeast China in 1945.[13]

All in all, the propaganda clearly advocated setting aside questionable Soviet actions of the past in the name of friendship and internationalism. Of course the Chinese leaders were not unaware of the facts in Sino-Soviet relations, but for them, exposing these negative facts would have hurt public perception of the Soviet Union, possibly undermining the PRC's relationship with the Soviet Union at a time when the CCP wanted to impress the "Soviet big brother" in return for favor. This is why, in 1949, Mao sang the praises of Soviet aid in *On the Dictatorship of People's Democracy*: "If it were not for the Soviet Union, if it were not for the victory of the anti-fascist Second World War, if without the defeat of Japanese imperialism, if without the emergence of countries of the new democracy in Europe. . . then the international reactionary force would be much stronger than now. Could we have achieved victory in such circumstances? Of course not."[14] Mao would later admit that he was compelled to extol the Soviet Union because China needed Soviet support then. However, Mao's acknowledgement of the Soviet Union in 1949 was immediately echoed in numerous speeches and writings at the time. In the words of Zhu De, Commander-in-Chief of the People's Liberation Army: "Without the Soviet Union, without the victory of the anti-fascist world war under Soviet leadership, without the growth of international forces for peace and democracy championed by the Soviet Union, we would not have won the revolution this early, and even if we had won, we would not have been able to secure our victory."[15]

Besides rewriting the past, the rhetoric praised recent developments in bilateral relations, especially Soviet recognition of the PRC and the newly forged alliance, both of which were said to have brought New China enormous international support. Immediately after China and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance on February 14, 1950, the Central Propaganda Department directed lower-level propaganda organizations to publicize the news nationwide. In specific directives, the Department set out the focus and method of this important propaganda task, with special instructions on how to handle questions from the rank and file.

> The propaganda for the treaty should emphasize the important parts and focus on the overall history of Sino-Soviet relations, the benefits of the treaty to China and its contrast with various unequal treaties. Commentaries in publications should not be based on isolated interpretations of a single word or sentence in the treaty, nor should speculations be made about the reasons for certain special terms. So far some newspapers have answered a few specific questions such as why the Chinese Eastern Railway and the port of Lushun won't be returned to China until the end of 1952. This is not appropriate for the following reasons. First, such isolated explanations will only mislead readers to dig into unnecessary details while neglecting the full picture. Second, because such questions concern bilateral diplomatic policies, superficial and partial explanations should not be published in writing. Given the fact that

> questions concerning the terms of the treaty have been raised from all over the country, it is better to mention them in passing in general explanations. Except for purely technical questions, no specific answers should be publicized.[16]

The meticulous attention to detail underpinning this excerpt is an excellent illustration of how the CCP fine-tuned its propaganda in promoting Sino-Soviet friendship. According to the instructions, discussions of thorny issues regarding the takeover of the Chinese Eastern Railway, Lushun, and Dalian were to strictly follow official explanations, while embarrassing questions concerning the interest-bearing loans from the Soviet government and the war booty captured by the Soviet army were to be discreetly avoided, even if doing so entailed evading or distorting realities.[17] Within these guidelines, the rhetoric lauded the Soviet Union whenever possible, often in a fulsome and even fawning manner. Numerous articles and books exulted the Soviet military, economic, technical, and cultural support to China based on the 1950 Treaty. The Sino-Soviet alliance was said to be indestructible and the guarantee of everlasting world peace, etc.[18] As Liu Shaoqi concluded in a public address, "the history over the past thirty years has forcefully proven that the people of China and the Soviet Union are as friendly and close to each other as brothers."[19]

To effectively disseminate Sino-Soviet friendship rhetoric, the CCP quickly developed a nationwide propaganda network by establishing the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association (SSFA) across the country. This officially "unofficial" (*fei guanfang*) mass organization was to play a high-profile role in China's domestic and foreign affairs for almost a decade. In particular, it would play a critical role in influencing public perception of Sino-Soviet friendship and facilitating popular dreams of a socialist paradise in China.[20]

The SSFA was a legacy from the Sino-Soviet Cultural Association (SSCA), which had served as a bridge between China and the Soviet Union since 1935.[21] It grew out of the local friendship organizations (also known as SSFAs) that the CCP set up in Northeast China after 1945, which focused on smoothing out relations with the Soviet Union, removing anti-Soviet sentiments among the local people, and paving the way for the CCP takeover of the region after Soviet military occupation.[22] Mao's 1949 proclamation of the pro-Soviet foreign policy pushed forward the transformation of the SSCA and the SSFA in Northeast China. The Preparatory Committee of a brand-new SSFA was set up shortly after Mao's "lean to one side" speech. The Committee involved a wide range of participants, including high-ranking officials of the CCP, prominent figures in China's democratic parties, and representatives from various pro-democracy organizations. Clearly, these steps were meant to declare to the world, particularly to the Soviet government, that the "lean to one side" policy was not simply rhetoric but a path of development that the CCP had chosen. It also signaled to the domestic public that any wavering in their friendship with the Soviet Union would not square with the new regime's outlook.

The inaugural convention of the SSFA General Committee took place immediately after the founding of the PRC and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the PRC and the USSR. Liu Shaoqi delivered a speech titled "Long Live

the Undying Friendship and Cooperation between the Chinese and Soviet People," setting the tone for the SSFA mission. He asserted that the purpose of the SSFA was to "improve and fortify the brotherly friendship and cooperation between the Chinese and Soviet people, and to facilitate exchange of wisdom and experience between the two nations."[23] The convention also invited visiting Soviet friends represented by the Soviet Cultural and Artistic Delegation. Alexander Fadeev, a Soviet writer whose 1927 guerrilla war novel *The Rout* had been acclaimed by Mao, made congratulatory remarks to applaud Sino-Soviet brotherhood on behalf of the Soviet cultural circles.[24]

The SSFA's prestige was reflected in the attendees at the inaugural convention and also in its eminent personnel – a demonstration of the significance that the Chinese government attached to Sino-Soviet friendship. At the Beijing headquarters, Liu Shaoqi (from the CCP) was elected director; Song Qingling, Wu Yuzhang, Li Jishen, Shen Junru, Zhang Lan, and Huang Yanpei (all from democratic parties) formed the board of deputy directors. Branch associations of major cities and provinces were headed by local party authorities. For instance, Peng Zhen, Mayor of Beijing, was appointed director of the Beijing Municipal SSFA. As its composition shows, the SSFA involved members of the CCP and democratic parties, thereby functioning as a united front of the CCP and other parties in China. But the leadership remained firmly in the hands of the CCP, meaning that the SSFA was by no means an "unofficial" organization of the masses as claimed. The SSFA General Committee was directly led by the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee, and all branches were directly supervised by local party committees. The strong party leadership of the SSFA ensured that only one version of friendship rhetoric could be passed down and circulated. Particularly when it came to important political events concerning Sino-Soviet relations, the CCP Central Committee would give the SSFA a standard text and specific directives as to when, where, and how to disseminate it.[25]

Initial resistance from society

It has become a cliché to quote former British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston's classic statement that "Nations have no permanent friends and no permanent enemies, only permanent interests" to account for a case of affinity or mutuality of purpose in international relations: in this case, Sino-Soviet relations. On the Soviet side, it was primarily for the sake of Soviet interests in the Far East that Moscow lent support to China, be it the restoration of diplomatic relations with the Beiyang warlord regime in 1932, the signing of the 1937 Pact with the Nationalist government, or its entry into the war with Japan in 1945. The alliance with the PRC was intended to expand Soviet influence and create a buffer zone against the US in Asia, further evidence of "Stalin's utilitarian approach toward China."[26] Unquestionably, China also sought its own national interests through Beijing's strategic friendship with Moscow. It certainly did more to promote the relationship, and in return gained various forms of help urgently needed for building socialism in the country. Although mistrust between top leaderships and disputes over territories

and international politics remained, the outward appearance of a brotherly alliance was basically a win-win situation for both nations.

Despite the significance that the PRC government attached to Sino-Soviet friendship, selling the pro-Soviet rhetoric at the grassroots level was no easy task. When Xiao Jun, a Communist writer popular in the 1930s, was assigned to promote understanding of Sino-Soviet friendship in Harbin, he encountered enormous difficulties.

> The audience raised questions about Soviet soldiers' violation of military disciplines such as robbing civilians and stealing machines, and they brought these up with evidence, which I cannot deny or justify. I did not want to cheat the masses by negating these facts. At the same time, however, I had to 'stand firm on my position' of protecting the 'prestige' of the USSR. I also had to explain the relationship between the CCP and the Soviet Union, in exchange for understanding and forgiveness from the masses, and eventually the removal of their animosity. I admit that this was not an easy or pleasant task, and oftentimes I had to face the risk of being kicked off the podium.[27]

Xiao Jun's recollection reveals the moral dilemmas that the CCP propaganda workers faced. On the one hand, they were aware of prevarications and falsehoods in the propaganda materials, but on the other, because of their political allegiance, they had to persuade the people that the Russians were *now* "our friends." Although Xiao Jun was speaking about the situation in the Northeast in 1946, the propaganda work did not show improvement until a few years into the 1950s. A significant portion of the population continued to resist the notion of a Soviet big brother, especially in the Northeast where it was impossible to refute people's first-hand experiences by simply giving a new talk.

One major source of popular opposition to the "lean to one side" policy was Chinese nationalism. China's shameful losses of territories to tsarist Russia, the imperialist conduct of Russians in China, and Soviet chauvinism all cast a negative shadow on the image of the Soviet Union and fueled widespread resentment of Russians.[28] Some people asked, "Why didn't the Soviet Union return Sakhalin and Vladivostok to us, if it is our friend?"[29] Others posed questions like: "Why does the Soviet Union give us loans? Why does it ask for interest? If it is our friend, why can't it just give us [money] for free?" People with such questions believed that the loans were economic aggression and the interest was exploitation.[30] Others wondered, "Why should we lean to one side? Why can't the Soviet Union lean to us? . . . Isn't it better to be self-reliant and not dependent on anyone?" These people concluded that the CCP turned to the Soviets for their patronage, just as the Nationalist Party had turned to the Americans.[31]

Clearly, such nationalistic criticism was directed at the Chinese government as well as at Soviet chauvinism and "red imperialism." It fed off popular mistrust of the CCP in the early days of Communist control, more explicitly shown in reactions to Mao's visit to Moscow on the occasion of Stalin's seventieth birthday. When Mao arrived in Moscow on December 16, 1949, Stalin did not greet him in

person at the train station. Quite a number of Chinese people with a keen nationalistic sense believed that the Soviet government was belittling China, for Stalin saw off the Japanese Foreign Minister at the train station in 1941.[32] Some people commented sarcastically: "Mao is there to bow and to be taught. Stalin is the host, the mentor, and therefore doesn't have to greet Mao." Some people thought Mao's visit to the Soviet Union "damaged China's international prestige" because "it gave the impression that China was like a servant-country being summoned to Moscow."[33]

In China, the convergence of anti-Soviet and anti-Communist sentiments was not a new phenomenon. During the 1946 anti-Soviet protests, when students protested against Soviet military occupation of China's Northeast and Soviet profits in China based on the Yalta Agreement, they also criticized the CCP for its involvement in the region. The charges were generated by the postwar situation in the Northeast, where Communist power was growing rapidly; Soviet military forces were blocking the Nationalist Party's takeover of the region, and the CCP was trying to improve relations with the Soviet Union. At that time, some of the population still regarded the Nationalist Government as the legitimate representative of Chinese sovereignty, and they felt that the CCP was a Soviet puppet.[34] Even though the protests "did not succeed in seriously discrediting the CCP and the Soviet Union,"[35] it was evident that a significant number of Chinese people confused the two and thought they were collaborating to control China.

Inadequate public knowledge of the Sino-Soviet alliance led to rumor-mongering regarding bilateral relations, which can be seen as the continuation of mixed anti-Soviet, anti-Communist sentiments. One of them, known as the castration rumor, was widespread in North China in 1950. Allegedly, the rumor was first spread by Daoist demagogues who claimed that "the Soviet Union has produced 300,000 rubber men which need human hearts, eyes, and genitals to help China wage war on Taiwan." Building on this, the rumor maintained that "the Chinese government wants to pay off the loans to the Soviet Union with human hearts, eyes, and genitals." Another version of the rumor asserted that "the Soviet Union will use the Chinese supply of male genitals to make atomic bombs." The rumor spread the message that undercover agents sent out by Mao would cut away human organs and that, when arrested, these people would be released without charges by the local police. Because of traditional Chinese veneration of the reproductive organs, the loss of genitalia especially alarmed the population, causing enormous panic among people in today's Beijing, Hebei, Tianjin, Inner Mongolia, and Shanxi. When these rumors held their peak power, it was said that at night every house was brightly lit, men stayed on watch, women clustered together, nobody dared to go out, and some people even had hallucinations.[36]

At the same time, a similar rumor broke out in Lanzhou, the capital of the northwestern province of Gansu. It claimed that "Mao has made a secret agreement with the Soviet Union to use 100,000 children in exchange for Soviet munitions." All of a sudden, the number of children attending school plummeted. Hundreds of citizens protested and some people used the occasion to spread anti-Communist slogans such as "Down with the People's Liberation Army!" and "Down with the CCP!"[37]

Although the rumors might have been produced and spread by American spies, remnants of the Nationalist Army, former landlords, local bandits, and secret societies – many in those categories were indeed arrested – no evidence of any organized attempt was found.[38] The origins of these rumors may typically remain unknown, but the fact that they went viral meant that they resonated with social concerns and tapped into public beliefs. In fact, these rumors arose at the very moment that building the Sino-Soviet alliance was the focal point of Chinese foreign policy. Mao had just spent two months in Moscow, which was completely unprecedented for a Chinese head of state in millennia of history, and he returned to announce a treaty to exchange Chinese resources for Soviet technical assistance and weapons. Distrust of Mao and the CCP, coupled with long years of war, privation, political instability, and insufficient media communication, provided fertile ground for the spread of rumors against Sino-Soviet friendship. What the virulence of these rumors hammers home is that Communist control was not yet fully established despite the creation of the regime. Even until 1954, similar stories were still heard in some areas. For example, one rumor about "hairy monsters" cutting human genitals for the government to send to the Soviet Union spread wildly in Shandong, Jiangsu, and Anhui provinces, suggesting the persistence of anti-Soviet, anti-Communist sentiments.[39]

Strategies of persuasion

In response to biases, doubts, and resistance from society, the CCP provided further explanations to uphold the Soviet Union, and levelled criticism at those with anti-Soviet attitudes. People who complained about "not so generous" Soviet aid were asked to reflect on their "narrow-minded nationalism" and "dependent tendencies," and were required to think about Sino-Soviet relations in international terms. Liu Shaoqi said: "Unity has two sides; we can't only talk about ourselves, our own interests, and selfish Chinese departmentalism – they are narrow-minded nationalism." He also pointed out: "In terms of spiritual matters, we can ask for free help; but for materialistic matters such as clothing, fabric, and food, we can't ask without paying, because these are products of labor. . . If we feed ourselves on Soviet people's work . . . that is exploitation."[40] Liu Shaoqi's justification of the Soviet Union may indeed have been the understanding of a true Communist with a highly developed international sense, but taken as a whole, it is more of a rhetorical strategy to coax the Chinese people into acquiescence, for it deliberately avoids talking about the self-serving calculations on the Soviet side. Nonetheless, the persuasion was compelling, as it effectively shifted the focus of attention from questioning what the Soviet Union did for China to asking how the Chinese should view the Soviet Union.

This shift points to the covert political pressure built into the promotion of Sino-Soviet friendship. Whether a person spoke highly of the Soviet Union and supported the alliance was made into an important criterion for judging whether they supported New China, welcomed socialism, and had an international consciousness.[41] By bringing Sino-Soviet friendship to a new level of political

importance and defining it in both international and national terms, friendship rhetoric neutralized opposing opinions. Because attitudes to the Soviet Union were divided into black and white categories, the public was pressurized to opt for the officially sanctioned side, even more so when the government set out to penalize anti-Soviet remarks.

Nothing could more concretely manifest a positive response to Sino-Soviet friendship than "voluntarily" joining the SSFA. Sincere or not, being an SSFA member was seen as a proof of one's revolutionary consciousness and correct understanding of the government's "lean to one side" policy, as well as a statement of one's support of socialist solidarity and world peace. The huge political cachet that SSFA membership gave to citizens greatly accelerated the organization's growth, which in turn facilitated popular acceptance of friendship rhetoric.

After the induction of the SSFA General Committee in 1949, lower-level organizations were quickly set up. Major regions, such as the Northeast, North, and Mid-South, had their own general branches; so did major cities and provinces, such as Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing, Harbin, Hebei, and Shaanxi.[42] In April 1951, membership passed 5 million; by the end of the year, it reached 17 million.[43] Membership doubled in the following two years. In July 1953, in an effort to galvanize the nation to learn from Soviet industrial experience, the SSFA initiated a nationwide recruitment plan which substituted group membership for individual membership. Those in the People's Liberation Army, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, and the All-China Women's Federation automatically became SSFA members.

Although SSFA membership was not mandatory for every citizen, the pressure to join was high. At a time when it was viewed as an honor to become a member defending Sino-Soviet friendship and world peace, being a non-member meant being a political bystander, which especially handicapped those working for the government. Since all it took to sign up was filling out a form (and later just an oral notification to the organization), not having membership could be interpreted as having applied and been turned down. It might also be taken as an indication of "historical problems" (*lishi wenti*) incongruous with Sino-Soviet friendship or unfriendly views against the Soviet Union, which could bar the person from political office.[44] For this reason, joining the SSFA became a symbolic gesture of renouncing old social ties and embracing the new society.

While peer pressure and political coercion served to influence people, the SSFA also offered material incentives to attract and retain members. The membership fee was kept reasonably low so as not to be a financial burden, and later it was waived altogether.[45] Moreover, with a membership badge or card, one could get discounts on certain merchandise, bus fares, movie tickets, and hotel stays.[46] These practical benefits closely related to day-to-day subsistence were extremely appealing. In just a couple of years, the SSFA grew into the largest mass organization in the country.

Under the auspices of the CCP and equipped with a well-orchestrated network that reached out to millions of members, the SSFA offered a broad spectrum of popular cultural activities designed to advance grassroots-level understanding

Figure 1.1 Shandong Provincial SSFA membership card. Printed on the cover are principles of the SSFA, the rights and responsibilities of members, and rules for using the card

of Sino-Soviet friendship, and through it the prospect of socialism in China. By interweaving friendship rhetoric with everyday life and endowing the everyday with international significance, these activities interfaced with public attitudes toward the Soviet Union and proved to be more effective than top-down political indoctrination. The major forms of cultural activity during this time did not differ considerably from those in CCP friendship propaganda in the Northeast before 1949,[47] but they were carried out on a far more extensive scale to embrace a wider array of Soviet cultural products. The following six categories of "friendship activity" demonstrate the extent to which friendship propaganda spread among the Chinese population. Some of them are discussed in detail in subsequent chapters.

First, the SSFA published a huge amount and variety of printed material aimed at familiarizing the public with the Soviet Union and propagating Sino-Soviet friendship, as already mentioned. More than 70 magazines sprang up in the first two years after the founding of the SSFA, including *Sino-Soviet Friendship* (*Zhong Su youhao*) by the General Committee, *Introduction to the Soviet Union* (*Sulian jieshao*) by the Northeastern Branch, and *Knowledge about the Soviet Union* (*Sulian zhishi*) by the Shanghai Branch.[48] In October 1952, *Sino-Soviet Friendship* was changed into a newspaper that functioned as the mouthpiece of the SSFA General Committee. Its readability and abundant illustrations helped to boost its circulation. Authorized to publish outside China, the newspaper gained a status equal to state organs such as *People's Daily* and *China Youth Daily*.[49] By 1959, the SSFA had distributed over 1,820 titles of pamphlets and pictorials, distributing more than 46,566,000 copies.[50] A sizable proportion of the printed materials were translated from Soviet propaganda acclaiming the achievements under socialism and Stalin's leadership. Most of the publications were written in simple Chinese suitable for workers and peasants with low literacy levels. In addition to pure publicity material, Soviet literature continued to enjoy substantial governmental patronage. Translated Soviet literary works flooded the Chinese book market, with many of them high on best-seller lists.

The second category of friendship activity spread knowledge of the Soviet Union through public exhibitions. The SSFA gathered visual material from Soviet sources and turned them into exhibitions on various themes or to celebrate special occasions. For instance, on Stalin's seventieth birthday pictures and posters of Stalin were put up in several cities to celebrate the "great leader of world people."[51] A quick glance at the titles of the exhibitions gives an idea of the wide range of themes involved: "Soviet Construction Projects," "State-owned Farms and Collective Farms," "Moscow Scenery," "Babies and Mothers," etc. In addition to formal events, visuals showcasing Soviet life and social progress were regularly displayed in windows and galleries in parks, schools, libraries, factories, and other public places of mass gathering. More importantly, a number of major cities built their own Sino-Soviet friendship buildings with space designated for exhibitions, where various exhibitions featuring Soviet culture and industrial experience were hosted. These buildings, constructed in Soviet style, came to have a powerful impact on Chinese architecture and urban topography.

The third and one especially successful friendship activity was the screenings of Soviet films. In the campaign to eradicate "feudal" and "bourgeois" cultural influences at the beginning of the PRC, a large number of Soviet films were imported to replace old China's "reactionary" films and Euro-American movies. Loaded with socialist ideals, Soviet films presented the desirable lifestyle that socialism enabled, while at the same time demonstrating the key qualities socialist citizens were expected to possess. The films were thus used to help Chinese citizens see the advantages of the socialism that their country was building, and even more, to motivate them to serve in the new social order. As a result, the Chinese government attached great importance to showing Soviet films. Combining education with entertainment, these films offered the SSFA, as well as the Chinese

propaganda machine, a powerful tool for reaching a population of low literacy. As a result, they whipped up enormous interest in city and countryside alike. "Soviet film weeks," "Soviet film months," and "Soviet film festivals" were common methods of promotion. Until the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, about 750 Soviet films were shown to millions, accounting for nearly half of all films during this time period.[52]

The fourth major activity involved Russian-language training. The SSFA expansion and the development of Sino-Soviet exchange increased the demand for Russian speakers and translators. The SSFA collaborated with local education departments and organizations to provide Russian language training programs via night schools, continuing education, and informal classes. Long distance learning on the radio and by correspondence was also made available. Russian dictionaries and grammar books were in high demand. It quickly became all the rage to mix a few Russian words into daily conversation.

Fifth, to increase direct interaction with participants, the SSFA organized countless lectures, seminars, discussions, and study groups on the Soviet Union. The most popular among them were the debriefings of delegations which had visited the Soviet Union. The SSFA was responsible for arranging exchange visits between the two countries. Delegations often included state-level performance groups, film personnel, writers and technicians, and also selected workers and peasants.[53] Returning home, they were summoned to give reports to their colleagues or to the general public. The speakers' personal experiences in the Soviet Union attested to the credibility of the information in print, thus significantly deepening the listeners' understanding of the Soviet Union and bringing them closer to the Soviet big brother.

The sixth avenue for promoting Sino-Soviet friendship was commemorative celebrations of landmark events in Soviet history. Each year festive activities were organized on the anniversaries of the signing of the 1950 Friendship Treaty (February 14th), the founding of the Soviet Army (February 23), Lenin's birthday (April 22), the October Revolution (November 7th), Stalin's birthday (December 21), etc. Party leaders and top government officials would attend these ceremonies and make speeches to reassert the significance of the alliance, the "selfless" assistance from the "big brother," and the importance of learning from Soviet experience for China's socialist construction. Newspapers would publish Chinese leaders' congratulatory telegrams to their Soviet counterparts. On a regular basis, the SSFA organizations would host a "Sino-Soviet friendship month" each year to maintain public enthusiasm. For example, in celebration of the 35th anniversary of the October Revolution, a "friendship month" celebration swept the country in 1952. This began with an opening ceremony in Zhongnanhai attended by Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, and other top officials, along with representatives of Soviet experts in China and envoys from other countries. The cordial tone of the gathering was enhanced with performances by the famed Red Army Red Banner Song and Dance Ensemble of the USSR then touring China.[54] At the same time, exhibits, talks, lectures, film festivals, dance parties, and other activities of varied scope were carried out in other cities.[55]

These cultural activities were designed to immerse participants in experiences that allowed them to see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears the "wonderful realities" in Soviet society. To make friendship rhetoric more understandable and appealing to Chinese audiences, the SSFA also employed traditional cultural forms and mass activities. *Nianhua* (New Year prints), for instance, were extremely useful in reaching illiterate communities. As a must-have item of interior decoration in the 1950s, friendship-themed *nianhua* brought thousands of households face to face with the objective of world peace and international solidarity. Similarly, *yangge* (a popular rural folk dance in North China), *er-ren zhuan* (a song-and-dance duet popular in the Northeast), and *xiangsheng* (a traditional comic performance in the form of dialogue) were used to tell stories about the Soviet big brother in vernaculars familiar to local people.[56] The actors usually came from members of local SSFA units that were often loosely structured to give flexibility to mass participation. Performed on the street or at mass gatherings and often drawing huge crowds of spectators, these entertainments effectively plugged the CCP's internationalist rhetoric into everyday Chinese life. In the process, the audience was invited to think about their roles in the struggle for Chinese socialism and to recognize the importance of Sino-Soviet friendship for reaching that goal.

Removing American cultural influence

As the government's proxy, the SSFA used every means of mass communication to ensure maximum participation. The SSFA's successful mobilization of available resources and effective performance of its duties demonstrated the new regime's competence in exercising power, which would be sharpened in subsequent political campaigns. It also revealed a profound Cold War anxiety to make "friends." To make the friendship robust, however, required that the PRC engage with its allies against Cold War "enemies." Pro-Soviet propaganda thus went hand in hand with the campaign to oppose the United States. The obverse side of the glorification of the Soviet Union was the CCP's relentless denunciation of America.

If some Chinese still clung to hopes of a possible Chinese rapport with the US, the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 compelled them to abandon that idea. America became China's major adversary. To get this through to people, Chinese propaganda started to blacken Americans in every possible way. Denigrating portraits of US soldiers in wartime posters stoked anti-American feelings.[57] In rhetoric, inflammatory condemnation of US imperialism sowed more hatred, disdain, and contempt for the American government and culture. In fact, the three words "hatred, disdain, and contempt" (*choushi, bishi, mieshi*) became a new phrase frequently appearing in printed materials of the time, pushing aside the older attitude of "inclining toward America, admiring America, or fearing America" (*qinMei, chongMei, KongMei*).[58] A dictionary of neologisms published in 1952 dubbed the phrase as the "the understanding and attitude that every Chinese must have toward US imperialism."[59]

In this context, America served as a well-timed and convenient foil to the Soviet Union. The SSFA became one of the key organizations in the nationwide campaign

to oppose American aggression, and it seized this opportunity to promulgate the Soviet "peaceful" foreign policy, Soviet achievements in peaceful development, and the "genuine," "selfless" Soviet support to China.[60] By upholding Sino-Soviet friendship as the weapon for resisting the US, the propaganda called for popular determination to defeat American imperialism, in the process boosting public confidence in the prospects of victory.

When the Korean War started, Washington ordered a freeze on Chinese assets in the US and imposed an embargo on the PRC. Beijing responded immediately with economic sanctions against American assets in China.[61] The effort to remove American economic influence was extended to the cultural and social realms, as the government took this opportunity to cut off American financial subsidies to Chinese religious, educational, and medical institutions.[62] But this was just the prelude to a thorough-going campaign to eradicate American cultural and intellectual influences, and at the same time establishing Soviet cultural and intellectual authority.

An important example of the ascendancy of Soviet authority can be found in the comprehensive reform of Chinese education in the early 1950s. In the making of New China, restructuring the education system was a priority, for a new type of education would produce a new generation of "red talents" to serve the party-state. Emulating the Soviet Union, the Chinese education reform aimed at replacing existing American education concepts with the Soviet ones. Soviet teaching methodologies were esteemed as "the highest stage in the development of pedagogy," "the truly scientific Marxist pedagogy," and "the most comprehensive, systematic, and revolutionary science."[63] It was claimed that "the Soviet Union has used Marxist-Leninist views and methods combined with thirty years' experience in socialist construction to criticize, absorb, and develop the most advanced achievements in world science."[64] An upsurge in the translations of Soviet pedagogical books followed. Between 1949 and 1954, about 300 titles were translated into Chinese, covering a wide range of topics from child psychology to political education for adults, from methods of teaching vocabulary to specific instructions in physical training.[65] The most widely used and discussed was *Pedagogy* by Ivan A. Kairov (1893–1978), a Soviet educator prominent in public education whose emphasis on a Communist upbringing and a state-defined curriculum dovetailed with the CCP's desire to breed loyal red talents. The book was the most influential pedagogical textbook in Soviet higher education at the time, and many Soviet professors working in China used it in their teaching. As the principal reference book for students and teachers at teachers' training institutions, *Pedagogy* was believed to hold the solution to every teaching problem.[66]

In tandem with the promotion of Soviet pedagogy, the Chinese education authorities attacked John Dewey, the American philosopher and educationist whose pragmatic education theory and child-centered approach were influential in shaping pre-PRC school education. Cao Fu, a Chinese educator who received his doctoral degree in education in America, published *Introduction to Dewey Criticism* in 1950 based on his doctoral dissertation about Dewey. The book focuses on general flaws and deficiencies in American life and education, but the

centerpiece is Cao Fu's criticism of Dewey's philosophy of education. It asserts that any criticism of the old education creed should begin with discrediting Dewey and the basis of his pedagogical doctrine – the philosophy of pragmatism. Cao Fu claims that Dewey's teaching methods place a lopsided emphasis on activities and children's natural interests but fail to give due attention to teachers' guidance or the necessity of imparting knowledge in a systematic way.[67] Cao Fu's book marked the first comprehensive criticism of Dewey among Chinese intelligentsia, a prelude to a nationwide campaign in academia to replace bourgeois educational philosophy with Marxist educational theory.[68]

Around this time, Cao Fu also published a series of articles setting out further indictments of pragmatism in education and the American school system. As Chair of the Education Department at East China Normal University, he gave a series of public lectures to elementary school teachers in Shanghai in 1952. Also broadcast on the radio, these lectures focused on Soviet socialist education theory and practice, particularly Kairov's ideas. The follow-up publication of his lecture notes under the title of *Popular Lectures on Pedagogy* (*Jiaoyuxue tongsu jiangzuo*), relating Soviet theory to the circumstances of Chinese education, became a practical guide for Chinese teachers in the mid-1950s.[69]

Along with Dewey, Chinese educators influenced by him also came under attack. Between 1951 and 1953, criticism was leveled against leading figures in the pre-1949 education circle and their theories, including Chen Heqin and Tao Xingzhi. A student of Dewey, Chen Heqin had a master's degree in education from Columbia University in 1919. As dean of the teachers' college at Nanjing University after 1949, he actively participated in the political movements of the time, trying to prove his allegiance to the new government. When the Korean War broke out, he made speeches at public gatherings, declaring that "American imperialism had no other intention than to enslave Chinese children when running schools in China."[70] But this did not shield Chen Heqin from political strife in the years that followed. Accused of being the first "living example of Dewey's poisonous influence on Chinese educators," he was heavily denounced after 1951. Charges escalated against his "live education," an important part of the campaign to root out Dewey's influence. A major education journal, *People's Education* (*Renmin jiaoyu*), led the onslaught. Chen Heqin was forced to undertake self-criticism and publish his reflections in newspapers.

The main target of the criticism, however, was the late Tao Xingzhi, perhaps the most influential figure in Chinese education. A student of Dewey in the 1910s, Tao Xingzhi developed his mentor's philosophy of education into three basic principles: "life is education," "society is school," "teaching and learning must be combined." These concepts were widely recognized in the Communist-controlled areas during the 30s and 40s. After his death in 1946, Tao Xingzhi was acclaimed by the CCP as a great educator of the people, "a Bolshevik outside the Party who unreservedly followed the Party," and his creed was identified as the "new democratic education theory."[71] Mao's criticism of the film *The Life Story of Wu Xun* (*Wu Xun zhuan*) in 1951, though, stood the CCP attitude to Tao Xingzhi on its head.

The link between criticizing the film and criticizing Tao Xingzhi was apparent. The film portrayed a late Qing dynasty figure named Wu Xun, who set up free schools for commoners' children after years of collecting money as a beggar. Admiring Wu Xun, Tao Xingzhi had devoted his life to the mass education movement, thus gaining the reputation as "the Wu Xun of modern China." In 1944, Tao Xingzhi entrusted Sun Yu, a leftist film director, with the project of adapting Wu Xun's story into a film, hoping that the film would popularize the Wu Xun spirit and the idea of mass education. After a struggle to give the subject matter a "politically proper" fit for the new era, Sun Yu completed the film in late 1950. Despite initial positive reception, the film was doomed after Mao asserted that it promoted bourgeois reform. Party organs published a series of articles denouncing the film and Tao Xingzhi.[72] Tao Xingzhi was labeled a "bourgeois reformist," and his theory a copy of Dewey's pragmatism.

The criticism of Dewey, Tao Xingzhi, and Chen Heqin was meant to put the party firmly in control of educational reform by consigning pre-PRC educational paradigms to the trash bin, particularly those under American influence. It also served as a stern warning to all Western-trained intellectuals that they should abandon their pro-American stance and renounce their connections to Euro-American academia. More importantly, it facilitated the idea that the Soviet Union was the only correct and permissible source of foreign influence.

Transforming the entire Chinese educational system from its pre-revolutionary form to the Soviet model was a complex task. In addition to sending students to the Soviet Union, the Chinese government invited Soviet specialists to China to help build the new education system. Even before the founding of the PRC, the Chinese leadership had asked the Soviet government to send experts to assist in China's reconstruction.[73] Between 1949 and 1960, at least 20,000 Soviet experts worked in China. While most of them worked as consultants in key areas such as heavy industries and nuclear technology, some served as faculty members at Chinese universities.[74] Under Soviet supervision, China implemented the Soviet school system wherever education was available. From elementary school to college, Chinese schools duplicated Soviet curricula, teaching materials, and sometimes even their daily schedules.

An important area of this education restructuring was the reform of colleges and universities. Similar departments from several comprehensive universities were combined to develop a new university specializing in one area of study such as engineering, agriculture, Russian language, and teacher training. This pattern mirrored the configuration of Soviet institutes of higher learning, where specialization rather than comprehensiveness was emphasized. Before the reform there were 221 universities and colleges in China, most of them patterned on American and European institutions. Among them were 49 comprehensive universities. When the reform was completed in 1953, the number of universities had dropped to 182, with most of the casualties being previous comprehensive universities. All private and missionary universities were reorganized or absorbed into new institutions.[75] These changes testified to the government's desire for immediate economic and industrial development. Although the restructuring did meet the short-term need

for specialists to build the country, it caused as many problems as it solved in the long run.[76] During the widest-reaching education reform in Chinese history, the endeavor to adopt the Soviet education system cast long shadows, some of which are still keeping light from areas of tertiary education today.[77]

The most radical step in this process was the establishment of Renmin University in 1950. This institution was built on the principle of "connecting teaching with practice, combining Soviet experience and Chinese circumstances."[78] Soviet professors were extensively involved in developing the university's curriculum.[79] Between 1950 and 1957, the university produced more than 100 textbooks written either by the Soviet advisers or under their supervision.[80] A similar case was the reorganization of Harbin Institute of Technology (HIT), a university historically with many Russian-speaking teachers. It was chosen to be an experimental university along Soviet lines because of the national priority of developing capable professionals in heavy industry.[81] In 1950, the Department of Education proposed an outline for modifying HIT's academic programs by copying Soviet polytechnic institutes. Soviet experts were invited to teach on campus, several majors were added, and Soviet teaching materials were borrowed. Together, Renmin University and HIT served as models for reforming Chinese institutions of higher education. Every year, they hosted seminars led by Soviet professors for Chinese teaching staff from all over the country. As a result, many universities were reconfigured according to the pattern at these two universities.

Changing attitudes

With the SSFA's thorough and dedicated work, China presented itself as a loyal ally and faithful supporter of Soviet leadership in the Communist world. The relationship between Beijing and Moscow improved dramatically, bringing the two countries to a professed "unbreakable brotherhood." The achievements of Chinese propaganda were confirmed by Soviet ambassador to China Aleksandr Paniushkin, who stated in 1952 that "the SSFA plays an immensely important role in broadening and reinforcing the friendship and the noble cause of cultural exchange between the people of the two countries."[82] These directly strengthened bilateral relations, resulting in greater Soviet input into China's burgeoning socialist construction.[83]

In both Paniushkin's remark and CCP foreign policy, the term "friendship" refers to a diplomatic, strategic partnership between two countries at the state level. Personal relations between Chinese and Soviets remained as distant as geographical ones, even though stories of friendly interactions often appeared in newspaper headlines and a few dozen interracial romances occurred.[84] The Chinese respected Soviet advisers and treated them well wherever they were assigned in China.[85] Delegations from the Soviet Union always found an appreciative Chinese audience that showered them with cheers and gifts. Many Chinese maintained correspondence with Soviet pen-pals until such contact was suppressed in the 1960s. But none of these amounted to sustained personal relationships. For those who had the opportunity to cross borders on a tour, what they saw and heard rarely

went beyond what was officially permissible; coming back to their home countries, they could only tell the public what was officially approved. The Chinese and Soviet governments exercised equal vigilance in arranging and overseeing the visits of experts and students as well as the exchange of letters.[86] All forms of personal communication between Chinese and Soviet citizens had to be officially sanctioned and were subject to censorship. Visiting Soviet experts in China lived in separate quarters, and their contact with Chinese rarely went beyond a small circle of co-workers and interpreters.[87] The isolation of Soviet advisers is often taken as evidence of "Soviet chauvinism."[88] There might have been some truth in the claim, but the fact was that both governments preferred to keep Soviet and Chinese people apart. According to the Chinese government's rules for interaction with foreigners, "Chinese people are only permitted to form friendly relations with foreigners in the interests of the specific political and economic goals of the state."[89] The government also curtailed opportunities for romance and marriage by Chinese students in the Soviet Union. Intimate relations with Soviet citizens were discouraged and often completely forbidden.[90]

For the particular type of "friendship" that the rhetoric propagated, the CCP expected public acceptance of its "lean to one side" policy and its vision of international socialism. Obviously, if the Chinese accepted the Soviet Union, they would accept CCP leadership in building socialism in China. The ultimate objective was to enlist public recognition of the Party's leadership and to mobilize the people for socialist construction. Sino-Soviet friendship rhetoric would thus allow the CCP to achieve both international and domestic goals, confirming the self-serving nature of the friendship strategy.

The result on the mass level largely met the expectations from the top, but it did not happen overnight. As this chapter shows, Chinese people did not easily swallow the government's claim that the USSR was a trustworthy "friend," nor did they unanimously subscribe to official reinterpretations of bilateral relations in the past and present. However, with the CCP's control of information and a powerful propaganda network that permeated everyday life, popular understanding of the Soviet Union either increased or changed. When the "lean to one side" policy was instituted, many people in remote areas did not even know whether *Sulian*, the Chinese translation for the USSR, was a country or a person. But in just a few years, they had acquired a basic understanding of this country and its relationship with China. In particular, Stalin became a household name.[91] Popular reverence for Stalin during this time reached such a level that, when Stalin died in 1953, many felt that they were "orphaned" and that "the sky was falling down."[92] In urban areas, where the literacy rate was higher and the rhetoric penetrated deeper, the effects of propaganda were obvious. The SSFA's meticulously designed cultural activities imbued urban life with an enthusiasm for Soviet leaders and celebrities, as well as with the culture and values that Soviet socialism had to offer. In the absence of direct, close personal relations, Chinese "friendship" with the Soviets was manifested in other forms such as acceptance of the "Soviet big brother," eagerness to follow the Soviet path, identification with Soviet culture, and dreams of living Soviet lifestyles. When Sino-Soviet friendship was at

its peak in the mid-1950s, people sang the praises of the Soviet Union, responding enthusiastically to friendship propaganda and the grand scheme of transforming China on the Soviet model.

Yet, dissenting voices never ceased. To take education reform as an example, not all Chinese educators agreed with the idea of transplanting Soviet education into Chinese soil. Many people had reservations about the suitability of the Soviet school system for China and warned against adopting it uncritically. At times, Chinese teachers and professors even challenged Soviet advisers during lectures and talks.[93] In a more constructive manner, a number of esteemed educators advocated blending Soviet experience with the particular conditions in China. For instance, Jiang Nanxiang, president of Tsinghua University from 1952 to 1966, told the faculty and students of Tsinghua many times that "we should not simply install the formal structures of Soviet universities, but rather, we need to think and use our own brains."[94] While advocating that learning from advanced Soviet experience was the main direction, Jiang Nanxiang did not believe that China's education reform should stop there. He recommended absorbing useful information from other democracies as well, even in capitalist countries. Similarly, Cao Fu cautioned against radicalism and conservatism in the education reform. Despite his harsh criticism of Dewey, Cao Fu maintained that the positive contributions of Dewey's philosophy should be recognized. Despite his advocacy of Soviet experience, he did not follow the Russian way blindly but successfully indigenized Soviet pedagogy for Chinese education. Unfortunately, both Jiang Nanxiang and Cao Fu were criticized during the Cultural Revolution for their educational concepts and practices. One major criticism was that their attitudes toward copying Soviet education were not "unreserved."

Slavishly quoting Soviet authorities and copying Soviet experience was a serious problem in the education reform of the early 1950s. Many Chinese teachers and professors did not really comprehend Kairov's pedagogy but felt compelled to cite him. One village school inspector who had given numerous lectures on the Soviet educator admitted: "We had to study Krirov, but I never understood any of it. The inspectors who came from the county did not understand it either, but they quoted him all the time, and so did I when I gave lectures to the teachers."[95]

Another typical example was the case of duplicating Soviet school daily schedules. Many universities adopted the "six periods in a row" schedule (*liujie yiguan zhi*) used at Soviet universities, squeezing all six periods of classes into a long morning from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. and leaving the afternoon for political study and extracurricular activities.[96] This schedule was designed to make optimal use of daytime in the long, cold winters, but Chinese schools generally operated in a different climate. For students in particular it was disastrous, because their meager breakfast could not sustain them through the long morning – the average living standard was still rather low. By the end of the fourth period, student stomachs were already rumbling, which seriously affected their concentration and effectiveness during the last two periods. Chen Wangdao, translator of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1920 and President of Fudan University from 1952 to 1966, pointed out the flaws in this practice: "Lunchtime in China and the Soviet Union is different, and the physical

conditions of Chinese and Soviet students are different too. How can we mimic another country's experience without considering such facts?. . . When we learn from Soviet experience, should we blindly copy it regardless of national characteristics, or should we adopt a realist attitude and [make choices] according to the actual circumstances?"[97] Echoing Chen Wangdao, Jiang Nanxiang made similar comments on Tsinghua's adoption of the schedule. Amid complaints and criticism, the "six periods in a row" schedule was terminated in 1954.

Formalism and doctrinarism were not problems unique to the education reform; they frequently appeared in the process of carrying out the principle of "friendship" and learning from the Soviet Union. Although some issues were corrected in time, the majority remained unaddressed. Under the influence of powerful propaganda and political pressure, many people developed a blind faith in the Soviet Union and regarded everything from the Soviet Union as the best of its kind. In medicine, some doctors labeled traditional Chinese medicine feudalistic and Western medicine capitalistic. To them, only the Russian physiologist Pavlov's theory should be recognized as socialist medicine.[98] In agriculture, Michurin's theory of pomology and selection attained canonical status among Chinese botanists and agronomists. Based on a contrast between the Michurinist biology and the "fruitless," "capitalistic" Weismanist-Morganist-Mendelist genetics, some people even claimed that human efforts would produce desired variations according to the needs of socialism.[99] There was a long list of similar examples.

The strong impulse to blindly copy the Soviet model arose out of the powerful CCP friendship propaganda combined with political and social pressures. With the first wave of educational reform being the restructuring of Chinese universities on the Soviet pattern, it was not surprising that the Soviet model was followed in other fields. From government organization to army building, from economic structures to cultural apparatus, China was reconfiguring itself according to the Soviet blueprint. Public opinions of the Soviet Union were also changing rapidly. Despite scattered suspicion and challenge, opposing voices rapidly subsided in public.

Perhaps nothing encapsulates the Chinese attitude to the Soviet Union better than the way China took on the Russian language. The craze for Russian and neglect of English in the early PRC clearly marked Chinese preferences on the mass level. Just as English is the language of choice for study in China today, back in the 1950s, Russian was the foreign language that people from all walks of life wanted to learn, illustrating the effectiveness of friendship rhetoric in changing popular views of the Soviet Union. By turning to the spread of Russian language programs in China and the reform of the Chinese language with Soviet guidance, the following chapter will delve deeper into the hopes and enthusiasm, as well as tensions and uneasiness, in the Soviet-Chinese encounter.

Notes

1 For long-standing hatred of Russians among Chinese residents in Northeast China, see Yu, "Learning from the Soviet Union." For a detailed analysis of Chinese mistrust of the Soviet Union, see Pan, "ZhongSu youhao xiehui de yuanqi," 21–27.

2 Heinzig, *The Soviet Union and Communist China*, 82.
3 Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China*, 240–276, 370; Jiang, "1946 nian fan-Su yudong pingshu," 65–72.
4 Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 7. As Brady points out, the Chinese diplomats built their political understanding of "friendship" upon the political meaning of *druzhba*, the Russian word for "friendship" in the Soviet foreign affairs terminology. Nonetheless, the Chinese "friendship strategy" was not simply a direct copy of Soviet approaches to international relations. Combined with a Confucian tradition that valued "faithfulness" of friendship (without being burdened by it at the same time) and a more devoted effort to propaganda, the PRC carried Soviet foreign affairs model to the fullest (or the most successful) extent.
5 For a comprehensive coverage of the Sino-Soviet friendship rhetoric and activities, see Li Qiaoning, *Xin Zhongguo de ZhongSu youhao huayu goujian*.
6 See, for example, Lianhe she bianjibu, *ZhongSu youhao guanxi xuexi ziliao*, 21–33; Zhanwang zhoukan ed., *ZhongSu youhao guanxi xuexi shouce* (March 1950): 83–101. This kind of view remains even among books published in the mid-1950s, e.g. Peng Ming, *ZhongSu renmin youyi jianshi*, 3–5.
7 Liu, Shaoqi, "ZhongSu youhao xiehui chengli dahui shang Liu Shaoqi huizhang baogao quanwen," [Liu Shaoqi's report on the inaugural convention of the SSFA,] *Renmin ribao*, October 8, 1949.
8 Lianhe she bianjibu, *ZhongSu youhao guanxi xuexi ziliao*, 86–88.
9 Hu Hua, *Sulian shi zenyang de yige guojia*, 39.
10 "ZhongSu youxie zonghui chengli dahui gei Mao zhuxi de zhijing dian," [A telegraph from the inaugural convention of the Sino-Soviet friendship general association to Chairman Mao,] *Renmin ribao*, October 5, 1949.
11 Lianhe she bianjibu, *ZhongSu youhao guanxi xuexi ziliao*, 63–69.
12 These views permeate a number of articles in *ZhongSu youhao* [Sino-Soviet friendship] published between 1949 and 1951 by ZhongSu youhao xiehui zonghui and *Shishi shouce* [Handbook of current affairs] published between 1950 and 1952 by Beijing shishi she.
13 Hubei shengwei xuanchuanbu, *ZhongSu youhao wenxian*, 120–122.
14 Mao Zedong, *Lun renmin minzhu zhuanzheng*, 10.
15 Hu Qiaomu, "ZhongSu youhao wansui," [Long live Sino-Soviet friendship,] *Renmin ribao*, October 6, 1949.
16 "Zhongyang xuanchuanbu guanyu xuanchuan ZhongSu xinyue jige wenti de zhishi," 22–23.
17 For information on the history of the Chinese Eastern Railway, see Hess, "From Colonial Jewel to Socialist Metropolis," 17–23. For more information on the 1950 treaty, especially the tricky issues mentioned in the text, see Shen Zhihua, "1950 nian ZhongSu tiaoyue de qianding," 61–73; Shen Zhihua, "ZhongSu tongmeng tiaoyue houqi tanpan de qingkuang ji jieguo," 11–30.
18 See, for example, Guan, *ZhongSu youhao tongmeng wansui*; Ha'erbin shi ZhongSu youhao xiehui, *ZhongSu youhao hezuo de xin shidai*.
19 Liu Shaoqi, "Zhongsu liangguo renmin yongyuan buxiu de youyi yu hezuo wansui," [Long live the undying friendship and cooperation between the Chinese and Soviet people,] in "ZhongSu youhao xiehui chengli dahui shang Liu Shaoqi huizhang baogao quanwen," [Liu Shaoqi's report on the inaugural convention of the SSFA,] *Renmin ribao*, October 8, 1949.
20 For an overview of the SSFA, see Priestley, "The Sino-Soviet Friendship Association"; Yu, "Learning from the Soviet Union." For a more detailed account of the SSFA organizations, see Pan, "ZhongSu youhao xiehui de yuanqi"; Kong, "Xin Zhongguo yu Sulian guanxi"; Zhang, "ZhongSu youhao xiehui de zuzhi jiegou jiqi bianqian."
21 For an account of the SSCA, see Wang Jinhui, "ZhongSu wenhua xiehui yanjiu."

22 Hess, "Big Brother Is Watching," 178–183.
23 Liu Shaoqi, "ZhongSu youhao xiehui chengli dahui shang Liu Shaoqi huizhang baogao quanwen."
24 "Fajieyefu yanshuo ci," [Fadeev's speech,] *Renmin ribao*, October 6, 1949.
25 See, for example, "ZhongSu youhao xiehui zonghui fabiao ZhongSu youhao yue xuanchuan yaodian," [The SSFA General Committee publicizes the main points of propaganda work during the Sino-Soviet friendship month] issued by ZhongSu youhao xiehui zonghui, October 28, 1952, reprinted by Ganzhou zhuanqu ZhongSu youhao xiehui gongzuo weiyuanhui.
26 Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens*, 207.
27 Zhang, *Xiao Jun zhuan*, 253.
28 For Chinese nationalism against Russians (and other foreigners), see Carter, *Creating a Chinese Harbin*.
29 "Shiyi yue jiaoqu qunzhong sixiang dongtai baogao," [Reports on rural people's opinions in November,] December 3, 1952, Shanghai Municipal Archives, A71–2–895. The territory on which Sakhalin and modern Vladivostok are located had been part of various Chinese dynasties before Russia acquired them by the Treaty of Beijing (1860) signed with China's Qing government.
30 "Shanghai shi gaodeng xuexiao guanyu kaizhan ZhongSu youhao yue huodong de zongjie baogao," [Reports on the Sino-Soviet friendship month among Shanghai institutes of higher learning,] November 21, 1952, Shanghai Municipal Archives, C21-2-310.
31 "Guanyu Huabei gedi dui ZhongSu youhao xuanchuan de fanying," [On responses to Sino-Soviet friendship propaganda in the Northeast,] March 31, 1951, Beijing Haidian District Archives.
32 After the Soviet–Japanese Neutrality Pact was signed on April 13, 1941, Stalin saw off Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke at the train station, which showed the importance he attached to the pact and also sent a signal to Germany.
33 See the CCP Central News Agency's bulletin "Xia'ai minzu zhuyi sixiang de biaoxian," [Manifestations of narrow-minded nationalism] published on January 1, 1951, cited from Yang Kuisong, "ZhongSu guojia liyi yu minzu qinggan de zuichu pengzhuang, 107–109.
34 Jiang Pei, "1946 nian fanSu yundong pingshu," 70.
35 Yick, "Anti-American, Anti-Government Demonstrations," 5.
36 Li Ruojian, "1950 nian huabei diqu"; Li Ruojian, *Xushi zhijian*, 77–108.
37 Li Ruojian, "1950 nian huabei diqu," 83.
38 Ibid., 83. For American involvement in the spread of rumors, see "Sugong zhongyang qingbao ju guanyu Zhongguo," 131–135.
39 For more information, see Zhang and Wu, "Jiefang chuqi fasheng zai Wuwei xian," 165–168; Li Ruojian, *Xushi zhijian*, 13–76.
40 Liu Shaoqi, "Liu Shaoqi jianghua xuanbian," 6.
41 Qian, "Guoji zhuyi de zhuyao biaozhi," 95–105.
42 "ZhongSu youhao huodong jianxun," 1949, 18.
43 "ZhongSu youhao huodong jianxun," 1951, 30.
44 See Wang Zhichen, *Bisheng xinxu qingzhu Dagong bao*, 55–57. From 1935 to 1953, Wang Yunsheng was the chief editor of *Dagong bao* (also spelled as "Ta Kung Pao"), the oldest Chinese language newspaper in China. For his "middle-road" political stance between the US and the Soviet Union before 1949, Wang was initially denied the SSFA membership. After persistent requests, he was admitted.
45 "Tuanshiwei guanyu zhibu gongzuo jingyan jieshao he xuanchuan jiaoyu ZhongSu youhao deng gongzuo de tongzhi," [Notices by the Municipal Youth League on introducing the work experience of branches and propagating Sino-Soviet friendship,] April 29, 1953, 100-001-00114, Beijing Municipal Archives.

46 Interview with a former SSFA member, Shijiazhuang, June 8, 2008.
47 Hess, "Big Brother Is Watching," 178–183.
48 "Gedi ZhongSu youhao xiehui chubanwu yilan," 32.
49 Zhang, "ZhongSu youhao bao: ZhongSu youhao de jianzheng."
50 Kong, "Xin Zhongguo yu Sulian guanxi," 43.
51 See reports on celebration activities in *Renmin ribao*, December 21, 1949.
52 Liu Dishan, "Fengmian zhong de zhengzhi," 79–83; Lü Xiaoming, "Dui 'shiqi nian' Shanghai yizhipian," 278–88.
53 A number of articles were published by celebrities who visited the Soviet Union, such as Ding Ling, Wu Han, Sha Kefu, Ding Xilin, Zhao Shuli, Ma Sicong, Bai Yang, and Xu Guangpin. Their writings were compiled in a column called "FangSu yinxiang," [Impressions of the Soviet Union] in *ZhongSu youhao*, 1950.
54 "Shoudu gejie zuowan juxing shenghui, qingzhu shiyue shehui zhuyi geming 35 zhounian, Mao zhuxi lihui, Su wenhua gongzuozhe daibiaotuan deng yingyao chuxi," [Celebrations held in the capital for the 35th anniversary of the October Revolution; Chairman Mao attended; Soviet cultural delegation was invited,] *Renmin ribao*, November 7, 1952.
55 "Tianjin Shenyang Shanghai Lasa gedi renmin relie canjia ZhongSu youhao yue huodong," [People of Tianjin, Shenyang, Shanghai, and Lhasa enthusiastically participate in the Sino-Soviet friendship month activities,] *Guangming ribao*, November 11, 1952.
56 A number of books were published to instruct cultural workers in this regard. See, for example, Shanghai shi qingnian wengong tuan, *Qingnian wenhua gong*.
57 For officially approved portrayals of American imperialists during this time, see Julian Chang, "Propaganda and Perceptions," 190.
58 "Guanyu zai quanguo jinxing shishi xuanchuan de zhishi," 810.
59 Chunming chubanshe, *Xinding xin mingci cidian*, 129.
60 "Juti shenru di kaizhan ZhongSu youhao gongzuo – zhu ZhongSu youhao xiehui diyici quanguo daibiao huiyi," [Concretely and further carry out Sino-Soviet friendship work – to the first national meeting of the SSFA,] *Renmin ribao*, October 15, 1951.
61 Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, Chapter 1.
62 See "Zhongyang renmin zhengfu guanyu chuli jieshou Meiguo jintie de wenhua jiaoyu jiuji jiguan ji zongjiao tuanti de fangzhen de jueding," [The central government's decision on how to deal with the cultural, educational, and relief agencies and religious groups that receive American subsidies,] December 29, 1950. This instruction, along with Guo Moruo's report, appeared in *Renmin ribao*, December 30, 1950.
63 Wang Huanxun, "Duiyu shifan xueyuan zanxing jiaoyuxue jihua zhong jige wenti de renshi."
64 "Shelun: Jinyibu xuexi Sulian de xianjin jiaoyu jingyan," 4–5.
65 The number is based on translations of Soviet educational books gathered in Zhongyan wenhuabu chuban shiye guanliju, *Woguo fanyi chuban Sulian shuji mulu*; and Zhongyang wenhuabu chuban shiye guanliju, *Quanguo fanyi shuji mulu*.
66 See Qing, "Xuexi Kailuofu *Jiaoyuxue* diyizhang hou de yixie tihui"; Yi, "Zenyang xuexi *Jiaoyuxue*? Shenyang Erzhong xuexi *Jiaoyuxue* de qingkong."
67 Cao Fu, *Duwei pipan yinlun*. The content was previously published in *Renmin jiaoyu* in 1950.
68 Bi Chengwen, *Zhongwai jiaoyu mingzhu yijie*, 2257.
69 Cao Dawei, "Cao Fu yu Cao Fu de jiaoyu sixiang," 222.
70 "Dui Jinnüyuan tongxue de aiguo douzheng, Nanda siqian shisheng jihui zhiyuan, Chen Heqin jiaoshou yi qinshen jingli, tongchi Meidi zaiHua ban jiaoyu de suowei 'youyi'" [Teachers and students at Nanjing University organized rallies to support the students' patriotic struggles at Jinling girl's school. Professor Chen Heqin used his personal experience to condemn American imperialists' so-called 'friendship' through providing education in China], *Xinhua ribao*, December 6, 1950.

71 Wu Yikuan, "Zuowei dangwai Buershiweike de Tao Xingzhi," 86–91.
72 The causality between the criticism of the film and that of Tao has been widely researched and debated. For an insightful discussion, see Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform*, 166–174.
73 For the correspondence and talks between the Chinese and Soviet top leaderships regarding sending Soviet experts to China, see Chapter 1 in Shen Zhihua, *Sulian zhuanjia zai zhongguo*.
74 Shen, "Dui zaihua Sulian zhuanjia wenti," 26.
75 Gu Mingyuan, "Lun Sulian jiaoyu lilun dui Zhongguo jiaoyu de yingxiang," 10.
76 Pepper, Radicalism and Education Reform, 217–255.
77 For the negative consequences of adopting Soviet educational models see Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform*, 217–255; Li, "The Influences of the Soviet Educational Model," 110–112.
78 Li, "The Influences of the Soviet Educational Model," 107.
79 For more information on the management of Renmin University, see Stiffler, "Creating New China's First," 288–308; Stiffler, "Three Blows," 303–325.
80 Gu Mingyuan, "Lun Sulian jiaoyu lilun dui Zhongguo jiaoyu de yingxiang," 7.
81 The HIT grew out of the Harbin Sino-Russian School for Industry, which educated railway engineers in the Russian education style. The first president was a Russian engineer, and courses were taught in Russian. During the Japanese occupation of Northeastern China between 1935 and 1945, the school was taken over by the Japanese. After World War II, it came under the joint management of the Chinese and Soviet governments through the China Changchun Railway Administration. In June 1950, the Chinese government took over the administration of HIT and started experimental reform of the university.
82 "Sulian zhu woguo dashi zai Beijing gejie qingzhu ZhongSu youhao tongmeng," 9–10.
83 For Soviet aid to China see Kong, "The Transplantation and Entrenchment of the Soviet Economic Model in China," 153–166; Roy, *China's Foreign Relation*, 79–83.
84 For Chinese-Russian romances, see Huang, *Zhenqing ruge: wushi niandai de Zhongguo wangshi*, 187–204; McGuire, "Between Two Revolutions," 365–367.
85 For an example of the Chinese protocol of receiving foreign guests, see "Jiedai waibin cailiao," [Information on receiving foreign guests,] September 12, 1952, 012-002-00059, Beijing Municipal Archives.
86 For information on the Chinese government's management of foreigners residing in China, see Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*. This book also includes information on the Soviet government's supervision of foreign residents in the Soviet Union on pages 8–13.
87 For a personal account of the life of Soviet experts in China, see Klochko, *Soviet Scientist in Red China*.
88 Kirby, "China's Internationalization in the Early PRC," 888; Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens*, 9.
89 Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 16.
90 McGuire, "Between Two Revolutions," 365. These restrictions were confirmed in my interviews with two women who studied in Ukraine in the 1950s, Beijing, September 11, 2016.
91 Wu Yun, "Zhongguo nongmin renshi Sidalin de gushi," [The story of Chinese peasant learning about Stalin,] *Renmin ribao*, December 21, 1949.
92 Interview with a retired factory director, Beijing, August 12, 2008. For a nuanced examination of Chinese reactions to Stalin's death, see Li, "Reactions of Chinese People to the Death of Stalin," 70–88.
93 "Jiaoyu jie xuexi Sulian de qingkuang," [State of affairs regarding learning from the Soviet Union in the educational circle,] Shijiazhuang Municipal Archives, December 12, 1953.
94 Fang, *Jiang Nanxiang zhuan*, 153.
95 Thogersen, *A County of Culture*, 152.

96 As it was later pointed out, the term "six periods in a row" did not exist in the Soviet Union, but Soviet universities did arrange classes around noontime because students normally ate around 2 p.m. See Higher Education Department of China, "Guanyu tingzhi shixing suowei," 100.
97 Hua Zhongyi, "Bainian disanren xiaozhang: Yidai zongshi Chen Wangdao xiansheng," [The third president in a century: A path-breaking master Chen Wangdao,] *Renwen Fudan wang*, September 16, 2005, http://sh.eastday.com/eastday/node83953/node87122/userobject1ai1458467.html.
98 For reception of Pavlov's theory in China, see Gao, "Pavlovianism in China," 57–85.
99 See Lu Dingyi's remarks at a Politburo meeting on May 26, 1956 in Lu, *Lu Dingyi wenji*, 499–521.

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2 One world, one language?

A critical task in restructuring Chinese education along Soviet lines was language teaching and reform. The primary goals were to choose the foreign language(s) for study and to reform the Chinese language. To re-establish itself in the world and broaden international exchange, China needed to learn from other languages and produce capable speakers of foreign languages. As early as 1942 Mao stressed that "We shall absorb what we need from foreign languages . . . [namely] the good elements that are applicable for us."[1] Back then Mao was likely to be talking about "foreign language" in the plural. The alliance with the Soviet Union in the early 1950s, however, narrowed the term down to the singular form. Russian, the language of the Soviets, dominated the scene in China. The socialist bloc with the Soviet Union as its hub meant almost the entire world to the fledgling Chinese Communist regime in Cold War isolation. Little wonder, then, that the Chinese government promoted Russian as the international language most in tune with socialism. The prestige of Russian was immediately reflected by expanded Russian programs in school curricula and flourishing institutions of higher learning specializing in Russian. Learning Russian, speaking Russian, or simply dropping a few Russian words into everyday conversation became a vogue among those enthusiastic for the latest knowledge and worldview. Concurrently, the Chinese language was undergoing noticeable changes. In particular, it absorbed Russian vocabulary to describe modernization and new projects under socialism. But this was not all.

Wider-ranging changes were needed to reform the Chinese language in order to increase domestic literacy and popularize education. The traditional writing system using complicated characters needed a fundamental overhaul. In the 1950s, the PRC government introduced three major changes in this regard: many commonly used Chinese characters were simplified in form to *jianhuazi*, a standardized national speech known as *putonghua* was established, and a Romanized phonetic notation system called *Hanyu pinyin* (or *pinyin* for short) was developed. All of them would have far-reaching impact on the literacy campaign and the unification of culture. However, the original plan which focused on reforming the script was intended to take a different route. Based on some supposed advantages of phonetic scripts in achieving widespread literacy, a group of Chinese intellectuals, including a number of leading linguists, pushed for a phonetic spelling system

to replace the pictographic and ideographic Chinese characters. Therefore, the *pinyin* scheme was initially envisioned as a fully functional script, at least by some supporters. Simplified characters were a temporary expedient before the phonetic script was designed, and *putonghua* based on the Beijing dialect was to pave the way for the script transition. With various regional accents and dialects among the Han nationality, a unified phonetic script required a commonly recognized speech in standard pronunciation. The development of a phonetic writing system, in this sense, was the glue to hold the language reform together.

Why are these new changes considered in conjunction with the promotion of Russian in China and the language policy of the Soviet Union? How could a foreign language that shares no affinity with Chinese have had anything to do with the reform of the distinctive Chinese characters? Following an examination of China's Russian language education and linguistic borrowings from Russian, this chapter reveals that the spread of Russian and the alliance with the Soviet Union, in direct and indirect ways, facilitated the Chinese script revamp central to the Chinese language reform in the 1950s. Soviet linguistic advisers systematically used their own experience in designing alphabetic scripts for the ethnic minorities living in the Soviet Union, offering the Chinese script experiment a concrete frame of reference. Proposals were made to adapt the Russian Cyrillic script to the new Chinese alphabet, in the belief that this new alphabet would make learning Russian easier for Chinese and further enhance the friendship and cooperation between the two countries. But not all agreed, despite the professed political legitimacy and socialist values attached to Cyrillic. In contrast to their unreserved support for learning Russian, the Chinese leadership showed more deliberation and prudence in choosing the new alphabet. More importantly, the selection of the alphabet, as well as the attempt to switch to a phonetic spelling system in the first place, demonstrated the CCP's desire to make China part of an international culture larger than the one under Soviet dominance. Although the fervor for a new script cooled off at the end of the decade, the reform accelerated the simplification of traditional Chinese characters and the official adoption of the *pinyin* system in 1958. In the coming decades, these two changes would facilitate mass education and widespread literacy, transforming the lives of millions throughout China.

Russian in center stage

The Chinese mania for Russian was a direct result of the "lean to one side" policy. For one thing, there were practical needs – the alliance with the Soviet Union generated strong demand for Russian speakers. The surge in diplomatic, economic, and cultural exchange, as well as the growing number of Soviet experts working in China, called for a large number of qualified Russian translators and interpreters.[2] Shortly after the establishment of the PRC, Russian training colleges were set up in Beijing and Shanghai (both have developed into the top foreign language universities in China today). By 1951, the number of Russian-language institutions across the country had risen to 12, with more than 5,000 students

enrolled.[3] Several state-sponsored journals on the study and teaching of Russian also emerged.[4] Russian-language education was officially launched.

From the outset, the promotion of Russian had a political dimension. The radicalism and coercion used to propagate the pro-Soviet policy gave rise to an arbitrary equation between the foreign language studied and the ideological allegiance held. In other words, one's attitude toward Russian was yet another criterion for judging political consciousness. It was believed that Russian was the language of the proletariat and English was the language of the capitalist. An influential Russian-language learning periodical called *Russian* echoed and elaborated on this perception in its inaugural issue:

> The socialist Soviet Union has gained success with the most advanced theory of humankind – Marxist Leninism, and with a proletarian worldview and methodology. Whether in politics, economy, culture, science, or art, it represents the most advanced human ideas and techniques, which is strong evidence of its infinite potential for development. For this reason, all progressive countries of the world, all specialists and scholars who truly love their countries and their people, are ardently learning Russian. Without learning Russian, we cannot fully absorb the most advanced ideas and techniques of humankind, we cannot become true scholars and specialists, nor can we do well in the revolutionary cause and reconstruction of our own country.[5]

According to this paragraph, Soviet culture is "the most advanced," and therefore Russian is the most "progressive," "modern," and "international" language. By this logic, acquiring Russian is the key to knowledge and development. Influenced by such rhetoric, the Chinese started to look admiringly at those who could speak Russian. By contrast, the number of English learners dramatically declined when a contemptuous, disparaging attitude was applied to learning English. The change of attitude to foreign languages was especially pronounced at universities. For example, before 1949, English was the strongest among all foreign language programs at Nanjing University, while the Russian program had only one class with a handful of teachers and students. Soon after 1949, however, the number of students majoring in English dropped; learning English was disparaged and even considered a sign of pro-American inclinations.[6] Consequently, many English teachers and professors had to change track and instead learn and teach Russian.

Yet, the rejection of English for anti-American reasons did not escape censure. Some people argued that "in the technological and scientific literature around the world, 70 percent is written in English, compared to less than 20 percent in Russian."[7] Some even quoted Stalin to argue against attaching "class character" to languages.[8] But these opinions were heavily criticized and labeled "anti-Soviet" and "anti-party." As a result, even intellectuals who were experts in English and American literature had to put those skills on hold and learn Russian. Xiao Qian, a writer and translator of several well-known English literary classics, was a typical (and tragic) example. He was determined to transform himself according to the party's guidance. While writing essays of self-criticism, he taught himself Russian

and studied *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, the most revered and widely disseminated textbook on Soviet party history for the CCP.[9] Like Xiao Qian, many intellectuals trained in Europe and America made compromises, pledged allegiance to the Communist regime, and bowed to the literary and artistic doctrines from the Soviet Union.[10]

Although switching to Russian devastated a number of established scholars, the younger generation saw studying Russian as doing the "right" thing to serve the nation and the world and, at the same time, ensuring strong career prospects, a choice that neatly served national, international, and personal interests. Russian thus became the hottest major at universities, the top option for young people who responded to the state slogan, "My aspiration is to do what the country needs me to do!"[11] A good command of Russian would also lead to a period of study in the Soviet Union, which was "the dream of everyone and the highest personal honor recognized by society."[12] However, the importance of basic Russian proficiency was overlooked when the PRC government dispatched the first group of 375 students to study in the Soviet Union in August 1951. Unfamiliarity with the language posed a huge obstacle for students when they were assigned to various Soviet universities.[13] To redress this problem, in the following year the Preparatory School for Study in the Soviet Union (*LiuSu yubei bu*) was set up, offering selected students a one-year intensive training in Russian before their departure to the Soviet Union. To prepare them for the language environment there, the government also invited Soviet experts in Russian linguistics to teach at the school.[14] By 1959, a total of 14,798 Chinese students, teachers, and interns had been sent to the Soviet Union, making up 91.6% of all the personnel studying abroad.[15]

The growing public interest in Russian led to a rapid expansion of Russian programs. Russian became *the* required foreign language in secondary and higher education. By 1952, 59 high schools in Beijing, Shanghai, and other major cities were offering Russian classes; in the Northeast, the region bordering the Soviet Union, Russian was taught at all high schools. Some schools even organized students to exchange letters written in Russian with Soviet students. Many of the pen-pal relationships lasted a number of years.

The educational sector most affected was higher education. In 1950 Renmin University and 18 other key universities set up Russian language departments and research centers. In 1952, about 60 higher education institutions offered Russian as a major. These universities became factories for mass-producing Russian speakers.[16] To make the teaching of Russian effective, not only were native Russian speakers invited, but the methods of Russian teaching used at Soviet schools were introduced. By the end of 1956, there were nearly 2,000 college and university professors specializing in Russian language and literature. Between 1953 and 1956, more than 12,000 college students majored in Russian.[17] Together with those who studied in the Soviet Union, the lives of these people were inextricably linked to the status of Russian in China, a sensitive barometer of Sino-Soviet relations.

For amateur learners, the SSFA (Sino-Soviet Friendship Association) offered various types of Russian learning programs at different levels. By 1954, 352 Russian night schools sponsored by the SSFA had attracted more than 51,200 learners across the

country, and about 269,400 people regularly listened to the SSFA Russian learning programs on the radio.[18] To encourage cadres and governmental workers to learn Russian, the Central Government offered rewards and financial incentives.[19] Many learned to sing Russian songs with the original lyrics. Even those with low literacy were able to pick up a few Russian words to come in with the tide. Indeed, it was during this time that a number of loanwords from Russian gained currency, as the following section shows.

Linguistic changes and standardization

As the craze for the Russian language swept the country, Russian also influenced the Chinese language. Chinese linguists, most of whom were trained in Europe or America, switched to Russian and called Soviet linguistic theory the best available.[20] *Zhongguo yuwen* (Studies of the Chinese language), one of the earliest journals on Chinese language research and teaching in the PRC, published a large number of articles introducing Soviet linguistics and translations of Russian articles in its first few years of publication. Wang Li's three-volume *Hanyu shigao* (History of the Chinese language), written between 1954 and 1956, reflects the extent to which a Chinese linguist was compelled to refer to Soviet doctrine and even the Russian language itself in his writings. A giant in modern Chinese linguistics who was educated in Paris, Wang quotes Stalin's *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics* at multiple points in the introduction, and throughout the footnotes, he cites Russian linguistic works far more frequently than those from Europe and America.[21] He also gives special consideration to publications on the Chinese language by Russian sinologists. When explaining changes in modern Chinese due to the introduction and translation of Western languages, Wang painstakingly lists the corresponding Russian words alongside every English example, though he admits that English had greater influence on Chinese before 1949.[22]

Given the fact that Russian was the primary source of foreign language influence when the book was written, Wang's use of Russian alongside English was a fair indication of the increasing Russian intervention in the transformation of the Chinese language at the time. People started to use syntactic structures borrowed from Russian, such as "yuanze shang" (Chinese: 原则上, Russian: в принципе, English: in principle), "shiji shang" (Chinese: 实际上, Russian: в действительности, English: actually, in reality), and "jiben shang" (Chinese: 基本上, Russian: в основном, English: basically, fundamentally).[23] Even some idiomatically awkward phrases became acceptable because they frequently occurred in translations of Russian texts.[24]

However, the strongest influence of Russian was not on grammar but vocabulary, in the form of loanwords, something that often happens between interfacing cultures. There is a large supply of loanwords in Chinese as a result of China's long history of exchange with other peoples and cultures. In ancient times, the spread of Buddhism brought an influx of loanwords from Sanskrit. Even more numerous are those that caught on from the end of the nineteenth century when Chinese intellectuals turned to Western science, technology, and culture for remedies to the problems in China. The majority came from English, sometimes via Japanese kanji translation, with others from French, German, and Russian.[25]

Most of the pre-PRC Russian loanwords were introduced via translation. The success of the Russian October Revolution accelerated the introduction of Marxism into China, and in return the spread of Marxism fueled Chinese enthusiasm for Russian revolutionary experience and Russian learning. Russian literary publications and revolutionary works on Marxism and Leninism were translated into Chinese. At the same time, Russian terms, especially in philosophy, politics, and economics, entered the Chinese language. New expressions such as Bolshevik (Chinese: 布尔什维克, Russian: большевик), Soviet (Chinese: 苏维埃, Russian: советский) gave Chinese revolutionaries new concepts and, beyond that, a whole new way of conceptualizing China's future. But many of the transliterated loanwords were not that easy to grasp and memorize, so over time, they were replaced by semantic translations using existing Chinese concepts. For example, "naipu" (Chinese: 耐普, Russian: нэп, English: NEP, or New Economic Policy) eventually became "xin jinji zhengce" (Chinese: 新经济政策). The "Comintern" was initially "kangmin tuan" (Chinese: 康民团, Russian: коминтерна) and later changed into "gongchan guoji" (Chinese: 共产国际). "Gongshamole" (Chinese: 共莎莫勒, Russian: комсомол, English: komsomol) was replaced by "gongqing tuan" (Chinese: 共青团). All these "translated" new terms for alien notions and objects have become so well integrated into the Chinese vocabulary that some linguists prefer not to treat them as loanwords.

It should be pointed out that many translated Russian works were actually retranslations. Often, they came into Chinese via English, Japanese or German versions, since there was a lack of competent Russian translators.[26] As a true believer in Russian literature's ability to cure social ills in China, literary giant Lu Xun translated Gogol's *Dead Souls* from German and Fadeev's *The Rout* from Japanese, among many others, because his Russian skills were not up to the task. To get accurate translations from the original, Lu Xun lent intellectual and financial support to translators proficient in Russian. He compared the translation of Russian revolutionary literature to "Prometheus stealing fire from heaven for humankind," or "smuggling munitions to insurgent slaves."[27] Following Lu Xun, revolutionary intellectuals like Qu Qiubai, Geng Jizhi, Li Jiye, Wei Suyuan, and Cao Jinghua dedicated their lives to producing quality translations directly from Russian and introducing Chinese readers to Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Gorky, and other Russian writers.

Many characters in these masterpieces entered the Chinese lexicon. "Maniluofu" (Chinese: 马尼洛夫, Russian: Манилов, English: Manilov), a lazy, sentimental landlord in *Dead Souls* who spends most of his time daydreaming, became a name for idle daydreamers, and "Boliuxijin" (Chinese: 波留希金, Russian: Плюшкин, English: Plyushkin), another landlord from the same novel, is a term for miser. Particularly, "Maniluofu jingshen" (Chinese: 马尼洛夫精神, Russian: маниловщиной, English: Manilovism) was often cited to criticize smug complacency, lack of action, and futile daydreaming, as it was at times used by Lenin and Stalin in their writings.[28]

In contrast to the vocabulary that entered Chinese via written translation, other loanwords from Russian came orally, through Chinese interaction with Russian

immigrants. The first wave of Russian migration to China began in Harbin, China's northeastern gateway to Russia, at the end of the nineteenth century with the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway. In 1917, 60,200 Russians composed over 60% of Harbin residents, an overwhelming majority that made the region something of a Russian enclave. The second wave occurred around the time of the October Revolution, when thousands of Russians fled to Harbin, Shanghai, Xinjiang and other cities to escape the turmoil in their home country.[29] By 1921, there were 165,657 Russians living in Harbin, the largest Russian émigré community in China.[30] These Russians rarely intermingled with the Chinese, but from their limited contact a Chinese pidgin Russian sprang up, mainly as a work-related language used by Chinese employees hired by the Russians. Imitating the pronunciation of Russian words and phrases, this pidgin language was lexically Russian but relied on Chinese morphology and syntax. Although rather limited and often associated with low social status, pidgin Russian was a functional intermediary between Chinese and Russians.[31] Its vocabulary focused on trade and everyday life in the Russian émigré community. Many pidgin words also found their way into Harbin slang and the Northeastern dialects.[32]

Despite their large numbers, the prestige of Russian immigrants in Harbin waned with the collapse of the tsarist empire in the late 1910s. Soviet and Chinese joint management of the Chinese Eastern Railway in 1924 left many Russian émigrés jobless and homeless.[33] Finally, the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in the 1930s put an end to the strong Russian presence in the region. Many fled to other Chinese cities (Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, and Qingdao) or overseas, while others pledged allegiance to the Soviet regime and were repatriated. By February 1936, only 38,393 Russians remained in Harbin.[34] The end of World War II saw the Russian population in Harbin further reduced when the Soviet government executed those who were identified as Japanese collaborators and anti-Soviet. The survivors of the purge returned to the Soviet Union or relocated to a third country, leaving behind a population of only a few thousand.[35] Russian cultural influence in Harbin diminished, and pidgin Russian died out. The end result was that loanwords from pidgin Russian faded from the daily life of Harbin residents.

Table 2.1 Examples of frequently used Chinese Pidgin Russian

Pidgin Russian	*Russian*	*Chinese*	*English*
伏特加	водка	伏特加	vodka
格瓦斯	квас	格瓦斯	kvass
苏泊汤	суп	汤	soup
列巴	хлеб	面包	bread
八杂市儿	базар	集市	bazaar
布拉吉	платье	连衣裙	dress
哈拉少	хорошо	好	good
不老好	плохо	不好，坏的	bad

Given the decline of Russian influence in Northeast China in the 30s and 40s, it might have been difficult to imagine that the Russian language would stage a comeback in the 50s. When it resurfaced, however, this language not only reclaimed its past glory in the Northeast but also gained national currency. A few Harbin pidgin Russian words like "bulaji," "lieba," "gewasi," found their way into everyday speech across China. When spoken, these words were given a special flourish to mimic the Russian intonation. For instance, people would stress the second syllable in "bulaji" to make a prolonged "la" using a rising tone, and finish with the third syllable unstressed. Uneducated people joined in too, with street vendors calling out prices in pidgin Russian.[36] Educated people would mix Russian words into their speech whenever possible. This practice became especially popular among college students, who believed speaking Russian made them appear more cultured, progressive, modern, and internationalist. Indeed, when people called each other "dawalixi" (Chinese: 达瓦利希, Russian: товарищ, English: comrade), they were not only showing off their education and political inclination, but also announcing a brand-new type of interpersonal relationship.

As Russian became the most important foreign language for China and many Russian books were translated into Chinese, Russian replaced English as the major conduit for transferring foreign concepts into Chinese vocabulary, especially the socialist terms favored by the Chinese Communist government.[37] While many of the Russian-origin loanwords from the pre-1949 translations earned broader circulation and colloquial currency, more of what Wang Li called "socialist new terms" were introduced, spreading across politics, economics, the military, technology, law, culture, and education.[38] These words endowed the CCP and its people with a much-needed lexicon for the burgeoning socialist construction. Copying the Soviet Union, China had its own "wunian jihua" (Chinese: 五年计划, Russian: пятилетка, English: five-year plan). "Tuolaji" (Chinese: 拖拉机, Russian: трактор, English: tractor) and "cangbaiyin" (Chinese: 康拜因, Russian: комбайн, English: combine harvester) were often a spectacle inviting curious crowds and dreams about the Soviet-style "jiti nongzhuang" (Chinese: 集体农庄, Russian: колхоз, English: collective farm) and mechanized agriculture in the Chinese countryside. As workers competed to contribute to industrialization, "laomo" (Chinese: 劳模, Russian: герой труда, English: model worker), "jiji fenzi" (Chinese: 积极分子, Russian: активист, English: an active member), and "sidahannuofu gongzuozhe" (Chinese: 斯达汉诺夫工作者, Russian: стахановец, English: Stakhanov) emerged one after another. In the management of residents, "jiedao" (Chinese: 街道, Russian: квартал, English: community[39]) replaced the rather formal and literary "shequ" (Chinese: 社区) – the English word for "community" via Japanese translation.[40] At the college level, the introduction of "jiaoyanshi" (Chinese: 教研室, Russian: кафедра, English: teaching and research section) was part of the ongoing higher education reshuffle, and "ximingnaer" (Chinese: 习明纳尔, Russian: семинар, English: seminar) more or less changed the teacher-centered traditional classroom. In their leisure time, Chinese children loved the activities at "xialingying" (Chinese: 夏令营, Russian: Летний лагерь, English: summer camp), while men and women enjoyed various cultural activities at the

"wenhua gong" (Chinese: 文化宫, Russian: дом культуры, English: club). Such new political, social, and cultural words were the building blocks of the socialist saga in the making of a New China.

Given the increasing number of Russian-origin socialist terms in the Chinese vocabulary, the question arose of how to treat loanwords from English and other Western European languages. Should China abandon hundreds of words previously borrowed from capitalist countries and replace them with Russian equivalents? This was linked to the debate over the class nature of language. Although the debate would carry on into the Cultural Revolution, at this point most linguists, grounding their argument on Stalin's conclusion that language was not class-based, agreed that loanwords were inevitable in cultural contact and that, regardless of their origins, loanwords could contribute to the cultural exchange between socialist China and the world. As Wang Li argued, the transition to socialism should not kill off all the new words of the past century. Instead, these words should be considered "international terms" that do not belong to any particular language. Therefore, Wang Li advocated the internationalization of Chinese through loanwords, following the international convention of word usage. He believed this would remove barriers in China's intellectual and cultural communication with the world.[41]

While linguists like Wang Li were confident that loanwords would not threaten the healthy development of the Chinese language, others were concerned about the vocabulary being muddied by loanwords that were merely phonetic transliterations of the original. They found support in Lenin's article "On Cleansing the Russian Language," in which Lenin criticizes the excessive use of foreign words in place of an adequate Russian expression.[42] To avoid excessive use of foreign words, they proposed to translate the meanings of foreign words instead of slavishly using transliterations.

The cry to get rid of strange, foreign-sounding loanwords denotes both the prevalence of foreign influences, particularly from Russian, and the conscious Chinese attempt to regulate and indigenize foreign words. It echoed an ongoing effort to rationalize the Chinese lexicon, which was an important part of the standardization of the Chinese language that obsessed Chinese linguistic circles after 1949.[43] On June 6, 1951, *People's Daily* issued an editorial entitled "To Correctly Use the Language of Our Motherland and Fight for the Purity and Health of the Language," which served as an official prelude to rectifying improper, nonstandard usage of vocabulary and grammar. It reiterated Mao's remark that "we shall not mechanically copy a foreign language or abuse it," but that "we need to absorb the good elements that are applicable for us."[44] In the following six months, the newspaper serialized a long treatise on Chinese grammar and rhetoric by two prominent linguists, Lu Shuxiang and Zhu Dexi, who increased public awareness of linguistic standardization. Such preparatory work culminated in an academic conference on the standardization of modern Chinese convoked by the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 1955. Again, several participants expressed concern over loanwords and proposed two principles. First, when there is an adequate equivalent already existing in Chinese, there is no need to mechanically copy

the pronunciation of a foreign word. Second, the new word should comply with the Chinese rules of morphological structure and word formation.[45] This explains why there were fewer and fewer loanwords in the form of pure transliteration; many literary classics were re-translated without the alien-looking transliterations in previous renditions.[46] And when the infatuation for all things Russian, including the language, began to die at the end of the 1950s, Russian-sounding loanwords again faded from everyday speech.

Toward a phonetic script

In tandem with the effort to standardize Chinese language usage was the reform of the Chinese writing system, known as "script reform" (*wenzi gaige*). Given that the national literacy rate was so low, the script reform that aimed at transforming difficult Chinese characters was a pressing task. An easy solution was to simplify the "spelling" of characters and reduce the number of strokes in each character, which resulted in the CCP endorsement of *jianhuazi*, or simplified characters, throughout the Mao era. However, the simplified characters were not seen as "a fundamental change of the writing system" but only a compromise before a phonetic script known as *pinyin wenzi* could replace the characters.[47] To this end, the government promoted *putonghua*, a national speech derived from the Beijing dialect, to provide a common pronunciation basis for the anticipated phonetic script. *Jianhuazi, putonghua*, and the creation of the phonetic script drove Chinese script reform together in the 1950s, but it is the phonetic script on which the following discussion will focus.

The 1950s endeavor to develop a phonetic script for Chinese was built on earlier attempts to reform the language and promote literacy that had been active since the end of the nineteenth century. It was believed that Chinese characters were too complicated, too difficult to recognize, and too laborious to memorize, causing the low literacy rate which had China lagging behind the West. To develop China and popularize education, some intellectuals proposed the complete abandonment of Chinese characters to give young learners more time to study science and technology instead of "wasting" time learning characters. Various indigenous Romanization systems were devised and experimented with, following the example of European missionaries and sinologists who used the Latin alphabet to transcribe Chinese pronunciation.[48] In 1892, Lu Zhuangzhang invented the Qieyin xinzi (New Phonetic Alphabet). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Wu Zhihui proposed to borrow the Esperanto alphabet. In the 1920s, an elite group of Chinese linguists, including Zhao Yuanren, Lin Yutang, Li Jinxi, Qian Xuantong, and Wang Li, designed the Gwoyeu Romatzyh (National Romanization), officially adopted by the Nationalist Government in 1928. In 1929, Qu Qiubai created the Latinxua Sin Wenz (Latinized New Writing). Regardless of their forms and rules, the ultimate goal of these schemes was the same: to use a phonetic spelling system, or pinyin, in place of Chinese characters. Despite strong opposition and resistance, this undertaking received wide support from a number of prominent scholars, including Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Lu Xun, Hu Shi, and Fu Sinian.[49]

Along with the Written Vernacular Movement, Latinization appeared to be an inevitable trend in reforming Chinese language, education, and culture.

Of these phonetic spelling systems, Latinxua Sin Wenz is of particular interest to the discussion here, as it was originally developed for Chinese migrant workers in the Soviet Far East during the late 1920s. In fact, its creation was tied up with the Soviet Union's language policy at the time. Based on Lenin's decree promoting ethnic equality in the USSR, a linguistic engineering program was announced to bring minority languages to the same level as Russian. The major part of this task was orthographic reforms using the Latin alphabet to transform various existing minority scripts, or to create a new Latin-based script in the absence of a writing system. "By 1935, a total of 70 Soviet languages, representing 36 million people, were being written in the Latin alphabet."[50] The Latin alphabet was chosen over the Cyrillic because the latter called to mind tsarist Russia's oppression of ethnic minorities. To some language reformers, Cyrillic was a relic of the old times, when the majority of the Russian population was cut off from the revolutionary East and the proletariat in the West. These reformers called for a new alphabet, or rather, a "socialist alphabet." At a time when "world revolution" was still a prevalent slogan, a socialist alphabet meant an international alphabet, and with Cyrillic being ruled out, the only adequate candidate for this role was Latin.[51] Between 1929 and 1930, proposals were even made to write Russian with Latin letters. Although none of them were adopted, these proposals represented a Soviet attempt to build a world-wide unified writing system. Eventually, in the late 1930s, Moscow would reverse course by deciding to replace various Latin scripts with Cyrillic. However, the significance of the Latin script in the early Soviet period must be emphasized.

The main achievement of the Latinization movement was to facilitate the Soviet campaign to eliminate illiteracy, enabling 25 million people to read and write in various forms of Latinized scripts.[52] Interestingly, about 100,000 émigré Chinese workers in the Soviet Far East were included in the literacy campaign. Initially, they were taught Chinese characters but made little progress. In 1928, the Soviet Scientific Research Institute on China explored the possibility of using a phonetic script to improve Chinese learning. Qu Qiubai, Wu Yuzhang, Lin Boqu, Xiao San, and several other CCP members then present in the Soviet Union were invited to be part of this project.[53] Thus, the Chinese effort to adopt a Latin-based phonetic script converged with the Soviet language reform program favoring Latinization.

In 1929, with help from the Soviet sinologist V. S. Kolokolov,[54] Qu Qiubai drafted a prototype of Latinxua Sin Wenz (henceforth Latinxua), which he outlined in a pamphlet called *Zhongguo Ladinghuade zimu* (Chinese Latinized alphabet). In this draft, he explained the necessity and practicability of Latinizing the Chinese writing system, as well as rules for tone marking and spelling. When Qu Qiubai returned to China in 1930, the Soviet Academy of Sciences organized a committee led by eminent sinologists V.M. Alekseev, A.A. Dragunov,[55] and A.G. Shrprintsin[56] to further develop the prototype.[57] Drawing on the draft by Qu Qiubai and other Chinese Romanization systems including the Gwoyeu Romatzyh, the committee proposed the Latinxua in 1931, which was approved by the All-Union Central Committee on the New Alphabet in the same year.

Immediately after the approval, the new alphabet was specifically adapted to the spoken language of Chinese workers in Vladivostok and Khabarovsk. As most of these workers were from Shandong Province in China, the Latinxua was made to reflect the pronunciation of the Shandong dialect. Once in place, a vigorous literacy campaign was initiated. Primers, textbooks, dictionaries, and newspapers were published, study groups, classes, and schools were opened, and allegedly numerous workers learned to read and write in the new script. In both Soviet and Chinese reports, the program was heralded as a great success.[58] Ultimately, however, following political upheavals in the Soviet Union, most migrant workers were repatriated by the mid-1930s, and Latinxua usage within the Soviet Union came to an end.

As the Latinxua movement was tapering off in the Soviet Far East, it acquired a second life in China on a much more extensive scale. Because of information control by the Nationalist government, word about the new Latin script did not reach China until 1933.[59] Despite this difficult start, Latinxua quickly gained ground with its simple spelling and absence of tone indications,[60] a significant improvement over Gwoyeu Romatzyh which uses an elaborate spelling system to mark tones. Over the following 21 years, the new script spread from Shanghai to Beijing, from Taiyuan to Hong Kong, delivering basic literacy to more than 200,000 people.[61] In step with the international trend and dovetailing with the CCP's promotion of mass literacy, Latinxua immediately won party support. In 1936, Mao told the American journalist Edgar Snow that, "We believe Latinization is a good instrument to overcome illiteracy . . . Sooner or later, we believe, we will have to abandon characters altogether if we are to create a new social culture in which the masses fully participate."[62] Under Communist auspices, the promotion of Latinxua in the CCP-controlled Shaan-Gan-Ning border region was in full swing between 1940 and 1942. After 1943, the movement stalled because of frequent wartime relocations and the loss of capable teachers.[63] There might also have been a deeper concern: the new writing would fundamentally subvert the cultural basis of the old intelligentsia. At a time when the CCP had to rely on this group for broader social support, Latinxua might have been an unnecessary provocation.[64]

As the situation more or less stabilized at the end of the Civil War (1945–49), those who demanded reform of the Chinese script, whether supporters of Gwoyeu Romatzyh or Latinxua, saw new hope in the Communist leadership and continued to lobby for a phonetic script. Mao and his colleagues understood the importance of script reform to the imperative task of achieving universal literacy and turning China into a modern, industrialized nation state. In a meeting with members of the Committee for Research into the Script Reform in 1951, Mao made the following remarks:

> The written language must be reformed. It should follow the direction of phoneticization common to all languages of the world. It should be national in form. The alphabet and scheme should be devised according to the existing Chinese characters.[65]

For the unfolding CCP involvement in the Chinese quest for language reform, Mao's above instruction was significant on two levels. First, it set the course for the Chinese linguistic by highlighting phoneticization. As Harriet Mills pointed out in 1956, phoneticization should be more accurately called alphabetization at this stage of the reform.[66] The preference for an alphabet lays bare Mao's desire "to integrate China more closely into the stream of modern world culture."[67] Adopting an international alphabet would enable China to take advantage of the rapid development of science and technology, as in other countries that undertook script reforms. The success of neighboring countries – Mongolia, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and Indonesia – in using phonetic scripts to achieve literacy convinced the Chinese leadership that replacing the complicated Chinese characters, a key to raising the national cultural level and fostering modern consciousness, could be done.[68] Of course, it would be naïve to take such lofty objectives at face value. As in the Soviet Union, language policies in the PRC were driven by a Communist program of social engineering, or in Nicolai Volland's words, "an effort to transform the basic mental outlook of man, to purge him of his old habits, and to guide him in the formation of a new kind of thinking and behaving."[69] A new script could effectively eradicate the old culture and re-educate the masses in the path of Communism.

Mao's directive on phoneticization became "a kind of holy writ that was cited over and over again" in script reform.[70] His understanding of phoneticization as a phase in the growth of all languages was presumably influenced by the "three stage" theory of script development preached by supporters of a phonetic script. For example, when Ni Haishu wrote the 1949 introduction to Latinxua, he recounted the evolution of different writing systems from the pictographic to the ideographic to the phonetic, with the phonetic script being the most advanced.[71] Many translations of Russian articles on China's language reform in the 1950s also took this line. However, none of these authors asked whether this Western linguistic theory was applicable to the Chinese writing system, which developed out of a totally different matrix. Some argued that the Chinese *xingshengzi*, the combination of a meaning element and a sound element, was an indication of the Chinese characters advancing toward phoneticization, but nobody could offer conclusive evidence proving that a phonetic script was the ultimate destination.[72] Nonetheless, after Mao stated his position on the issue, phoneticization was taken as an unchallengeable universal truth, shattering the debates of previous decades over the necessity of replacing characters with an alphabet.

Second, the instruction from Mao stipulated the form of the new alphabet: it had to be represented by Chinese national symbols of some kind. According to Zhou Youguang, one of the key figures in the 1950s language reform, the idea of a national form originated from a meeting between Mao and Stalin during Mao's first visit to the Soviet Union a year earlier. When Mao asked Stalin for advice on the Chinese script reform, Stalin suggested that China was a big enough country to have its own alphabet.[73] This could be seen as exemplifying the professed Soviet policy of treating socialist brother nations on equal terms, or perhaps it was just jovial flattery, but it certainly accorded with Mao's nationalist desire to have a

phonetic script in a distinctively Chinese format. Deep down, Mao's internationalist aspirations were based on strong nationalist sentiments, so an alphabet different from any other in the world naturally appealed to him. Such a writing system would not only re-plug China into the world system, but also showcase its national characteristics. It would have the potential to establish itself as an international alphabet and, eventually, even to establish Chinese as an international language.

However, Stalin did not clearly describe the features of a "national form," and Mao's directive was somewhat ambiguous. In the following years, the Committee for Script Reform spent most of its time developing an alphabet that would represent the Chinese national form.[74] Their inspiration came mainly from the previously devised Qieyinzi[75] and Zhuyin zimu, both based on the shapes and strokes of Chinese characters. Finally, in 1955, when six schemes were proposed at the National Conference of Script Reform, four were "national form" alphabets, one used the Latin script, and one used Cyrillic. Despite their strength in number, the "national form" alphabets received the least support; either they had too many strokes and were hard to write, or, when fewer strokes were used, they did not look like Chinese characters. In fact, most committee members were key figures in the creation and promotion of either the Gwoyeu Romatzyh or the Latinxua. Therefore, it was not surprising that a Latin-based scheme was included in the proposals and that the committee actively supported it. After all, the Latin alphabet was the most widely used in the world. But oddly, even this Latin-based proposal contained a Cyrillic letter, for which designers could not find a Latin symbol.[76] So, what was so important about Cyrillic?

Support for the Cyrillic alphabet

In the heyday of China's "learning from the Soviet Union" campaign, a Chinese alphabet using Cyrillic letters would have been an ideal way to further cement Sino-Soviet friendship and cooperation. Furthermore, the Cyrillic proposal can be seen as an example of China learning from Soviet script reform experience. Specifically, it was the transition from Latinization to Cyrillization starting in the mid-1930s under Stalin's regime that had important relevance to the designing of the Chinese new alphabet.

To standardize orthography, the Soviet government reversed the previous practice of designing Latin-based scripts for ethnic minorities and introduced Cyrillic throughout the Soviet Union. While attention to orthography had its own intrinsic merit, the Cyrillization movement was more likely part of an effort to centralize power in Moscow. By 1950, the Cyrillic alphabet brought the majority of ethnic scripts in line with the "national language," Russian. As Beijing was following every step Moscow took, the new Cyrillized alphabets among Soviet minorities convinced many Chinese that a genuinely socialist alphabet for New China should also take a Cyrillic form. As supporters maintained, sharing the same alphabet with the Soviet brother would not only promote exchanges with the Soviet Union but also suit ethnic minority languages in China. In the Soviet Cyrillization process, the Uighur and Mongolian (the Bruyat) ethnic groups in the Soviet Union

adopted the Cyrillic alphabet. Under Soviet influence, the Republic of Mongolia also implemented Mongolian Cyrillic as its official script. By contrast, the Uighurs and Mongolians in China continued using traditional scripts. Therefore, it was thought that if China adopted the Cyrillic alphabet, those people could use the same script to share cultural achievements and deepen ethnic affinity. Some Chinese Uighurs and Mongolians were keen to adopt the Cyrillic script,[77] prompting assertions that choosing the Latin alphabet that was only tailored for the Han Chinese language would reduce uniformity in the entire Chinese writing system, thus damaging the relationship between minorities and Han people.

Conviction that the Russian alphabet was right for the new Chinese script was further fortified by a peculiarly remarkable example of using the Cyrillic to write the Chinese language among a diaspora community in the Soviet Union known as the Soviet Dungans. They descended from Muslims of the Chinese northwest, who fled to Russia in the 1870s after a failed uprising against the Qing Dynasty and settled in today's Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.[78] Their ancestors spoke the Gansu and Shaanxi dialects of Mandarin Chinese but were illiterate. During the wave of Latinization, a locally developed Latin-based script was adopted by the Dungans in 1928. Subsequently, Dragunov, who had participated in the creation of the Latinxua, was involved in revising Dungan orthography to bring the alphabet into conformity with Soviet principles. In this process, the Dungan Latin script moved closer to Latinxua.[79] According to some scholars, the Dungan script was essentially Latinxua based on the Gansu and Shaanxi dialects.[80] In 1952, the Dungan script was switched to Cyrillic and the use of Latin letters came to an end. Given its relevance to the ongoing Chinese script reform, the Soviet Academy of Sciences organized a special committee under Dragunov's direction to oversee the transition.[81] Chinese linguistic circles paid close attention to the development. *Guangming Daily*'s "Script Reform" edition published articles on the significance of the new Dungan script to China. At the same time, several monographs introduced the Dungan experience.[82] Authors enthusiastically praised the Dungan Cyrillic script, which allegedly had allowed the Dungan people to quickly remove illiteracy, produce their own unique literature, and translate a great deal from other cultures. The implication for China was obvious: it was possible to use a phonetic script for Chinese. And for those who advocated the Russian alphabet, the new Dungan script was conclusive evidence that Cyrillic was the one that could do the job.

Soviet advisers played an indispensable role in systematically introducing Soviet techniques of script invention to China. In the 1950s, several Soviet sinologists specializing in linguistics were invited to Beijing, including G. P. Serdiuchenko and his wife, B. X. Todaeva, and I. M. Oshanina. All of them were well-respected linguists in the Soviet Union, underscoring the importance that the Soviet government attached to Chinese linguistic engineering. Their main contribution was in helping to create scripts for Chinese ethnic minorities. Serdiuchenko's introduction of the Soviet experience in designing minority scripts in general and Todaeva's theory on the Mongolian language in particular had wide influence: they both taught at Minzu University of China, where the first crop of PRC scholars trained in ethnic languages and studies were produced.

Continuing the Soviet interest in Chinese language reform from the late 20s and 30s, Soviet advisers also went to great lengths to support the alphabetization of the Chinese script. Although they were not directly involved in the design of the six proposed alphabets, their opinions certainly counted with members of the Committee for Script Reform. The most active of all the linguistic advisers was Serdiuchenko, who participated in a flurry of meetings and conferences revolving around Chinese script reform. Several of his publications carried conference speeches and classroom instruction in which he set out Soviet language policy and the justification for replacing Chinese characters with a phonetic script.[83] Serdiuchenko insisted that the square characters are not based on the Beijing dialect or any other dialect; in fact, they are not based on any spoken language, making them even more impractical than the Arabic and traditional Mongolian scripts that transcend regional dialects. Therefore, he emphasized, the Chinese writing system had to be reformed.[84] He further argued that a script is simply a coding system which can be replaced by another without affecting the language, as languages keep their own intrinsic rules, and are unaffected by different writing systems.[85] Thus, he soothed the fears of those with reservations about using an alphabet to spell Chinese. Serdiuchenko pointed out the advantages of the Russian alphabet in writing, teaching, typing, and printing. Several times he stated that the Cyrillic alphabet is more suitable for Oriental languages, as evidenced by the success of the Dungan Cyrillic. His explanation of why the Soviet government transformed the previously Latin-based alphabets into the current Cyrillic system also hinted that similar mistakes should be avoided in Chinese script reform. Indeed, if adopting the Russian alphabet helped to standardize the Soviet writing systems, why couldn't it do the same for China and all members of the socialist block? As Serdiuchenko emphasized, the pre-eminence of the Cyrillic alphabet was self-evident considering the huge number of publications on Marxism, Leninism, and important scientific discoveries written in Russian.[86]

In an era when politics had a finger in every pie and Sino-Soviet friendship was professed to be above all national concerns and interests, the ideological significance of the Cyrillic proposal should have tipped the balance for the Committee for Script Reform. The reality, however, was quite different. When the six alphabets were proposed at the National Conference on Script Reform in October 1955, most conference participants voted in support of the Latin scheme. Surprisingly, Serdiuchenko also voted for the Latin scheme. He delivered a talk titled "On Several Problems of the Chinese Script," in which he criticized the Zhuyin zimu script because of its finicky strokes. After praising Latinxua and China's rich experience with it, he went on to assert that an already well-designed scheme (namely Latinxua) should be preferred to an untested one using the complicated Zhuyin zimu (an example of the "national form" alphabets). Serdiuchenko recommended that the choice of alphabet should be based on the following questions. First and foremost, does the alphabet accurately represent the phonological system of the language? Second, is the alphabet easy to teach and learn? Third, is the alphabet adaptable to the technology of the time, particularly the current typing and printing equipment? Lastly, will the chosen alphabet lead to an appropriate political orientation?[87]

Although the Cyrillic alphabet seemed a tailor-made "Yes" for all these questions, as Serdiuchenko stated elsewhere, he made no mention of the Cyrillic proposal at the conference. The alphabet for the Han Chinese language, he said, should be decided by the Han people and their intellectuals. If this was not a tactful side-step to avoid suspicion of Soviet chauvinism,[88] Serdiuchenko's vote for the Latin alphabet over the Cyrillic can be seen as a recognition of what mattered most. The ultimate goal was to replace Chinese characters with a phonetic script. The particular alphabet chosen was less important. After all, Latinxua, on which the proposed Latin scheme was based, was created in the Soviet Union and owed a great deal to Soviet assistance, as Serdiuchenko constantly reminded the Chinese in his talk.

After the conference, a report that summarized various objections against Zhuyin zimu and endorsed the Latin proposal was sent to the Central Committee of the CCP, requesting the Party to decide on the final pinyin scheme as early as possible.[89] On January 27, 1956, the Central Committee responded with a definite decision to adopt the Latin alphabet for the Chinese pinyin scheme.[90] As the Secretary of the Committee for Script Reform Ye Laishi recalls, Mao's personal opinion was critical to this decision. During this time, Mao studied various kinds of alphabets. In the end, he agreed to drop the "national form" alphabets and adopt the Latin letters because they are the most commonly used worldwide; plus, "they look better than Russian and other letters."[91] At a meeting with intellectuals shortly before the Central Committee issued the directive, Mao set out his position:

> Comrade Wu Yuzhang advocates the script reform, and I support it. If we adopt the Latin letters, will you agree or not? In my opinion, among the masses there should be little problem [in accepting it]. But among intellectuals there may be some difficulty. How can China use a foreign alphabet? However, it seems that adopting this foreign alphabet [Latin] is fairly good. Comrade Wu Yuzhang's opinion in this regard sounds very reasonable, because this alphabet has no more than 20 plus letters and they all write in one direction, very simple and clear. Our Chinese characters don't measure up to that. We have to admit it and we can't think that highly about Chinese characters. A few professors told me, Chinese characters are the best script in the world and can't be changed. [But] if the Latin alphabet was invented by the Chinese, there would be no question. The question is that it is invented by foreigners and the Chinese are learning. Yet Chinese people have long been learning from things that are invented by foreigners. For example, the Arabic numbers, haven't we used them for a long time? Latin letters originated in Rome and they have been adopted by many countries in the world, so if we use them, will we be suspected of betraying our country? I don't think so. For all the good things from abroad, as long as they are useful to us, we need to learn and adopt without reservation, at the same time turning it into our own after digesting it.[92]

One month after Mao made those remarks, the Committee for Script Reform issued the draft scheme of the Latin-based phonetic script, chosen from the six proposals,

to invite discussion and suggestion for revision from the public. An explanatory note was published with it to explain the technical considerations involved in alphabet design. Not surprisingly, the note followed Mao's line of argument to explain why the Latin alphabet was chosen: the Latin alphabet is the most widely adopted writing system; it is indispensable in modern scientific research; it is simple, clear, and easy to read and write; and it can serve China and its modernization. As to the advantages of Latin over Cyrillic, the note asserts that the Latin alphabet has a longer history in China and its pronunciation is more flexible. Since the Latin alphabet is taught in Soviet schools, too, as the note points out, it will not affect communication between China and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, because the Latin alphabet has wider international use, it will facilitate Chinese exchange with Southeast Asian countries and expand China's foreign relations.[93]

The CCP's decision to make only the Latin-based alphabet public put an official end to the other five proposals. However, the debate in intellectual circles over the choice of alphabet rumbled on for some time. During the brief liberalization period of the "Double Hundred," which immediately followed the release of the draft pinyin scheme, strong opposition to the "arbitrary choice" of the Latin alphabet came to the surface. As people dared to speak out, they raised all sorts of questions and suggestions. Some wanted to keep exploring a "national form" alphabet; some advocated supplementing the Latin alphabet with Cyrillic and other scripts; some raised criticism against having a Russian letter in the Latin scheme since it was inconvenient for typing; others rejected the whole idea of language reform, including alphabetization. Demand for the Cyrillic alphabet was powerful. As supporters argued, the explanatory note to the pinyin draft only mentioned the advantages of the Latin alphabet, but failed to see the larger picture and the many ways that the Russian alphabet could serve Chinese socialist construction and internationalization. First, as Russian has become China's major foreign language, using the Russian writing system will inspire the Chinese people to learn Russian and speed up the learning process. At the same time, it will help visiting Soviet experts linguistically in their assistance to China. This will facilitate the adoption of advanced Soviet science, technology, and culture, which is critical to China's socialist construction and national development. Second, since Russian is the primary source for loanwords, using the Russian alphabet will help transfer new socialist concepts. Third, from a technical point of view, the Russian alphabet can accommodate the Chinese phonological system, including that of China's ethnic minority languages, more efficiently and effectively than Latin. Fourth, a common script in China and the Soviet Union can be used by more than half of the world's population. And once world revolution is achieved, people outside the Soviet Union and China will need to learn only one alphabet for both languages. The Latin alphabet, they said, cannot perform any of these functions.[94] Obviously, these backers of the Cyrillic alphabet based their argument on Serdiuchenko's theory.

Despite the high-profile claim they made for the Cyrillic proposal, the debate was quickly shut down when the "Anti-Rightist" campaign stormed the country. Many opponents of script reform were labeled "rightists" and purged. After the Hanyu pinyin scheme was ratified by the National People's Congress on

February 11, 1958, no more disagreement was voiced in the press. Chinese media sang the praises of the new pinyin scheme, and acclaim poured in from home and abroad. According to the media, students and teachers from Chinese schools extolled the accuracy and effectiveness of the pinyin method of phonetic instruction.[95] Soviet students rejoiced at how much easier it was to use pinyin to learn Chinese.[96] Soviet sinologists and the China Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences applauded the accomplishment and immediately started spreading the new Chinese alphabet within the Soviet Union.[97] The pinyin scheme also gave impetus to plans to devise scripts for Chinese minorities based on the Latin alphabet.[98]

In the final scheme, modifications were made to replace that Cyrillic letter in the original Latin proposal. Thus, with the establishment of the Hanyu pinyin scheme, the Latin alphabet trumped the Cyrillic and Chinese-style alphabets. But the Latinization movement, which aimed at replacing the Chinese characters with a Latin-based phonetic script, ground to a halt. When the draft pinyin scheme was released in February 1956, the word "wenzi" – meaning "script" – was dropped from the original title. Literally, "the phonetic script scheme" was changed into "the Chinese phonetic scheme." Behind the name change was a fundamental shift in the central government's plan for a phonetic alphabet in Chinese language reform. As the Committee for Script Reform stated clearly, the pinyin scheme was to be used to annotate pronunciation *only*.[99] The decision was a slap in the face for those advocating alphabetization of the Chinese script.[100] The fact that some newspapers and magazines, including *People's Daily*, as well as the prints of some official documents, had already arranged horizontal typesetting indicated that preparations were underway for an alphabetic script.[101] However, as to whether pinyin would replace Chinese characters, the Committee chose to leave it to the future. For the time being, script reform should focus on simplifying Chinese characters, promoting standardized Mandarin, and using pinyin as a phonetic notation tool for standardized pronunciation.[102] This decision wound up the first round of language reform in Communist China.

Language and politics

Internationalization has been a key component in the nation-building of the PRC. It was an especially important part of the Chinese adoption of Soviet experience during the early years of the regime, because "internationalization" in a divided world was synonymous with "Sovietization" to the CCP. Adopting Soviet experience and building up Sino-Soviet friendship were seen as the way to integrate China with contemporary world culture. In Chinese propaganda, the guarantee of a modern, prosperous lifestyle was an internationalized China hand-in-hand with the Soviet Union, and for that, what could have been more natural than learning Russian, the language most widely spoken by the Soviets and the accepted voice of socialism? The linguistic encounter between Chinese and Russian at this time thus illustrates the dynamic and tension between Soviet intervention and Chinese assimilation.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Soviet language policy saw a departure from Lenin's relatively lenient, egalitarian treatment of minority languages.

What followed instead was a Stalinist policy that positioned Russian as the USSR's national language and the common language of the world.[103] The policy had multiple implications for China. Most important of all, it offered the CCP a template for using language to centralize control among a multi-ethnic population. The official choice of *putonghua*, a standardized Han dialect, which in effect diminished the influence of various other Han dialects and non-Han ethnic languages, followed Soviet logic. Also, in the light of the Soviet push to make Russian the world language, the CCP's promotion of Russian language learning can be seen as a way of cultivating friendship with the Soviet Union, whether they genuinely envisioned Russian as the universal language of future or not. Soviet authorities seemed pleased with the enthusiasm in China and went out of their way to praise the Chinese effort on a number of occasions. The strengthened bilateral relationship directly increased Soviet input in the socialist construction of New China.

As the decade unfolded, however, the one-sided emphasis on Russian led to a terrible neglect of other foreign languages in Chinese curricula. Chinese foreign language education became skewed. The number of students graduating from Russian programs exceeded the demand for Russian speakers in China, but competent speakers of languages used in other countries that had limited diplomatic relations with the PRC were in critical short supply.[104] Moreover, the graduates mass produced by China's rapidly expanded Russian programs were only questionably prepared for the jobs available. These pressing issues compelled the government to make a series of policy adjustments starting in 1956. Foreign language education was reintroduced in the high school curriculum, with an emphasis on English. In higher education, while programs of foreign languages other than Russian and Eastern European languages increased their enrollment, Russian programs had to suspend enrollment for a year. Several Russian-language institutions closed down. In those that remained open, Russian majors were recommended to switch to other languages, and third-year students in a three-year Russian program were urged to study for an additional year.[105]

Despite these adjustments, Chinese foreign language education showed no real improvement. In the early 1960s, when the Soviet government recalled its advisers from China and the two parties openly challenged each other, Russian fell out of favor. As China reoriented its foreign policy, diplomatic relations with many third-world and Western European countries – the two "intermediate zones" between the American and Soviet superpowers – called for a large number of graduates proficient in English, Japanese, French, German, and so on. In 1964, the Foreign Affairs Office of the State Council and the Party Committee in Higher Education jointly issued a report on the shortfall in competent speakers of these foreign languages. It estimated a surplus of 3,889 Russian speakers, in contrast to a deficit of 5,245 English speakers, forcing the government to take drastic measures to remove such anomalies.[106] A number of high schools, junior colleges, and universities specializing in foreign languages (mostly English and Japanese) were set up, allowing students to receive foreign language training at an earlier age. Between 1964 and 1965, more than 1,000 language students were sent abroad

to study languages other than Russian. In the 1964 "foreign language education 7-year plan," emphasis was placed on changing the Russian-English ratio from 2:1 to 1:1 and eventually to 1:2. English was officially re-established as the major foreign language.

It is intriguing that the Chinese re-emphasis on English education occurred around the time when the Latin alphabet was chosen for the Chinese pinyin scheme, but it was no coincidence. It is true that the committee in charge of Chinese script reform and the top leadership already inclined to the Latin alphabet early in the 1950s, but the increasing Sino-Soviet rift from 1956 made illusory any continuing hopes about sharing the Russian alphabet. As Mao and his colleagues played down the importance of the Soviet model, a new vision for China's internationalization was in the making. It looked beyond the Soviet Union to a world with two "intermediate zones." Russian was not part of it, and use of the Cyrillic alphabet was doomed. Behind the linguistic considerations for dropping that one (and odd) Cyrillic letter in the final revision of the Latin-based pinyin scheme, there was a political agenda. The official justification for the Latin-based pinyin scheme was unequivocal: it would allow China to be in line with international conventions and expand exchange beyond the Soviet sphere of influence.

Notes

1 The original speech was made at a cadre meeting in Yan'an on April 2, 1942. Mao, "Fandui dang bagu," 858.
2 "Shiwei guanyu pinqing Sulian zhuanjia, wei zhuanjia choudiao fanyi renyuan he guanyu Sulian dashiguan xinjian shiguan dizhi wenti de qingshi," [The Municipal Committee's request on inviting Soviet experts, assigning translators for experts, and the address of the new Soviet Embassy], August 1–December 31, 1954, 001-005-00125, Beijing Municipal Archives.
3 Baolisuofu and Keluosikefu, *Suzhong guanxi*, 48.
4 "Jieshao *Ewen jiaoxue* zazhi," [Introducing the *Russian-language Teaching* journal,] *Renmin ribao*, December 10, 1952.
5 Harbin Municipal SSFA Russian-language Committee, *Eyu (Chuangkan hao)* [Russian (Inaugural issue)], January 31, 1950, cited from Li, *Xin Zhongguo de ZhongSu youhao*, 108–109.
6 Wang, *Shizhe rusi*, 256.
7 Qian, *Qishi nian de jingli*, 253.
8 In his *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics*, Stalin suggests that Language serves all classes of society and changes very slowly, and he opposes the idea that language is related to class difference, as he says, "It is no secret to anyone that the Russian language served Russian capitalism and Russian bourgeois culture before the October Revolution just as well as it now serves the socialist system and socialist culture of Russian society." For more information, see Stalin, *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics*.
9 See Chapters 1 and 2 in Ding, *Shuidi de huoyan*; Wen, *Wo yu Xiao Qian*, 22–25.
10 For an insightful analysis of intellectual compliance with the party-state, see Mazur, "United Front," 51–75.
11 Yang, "Sandai ren de zhuanye xuanze," 34–37.
12 Huang, *Zhenqing ruge*, 172–181. The book includes personal memoirs of Chinese students studying in the USSR in the 1950s.
13 Li, *Zhonghua liuxue jiaoyu shilu*, 101.

14 See Hao, "Ershi shiji wushi niandai," 11–15; Shan, *Suiyue wuhen*, Chapter 3; and Liu, *Yige daxue xiaozhang de zibai*, 55–58. For invited Russian specialists teaching at Chinese Russian schools, see Li, *Wode Zhongguo yuanfen*, Chapter 5; Stiffler, "Building Socialism."
15 Besides the Soviet Union, China also sent students to countries in the Soviet orbit, such as Poland, Hungary, and Mongolia. For the statistics, see Cao, "Zhong Su guanxi polie," 25–26.
16 Orleans, "Soviet Influence Education," 184–198; Li, "Soviet Educational Model," 106–113; Stiffler, "Building Socialism"; Stiffler, "First New Style Regular University," 288–308; Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform*, 157–255.
17 Liu Limin, "Xin Zhongguo Eyu jiaoyu liushi nian," [Sixty years of Russian language teaching in New China,] *Guangming Daily*, September 25, 2009.
18 Qian Junrui, "Wunian lai de Zhong-Su youhao xiehui (caogao)," [The SSFA over the past five years (draft)], October 12, 1954, Shijiazhuang Municipal Archives.
19 "Jiangli xuexi Ewen shixing banfa," [Tentative plan for rewarding learning Russian,] September 1, 1952, 002–005–00011, Beijing Municipal Archives.
20 Luo, "Zhongguo de yuyanxue," 15–20; Wang Li, "Guanyu zanni de hanyu," 8–10.
21 The first edition published in 1957 (by Kexue chubanshe) even included an article in which Wang listed the "mistakes" he made by overlooking Soviet scholarship.
22 Wang, *Hanyu shigao*, 322–323, 398.
23 Ibid., 324, 537.
24 Wang Li gave an example of this case. The Chinese phrase "yanzhong de renwu" is the direct translation of "серьезные задачи" in Russian. Although the adjective "yanzhong de" (Chinese: 严重的, English: serious) is normally not used to modify the word "renwu" (Chinese: 任务, English: task), this usage frequently appeared in writings then. The more idiomatic translation should be "zhongda de renwu" (Chinese: 重大的任务) or "zhongyao de renwu" (Chinese: 重要的任务). See Wang, *Hanyu shigao*, 537.
25 For a historical overview of loanwords in the Chinese language, see Shi, *Yiwenhua de shizhe*. For loanwords from different foreign languages such as English, French, German, Japanese, Russian, Italian, and Spanish up to the 1950s, see Gao and Liu, *Xiandai hanyu wailaici yanjiu*, 34–104. For the traveling words from English into Chinese via Japanese translation, see Gu, "Hanyu zhong riyu jieci yanjiu"; Liu, *Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity*, 284–342.
26 Ping, "Lun Wusi," 89–92.
27 Lu Xun made this remark in the postscript for his translation of *Wenyi zhengce* (also known as *Su'e de wenyi zhengce*, or Soviet Russia's cultural policy) from the Japanese rendition in 1930. See Liu, *Lu Xun xuba ji*, 259–261.
28 Lukyanenka, "Classification and Analysis," 26.
29 For Russian emigres in Harbin, see Carter, *Creating a Chinese Harbin*. For those in Dalian, see Hess, "Colonial Jewel." For those in Xinjiang, see Li, "Xinjiang Sulian qiaomin," 80–99, 191. For those in Shanghai, see Shanghai tongzhi weiyuanhui, *Shanghai tongzhi*, 7028–7068; Wang, *Shanghai Eqiao shi*.
30 Ma and Gong, "Jindai Harbin," 88.
31 Fedorova, "Transborder Trade," 107–128; Oglezneva and Zou, "Dangdai Eluosi," 65–69.
32 Wang, "Dongbei fangyan," 8.
33 Shanghai tongzhi weiyuanhui, *Shanghai tongzhi*, 7028.
34 This number includes 30,589 "White Russians" and 7,804 "Red Russians" of Soviet citizenship, see Zhang, *Heilongjiang waishi shilue*, 216.
35 Ma and Gong, "Jindai Harbin," 89–90.
36 Interview with a Shijiazhuang resident, June 2, 2009.
37 Shi, *Hanyu wailai ci*, 87–108.
38 Wang, *Hanyu shigao*, 535.

39 Literally, "квартал" means "quarter," "block" and "jiedao" means street.
40 Xu, "Shehui yuyanxue," 206.
41 Wang, *Hanyu shigao*, 537.
42 Gao and Liu, *Xiandai hanyu wailaici yanjiu*, 4.
43 For information on the standardization of the Chinese language, see "Xiandai hanyu guifan wenti xueshu huiyi gaikuang," 58–62.
44 Mao, "Fandui dang bagu," 858.
45 "Xiandai hanyu guifan wenti xueshu huiyi gaikuang," 60.
46 Volland, "Linguistic Enclave," 474–476.
47 "Wei cujin Hanzi gaige, tuiguang putonghua, shixian Hanyu guifanhua er nuli," [To strive for the promotion of the Chinese character reform, putonghua, and standardization of Chinese,] *Renmin ribao*, October 26, 1955.
48 Terrence G. Wiley incisively points out that the supposed advantage and prestige of alphabetic languages stems from a Eurocentric diffusionist perspective that views the West as a model for the rest of the world. See Wiley, "Historical Investigation," 135–152. Defu Wan contends that the framework of the Chinese language policy is based on the Chinese assimilation of this Eurocentric model. Hence, the simplified characters and the pinyin scheme can be seen as "partially a colonial invention." See Wan, "Language Planning and Reform," 65–79.
49 For the development of the pinyin movement before 1949, see Ni, *Zhongguo pinyin wenzi yundong jianbian*.
50 Mark Dickens, "Soviet Language Policy in Central Asia," accessed on July 15, 2015, www.oxuscom.com/lang-policy.htm.
51 Alpatov, "Sulian 20, 30 niandai," 16.
52 Ni, *Ladinghua xin wenzi yundong*, 4.
53 Both Ni Haishu and Zhou Youguang believe that as early as in the beginning of the 20s Qu Qiubai was inspired by the Latinization movement in the Soviet Union and had already started thinking about creating a Latin-based script for the Chinese language. However, as Shrprintsin notes, no documentary evidence has been found to support this point. See Shrprintsin, "Guanyu Zhongguo xinwenz," 20.
54 Chinese name 郭质生.
55 Chinese name 龙果夫.
56 Chinese name 史萍青.
57 Most of the committee members were Soviet sinologists, with a few Chinese participants.
58 Usojev, "Sulian ge minzu," 62–63; Ni, *Ladinghua xin wenzi yundong*, 5.
59 Although Qu Qiubai continued to research and write for the Latinxua Sin Wenz after he returned to China, his works did not attract much attention. His monograph, *Xin Zhongguowen caoan*, did not get published until 1953.
60 Tone indications are used only in case of homophones that may cause confusion.
61 Ni, *Ladinghua xin wenzi yundong*, 37.
62 Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 446.
63 Ni, *Ladinghua xin wenzi yundong*, 27.
64 DeFrancis, *Chinese Language*, 258.
65 Ma, "Zhongguo wenzi gaige yanji," 4.
66 Mills, "Language Reform in China," 531.
67 Ibid., 536.
68 Tsu, "Romanization Without Rome," 331.
69 Volland, "Linguistic Enclave," 473.
70 DeFrancis, *Chinese Language*, 259.
71 Ni, *Ladinghua xin wenzi gailun*, 5–18.
72 It was not until the "Double Hundred" in 1957 that this kind of challenge was raised in the open. See, e.g. Chen Mengjia, "Luelun wenzixue," [A brief discussion of philology], *Guangming ribao* February 4, 1957.

73 Zhou, "Hanyu pinyin," 11.
74 For the name change and reorganization of the committee, see Zhao and Baldauf, *Planning Chinese Characters*, 43–44.
75 There are various designs of the *Qieyinzi*. Lu Zhuangzhang's is the earliest scheme, which uses the Latin letters. Other variants are either based on Chinese character strokes and simple characters or use shorthand symbols and numbers.
76 In the first draft of the Latin proposal, the Cyrillic letter "ч" was used to stand for "j" in today's pinyin system, because in this draft, the latter was used for "y" in today's pinyin. According to the explanatory notes to the draft, this is because "ч" looks like the *zhuyin zimu* spelling for this consonant and its pronunciation is similar, too.
77 Henze, "Alphabet Changes," 124–136; Bulag, "Mongolian Ethnicity," 753–763.
78 For the history of the Dungans living in Russia and later the Soviet Union, see Hu, *Zhongya Dongganxue yanjiu*.
79 Serdiuchenko, *Guanyu chuangli minzu wenzi*, 51, 122.
80 Chappell, "Romanization Debate," 105.
81 For the creation of the Dungan script, see Rimsky-Korsakoff, "Soviet Dungan," 352–421.
82 See, eg. Du, *Pinyin wenzi yanjiu*.
83 Zhou, *Multilingualism in China*, 169–196.
84 Serdiuchenko, *Guanyu chuangli minzu wenzi*, 53.
85 Ibid., 159.
86 Ibid., 77.
87 Ibid., 174–175.
88 Ye Laishi revealed later that Sierdiuchinko had tried to exert pressure on him and Wu Yuzhang to adopt the Cyrillic alphabet; see Zhonghua quanguo shijieyu xiehui, *Ye Laishi wenji*, 246.
89 "Guanyu quanguo wenzi gaige huiyi de qingkuang he muqian wenzi gaige gongzuo de qingshi baogao."
90 "Zhonggong zhongyan guanyu wenzi gaige gongzuo wenti de zhishi."
91 Liu and Gao, *Da lunzheng*, 206.
92 Fei, *Zhongguo yuwen xiandaihua*, 219.
93 Wenzi gaige weiyuanhui, *Hanyu pinyin fang'an (caoan)*, 12–15.
94 Chen Chuxin and Wang Jingliu were the most vocal among supporters of the Cyrillic alphabet. See Chen, "Yingdang caiyong eyu zimu," 42; Wang, "Hanyu pinyin wenzi yinggai caiyong Silafu zimu," 41.
95 Fu, "Pinyin zimu," 37; Qu, "Pinyin wenzi de youyue," 37.
96 Liu, "Hanyu putonghua," 4–5; Zhadoyanko, "Yong pinyin fang'an," 22–24.
97 "Sulian kexueyuan hanxue yanjiusuo xueshu," 8.
98 "Qingzhu weida shiyue geming sishi zhounian," 2.
99 Wenzi gaige weiyuanhui, *Hanyu pinyin fang'an (caoan)*, 8–9.
100 Chen, *Modern Chinese*, 188.
101 "Guanyu quanguo wenzi gaige huiyi de qingkuang he muqian wenzi gaige gongzuo de qingshi baogao."
102 Zhonghua renmin gongheguo guowuyuan, *Hanyu pinyin fang'an caoan*, 4.
103 Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues*, 84–86.
104 "Xuduo fanyi renyuan zai jianzhu gongchengbu zuotanhui shang shuo, Eyu yuanxiao peiyang mubiao you chongxin kaolü biyao," [Many translators said in a meeting of the Ministry of Construction that it was necessary to re-consider the educational objectives of Russian language colleges], *Guangming ribao*, June 3, 1957.
105 "Guanyu Eyu, Poyu, Jieyu," 770; "Guowuyuan waishi bangongshi," 1326–1327.
106 Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, "Zhonggong zhongyang, guowuyuan guanyu waiyu jiaoyu qinian guihua," 313–332.

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Part II

The new outlook

3 Urban landscapes and socialist architecture[1]

> This city was intimately related to cotton. . . With the help of the Soviet big brother, the city built nearly ten textile factories all at once in the 1950s . . . In these factories, the Soviets not only provided equipment, workshops, and techniques, but they even designed the living quarters . . . [In each apartment building] there is a well-maintained garden and a workers' club for residents . . . This is a city filled up by textile workers, a city topped with Soviet-style buildings. An Delie[2] was born into this city.
>
> . . . An Delie was born around March 1954. His father named him, and the name itself was a reflection of Sino-Soviet friendship at the time. Responding to the call of the government, An Delie's parents moved from Shanghai to support this city's development; they were both middle school teachers. His father used to wear colorful shirts made of Soviet print cotton, and his mother had Soviet-style bulaji.[3] Back then they both yearned for the wonderful life of the Soviet big brother, and they also hoped little An Delie would study in the Soviet Union when he grew up.[4]

These paragraphs from a fictional short story by Tie Ning, a writer born in 1957, exemplify the deep involvement between China and the Soviet Union in the early 1950s. Besides the protagonist's name, the textile factory in the story and its Soviet-style buildings were all products of the pro-Soviet 1950s. During China's First Five-Year Plan (1953–1957) for city-based industrial growth and modernization, not only did China adopt the Soviet economic model, but it also received Soviet aid, as typified in the so-called "156 Projects" across the country.[5] The fiction clearly depicts one of these key projects that were carried out with close Soviet assistance. According to a series of agreements between the two governments, the Soviet Union provided equipment and technical support for Chinese factories, particularly machinery designs. Soviet advisors were also involved in the overall configuration of almost every plant, including the design of workshop buildings and workers' dormitories. Today, many Chinese cities that underwent development in the 50s, like the one Tie Ning portrayed, still have areas reminiscent of Soviet input into China's urban planning, revealing the extent to which Soviet influence affected everyday life.

At that time, cities underwent socialist modernization based on the Soviet model. Chinese city planners turned to Soviet urban planning for ideas and inspirations, and frequently they renamed streets and roads to make reference to Sino-Soviet friendship. Fashion was affected as well, when modified Soviet-style clothing like Lenin jackets was proudly worn by city people. *Bulaji*, bowknots, and colorful waistbands – the typical summer ensemble for Soviet women – were chic among fashionable Chinese women. Like An Delie's parents in the story, young parents would adopt pleasant-sounding Russian names for their children or name them after Soviet heroes. Whenever possible, people learned Russian and aspired to study in the Soviet Union; even those with low levels of literacy were able to put some pidgin Russian words into daily practice, fancying their "newness." The transnational practices that enabled the migration of Soviet experience, personnel, and culture into China underpinned China's quest for modernity in the 50s.

In Part II, the type of modernity that the nascent PRC chose to embrace is defined as "socialist modernity." This terminology seeks to emphasize that the early PRC government did not modernize blindly, but instead pragmatically sought a particular type of modernity that could effectively establish China in the Cold War polarization abroad and among the Chinese populace at home. Indeed, it was not just modernity or socialist modernity that the CCP wanted to establish, but an *international* socialist modernity. The intention in constructing a new society was to create a culture that, while still Chinese, was integrated with the larger global society, and thus stronger and more resilient in interfacing on the international scene. The international modernity chosen, as the result of a divided world and the exigencies of the time, was that of the Soviet Union; the effects of this choice were directly manifested across China, particularly in cities.

Following an examination of Chinese friendship propaganda and promotion of Russian language in Part I, the two chapters in Part II further explore the effects of the propaganda by revealing the transformation of Chinese urban landscapes upon a Soviet-inspired modernization blueprint. More specifically, this part begins with an introduction to the CCP's friendship propaganda acclaiming the achievements of Soviet socialist modernization. It goes on to discuss how physical construction and everyday fashion were used to substantiate the "language of modernity" in the rhetoric and to provide visible inspiration to the general populace, thus altering the appearance of Chinese cities and the lifestyle of city dwellers. Chapter 3 centers on the so-called "Sino-Soviet friendship buildings," a new addition to Chinese cityscape that generated the construction of Soviet-style buildings across the country. Chapter 4 foregrounds the "Soviet-style clothing" that induced aesthetic changes among men and women. The focus here is not on new theories or designs in Chinese architecture and fashion, but rather, on the social functions and cultural implications of Soviet-style construction and clothing. Together, the two chapters address how new trends in urban topography and aesthetics deepened the "language of modernity," modified popular tastes, and brought about new beliefs and perspectives. In other words, the architecture and fashion of the 1950s are viewed

as a manifestation of the type of socialist modernity that China was modeling and an indication of a new direction in Chinese outlook.

The language of modernity

In the early days of New China, the "lean to one side" policy focused mainly on forging a strategic friendship with the Soviet Union, and spreading friendship rhetoric to promote a pro-Soviet environment in China. These were but the first few steps by which China as a nation could claim an internationalist identity. According to this proposed new identity, China was a partner with the Soviets in building socialism, which was vitally important to the Chinese leadership in the initial stage of state building. As the Communist regime cemented power in the mainland, it was faced with the enormous task of developing China from a poor agrarian country into an economically secure industrial nation. Modernization, however, was a new endeavor for the CCP, far beyond its familiar knowledge and wartime experience. Party leaders had to look abroad for a handy model and they turned to the leading socialist state, the USSR. Thus, the country embarked on a journey to learn from the Soviet Union.

In 1953, China started the first Five-Year Plan, and the country plunged into a comprehensive reconstruction. Acquiring direct Soviet assistance and learning from Soviet experience – or, more directly, copying much of the Soviet development model – became an expedient choice for the CCP. Against this backdrop, Mao called on the nation to "blow up a high tide of studying the Soviet Union across the country to build our own nation."[6] The campaign to implement the Soviet modernization model was initiated in all industries.

To mobilize Chinese society for building Soviet-style socialism, friendship rhetoric came to be endowed with new content and significance, following the previous focus on smoothing out public hostility and mistrust of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was declared to be the world's biggest country, with a huge population and an abundance of natural resources. In numerous pamphlets and handbooks circulated at the time, it was described as the leading country in every regard: the first socialist state in the world, the largest democratic state, the nation with the highest literacy rate and the most advanced culture, the strongest fortress with an indestructible army safeguarding world peace, etc. The rhetoric attributed all these accomplishments to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the "superior" socialist system: under the leadership of the CPSU, the Soviet people had not only turned a backward agrarian country into a strong, advanced socialist state marching on the path to Communism, but also made enormous progress in culture and science, surpassing the most advanced capitalist countries.[7]

By all possible means of mass communication – newspapers, magazines, books, pictures, posters, blackboard bulletins, study groups, radio programs, films, songs, etc. – friendship rhetoric presented an image of a "perfect" Soviet life to the Chinese masses. Rather than paying excessive lip service to the Sino-Soviet alliance, the rhetoric homed in on concrete examples of Soviet economic achievements and

everyday life. The following excerpt from an article that appeared in a handbook circulated nationwide gives some idea of how the living standard of Soviet workers was portrayed.

> Soviet workers are well dressed. Men wear well-ironed suits; women wear perfume and look graceful – they are even prettier than the fashionable women and modern-looking ladies in Shanghai!. . . In terms of food, by 1946 Soviet workers had reached the following standard. For breakfast, [they had] 75 to 100 grams of butter, two eggs or fried sausages, two cups of milk, and a lot of bread. Lunch included a bowl of cabbage soup, potatoes, noodles, beef, and then a big plate of sautéed pork or fried beans and roast chicken, served together with bread, and lastly, a small plate of steamed sweet fruits and a cup of tea with sugar. In the evening, workers could go to workers' clubs for lemon tea, cakes, and fruits. Of course this was the standard five years ago, and now it is even better. . . Soviet workers' houses are also pretty. An apartment for a couple has at least five rooms with bathroom, living room, storage room, and bedroom, not to mention complete water and electricity systems. Each apartment is equipped with radio, carpets, and elegant decorations. Outside the apartment building is a garden where residents can take a walk. For the unmarried, two persons share a room with a closet and carpets, and they have easy access to the gymnasium, ballroom, swimming pool, radio broadcasting, etc.[8]

As is now well known, the average life of Soviet citizens during this time was hardly that idyllic. In many places, food and housing shortages remained persistent problems. However, very few Chinese at the time had any way of verifying their sources of information personally, because self-sponsored travel outside China in the Mao era was nearly impossible, and those selected for state-funded study trips to the Soviet Union constituted only a tiny percentage of the population. Although some were bitterly disillusioned by what they saw in the Soviet Union, they were discouraged from divulging such information.[9] Since most people were inclined to believe what friendship rhetoric claimed, it is not surprising that workers who read the above handbook would aspire to replicate the idealized Soviet life by adopting Soviet industrial experience. Besides workers, friendship rhetoric also targeted peasants, soldiers, intellectuals, women, and youths with specific language about Soviet modernity. Soviet life became so desired that thousands of people strove to find a way to visit the Soviet Union and witness the "heavenly" life with their own eyes.

The Soviet Exhibition Center

To help people experience Soviet life first-hand without leaving China, to deepen popular understanding of socialist modernity, and to underscore the importance of building Chinese socialism on the Soviet model, the Chinese government decided to build exhibition centers and showcase Soviet achievements on Chinese soil.

The idea first surfaced in 1952 when Li Fuchun, Deputy Director of the Finance and Economic Committee of the Government Administration Council, visited the Soviet Union. During the visit, the Soviet side expressed interest in opening exhibitions in China to demonstrate Soviet accomplishments in economy, science and technology, culture, architecture, etc. The Chinese government quickly responded with a decision to build multipurpose public buildings in four key cities – Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, and Guangzhou – so that visitors throughout China could learn about Soviet life and industry, enjoy Soviet paintings, watch Soviet ballet, and savor Russian cuisine, all in one building (Figure 3.1). To optimize visitors' experience of Soviet culture, the buildings themselves were built in Soviet style; Soviet architects and technicians were assigned to guide the design and construction.[10] Perhaps the most striking examples of Soviet socialist modernity given by the CCP, these were quickly completed.

The completion of the Soviet Exhibition Center (*Sulian zhanlanguan*) in Beijing coincided with Nikita S. Khrushchev's first visit to China in September 1954. After Stalin's death in 1953, Khrushchev's government increased economic and technological aid to China, making a more explicit attempt to court Chinese support in world affairs and the international communist movement. A legion of Soviet experts was dispatched to China to provide training and give advice in all industries where help was needed. Against this backdrop, Khrushchev's visit brought China's "learn from the Soviet Union" campaign to new heights.

For the Chinese people, the highlight of Khrushchev's visit was the exhibits he brought to the Soviet Exhibition Center's grand opening. Between October 2 and December 26, 1954, the center held its first exhibition, entitled "the Exhibition of Soviet Economic and Cultural Achievements." Both Chinese and Soviet leaderships attached great importance to this exhibition and attended the opening ceremony. A total of 11,500 items were on display, including several state-of-the-art machines used in manufacturing, metallurgical, and electrical industries, a cornucopia of textiles, handicrafts, and household products, and a wide variety of improved crops, fruits, and domesticated animals (Figure 3.2). In addition, the exhibition presented a wide collection of cultural materials, including books, magazines, textbooks, paintings, sculptures, musical scores, and photographs.[11]

For a new member to the socialist bloc such as China – a country not yet able to produce its own cars and tractors – the ingenious exhibits from the Soviet big brother were eye-opening. The exhibition was enthusiastically welcomed by Mao, Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai, who were "very pleased and satisfied" with this generous gift from Moscow. Mao wrote Khrushchev twice to express his "heartfelt appreciation" for "the Soviet people's deep friendship with Chinese people and their support for the Chinese people's cause of [socialist] construction."[12]

After being shown in Beijing, the exhibition went to Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan, and other cities, drawing millions of visitors.[13] Despite complaints about over-crowdedness and insufficient on-site explanation, the exhibition was a great success. It brought socialist modernity from abroad to urban centers throughout China, and exposed people to the thrills of modernity through the prism of socialism. The largest such event in the early history of the PRC, the exhibition made a

Figure 3.1 Former Soviet Exhibition Center in Beijing (above) and former Shanghai Sino-Soviet Friendship Building (top of next page)

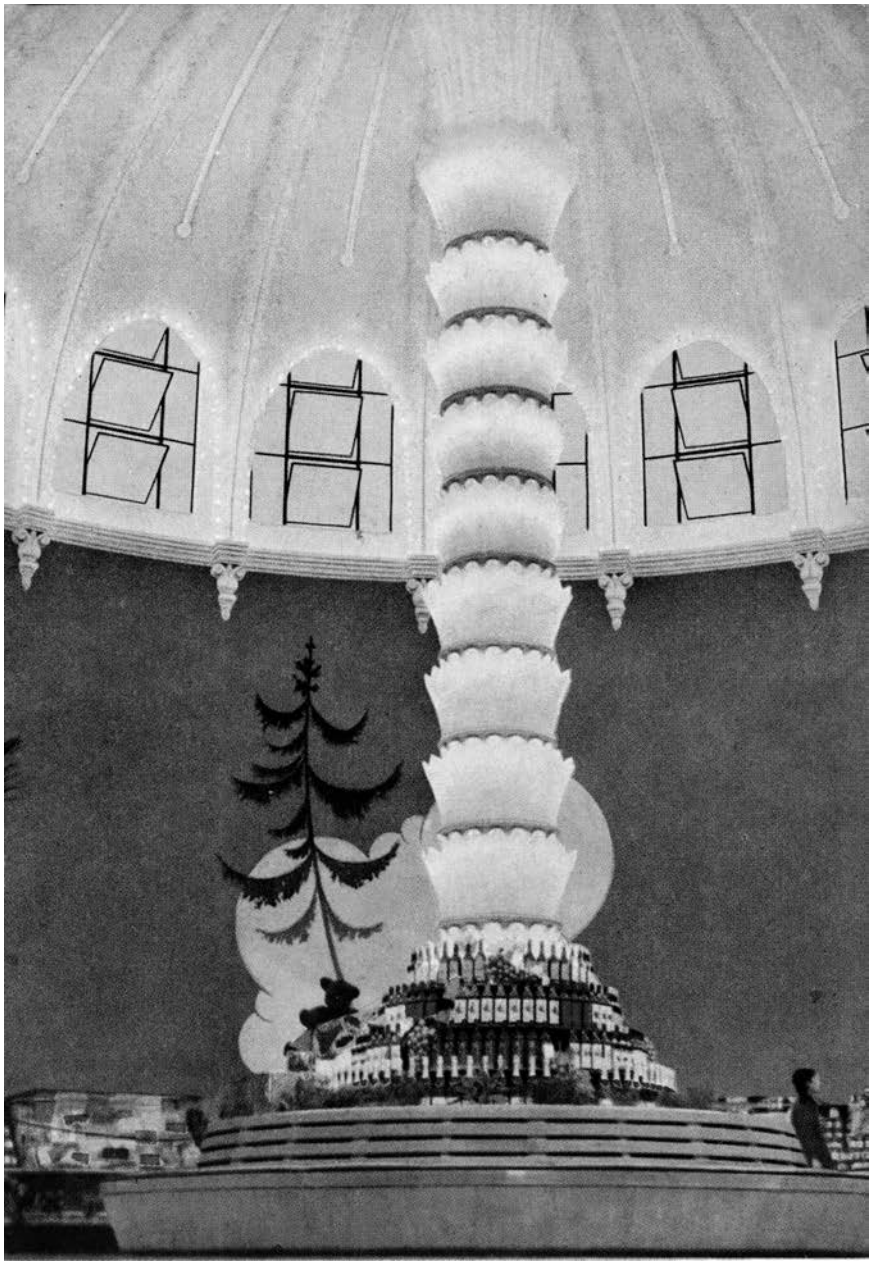
Source: Courtesy of Steven Louis, October 12, 2016, Beijing and June 24, 2015, Shanghai.

Figure 3.1 (Continued)

(A)

Figure 3.2 Postcards of the Exhibition of Soviet Economic and Cultural Achievements, held in the Shanghai Sino-Soviet Friendship Building in 1955. The images show (A) The Hall of Industry, (B) The Hall of Food, (C) Lobby of the Hall of Agriculture, and (D) The Art Gallery

Source: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1956.



(B)

Figure 3.2 (Continued)

(C)

Figure 3.2 (Continued)

(D)

Figure 3.2 (Continued)

remarkable impact on Chinese spectators, allowing them to come face-to-face with what they had only heard of or had previously seen only in pictures and films. While skepticism still remained among some people, many who were doubtful about Soviet advancements before came to accept what friendship propaganda acclaimed about the Soviet Union. A worker in Beijing observed: "I was finally convinced that in the Soviet Union people make everything with machine. One person operating a paver can substitute 500 workers . . . We shall learn from the Soviet people's diligence and perseverance, do well in production, and work hard for [our] country's socialist industrialization."[14] A farmer from Hunan who visited the Soviet exhibition in Wuhan, after seeing the combine harvester, the cotton picker, and the "rainmaking machine," came to the conclusion that nothing was impossible under the socialist system – even the old saying of "no clouds, no rain" had to be revised.[15]

The close encounters with Soviet socialist exploits, and especially the sight of affluent Soviet life, were an illuminating inspiration to all Chinese who craved the same living standard. As Qian Junrui (Secretary of the SSFA General Committee) pointed out, during the exhibition people could witness and feel what a beautiful, happy life the Soviet people had: "they eat well and dress well; they have nice houses and enjoy a variety of cultural activities. Our people must know all this. To build socialism is to make all people of China live such a life."[16] A comment by a housewife echoed Qian: "Coming to the Soviet Exhibition Center is like being in Moscow. I've never seen such fine houses and so many machines!"[17] Like this

woman, many female visitors were impressed by the various kinds of machines for doing housework and couldn't help admiring the happy life of Soviet women.[18] These personal testimonies were compiled and published in the forms of pamphlets and handbooks that were distributed to more people. Along with massive press coverage of the exhibition, these publications allowed those who could not see the exhibition in person to share the excitement. Reportedly, seeing concrete evidence of socialist advantages, Chinese people's confidence in the future under communist leadership was boosted, and public morale for building socialism grew noticeably.[19]

Beyond the Soviet products on display that won nationwide admiration, the Soviet Exhibition Center itself was also a spectacle in its own right. Still standing in Beijing today, "the tall, tower-like structure, adorned with socialist realist statuary, rises above the main crossing of two sections of the exhibition space at the entrance to the building. Two lower wings form a curvilinear colonnade around the base of the building, symmetrically arranged around the central tower."[20] Modeled on the Admiralty Building in St. Petersburg, the center's exotic Russian style stood out as a Beijing landmark throughout the Mao era, and even today it still captures attention among the shoals of modernist-style office buildings and nearby department stores.

For people growing up in the 1950s, the Soviet Exhibition Center was a message in concrete. It was a symbol of advanced Soviet culture, a sacred place they dreamed of visiting on important occasions in their lives. With revolutionary aspirations, they gathered here to celebrate college graduations, engagements, marriages, childbirths, and, if they were lucky enough to be selected to study in the Soviet Union, they would make a pilgrimage to the center and take pictures before departure.[21] In their eyes, the 87-meter tower forming the superstructure of the building stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the Kremlin in Moscow, "a beacon illuminating the road ahead."[22] More than half a century later, the red star glowing day and night on the top of the building still has a special place in the memories of this generation.

The Soviet Exhibition Center also enriched the cultural life of Beijing residents. In the center's circular, open-air theater, many Chinese people saw, for the first time in their lives, the Russian ballet of *Swan Lake*. Indeed, it was during this time that Chinese ballet started to take shape under Soviet guidance. The theater was later roofed and became the well-known Exhibition Center Theater, which staged dance and singing performances from the Soviet Union and other socialist brother countries. Additionally, an affiliated cinema became a popular place that movie buffs frequented.

Moscow Restaurant: where dreams begin

Despite the fame of its theater and cinema, the best-known part of the Soviet Exhibition Center, from then until today, has been its Moscow Restaurant (Figure 3.3), specializing in Russian cuisine. The first restaurant serving foreign food in Beijing after the founding of the PRC, the original Moscow Restaurant looked like a Russian palace in miniature, but it quickly took on a life and character of its

Figure 3.3 Entrance to the Moscow Restaurant on the western side of the Beijing Exhibition Center

Source: Courtesy of Steven Louis, October 12, 2016.

own. Occupying the western wing of the Soviet Exhibition Center, the restaurant featured a tall arch gate supported by beautifully carved pillars in the facade. The interior décor of the main hall was even more impressive: an ornate dome three stories high, crystal chandeliers inlaid with snowflake-shaped decorations hanging from the soaring ceilings, four gigantic copper pillars with relief carvings in the spacious dining hall, tall windows with heavy, luxurious curtains, granite walls adorned with Russian paintings. Other eye-catching items included a swing gate, hardwood floors, Russian sculptures, and a small fountain. The neoclassical design and lavishly furnished interior of Moscow Restaurant clearly illustrated what Khrushchev would soon condemn as "large excesses," a return to conservatism in architecture and aesthetics during Stalin's time.

In addition to its magnificent and awe-inspiring appearance, Moscow Restaurant also gained its exalted standing from the distinguished clientele it served. After the opening ceremony of the Exhibition of Soviet Economic and Cultural Achievements, Premier Zhou Enlai hosted a state reception at Moscow Restaurant to welcome Khrushchev's delegation and other foreign guests residing in China. From then on, the restaurant was the dining-place of choice for Soviet experts in Beijing. It also did the catering for receptions and parties held at the USSR Embassy in Beijing. "Sometimes for special events, all 300 of the restaurant's staff had to go and cook over there [in the Embassy]. We also brought over

vegetables, ingredients, cooking utensils, and sometimes even tables," recalled Wang Zhaozhong, who rose from a cook to the restaurant manager.[23] As the symbol of Sino-Soviet friendship, Moscow Restaurant celebrated the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution in style in 1957: the chefs prepared two sugar carvings – one modeled on the Kremlin, the other on the Tian'anmen Tower – to symbolize the friendship between the two countries.[24]

Given its unique standing, Moscow Restaurant had special payment requirements for diners. Instead of cash, it required meal tickets available primarily to foreign guests, most of whom were Soviet specialists and their families.[25] Ordinary Chinese citizens looked on dining at Moscow Restaurant as a perk attached to rank and social status; only top Chinese personnel, such as high-ranking officials, intellectuals, and celebrities, could obtain the meal tickets. As in the Soviet Union, socialism created its own privileges and hierarchies in the name of revolution. Party cadres and senior intellectuals were routinely "awarded" with spacious housing (or a dacha in the Soviet Union), special meal plans (especially in times of rationed supply), and privileged access to cultural products and entertainment. This is why China went to great lengths to build fancy restaurants and hotels for "foreign experts." It also explains why Soviet experts felt justified in eating and residing away from their Chinese brothers and sisters. Even friendship had to come second.[26]

Interestingly, the alienation created by the meal tickets did not turn the Chinese off but served to increase Moscow Restaurant's mystique and stimulate the Chinese craving for something exotic. To the Chinese eye, everything on its menu looked unusual and mysterious: kvass, pickled cucumber, foie gras, beef stroganoff, chicken Kiev, baked fish in cream sauce, braised ox casserole, and more. Just the names of these delicacies were mouth-watering enough. The longing to savor Russian cuisine became more intense when the restaurant cancelled the meal tickets and opened its door to the public in 1955. Given the fact that the average cost of living in Beijing was 8 yuan per person per month, the restaurant was a luxury beyond ordinary people's affordability. For instance, its three *prix-fixe* meals were priced at 1.5, 2.0, and 2.5 yuan, and just one serving of borscht cost 1.2 yuan. Most people could only dream of eating there. However, the exorbitant charges only intensified people's desire to visit Moscow Restaurant and sample the food of the Soviet big brother. If their salary fell short, they would save for several months to buy a meal. And when they did get there, they would brag about their experience again and again before envious listeners.[27] This way, the fame of Moscow Restaurant spread far beyond the small number of people who had eaten there. No doubt, if anyone had the luck to work in the restaurant, that was cause enough for admiration.[28]

Admittedly, although some Chinese developed a taste for Russian food, most people could not take its flavor. Some recoiled at the strong smell of caviar, and others thought borscht was too sour. Nevertheless, during those years of rationed supplies, the rich food served at Moscow Restaurant brought gustatory satisfaction that could not be matched with the plain cabbage and coarse cornmeal bun – the staple of most families. In fact, together with foreign embassies in Beijing, Moscow Restaurant was among a limited number of "special units" that

enjoyed privileged supplies. Even during the years of severe food shortages and famines between 1959 and 1961, supplies to the restaurant maintained the same quality and quantity.[29]

To many, however, it was not the food but the feeling of being a "high-end" customer in the dream-like mansion of Moscow Restaurant that completed their Russian adventure. Just sitting in such a palace was enchantment enough, not to mention the gratification of having an expensive feast, experiencing a different dining style, practicing Western etiquette, and gingerly experimenting with strange utensils. As a matter of fact, oftentimes, Chinese delegations to the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries were sent to Moscow Restaurant before departure to learn about Western dining etiquette, especially how to use forks and knives.[30] Here, shiny knives and forks replaced chopsticks; brownish coffee served in a cup on a silver-rimmed plate replaced the cheap, yellowish tea commonly offered in Chinese restaurants; and long-stemmed wine glasses sparkled instead of the old-fashioned ceramic wine cups of traditional China. Most utensils, wine, and even some cooking ingredients were imported from the Soviet Union to enhance the authentic flavor. Russian experts were also brought in to not only train Chinese chefs in essential cooking skills but impart in them the knowledge of nutrition, hygiene, and restaurant management.[31] Altogether, Moscow Restaurant was made to represent the highest standards of cooking and dining. These standards were deeply and vividly ingrained in the memories of every Chinese diner. Four decades later, when tourist restrictions were lifted and former patrons of Moscow Restaurant finally had the chance to set foot on Russian soil, some even judged the authenticity of Russian cuisine by their recollections of the dishes from Moscow Restaurant.[32]

The Chinese experience of the ersatz exotic at Moscow Restaurant clearly verges on Occidentalism. At a time when the Soviet Union was China's primary window to the outside world, the restaurant stimulated and satisfied the Chinese curiosity about foreign/Western food and culture, and it did so in politically permissible terms. Endowed with a flavor of Russian aristocracy, the restaurant also embodied advanced Soviet socialist culture that guaranteed ideological legitimacy. After touring the Exhibition Center, visitors could come here for a meal, then go on to the adjacent cinema to watch *Lenin in 1918*, or the theater next door to see a performance, thus concluding the revolutionary rite of passage on a sacred site of socialist ideals and, at the same time gratifying their yearning for something "foreign" and "fashionable." In Beijing, it became a fad for young men to propose to their girlfriends at the Moscow Restaurant. A diner recalled that in 1955, after saving every penny for three months, he invited his girlfriend to Moscow Restaurant. In the name of revolution and the socialist cause, he proposed to her by singing the famed Russian song "Moscow Nights."[33] Since then, it has been a tradition for the couple to celebrate their wedding anniversary in the restaurant.[34] This is but one of the many romantic stories intimately associated with Moscow Restaurant.

Although Moscow Restaurant was built in China after Stalin's death, architecturally, it still belonged to the Stalinist neoclassical lineage, and culturally it exemplified the middle-class values that Stalin promoted. As such, it met the

desire of Chinese elite (and occasionally some ordinary people) for status and material well-being. But for the majority of the masses, it was a culture too high (and too expensive) to attain or appreciate. A female teacher named Hong Jinglan commented after visiting the Soviet Exhibition: "Moscow Restaurant is not for us. We would be asked to change clothes and wear perfume if we go in."[35] Although the point of this archival document is to criticize those who had "backward thinking and ulterior motives (against the Soviet Union)," the view of this woman certainly reveals among the unprivileged an aversion to fine clothes, perfume, and other bourgeois trappings associated with Moscow Restaurant. The type of European high culture that Moscow Restaurant embodied was a dream to fancy for the elite but a dream too good to be relevant for ordinary people. The CCP rejected the bourgeois values of the middle class in general but tolerated them to some extent, especially before 1956. However, when the Anti-Rightist Campaign started and Sino-Soviet relations changed simultaneously, Soviet middle-class culture became a target of relentless criticism.

The Soviet-style buildings

Shortly after the Soviet Exhibition Center was opened in Beijing, three additional exhibition centers were completed to showcase Soviet socialist achievements in other Chinese cities. In 1955, the Shanghai Sino-Soviet Friendship Building and the Guangzhou Sino-Soviet Friendship Building came into being, and so did the Wuhan Sino-Soviet Friendship Palace in the following year. Like the Soviet Exhibition Center in Beijing, these three buildings also hosted the "Exhibition of Soviet Economic and Cultural Achievements" that brought millions of people face-to-face with Soviet industrialization and modern material life.

At the same time, these four buildings became the most conspicuous landmarks of their cities and models for urban building design. As the first few public structures to demonstrate Soviet architectural concepts in the PRC, they offered Chinese architects a practical illustration of what was known as "socialist architecture." Pseudo- and semi-Soviet-style structures soon mushroomed across China, especially in the Northeast and Northwest, where most of the 156 projects were located. Altogether, these buildings set the life of urban dwellers alight with high ideals of international solidarity and feelings of socialist modernity.

In the Chinese context, the so-called "Soviet-style" or "Stalinist" architecture[36] was simply a loose term for Chinese buildings patterned on Russian architectural designs or displaying certain Russian architectural features. Unlike the buildings in Eastern Europe that still stand as pointed reminders of Stalinism, Soviet-style architecture in China was generally free from the neoclassical excesses of tiers and spires that gave them extra height. Typically, a Soviet-style building in China involved a symmetrical tower block featuring a high-rise in the center, flanked by two lower wings. Masonry was often used, which naturally dictated narrow windows and sturdy, thick walls. This style dominated new structures built in the 1950s to house important party organizations and provincial governments, the factories of the "156 Projects" under Soviet aid, as well as the teaching buildings and dormitories

on newly reorganized university campuses. Some of them were carbon copies of buildings in the Soviet Union. For example, several mining schools and colleges in Liaoning, Hebei, and Jiangxi provinces used as their blueprint the design of the main building at the former Leningrad State Mining Institute (today's Saint Petersburg Mining Institute). Others designed by Chinese architects synthesized motifs of Soviet architecture. In this case, the former building for the Anhui Provincial Government and Tsinghua University's main building (emulating Moscow State University's main building) both adopted the symmetrical layout.[37] Overlooking traditional Chinese palaces and temples, the monumental Soviet-style buildings unmistakably "underscored the new Soviet presence in China."[38]

However, Soviet architecture and the proliferation of Soviet-style buildings across China were not always seen as intrusive or incongruous with Chinese architecture. Although it is not clear whether central government or local leaders ordered new buildings to be put up in the Soviet style, it was generally believed that the symmetrical, imposing, and sometimes grandiose Soviet designs best legitimized China's new socialist order and buttressed communist authority. Symbolizing a break with the past, Soviet-style architecture represented an appropriate way of celebrating the victory of socialist revolutions (both in China and in the world), the Sino-Soviet alliance, and China's new-found sense of belonging in the socialist world.[39] Rising above China's emerging industrial centers, Soviet-style buildings applied to these cities an identity that was both socialist and internationalist.

To heighten the socialist, internationalist nature of new constructions, Chinese architects transformed Chinese architectural concepts in the process of emulating Soviet architecture. Some of these novelties resulted from new uses of conventional Chinese architectural elements, as reflected in the widespread use of doves and red stars as adornments. In buildings such as the "Four Departments and One Committee" Building (*sibu yihui dalou*)[40] in Sanlihe and Tianjin University's No. 9 Teaching Building, the image of a dove, a symbol of world peace and internationalism, appears in place of traditional dragon-head ornaments on the ends of ridgepoles commonly seen in imperial palaces. The red star, as a symbol of revolution, was extensively used in buildings with revolutionary significance. For instance, the Military Museum of Chinese Revolution, like the Soviet Exhibition Center in Beijing, was furnished with a colossal red star at the top of its central tower. Similarly, sculptures and murals – two forms of decoration common in traditional Chinese architecture – were given a new twist. As in the Soviet Union, sculptures and murals were often made elaborate and grandiose to enhance the artistic appeal of socialist architecture. A typical example is a series of sculptures on the theme of harvesting in front of the National Agriculture Exhibition Center. Like the pillars carved with clusters of fruits on the facade of the Soviet Exhibition Center, these sculptures highlight the great achievements of agricultural development in China and the advantages of the socialist system. Likewise, eye-catching slogans were added to reinforce public understanding of the function of certain buildings. Examples of this include the Chinese characters for "solidarity" and "progress" on the two side doors of the main entrance to the Cultural Palace of Nationalities, calling to mind the slogans of "peace" and "friendship" at the entrance to the Soviet Exhibition Center.

These motifs brought Soviet designs closer to the Chinese public, but what really made Soviet-style buildings locally acceptable was the fact that the solidly built Soviet-style buildings surrounding their lives afforded them solid proof of socialist modernity. Indeed, at a time when the Soviet Union was China's main contact with the world, Soviet architecture was viewed as "modern," "exotic," and in the words of the rank and file, "especially good-looking, trendy, and worth copying."[41] To understand the appeal of Soviet-style buildings in China, it is important to bear in mind that high-rises were a rarity in most Chinese cities in the 1950s. The newly built Soviet-style structures – often the tallest buildings in the urban center – became hallmarks of modernity. For example, when construction for the North China Pharmaceutical Factory started in 1953, the original site contained nothing but empty land dotted with small shops. The only "tall" structure in the area was a two-story building for the local newspaper headquarters. The largest antibiotics producer in Asia built under direct Soviet assistance, the factory emerged not only to end China's reliance on foreign-made penicillin but also as a new landmark of the city of Shijiazhuang, with a 72-meter sky-rocketing tower to process corn (for starch) and a Soviet-style office complex.[42] Similarly, when the Xinjiang Kunlun Hotel was completed in 1959, "the city of Urumqi still bordered on the barren Gobi desert and the dirt roads were bumpy," recalled Wang Jianming, who worked in the hotel for eight years after its completion.[43] Not surprisingly, the hotel – built in a semi-Soviet style and the tallest building in Urumqi – was opened with a rousing fanfare. In the eyes of local residents, the building looked "strong," "sturdy," "magnificent," and "modern," and it was held a privilege to attend a meeting or eat a meal there.[44] Even today the townsfolk of Urumqi still refer to it as "Eight Floors," an intimate nickname the building acquired fifty years ago.

Soviet-style residential buildings set the benchmark for residential constructions in China at the time, giving Chinese people an even closer understanding of Soviet advancement. Although these buildings in China were not as well equipped as the Soviet residential buildings portrayed in Chinese propaganda, they were in a different league from the small, rundown mud-brick houses ubiquitous in the early 1950s China. Following the Soviet pattern, newly developed residential areas were often a self-contained unit complete with a garden, a canteen, a workers' club, and sometimes even with a nursery or a hospital, as the excerpts from Tie Ning's short story describe at the beginning of this chapter.

Along with the infrastructure, entertainment organized especially to cater for the Soviet nationals living in China also spread among Chinese residents of Soviet-style buildings. On weekends and for special occasions, workers' clubs would organize film screenings and dance parties that often drew huge crowds of participants and onlookers.[45] Russian music and dance quickly swept Chinese cities. Russian songs were furnished with Chinese lyrics; their beautiful melodies and timeless themes of love and happiness captivated the hearts of numerous music fans, and even today they are still well-remembered. Men and women danced in pseudo-Russian fashion to tunes from Russia. Many people learned to play the accordion, an instrument for Russian folk music. In such surroundings, some

sports and pastimes popular in the Soviet Union also gained currency in China. For instance, chess, an international game then dominated by the Soviet Union and a Soviet propaganda tool against American hegemony in sports during the Cold War, was promoted as a competitive game by the Chinese government. Ice skating became a popular winter activity in North China. In Beijing, skating in the Shichahai Ice Rink was the second most trendy and romantic activity for young people who were dating, outranked only by dining at Moscow Restaurant. Soviet lifestyles thus became a part of urban culture; the vision of socialist modernity and the importance of internationalist solidarity also penetrated deeper into the everyday life of city dwellers.

The conflict between "socialist content" and "national forms"

Although Chinese architects were copying Soviet architecture in the early 1950s, they could hardly find any well-defined terms for the so-called "socialist realist architecture" from translated Soviet books.[46] In China's architectural circle of the time, the best-known but also the vaguest Soviet architectural principle was a Stalinist policy affirming that architecture, like other forms of art, should be "national in form, socialist in content."[47] This policy was raised essentially to deal with a polyethnic reality within the USSR and among countries under Soviet influence. In general, the dictum resulted in a revival of classical architectural styles in mainstream architecture, after suppressing Modernist and Constructivist opposition. Russian classical architecture was regarded as the national form suitable for the proletariat, thus a weapon against "bourgeois" Modernist architecture.[48] As for the national republics of the USSR, although it is questionable whether Stalin's advocacy of national forms was genuinely intended to take in local traditions, it did give architects a degree of freedom to develop their own Stalinist styles.[49]

Representing Soviet official attitude to the question of national identity and ethnic style, the policy of "national in form, socialist in content" had particular significance for the export of Soviet architecture to countries in the Soviet orbit. In Eastern and Central Europe, the Soviet Union promoted this policy to minimize local resistance and facilitate assimilation of Soviet cultural models. It was claimed that there was no contradiction between socialist culture and national culture; instead, socialist culture would endow national culture with new content and national culture would invest socialist culture with new forms and modes of expression. Different nationalities should, based on their own languages and ways of living, use distinctive forms and methods in socialist construction to represent socialist content.[50] But in actual practice, the tendency of mono-national approach to a polyethnic existence prevailed and Soviet cultural policy turned repressive.

By the late 1940s, the dictum had been considerably watered down by the insistence that all artists, whatever their nationality, should study the great realist heritage of Russian art. According to the colonialist ideology of the Zhdanov Doctrine (*Zhdanovshchina*), a unified artistic culture was to be imposed across the USSR based on the supremacy of Russian culture.[51] Further, there could be no separate national paths to socialist culture in Eastern Europe: the Soviet

(Russian) model was to be followed slavishly. As a result, Stalinist architecture was extensively employed in the postwar people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc. Buildings with tiers and spires – often disrespectfully dubbed "wedding cake" or "Stalin's birthday cake" – dotted the skylines of major cities in Poland, Romania, Hungary, Latvia, East Germany, etc. Although some did show certain local influences, they were generally regarded as Soviet imports.[52]

Soviet cultural policy toward China, however, was less heavy-handed. Despite the chauvinism of Soviet leadership and the sometimes know-all manner of Soviet advisors, Soviet authorities seem not to have attempted to change Chinese cities into clones of Eastern European cities. Ironically, it was the voluntary choice of the Chinese government to follow the Soviet model closely, at least during the formative years of the PRC. Mao once openly admitted that back in the early 50s, China was "slavishly" copying the Soviet Union "with little creativity."[53] In architecture, the demand to follow the Soviet architectural creed that architecture should be not only "socialist in content" but also "national in form" resulted in the reproduction of Soviet-style constructions on the one hand, and an utterly "nationalistic" search for a Chinese form to represent the country's new socialist identity on the other.[54] In this sense, it is fair to say that among the Soviet-style buildings that proliferated in the 1950s China, even the most mechanical imitation by Chinese architects attempted to translate Soviet theory into the Chinese context.

But the role of Soviet advisors in the planning of Chinese cities and the refashioning of Chinese architecture cannot be underestimated. In the re-design of Beijing as the capital of the PRC, Soviet advisors suggested to place the central government inside Old Beijing's traditional buildings, whereas a group of Chinese architects headed by Liang Sicheng (then Vice-Director of the Beijing City Planning Commission) advocated building a separate new town for administrative purposes.[55] In the end, the Chinese leadership adopted Soviet advisors' plan. The decision was devastating to a number of historical structures and in recent years has been strongly criticized for destroying the Chinese national essence.[56]

However, Soviet advisors did not lack appreciation of traditional Chinese architecture. Following Stalin's dictum, Soviet advisors supported China's quest for a national form and were instrumental in this regard. Particularly, they urged Chinese architects to develop a Chinese national form from China's own traditional architecture. This facilitated a wave of architectural "revivalism" (*fugu zhuyi*) in the early years of the 1950s. In September 1949, when the first few Soviet architects arrived in Beijing and met Liang Sicheng, they advised Chinese architects to design something like the Dongzhimen Watchtower to represent China's new national architectural form. To make sure the message got across, they even drew a gate tower to show Liang.[57] Despite their contrasting plans for Beijing's urban planning, Liang and Soviet advisors found common ground in developing national forms with Chinese characteristics for socialist buildings. Although Liang received a totally Western education in his youth and was well educated in Western modernist architecture, his works were dominated by a tradition-oriented spirit owing to his upbringing in classical Chinese culture.[58] With Soviet backing, Liang, and some like-minded Chinese architects who advocated protecting

traditional architectural structures and designing new buildings in harmony with existing old styles, played a key part in the renewal of strong traditional forms typified in large, upturned tiled roofs, or the "big roof" (*da wuding*) as it was commonly known. Although Liang had been held responsible for proposing and developing the "big roof" style, Liang himself was not pleased by this design, as he compared it to a man "wearing a Western suit and a Chinese skullcap." However, it was often believed that Liang nevertheless accepted the design as a concession after his plan of preserving Beijing's old town was rejected.[59]

The "big roof" was a predominant feature of imperial palaces and temples. In traditional Chinese architecture, the style and size of the roof was an expression of hierarchy: the bigger and more elaborate the roof, the higher the social class the building represents. For this reason, the roofs of imperial palaces were made extraordinarily large with richly decorated overhanging eaves. After the Republic of China replaced the Qing Dynasty, the "big roof" continued to exist as a result of" foreign intervention. Some Western architects who recognized the artistic appeal of traditional Chinese architecture applied the "big roof" to their designs in China, but they modified it with the use of concrete, steel, and stone in place of wooden materials. Several missionary schools in particular adopted this style to reduce local resistance to missionary work and foreign presence. The main building of the Peking Union Medical College Hospital, designed by American architect Charles Coolidge, was a typical example of capping a modernist high-rise (equipped with up-to-date facilities inside) with a traditional "big roof."[60] The Yanyuan Garden at Yenching University (today's Peking University) designed by an American, along with the teaching building of the Catholic University of Peking (today a campus of Beijing Normal University) designed by a Belgian architect, further developed Western adaptation of Chinese palace designs for modern usage.[61] This modified Chinese style was widely used by Chinese architects when they designed administrative buildings for the Nationalist government in Nanjing.[62]

Amid the revivalist trend in the early PRC, the "big roof" was selected to pass on the essence of Chinese national architecture, saving it from the scrap-heap among the "cultural dregs" of Old China. Highly commended by Soviet architects, the design even survived CCP hostility and resistance to Euro-American cultures and was not blamed for its association with Euro-American architects. Between 1952 and 1956, the high tide of revivalist architecture brought the "big roof" to a number of new public structures in Beijing: the teaching buildings at Central University for Nationalities, the dormitory of the People's Liberation Army General Political Department in Di'anmen, the main building of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and the Beijing Gymnasium. The famed Friendship Hotel, completed in 1954 to house Soviet experts and their families in Beijing, was an especially notable "big roof" design (Figure 3.4).

The glamor of the "big roof" did not last long in the PRC revivalist trend because neoclassicism was criticized in the Soviet architectural circle shortly after Khrushchev came to office. At an important meeting of Soviet architects, Khrushchev made a speech condemning the "excesses" of past constructions in the Stalinist era. He advocated low-cost prefabricated concrete apartments that were short on

Figure 3.4 The Friendship Hotel

Source: Courtesy of Steven Louis, October 12, 2016.

aesthetic appeal but temporarily eased the housing shortage in Moscow.[63] The new move in Soviet architecture soon swept China. On January 13, 1955, *People's Daily* published in full length Khrushchev's long speech.[64] A campaign against wasteful expenditure in construction started, and the "big roof" was made the main culprit for generating the "excesses" in China's new buildings. As a result, not long after the Friendship Hotel was completed, its designer Zhang Bo was criticized for the high cost of an elaborate "big roof." Liang Sicheng was forced to make open self-criticism at a national conference after a series of struggles.[65] Constructions and designs with "big roofs" were immediately halted. The decision was so arbitrary that the original "big roof" design for the "Four Departments and One Committee" Building was never completed even though the roof materials were already stacked on top at the time.[66] Similarly, other ongoing projects were stripped of the "extravagance" or redesigned from scratch. Constructing Soviet-style buildings was out of step with the times.

The increasing rift between Chinese and Soviet leaderships in the late 1950s drove Chinese architects into a dilemma: they could not use the "big roof," nor could they openly follow Soviet styles (and of course they could not go back to American Modernist architecture). However, the influence of Soviet architecture was already so prevalent that it was nearly impossible for Chinese architects to steer totally clear of it in their new works. For this reason, even the design of the Military Museum of Chinese Revolution (Figure 3.5), one of the "ten monumental buildings" (*shida jianzhu*) constructed in 1959 in a concerted effort to "create the

Figure 3.5 The Military Museum in Beijing

Source: Courtesy of Steven Louis, October 12, 2016.

new style of Chinese socialist architecture," bore a strong resemblance to Soviet architecture.[67] Oddly, the "big roof" resurfaced as an assertion of China's nationalist independence, leading to traditional roof designs for the Beijing Railway Station, the National Agriculture Exhibition Center, the Cultural Palace of Nationalities (Figure 3.6), and Diaoyutai State Guest House among the "ten monumental buildings." In the following three decades, building designs in other cities were mostly modeled upon the "ten monumental buildings" in Beijing. This combination of indigenized Soviet elements and tradition-oriented styles continued well past the opening up of China in the 1980s. The Beijing West Railway Station (Figure 3.7), which was constructed in the mid-1990s, clearly displays the symmetry and grandiose Soviet architectural style, with a "big roof" to match.

Folding down

Architecture has often been used by new state regimes as a way to enhance authority, build nationalism, and bring about popular identification with the state. For this reason, the CCP employed Soviet architectural forms and refashioned the Chinese cityscapes. While Soviet-style structures led the charge in aligning the Chinese with the international socialist worldview, they were also at the cutting-edge of socialist modernity, serving to directly introduce advanced Soviet culture and technology to Chinese society at large. The CCP succeeded to a considerable extent in bringing an international flavor to the physical structures that Chinese people inhabited, used, and recognized in their daily lives. Designed to drive home the advantages of the socialist system and to give ordinary people a feeling of being up with the times, the transformations in Chinese urban architecture "reinforced an internationalist

Figure 3.6 The Cultural Palace of Nationalities

Source: Courtesy of Steven Louis, October 12, 2016.

Figure 3.7 Beijing West Railway Station

Source: Courtesy of Steven Louis, October 12, 2016.

image that China was on the verge of enjoying the fruits of socialism just like the Soviet Union was."[68] These structures enabled people to see that the claims made by the new regime concerning socialism and modernity stood on solid foundations. Well-built modern structures and the lifestyles that went with them convinced at least some of the population to expect Chinese life to be fully integrated into the modern world. After more than a century of resistance to foreign incursions – from the Opium Wars to World War II – achieving a level of popular support for a foreign modernization path in less than a decade was indeed extraordinary.

The sad thing is that China did not walk much further on this path of development. When the Sino-Soviet alliance collapsed in the early 1960s, the PRC government made every effort to break away from the Soviet model and blocked all sources of Soviet influence. In architecture, existing Soviet-style buildings were repainted or modified to look less foreign, and ongoing construction projects were redesigned. When a physical overhaul was out of the question, at least the name was changed. The Soviet Exhibition Center in Beijing was renamed Beijing Exhibition Center (*Beijing zhanlanguan*) in 1958,[69] and, later, Moscow Restaurant became Beijing Exhibition Center Restaurant (*Beijing zhanlanguan canting*). Likewise, the Shanghai Sino-Soviet Friendship Building was renamed Shanghai Exhibition Center (*Shanghai zhanlanguan*) in 1968, and the iconic sculpture of a Soviet worker and a Chinese worker holding up a hammer and a red star was removed from the front.[70] Despite such mishaps, the reputations of these buildings among the Chinese remained intact, showing the ingrained high regard that Soviet culture enjoyed among the populace and the on-the-ground effect which the physical presence of Soviet culture had in influencing general opinion. Moscow Restaurant retained its distinctive status even during the Cultural Revolution and eventually went back to its original name in the 1980s.

Overall, though, most Soviet-style buildings constructed in the 1950s have faded into obscurity since China started its economic reform and opened up to the Western world in the late 1970s. Faced with the stunning speed of modernization across the country, Soviet-style residential buildings are out-of-date. Many have been replaced by apartment buildings with new facilities in step with new lifestyles. As to the future of existing Soviet-style buildings, there is a clash of interests between residents demanding new apartments and architects worrying about the disappearance of old designs.[71]

While the problem remains unresolved, Soviet-style buildings were temporarily brought back into the spotlight, after the 2008 Sichuan earthquake which had an 8.0 magnitude. In the shock-affected areas, many of the buildings (especially school buildings) constructed in the 1990s were reduced to rubble, whereas a good number of Soviet-style buildings firmly stood their ground. This attests to the "solidity" of Soviet-style construction, which Tie Ning fondly describes in her aforementioned short story.

> Today, when we pass by the textile workers' apartments designed by the Soviets and gaze reflectively at these similar-looking, old, and somewhat clumsy buildings and the smoke pipes on the roof that have turned pitch black, we

> can still see the solid material and grand style of Soviet-style buildings and feel the romantic zeal for Communism.[72]

As Tie Ning aptly captures here, most Chinese coming of age in the 1950s view Soviet-style buildings with nostalgia. After the rollercoaster ride of political movements in the second half of the twentieth century, they find themselves lost again in a fast changing economy and a dizzying pace of life. They look back to the early PRC time of their youth and dreams. Like An Delie, the protagonist in Tie Ning's short story who gets lost without the old routine that the old Soviet-style residential buildings embody, many people need objects of the past to identify with and reassert their identities. In 1995 when the Wuhan Municipal Government decided to demolish the Wuhan Sino-Soviet Friendship Palace and put up a new building complex on the site, the townspeople swarmed to bid farewell to the building. For them, the Palace was not simply a building, but a keepsake of past ethos and sentiments. Fortunately, Moscow Restaurant has been preserved and remains a symbolic site that brings back bittersweet memories to many. That this restaurant still operates today speaks volumes about the public yearning for certain moments in the revolutionary march forward.

Notes

1 An earlier version of this chapter was published in 2014 as "Building Friendship: Soviet Influence, Socialist Modernity, and Chinese Cityscape in the 1950s" for the *Quarterly Journal of Chinese Studies*, 2(3), pp. 48–66. Reprinted with permission.
2 An Delie is the Chinese transliteration of a common Russian name Andrei.
3 *Bulaji* is the Chinese transliteration of the Russian word *plate*, meaning "frock."
4 Tie, *An Delie de wanshang*, 97–98.
5 For more information about the "156 Projects," see Webber, Wang, and Ying, *China's Transition to a Global Economy*, 120–122; Lin, *Red Capitalism in South China*, 36–37.
6 Mao, *Jianguo yilai*, 46.
7 See a number of publications under the title "the great Soviet Union," e.g., Gu, *Zai xingfu de guojia li*; Wei, *Weida de Sulian*; Zhu, *Weida de Sulian*; Shandong sheng ZhongSu youhao xie hui, *Weida de Sulian*; Mikhaylov, *Weida de Sulian*; Jiangsu sheng ZhongSu youhao xie hui, *Weida de Sulian*.
8 Li, "Gongren jieji weishenme," 11–12.
9 Some Chinese students found it hard to believe that misconduct such as theft, alcoholism, cheating in exams, and loose morals, existed among Soviet college students. However, they were not permitted to mention such things to their Chinese fellows.
10 "Peng Zhen, Song Yu deng tongzhi zai Sulian zhanlanguan kaigong dianli shang de jianghua," [Speeches by Peng Zhen, Song Yu, and other comrades on the commencement ceremony of the Soviet Exhibition Center], October 15, 1953, 001-006-00783, Beijing Municipal Archives (hereafter, BJMA). "Peng Zhen, Li Zheren deng tongzhi yu Sulian zhuanjia he youguan fuze tongzhi zuotan Suzhanguan gongcheng wenti de jilu," [Memos of Peng Zhen, Li Zheren, and other comrades meeting Soviet experts and related personnel on the construction of the Soviet Exhibition Center], November 1, 1953, 001-006-00784, BJMA.
11 Jiedai Sulian laihua zhanlan bangongshi xuanchuanchu, *Sulian jingji ji wenhua jianshe chengjiu zhanlanhui jieshao*; "Sulian jingji yi wenhua jianshe chengjiu zhanlanhui di'ertian shengkuang," [The grand scene on the second day of the Soviet Economic and Cultural Achievements Exhibition], *Renmin ribao*, October 4, 1954.

12 "Mao zhuxi xiexin xiang Sulian zhengfu daibiaotuan zhixie," [Chairman Mao wrote to the Soviet government delegation to express gratitude,] *Renmin ribao*, October 13, 1954.
13 The number of visitors in Beijing reached 2,760,000, see "Jiedai Sulian laihua zhanlan bangongshi canguan zuzhichu gongzuo zongjie," [Work report by the visiting and organization sector of the office of receiving the Soviet exhibition,] December 28, 1954, 038-002-00147, BJMA. For a report on the overall visiting information, see "Sulian zhanlanghui zai Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou zhanchu jiankuang," [Brief report on the Soviet exhibition in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou,] *Changjiang ribao*, May 4, 1954.
14 "Chongwen qu zuzhi ge jieceng renmin canguan Sulian zhanlanguan gongzuo qingkuang," [Reports on residents in the Chongwen District of different social strata visiting the Soviet Exhibition Center,] December 31, 1954, 038–002–00147, BJMA.
15 Yang, "Wo kandao le woguo," 7.
16 Qian Junrui, "Guanghui de bangyang: zhuhe Sulian jingji ji wenhua jianshe chengjiu zhanlanhui de kaimu," [A glorious example: Congratulations to the opening of the Soviet Economic and Cultural Achievements Exhibition,] *Renmin ribao*, October 3, 1954.
17 "Chongwen qu zuzhi ge jieceng renmin canguan Sulian zhanlanguan gongzuo qingkuang," [Reports on residents in the Chongwen District of different social strata visiting the Soviet Exhibition Center,] December 31, 1954, 038–002–00147, BJMA.
18 Wu, "Qingsong yukuai," 30–32.
19 See a number of articles in *Renmin ribao* on the day after the opening of the exhibition (October 3, 1954), e.g. Kang Zhuo, "Wo kandao le zuguo de mingtian: Sulian jingji ji wenhua jianshe chengjiu zhanlanhui." [I saw China's tomorrow: The Soviet Economic and Cultural Achievements Exhibition]; Ye Jizhuang, "Yiding yao zou Sulian de daolu: wei Sulian jingji ji wenhua jianshe chengjiu zhanlanhui kaimu er zuo." [We must take the Soviet path: Written for the opening of the Soviet Economic and Cultural Achievements Exhibition]; Fu Dong and Yu Ming, "Xuexi Sulian xianjin jingyan de xuexiao: ji Sulian jingji ji wenhua jianshe chengjiu zhanlanhui kaimu de diyitian." [A school for learning about advanced Soviet experience: The first day of the Soviet Economic and Cultural Achievements Exhibition].
20 Rowe and Seng, *Architectural Encounters*, 92.
21 Huang, *Zhenqing ruge*, 254.
22 Xu Delong, "Wo xinzhong de nake xing," [That star in my heart,] *Renmin wang*, June 16, 2004, www.people.com.cn/GB/14738/14759/21865/2576323.html.
23 Li, "1966, Laomo," 30.
24 Ibid., 31.
25 Wang Wenwen, "Nostalgic Moscow Restaurant to Be Renovated," *China Radio International English News*, July 3, 2009, http://english.cri.cn/7146/2009/07/03/1901s498565.htm.
26 Some Chinese did have complaints in this regard. For discord between Soviet advisers and Chinese people, see Ganshin and Zazerskaya, "Pitfalls Along the Path," 63–70.
27 Liu Ting, "Laomo canting: dayuan zidi jiaochulai de laopengyou," [The old Moscow Restaurant: An old friend of children from the compound,] *Beijing ribao*, October 15, 2013.
28 Interview with a Beijing resident, August 2, 2008.
29 "Sulian zhanlanguan guanlichu guanyu Mosike canting qingqiu zengjia fuqiangfen, baiting, huashengyou de gongying wenti," [The management department of the Soviet Exhibition Center on Moscow Restaurant's request for increasing supplies of Grade A flour, sugar, and peanut oil,] May 16, 1958, 002–010–00080, BJMA.
30 Li Lao, "Mosike canting: fengyu piaoyang de meishi anhao," [Moscow Restaurant: A gourmet code in raging storms,] *Chengshi huabao*, June 14, 2006, http://magazine.sina.com/gb/citypic/159/20060526/06052264.html.

31 Wang et al., *Mosike canting chushi peixunban*.
32 Luo Xuehui, "Laomo: meng jieshu de difang, xiangxiang zhong de Eluosi," [Old Moscow: A place where dreams end, Russia in imagination,] in "Zaojian Laomo: jinian Beijing 1954 Mosike canting kaiye 50 zhounian," [Seeing the Old Moscow again: Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1954 Moscow Restaurant in Beijing], *Xinwen zhoukan*, October 14, 2004. This essay was written for a writing competition to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of Moscow Restaurant. The competition was sponsored by the newly renovated Moscow Restaurant in 2004.
33 This song won an award at the World Festival of Youth and Students in 1957. Since then it has been one of the best-known Russian songs. The Chinese translation is "Mosike jiaowai de wanshang." As the most popular Russian song in China, it is still well remembered by those who lived through the Mao era.
34 Interview with a college professor, Beijing, June 22, 2009.
35 "Chongwen qu zuzhi ge jieceng renmin canguan Sulian zhanlanguan gongzuo qingkuang," [Reports on residents in the Chongwen District of different social strata visiting the Soviet Exhibition Center,] December 31, 1954, 038-002-00147, BJMA.
36 For Stalinist architecture, see for example, Dobrenko and Naiman, *Landscape of Stalinism*; Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values*, 146–183.
37 The Anhui Provincial Government has been moved to a new location and a new building on May 1, 2016. The former building was designed by a Chinese architect and was completed between 1954 and 1956. Despite the absence of Soviet supervision, the building adopted the symmetrical design of Soviet-style architecture.
38 Rowe and Seng, *Architectural Encounters*, 92.
39 In a report about inviting Soviet advisors for Beijing's city planning, it was said that "most [Chinese] technicians are well versed in the city planning in capitalist countries, but know very little about the theory and technical knowledge of socialist city development." See 001-005-00125, BJMA.
40 This early office building complex housed four state departments (No. 1 Department of Mechanics, No. 2 Department of Mechanics, Department of Heavy Industry, and Department of Finance) and the State Planning Committee.
41 Run Xin and Yang Mei, "Sushi jianzhu: gongye zhongzhen de shidai jiyi," [Soviet-style buildings: Historical memory of an important industrial town,] *Taiyuan ribao*, February 15, 2009.
42 Wang Sida, "'Huayao' he Shijiazhuang: yichang, yicheng, yijiazi," [The Northeast Pharmaceutical Factory and Shijiazhuang: A factory, a city, and sixty years,] *Hebei ribao*, October 8, 2014. The factory moved out of the original site in 2014, as the result of measures taken to reduce air pollution in the city. The original factory buildings will remain intact, and are in the process of being converted into a pharmaceutical museum.
43 Zhang Yingchun, "Fengxue piaolai man 'balou'," [Wind and snow to the "Eight Floor",] *Xinjiang tianshan wang*, December 14, 2005, www.tianshannet.com.cn/GB/channel8/37/1082/200512/14/208938.html.
44 Liu Shuling, "'Balou' de qianshi jinsheng," [The origin and presence of the "Eight Floor",] *Zhongguo xinwen wang*, August 17, 2005, accessed on November 10, 2009, http://big5.chinanews.com.cn:89/gate/big5/www.chinanews.com/news/2005/2005-08-17/26/612929.shtml.
45 Kuang and Pan, *Women de wushi niandai*, 273–275.
46 Ji, "20 shiji 50 niandai Sulian," 66–71.
47 Frolova-Walker, "National in Form," 334.
48 For the characteristics of Stalinist architecture and its vital role in expressing and promoting ideology in the Soviet Union during the Stalin years, see Dobrenko and Naiman, *Landscape of Stalinism*.

49 The Armenian architect, Alexander Tamanian, was a typical example. Appointed as the chief architect of Yerevan, he was largely responsible for the neoclassical designs in the city and the Armenian variety of Stalinist architecture.
50 Stalin, "The Political Tasks of the University," 135–154.
51 Zhdanov (1896–1948) was a Soviet party figure and statesman who directed Soviet cultural policy between 1946 and 1948.
52 For a survey of the history of architecture in the Stalinist period in Eastern and Central Europe, see Aman, *Architecture and Ideology*.
53 See Mao's speech at an expanded meeting of the CCP Central Party in 1962 (also known as "Seven-thousand People Conference," in Mao, "Mao Zedong zai kuoda," 305.
54 Ding, *Constructing a Place*, 46.
55 For Soviet advisors' suggestions, see "Sulian zhuanjia Lannikefu guanyu Beijing shi jianglai fazhan jihua de baogao," [Soviet advisor Lanikov's report on the planning of Beijing's future development,] December 31, 1949, 001–009–00056, BJMA.
56 For the debate between Soviet and Chinese architects regarding the planning of Beijing, see Wang, *Chengji*, 5–126; Westad, "Struggles for Modernity," 45–51.
57 Liang Sicheng, "Wenge jiaodai cailiao," [Confession in the Cultural Revolution,] December 3, 1967, cited in Wang, *Chengji*, 138.
58 Liang's father was Liang Qichao, a well-known Chinese thinker in the late Qing Dynasty.
59 Wang, *Chengji*, 127–62; Hung, *Mao's New World*, 25–50; Yang, *1955–1957 Jianzhu baijia*, 3–13, 26–28.
60 Cody, *Building in China*, 73–85.
61 Ibid., 107–142; Li et al., *Beijing gu jianzhu ditu*, 163.
62 Musgrove, *China's Contested Capital*, 89–124.
63 See Khrushchev's 1955 decree "On the liquidation of excesses in design and construction," in Czepczynski, *Cultural Landscapes*, 95.
64 "Lun zai jianzhu zhong guangfan caiyong gongyehua fangfa, gaishan zhiliang he jiangdi zaojia," [On widely adopting industrial methods in construction to improve quality and reduce cost,] *Renmin ribao*, January 13, 1955.
65 Lin, *Liang Sicheng*, 334.
66 Zhang Kaiji, "Wo huyu! Cong 'Sibu yihui' gongcheng tanqi," [I appeal! From the construction of the "Four Departments and One Committee",] *Zhongguo jianshe bao*, April 6, 2000.
67 On the "ten monumental buildings," see Hung, *Mao's New World*, 51–72.
68 Hess, "Big Brother Is Watching," 178.
69 "Sulian zhanlanguan gaiming wei Beijing zhanlanguan de qingshi," [Request for instructions on changing the name of the Soviet Exhibition Center into Beijing Exhibition Center,] September 27, 1957, 002-009-00157, BJMA. The name change became effective in the following year.
70 "Gudian Eluosi fengge de ZhongSu youhao dasha," 303.
71 "Sushi jianzhu gai zouxiang hechu?" [Where should the Soviet-style buildings go?], *Xin'an wanbao*, October 27, 2008.
72 Tie, *An Delie de wanshang*, 97.

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4 New clothes and socialist fashion

In July 1950, Zhang Ailing (Eileen Chang), the famed female writer of 1930s Shanghai, appeared at the First Shanghai Congress of Literature and Arts Workers. Known for her unusual, sometimes quaint dress style and her use of bold colors, on this occasion, Zhang was surprisingly attired in a dark gray *qipao* topped with a white fishnet sweater, sitting in the back of the auditorium.[1] Despite the low-key outfit, she still looked out of step with the conference dress code – the Zhongshan suit (known as the Mao suit in the West) for men and the Lenin jacket for women.

This contrast epitomizes the clash between the lingering "traditional" (and Westernized) clothing of the Republican era and the emerging styles in the first decade of the PRC, above all, in urban female fashion. Zhang's time was gone; before her, a new look embracing socialist fashion was in the making. As socialist reform deepened, *qipao*, perfume, permed hair, and high heels were increasingly seen as at odds with the aesthetics and lifestyles advocated by the new regime. Finding it impossible to reconcile herself to the new order after a two-month "real-life immersion" (*shenru shenghuo*) in northern Jiangsu Province's land reform, Zhang left for Hong Kong in 1952 to keep writing what she knew about ("granny's stuff"[2]) and wearing what she pleased. Under the new regime, *qipao* and Western dresses, together with the "petty-bourgeois" femininity they embodied, would be relegated to the back of the wardrobe within a decade. Meanwhile, urban fashion was to be transformed by imported Soviet styles and fabrics.[3]

Chapter 4 examines fashion and clothing behavior of the early PRC by focusing on a few Soviet-inspired clothing styles against the backdrop of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1950s and 60s. As the Chinese Communist state set forth a plan of socialist modernization based on the Soviet blueprint, Soviet fashion designs quickly took over and became a symbol of the new alignment in the Chinese worldview. Dressed in the Lenin jacket, the *bulaji*, and colorful shirts, men and women sang and danced to Russian melodies, celebrating socialist solidarity and the prospect of socialist prosperity. In the Cold War political climate, wearing Soviet-style clothes increasingly turned into a public ritual to highlight a "correct" political stance. Wearing Soviet-made cotton prints became a patriotic act in line with Sino-Soviet economic exchange, calling to mind the "selfless" help from the Soviet big brother.

The fact that these Soviet-related fashion items were used for political purposes in the early PRC was nothing new to a country with a long history of codified

regulations linking clothing to political statement, status, and power. Quite common in imperial China, authorities enacted edicts to prescribe the color, design, and material that members of different social strata could wear. However, the PRC government did not stipulate any specific dress code, and rarely did a Chinese statesman openly remark on clothing.[4] So who were the trendsetters in New China? What were the determinants of China's new fashion? And how did this new fashion become imbued with the Soviet Union?

To answer these questions, this chapter investigates the cultural politics of fashion in Mao's China, that is, the interplay between various forces and entities from within and outside China that shaped the production and consumption of the new socialist fashion. The discussions here include the government's intent to use fashion to create a new national image and display socialist achievements, as well as the availability of clothing restricted by national economy and household finance. The impact of Cold War on the Chinese outlook and choice of fashion is also examined. China's entry into the socialist camp and the Chinese Communist Party's pro-Soviet position pushed many to view Soviet fashion as revolutionary, progressive, modern, and therefore the right way forward. As the result of the negotiation between internal and external factors, China's Soviet-related clothing changes were woven into a national quest for a socialist identity and modernity, as well as the larger tapestry of building international camaraderie.

For sure, these new fashion trends were highly politicized, driven by governmental action and ideology. However, the non-political forces behind individual clothing habits and choice of fashion cannot be passed over. On a day-to-day level, choosing what to wear was not simply a subconscious action, but a constant balancing of personal desire, peer pressure, and social convention. This was especially the case at this time of social ferment. Some people still felt more comfortable in their pre-liberation coat-and-pants ensembles, but others were drawn to the foreign flavor of Soviet-style designs and welcomed them as an alternative to traditional Chinese dress. As more and more people ventured into the new fashion zone, it became odd to stay outside. By probing into the fashion impulses and self-regulation of ordinary citizens, this chapter offers a glimpse of how individuals reacted to the changes surrounding their everyday life in the early years of communist control.

Dress to progress: the Lenin Jacket

The Lenin jacket, or Lenin suit, was a legacy from the Yan'an period. Allegedly the outfit Lenin used to wear during the October Revolution, the Lenin jacket was a modified Western suit. It was popular among Chinese revolutionaries in the "liberated areas" of northwest China during the 1930s, as an emblem of Bolshevism and advanced revolutionary culture. The expansion of communist influence soon popularized it among the communist army. Originally worn by males and females alike, the Lenin jacket eventually evolved into a military uniform more preferred by women, featuring a big turn-down collar, a double-breasted front with two rows of buttons, two side pockets, and a waistband. After the CCP established its regime in 1949, the Lenin jacket soon took a place of pride in New China's "socialist fashion." (Figure 4.1)

Figure 4.1 (Top) Two women at Beihai Park in 1953. The woman on the left is wearing a Lenin jacket without a belt, and the jacket is buttoned all the way to the top. (Bottom) A girl and a woman wearing slightly modified Lenin jackets in December 1958

Source: Courtesy of Wang Weiyue.

The new role that the Lenin jacket took on was closely tied to the historical circumstances. For most regimes in history, particularly in their early days, physical appearance is considered both critical and instrumental in representing the ideology of the new authorities, unifying the minds of the subjects, and if necessary, asserting a national identity before the world.[5] Likewise, the new Chinese government attached great importance to how its statesmen looked, what its people wore, and how the nation as a whole presented itself to the international community. The "new look" of China was especially important because it manifested which side the country would take in the Cold War. Thus, in the formative stage of the PRC, clothing became invested with enormous political meaning.

Despite the lack of a clearly stated dress code mandated by the regime, Mao and his comrades-in-arms set the tone for proper male attire with their Zhongshan suits in the founding ceremony of the PRC. At the same time, the Lenin jacket was showcased in a national military parade by female student-soldier representatives. From then on, this jacket steadily established itself as the standard uniform for female cadres and soldiers, serving as an ideal match for Chinese men's Zhongshan suit on public occasions. This trend was reflected at the 1950 Shanghai Congress of Literature and Arts Workers mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. Dressing oneself that way became a symbolic gesture of renouncing old social ties, embracing the new era, and becoming a new citizen.[6] Acquiring the status of a "cadre suit" (*ganbu fu*), the Lenin jacket quickly became the *dernier cri* among urban Chinese women, especially working professionals.

The love affair with the Lenin jacket by China's female population can be attributed, first of all, to the thriving Sino-Soviet friendship in the early 1950s. During this "honeymoon" period of bilateral relations, the state-initiated "learn from the Soviet Union" campaign encouraged people to copy the Soviets in every possible manner. Just as American lifestyles, Hong Kong fashions, and Japanese and Korean pop cultures are admired in China today, in the 1950s, the Chinese idolized the Soviet Union to such a degree that everything related to that country became an instant hit. Against this backdrop, the Lenin jacket, associated with the leadership of the Soviet Union and the international proletarian revolution, became the must-wear fashion. Wearing this Soviet-style suit not only expressed one's participation in the "learn from the Soviet Union" campaign, but also stood as an everyday pro-Soviet statement.

The popularity of the Lenin jacket was also built on the fact that it dovetailed with the socialist aesthetics the Chinese government advocated. Designed to be functional and cost-effective, it was suitable for any season, a big plus in a struggling economy that emphasized the need for frugality. It could be made of any material, even cheap cotton cloth. Shoulder pads and underlining were not required, and the tailoring was not much different from traditional ways of making clothes. Thereby, this garment heralded a new type of femininity, a socialist femininity favoring simple styles and plain adornments. As women dropped figure-hugging dresses, fancy hairdos, heavy makeup, fine jewelry, and other trappings contrary to "correct" physical appearance, the ensemble of a Lenin jacket, bobbed hair, and

flat shoes quickly became chic among professional women, redefining the "New Woman" in the new era.[7]

Many publicly recognized female figures became walking models for the Lenin jacket and helped promote the newly formed socialist femininity across the country. Song Qingling (Sun Yat-sen's widow, Vice President of the PRC), known for her elegant but low-key *qipao*, also began to don the Lenin jacket after 1949.[8] As the Vice President of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association, Soong often wore a well-tailored Lenin jacket to receive Soviet delegations.[9] Mao's two English translators, Tang Wensheng and Wang Hairong, always presented themselves on formal occasions in gray or blue Lenin jackets, neatly combed short hair, and black cloth shoes. This simple but smart outfit was essential to their dignified grace and sophistication. Liang Jun (China's first female tractor driver) and Tian Guiying (China's first female train engineer) were often dressed in similar styles when attending public meetings. In a society in which labor was officially recognized as glorious and women were encouraged to join the workforce for sexual liberation and equality, the two celebrated female model workers gave a new twist to Tang Wensheng and Wang Hairong's clothing combo: the Lenin jacket also spoke of working women's pride.

In such political and social environments, a Lenin jacket became the dream of millions of young women who followed where public role models led. Su Xiu, a voice actress at the Shanghai Film Studio in the 50s, recalled how she yearned to become a professional actress so that she could wear a Lenin jacket issued by the work unit (*danwei*), since the Lenin jacket had officially become the uniform for women working in state-controlled institutions and organizations.[10] Similarly, a Beijing resident recalled how proud she was to wear a Lenin jacket on becoming a high school teacher.[11] The popularity of the Lenin jacket was reflected in a saying heard everywhere: "Get a Lenin jacket made and save it for the wedding" (*Zuo tao Lieningzhuang, liuzhe jiehun chuan*). Typically, wedding wear in the cities at the time included a double-breasted Lenin jacket for the bride and a single-breasted Zhongshan suit for the groom, both in gray, blue, or other dark colors.[12] Tailor's shops on the street started to customize Lenin jackets for women who did not have a work unit to receive an "official" Lenin jacket. Mannequins in shop windows also swapped silk and furs for gray Lenin jackets. It was so popular that even little girls were often seen dressed in this style.

Because the Lenin jacket fitted the purse of ordinary citizens, it even spread to some rural areas. Generally, urban centers lead the trend. Fashion changes usually start in big cities, then radiate to medium-sized cities, and then to the small towns and the countryside. That the Lenin jacket was introduced to the peasants proves its viable popularity. Peasants viewed it as one of the many new things that followed the national liberation. Some even used it as formal attire for important occasions. Villagers outside Nanjing coined a jingling rhyme to describe the new fashion among the well-to-do: "A pair of big scissors atop, a pair of no-waist beneath" (*Shang chuan da jiandao, xia chuan mei kuyao*). The "big scissors" refers to the big turn-down collars of the Lenin jacket, and the "no-waist" points to the new-style pants that contrasted with traditional Chinese pants with wide

waist. This is evidence that the Lenin jacket not only reached peasants but was similarly associated with social progress, economic development, and improved living standards in the countryside.[13]

Despite its plainness, the Lenin jacket was considered a stylish and widely admired fashion during the first half of the 1950s. Symbolizing a break from Old China and the traditional loose tops and pants, the pairing of a Lenin jacket with suit pants was seen as "perky" (*jingshen*), "modern" (*xiandai*), and carrying a "foreign/Western flavor" (*yangqi*). At a time when Western culture and lifestyle were rejected in China, the Lenin jacket, bearing similarities to a Western suit, allowed Chinese women to get a taste of "Western-ness" in politically legitimate terms. Moreover, amid the unsightly military uniforms adapted for civilian daily wear, the Lenin jacket stood out and fitted in with women's desire to look beautiful. The big collar, which can be buttoned up or folded back against the chest, enlivened the otherwise sternly symmetrical design. Some women chose to wear a white shirt inside and fold the shirt collar on top of the jacket collar, adding a splash of color to the drab uniform. When photos of Tang Wensheng and Wang Hairong dressed in this style appeared in newspapers, almost every woman with a thought for fashion fell into line.[14] The visual effect of the white collar was strikingly refreshing amid generic grays and blues, the predominant colors commonly seen in people's clothing at the time. Besides, there were two rows of buttons, one functional and the other for decoration, to cheer up the sober jacket front. For women who wanted to take one step further, they could wear a belt of the same material to more or less show their curves of bust, waist and hips. Although restraint was a watchword, these subtle modifications pushed a way of releasing female sexuality from beneath the otherwise loose-fitting, androgynous uniform.

The popularity of the Lenin jacket denoted a willingness among Chinese women to embrace socialist fashion, but women's innovative ways of wearing the Lenin jacket articulated a natural inclination for self-adornment and an attempt to test the boundaries of the new aesthetics. This perplexing attitude among Chinese women toward feminine beauty was a legacy from the pre-1949 revolutionary culture. Female revolutionaries rejected the objectified femininity and obsession with physical appearance, but they also shared the perception that beauty was rewarding in social interactions, and so they did pay attention to their appearance whenever conditions allowed during the revolutionary times.[15] In the early PRC, this seemingly self-contradictory practice continued. While women internalized public rhetoric that advocated simplicity and stressed the importance of combining good looks with political correctness, they also longed for diversified styles and colors. Sometimes women intentionally made their inner cotton-padded jackets longer than their blue or gray Lenin jackets as to reveal the flowery material of the inner jackets around the rim.[16] By personalizing the Lenin jacket, women reconciled their political consciousness and their fashion impulse, and negotiated a niche between their self-regulation and their sense of self.

Following the Lenin jacket, innovations inspired by Soviet clothing multiplied. In the military, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (the PLA) borrowed some uniform designs from the Soviet army. This practice became even more prevalent

when China adopted military ranks similar to the Soviet ones in 1955, for uniforms were used to denote ranks, as they still are today. For children, Chinese Young Pioneers wore the same uniforms as their Soviet peers. Russian fur hats and Cossack shirts (often with elaborate patterns around the collar) were introduced to Chinese men.[17] For women eager to follow the "progressive" and "modern" Soviet fashion, *bulaji* was a way to move beyond the uniformity of the Lenin jacket. Urban professional women and female students, emulating their Soviet counterparts, quickly became fixed on this foreign costume.

Dress to impress: Bulaji

Bulaji was one of the most frequently used loanwords in China in the 1950s. Unlike most loanwords in modern Chinese, *bulaji* did not derive from English or Japanese, but rather, it was the transliteration of the Russian word *plate*, meaning "dress" or "frock." Like the Lenin jacket, the *bulaji* was a product of Sino-Soviet exchange at the time (Figure 4.2). It was based on the design of a summer dress for Russian women, which was at the time quite common among European and American women as well.[18] Although there was nothing that "Russian" or "Soviet" about this dress style, in China it was perceived as a unique design from the Soviet world of fashion. And calling it *bulaji* with a fake Russian accent certainly reinforced that perception. Typically, a Chinese *bulaji* was a one-piece dress with short puff sleeves, a round neckline, a waistband, and sometimes pleats below the waistband. Made of floral, checkered, or striped cotton fabric, it was not difficult to tailor. A skilled housewife could handle it with a sewing machine at home. Although it often dictated the use of many yards of material, the relatively cheap price of cotton, imported from the Soviet Union, made it affordable for working professionals. Very quickly, the *bulaji* was embraced by Chinese women looking for something new to wear. In the relatively relaxed domestic and international climate of the mid-1950s, this brightly colored dress opened the door to a time of economic recovery and optimism in China.

As hallmarks of female sexuality, dresses and skirts were treated with reservation in the pseudo-ascetic ethos of Chinese Communism. Criticisms of women wearing skirts during the Yan'an era spoke volumes about worries over "corrosive," "bourgeois" lifestyles. Nonetheless, dresses and skirts in modest colors and designs were tolerated and revolutionary women did not totally abandon them. In the founding ceremony of the PRC in 1949, female soldiers stood out in their skirt uniforms, which were modeled on female military uniforms in the Soviet Union, with long sleeves and a mid-waist belt, similar to a below-the-knee belted tunic.[19] Between 1950 and 1965, this was the standard summer wear for Chinese female soldiers. In a society that extolled soldiers, the design of this distinct military garment was admired and copied by civilian women. The *bulaji* can be seen as its variation.

The popularity of the *bulaji* in China, first of all, owed to the flourishing Sino-Soviet alliance. With the "Learn from the Soviet Union" campaign in full swing and an increasing number of Soviet experts coming to China, Soviet personnel were held in high regard in Chinese society. Admiring Soviets, many educated

Figure 4.2 (Top) A group of college students before departure for studies in the Soviet Union. The women are wearing *bulaji*. (Bottom) A Chinese student studying in the Soviet Union, dressed like her Russian peers in a *bulaji*

Source: Courtesy of Yang Shuzhen.

Chinese went for Russian food, sports, entertainment, and clothing. The clothing of Soviet women naturally became what Chinese women emulated. Besides a small number of female advisers, Soviet women residing in China included spouses of male advisers who brought their families to China.[20] Although their number was small in proportion to the Chinese population and their interactions with Chinese society were rather limited, Soviet women always aroused the curiosity of the Chinese public. Their clothing styles, in particular, captivated the imagination of fashion-conscious women of China.

In conveying Soviet women's fashion to a wider audience, Soviet films played a huge role. In a 1944 Soviet movie featuring an 18-year-old heroine who died in defense of the country, the image of Zoya in a flowing *bulaji* made the dress a symbol of revolution and political progressiveness. But it is the light-hearted *The Kuban Cossacks* (1949) that made *bulaji* a cheerful emblem of socialist prosperity. Said to be one of Stalin's favorites, the film not only extolled the wonderful life under Stalin's leadership and the superiority of collective farms, but also successfully combined ideology and entertainment in a manner comprehensible and appealing to the general audience. Dubbed in Chinese right after its release in the USSR and renamed *Happy Life*, this lively musical was among the most frequently shown and favorably received Soviet movies. It brought joyful laughter to a Chinese audience whose domestic cinema was walking a fine line between politics and amusement. Besides heaps of food, delightful singing and dancing, the bright-colored *bulaji* of strong and vibrant women who took on an essential part in running collective farms forcefully promoted the notions of "gender equality," "happinesss," and "affluence" under socialism. Particularly, the collective farm Chairwoman Galina (brilliantly played by Soviet actress Marina Ladynina[21]) entranced Chinese women with her beautiful clothing and charming appearance, encouraging them to fancy their future of a similarly happy and prosperous life.

With the spread of the *bulaji* as a quintessential Soviet fashion code, Chinese interest in Soviet fashion grew more intense. Along with films, exhibits and magazines featuring Soviet lifestyle provided two important venues to familiarize the Chinese with Soviet fashion visually. The 1954 "Exhibition of Soviet Economic and Cultural Achievements" delivered an array of Soviet clothing styles and textile products, generating excitement and admiration in four major Chinese cities. Compared with exhibits that were restricted to a certain time period and locality, magazines offered a sustained and easily accessible way of learning about Soviet fashion. Particularly, some Soviet magazines published in the Chinese language and distributed in China, such as *Soviet Women* (*Sulian funu)* and *Soviet Pictorial* (*Sulian huabao*), often included a lot of pictures and photographs of Soviet people, from which the fashion-savvy Chinese gleaned their knowledge of the modern and traditional clothing styles in the Soviet Union. Sometimes these magazines even directly engaged readers with discussions of Soviet fashion. Owing to a lack of information about fashion around the world, the knowledge of Soviet fashion trends was extremely prized.

An article entitled "What Soviet Women Wear" in a 1956 issue of *Soviet Women*, for instance, explains in great detail the Soviet concept of fashion. The first thing

the author points out is that fashion designs are not the result of avaricious capitalist pursuit of profit; instead, "they are part of culture, a distinctive and refined art."[22] This view of fashion corresponded to the shift in the mid-1930s from the early Bolshevik rejection of even the word "fashion" to the Stalinist promotion of high fashion, which "reintroduced conservative aesthetics and traditional femininity."[23] In this transition, fashion became one of the defining components of middle-class values. The various designs shown in this article, ranging from everyday casual wear to evening gowns for festivities, illustrate the luxurious fashion styles that only the upper stratum of Soviet society could possibly acquire, despite the author's claims that "under Soviet socialist system fashion designing carries a straightforward mission of serving all people" and that "fashion does not represent class [differentiation] in a socialist society."[24] In truth, these designs were not made for everyone, but only the socialist elite. For the masses, they were either too expensive or utterly unattainable.[25]

Whatever the case was in the Soviet Union, the various *bulaji* designs that this article showcased never took roots in China. The mythical images of high fashion in Stalin's conservative backlash were too "bourgeois," too "lavish" for China. The Chinese *bulaji*, as a result, was just a simple, basic one-piece dress stripped of all fancy decorations. But the virtue of this article was that it stimulated the Chinese (especially the female readership's) imagination of what their future wardrobes would be like. More importantly, it legitimized advocacy of better clothing in socialist China. If women in the Soviet Union could wear such fine clothes as this article claimed, why couldn't women in China? Although the Chinese government never championed middleclass values as did Stalin's regime, its friendship with the Soviet Union and adoption of Soviet experience gave grudging acceptance to some middlebrow Soviet culture, including the taste of fashion. After all, beautiful clothes of the people would be a token of the economic progress that the Chinese government dreamed to show. Surmounting post-liberation hardships and the demands of the Korean War, the Chinese economy was indeed developing, which not only stimulated popular demands for new styles but provided a necessary, though still limited, basis for producing better clothing. In this context, the *bulaji* signaled China's moderate fashion advancement and added a colorful accent to urban landscapes.

As a symbol of international friendship and progressiveness, and also a comfortable, pleasant-looking, and affordable garment, the *bulaji* quickly altered everyday fashion in China. It became a must-have summer item for women ranging from celebrities to commoners to kindergarten girls. It was proudly displayed in tailor's shops and was made available in retail stores. In the popular novel *Long Live Youth* (*Qingchun wansui*) written in 1953, Chinese writer Wang Meng captured the happiness and pride of girls wearing this dress: after volunteer work, high school students put on their favorite *bulaji* to attend weekend parties, dancing and twirling in flowing colors matching their dreams and enthusiasm. Under a widespread slogan "the Soviet today is our tomorrow," a new era filled with hope and optimism unfolded in Chinese cities as thousands of *bulaji* bloomed on the street, encouraging people to dream and work for a brighter future.

Wearing socialist modernity: "Soviet big floral cloth"

The spread of *bulaji* in Chinese cities also coincided with imports of cotton fabrics from the Soviet Union. Textiles were the mainstay of Soviet light industry. Despite the priority that Soviet economic plans gave to heavy industries, the country's cotton fabric production continued to grow in the 1950s, producing a surplus. By contrast, cotton products were in short supply in the early years of the PRC, needing foreign imports as a supplement. As both countries sought to increase bilateral economic exchanges, China's purchase of cotton fabrics from the Soviet Union became a win-win solution – economically beneficial to both countries and a witness to Sino-Soviet cooperation on an international scale.

As a result, Soviet print cotton entered the Chinese market. Nicknamed "Soviet big floral cloth" (*Sulian da huabu*), this fabric was characterized by elaborate patterns and gay colors, standing in sharp contrast with the plain, dark fabrics that Chinese people normally wore. Yet the floral print cloth did not instantly win the favor of Chinese consumers. Although the material was color-fast, people complained about high shrinkage and poor durability. One foot of such cloth could lose three inches after the first wash and it wore out easily, proving to be uneconomical for everyday use. Another factor that caused people to shy away from the floral print was cultural. Traditionally, Chinese people were self-effacing; the use of bright colors and flamboyant patterns was generally avoided in everyday clothes. Soviet prints were considered too showy by the Chinese standard. In addition, some people were skeptical of this "selfless" help from the Soviet big brother. Arguing that spending money on low-quality Soviet fabrics was not in the interests of the Chinese economy, they believed that the Soviet government should give China its surplus for free if it really wanted to help China.[26] For these reasons, Soviet cotton did not sell well at the beginning.

To improve sales and dispel skepticism, the Chinese government promoted a slogan "Love the country, wear floral prints" (*Aiguo chuan huabu*) and called the Soviet cotton "patriotic cloth," thus turning an individual practice of everyday choice into a matter of national and international importance. Buying Soviet prints was equated with patriotism and internationalism. In some work units, mandatory purchase was implemented. Employees were given "patriotic cloth," but the cost was deducted from their salaries.[27] Clothes made of Soviet prints were honored "patriotic clothes" (*Aiguo yi*) and wearing them was taken as evidence of high political consciousness, as well as recognition of the "altruistic" assistance from China's socialist brother. Government officials and cadres, including those at top levels, were asked to take the lead in wearing Soviet prints. In one such act of official endorsement, Deng Yingchao, wife of Premier Zhou Enlai and Vice President of the Women's Federation, put on a red-dotted white shirt made of Soviet cloth to meet China's first female pilots at a dinner reception.[28] With state backing, cotton sales surged and prices were brought down.[29]

The bold, eye-catching Soviet fabrics reinvigorated everyday life with gaiety and lightheartedness, freeing more people from dreary uniforms in gray and blue. In summertime women put on the *bulaji*, while their menfolk slipped into shirts

and shorts, all made of Soviet prints. And if a man refused to wear the "Soviet big floral cloth," he could be mocked as "feudal" (*fengjian*) and "backward" (*luohou*). In the household, Soviet prints appeared wherever textiles were needed – tablecloths, curtains, bed sheets, quilt covers, and so on. The campaign to learn from the Soviet Union was now taken beyond theories and institutions to everyday life. Chinese people were reminded constantly of the importance of socialist brotherhood abroad and the prospect of socialist modernity at home.

Apart from demonstrating friendship with Soviet brothers and sisters, the brightly colored prints were also meant to show the achievements of socialist construction under the CCP's leadership. In the mid-1950s, when the national economy reached a new level and supplies of daily necessities increased (though still far from meeting demands), the government also wanted its people to look better.[30] In January 1956, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League and the Women's Federation convened a colloquium devoted to women's clothing. Themes centered on how to help women improve their physical appearance. Later, *China Youth Daily*, the publicity organ of the Youth League, published a series of articles to encourage women to wear "colorful clothes" (*hua yifu*) and look prettier. This made better clothes a hot public topic.[31] Fashion designs and practical information on how to look beautiful started to emerge in magazines and periodicals targeting female readers.

Around the same time, the Shanghai branch of the Chinese Fine Arts Association held an exhibition of print, silk, and brocade products. The exquisite designs and materials were an eye-opener for the audience, generating enthusiastic public discussions about what people should wear in New China. A report on this event urged women in a bold, straightforward way: "Girls, don't look so gloomy. Put on nice clothes and dress up like flowers."[32]

In 1956, the Hundred Flowers Campaign brought in a period of relative political tolerance and artistic pluralism. More slogans urged people to wear colorful clothes and pay attention to physical appearance, including "Let everyone wear colorful clothes" (*Renren chuan hua yishang*) and "Love labor, wear colorful clothes" (*Ai laodong, chuan huayi*). People were told that being a well-dressed worker was not a contradiction in terms, but a demonstration of the new quality of life brought by socialism. (Figure 4.3)

This idea was fleshed out in a few films that came out around this time. A children's film *Flowers of the Motherland* (*Zuguo de huaduo*, 1955) inspired the Chinese, young and old, with the happy life it portrayed, as well as the theme song, "Let Us Row and Paddle" (*Rang women dangqi shuangjiang*). The cheerful images of children dressed in fine clothes filled viewers with hope. Another film, *A Nurse's Diary* (*Hushi riji*, 1957), was literally a fashion show of actress Wang Danfeng, who played a model nurse dedicated to her profession and always following the call of the party. Although it was black-and-white, the film showed a variety of clothing and accessories including several scarves, a turtleneck sweater, a fur-collared coat, a pair of knee-high boots, topped with the nurse's permed hair and ribbons on her braids. The elegant dress style was presented as a perfect match to her strong work ethic. Together, the film and its theme song, "Little Swallows"

Figure 4.3 The Chinese woman in the center is wearing a *qipao* with a cotton floral print. This poster is titled "Flowers of friendship blossom everywhere" (*Youyi huaduo chuchu kai*) and is by Jiang Feng in preparation for the World Festival of Youth and Students held in Moscow in 1957

Source: Courtesy of the IISH/Stefan R. Landsberger Collections, chineseposters.net.

(*Xiao yanzi*), rendered "wearing colorful clothes," a line from the lyrics, into a thought to dance in the hearts of thousands.

The urban fashion landscape therefore was undergoing exciting changes. Permed hair came back, and hairstyles multiplied. Leather shoes were in stock again, with a wider range to pick from. Women were presented with not only more fashion choices but more encouragement to do themselves up. Some put on a long skirt, together with a white blouse, a neat cardigan, and low-heeled shoes. Others picked up the *qipao* that reappeared in a new design – modest with loose cuts around the waist and with short side slits or none at all. The material was mainly cotton in plain colors instead of the shiny silk or expensive wool used in the past. Lining and elaborate decorations like embroidery and glitters were often omitted. Altogether, the new *qipao* was a far cry from its body-hugging, alluring antecedent in 1920s and 30's Shanghai. Women usually wore it under a sweater, cardigan, blazer, or Lenin jacket. The simple but elegant taste that women displayed around this time, though not a fundamental departure from the official principle of socialist femininity, revealed Chinese women's greater fashion awareness and gender consciousness.

Voices of Opposition: wrapping up an era

The mid-1950s trends in Chinese clothing were received with mass acclamation and enthusiasm on the one hand and a fair amount of opposition on the other. To start with, the bright-colored, flowery *bulaji* was different from the traditional Chinese dress styles. It did not carry far in the countryside. And even in cities, as with any new fashion, some women were daunted by the prospect of adopting such a radical look, and some found it embarrassing to wear untested designs. A woman recalls that when she put on a *bulaji* for the first time in 1954, she nearly forgot how to walk because she was so self-conscious about exposing her legs between the dress hem and her ankle.[33] A man recalls feeling like a clown under the gaze of his relatives and neighbors when he returned to his hometown in the countryside in a shirt made of Soviet floral print. Compared with the plain, home-made cloth garments the villagers wore, his brand-new shirt was too garish.[34]

These two anecdotes exemplify public mentality concerning appearance, and how successfully Maoist ideology had shaped people's self-image by that time. In the first few years of the PRC, a new values system was taking shape, in which thrift, modesty, and industry dictated the code of conduct in everyday life. Applied to physical appearance, this code encouraged what might be called "minimalist aesthetics," emphasizing uniformity of style, use of primary colors, and extreme simplification of ornament. Standardized garb such as the Zhongshan suit and the Lenin jacket became the norm because they projected uniformity and equality, which set the ethics of the new society apart from those of the old. Simplicity of dress, so went the official line, would shape a "healthy" outlook with less attention to materialistic concerns. As people internalized such perceptions, they accepted standardized clothing, such as the Zhongshan suit and the Lenin jacket.

Besides political pressures, the poor economic condition and the low living standard at the beginning of the PRC also compelled people to practice frugality

and "minimalist aesthetics." In an average household, the majority of income went toward food and there was not much left for purchasing clothing. People could not expect much beyond wearability. Gray, black, and blue were popular colors because they did not show dirt easily. Clothes suitable for any season, for all ages, and for both sexes were a practical choice. Frugality became an especially pressing issue since 1954 when only a limited ration of "clothing tickets" was allotted to each person every year for purchasing textile products – a result of low fabric production combined with state monopoly on commodity purchases and sales. For more than three decades after 1949, the most luxurious "four big items" that a household could ever aspire to have were a bicycle, a sewing machine, a wrist watch, and a radio. These things not only cost a lot but also required ration tickets that were extremely limited. Therefore, to own a "butterfly-brand" sewing machine, for example, was a huge pride of the whole family, not to mention its practicability in everyday life.

However, in Mao's China, being poor materially was not something to be ashamed about – only wealth and luxury were. As thrift and hard work were publically recognized as working class virtues, people tried to look as plain as possible. A popular saying urged people to wear their clothes "New for three years, old for three years, and patched for three more years."[35] This is why when the concept of "colorful clothes" was introduced, most people had their doubts. Questions about whether colorful clothes on your body meant bourgeois ideas in your mind sprang up instantly. Before *China Youth Daily* openly encouraged people to "look pretty," the newspaper actually launched a reader's forum to discuss "wearing colorful clothes" in 1954. While the magazine's editorials praised colorful clothes as progressive and encouraged people to break away from "old thoughts," they also cautioned people (particularly women) against "being too picky about clothing and make-up." A gender-neutral look resembling industrial workers was increasingly trendy even when voices for the "colorful clothes" were the loudest. Young women working in factories donned male workers' bib-and-brace overalls, checkered shirts, and "liberation shoes."[36] Accommodating a wide range of body shapes, unisex clothing concealed physical gender differences and rendered a look of gender equality (Figure 4.4). Women took pride in wearing male workers' uniforms because these uniforms not only signified their economic independence but also allowed them to work as men and to look as strong as men. Unisex garments thus became a preferred choice for many women.

Against this backdrop, the "colorful clothes" fervor soon fizzled out. When the 1957 Anti-Rightist Campaign took over the short-lived Hundred Flowers Campaign, colorful clothes immediately became a byword for "petty-bourgeois sentiment" or "bourgeois conduct." People had to pay more attention to what they should and should not wear so as to avoid being branded a rightist. When dissension and conflict between Chinese and Soviet top leaderships erupted in the early 1960s, the Chinese government cooled on Sino-Soviet friendship. Wearing Lenin jackets, *bulaji*, or Soviet floral prints no longer seemed a good idea. When the Sino-Soviet rift became unbridgeable in the mid-60s, Soviet fashion vanished from Chinese life, along with much more that was associated with the

Figure 4.4 A woman wearing overalls in 1967

Source: Courtesy of Wang Weiyue.

Soviet Union. A female scientist who studied in the Soviet Union between 1955 and 1960 tore her *bulaji* into pieces at a meeting in 1966 to condemn Soviet revisionism. A male colleague of hers smashed the mandolin he brought back from the Soviet Union in the late 50s.[37] The Russian-language craze was over, and many Russian-sounding loanwords disappeared. *Bulaji* was renamed *lianyiqun* (literally, one-piece skirt) to sever the association with the Russian pronunciation. "Revisionism," a danger against which people were constantly warned, was used so arbitrarily that a taste for better clothing could lead to criticism. To prevent people from "turning revisionist" (*bianxiu*) or "forgetting the roots" (*wangben*), endless meetings to "recall the past bitterness and reflect on today's sweetness" (*yiku sitian*) were held. Cadres, intellectuals, and students were called on to reeducate themselves by learning from poor peasants and workers. Those who kept their clothes neat and ironed at meetings were frequently targeted. Working-class appearance and ideas became the safe fashion.

When the Cultural Revolution gathered momentum, people's clothing underwent radical changes. The bright floral Soviet prints were no longer seen in public. Women put away or destroyed their colorful dresses and fine clothes and went about in plain, worn clothes. *Bulaji*'s indigenized Chinese name *lianyiqun* became an empty linguistic signifier, for fewer and fewer women wore dresses. Young women had their hair cut short, the shorter, the more revolutionary. Even schoolgirls were clad in gray and dark blue.[38] In the 1965 army uniform reform that concurrently took place with the removal of the military ranking system, Lenin jackets and skirts in female uniforms were replaced by male soldier's tops and pants. The entire army started to wear the same "liberation cap" (*jiefang mao*) and basically the same style uniform made of the same material, regardless of rank or gender. The new military uniforms quickly affected civilian fashion, which made almost everyone look the same. Mao's frequently cited poem that extolled "Chinese daughters' high aspiring minds" and their "love for battle array instead of silk and satins" urged women to dress in army uniforms.

Although Mao's poem can also be interpreted as a cry for women (and men) not to care too much about dress, in reality people were trapped in a clothing dilemma. As Juanjuan Wu points out,

> on the one hand, one was not supposed to concern oneself with superficial, outward appearances because of the association of fashion with a bourgeois lifestyle. On the other hand, any deviation from the rigid dress code could result in life-threatening consequences, and in this sense, ironically, one had to be fully aware of dress and appearance to an unprecedented degree.[39]

This environment gave rise to an arbitrary equation between what one wore and what one thought. The shabbier the clothes, the more revolutionary the wearer. At the same time, a skewed logic about clothing and class came into being: plainness was the color of the proletariat, whereas attention to appearance betrayed a bourgeois nature. Under this logic, young people especially went all out for a radical look. They deliberately put patches on their clothes or washed their new

clothes several times until the color faded. Or, they intentionally kept their clothes wrinkled and their shoes dirty, rolled up their sleeves and trouser legs, and put on straw hats to look like peasants.[40] Fear led to conformity, and revolutionary fervor fueled extreme self-effacing, even in so mundane a matter as what to wear.

Conclusion

This chapter offers a few sketches of the changes in urban clothing during the early years of the PRC. In terms of women's fashion, it was first dominated by the plain Lenin jacket. As the mid-1950s approached, the summer usage of *bulaji* caught on. These two Soviet-inspired innovations represented more than a new, modern fashion that was in line with party doctrine; rather, they were an international socialist fashion, with an exotic Soviet flavor. Women who wore them associated themselves with Soviet culture and in so doing personally endorsed the CCP's internationalist outlook. The popularity of these styles among officials and celebrities, and their relatively high availability to the working class, served to directly reinforce the socialist modernization program. Even as Sino-Soviet relations cooled in the late 1950s, women continued to dress this way until the Cultural Revolution made military uniforms standard.

These changes further demonstrate the CCP's power to influence public behavior. Toward the end of the 50s, an increasingly heightened one-party system plus a highly centralized planned economy allowed the government to intervene in every aspect of society ranging from work and housing to food and clothing. During this time the state-controlled large-scale manufacturing was focused on heavy industry, which limited the availability of ready-made clothes to residents. At private shops, tailors were only licensed to make a small range of permissible styles.[41] Combining such controls with propaganda and slogans, the CCP successfully introduced Soviet-style clothing to the Chinese public and further pleased the Soviet Union by buying the Soviet cotton surplus. In so doing, it wisely wove the country's material deficiency into the larger tapestry of Sino-Soviet friendship, and placed socialist ideology in the most visible part of everyday life. By aligning fashion to international and domestic politics, the party was able to influence attitudes and clothing habits of the masses to a large extent.

However, Chinese people did not simply subscribe to the officially sanctioned code of dress. Besides political considerations, they made their own fashion choices based on a variety of practical factors true to themselves, such as affordability, durability, functionality, attractiveness, and suitability to different occasions. As such, personal desire might sometimes conflict with the mainstream standard, so there were various forms of negotiation and subtle resistance. As the chapter shows, Chinese women experimented with all kinds of modifications and uses of color to stake out alternative styles for themselves, even when they were largely conforming to the official dress code.

From the foundation of the PRC, the CCP's pro-Soviet propaganda had proclaimed that international socialist modernity would bring about huge improvements of living standards for the Chinese. Urban fashion during this time, like many other

aspects of Chinese culture and society, was altered to demonstrate such improvements. Particularly, the *bulaji* worn by women in the summertime and colorful Soviet fabrics were visual evidence that lifestyles were on the way up. Designed to showcase the advantages of the socialist system, the makeover of urban fashion presented a fast modernizing image of China on the international stage.

By zooming in on Chinese adaptation of Soviet fashion, this chapter reveals a more colorful and varied picture than what is commonly associated with Mao's China. Most literature gives Chinese clothing during this period a cursory glance or simply presents all Chinese as "blue ants and gray ants." Some emphasize the ubiquitous use of military uniforms in the Cultural Revolution, which only obscures the view of the 1950s and early 1960s. However, as Tina Mai Chen reveals in an article that examines women's dress in Mao's China, clothing before the Culture Revolution was much more diversified than the three kinds of color commonly used in everyday wear seem to suggest.[42] The Soviet-inspired developments played a pivotal role in China's fashion pluralism of the 1950s. Although the craze for Soviet clothing eased off as Sino-Soviet relations soured, it ushered in a level of modernity and freedom. In this sense, Soviet fashion can be seen as a liberating force for Chinese society and as evidence of China's under-recognized age of openness amid Cold War isolationism. Cultural connections with the Soviet Union created a socialist "cosmopolitanism" in the PRC.[43] While this relatively liberal period lasted, Chinese women took the chance to step out in new fashions of their own.

Notes

1 Also known as "cheongsam," *qipao* is a body-hugging one-piece Chinese dress for women.
2 Zhang, "Xie shenme," 28.
3 The reason that this chapter focuses on urban fashion is, first of all, cities tend to take the lead in fashion development. Second, during this time of Sino-Soviet friendship, changes contingent on Soviet influence were more visible in Chinese cities than in the countryside.
4 Steele and Major, *China Chic*, 170.
5 See Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class*; Finnane, "What Should Chinese Women Wear," 99–131; Parkins, *Fashioning the Body Politic*.
6 Finnane, "Tailors of 1950's Beijing," 122–123.
7 Zang, "The Soviet Impact on 'Gender Equality' in China in the 1950s," 265.
8 Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China*, 205. A Lenin jacket Soong Ching-ling used to wear was on display at an exhibition (Shanghai, April 28–July 31, 2016) commemorating the 150th anniversary of Sun Yat-sen's birth. See "Meiling de hunsha, Qingling de Liening Zhuang, Ailing de shuxin, Songshi san jiemei jiaxiang 'chongju'" [May-ling's bridal gown, Ching-ling's Lenin jacket, Ai-ling's letters, the three sisters of the Song family will "reunite" in their hometown], *Xinwen chenbao* (Shanghai), March 23, 2016.
9 See a picture of Soong Ching-ling with a Soviet delegation on November 2, 1952 to celebrate the "Sino-Soviet Friendship Month," in *China Pictorial*, November (1952): 2.
10 Su, *Wo de peiyin shengya*, 25.
11 Interview with a former school teacher, Beijing, July 6, 2010.
12 Huang, *Zhenqing ruge*, 130.
13 "Lening zhuang (gushi fengwu zhi shiba)" [Lenin jacket (Old time traditions and things, No. 18)], *Xinlang boke*, December 24, 2013, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_65d891800102e42k.html.

14 Interview with a Beijing resident, July 6, 2010.
15 Ip, "Fashioning Appearance," 329–361.
16 Hua, *Xin Zhongguo 60 nian fushi lu*, 39–43.
17 Ibid., 41.
18 My thanks to Professor Tom Havens and Professor Karen Thornber for pointing out the parallel between Russian women's dresses and those of European and American women.
19 Song Wei, "Wo canjia le kaiguo dadian de nübing fangdui," [I participated in the female soldier column in the founding ceremony of the PRC,] *Jiefangjun Bao*, June 11, 1999; "Bulaji yingjin wushi niandai de Sushi langman," [Bulaji and the 1950s Soviet-style romance,] *Xin Shangbao*, September 4, 2009.
20 In general, Soviet experts who worked in China for more than half a year were allowed to bring their dependents. The Chinese government encouraged Soviet experts to bring their spouses and children so that they did not have to worry about them during their stay in China. The number of Soviet experts' dependents in China often exceeded that of the Soviet experts themselves. For instance, in 1956, there were 2,189 Soviet experts living in China, but if their families were counted in, the number would be around 5,000. See Shen, *Sulian zhuanjia zai Zhongguo*, 38.
21 For a discussion of Marina Ladynina's stardom in China, see Chen, "Socialism, Aestheticized Bodies," 63–65.
22 Aokuniefu, "What Soviet Women Wear," 46.
23 Bartlett, "Let Them Wear Beige," 128.
24 Aokuniefu, "What Soviet Women Wear," 46–47.
25 Bartlett, "Let Them Wear Beige," 128.
26 "Shi shangyeju guanyu chushou Sulian huabu, xiangzao deng wenti xiang maoyibu de qingshi," [City Bureau of Commerce to the Department of Trade on sales of the Soviet floral cloth and soap,] December 1, 1950, Beijing Municipal Archives, 022–012–00221.
27 Interview with a former cadre who worked in a party organization, Beijing, June 9, 2015.
28 Wang Yun, "Wo wei zongli kai zhuanji," [I piloted the airplane for the premier,] accessed June 22, 2012, http://222.27.200.5/wsbgt/ADKSDATA/VideoInfo/56130/info.html.
29 Xia, "Cong Sulian huabu tanqi," 18.
30 Chen, *Wenbao ji xiaokang*, 10–11.
31 For example, "Nü jiaoshi tan funü fuzhuang wenti," 27; Zhang and Fu, "Renmin xuyao meili de huabu," 10–11.
32 Gan Lu, "Shanghai zhanlanhui ganxiang," [Reflections on the Shanghai exhibit,] *Qingnian bao (Shanghai ban)*, January 10, 1956.
33 Hu, "Wushi niandai," 21.
34 Interview with a former high school teacher, Shijiazhuang, June 12, 2009.
35 Yang, "Xin sannian, jiu sannian," *Dahe jiankang bao*, May 20, 2009.
36 The "liberation shoes," or *jiefang xie*, refer to the green canvas shoes with soft rubber soles and toecaps formerly worn by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). After 1949, they were adopted by ordinary people and remained a kind of durable footwear until the 1980s. They also gained status during the Cultural Revolution amid the popularity of military uniforms.
37 Interview with a woman who studied in the Soviet Union in the 1950s, Beijing, September 27, 2016.
38 Ye and Ma, *Growing up in the People's Republic*, 63.
39 Wu, *Chinese Fashion*, 2.
40 The image of Chen Yonggui (Party Secretary of Dazhai Commune and later Vice-Premier) in his northern peasant outfit with a white towel wrapped on the head and thick callus on both hands was held up as a paragon of the "true revolutionary class" during the Cultural Revolution.

41 Finnane, "Tailors of 1950s Beijing."
42 Chen, "Dressing for the Party."
43 Volland, "Translating the Socialist State."

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Part III

The public and the private

5 Soviet literature in 1950s China

For many Chinese whose coming of age coincided with the 1950s vogue for Soviet culture, just a mention of "Russian literature" is enough to set off an avalanche of memories. When they were young, their enthusiasm for Russian literary works, especially those of the Soviet period, was perhaps on a par with that of their Russian contemporaries. Although Russian literature has been admired elsewhere outside its birth place, the "reading mania" it generated in the early PRC was remarkable.[1] In the atmosphere of Sino-Soviet friendship, a huge number of Russian works was published in China. Translated literature familiarized Chinese readers with Russian culture, which helped cultivate pro-Soviet attitudes. People recited Pushkin and Mayakovsky, quoted Gorky and Nikolai Ostrovskii, and invested their own youth, hope, and dreams in Russian literature. "The Soviet Union was my nineteenth year, my first love, and the beginning of my literary career," said Wang Meng, a renowned Chinese writer born in 1934.[2]

No other literature had impacted modern Chinese writing more than Russian works in the twentieth century. From Lu Xun to Mao Dun, from Wang Meng to Tie Ning, Chinese writers openly admired Russian writers and literature. Between the 30s and 80s, the Chinese world of letters shadowed every move in the Soviet literary circle, even during the time of Sino-Soviet split. Particularly during the time of Sino-Soviet friendship Chinese writers were literally under direct tutelage of the Soviet mentor. The transformation of Chinese literature along Soviet lines has generated voluminous works in contemporary Chinese literary studies.[3] However, the broader social impact in areas beyond literature remains a topic rarely explored.[4] In both China and the Soviet Union, literature held a special position in politics and society. Its mission to heal social ills earned writers a status as "teachers of life" and passionate attention from readers, as well as the favor and suspicion of communist regimes. In both countries, literature was inextricably linked to revolutions and social movements. This shared destiny was a fundamental factor that directed Chinese intellectuals to Russian literature in the first place. It also accounts for the enormous state sponsorship that Russian literature enjoyed in the first decade of the PRC, and the venomous criticism it received when bilateral relations soured in the 60s.

Thanks to vigorous official patronage, the adulation of Chinese writers, and extensive distribution in bookstores and libraries, numerous readers began a

lifelong love affair with Russian literature. Although "Russian literature" is used here as an umbrella term for Russian-language literary creations in the modern period (mainly since the early nineteenth century), the bulk of translated Russian works in Mao's China came from the Soviet period. To be precise, I hereafter use "Soviet literature" for Russian works produced after the October Revolution, so as to distinguish between what Chinese at the time called "old Russian literature" and "new Russian literature."[5] Among this body of Soviet literature, those that enjoyed the widest circulation were written in Stalin's time, many being winners of the Stalin Prize, the highest literary award in the USSR between 1941 and 1952.[6] These Stalinist works are the primary concern of this chapter.

In Stalin's era, literature was an enterprise of high seriousness and state command. Writers were grouped into the Union of Soviet Writers, which offered them generous remuneration but also subjected them to centralized control. They were presented with one permissible style: socialist realism, "the truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development."[7] What the term really meant was "compliant with the party line" and "easy to follow." Although in the Soviet Union, "official" literature was often offset by "dissident" variants even under high Stalinism, the literary works that China borrowed during the time of Sino-Soviet friendship were mostly typical socialist-realist works that toed the party line.

With the fall of Communism in the USSR and the end of the Cold War, these works have largely been forgotten in Russia and countries formerly in the Soviet orbit. Yet in today's China, some of them, such as *How the Steel Was Tempered* (*Kak zakalialas stal*) and *The Young Guard* (*Molodaia gvardiia*), are still being reprinted. Old editions are highly prized. Those who read them in the 50s still have fond memories of certain plots and characters. What exactly is the enduring appeal of Soviet literature that captivated these readers for years? What energies and pleasures did they gain from reading this foreign literature in their youthful years? Was it simply because the call for Sino-Soviet friendship was loudest then, and the "friendly" environment inclined the public toward the literature of the Soviet "big brother"? If so, why didn't the collapse of the alliance completely derail the love affair? Apparently, the bond between Chinese readers and Soviet literature went beyond state politics.

But politics did intervene in mass reading. In Mao's China, publications had to go through rigorous state censorship and reading was not looked on as a private undertaking free from official guidance and supervision. So, what values did the Chinese state intend to promote through Soviet literature and how did readers respond? What did readers enjoy about Soviet literature and how was that different from the officially promoted values? Such are the questions this chapter will address. By examining the ways that Soviet literature interacted with Chinese readership in the 1950s, the chapter explains the extraordinary potency of Soviet literature in China, while at the same time illuminating the relationship between Chinese state and society. To evaluate the reader's response and probe into private worlds in the past is a challenge. In no way can the chapter speak for every reader. What is presented here is a profile of mass reading in Mao's China against

a variety of sources, including official publications with feedback from readers in the 50s, contemporary memoirs and other reminiscent writings about the 50s, and oral interviews with over 60 Chinese individuals who encountered Soviet literature then. The interviewees range from amateur readers to professors of Russian language and literature. Given the size of China's population, my selection of interviewees is just a few drops of water in an ocean. But the experiences they had and the dreams they kept may speak for some shared memories of a generation.

Popularizing Soviet literature

In the first half of the twentieth century, especially after the October Revolution, many Chinese intellectuals such as Lu Xun and Qu Qiubai turned to Russian literature for a solution to China's national problems. In tune with the development of Chinese leftist literature in the 30s, Chinese translators preferred works by those labeled "proletarian" writers, along with some pre-revolutionary writers concerned with social problems. This body of translated literature provided an alternative frame of reference to the Euro-American model for the modern transformation of Chinese literature; its social impact in China also helped the Chinese revolution along. All this laid the foundation for the flowering of Russian literature in the early PRC.

With its mission of "engineering the human soul," Soviet literature was seen by the PRC government as a ready-to-use textbook for New China's social engineering.[8] Eagerness to follow the Soviet path and educate the people with Soviet literature quickly brought a tidal wave of translation in the 1950s.[9] According to a 1959 article reviewing foreign literature translation, "between October 1949 and December 1958 a total of 3,526 titles of Soviet (including old Russian) literary works were published, covering over 65.8% of all foreign literary titles translated during this time; a total of 82,005,000 copies of Soviet literary translations were printed, constituting more than 74.4% of all the translated foreign works."[10] During the same period more than 90 titles published over 100,000 copies each. Sales of the most popular works such as *How the Steel Was Tempered* and *Stories of Zoya and Shura* (*Povest o Zoe i Shure*) ranged between 1,000,000 and 1,500,000 copies.[11]

People's Literature Publishing House (PLPH), a flagship state-owned press specializing in literature, was dedicated to publishing Russian fiction ranging from pre-revolutionary masterpieces to the "red classics" of the Soviet era. Among these translations, Gorky continued to top the Chinese ranking of Russian writers. Although most of his major works were already translated before 1949, interest stayed so keen that PLPH produced several re-translations. Sholokhov's popularity soared. PLPH published a new edition of *And Quiet Flows the Don* (*Tikhii Don*) in 1956 based on his 1953 revised version. Attention to Mayakovsky carried on. PLPH compiled a five-volume collection of his poems, plays, essays, public addresses, and reportage. Such preferences in the choice of Russian works were generally copied by other presses. Even private publishers were enthusiastically engaged in popularizing Russian literature before the government absorbed them into state-owned enterprises and turned the publishing industry into a state monopoly in 1956.

The introduction of Russian literature during the 50s had several distinct features. Most notably, the scale of translation and publication was unprecedented, whether in terms of the quantity of works and the extent of circulation or with reference to the number of writers and translators involved. Secondly, Soviet-era works dominated. More than a thousand Soviet writers found their books read and studied in China. Soviet works were viewed as exemplars of literary creation and criticism. In particular, winners of state-level prizes in the Soviet Union became high fliers favored by Chinese publishing houses. As a result, mainstream Soviet writers were brought to the forefront of the Chinese literary world, but many excellent works that did not keep to the party line were driven to the margin. Some writers previously introduced into China were removed from the publishing list because of their "incompatibility" with the current political climate. Sergei Esenin, Alexander Blok, Evgenii Zamiatin, and Demian Bednyi were typical examples of marginalized writers whose works faded away in China.

In a socialist planned economy, production does not necessarily reflect demand in reality. The large quantity of Soviet literary translations in the early PRC book market did not automatically result in a large readership. To promote Soviet literature, efforts were taken to make the translations more readable for the general public. Many Soviet novels were introduced in abridged versions written in simple, plain and sometimes vernacular Chinese suited to workers, peasants, and soldiers.[12] After the pinyin scheme was published in 1956, some of the abridged novels were furnished with pinyin annotation to aid reading. Considering the low literacy rate, adaptations in the form of comic books were also made widely available.[13] Some of the most popular Soviet novels, such as *Stories of Zoya and Shura*, *How the Steel Was Tempered*, and Gorky's autobiographic trilogy, had several comic-book versions. While comic strips relied primarily on visuals to build the storyline, other forms of adaptation also included drawings to facilitate comprehension and attract interest. The easy readability allowed a number of Soviet personalities to reach a broad audience and take concrete forms in the Chinese imagination.[14]

Another important channel to promote Soviet literature was classroom education. From the PRC's earliest days, Soviet literary works had been included in Chinese language textbooks at all levels.[15] It was believed that Soviet literature was the best fit for cultivating internationalist spirits in students: "Soviet literature is the most advanced literature in the world, the paragon of socialist realist creative writing, and excellent material for educating our country's youth in communist thoughts."[16] Works translated from Russian took priority over those from other languages in the foreign literature section of Chinese textbooks.[17]

The inclusion of Soviet literature in Chinese textbooks was a direct result and also a notable feature of China's nation-wide educational reform in teaching Chinese language. As in other fields, the reform in Chinese-language teaching struck out along the Soviet path in teaching materials and methodology. In Soviet schools, the teaching of literature occupied an important position and was kept apart from the teaching of Russian language. Following the Soviet experience, Chinese educators and teachers started to give more attention to students' training in literature. Research units for Chinese-language teaching were set up at key schools

and discussions about reform plans were lively.[18] After a few years' research, debate, and experimentation, a decisive step was taken in 1956 to finally separate literature from Chinese-language teaching.[19] In the same year, the Department of Education issued separate programs for literature and Chinese-language teaching from elementary school to high school.

The literature program not only set out the goals for literature teaching but also defined what should be included in literature textbooks. New literature textbooks included more Soviet writing, particularly works that demonstrated high socialist qualities. For instance, in a suggested extracurricular reading list prepared by the People's Education Press in 1956, Soviet books dominated the foreign literature section.[20] Although the division between language and literature was abandoned during the 1958 Great Leap Forward, the cachet of Soviet socialist realist literature in China's foreign literature education remained unchallenged. From such textbooks and suggested readings, Chinese students were exposed to a spectrum of Soviet life and personalities. Until the storm of the Cultural Revolution swept away almost all foreign literature in public circulation, the classroom served as an important venue for promoting Soviet literature and the socialist spirit it embodied.

Heroes and heroines

Against the backdrop of Sino-Soviet friendship, Soviet literature was integrated into the social and cultural life of China and played a significant role in shaping the minds of those growing up in the early PRC. This section will focus on some of the most celebrated Soviet works and examine the social dynamics they brought about in Chinese society. Most of the works discussed here center on two major themes: war and reconstruction.

The war-themed literary works deal with Russian struggles in the first half of the twentieth century. For the Russian Civil War, the best-known works are *And Quiet Flows the Don*, *Chapaev*, *How the Steel Was Tempered*, *The Rout* (*Razgrom*), and *The Iron Flood* (*Zheleznyi potok*), all of which were already translated before 1949. As for the Great Patriotic War (as Soviets called World War II), well-known works include *Days and Nights* (*Dni i Nochi* by Simonov, 1944; Stalin Prize, 1946, 2nd class), *The Young Guard* (by Fadeev, 1945; Stalin Prize, 1946, 1st class), *The Story of A Real Man* (*Povest o nastoiashchem cheloveke*, 1947), *The Life of Alexander Matrosov* (*Riadovoi Aleksandr Matrosov*, 1949), and *Stories of Zoya and Shura* (1953).

This body of war literature struck a chord with Chinese in the aftermath of a century of wars, and became even more relevant with the outbreak of the Korean War. Many soldiers were reported to have modeled their battlefield heroism on Soviet war heroes portrayed in Soviet literature. One of the best-known cases was a soldier named Huang Jiguang (1930–1952), who was awarded "Outstanding Hero" by the Chinese People's Volunteer Army fighting in the Korean War. He was seriously wounded during the Sangkumryung Campaign against American forces in Korea in October 1952, but he continued to fight. After throwing his last hand grenade, he threw himself at an American pill-box, blocking the machine

gun with his own chest. The sacrifice of his life allowed his regiment to advance and finally take an American-occupied military stronghold.

Huang Jiguang's self-sacrifice resembled that of Alexander Matrosov (1924–1943), an infantry soldier awarded "Hero of the Soviet Union" during World War II, who was widely revered in the Soviet Union through the novel *The Life of Alexander Matrosov* (1949) by Pavel Zhurba and a film *An Ordinary Soldier* (1948).[21] Both the novel and the film told stirring tales of the young Alexander (Sashka) growing "from rags to righteousness" and eventually giving his life for his country. Both were introduced into China, where Matrosov soon became a familiar name.[22] As the first Soviet film dubbed in Chinese, *An Ordinary Soldier* (Chinese title: *Putong yibing*, Changchun Film Studio, 1949) was shown to the Chinese People's Volunteer soldiers in Korea. Huang Jiguang was said to have seen this film and possessed several comic books about Soviet heroes, including *The Life of Alexander Matrosov*. This led to his being referred to as "China's Matrosov."[23]

While the Chinese infantry was learning from Matrosov, the air force was inspired by Aleksei Maresev (1916–2001), a Soviet ace pilot in World War II who lost both legs in a plane crash and fought his way back to combat duty using artificial limbs. His saga formed the basis for a 1947 novel *The Story of A Real Man* and a film with the same title the following year.[24] Hailed as a model of socialist realism, the Chinese translation of the novel (first published in 1949) became a must-read, serving as a political textbook for the Chinese air force. The author, Boris Polevoi, was highly regarded in China. Most of his works were introduced to Chinese readers, including his travel notes on a visit to China in 1956.

It was not just soldiers but Chinese society as a whole that drew inspiration and strength from stories of Soviet war heroes. According to a report about the impact of Soviet novels on Chinese youth, a student named Wang Huawen from Beijing No. 4 Middle School was determined to transform himself into an iron man like Matrosov after he read the hero's story. One night when he was awakened by a storm, it was the image of Matrosov that encouraged him to go out and close all the school windows in cold rain.[25]

Like Matrosov, Zoya Kosmodemianskaia (1923–1941) was another heroic Soviet icon among Chinese students. A young partisan, she was captured and executed at the age of 18 by the Nazis in World War II. In her home country, she became a national hero, made legendary in poems, dramas, films and radio programs. Portraits and sculptures of her across the country made her a popular idol. In the novel *Stories of Zoya and Shura* (1953) and the film *Zoya* (1944), she is depicted as a hero, an exemplary student, and an admirer of Stalin. The book and film were both extremely popular in China. Between January 1952 and August 1955 it was reprinted 19 times, totaling 1,347,000 copies. Lectures, study sessions, and reading groups were held to discuss Zoya's spirit and how to apply it in everyday life. At Kunming No. 1 Middle School in China's far south, students named the school garden after Zoya's hometown, gathering there regularly to study the book and report what they learned from the Soviet heroine. A class named after Zoya remained the school's model class from the time it adopted the heroic name.[26] Many parents named their children after Zoya

to honor the heroine, showing their high hopes for the children as well. When Zoya's mother, Liubov Kosmodemianskaia, author of the book, visited China in 1955, every talk she delivered drew a packed audience whom she moved to tears with her account of Zoya's life and death.[27] Chinese children called Kosmodemianskaia "our Soviet mother" and asked her to adopt them as her sons and daughters. A photo titled "We Love Zoya's Mother," showing Kosmodemianskaia with a Chinese girl and boy in the Young Pioneer red kerchiefs, was made into a poster displayed in several cities. The photo was even included in a Chinese photo exhibition held in Moscow in 1959.[28] A middle school student in Guangdong named Chen Shaotao learned Russian and formed a "Zoya Russian study group" to exchange letters with the "Liu Hulan Chinese study group" organized by some Soviet students in Sochi.[29] Admiring Zoya, Chen wrote to Zoya's mother and was thrilled to receive a reply. They kept up the correspondence for five years until such exchanges between Chinese and Russians were cut off in 1966.[30]

The exemplary power of Soviet heroes was so potent in China that Chinese heroes, model workers, and other individuals winning state honors, besides being praised for their own feats, were also commended for having consciously copied Soviet heroes. "China's Zoya" was a popular term for any teenager who venerated Zoya and showed her spirit in protecting public property or fighting against class enemies. Xiang Xiuli (1933–1959), who sacrificed her young life to protect a pharmaceutical factory from a fire, was a good example. She was said to have read Zoya's stories and used Zoya's communist principles to discipline herself.[31]

Likewise, the title of "China's Pavel" was given to people like Wu Yunduo (1917–1991), whose body and spirit were said to have been made of special material, similar to Pavel Korchagin in *How the Steel Was Tempered* by Nikolai Ostrovskii.[32] Pavel is portrayed as a legendary character who made himself into a steel soldier of great determination in October Revolution, with the belief that personal affairs must give way to collective interest. Though permanently handicapped after an accident, he continues to serve the party with persistence and diligence. As a quintessential hero of socialist realism, Pavel inspired generations of Chinese from the book's first translation in China in 1935. Wu was one of those influenced by Pavel. He was severely handicapped in a series of experiments testing explosive weapons for the army, but he continued to work at his post against all odds. After *People's Daily* publicized Wu's story under the headline "This Is How the Steel Was Tempered: Introducing China's Pavel Korchagin," the appellation of "China's Pavel" became his nickname.[33] Wu's autobiography *Give All to the Party* (*Ba yiqie xiangei dang*, 1953) was seen as a sequel to *How the Steel Was Tempered*.[34] The book further spread the Soviet "iron man" spirit among China's new generations. It was even translated into Russian and came to the attention of Soviet readers. In 1949, Wu was sent to the Soviet Union for medical treatment. Recovering partial eyesight, Wu made a pilgrimage to the Ostrovskii Museum in Sochi and met Ostrovskii's wife.[35] The museum later hosted an exhibit showcasing Wu's achievements, also under the title of "China's Pavel." Soviet heroism thus traveled a full circle, proudly bringing home clones from "little brother" countries.

High ideals

The second major theme of Soviet literature circulated in China was postwar reconstruction and socialist transformation under Stalin. As China finally entered a relatively peaceful time of development, building the country became the most urgent task for the Chinese government. A large number of "construction-themed" Soviet novels were thus translated into Chinese. The passion and aspirations of Soviet citizens portrayed in these works motivated Chinese readers to build their country toward Soviet-style socialism. While works such as *Cement* (*Tsement*), *Virgin Soil Upturned* (*Podniataia tselina*), and *Time, Forward!* (*Vremia, vpered!*) were already introduced before 1949, newly translated works such as *Fortitude* (*Muzhestvo*), *Far from Moscow* (*Daleko ot Moskvy*), and *The Harvest* (*Zhatva*) quickly gained popularity.

Perhaps the foremost example of this genre is Vera Ketlinskaia's 1938 novel *Fortitude*, an instant hit among Chinese youth when translated in 1954. The book is based on the modern development of Komsomolsk-on-Amur, a city located in the Far East and close to China's northeastern border. The area was included in the Chinese territory after the Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century. In 1858, the Qing court, being defeated in the Second Opium War, ceded it to the Russian Empire in the Treaty of Aigun. In 1931, Stalin announced plans to build a new industrial city in this area. When construction began in 1932, thousands of volunteers from the Soviet communist youth organization "Komsomol" arrived to build the city. Henceforth the city was renamed Komsomolsk.

Written in the Stalinist era, *Fortitude* is a model of socialist realism: its subject matter is derived from reality; it has characters that are positive figures with full communist awareness; it presents a rich, happy life under party leadership; it is shaped to imbue readers with a strong socialist spirit geared to nation-building according to the party's design. The author portrays a cross-section of those developing Komsomolsk: factory worker, train driver, sales assistant, warehouseman, Red Army veteran, college graduate, party cadre, etc. After leaving their original jobs and lifestyles, these people settle down in a desolate part of Siberia, in search of the meanings of life. They experience the sweetness and bitterness of love, work, and growth. Despite a few "cowards" who escape from hard labor, most of the Komsomol members eventually fight through the hardships and find the path to a meaningful life. In the Chinese translation, the book is summarized as such:

> This is a novel about Soviet Komsomol members building Komsomolsk near the Heilong River. These heroic, enthusiastic builders appear by the river and in the faraway forest of Siberia. Despite a lack of construction material, food, and housing, they overcome numerous difficulties, and devote themselves whole-heartedly to the cause of socialist construction. At the same time, they fight against hidden anti-revolutionaries with constant vigilance. In the course of building a new socialist city, they grow into the socialist new men. The novel realistically and forcefully presents the truth that the party leadership is the basis of socialist construction.[36]

The type of Komsomol spirit that combined collectivist thinking and socialist ideals with personal heroism instantly enthralled Chinese readers. The book was so popular that some readers preferred to ignore historical disputes over the territory of Komsomolsk. As one reader recalls, "[back then] with my intense 'proletarian internationalist spirits,' I thought it made no difference which country the area belonged to. Perhaps the people there were even happier under Soviet control."[37] Numerous reviews appeared in newspapers and magazines, along with two monographs discussing the book's educational values and calling on Chinese youth to learn from their Soviet counterpart.[38]

Following the path of Soviet Komsomol members, thousands of young Chinese gave up the opportunities of working in cities and headed off to the least developed areas. They brought to the countryside the knowledge and technology for industrial development, along with their dreams of building China's Komsomolsk. In 1955, 98 Shanghai students made the dream come true. Against all odds, they developed a rural area in Jiangxi Province by copying Komsomolsk-on-Amur as depicted in the novel.[39] Hu Yaobang, then General Secretary of the Chinese Komsomol Society, visited them and praised their Komsomol spirits. Later, when Hu became the CCP Party Secretary, he visited the place again in 1984 and named it Komsomolsk (*Gongqing cheng*), in direct homage to the dreams and aspirations shared by Chinese and Soviet youth. Hu was buried there in 1990, on the first anniversary of his death.

Vasilii Azhaev's *Far from Moscow* is another "construction-themed" Soviet novel to be frequently mentioned and well-remembered by those coming of age in the 50s. Although set in World War II, the plot centers on the construction of oil pipelines in Siberia by a Soviet engineering team to defeat the Germans. With their hard work, zealous patriotism, and unshakable resolution, the team completes within one year a project that was supposed to take three. As with *Fortitude*, characterization in *Far from Moscow* is in strict accordance with socialist realism. The fact that these pipelines were built by concentration camp prisoners was passed over.[40] Winner of the Stalin Prize, first class, in 1948, the novel was adapted for film and opera, translated into 20 languages, and widely circulated in the socialist bloc.[41]

In the PRC, readers went for the characters in *Far from Moscow* who are placed in exceptional situations but dare to fight against nature and human weaknesses. After reading the novel, students at Beijing College of Geosciences (today's China University of Geosciences) were motivated to study their majors for the development of China's vastly underdeveloped natural resources.[42] In similar ways, *Far from Moscow* became a book that changed the life of thousands. The story of Wu Yi (born 1938), Vice Premier of the State Council from 2003 to 2008 and known as China's "iron lady," provides a typical testimony. Wu Yi admits that she loves reading Soviet literature and *Far from Moscow* was her favorite when she was young. She dreamed to be an entrepreneur like Batmanov, the party secretary and director of the petroleum factory in the novel. For this reason, she chose petroleum engineering as her major when applying for college, even though it was a tough major deemed unsuitable for women. The dream set off by the novel sustained

her for years. She eventually became Party Secretary of one of China's largest petrochemical enterprises in 1983.[43]

Along with *Fortitude* and *Far from Moscow*, novels like Aleksandr Chakovskii's *It's Morning Here Already* (*U nas uzhe utro*, 1949; Stalin Prize, 1950, 3rd class) and Vsevolod Kochetov's *The Zhurbin Family* (*Zhurbiny*, 1952) went down well with Chinese readers. As China successfully carried out its first five-year plan, enthusiasm for further developing the country was high. Soviet socialist realist fiction delivered timely and concrete illustrations of such concepts as patriotism, collectivism, heroism, and idealism that were much in demand in China.[44] With dreams inspired by Soviet literature, the younger generations of China left home for the remote areas of the country. Like the characters from Soviet novels that followed Stalin's instructions, Chinese youths ardently responded to Mao's 1955 call to go to the vast countryside where the Chairman believed huge potential for developing young people's talents was opening up.[45] From the northeastern wilderness to the moorland on the southwestern border, from the barren Gobi Desert to lush forests, youth volunteer teams left their footprints in harsh terrains they had never imagined before. Their stories became China's localized versions of *Fortitude* and *Far from Moscow*. For example, based on the true story of young pioneers breaking in the land of China's Northeast, Chinese writer Cong Weixi's wrote *Grass of the North Country* (*Beiguo cao*).[46] He Jingzhi's poem "Windows of the Westward Train" (Xiqu Leiche de Chuangkou) cheered thousands of urban youths boarding trains to the Northwest to develop the region.[47] This movement served as a dress rehearsal for the bigger waves of urban educated youths "going up to the mountains and down to the countryside" during the Cultural Revolution ten years later. When that happened, many took along one of the Soviet novels mentioned.[48]

Among construction-themed Soviet literature, the "collective farm" novels also constitute a significant group. These novels tell of the return of soldiers to their hometowns after World War II and how they start a new life, often on the collective farms. They focus on a variety of difficulties that Soviet people encountered: adjusting to post-war reconstruction, dealing with war trauma, and forming personal relationships. These novels received special attention, particularly when China's agricultural cooperative movement peaked between 1954 and 1956. The most popular among Chinese readers included Semen Babaevskii's *Cavalier of the Golden Star* (*Kavaler Zolotoi Zvezdy*, 1947–48; Stalin Prize, 1949), Petr Pavlenko's *Happiness* (*Schaste*, 1947; Stalin Prize, 1948), and Galina Nikolaeva's *The Harvest* (1950; Stalin Prize, 1951). Between 1949 and 1953, four translations of *Cavalier of the Golden Star* and two of its sequel *Light on the Land* (*Svet nad zemlei*) were released in China. Study sessions were organized and enthusiastic articles idealizing the happy life on Soviet collective farms filled newspapers and magazines. *The Harvest*, which immediately placed Nikolaeva in the ranks of officially approved Soviet writers, also gave Chinese readers a more realistic version of how Soviet peasants set agriculture back on its feet in the arduous postwar conditions. Many Chinese remembered Nikolaeva's comparison of socialism to a warm lake that would never let a person sink to the bottom, "because the party is always there to lend you a hand."[49]

State and society

The above discussion suggests that Soviet literature had a powerful impact on Chinese society. Particularly, it exerted a formative influence on young people coming of age in the 1950s. From the outset, introducing Russian literature into China was tied to the mission of reforming the nation and enlightening society. It was never purely for entertainment or aesthetic appreciation. In the special environment of the 50s conditioned by official advocacy of Sino-Soviet friendship, the influence of Soviet literature went far beyond the literary level. It is not an exaggeration to say that Soviet literature guided, and even to a certain extent determined, the values accepted by a big slice of the Chinese population. In other words, moral and social values reflected in Soviet literature underpinned Chinese assessment of right and wrong, and Chinese judgment of a person's worth. Through the spread of Soviet literature, patriotism, collectivism, heroism, and idealism were further established as yardsticks for authentic socialist citizens.

In this process, official PRC ideology played a crucial part. From the selection of Soviet works for translation to the circulation of each publication, from setting translation criteria to interpreting major themes, the hand of the state was on every shoulder. The Gorky phenomenon in China makes this clear. His "revolutionary" works were translated and published again and again. From countless write-ups introducing the writer or evaluating his works, the image of Gorky in accordance with the party line branded itself into the minds of thousands: Gorky is a "stormy petrel" heralding revolution, a close comrade-in-arms of Lenin and Stalin, the greatest writer for the proletariat, and the like. This was the standard image of Gorky in China for a long time.[50] In the Chinese world of letters, Gorky was venerated as the founding father of socialist realism, but his humanistic thoughts and works were barely touched on.[51] This way of "selling" Gorky in China turned him into a spokesperson for socialist ideology and socialist realist literature.

Accordingly, mass reading of Soviet literature focused on loaded political and ideological subjects, highlighting keywords such as revolution, struggle, devotion, and sacrifice. The feelings it stirred up were not those of aesthetic pleasure but revolutionary fervor and political enthusiasm. The most typical case is the reading of *How the Steel Was Tempered*. People were happy to openly admit how much they admired Pavel's remarks on the value of life, but were often coy about discussing his romantic affairs in public. Or, when they talked about these, they would emphasize that love needed to be based on common class background, shared belief, and joint effort to build socialism.[52] Pavel's saying about the value of life was so often quoted that it became a commonplace in Chinese.[53] People copied it down in their notebooks, or wrote it on a scroll in fine calligraphy and hung it on the wall to motivate themselves. When applying for party membership, a lot of people would end their written pledge with that same paragraph.[54] Soviet heroes served as a beacon guiding the life journeys of Chinese readers.

In terms of guiding mass reading, state ideology often intervened through the voice of a so-called "readership" in literary criticism. Zicheng Hong offers an

incisive analysis of this unique concept of "reader" that emerged in the social and literary context of the early PRC, which is worth quoting in full here.

> Between the 1950s and 1970s, the relationship between readers of literature and literary writing and activities was fairly complex. When literary criticism led into the concept of the 'reader,' it generally did not have meaning as an independent entity, but acted as an extension of authoritative criticism. The introduction of the 'reader' was meant to strengthen the 'validity' of the criticism. Therefore, at the time, in most circumstances the 'reader' was a construct, a concept not to be concretely analyzed. Literary criticism did not acknowledge that readers of literature could be differentiated into different groups or circles, that differing social groups could have differing cultural needs, and therefore did not acknowledge literature that belonged to different groups. This was meant to cause the elimination of the multiplicity of trends in thought, artistic styles, and artistic tastes, and guarantee the movement toward 'integration.' Authoritative criticism often used 'the masses' and 'readers' (especially 'worker, farmer, and soldier readers') to embrace a group of readers who had identical ideological outlooks and artistic tastes, and that in fact did not exist. Authoritative criticism would use the 'reader' construct under several circumstances. Most frequently, the opinions of the necessary portion of readers were collected and processed, other discordant views were edited out or revised, and then a vague term such as 'the reading public' would be used. Another method was to write what one wished and then to claim that the end-result was a letter or manuscript from a 'reader.' This method was widely used on the eve of and during the 'Cultural Revolution.' Another important phenomenon was that the literary environment of the time also moulded the reader's modes of experiencing and reacting to literature, simultaneously nurturing a 'reader' who was good at divining the prevailing political currents and responding to authoritative criticism. Every time a major event or a polemic occurred in literary world circles, this 'reader' was always able to write the appropriate letter or essay in support of mainstream opinion, and was a constituent part of normative power in the literary world.[55]

The "reader" that Hong talks about often appeared in the Chinese reading and criticism of Soviet literature, too. At the time, newspapers and periodicals teemed with "reader's letters" from different places and of varied professions that related to how a "reader" was inspired, encouraged, or even "redeemed" by such and such a Soviet novel. In many cases, the "reader" would represent and speak for the group, community, or class they belonged to. In the light of Hong's analysis, we have to think again about mass reading of Soviet literature in Mao's China. Many of the "reader's response" anecdotes mentioned may have had some truthful elements, but may also have been embellished. In recent years, doubts have been raised about the authenticity of the brave deeds of several past Chinese heroes, including Huang Jiguang and Xiang Xiuli mentioned previously. Even their alleged Soviet models, Matrosov and Zoya, have been challenged in the country

of their birth. It has been pointed out that these heroes were not as flawless as reported, and that they were to a large extent tools of state propaganda. Their complete background stories may never be known, but we do know that with the cooling down of Sino-Soviet friendship, the number of gushing reports about public enthusiasm for Soviet literature drastically decreased. The Soviet Embassy's News Agency grumbled about diminishing Chinese effort in promoting Soviet literature and film.[56] Chinese heroes no longer had to emulate Soviet models, and even if they did, they were no longer commended for doing so. Instead, China produced its own heroes such as Lei Feng and Wang Jie, who rose to heroism by reading Chairman Mao's works and following the Chairman's instructions. But this does not mean that people stopped loving Soviet literature; it is just that the enthusiasm that people were allowed to express in public venues was reduced. Soviet literature continued to be enjoyed, even when banned during the Cultural Revolution, a point I will expand in the next chapter.

Given that state ideology loomed large over the mass reading of Soviet literature in the 1950s, it seems that Soviet literature's popularity at the time was orchestrated by the Chinese government, as the result of its patronage on the one hand (part of China's friendship diplomacy toward the Soviet Union), and its intention to impart Soviet literature's educational values to the population on the other. This gives the impression that Chinese people read and admired Soviet literature because they were swayed by official opinions. Is this true? How did people like Soviet literature personally? To answer these questions, we have to look at the "real-life reader," not the "reader" in Zicheng Hong's analysis, to discover how an average Chinese person living in the social, cultural, and political milieu of Mao's China reconciled Soviet literature and official instructions.

To begin with, I do not want to suggest that the passion Chinese readers showed in responding to the lofty ideals and high morals in Soviet literature, as presented in the media of the time, was fake. It is true that when "misreading" Soviet literature was deemed a grave political error, readers and critics alike were compelled to follow the official line in what they said about it. However, this does not necessarily imply that people of that time were turned off by the moral and political elements in Soviet literature which the Chinese government promoted. Moreover, we cannot assume that the ideals and principles people pursued were necessarily out of sync with those of the party-state. In fact, a fair number of people were convinced of the advantages of Soviet-style socialism, and dedicated themselves to bringing these advantages to China. Even if they had doubts whether the Soviet people's devotion to socialist goals and tireless diligence in furthering them were real or merely a literary construct of Soviet socialist realism, they needed such stimulation. It was out of genuine admiration that they emulated Soviet heroes, even though some were bitterly disillusioned in later decades.[57] Young people who grew up reading stories of Soviet heroes shared similar growing pains with their Soviet idols; in this process, they internalized the high ideals in Soviet fiction. The fact that many Soviet socialist values are often recalled in post socialist-era memoirs and personal recollections suggests that there were points where personal pursuits (the private) intersected with party demands (the public), though the two did not converge.

Love and fantasies

If there is a collective memory about Soviet literature among the generations coming of age in the 1950s, it is condensed into two sets of keywords. One includes revolution, struggle, devotion, and sacrifice, as previously discussed. The other embraces love, intimacy, freedom, and humanism. These latter words frequently appear in contemporary writings and recollections by those who read Soviet literature in their formative years. Even now they continue to cherish Soviet fiction for its "soft, tender, heart-melting language and romantic plots," as well as for the heroic spirits and high ideals of many literary characters.[58] It seems that privately, and without political pressure, readers gave their attention and affection to the non-political aspects of Soviet literature, which alerts us to an important but often dismissed fact that Soviet literature is not all about slogans, ideology, and endless indoctrination. In fact, even the most doctrinaire Soviet writers had moments when state pressure proved too strong for them. Many works were written in the most stylish language of the Soviet period, richly textured and aesthetically satisfying.[59] They dealt with topics such as love, emotions, and human weaknesses, of course within the boundaries of political tolerance.[60]

Living outside the political environment of mainland China from 1949, Liang Yusheng, a celebrated writer of martial arts fiction, could talk from the heart about what attracted him in Soviet literature. In one of his essays in 1957, he expressed how deeply he was touched by the intense interpersonal conflicts and affections in *Far from Moscow*, *Fortitude* and *The Harvest*, as well as by their detailed descriptions of the characters' thought patterns and love lives. He praised Soviet literature for the confidence and optimism it could give to a person who was feeling down. By skirting the political indoctrination in Soviet fiction, he drove home the point that even a rigidly ideological Soviet novel had material to touch a reader's feelings.[61] Although readers on the mainland rarely talked about such things openly in the 50s, they very likely shared Liang's taste for the non-political, non-ideological aspects of Soviet literature.

Human psychology and romance, features that ran deep in Soviet literature, were tolerated up to a point but remained a sensitive issue in the Chinese literature of the 50s. As early as 1951, it burst upon writers that human emotions and intimate relations were not "safe" topics to write about, when Xiao Yemu's short story *Between Me and My Wife* (*Women fufu zhijian*, 1950) first fell victim to the attack on literary works deemed "contradictory" to the officially prescribed worker-peasant-soldier themes. The story was intended, according to the author, to "create a new type of character through the portrayal of mundane life."[62] It honestly exposed the clash between "intellectual" cadres (the husband, or "me") and "peasant" cadres (the wife) when they were resettled in urban environments after 1949, and it concluded with their personal transformation and new appreciation of each other. The husband's acknowledgement of "the petty-bourgeois remnants in his thinking" showed that the story basically accorded with the official line, but when the criticism of *The Story of Wu Xun* flared up in film circles, *Between Me and My Wife* was accused of "being disconnected to reality," "vilifying the

peasants and spreading petty-bourgeois sentiments," "displaying an unhealthy tendency of observing and portraying life based upon the concept and taste of the petty-bourgeoisie." Setting the main characters in a marital relationship was viewed as especially "inappropriate."[63] In view of this incident, writers had to be more cautious in portraying romance. In several subsequent works, "the description of love usually has a beginning but lacks an end."[64] Even when love was present, the description was dry and superficial; men and women talked about work only or delayed the consummation because of work.[65] Eventually, in the time of the Cultural Revolution, love, marriage, and other intimate human relationships, or simply the trivia of everyday life, became tacit "forbidden zones" in Chinese literature and arts.

Against this backdrop, Soviet literature offered a safe venue for some Chinese writers, critics, and readers to advocate the inclusion of love in literature. To legitimate their argument, they often invoked what Soviet writers said about the necessity of representing love and drew attention to the pervasiveness of love in Soviet prose writings. An article published in *Literature and Art Study* (Wenyi xuexi) in 1955 is a typical example. The article examines the love plots in some of the afore-mentioned popular Soviet novels and expresses concern over Chinese writers' hesitation to touch on this topic. The author maintains that the subject of literature is thinking, feeling humans. Authors should not write about their characters' social activities only; they must also delve into their characters' love lives. In evidence, the author quotes Soviet writer Simonov's remark that "the question of love is the acutest in one's personal life." The author then gives a detailed analysis of the powerful effects that the depiction of love has on creating well-rounded characters in Soviet fiction, throwing in a few more quotes from Soviet writers. He ends by criticizing the mistaken view of some people who "indiscriminately equate writing of love with petty-bourgeois sentimentality and refuse to see it in literary works." But overall this author does not advocate writing about love for love's sake, as he underscores the importance of depicting love from the proletarian standpoint. The love portrayed in Soviet literature, he argues, is based on a solid social foundation: victory of socialist revolution, elimination of private ownership and exploitation, and full emancipation of women.[66] This understanding clearly echoes the standard view of socialist love in the official definition.

Despite the outcry over the lack of love, no miracle cure was observed in Chinese literature of the time. As a result, Soviet literature gave Chinese readers a chance to read and feel without guilt (or punishment) what would be labeled "bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sentiments" if portrayed in Chinese fiction. The Soviet big brother's authority guaranteed that readers did not have to worry about potential political accusations. Instead, they could openly read about love and human intimacy. Although at the time people had to keep to themselves this secret dimension of their fondness for Soviet literature, contemporary writings and recollections reminiscent of the early PRC era have brought it into the public domain. Looking back, many admit that they took on board the principles of love in Soviet fiction and applied them in choosing their own marriage partner. For instance, Wu

Yi says that the character Batmanov in *Far from Moscow* did not simply guide her career path – he also offered her an idealized image of a husband. Her determination to find such a soulmate has been so strong ever since she read the book in her early youth that she has chosen to be single rather than compromise her dream. One can only speculate whether Wu Yi's love for this character was due to his good looks and stylish appearance, his upright personal integrity, or his dedicated devotion to work and the party. Very likely it was the combination of all three. Like Wu Yi, a number of my interviewees confirm that they were captivated by the intense emotions and love affairs in *Fortitude* and *Far from Moscow*. For some, Soviet literature was their first lesson in heterosexual love.

Reading Soviet literature, people could enjoy some passion, some romantic sensations, or a vein of melancholy mixed with tenderness when such emotions and feelings were generally suppressed by the raw revolutionary ethos in China's public arena. For this reason, the language of Soviet fiction had a special charm for Chinese readers, who remember it as "poetic" (*shiyi*) and "misty" (*menglong*). It is worth pointing out that words such as "misty," "hazy," "sentimental," and "melancholy," like love plots, often ran the risk of being equated with "petty-bourgeois sentiments" (*xiaozi qingdiao*) in the PRC at the time, but some readers did secretly use such words as positive attributes and cherished such sentiments. Writer Wang Meng's reading of *Happiness*, a Stalin Prize winner that promoted the Stalinist cult of personality, expresses the Chinese fascination with the Soviet prose.

> When I read the lines describing Lena's feelings – 'Entranced by the beauty of the summer night, Lena mused on the long lifetime in front of her' – I felt I was reading the Bible; I was softened and lifted up by an ultimately touching and awakening sensation. . . I also liked the city of Vienna he [Pavlenko] describes, plus waltz. . . All was like poems and dreams; even though it all remained on the page, it was so warm, moving, and awe-inspiring.[67]

Like *Happiness*, many of the officially acclaimed Soviet novels combined work, party leadership, socialist construction, and political study with everyday routines, recreational activities, and innocent flirtations between men and women. Theater, symphony, ice rink, Christmas tree, Crimean wine, lipstick, perfume, stockings, together with "girls wearing babushkas," "ladies in fashionable coats," and "young men playing the mandolin," created an exotic universe far different from the environment of China in the 50s. This disjunction is another point that Chinese readers frequently recall. At that time of Sino-Soviet friendship, everything from the Soviet Union was so mysteriously charming to the Chinese eye that anything Russian was admired and often romanticized. Despite its falsity, Soviet literature encouraged Chinese imaginations to further idolize the Soviet Union: a country that not only provided material security to its citizens but also encouraged them to live, love, and be happy. It illustrated the idea that revolution and love were not at odds but could complement each another, and that personal freedom and leisure had their place.

Leisure, freedom, and individuality

Obviously, the impact of Soviet literature was especially powerful among China's younger generations. To further examine this impact, this section will focus on Soviet works specifically targeting school-age children (including adolescents) and college students. As the Chinese government expected, Soviet writings guided Chinese youth to form communist worldviews suitable for China's socialist construction and nation-building. Yet at the same time it opened up new horizons for young readers growing up under the red flag.

The first category discussed here, which can be labeled Soviet children's literature, was read by Chinese youngsters from elementary school to high school. Educating young people was the primary task of Soviet children's literature, which aimed at imbuing young readers with positive values of high spiritual and moral worth.[68] In China, this literature was considered "the most powerful and effective cultural weapon of the Soviet socialist enterprise for educating new generations in the communist spirit."[69] However, Soviet children's literature was not didactic and dogmatic. In fact, children's literature in the Soviet Union was much less restricted by the official literary line. Many Soviet writers turned their hand to children's stories to escape from party control.[70] They managed to weave into the moral lessons vivid characters, interesting plots, beautiful settings, and elegant prose.

It is the blending of positive values and artistic appeal that allowed Soviet children's literature to captivate the children of China and exert a civilizing influence on them. From fairy tales to science fiction, from comic strips to children's magazines, Soviet children's literature seized almost half of China's children's book market. Touching on almost every aspect of children's life in the Soviet Union, this literature familiarized young Chinese with Russian and Soviet history, with young Soviet heroes during wars, with knowledge of Soviet schools, sports, and cultural activities. By reading Soviet children's literature, Chinese children came face to face with some basic moral concepts and beliefs: children should love their motherland, love the collective, love life, love to work, do good things, be honest and kind and brave.[71] They learned about such concepts and beliefs from the legendary story of young Vladimir Volodia Dubinin and his struggle against German invasion of the Soviet Union (*The Youngest Son Street* [*Ulitsa mladshego syna*] by Lev Kassil and Maks Polianovskii, 1949), from the captivating account of Timur, an altruistic Young Pioneer member who inspired the "Timur movement" all over the country (*Timur and His Squad* [*Timur i ego komanda*] by Arkadii Gaidar, 1940), and from the growth of a little girl going through her first year at school (*The First Grader* [*Pervoklassnitsa*] by Evgenii Shvarts, 1949).

A number of well-known Chinese translators and writers helped promote Soviet children's literature and guide young readers to understand its merits. Translator Cao Jinghua observed: "I especially love Soviet children's literature, so I can call myself an old reader of it. It fosters ambition in the new generations to become wise, brave, and far-sighted; it teaches children to love work, love the motherland, love the working people of the world; it trains creativity and imagination; and it turns children towards grand, beautiful goals. Such works can [also] bring old people

back to youth."[72] Many other "old" fans of Soviet children's literature wrote introductions, prefaces and commentaries for translated Soviet children's books as a reading guide. Writer Ding Ling once wrote a preface for *The First Grader*, warmly introducing to Chinese children, parents, and teachers this "very interesting" book that "totally absorbed her" and "filled her with pleasure and lovely dreams." She earnestly advised Chinese students to follow their Soviet friends, who demonstrated "how to participate in the collective and how to love the people," who "listened to their grandmothers and mothers and had good manners," who were always ready to "help their peers and correct their own mistakes."[73]

Soviet children's literature also groomed Chinese youth to become firm believers in the advantages of Soviet-style socialism. The accounts of colorful, happy life enjoyed by Soviet children enchanted thousands of their Chinese counterparts, who dreamed of having such a childhood and going to such schools. Anatolii Aleksin's *Thirty-One Days* (*Tridtsat odin den*, 1950) is still well remembered by those who read it in their adolescence. The story's description of a Soviet Young Pioneers' summer camp offered Chinese children a telescope to view Soviet leisure life. The translator's note was clearly meant to bring this home to the reader.

> All the workers, employees, and children in the Soviet Union enjoy the right to rest prescribed by Article 119 in Stalin's Constitution. When summer comes, people go to scenic places in the south. Adults stay in a sanitarium, and children go to a summer camp. There are well-established health care facilities; sports and recreational activities are frequently organized. This is the best time in the happy life of Soviet children. The buildings they live in are lovely; some of them used to be villas of aristocrats, landlords, and capitalists, some are recently built new-style houses. Living in such buildings is like living in a real Paradise![74]

Such a description of Soviet leisure was echoed in a number of reading materials distributed to acquaint Chinese students with Soviet summer camps. The China Youth Press particularly published the translation of a monograph on this subject written by a Soviet educator. The book elaborates on every aspect of a summer camp from initial preparation to political education and to campfire parties.[75] However, in China, only students with good scores and outstanding performance at school had the "privilege" of attending a summer camp. For most children, reading about Soviet summer camps compensated for the lack of first-hand experience, and this, in turn, reinforced their attachment to Soviet literature.

If Soviet children's literature projected an image of heaven for children in China, Soviet youth literature was the Bible of young Chinese adults. The youth literature discussed here refers to works about Soviet college life. Although the number of translations on this particular theme was not big, each of them tantalized the heart and imagination of Chinese youth. In particular, three novels are best remembered: Iurii Trifonov's *Students* (*Studenty*, 1950; Stalin Prize, 1951, third class), V. Dobrovolskii's *Three in Gray Greatcoats* (*Troe v serykh shineliakh*, 1948; Stalin Prize, 1949, third class), V. Lifshitz's *Freshman* (*Pervokursniki*,

1951). These works were so popular that one would count on some luck to find a copy in a bookstore, despite their big print runs.[76] For instance, when the People's Literature Publishing House reprinted *Three Men in Grey Coats* for the sixth time, the total number of copies distributed was close to 200,000, undoubtedly a best-selling record even by today's standard.[77]

This body of literature gave young Chinese a panorama of Soviet college life in the post-war peacetime: a diversified student body from all parts of the USSR with high ideals and wide interests, devoted to disciplined study and rich extracurricular activities, all bound together by friendship and love. Within the restrictions imposed by the time, these works depict college life in a positive light, emphasizing the importance of the collective. Characters are uniformly kind, bright, and optimistic; they love their country, they cherish peace and hate war; they passionately debate issues and problems at school and in society; they carry out cultural programs in factories; they take up volunteer work in their spare time; they help one another and never leave anyone behind; etc. These works generated enormous admiration among Chinese college students, who heatedly discussed them in the classroom, on wall bulletins, and in essay writings and personal diaries. When the translation of *Students* came out in 1952, it was avidly read. "We read it in class, at the dorm, and even on the bus. Once when I was on a bus back to school, I heard two Peking University girls passionately talking about the male protagonists in the book. They criticized Sergei's individualistic heroism, and praised Vadim's collectivist spirit. I shared the same view with them," recalls Lan Yingnian, then a Russian major at Renmin University.[78]

The desire of Chinese students to know about Soviet college life and to study, work, and live in the same fashion was so strong that any description or discussion of Soviet college would instantly carry them away. It was in this context that the above-mentioned works led to a cult of Soviet college life among Chinese students. These wonderful accounts of Soviet college fed the aspiration of Chinese teenagers to go to college, or even better, to enter a Soviet university. A spin-off was that they drew many of them to major in Russian literature. Students who studied it at Chinese universities (often under the tutelage of invited Soviet professors), together with those who returned with degrees in Russian literature from the Soviet Union, became the backbone of China's Russian literary studies. Lan Yingnian, Tan Deling, Liu Ning, Jin Daxin, and Chen Jingyong, who dedicated their lifetime to the translation, teaching, and research of Russian literature, are among the most accomplished of this generation.[79]

Reading Soviet youth literature, Chinese readers again gained a comparative perspective, which they used to reflect on their own college life. Their reaction to *Students* is a good illustration. In this novel, Sergei is talented and handsome, but he cheats on his girlfriend and uses others to boost his reputation. When his misconduct is revealed, he withdraws from the collective. By contrast, Vadim is less brilliant but honest and diligent and actively participates in social work. He kindly offers help to Sergei. Eventually, Sergei is forgiven and readmitted by the collective after his attitudes are transformed. This plot of "the good helping the bad and everyone advancing together" was a familiar formula in socialist realist

fiction. As Trifonov's first novel, *Students* is generally considered "immature" and "artistically awkward" by critics today.[80] Like other works of its kind, *Students* conformed to mainstream Soviet ideology. Although problems such as food shortages, lack of shelter, and political repercussions plagued Soviet college students after World War II, the novel took place in a comfortable, affluent, and politically reassuring setting. For this reason, Trifonov later distanced himself from this early work.[81] But how did such a politically orthodox novel win so much popularity in its home country and abroad immediately after its release?

Students certainly had its strengths, despite its limitations. While Trifonov's meticulous depiction of ordinary life and human emotions refreshed Soviet readers jaded with grandiose heroism, his luxurious settings fed public longings to "some day share the life of the few," as Vera Dunham suggests.[82] In China, the novel caused similar effects among readers who were in a more or less similar social, cultural environment and yearned for similar things from literature.[83]

But for Chinese students, *Students* had an additional dimension of lure. The author, himself a recent graduate from the Gorky Institute of Literature, "managed to convey the tastes and smells of what Moscow student life was like."[84] He gave young Chinese readers a realistic illustration of the daily life and emotional world of students, an area dealt with only in passing in Chinese fiction.[85] At that time, Stalin's government espoused cultured leisure – "healthy and edifying entertainments [that] fitted their vision of a progressive and enlightened society."[86] Thus, Soviet college life was endowed with a variety of leisure choices: films, plays, dance parties, picnics, skating, etc. This was very attractive to Chinese students.

What was more attractive, however, was the level of personal freedom Soviet students had. In comparison with Chinese college students, Soviet college students had a bigger stage on which to develop their personalities and talents. Although political participation was unavoidable, their lives were decorated with friendship, romance, and leisure. But college life for Chinese students was much different. Lan Yingnian's reflection on why *Students* was so popular among Chinese college students in the 1950s highlights this huge contrast.

> An important reason is that our life was so boring compared with that of Soviet college students. *Students* livened up our monotonous life. In our life there was too much stress on collectivism which stifled individuality and allowed no room for even personal interests. Individuality equaled individualism, so it must be criticized. We would be told off or criticized if we read books other than those related to political and ideological education . . . Although romance was not banned for college students, the over-emphasis on collectivism turned the relationship between fellow students into a 'comradeship,' thus chilling the natural human bond between boys and girls. However, male and female students in Soviet colleges could go together on vacations – they could climb the Caucasus Mountain, or swim in the Black Sea. We went to Dalian one summer, but everything was so strictly controlled that we had little free time, and there were no boyfriends and girlfriends. In a word, Soviet college life was freer than ours and there was more room for individual activities.[87]

Lan Yingnian's reflection accentuates the contrast between Chinese and Soviet colleges, but it does not mean that Chinese campus life in the 50s was completely straitjacketed. Frequent political movements and compulsory volunteer work took up a large amount of study time, leaving students physically and psychologically exhausted.[88] But the need for leisure and independent thinking was ever stronger. Combining entertainment with political instruction, Soviet cultural products offered a much-needed means of retreat. Chinese students could relax and lose themselves in reading Soviet fiction, watching Soviet films, singing Russian love songs, or dancing in pseudo-Russian style.[89] At the high tide of learning from the Soviet Union, such activities were often assigned as "political tasks" by Chinese schools to impart an international communist worldview to students. But students found something else in these activities. Privately, they enjoyed the light-hearted recreational elements in Soviet culture. In that way, they depoliticized Soviet culture and stymied attempts by authorities to indoctrinate.

Notes

1 Of course, Russian literature was promoted throughout all socialist countries in the Soviet orbit. However, taking into account China's size and population, the enthusiasm that Russian literature generated in this country certainly was on a greater scale than in other socialist countries.
2 Wang, *Sulian ji*, 21.
3 A number of scholarly works have been written about the introduction of Russian literature into China. Chinese-language monographs include, for example, Chen, *20 shiji Zhong E wenxue guanxi*; Zhi et al., *Eguo wen xue yu Zhongguo*; Chen and Zhuang et al., *E-Su wenxue zai Zhongguo*; Wang, *Xuanze yu shilu*. Among English-language treatises, two important early works are Fokkema, *Literary Doctrine in China and Soviet Influence, 1959–60* and Goldman, *Literary Dissent in Communist China*. For the influence of Russian literature on Chinese writers in the Republican era, see Ng, *The Russian Hero in Modern Chinese Fiction*. The Hungarian sinologist Marian Galik has provided a detailed account of the complex process of translation, reception and influence between Russian and Chinese writers and offered sharp insights into this "interliterary" practice in *Genesis of Modern Chinese Literary Criticism*, and *Milestones in Sino-Western Literary Confrontation*. Richard King's *Milestones on a Golden Road* also sheds light on Soviet literary influence on China. For the translation and reading of Russian literature in China, see Gamsa, *The Chinese Translation of Russian Literature* and *The Reading of Russian Literature in China*.
4 Mark Gamsa's *The Reading of Russian Literature in China*, situating Russian literature in the larger framework of Chinese intellectual history, is a path-breaking endeavor.
5 Chinese publications during this time sometimes also used "Soviet literature" as a generic term for all Russian-language literature, including that of the pre-revolutionary times.
6 Latynina, "The Stalin Prizes," 107.
7 Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society*, 143.
8 Stalin authorized the use of "engineers of the human soul" as a reference to the role of writers and other cultural workers. Andrei Zhdanov developed it into the idea of socialist realism. In the PRC, the term was mainly applied to the teaching profession.
9 For an overview of Chinese translation of Russian literature, see Li, "Eguo wenxue fanyi zai Zhongguo."
10 Bian and Ye et al., "Shinian lai de waiguo," 47.
11 Wu, "Eluosi wenxue dui zhongguo," 16.

12 Zhou, "Women zhen'ai de Sulian wenxue," 70.
13 For comic-books in the PRC, see Farquhar, *Children's Literature in China*, 191–248; Jiang, *Xin Zhongguo lianhuanhua*; Altehenger, "A Socialist Satire."
14 Interview with an editor, Shanghai, May 13, 2009. Also see *Aikan lianhuanhua, disi ji*.
15 For an insightful examination of why Chinese textbooks (in the subjects of Chinese language and geography) incorporated knowledge of the Soviet Union, see Chapter 2 in Yu, *Xingsu* "*xinren*."
16 "1955 nian chuji zhongxue wenxue jiaoxue dagang (cao'an)," [The 1955 junior high school literature education program (draft),] cited in Cha, "Wenhua caozong yu liyong," 101.
17 An article in 1951 complained about the excessive amount of Soviet literature in middle and high school textbooks, which, in the author's opinion, undermined the purpose of promoting patriotism, see Jiang Shanye, "jiaqiang yuwenke de aiguo zhuyi neirong: dui zhongxue yuwen keben de yixie yijian," [Enhance the content of patriotism in Chinese textbooks: Some criticism of middle school Chinese textbooks,] *Renmin ribao*, March 22, 1951. Also see Yu, "Jianguo hou de zhongxue."
18 A good number of research articles and monographs came out during this time which promoted reform in the field. See, for example, Liu Guoying, "Guanyu zhongdeng xuexiao de guowen jiaoxue," [On the teaching of Chinese language in middle school,] *Renmin ribao*, November 15, 1949; Li, *Xin guowen jiaoxuefa*.
19 Ye, "Guanyu yuyan wenxue fenke de wenti," 33.
20 Zhuang, "Lun zhongxue yuwen"; Xing and Liu, "Shiji zhi jiangou."
21 The story also appeared in Soviet school textbooks, see an English-language reading lesson "Alexander Matrosov," in Belova and Todd, *English: A Textbook*, 45.
22 Chen, "Internationalism and Cultural Experience," 90–107; Also Nicolai Volland, "Translating the Socialist State," 64.
23 See the telegraph report from Xinhua News Agency on the Korean frontline by Liu Yunkui, "Huang Jiguang du qiangyan," [Huang Jiguang blocking the machine-gun,] October 20, 1952. The report was subsequently expanded and published. See, Shi Feng and Wang Yuzhang, "Mateluosufu shi de yingxiong Huang Jiguang," [Huang Jiguang, a hero like Matrosov,] *Renmin ribao*, December 21, 1952. For subsequent writings about Huang Jiguang, see, for example, Li, *Huang Jiguang*; and Li, "Huang Jiguang." The story was also included in the fourth-grade Chinese textbook (People's Education Press Edition).
24 The story was also made into an opera by Sergei Prokofiev, premiered in 1948 to an audience of Soviet cultural officials. However, they were not impressed, and the opera remained shelved until its public premier in 1960.
25 Wang, "Zhongguo qingnian," 6.
26 Ibid., 6.
27 "Sulian Wenhua daibiaotuan daojing," [Soviet cultural delegation arrived in Beijing,] *Renmin ribao*, September 28, 1955. Lyubov Kosmodemianskaia was on this delegation. She visited Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou and delivered several talks.
28 Zhao Junyi, "Yizhang hongbian ZhongSu de zhaopian," [A photo popular from China to the Soviet Union,] *Da shijue*, June 1, 2011, http://see-hzrb.hangzhou.com.cn/system/2011/06/01/011367118.shtml.
29 Liu Hulan (1932–1947) was a probationary Communist when she was killed by the Nationalist Army under Yan Xishan. She then became a symbol of courage and loyalty to the CCP, especially after Mao Zedong wrote the famous line "a great life, a glorious death" in her memory.
30 Xu Xiaomei and Chen Li, "Yingxiong Zhuoya de Zhanjiang 'meimei,'" [Heroine Zoya's Chinese "sister",] *Zhanjiang xiaoqing*, no. 49 (2006).
31 Li, *Xiang Xiuli*, 14; Fang and Huang, *Xiang Xiuli*, 29, 68.
32 The novel's impact has been extensively studied. See, for example, He, "Coming of Age in the Brave New World"; Yu, "Sulian yingxiong Baoer Kechajin dao Zhongguo."
33 "Gangtie shi zheyang liancheng de: jieshao Zhongguo de Baoer Kechajin binggong gongchen Wu Yunduo," [This Is How the Steel Was Tempered: Introducing China's Pavel Korchagin, ammunition expert Wu Yunduo,] *Renmin ribao*, October 5, 1951.

34 Zhao, *"Zhongguo de Bao'er*."
35 Wu, *Ba yiqie xiangei dang*, 187–202.
36 "Neirong tiyao," in Kaitelinsikaya, *Yonggan*, ix.
37 Ling Feng [Lin Baohua], "Huanqi dui dangnian Sulian wenxue de jiyi," [Evoking my memories of the Soviet literature then,] *Lin Baohua pinglun* [Lin Baohua's comment], June 10, 2001, http://lingfengcomment.pixnet.net/blog/post/24890993.
38 See Han, *Yonggan di xiangzhe shenghuo*; Zhang, *Cong Yonggan zhong xuexi shenme*?
39 Min, "Ershi shiji wushi niandai."
40 Lan, "Qu yuanli Mosike."
41 Lahusen, *Late Soviet Culture*, 143.
42 Wang, "Zhongguo qingnian," 6.
43 Li, "Wu Yi: Shenghuo meiyou," 65.
44 Here, by "idealism," I mean the belief in elevated ideals or conduct and the conviction that such ideals and conduct should be pursued.
45 Mao made this comment while reviewing an article about a group of high school graduates returning to the countryside in Henan to participate in the agricultural cooperative movement. Mao said, "All intellectuals as such who can go to the countryside should be happy to go. The countryside opens a huge world. There great opportunities for young people to apply their talents are offered." See, Mao Zedong, "*Zhongguo nongcun*," 462.
46 In mid-1950s, Cong Weixi twice went to the north end of Heilongjiang and lived with the young people working there to turn the wasteland into fertile soil. The first draft of the novel, then titled *The First Black Soil* (*Diyipian heitu*), was completed around 1957. However, Cong was labeled a rightist, and publication of the novel was not permitted. During the Cultural Revolution, the manuscript was burned. After Cong was rehabilitated politically, he rewrote the novel under the title *Grass of the North Country* (*Beiguo cao*). It was first serialized in a literary journal in 1983. The complete novel was published in 1984. See Cong, "Juantou yu," 1–6.
47 He, "Xiqu lieche de chuangkou."
48 This connection is reflected in many works of the "educated youth literature." For instance, Huang, *Bianjiang xiaoge*; Guo, *Zhengtu*; Ye, *Cuotuo suiyue*.
49 Zhu, *Miyiyang de rensheng*, 188.
50 Wang, *Gaoerji yanjiu*; Wang, *Fuerjia he de shenyin*, 27–35.
51 Some writers and literary critics – Lu Xun, Fu Feng, Ba Jin, Xiao San, and Qian Gurong, for example – discovered the humanism in Gorky's works and used it to advocate humanism in literary creation and criticism. However, these ideas were unfairly labeled "bourgeois humanism" and thus heavily criticized in the 1960s and 1970s. It was not until the beginning of the new era after the Cultural Revolution that Qian Gurong's assertion that "the art of literature is an art of humanity" was put forward for discussion in the literary circles.
52 Interview with a writer, Beijing, June 21, 2014.
53 Pavel says in the novel, "A person's dearest possession is life. It is given to him/her but once, and s/he must live it so as to feel no torturing regrets for wasted years, never know the burning shame of a mean and petty past; so live that, dying, s/he might say: All my life, all my strength were given to the finest cause in all the world – the fight for the Liberation of Humankind." See Ostrovsky, *How the Steel Was Tempered*, 89.
54 Interview with a Shanghai resident, May 11, 2009. Interview with a college professor, Beijing, June 20, 2014. Interview with a party cadre, Shijiazhuang, June 23, 2008.
55 Hong, *A Century of Contemporary Chinese Literature*, 32.
56 "Sulian zhuhua dashiguan xinwenchu renyuan dui wo xuanchuan Sulian de yijian," [Criticism by Soviet Embassy's News Agency personnel on our propaganda of the Soviet Union,] *Xuanjiao dongtai*, no. 71 (1958).
57 Four of my interviewees emphasized this point, saying that they did not regret emulating Soviet models, even though this kind of behavior is considered "foolish" and "naïve" in hindsight.
58 Interview with a former employee of *Renmin huabao*, Beijing, July 20, 2010.
59 No doubt the high quality of Chinese translators played an important role here.

60 For the changes in postwar Soviet fiction, see Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 199–209.
61 Liang Yusheng, "Sanjianlou suibi: Du Sulian xiaoshuo," [Essays by the Three Swords: Reading Soviet fiction,] *Ta Kung Pao*, January 24, 1957.
62 Xiao Yemu, "Wo yiding yao qieshi di gaizheng cuowu," [I must correct my mistakes,] *Renmin ribao*, 26 October 1951.
63 See a series of articles criticizing Xiao Yemu's "mistaken tendencies," for example, Chen Yong, "Xiao Yemu chuangzuo zhong de yixie qingxiang," [Some tendencies in Xiao Yemu's creative writings,] *Renmin ribao*, June 10, 1951; Li, "Fandui wannong renmin de taidu."
64 Liu, *Revolution Plus Love*, 174.
65 Qiu, "Tan 'aiqing,'" 59.
66 Fang, "Tantan jibu Sulian wenxue zuopin," 14–16.
67 Wang, *Wang Meng wenji*, 99.
68 For an examination of how the values of Soviet socialism were instilled through children's literature in the Soviet Union, see O'Dell, *Socialisation Through Children's Literature*; Balina and Rudova (eds), *Russian Children's Literature and Culture*; Kelly, "'Thank You for the Wonderful Book.'"
69 Chen, *Zai xuexi Sulian ertong*, 2–3.
70 Inggs, "Censorship and Translated Children's Literature in the Soviet Union."
71 Several of my interviewees believe that these values should continue to be promoted today.
72 Cao, "Daixu," ii.
73 Ding Ling, "Jieshao *Yinianji xiaoxuesheng*," [Introducing *The First Grader*,] *Remin ribao*, June 3, 1951.
74 Qiu, "Yizhe de hua," i.
75 See, Yahongtuowa, *Sulian shaonian xianfengdui xialingying*.
76 Interview with an editor, Beijing, July 30, 2009.
77 Xu, "Ershi shiji wushi," 50.
78 Lan, "Cong *Daxuesheng* dao *Binhejie gongyu*," 34. For the Chinese translation, see Telifonuofu, *Daxuesheng*. For the English translation, see Trifonov, *Students*.
79 Liu, *Nanwang liusu suiyue*.
80 Woll, *Invented Truth*, 20.
81 Ibid., 19.
82 Dunham, *In Stalin's Time*, 46.
83 It must be mentioned that commentaries in newspapers and magazines still emphasized the Communist virtues and the struggles against Sergei's individualism in the novel. See Meng, "Yaozuo yige gaoshang de chengshi de ren."
84 Woll, "Iurii Trifonov," 3.
85 Wang Meng's *Long Live Youth* (*Qingchun wansui*, written in 1953) was among the few Chinese novels to take up the subject of student life, but the novel was censured and was not released until 1979.
86 Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values*, 31. For "cultured leisure" in Stalin's time, see pp. 31–37 in Hoffmann's book.
87 Lan, "Cong *Daxuesheng* dao *Binhejie gongyu*," 35.
88 Li, "1950 niandai daxuesheng de xiaoyuan shenghuo."
89 For Soviet songs, see Chapter 3 in Yu, *Xingsu "xinren*."

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6 Soviet literature in China's Cultural Revolution

In the early 1950s, it would have been difficult to imagine that the massive cultural flow from the Soviet Union to China would dry up so quickly, never to regain the same momentum. When the alliance foundered in the 1960s, the PRC government made every effort to break away from the Soviet model and blocked all sources of Soviet cultural influence: Russian-language programs were halted, Soviet-style buildings were repainted or modified to look less foreign, Soviet-style clothes were discarded, Soviet films and literary works – except a few selected titles – were banned from public circulation.

But did Soviet influence evaporate together with the removal of Soviet presence in China? Where were the millions of copies of Soviet literary works published in China throughout the 1950s? If we can speak of the long-term impact of Soviet political structure, economic pattern, and educational system on the PRC after the Sino-Soviet split, can we also speak of an enduring impact of various imported Soviet cultural products on the private lives of Chinese people?

Focusing on popular reading tastes in Mao's China after the Sino-Soviet split, this chapter investigates the question of Soviet cultural influence by looking into the Chinese reception of a few Soviet literary works translated into Chinese between 1960 and 1976. It is commonly assumed that China stopped introducing Soviet literature during this period and its cultural connection with the Soviet Union was completely cut off. But in fact, quite a number of Soviet works were published as "internal reference books," distributed through restricted channels. For each book translated, the Chinese cultural authorities had specific guidelines as to how the designated readers should interpret the contents and how they could use the information to fight against the so-called Soviet revisionism. However, many of these books reached beyond the designated group and were secretly read by educated youth during the Cultural Revolution.

Ironically, in a time when Soviet literature was officially rejected and denounced, the internal publications resonated even more strongly with the Chinese Cultural Revolution generation. The circulation of Soviet books became part of a subculture among disillusioned youth. For these young people, secret enjoyment of Soviet culture was their expression of resistance. By rejecting official interpretations of Soviet fiction and admiring Soviet prose, disgruntled Chinese readers defied in the only way possible the tightened control of minds in Mao's China.

In the extreme condition of the Cultural Revolution, Soviet culture turned into an even more liberating force for the Chinese society.

From "big brother" to "Soviet revisionism"

In the first half of the 1950s, when Chinese publishers were enthusiastically publishing model works of socialist realism from the Soviet Union, new works reflecting the drastic changes in Soviet society after Stalin's death also made their ways into China. From Valentin Ovechkin's *District Routine* (*Raionnye budni*, 1952) to Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Thaw* (*Ottepel*, 1954) to Galina Nikolaeva's *Tale of the Director of an MTS and the Chief Agronomist* (*Povest o direktore MTS i glavnom agronome*, 1954), the literature of the Khrushchev Thaw blew fresh air into the Chinese literary circle. A delegation of Chinese writers visited the Soviet Union in 1954 to attend the Second All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers. A major achievement of the congress was its revision of the socialist realist principle in order to stop the trend of glorifying social reality.[1] Inspired by the Thaw and emboldened by Mao's "Double Hundred" slogan, Chinese writers started to explore new theories and techniques of literary creation and criticism. Qin Zhaoyang, Qian Gurong, and Ba Ren wrote articles on realism and humanism in literature. Wang Meng, Liu Binyan, and Liu Shaotang, while calling for "intervening in life and participating in life," published short stories that exposed contradictions in the party and society. The literary front-runners in China were actively breaking away from the dogmas of socialist realism prescribed in Stalin's time.

It was in this time of newfound openness and vibrant cultural exchange that Sino-Soviet relations showed rifts. The Chinese and the Soviet parties had disagreements on several emerging issues including Khrushchev's de-Stalinization, and many past grievances rose to the surface as well. However, in dealing with growing domestic demands for political and artistic freedom, the two parties were in tacit agreement. In 1957, Khrushchev met several times with Soviet writers. In the name of the Soviet Party, he savaged Vladimir Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone* (*Ne khlebom edinym*), a novel attacking bureaucracy and corruption published just a year before and a symbol of Khrushchev's Thaw. The novel was accused of "biasedly citing some negative facts for distorted presentation from a malicious standpoint."[2] Other works that revealed social ills were also under attack for "vilifying" Soviet society and the Communist Party. Similarly, Mao replaced the moderately open air of the "Double Hundred" with the Anti-Rightist Campaign in the summer of the same year. Writers and critics who had voiced constructive criticism or exposed injustices were convicted of being "rightists" and purged. As both countries stepped back from the liberal trends their party leaders initiated, writers and artists had to put on the old uniforms of socialist realism to play safe.[3]

Because of Khrushchev's criticism, the Chinese translation of *Not by Bread Alone*, originally intended to present the effects of the Thaw at its peak, was not allowed to be openly published.[4] Instead, it appeared as an "internal reference" (*neibu cankao*) work with a limited print run. Khrushchev's speech denouncing Dudintsev was republished in a 1958 Chinese volume titled *Defending Socialist Realism*. The editor

made it clear that the Thaw literature was "revisionist," an enemy that both Chinese and Soviet literature needed to caution against and get rid of.[5]

Since it was uncertain where Sino-Soviet relations were going to end up at the end of the 1950s, the introduction of Soviet literature into China slowed down only a little, but a downtrend was in sight. A few propagandist articles calling on Chinese writers to emulate their Soviet counterparts appeared in newspapers, and some bland pronouncements at the Third All-Union Congress of Writers (1959) were applauded, but they were merely decorative.[6]

As the 1960s unfolded with worsening Sino-Soviet relations, especially as open disagreements between the two parties became public in 1963, any remaining enthusiasm Chinese publishers had for Soviet literature waned. Some commemorative activities for important political occasions were nothing more than formalities.[7] Only a handful of translated Soviet works were released to the general public, many of them reprints of previous translations, until even this ceased after 1965.[8]

The new translations between 1960 and 1965 were highly selective. The criterion for selection was whether the author championed the "party spirit" (*dangxing*) and socialist realism in their writings.[9] It was for this reason that a Soviet writer named Vsevolod Kochetov (1912–1973) gained special attention. Kochetov was already a familiar name to Chinese readers in the 1950s because of his 1952 novel *The Zhurbin Family* (*Zhurbiny*) on boat workers, which was translated into Chinese in 1953 and re-translated several times afterwards. Kochetov's two new novels – *Brothers Yershov* (*Bratia Ershovy*, 1958) and *Secretary of the Oblast Committee* (*Sekretar obkoma*, 1961) – appeared in Chinese close together in 1962. The first portrays conflicts and contradictions in Soviet society in the second half of the 1950s, seen through the life of a steel worker family. By praising the extraordinary qualities of the Soviet working class and the "good" intellectuals who fight alongside them, the novel turns the spotlight on "decadent" and "revisionist" thinking among Soviet intelligentsia. The second book focuses on the leadership style of party officials, delving further into upheavals in Soviet society after Stalin's death. It portrays a few typically bureaucratic and dishonest officials, but at the same time emphasizes that good leaders still exist and will eventually defeat the bad ones. In both works, the characterization of positive figures takes the orthodox socialist realist route, undoubtedly meeting the demands of Chinese official ideology.

Known for his steadfast defense of the party line and rigorous adherence to socialist realism, Kochetov wrote these two political novels to counter liberal trends emerging among intellectuals, writers, and artists during the Thaw. His positive portrayal of workers and the party was a direct response to the criticism of social conflicts in works like Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone*.[10] For Kochetov, it was important to deal with personality cults, dogmatism, and bureaucracy. It was more important, however, to ward off attacks on the party leadership and the working class because, as he believed, subversive elements were often disguised as liberalists.

In contrast to Kochetov's upfront, uncompromising position, the official Soviet attitude toward the Thaw was ambivalent. For Khrushchev, it was necessary to

bring to light the flaws in the party, but that should not undermine the party's prestige. It was crucial to encourage different viewpoints and dissident opinions, but only when they were not too radical to challenge the party's authority. Throughout his time in office, Khrushchev's policy struggled to strike a balance but ended up pleasing neither side.

The Chinese official attitude toward the changes in the Soviet Union, especially after the 1956 Twentieth Party Congress, was mixed. Mao welcomed Khrushchev's de-Stalinization in the hopes that it would free China from its subordinate position in the socialist camp, and at the same time help relax the political atmosphere at home. Yet Mao also had reservations, particularly in the face of the 1956 turmoil in Poland and Hungary. He feared that the liberalization triggered by the Thaw would shatter the foundations of socialism not only in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries but also in China. Soon this fear became an obsession as worries about class struggle intensified. To defend the party's leadership, the CCP had to inflate the reputation of Lenin and Stalin in China. So it was no surprise that Kochetov, a party dogmatist and a pro-Stalinist, received bouquets from the Chinese press amidst growing hostility toward Soviet literature shown in increased censorship. Such was the context in which *Brothers Yershov* and *Secretary of the Oblast Committee* met Chinese readers. The following discussion will focus on the former since it received more attention in China than the latter.

Although its reception in the Soviet media was mixed, *Brothers Yershov* was highly acclaimed in China and was "studied as a typical literary reflection of Soviet people opposing Khrushchev's revisionist route."[11] Narrating the life story of three generations of steel workers in the Yershov family, the novel describes in great detail how ordinary workers in their work and everyday life fight against those who obstruct Soviet society from marching forward. Through such struggles, Kochetov puts his finger on a politically sensitive issue of the time: the evaluation of Stalin. In one episode, a factory engineer who fought in World War II defends his personal loyalty to the party. He argues that he marched to battle shouting, "For the motherland! For Stalin!" because Stalin personified the party and the country, and this cannot be simply explained away as the cult of personality.[12] In the person of this engineer, Kochetov expresses his disapproval of efforts to discredit Stalin totally and absolutely. The city secretary named Gorbachev, a die-hard Bolshevik member, is another character who does not go along with some of the new trends after the Twentieth Party Congress. He finishes up dying of a heart attack, outraged at false accusations. The novel points out that Khrushchev's policies are not altogether welcome to his people. This was precisely what the Chinese government wanted to hammer home.

More importantly, the novel was considered a much-needed lesson for China because it relentlessly exposes the dark side of Soviet society, the ugly tricks of party functionaries, and the long-existing conflicts between the party and the people. Kochetov brings to daylight various types of enemies and their dirty deeds to show people that these bad elements of society are hidden in the crowd, plotting to destroy the people's cause. As the writer makes clear, the threat that these enemies pose to society cannot be underestimated, even though they are

doomed to be defeated by the working class.[13] For China, this was a timely alarm and a perfect justification for the mounting class struggle at home – there were class enemies everywhere, even in a socialist society, as Mao warned people.[14] To extend the influence of this work, the story was adapted as a stage drama directed by the Soviet-trained director and actress Sun Weishi.[15] Many high-ranking officials were summoned to learn a lesson from this revelation of Khrushchev's Soviet Union.[16] The book was even translated into the Uyghur language two years later.[17]

The significance of *Brothers Yershov* to China was set out in a long article published in *People's Daily* shortly after the Chinese translation came out.[18] The author Li Xifan was an editor and critic for the literature and art section of *People's Daily*. Focusing on "the intense and fierce ideological struggle," Li analyzes the contrast between the positive and negative forces, and applauds the "high political sensitivity" of the novel. Li compares the arch-villain in the novel to a camouflaged worm that seizes every chance to become a big fish. Like the bourgeois and other reactionary forces, this worm "is all the time looking for anti-communist allies among the dregs of society," and together, they find every opportunity to subvert socialism and block socialist development. At the end of the article, Li warns the readers to be alert and ready to fight against reactionary forces in everyday life: if you let "a mosquito bite" go, you may get shot in the dark by a hooligan, as happens to that old Bolshevik in the novel.

"Saving the Soviet Union"

In 1962, when *Brothers Yershov* and *Secretary of the Oblast Committee* were published in China, Soviet literature was still respected by the Chinese press as a "fighting literature,"[19] at least for rhetorical effect, if not in earnest. Li Xifan's article opened fire on a handful of Soviet reactionaries corrupted by foreign bourgeois and revisionist thoughts, but not on the Soviet Union as a whole. However, in the following years, as open polemics between the two countries intensified and their alliance finally broke up beyond repair, the Soviet Union's primary reference in China changed from "the big elder brother" to "Soviet revisionism," or "Soviet social capitalism," both of which were often yoked together to "American capitalism." Likewise, the Soviet Communist Party under Khrushchev, Soviet art and literature, and especially the liberal ideas of the Thaw, all fell from grace. Soviet literature was denounced as a "revisionist literature," except for the revolutionary works by Gorky, whose status as "the great mentor for proletarian literature" exempted him from challenge in China.

Chinese critics started to criticize Soviet writers such as Ehrenburg, Mikhail Sholokhov, Vladimir Tendriakov, Iurii Trifonov, and Boris Vasilev, who were acclaimed in China in the 50s for their generally upbeat writings about socialism. Yet, in the Thaw, these writers shied away from the socialist realist method of embellishing reality or completely rejected it. For this reason, in China, they were accused of deviating from the party line. Sholokhov, in particular, was labeled "the founding father of Soviet modern revisionist literature," "the big boss of Soviet

revisionist literature," and "the trumpeter for the renegades." All of his works were discredited for alleged political errors and deviations.[20] The assault on Soviet writers even implicated translators of Soviet literature. Cao Ying, for example, was labeled a "big rightist" for translating Sholokhov and was banned from the profession for a while.[21]

Contemporary Soviet writers were not the only ones to feel China's ire; even nineteenth-century writers became targets. Literary giants like Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Gogol, and Turgenev were vilified or completely forgotten. Reading their works became questionable. For instance, an article attacking Turgenev's *On the Eve* (*Nakanune*) accuses the heroine Elena of being "an ultra-individualist." The author announces that anyone who admires Elena is either "born into a family of the exploiting class without due thought reformation," or "having serious bourgeois sentiments."[22] Such an assessment, if it stuck, could jeopardize anyone's career or even life in the on-going ideological struggle of the time. Fearing the grave consequences that reading "revisionist literature" might cause, readers started to steer clear of Soviet fiction. In fact, by the mid-1960s, almost all translations of foreign literature, whether from Russian or other Western languages, were locked away in Chinese libraries.

Attacks on Soviet literature in the Chinese press, along with anti-Soviet rhetoric in the Chinese media, played a role in changing public opinions of the Soviet Union in the 1960s. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, Pushkin's bronze statue was knocked down in Shanghai. Wherever possible, portraits of popular Soviet writers were taken down from the walls of libraries and bookstores. People were told that for too long they had been hooked on the "spiritual opium" in Soviet literature and it was time to kick the habit. To demonstrate that they had broken with Soviet revisionism, Red Guard authors often treated anything related to the Soviet Union with condescension. In their writings, China invariably takes the form of a savior, offering redemption to the Soviet people. This imagery is embodied in several poems from a popular 1968 collection *Written on the Red Flag: Selected Poems by the Red Guards*. One poem describes how a Soviet woman working at a restaurant in Moscow admires the shiny Chairman Mao badges that Chinese Red Guard students wear on their coats. She goes up to them and says:

> Your badge radiates the glow of the sun,
> Chinese Red Guards, please give me one!
> Ah, calamity-ridden Russia
> Has been awaiting the second October Revolution for too long![23]

In a similar poem, through the voice of a Soviet worker "forced" to embroider portraits of Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Kosygin, the author calls for "a solemn war to overthrow Soviet revisionism."[24] In Red Guard imagination, the Soviet Union has joined the rank of revisionists and capitalists, and betrayed the international communist movement. Along with the United States, it is now in need of salvation and a target of world proletarian revolution. In response to Mao's call for "continued revolution," Red Guard poets proclaim war on these two countries.

Kill,
March to Moscow and Washington!
Throw them off their feet,
Turn their damn world upside down![25]

In these poems, China in the Cultural Revolution is seen as the very leader of the new revolution. Since in the Soviet Union "the first socialist beacon has been knocked down," Red China is to light up the torch of international communist movement and raise the flag of Lenin and Stalin once more.

Ah, Neva River, you are so happy to see
The red star in the Kremlin twinkles in Zhongnanhai.
Follow Mao Zedong,
Thus you tell descendants of former Bolsheviks,
Pick up your old musket,
Thus you ask children of the Red Guards.
Aim the cannon of Cruiser Aurora at the new Tsar's throne,
Fire, raise up a new Soviet world.[26]

In the political fantasy of *To the Warriors of the Third World War*, a long series of poems widely circulated in 1969, the metaphor of the Soviet red star is employed again.

We once watered horses by the Don,
Strode over the prairies of Ukraine,
Climbed over the peaks of the Ural.
Now we re-kindle the red star in the Kremlin.[27]

All these poems made reference to a number of Soviet revolutionary symbols that were once so familiar and arousing to the Chinese. But in the ultra-left atmosphere of the Cultural Revolution they were turned into Chinese weapons against the Soviet Union. In the new mapping of the Red Guards, the center of world revolution had already moved from Moscow to Beijing. Until 1972, in a long political poem *Break up, March on*, orthodox Red Guards would continue to "stamp flat the White House, re-kindle Lenin's lamp."[28]

Saved by the Soviet Union

It was not long before the cruel reality of the Cultural Revolution cooled down the heroic fervor and revolutionary romanticism in Red Guard poetry. Confronted by the violent class struggle, the absurd theory about family background, and the distortion of human nature, many Red Guards felt deceived. The "up to the mountains and down to the countryside" campaign further accelerated their disillusionment. In the wild Northeast, the barren Northwest, and the rain forest of Xishuangbanna, sent-down youth finally saw that what grew on the stretches of

beautiful wasteland was poverty and ignorance. As their idyllic dreams to transform the countryside were shredded by harsh realities, they started to rethink, doubt, challenge, and look for a way out. Their thirst for knowledge and quest for truth and spiritual freedom compelled them to read, and oddly, it was the chaos in the Cultural Revolution that made reading a possibility.

By the mid-1960s, except for Mao's writings and Marxist-Leninist works, almost all books – from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen, from Shakespeare to Tolstoy – were relegated to the "bourgeois, feudal, and revisionist" (*zifengxiu*) categories and banned from public circulation. Soviet literature was regarded to be especially "poisonous." However, the inaccessibility of "banned books" only increased young people's curiosity, impelling them to search and read. In turn, the "forbidden" nature of these books brought them a special sense of accomplishment, rebellion, and exhilaration.[29] Li Yinhe (China's best-known female sexologist, b. 1952) describes this kind of reading behavior as "quenching a thirst with poison," admitting that at the time, she would "drink it even if it is poison, even if it causes death immediately."[30]

Admittedly, countless libraries were ransacked and numerous private collections were burnt during the campaign to destroy the "Four Olds" at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Yet, some survived. To taste the forbidden fruit, young people stole from homes and libraries, or picked through trash at recycling stations, for banned books were often sold as waste paper. Sometimes, Red Guards also kept the books and magazines they confiscated for personal use. And there was still a fair supply being circulated on the black market.[31] But obtaining books was just the first step. To benefit more people, book lovers tried every means to spread their limited acquisitions. They commonly adopted two methods: passing books on after a quick read and copying a book by hand. The first got the most use out of a single book, while the second made more copies available. Gradually but steadily, these books accumulated, opening up new vistas for the Cultural Revolution generation.

Among the secretly circulated books, the literary works published between 1949 and 1965 were easier to find. Not surprisingly, Russian novels and poems constituted a large portion of these books. Fed up with the "precious red book" (*Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*) and the "three old pieces" (three of Mao's political essays), educated youth were surprised to find in Russian literature "a treat in a time of starvation."[32] The soothing, sentimental, and often wistful tones, combined with rich descriptions of sceneries and meticulous depictions of human psychology, invigorated the hearts of Chinese readers, urging them to think critically of Chinese articles condemning Russian literature.[33] As a result, the distorted image of the "Soviet revisionist" began to fade. Late historian Gao Hua (b. 1954) remembered his mixed feelings back then: "I was indignant at Tsarist Russia's encroachment on Chinese territory and Stalin's hegemony over China, but just the same, I still related 'true socialism' to the bygone 'Sino-Soviet friendship' period. . . In my heart I even hoped to go back to the 'Sino-Soviet friendship' years."[34] Like Gao Hua, many young people wondered how a country with such beautiful literature, once respected as China's big brother, could turn into an ugly

enemy so quickly? Did the Chinese government bear some of the blame for the break-up? Had the alleged "corruption" and "ideological deviation" of the Soviet Union also taken place in China?[35]

It was in this context that *Brothers Yershov* was reborn in China and became one of the best-remembered Soviet novels among the Cultural Revolution generation. Although banned from public circulation, the novel was circulated in the underground reading groups and generated lively discussions. From the positive image of workers, their high moral standards, and their ordinary but exciting everyday life, a new generation of readers found the dreams that their parents pursued. For some of them, the ideal of an ultimate Communist society still had great appeal, even though the widespread violence and fanatic cult of personality had shaken up much of their previous belief in that ideal.[36]

To some readers, *Brothers Yershov* conveyed the beauty and charm of Soviet literature, something badly needed in a time of cultural repression. One reader recalls marveling at the poetic language and exquisite description of emotions in the novel. Even now, she is still able to recite an affectionate poem from the book.[37] Zhou Li (b. 1950), author of a well-known autobiography *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan*, shares a similar memory about *Brothers Yershov*. She remembers once copying out several paragraphs from the novel into her diary when she was around 20. These paragraphs contain a fine account of the character's emotional reactions to a wartime song. This excerpt from *Brothers Yershov* accompanied Zhou through her harsh years as a sent-down youth, adding a soft but stirring counterpoint to her seemingly endless dreary life in North China's wilderness.[38]

Readers also enjoyed the love plots in *Brothers Yershov*. The depiction of love allowed them to see that romance can be expressed in such passionate terms in socialist literature.[39] Comparing the Soviet novel with Chinese literature of the time, they came to new conclusions about China. In China then, "any personal feeling, idea, or desire unrelated to class interest, any behavior incompatible with the official ethical code, even a single attempt to break bounds, was considered dissident and pernicious, and therefore was repressed."[40] The Chinese fiction, films, and plays permitted for general entertainment at the time trivialized subjects like love, marriage, and sex or skipped over them altogether. The contrast showed that the ultra-left puritanical culture of the Cultural Revolution "was to foster ignorance and to deprive an individual of their personality."[41] It stamped out home-grown and foreign literary traditions and, even worse, tried to do the same to human aspirations and feelings. The CCP's war against "revisionism" was in fact an assault on humanism.[42]

As for the dark side of Soviet society that *Brothers Yershov* reveals, Chinese readers no longer questioned its credibility, but instead measured it against the realities around them. China and the Soviet Union had similar political systems. The corruption, bribery, and cheating in the Soviet novel also existed in the Chinese party and society. It was not difficult to find Chinese matches for the villains in Kochetov's book. What astonished Chinese readers at this time was the fact that "Soviet writers described such evils in novels, but Chinese writers could not,"[43] because "if a [Chinese] writer dared to portray factory managers in such a

[negative] light, they would be thrown into the 'rightist' category and that would be the end of their career."[44] Moreover, when *Brothers Yershov* was published, Khrushchev was still in full power. Yet, Kochetov could write against Khrushchev's de-Stalinization candidly. The level of political and artistic tolerance in the Soviet Union was utterly unthinkable to Chinese readers.[45] In China, only positive characters were tolerated in Cultural Revolution literature. Even when an anti-hero was needed to get class struggle going, the character could not be fleshed out as in Kochetov's writing. As Chinese readers came to see the differences, they no longer read *Brothers Yershov* as an "anti-revisionist textbook," nor did they denounce it as a "poisonous weed." On the contrary, they saw it as a mirror reflecting not only the sickness and ugliness in Chinese society, but the suppression of humanity and free speech during the Cultural Revolution.

Internal publications: the first wave

The Cultural Revolution generation fell for Russian literature as soon as they gained access to it, and, clearly, they were attracted to aspects of Russian literature that their parents had loved. Their mindset was changed immensely as well, but in a radically new way. One reason was that they saw things differently in a completely new cultural environment. Another was that they were able to see different things – a number of newly translated works of Soviet fiction unavailable to many of their parents' generation. Known as "internal publications," these new translations were to subvert the belief system of the younger generation that was already under challenge.

These "internally published and circulated books" (*neibu faxing tushu*), a different category from openly published and circulated books (*gongkai faxing tushu*), are a peculiar censorship phenomenon in the PRC. The term applies to books that are not considered suitable for public dissemination; therefore, they are intended only for a specific group of readers. There are three possible reasons that a book may be classified as "internal only." First, the content involves party and state secrets; second, the information is potentially harmful to foreign relations; and, third, the content is valuable for researchers but inappropriate for the general public.[46] Literary works of this third kind are the concern of the following discussion. According to *Quanguo neibu faxing tushu zongmu 1949–1986* (catalog of China's internal publications 1949–1986), there were only a few internally published literary works in the 1950s, but beginning in the early 1960s, the number expanded greatly. The 1957 translation of Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone* mentioned previously is generally recognized as the first Soviet novel classified as an internal book.[47] However, strictly speaking, it differs from the internal books after 1960 in that it was originally intended for open publication; it was reclassified for internal publishing later when circumstances changed. By contrast, literary titles published internally after 1960 were restricted from the time they were selected for translation. For this reason, they often began with a preface or translator's note offering critical interpretations.

While the number of openly published Russian literary translations shrank in the early 1960s, those that were released as internal books showed an increase.

Under the Ministry of Propaganda's directives, the People's Literature Press was the major publisher responsible for internally publishing foreign literary works viewed as reflecting "revisionist" and bourgeois cultural trends. These internal books were intended to be criticized and to provide ammunition for China's polemics with the Soviet Union.[48] As "counter examples," they were easily distinguishable for their plain yellow covers, hence the nickname "yellow-covered books."[49] Often the Chinese characters for "internal publication" were printed on the cover or the back, though sometimes a slip of paper was inserted inside, warning that "the book is for internal reference only and should not be circulated publicly."[50]

From 1960 until internal publishing halted with the onset of the Cultural Revolution about 200 foreign literary works were published as internal books.[51] Some were Euro-American novels, including J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, John Braine's *Room at the Top*, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, and Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nausea*. These works of "the beat generation," "the angry young men," "the absurdists," and "the existentialists" were selected because they "represented young people's (especially workers') dissatisfaction with society in Western countries."[52] Whether or not the editors and cultural authorities who made this assessment truly thought so or simply said so to legitimate their choices, the important thing was that a door on some cutting-edge Western literary trends finally opened a crack.[53]

Nonetheless, fiction from the Soviet Union continued as the major player in translated foreign literature, with more than half the titles. Apparently, this was because "Soviet revisionism" was considered a bigger threat to China. In official rhetoric, the internal distribution of Soviet works was meant to expose the intended readers to the "poisonous weeds" so that they could better deal with the Soviet enemy. As a result, a diverse array of recently published Soviet works was introduced, touching on a number of burning issues in Soviet literary and art circles. Most notable were Ehrenburg's 1956 sequel to *The Thaw* and 1960 memoir series *People, Years, Life* (*Liudi, gody, zhizn*), along with many works influenced by the humanistic trends in Soviet literature, e.g., Aleksandr Tvardovskii's satirical poem *Tyorkin in the Other World* (*Terkin na tom svete*), two war novels by Konstantin Simonov, Vera Panova's 1958 semi-autobiography *Sentimental Romance* (*Sentimentalnyi roman*), and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's 1962 masterpiece *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (*Odin den Ivana Denisovicha*). Along with these works revealing Stalinist repression were others experimenting with alternative language and new genres, such as Evgenii Evtushenko's 1961 poem *Babiyy Yar* (*Babii iar*), Vasilii Aksenov's 1961 hit *Ticket to the Stars* (*Zvezdnyi bilet*), and a novella collection by Chinghiz Aitmatov. Most of these writers and poets were critical of the Soviet state, but it was exactly for this reason that their works were welcomed with open arms by the rigid Chinese censorship.

Designated as internal publications, the new translations had a very small print run of no more than 900 copies per book. They were distributed among a small ring of high-ranking officials and intellectuals, who were eligible for a special purchasing permit to be used at an "internal bookstore." For example, in Beijing they were passed on to "cultural officials, libraries and reference rooms in

the Propaganda Department and Ministry of Culture, and to famous writers and university professors."[54] The social status of the intended readership testified to the cultural privileges that intellectuals and party elites enjoyed in socialist China (as in the Soviet Union), making a mockery of the slogan that "everyone is equal in a socialist society." In truth, "access to knowledge was heavily guarded in the name of revolution."[55] The government believed that only those hand-picked readers needed to know these literary works, so that they would have the necessary information to fight against Soviet revisionism. The government also believed that these people had been politically immunized against "problematic" works and that they would be able to recognize the "poisonous weeds," pull them out, and turn them into fertilizer.

However strictly controlled, these internal publications found their ways to a readership outside the designated one and generated consequences opposite to the intended. Ironically, these books turned into fertilizers for the intellectual and spiritual growth of the unforeseen readers, allowing them to challenge the authority that banned them from reading. Hot off the press, these internal books circulated among children of top officials and cultural high fliers. Dissatisfied with the doctrinaire school education, these young people gathered together to read books, criticize contemporary politics, and produce their own literature and poetry. Through their parents, they gained access to all sorts of books, including internal publications. "X Poetry Club" (*X shishe*) and "the Sun Column" (*Taiyang zongdui*) were the best-known cultural salons in the early 1960s. Leading figures in the first included Guo Shiying (b. 1942, Guo Moruo's son) and Zhang Heci (b. 1943, grandson of Zhang Dongsun[56]). Both of them read widely in Western and Russian philosophy, politics, history, and literature, since these books were readily available to them at home. Guo especially admired the Russian Decembrists and Narodniks who gave up their wealth and aristocratic lifestyles, or even their lives, to fight against autocracy for personal freedom and social progress. As a result, Guo became critical of his own privileged family background and started to question the nature of Chinese socialism.[57]

Like the "X Poetry Club," the core of "the Sun Column" was children from distinguished families. Zhang Langlang's father Zhang Ding was a famous painter. Zhang Langlang (b. 1943) started writing poems in high school. Admiring Mayakovsky, he and his fellows had their heads shaved. They were often seen reciting Mayakovsky's "A Cloud in Trousers" ("Oblako v shtanakh," 1915) in their military cotton pants belted with old wire.[58] They also met to exchange and discuss the forbidden books their parents owned, for these books offered them a radically different worldview from that pushed down their throats at school. Interestingly, they received these incendiary ideas through the privileges granted to their families by China's socialist political system, but they created a counter-culture against the system with these ideas. In the process, the internal books that were designed to protect the system served as an intellectual stimulus for young people like Guo Shiying and Zhang Langlang to question and challenge the system.

It did not take long before the two cultural salons fell under suspicion. Their activities were deemed "anti-party" and "anti-socialist." Both were disbanded and

their members arrested.[59] However, the spark they lit was to set the whole country on fire during the Cultural Revolution. Especially with the massive relocation of city-educated youth in 1968, the internal publications spread like a wild fire across the country, illuminating a path for millions who were searching in darkness and despair.

Ticket to freedom

In almost all sent-down youth memories of the "yellow-covered books," Aksenov's *Ticket to the Stars* occupies a significant place.[60] The novel narrates a coming of age story about Dimka and his three companions. Instead of behaving as typical Moscow adolescents, the four friends go on a journey to the Baltic to escape their nagging parents and the stifling school system. The challenges and setbacks they encounter during the journey mature them psychologically and emotionally. A parallel storyline in the novel concerns Dimka's elder brother Victor, whom Dimka views as a docile conformer to social norms. But the truth is that Victor is bent on scientific research as a career and behaves in a stubbornly honest and forthright manner in the face of fallacies and academic corruption. He dies in a plane crash after reporting the corrupt authorities. In the end, when Dimka returns home, he looks out the window in Victor's bedroom and sees a rectangular patch of starry sky, much like a train ticket punched by a conductor. This vision, passed on to Dimka by his brother, sets him off on another journey, even though it is not clear where.

The story of a rebellious teenage runaway on his own is reminiscent of Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. In fact, Aksenov is often recognized as "the Salinger of the Soviet Union."[61] Between the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Thaw was nearing its second high tide after a brief halt.[62] American writers like Hemingway, Salinger, and Faulkner were introduced to Soviet readers. The first Russian translation of *Catcher* (released in 1960) made the protagonist Holden Caulfield a rock star in the eyes of Soviet youth. In the following year, Aksenov became an overnight celebrity for his *Ticket*. Although Aksenov himself and some researchers denied that *Catcher* directly influenced *Ticket*, Dimka's running away to search for the meaning of life is clearly of a piece with Holden's, and their similar preference for vulgar slang is evident.[63] American music, fashion, and literature frequently appeared in the writings of Aksenov, who adopted American hipsters' speech and ways of thinking. But for Chinese readers, the link between these two novels lay not only in their similar themes and language, but in the fact that both were published in China as internal publications in September 1963 by the Writers Publishing House, an imprint of the People's Literature Press. Was this merely coincidence?

In fact, it could not have been more appropriate to put Salinger and Aksenov side by side in China, for *Ticket* was taken as a product of the influence that the beat generation literature had on Soviet writers. As "the Note about the Author" appended to the Chinese translation claims, *Ticket* is about "a bunch of Soviet punk kids running away from home. . .to pursue sensual pleasure and Western libertine lifestyles." Readers were recommended to read one in the light of the other

as windows on "the decadent bourgeois worldviews and lifestyles that the Soviet regime encouraged"[64] as well as on insipid American bourgeois culture.

Such an interpretation can be seen as a way of "recoding" Soviet and Western texts according to the Chinese official ideology.[65] In a time when literature was still considered as textbooks for society, young readers were thought to need guidance in their reading. The purpose of adding prefaces and postscripts was exactly to repackage the original cultural code into something suitable to the principles of the target language. But for young people who were breaking away from the constraints of ideological education, the negative vocabulary used in describing the two books, such as "libertine," "decadent," "rotten," and "bourgeois," only sharpened their curiosity to take a peep. At the same time, the "forbidden" nature of the books flavored them with the spice of rebellion. In the cultural context of the Cultural Revolution, young readers decoded a different set of messages from the two books: generation gap, dissatisfaction with school education, doubt, rebellion, dreams, and aspirations, all of which spoke to their own hearts. Their new interpretations completely shattered official indoctrination and undermined the purpose of publishing these works. Quickly *Catcher* and *Ticket* became two of the "trendiest books blowing a refreshing breeze" on educated youth.[66] Whoever had both was admired and envied. Those who never got a chance to read them knew they had missed something important.

For readers sensitive to literature, the two novels were their first lesson about the differences between modernist and classical works. Li Yinhe reveals that it was in *Catcher* she saw for the first time the positive usage of vulgarity in fiction. To her, this language "has a bewitching power" that makes "every page a source of surprise and happiness."[67] Lin Mang (b. 1949), who became a member of the Baiyang Lake Poets, shared the same opinion after reading *Ticket* in the early 70s. To him, modernist works like *Ticket* "unfold rapidly and keep giving you new things, so different from the dawdling prose of Balzac that can drag out a description of a leaf for ten pages."[68] As for the use of slang, *Ticket* certainly influenced several Chinese writers emerging after the Cultural Revolution. The hooligan style of writing that Wang Shuo (b. 1958) developed in the 80s is a typical example.

On a mundane level, *Catcher* and *Ticket* invested educated young Chinese with a new language for expressing their discontent, doubt, and anger. A former Red Guard describes his feelings back then in the following sentences.

> We just felt we had nothing any more, those ideals we had, those expectations and enthusiasm to serve mankind. These seemed so unreal. I didn't know how to express my feelings at that time. . . I felt I hated all people. Even if they were nice to me, I found them a nuisance. There was no more meaning.[69]

Apparently, this Red Guard was in the same sort of situation as Holden and Dimka, and he was talking in exactly the same tone as them. Many a reader in real life felt instant empathy with the rebellious protagonists in the stories. The books gave them a vocabulary to vent their suppressed emotions and dissatisfaction with the realities of their life. Some went further and tried a vagrant life like Holden

and Dimka.[70] Despite differences of geographical location and social milieu, the Chinese Cultural Revolution generation, the American Holden's, and the Soviet Dimka's shared the same doubt and disillusionment, the same hope for freedom, love, and trust, as they came of age in an alienating world where conventions and political power shaped lives. Yet, what was the way out? Keep fighting the system? Put everything on the long finger? Or just turn away? Although Holden and Dimka come back home in the end, neither knows what to do next. Chinese readers found themselves hesitating at the same crossroads, but at least they learned to think independently.[71]

There is no doubt that *Catcher* and *Ticket* were equally popular among Chinese youth, but individual readers sometimes had their preference. In Zhang Langlang's view, "the most appealing and stunning were Salinger's *Catcher* and Kerouac's *On the Road* . . . Some people copied out the whole of *Catcher*; others could recite paragraph after paragraph of *On the Road*. I felt that the protagonists' spiritual world were very similar to ours at the time."[72] Zhang Langlang's preference might have come from his upbringing in a distinguished family and his exposure to Western literature. But for ordinary readers who grew up reading mainstream Chinese literature and Soviet children's literature, *Ticket* resonated more closely and intimately. According to Shi Liang (b. 1956), whose father, Shi Xianrong, translated *Catcher*, *Ticket* had a wider social impact than *Catcher* for a while. He explains that "Chinese adolescents and young people may not have fully understood American society and the spiritual world of American youth" because "China was cut off [from the West] at the time." Holden's angst and spiritual crisis were caused by a highly industrialized, commercialized society that alienated people, a world away from what most Chinese were familiar with. In contrast, "the Soviet society portrayed by Aksenov seemed more familiar to Chinese readers culturally and psychologically."[73]

This could be why *Ticket*, much less known than Aksenov's other novels and certainly not reckoned a world classic, enjoyed high esteem in China during the Cultural Revolution and was venerated by underground reading groups. Although Sino-Soviet friendship was dead and buried and the two countries turned into enemies, the Soviet Union was still the foreign country that Chinese people felt most for. A decade of direct and indirect cultural contact with the Soviet Union, especially through translated literature, had left a deep imprint on the collective Chinese psyche. Despite changes and developments in Soviet prose, its language and style still captivated, even enchanted, Chinese readers. Compared with "the coarse speech and loose organization" in *Catcher*, *Ticket*'s relatively "healthy" language and overall positive attitude were easier for Chinese readers to warm to.[74]

On a deeper level, *Ticket* appealed to Chinese readers with its realistic representation of Soviet society. The hypocrisy and endless preaching of Soviet authorities, leaders, and other "important" people were just what Chinese adolescents experienced and just what turned them off, too. Moreover, because the novel presents Soviet society and everyday life under Khrushchev from various angles, it also gave Chinese readers a fair picture of Soviet life. As mentioned before, a lot of Chinese were made to believe that Soviet people were living in turmoil under a

revisionist regime. However, *Ticket* shows a dramatically different Soviet Union from that demonized in Chinese media. The life of Soviet adolescents, despite the protests of Dimka and his friends, was much simpler, livelier, and more diversified than that of Chinese teenagers undergoing the Cultural Revolution re-education. For the latter, teenage love, dating, and premarital sex were taboo. There was no freedom to speak about, as they could not even choose what to read.

An even greater reason for envy was that Soviet adolescents had a certain amount of exposure to Western culture. *Ticket* sketches a Soviet hipster youth culture festooned with symbols of Western pop culture – jazz, rock'n'roll, French film stars, bars and dance halls, Coke, coffee maker, mini-skirts, jeans and cool sneakers, all of which fascinated Chinese readers blocked from knowing what was going on in the rest of the world. Through the lens that *Ticket* gave them, the Cultural Revolution generation saw the richer, more colorful life in the Soviet Union and the West, and could make up their own minds about the Chinese government's relentless slander. Once again, Soviet literature became a frame of reference and a guiding star for youthful Chinese, though this time, it was when the Chinese authorities explicitly rejected the Soviet Union.

Internal publications: the second wave

In the late 60s and early 70s, when sent-down youth were secretly lapping up *Ticket* and *Catcher*, the most violent phase of the Cultural Revolution was over. A brief period of relaxation followed the revelation of the Lin Biao Incident in 1971. Many underground cultural salons flourished in urban centers from Beijing, Shanghai, and Xi'an to remote places like Guiyang and Xiamen, heralding the early spring of sent-down youth's spiritual liberation.[75] At the end of 1972, publication of internal books resumed after a six-year hiatus.[76] These were to make educated young people better informed about the outside world and eventually helped them put an end to the Cultural Revolution.

The second wave of internal publications coincided with China's foreign policy change in the early 1970s. The rapprochement with Japan and the United States boosted the inflow of literary works from those countries. Along with internal books, some new magazines and journals emerged that were also designated for internal circulation only, including *Zhaiyi* (Selected translation), *Zhaoxia* (The dawn), *Xuexi yu pipan* (Study and criticize). The "foreign literature" series of *Zhaiyi* stood out for its impressive number of short- and middle-length stories and plays from other countries. Between November 1973 and December 1976, 31 issues (including 9 supplements) were published, with a print run of 15,000 per issue. Like the internal books, *Zhaiyi* did not cater for "reading for pleasure" or "literary appreciation." Its purpose was to "reveal through literature the intellectual, political, and economic conditions in the Soviet Union, the U.S., and Japan, thus providing material for anti-capitalist, anti-revisionist struggles."[77]

While all these internal publications gave increasing attention to Japanese and American works, Soviet fiction still dominated. Compared with those published before the Cultural Revolution, the second round of translated Soviet works were

distinct in three ways. First, military subjects received greater attention. Although war fiction was always an important genre, its importance was accentuated by a series of military skirmishes on Sino-Soviet borders in the late 60s, as well as by the Chinese government's nagging fear of an all-out war with the Soviet Union. From the Chinese point of view, the revisionist turn in Soviet domestic politics went hand in hand with its hegemonic and chauvinist foreign diplomacy, confirmed by Soviet military intervention in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Second, more copies of each book were printed. Exact numbers are still hard to pin down, but judging from the scale of what later trickled into the old-book market, much bigger print runs must have been issued. Though still labeled as internal books, they were less strictly controlled than before. In tandem, the sizeable number of copies and relaxed control allowed a wider range of readers to gain access to these books. Third, many new translations included long, belligerent prefaces, sometimes decked out with Mao's quotations in bold font, homing in on the "toxicity" of Soviet fiction. This was especially true of military-themed works. For example, Sholokhov's *They Fight for Their Country* (*Oni srazhalis za Rodinu*) was seen as "willfully sensationalizing horrors of war and suffering," "negating revolution and just wars," "not only reactionary in ideological content but with distasteful artistic merit."[78] A novel called *Blue Lightning* (*Golubye molnii*) by A. Kuleshov was accused of being "an advertisement for conscription into the treacherous Brezhnev clique" and "a lame textbook for militarizing young people."[79] Similarly, *The Hot Snow* (*Goriachii sneg*) by Iurii Bondarev was said to be "fanning Great Russian chauvinism and preaching fascist, militaristic ideology in the name of commemorating the Great Patriotic War and under the banners of patriotism and heroism."[80]

Clearly, the Chinese comments focused only on ideological and political aspects, with no attention to the aesthetic and social values of a work. It had become something of a Cultural Revolution formality to compose such critical but empty reviews on the publication of a foreign work. It would be hard to imagine that this kind of "repackaging" of Soviet fiction could have played a part in influencing individual interpretations. Chinese readers' reaction to Kochetov's two new books clearly deviated sharply from the official guidelines.

In the second round of internal books, Kochetov was again the darling of young readers in China. Two of his novels were published. One was the 1972 Chinese translation of *What Do You Want* (*Chego zhe ty khochesh*), and the other, *Angle of Fall* (*Ugol padeniia*), was translated in 1973. The latter was written in 1967, 50 years after the October Revolution. This historical novel centers on the defense of Leningrad in spring 1919, when workers and the Red Army fight under Lenin's leadership against the opposition of Trotsky, during the counterattack by the White Army. Following the official Soviet line, Kochetov characterizes the opposition leaders as villains detestable across a spectrum stretching from political views to personal conduct, and extols the revolutionary spirits of the Bolsheviks and workers. But even such a positive portrayal of revolution was viewed as "bourgeois in worldview and approach" in the anti-Soviet context of China's Cultural Revolution. Kochetov was accused of "only dramatizing the cruelty and suffering of the Civil War and exaggerating the White Army's unruliness and atrocities." The author's

sympathy for the effete aristocracy and petty-bourgeoisie was especially scorned, for instance in the criticism of a female character named Irina, who was denounced for "sheltering enemies, fraternizing with them, and finally fleeing the country in their company."[81] Chinese readers, however, did not see things that way. Instead, many were attracted to Irina's ambivalence over her destiny. One reader recalls,

> I was touched by Irina's acceptance of a former tsarist army officer in the end. The description of her mental activities captivated me . . . [Starts reading an excerpt from the novel] 'Away from the firm ground, drifting over the strange, cold waves, the only joy lay in the hope of reaching the shore, landing on another coast. On the ocean of life that buoys Irina up, she can't see the shore, the shore is not even part of reality for her.' I was still in the countryside then. The hope of returning to the city was slim. I felt I was drifting on the ocean like Irina, not knowing where the shore was. I sympathized with Irina and with myself. This made me sadder, but somehow also gave me the courage to keep on.[82]

In this reading of *Angle of Fall*, the grand historical narrative slipped into the background and became irrelevant. Overall, readers were no longer impressed by the victory of the "just" over the "evil" because they were tired of the bloody class struggle in the name of revolution. What mattered was the truthful expression of human feelings they could identify with.

From this reading, it is also obvious that readers reserved their right to choose what to keep in their hearts, despite political pressure to conform. The Chinese response to Kochetov's 1969 political fiction *What Do You Want* further demonstrated the chasm between official intention and personal preference. Like *Ticket*, this novel was another instant hit in China after being translated, and it was also about the "encroachment" of Western bourgeois lifestyles upon Soviet youth. But Kochetov and Aksenov had sharply diverging attitudes toward the West. In *What*, Kochetov mercilessly condemns Western influences by portraying subversive activities of a few disguised Westerners. Among them are former Nazis, White Russian descendants, and American spies. They infiltrate Soviet society, peddle bourgeois values like democracy, freedom, gourmet food, and free love to young people, and lure them into criminal and immoral activities. The book identifies "dangerous" signals in Soviet society: corruption, lack of vigilance, worship of everything foreign, and spiritual decay among youth. Convinced that such will dismantle the ethical basis of society, the author calls for re-education of young people in revolutionary traditions so that they will know clearly what they want.

When *What* was first published in the Soviet Union in 1969, reception was mixed because the novel dealt with some thorny questions of the day. Despite Kochetov's unwaveringly pro-Soviet stance, his relentless exposure of social problems was considered too "reactionary" by Soviet official press. The novel was never republished in its home country. When it was selected for internal publication in China, the Chinese official response was qualified praise, acknowledging that the

book "to a certain extent exposed the darkness of revisionist Soviet society," but "failed to unveil the reactionary nature of socialist imperialism." Kochetov was criticized for glossing over some issues and justifying Khrushchev's regime.[83] The book was considered to do a good job showing the degeneration of the Soviet Union, but readers still had to be warned against its potentially harmful influence.

There were good reasons for that warning. *What* grabbed the interest of Chinese readers, but not for reasons officialdom wanted. Along with Euro-American fiction published at the time, the book was a direct account of Western lifestyles, even if through the eyes of a conservative, anti-Western Soviet writer. Rather than deterring Chinese readers from Western influence, it effectively served as a guided tour of the Western world, very much to the taste of many young readers desperately hoping to break through the information blockage inflicted by the government.

The hidden transcripts

Coexistent with "underground reading" was "underground writing." Together, they formed a personal bastion to counter the fascist cultural autocracy of the Cultural Revolution. Underground writing during this period refers to the poems, novels, and plays created voluntarily by individuals and disseminated through unofficial channels by means of hand-copying and mimeographing.[84] The influence of Russian literature on the Cultural Revolution generation was directly reflected in the educated youth underground literature that went viral in the 1970s. Many of these works considered "heretical" by official standards and many of their "rebellious" characters were closely linked to Russian literature.

One typical example was Bi Ruxie's *Jiuji lang* (The ninth wave), which began to circulate among educated youth in 1970. The protagonist is a boy who is attracted to a beautiful girl named Sima Li and starts to go to painting classes with her. One day he discovers a secret: the painting teacher seduced Sima Li. As the previously pure "goddess" he loves turns into a depraved wanton, the boy becomes disillusioned and starts to take advantage of her. Sima Li's transformation from an innocent girl to a slut is reminiscent of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* (1899). Although there is no evidence that Bi Ruxie was aware of Tolstoy's novel, his acquaintance with Russian and Western literature, music, painting, and aesthetics is clear in the casual but apt references he often made in this novel.

The title of the novel comes from a painting hanging in the teacher's room. The painting, also named "The Ninth Wave," is an 1850 masterpiece by the Russian Armenian marine painter Ivan Aivazovskii. It shows a stormy sea with surging waves and desperate survivors clinging to flotsam from a wrecked ship. In rivalry with the forceful and destructive power of nature is the human struggle for life. Bright light shines through clouds onto the waves like a glimpse of hope for the people. In Bi Ruxie's novel, the men who flirt with Sima Li use "the ninth wave" to describe her debauchery (*lang* in Chinese), meaning that there are no limits to her promiscuity. In fact, as a woman from a "bad" family background, Sima Li has been a victim of prejudice and humiliation. She is like the people tossed about by waves in the painting. In the end, she opts for self-destruction as her last defense.

Jiuji lang was the first Chinese novel to expose and criticize social realities in the Cultural Revolution. Many of the characters, like Sima Li, came from real life. The Beijing setting was also familiar to the people of the time. Several scenes take place in the Moscow Restaurant, frequented by children of high-ranking cadres and intellectuals in the late 60s and early 70s. Alienated and disillusioned, many of them chose to stay at the periphery of the Cultural Revolution. At that time, the restaurant – renamed "Beijing Exhibition Center Restaurant" – had become a place for those young people to come together in an attempt to resist the mainstream culture. "Lao Mo" (Old Moscow), as they called the restaurant, turned into a center of disaffection and rebellion, a haven for youngsters in search of acceptance.

In the early 70s, on par with *Jiuji lang* was another underground novel titled *Bodong* (Waves) by Zhao Zhenkai (b. 1949), which also features a female character. Xiao Ling is born into an intellectual family. Her parents are both denounced in political movements and commit suicide when she is young. After she grows up, she leaves Beijing and settles down in a small town. A colleague of cadre family background seduces her and then walks out on her, leaving her to raise their daughter alone. The novel starts with Xiao Ling's encounter and subsequent romance with Yang Xun, whose father is a high-ranking official. But because of her past and their different class origins, they have to break up. When Yang Xun comes back for her, she is killed in a mountain flood.

Like Sima Li, Xiao Ling also battles with fate loaded against her. Yet she never loses her pure spirit. Her contempt for injustice and hypocrisy becomes a silent but tenacious rebellion. Despite a lack of explicit reference to Russian culture, the protagonists of *Bodong* have distinctive "bohemian sentiments," or what were criticized as "petty-bourgeois sentiments" in the Cultural Revolution.[85] Xiao Ling and Yang Xun recite poetry together, play the piano, make black tea, drink wine (instead of Chinese liquor), and discuss foreign art and literature. The home they make for themselves in prohibited foreign cultures is their way of opposing the dominant ideology.

Bodong is considered "modernist" in its use of dialogue and quick switches between narrative perspectives.[86] Many dialogues and descriptions of scenery resemble Russian poetry, especially in the use of imagery. The author Zhao Zhenkai, later known by the pen-name Bei Dao, was a member of the Baiyang Lake Poets at the end of the Cultural Revolution and later a famed representative of the Misty Poets who grew influential shortly after the Cultural Revolution. He is said to have memorized a large part of Evtushenko's *Babiyy Yar*, a poem denouncing the Nazi massacre of the Jews in World War II and the anti-Semitism still prevalent in the Soviet Union.[87] His best-known poems *Huida* (Answer), *Xuangao* (Announcement), and *Jieju huo kaishi – xiangei Yu Luoke* (Ending or beginning – for Yu Luoke) demonstrate humanistic concerns and sober thinking similar to those of Russian poets. Face to face with the repressive ideology of the Cultural Revolution, Bei Dao fearlessly cried out: "I don't believe!"[88]

Many other members of the Baiyang Lake Poets and the Misty Poets, such as Mang Ke (Jiang Shiwei), Duo Duo (Li Shizheng), and Lin Mang, also came under the spell of Russian poetry. During the Cultural Revolution they gathered together to

read Russian literature and sing Russian songs. They circulated among themselves poems they collected and hand-copied from books and magazines, many of them Russian. Reciting poetry and creating their own became an outlet for their emotional distress. Some followed Alexander Pushkin's style. Others, feeling outcast from society, identified themselves with marginalized poets like Sergei Esenin and Marina Tsvetaeva.[89] For all of them, Russian poetry was their preferred lodestar. The imagery and settings in their writings often came from the Russian poetry and novels they secretly read and discussed. Russian literature helped them re-establish their bonds with humanity and prepared them for the end of an era.

Notes

1 Zhou, "Zai di'er ci quansu zuojia."
2 Heluxiaofu (Khrushchev), "Wenxue yishu yao tong renmin," 21–22.
3 The Third All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1959 re-established the principle of socialist realism as the predominant method of literature and literary criticism. In China, Mao Dun, Minister of Culture, opposed the challenge to socialist realism raised by Qin Zhaoyang and like-minded writers.
4 Song, "50 zhi 70 niandai Sulian wenxue," 149; Ng, *The Russian Hero in Modern Chinese Fiction*, 278.
5 Heluxiaofu (Khrushchev), "Wenxue yishu yao tong renmin."
6 Sha, "Sulian disan ci zuojia daibiao dahui."
7 These occasions were, for example, anniversaries of the October Revolution and the signing of the 1950 Sino-Soviet Treaty. In cultural circles, the Chinese Writers' Association, in conjunction with other organizations, hosted a ceremony in Beijing in 1960 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Chekhov's birth. Mao Dun delivered a long speech that highlighted the lasting interest of Chinese readers in Chekhov and the nineteenth-century Russian realist tradition. See Mao, "Weida de xianshi zhuyizhe Qihefu."
8 Zhongguo banben tushuguan, *1949–1979 fanyi chuban waiguo wenxue*, 182–931.
9 Gong and Rong, "Yihou ji," in *Yeershaofu xiongdi*, 591.
10 Stacy, *Russian Literary Criticism*, 222.
11 Yu, "Waiguo wenxue aihaozhe de yiben antou shu," 174.
12 Keqietuofu (Kochetov), *Yeershaofu xiongdi*, 314.
13 Gong and Rong, "Yihou ji," in *Yeershaofu xiongdi*, 590.
14 Mao, "Zai bajie shizhong quanhui shang de jianghua."
15 Gao, "Yige 'waitaozhe' yanzhong de Sulian," 384.
16 Interview with a party cadre, Shanghai, June 12, 2008.
17 The Uyghur version has two volumes, both published in 1964 by Xijiang People's Press.
18 Li Xifan, "Yiben yangyi zhe zhenglun reqing de xiaoshuo: du Keqietuofu de *Yeershaofu xiongdi*," [A novel with passionate political comments: Reading Kochetov's *Brothers Yershov*,] *Renmin ribao*, August 12, 1962.
19 Gong and Rong, "Yihou ji," in *Yeershaofu xiongdi*, 591.
20 See, for example, Wen, "Gongji wuchan jieji zhuanzheng de da ducao; also see Zhou, "Cong *Yigeren de zaoyu* kan Suxiu."
21 Chen, "Ni daodi yao shenme? baipishu shidai de wangshi," 6.
22 Lan, "*Qianye* renwu pipan," 47.
23 Anonymous, "Nin xiongqian shanzhe," in *Xiezai huohong de zhanqi shang*, 37.
24 Xia, "Yiwei Sulian lao cixiu nügong de hua," in *Xiezai huohong de zhanqi shang*, 209.
25 Yang, *1966–1976 de dixia wenxue*, 40.
26 Zhao, "Niewahe zhi ge," in *Xiezai huohong de zhanqi shang*, 212. The "Red Guards" here refer to the Russian Red Guards, who were paramilitary volunteer formations

joined by factory workers, peasants, and Cossacks in support of Bolsheviks during the October Revolution and the first months of the Civil War.

27 Anonymous, "Xiangei disanci shijie dazhan de yingxiong," in *Zhongguo zhiqing shichao*, 293.
28 Wang Jing, "Juelie, qianjin [Break up, march on]," quoted in Yang, *1966–1976 de dixia wenxue*, 119.
29 Ye, "Yueshi 'jinshu' yue xiangkan," 14.
30 "Chuban qianyan," [Preface] in Li, *Wode xinling yuedu*, i.
31 Interview with a school teacher, Beijing, June 18, 2015.
32 Xiao, "Sulian wenxue qingjie," 34.
33 Fang, "Zheme ban."
34 Gao, "Xingzou zai lishi de heliu li," 554–555.
35 Interview with an engineer, Beijing, August 18, 2008. Also see Chapter 2 in Kong, *Sishiwu sui feng man lou*.
36 Gao, "Xingzou zai lishi de heliu li," 553.
37 Xiao, "Sulian wenxue qingjie," 35.
38 Zhou, *Manhadun de Zhongguo nüren,* 399.
39 Interview with a translator, Beijing, August 13, 2008.
40 Dai, "Tugeniefu yu Zhongguo," 113.
41 Ibid., 113.
42 Fokkema, *Literary Doctrine in China*, 185.
43 "Xiangqi le Yeershaofu xiongdi," [Remembering Brothers Yershov,] *Xinlang boke*, April 29, 2012, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_605022ab01014x0q.html.
44 "Yiben yingxiang henda de Sulian xiaoshuo Yeershaofu xiongdi," [An influential Soviet novel Brothers Yershov,] *Xinlang boke*, August 6, 2010, http://blog.sina.com.cn/main_v5/ria/print.html?blog_id=blog_4d37ed770101t2y2.
45 Interview with two Beijing residents, August 2, 2008 and July 15, 2009. Chinese writer Chen Zhongshi (b. 1942) also shares this opinion, see Chen, "Jiezhu juren de jianbang," 36.
46 Zhong, "Neibu faxing tushu bixu zai 'neibu faxing'," 34.
47 Zhang, "Wo liaojie de 'huangpi shu' chuban shimo."
48 Zhang, "Guoji fanxiu douzheng he 'huipi shu'," 16.
49 "Yellow-covered books" is not a strictly accurate term. Some of the internally published literary works had white or gray covers.
50 Zhang, "Wo liaojie de 'huangpi shu' chuban shimo."
51 This number is based on Zhongguo banben tushuguan, *Quanguo neibu faxing tushu zongmu (1949–1986)*, with reference to Zhongguo banben tushuguan, *1949–1979 fanyi chuban waiguo*. Only novels and poetry collections published in book form are counted, excluding those published in journals and magazines.
52 Sun, "Guanyu 'neibu shu:' zayi yu suigan."
53 For the process of selecting a foreign literary title for internal publication, see Kong, "For Reference Only," 78–80.
54 Kong, "For Reference Only," 80.
55 Ibid., 84.
56 Zhang Dongsun was a philosopher, public intellectual, and political figure. Implicated in a treason case and stripped of all political rights in the early 1950s, he died in prison in 1973.
57 Mou, "X shishe yu Guo Shiying zhisi," in Liao, *Chenlun de shengdian*, 24–25.
58 Gu, "Qishi niandai de shige huozhong," 32.
59 Yang, *1966–1976 de dixia wenxue*, 61–63.
60 Liu, "'Huangpi shu' *Dai xingxing de huoche piao* de zaiban."
61 Rudy, "The Soviet Russian Literary Scene in 1961," 252.
62 Rogers, "Trends in Soviet Prose of the 'Thaw' Period," 198–207.
63 Matejka, *American Contributions: Literature and Folklore*, 71.
64 "Guanyu zuozhe," [About the author] in Akexiaonuofu, *Dai xingxing de huoche piao*, 280.

65 Zhu, "'Chuzou shaonian' de Zhongguo jingyu," 128.
66 Duo, "1972–1978: bei maizang de Zhongguo shiren," 469.
67 Li, *Wode xinling yuedu*, 69.
68 Liao and Chen, "Lin Mang fangtan lu," in Liao, *Chenlun de shengdian*, 292.
69 Chan, *Children of Mao*, 140–141.
70 Liao and Chen, "Peng Gang, Mang Ke fangtan lu," in Liao, *Chenlun de shengdian*, 183–187.
71 Interview with a Beijing resident, August 15, 2008. The interviewee remembers vividly how he was struck by *Catcher* and *Ticket* when he read them within three days around 1970. To him then, it did not matter that neither Salinger nor Aksenov gave directions. Instead, he was especially moved by the vague but open endings and started to think more seriously what he could do.
72 Zhang, "'Taiyang zongdui' chuanshuo ji qita," in Liao, *Chenlun de shengdian*, 38.
73 Shi, "Guanyu huangpi shu," 91.
74 Ibid., 90.
75 For the activities of cultural salons in the Cultural Revolution, see Yang, *1966–1976 de dixia wenxue*, 52–81. For a detailed account of the activities among reading groups, see Dai Weiwei, "Leng Wei koushu," 43–52.
76 Openly published translations of foreign literature also resumed at the same time. Only a few of them were from the Soviet Union (e.g., re-translations of *How the Steel Was Tempered* and *The Young Guards*) and capitalist countries. The focus was shifted to Asian, African, and Latin American literature to facilitate Chinese foreign policy.
77 *Zhaiyi* (waiguo wenyi) bianyizu, "Da duzhe," 172.
78 Shi, "Yizhe shuoming," in *Tamen wei zuoguo er zhan*.
79 Bi and Zhang, "Tamen zai zhizao junguo zhuyi de paohui," 8.
80 Ren, "Zai 'xinde jieshi' beihou," 12.
81 "Chuban shuoming," in *Luojiao*, 1.
82 Interview with a former educated youth, Shanghai, July 22, 2008. The excerpt appears on page 550 in the 1973 Chinese translation (see Keqietuofu, *Luojiao*).
83 "Neirong shuoming" in *Ni daodi yao shenme*.
84 For underground writing, see Chen, *Zhongguo dangdai wenxue shi jiaocheng*, 12, 162–188; Hong, *Zhongguo dangdai wenxue shi*, 164–165, 205–207, 226–230; Yang *1966–1976 de dixia wenxue*. The Red Guard poetry previously mentioned also belongs to this category except that some of the poem collections were semi-officially published (e.g. *Xiezai huohong de zhanqi shang*).
85 The 2015 reprint of *Bodong* includes a long preface by Li Tuo, which discusses in great detail Xiao Ling and Yang Xun's "*xiaozi qingdiao*" (petty-bourgeois sentiments). See Li, "Xu."
86 For an analysis of *Bodong*'s artistic values, see Yang, "Shilun wenge shiqi de shouchao ben"; McDougall, "Zhao Zhenkai's Fiction"; McDougall, "Introduction."
87 Wang, *ZhongE wenzi zhijiao: E'Su wenxue yu ershi shiji Zhongguo xin wenxue*, 224.
88 "I don't believe" (Wo bu xiangxin) is a line from the poem *Huida*, which Bei Dao composed in 1976.
89 Hong, *Zhongguo dangdai wenxue shi*, 228.

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Afterword

After Mao's death in 1976, China started to rein in the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. In the process of restoring cultural order, what to do with the "forbidden," "poisonous" books became a paramount question. The State Publication Bureau convened a national conference on publishing in December 1977 under the directive of the CCP Central Propaganda Department. The conference laid out plans for ending shortages in book and journal supplies. In particular, it re-asserted the "Double Hundred" principle, encouraging writers to write and people to voice their opinions. It also advocated slashing the number of "internal publications" to free a wide range of useful books from undue restrictions.[1]

In literature, an early attempt to tackle the question of banned books was Liu Xinwu's 1977 short story "Class Counsellor" (Ban zhuren).[2] It tells how Mr. Zhang, the class counsellor at a middle school in Beijing, helps a transfer student and a juvenile delinquent named Song Baoqi to re-integrate into normal life in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. The plot hinges on a book that Song steals from a warehouse of discarded books in his previous school. It is the Chinese translation of a novel called *The Gadfly* by the Irish novelist Ethel L. Voynich, written in the 1890s. Although first published in America and Britain, the novel's treatment of iconoclasm, revolution, and heroism made it enormously popular in the Soviet Union. Pavel Korchagin, the protagonist in the Soviet novel *How the Steel Was Tempered*, is described to have been inspired by *The Gadfly*. So is Zoya in *Stories of Zoya and Shura*. Its popularity in the Soviet Union saw *The Gadfly* translated into Chinese in 1953 and promoted as a model revolutionary work when Soviet culture was filling China. Its combination of revolutionary passion with personal romance and disillusionment instantly captivated Chinese readers. But like all foreign fiction, it was banned during the Cultural Revolution, hence the plot of book-stealing in Liu Xinwu's story.

Together with his gangsters, Song steals books for money, not for reading. When they discover that books with library stamps can't be resold, they entertain themselves by drawing mustaches on the faces of women in the illustrations. In Mr. Zhang's eyes, these youngsters are at fault not because they are influenced by "poisonous weeds" and "yellow books" (a euphemism for pornography), but because they throw away the chance to read such books that can enlighten them.

Yet, there is an even more alarming problem. It involves Xie Huimin, a fairly good student and the Youth League secretary of the class. She is brimming with zeal and devotion but politically she is rather naïve, which makes her susceptible to the Gang of Four rhetoric. For example, she refuses to wear short-sleeve shirts and pleated skirts, associating them with bourgeois lifestyles. She denounces as subversive and pornographic any book portraying intimate relations and foreign culture, or obtained outside of bookstores and libraries. When she dismisses *The Gadfly*, she is shocked to hear Mr. Zhang urging her to read it.

In the eyes of Mr. Zhang (and the author), the Cultural Revolution has twisted Xie even more out of shape than Song, because "Xie had naively and trustingly swallowed all that had been printed, devoutly reading the newspapers and magazines which are full of the Gang's tainted writings."[3] Asked why he brought *The Gadfly* into his story, author Liu Xinwu explained:

> Strictly speaking, *The Gadfly* does not occupy an important place in the history of world literature. However, this book has left an indelible impression on just about every [Chinese] reader who spent their adolescence or youth during the 50s. A huge number of copies were distributed and the book was strongly recommended, so that it heavily influenced the thoughts and feelings of this generation. Naturally, when Mr. Zhang in the story hears Xie Huimin and Song Baoqi, two drastically different students of the next generation, both denouncing the book as a 'yellow book,' he is filled with strong emotions. I make Mr. Zhang my own age, with a flashback of me and my friends reading and discussing *The Gadfly*. I seethe with indignation at the way the Gang of Four wiped out all the treasures of human civilization including *The Gadfly*. I have seen and heard about young people like Xie and Song who are ignorant as a result of being poisoned, and their stories still haunt me.[4]

Although constraints of the political climate at the time forced the author to blame the Gang of Four for all the excesses of the government, his point is clear: these young people urgently need both good books and correct guidance. This point is expressed in the idealized form of a third student Shi Hong. A bookworm like her parents, Shi reads the obligatory Marxist and Maoist works and, beyond those, a great deal of literature as well. In her family, "even during the time of the Gang of Four's suppression of culture, they had on their bookshelves 'forbidden' Chinese and foreign literature – works like *The Hurricane*, *Red Craig*, *Selected Works of Mao Dun*, *Selected Works of Gaidar*, *Eugénie Grandet* and *Three Hundred Poems from the Tang Dynasty.*"[5] The good influence from her parents and a variety of Chinese and foreign fiction help her remain sane through the years of absurdity.

As the story unfolds, Shi is leading some other students to read a Soviet short story, "The Watch" (Chasy) published in 1928 by L. Panteleev (Aleksei I. Eremeev). After Lu Xun first translated it from a German edition in 1935, this short story was reprinted several times in the PRC, along with translations of Panteleev's other children's stories. It describes a young delinquent transformed through education in a reformatory; in the end, he gives back to the owner's daughter a gold

watch he stole earlier. Having read similar stories in his formative years, Mr. Zhang is convinced that this book, along with *The Gadfly* and others, are the perfect antidote to the poison that the Gang of Four injected into the minds of young people like Chen and Xie.

Known as the pioneer of "scar literature," "Class Counsellor" reveals the damage that a time of cultural fascism had inflicted on the Chinese people.[6] Its publication immediately generated heated discussion over the "book famine" across China. Demands for lifting restrictions on publications were strident. In its inaugural issue in 1979, *Dushu* magazine published a leading article "No Forbidden Zone in Reading," calling for thought liberation and free access to all books Chinese or foreign, ancient or modern.[7]

It was in this context that China's cultural reconstruction started by reinstating the literary and artistic canon of the 1950s and early 60s shelved during the Cultural Revolution. As a result, Soviet literature roared back into public distribution after a decade of underground circulation in China. Previously translated Russian and Soviet works were reprinted, despite the continued freeze in diplomatic relations. The "internal publication" label was removed from many books as well, allowing many Soviet novels to be purchased without special permits.[8] Chinese readers voraciously read, desperate to make up for the loss of knowledge they suffered previously.

As Sino-Soviet relations improved in the 80s, Soviet literature had a second blooming in China. Several journals dedicated to Russian and Soviet literature sprang up. Publishers competed to publish Soviet novels, poetry, and memoirs, so that sometimes different publishers released their translations of the same book around the same time. In addition, articles discussing Soviet literature appeared in academic journals by the score.[9] A great deal of such effort was devoted to updating Chinese readers with newer works of Soviet authors. Evtushenko and Aitmatov, for example, became well known.

Overall, however, this new Soviet literature failed to ignite much excitement. The older generations, still emotionally attached to the socialist realist fiction of Stalin's time, were unsympathetic to it. And for the younger generations, American and Western European works, now available in bookstores and libraries, had more appeal. After the USSR disintegrated in 1991, the gap between Chinese and Russian value systems widened. Post-Soviet Russian literature could hardly resonate in China as Soviet literature once did. As a result, Russian has since become a minor language in China's foreign language teaching.

Moving into the twenty-first century, the rising international importance of China and Russia has made their strategic partnership more critical. China hosted the "Year of Russia" in 2006 and Russia reciprocated with the "Year of China" in 2007. Both were government attempts to warm up bilateral relations, boost business cooperation, and promote cross-cultural understandings. More recently, China hosted a "Russian Language Year" in 2009, and Russia followed suit with a "Chinese Language Year" in 2010. These events demonstrate that cultural exchange between the two countries has become evenly balanced. The skewed flow of culture in the twentieth century has ended, and the 1950s Chinese mania

for Soviet culture is no more. In China today, there are still young people who study Russian and enjoy Russian culture, but it is purely a matter of personal preference.

The Soviet complex

The massive outpouring of Soviet experience, personnel, and culture into the PRC in the 1950s is one of the most intriguing phenomena in China's quest for the modern. Despite the drastic changes in official policy that took place in subsequent decades, it was this first round of modernization along Soviet lines that laid the foundation for China's development today. Behind the economic reconstruction of the 50s were the social, cultural transformations sparked off and fueled by the spread of Soviet culture, a pervasive and enduring legacy to the people of China.

China's opening-up to Soviet culture in the 50s was a CCP tool to promote socialist ideology. Despite the built-in political indoctrination, this endeavor acquainted millions of Chinese, especially urban youth, with the Soviet Union, a northern neighbor culturally distant from them before. "No other foreign country is like the Soviet Union to me; I had already known her so well before I had the chance to see her with my own eyes. She feels so familiar. I miss her cities, towns, and lakes so much," confessed Wang Meng, who is quoted at the beginning of this book.[10] Soviet literature endeared the Soviet Union to Wang. Similarly, it filled the imagination of numerous Chinese readers with an idealized, if largely inaccurate, image of the Soviet Union. While reading Soviet novels, watching Soviet films, and singing Soviet songs, Chinese people wove a dream country for themselves. This imagined Soviet Union proved to be a tenacious component in the collective memory of those born between the 30s and 50s.

Growing up on Soviet culture, many of these Chinese acknowledge having a "Soviet complex" (*Sulian qingjie*). Celebrated writers and artists like Wang Meng, Feng Jicai, and Chen Danqing write books about it; ordinary people talk about it on social media.[11] If possible, they make a pilgrimage to Russia to "revisit" the Soviet Union they knew about in their youth.[12] As a psychoanalytic term, a complex is "an organized group or constellation of feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and memories which exists in the personal unconscious. It has a nucleus which acts as a kind of magnet attracting to it or 'constellating' various experiences."[13] A complex shapes the ways a person thinks, feels, and behaves. It also predisposes a person "to fit any new experience into one of the constellations associated with the nucleus."[14]

In the Soviet complex of many Chinese, the nucleus is the love of their imagined Soviet Union that encapsulates their youthful dreams. It explains why they remain sensitive to information related to the former Soviet Union and have been partial to Soviet culture until today. One good example is the deep affection the Chinese have kept for Russia's Alexandrov Ensemble, formerly known as the Red Army Red-Banner Song and Dance Ensemble of the USSR. It first visited China in 1952 during the heyday of Sino-Soviet friendship. Its second visit in 1965 was meant to ease the tension in bilateral relations, but soon the two countries broke up

completely. In 1997 when the Ensemble revisited China after a 32-year interval, it stirred up exuberant reactions among the Chinese. Hearing the familiar tunes of their youth, many in the audience were moved to tears.[15] Almost 20 years later, in December 2016, when the Ensemble's loss of 64 members in a plane crash was confirmed, again, many Chinese wept.[16]

The strong Soviet complex in some Chinese often manifests itself as a compulsive preoccupation with the literature, films, and songs of the Soviet era, leading to a prejudice against contemporary Russian culture. In the case of Wang Meng, the most outspoken in divulging his Soviet complex, loyalty to Soviet literature is so fierce that he is reluctant to read post-Soviet Russian literature.[17] Although Wang is not completely uncritical of the Soviet era, his strong Soviet complex compels him to romanticize it. He is aware of his own fixation, as he admits when talking about Soviet songs.

> I think I will forever love this country [the Soviet Union] and its people. No matter how many people Stalin wrongly killed, whatever nonsense Khrushchev told . . . whether the CCP liked it or not, and even if its so-called advanced technology was just a heap of clumsy, bulky gadgets, all the same, Soviet songs are great to hear. A nation with such pure and passionate songs is forever lovely, and I will always love it.[18]

For people like Wang, opinions and assessments of Soviet history can change, but their identification with Soviet culture will remain. To scoff at Soviet culture and jettison it is to discredit the values and principles they used to pursue, and further, to invalidate the experiences of their generations. This is not what they like to see but as a group of people moving offstage into the wings of history, they cannot change the fact that Soviet culture is out of tunes with the drastic changes in China today. So they continue to idealize Soviet culture and use it as a safety blanket against a world that is no longer theirs. Their only comfort is to look back at the past and reflect wistfully on the friendly but fraught days with the Soviet big brother, a time when they wove their own dreams into the thrills and chills of building socialism in China.

Notes

1 "Guojia chubanju guanyu jiaqiang he gaijin chuban gongzuo de baogao."
2 Liu, "Ban zhuren."
3 Liu, "The Teacher," 11. The title of the story is best known in English as "Class Counsellor," which I adopt in the text. The English translation that I use here by the Foreign Languages Press renders the title into "The Teacher."
4 Liu, "Genzhi zai shenghuo de wotu zhong," 6–7.
5 Liu, "The Teacher," 22–23. Note *Selected Works of Gaidar* was missing from the translation.
6 On scar literature, see Fokkema, "Creativity and Politics," 611–615; Birch, "Literature Under Communism," 799–806.
7 Li, "Dushu wu jianqu."
8 "Guojia chubanju guanyu yasuo neibu faxing fanyi tushu de tongzhi."

9 Li, "Ye tan 'Sulian wenxue de guangming meng,'" 98.
10 Wang, *Sulian ji*, 54.
11 For such books, see Wang, *Sulian ji*; Feng, *Qingting Eluosi*; Chen, *Wuzhi de youli*. For social media, see "Sulian ba" and "Sujun ba" at http://tieba.baidu.com; "Sulian zhuyi luntan" at http://cccpism.ali.yumingshang.com.
12 "Zhongguo laoren you Sulian qingjie, ZhongE gongtui hongse zhi lü," [China's elderly have a Soviet complex; China and Russia jointly promote red tourism], *Cankao xiaoxi*, July 20, 2015.
13 Hall and Lindzey, *Theories of Personality*, 79.
14 Ibid., 92.
15 Zeng, "Gequ yishu zhong de haoran zhengqi," 61.
16 Wu, Anna. "Nanwang Eluosi hongqi gewutuan," [The unforgettable Russian red-bannered song and dance ensemble], *Renmin ribao*, December 29, 2016.
17 Wang, "Lun Zhongguo wenxue jieshou Eluosi wenxue," 138.
18 Wang, "Gesheng haoxiang mingmei de chunguang," 422.

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