

胡乔木的悲哀

Hu Qiaomu and His Melancholy

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From the Editor's Desk:

With this Issue, *ICS Translations* is launching a new six-part series on the theme “CPC’s ‘Two-Line Struggle’”. We welcome contributions from our readers in the series.



Hu Qiaomu (1912-1992)
Source: chinaheritage.net

Editor's Note:

Hu Qiaomu was a Communist Party of China (CPC) politician and propagandist, and arguably the People's Republic's most prominent historian. Born in Jiangsu province to a wealthy landowning family, Hu studied history, philosophy and foreign studies at Zhejiang and Beijing universities, before joining the CCP in 1935. Hu replaced Chen Boda as Mao Zedong's secretary (1945-49) before forming the state news agency Xinhua and heading the *People's Daily* newspaper. In 1956, Hu was elected to the CCP Central Committee and became a deputy director of the party's propaganda unit. He fell out of favour in 1962 after encouraging the Beijing historian Wu Han to publish his

play *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*. Disliked by Jiang Qing, Hu was marginalised and persecuted during the Cultural Revolution. He was restored to the Central Committee in 1974 after a period of self-criticism.

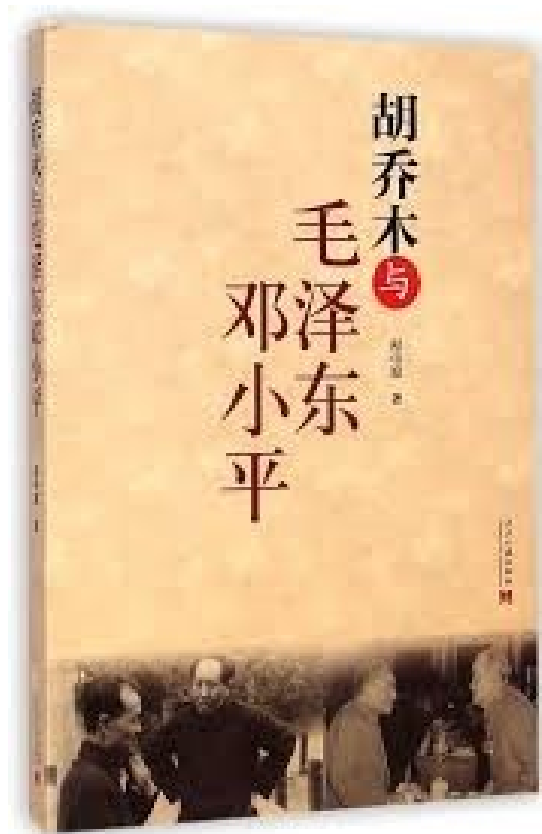
In 1951, Hu published *Thirty Years of the Chinese Communist Party*. This text received the backing of Mao and for many years served as the CCP's official history. As might be anticipated, Hu's perspective was devoutly Maoist. He hailed Mao as an astute leader, a clever military strategist and the driving force behind the Chinese Revolution. He also emphasised the Chairman's ideological importance, writing that only Mao was able to correctly interpret and apply Marxist-Leninism to the Chinese situation. *Thirty Years of the Chinese Communist Party* also gave praise and recognition to orthodox Marxism, Joseph Stalin, the Comintern and the Soviet Union, acknowledging their role in the revolution and the formation of the CCP.

(Source:

<https://alphahistory.com/chineserevolution/historian-hu-qiaomu/>)

Translation:

The First Pen of the CPC Central Committee: Hu Qiaomu's Days with Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping (authored by 丁晓平 *Dīng Xiǎopíng*, published by China Youth Publishing House in May 2011) is an intriguing book. The historical words and deeds of Hu Qiaomu during and after the “historical turning point” period disclosed in the book are particularly interesting.



Hu Qiaomu with Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping (2015) by Cheng Zhongyuan

For example, the book mentions that during the “historical turning point”, Hu Qiaomu firmly supported Deng’s actions of “criticizing the two whatevers”*

“thoroughly negating the Cultural Revolution,” and “criticising Mao Zedong's mistakes in his later years.” He also criticised Mao’s many “wrong ideas” and their “backgrounds” in politics, economy, and culture in articles or speeches as a former secretary of Chairman Mao Zedong. As a result, he was highly appreciated by Deng and successively served as the president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, deputy secretary-general of the CPC Central Committee, secretary of the CPC Central Committee Secretariat, and member of the 12th Central Political Bureau. He was entrusted with the important task of guiding the CPC Central Committee's theoretical and propaganda work. It can be said that he was an “anti-leftist theorist” among the top leaders at that time.

*[*Two Whatevers*, in Chinese, 两个凡是 *Liǎng gè fánshì*, refer to ‘resolutely uphold **whatever** policy decisions Chairman Mao made, and unswervingly follow **whatever** instructions Chairman Mao gave.’ Chairman Hua Guofeng, Mao’s designated successor and who succeeded Mao in 1976, had said this as CPC’s commitment to continue with all the policies of Mao Zedong. Later on, Hua’s these words became a slogan. However, the slogan went out of use following the removal of Hua Guofeng by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 – Editor.]



‘Hu Qiaomu, a Chinese hard-liner is dead at 81’ –
NYT, 29 September 1992

Source:

<https://www.nytimes.com/1992/09/29/obituaries/hu-qiaomu-a-chinese-hard-liner-is-dead-at-81.html>

However, this “anti-leftist theorist” was later denounced as “the king of the left” by certain forces in the political and cultural circles together with anti-China forces in the West. The book analyses and judges this:

“From participating in the leadership of criticising the erroneous bourgeois liberalisation trend represented by ‘Bitter Love’ in 1981 and publishing the speech “Some Issues on the Current Ideological Front”, to helping Deng Xiaoping draft the speech of great historical significance,

‘Upholding the Four Cardinal Principles’ in the mid-1980s, Hu Qiaomu also forcefully refuted the erroneous view that ‘people-oriented approach’ is higher than ‘party-oriented approach’ on the news front. After the smashing of the ‘Gang of Four’, when several rightist trends appeared in China one after another, Hu Qiaomu stood up and grasped the key points of these erroneous trends, and gave a profound and powerful refutation from the theoretical and ideological perspectives. This is the main reason why Hu Qiaomu was falsely accused of being a conservative ‘left king’.”

As we all know, “several rightist trends of thought appeared in China after the smashing of the Gang of Four”, that is, “erroneous bourgeois liberalization trends of thought”, whose purpose was to negate the Chinese Communist Party’s revolution and socialist cause and make New China change its flag like the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Hu Qiaomu “provided a profound and powerful theoretical and ideological refutation” of this attempt, and was therefore called a “left king”. Now it seems that he has maintained at least his original revolutionary intention.



Mao with Hu Qiaomu in April 1949

But the book says that Hu Qiaomu “felt somewhat confused and aggrieved” for being called a “Left King,” while the author of the book says that “Hu Qiaomu was falsely accused of being a conservative ‘Left King’.” Obviously, in the minds of Hu Qiaomu back then and the author of the book now, “left” is not good, and “Left King” is even worse, and it is a “slandorous” word when used on Hu Qiaomu.

However, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the change of colour in Eastern Europe, and the fact that reactionary forces and thoughts are still rampant to this day prove that Hu Qiaomu’s actions in this regard were basically correct. If it is said that Hu Qiaomu’s actions in this regard played a certain role in preventing the tragedy of the disintegration of the Soviet Union from happening in my country and in curbing the arrogance of reactionary forces, then it should be said that the title of “Left King” is Hu Qiaomu’s historical achievement, but he “felt wronged” for this, indicating that although he had his original intention, his thoughts were lost.



On CPC History by Hu Qiaomu (In Chinese) by Zhu Jiamei, June 2012



Deng Xiaoping and Hu Qiaomu in 1977

(Speaking of Hu Qiaomu, Deng once said: “He also has weaknesses and shortcomings, [he] is also a bit of stubborn and full of bookishness. But it is different from those who see the wind.”)

On the other hand, “the several rightist trends that emerged in China after the smashing of the Gang of Four” were also related to some of Hu Qiaomu’s ideological deviations as an “anti-left theorist.”

Hu Qiaomu’s sorrow was that he was lost in thought.

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The views expressed here are those of the original author and not necessarily of the translator or of the Institute of Chinese Studies.

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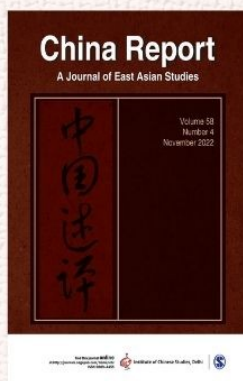


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