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Letter from Zhang Jiafu, 'Communication of Party Organizer of Delegation of Chinese Scientists [to the Soviet Union]'

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Summary:

Description of a delegation of Chinese scientists and party members traveling to the Soviet Union.

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COMMUNICATION OF PARTY ORGANIZER
OF DELEGATION OF CHINESE SCIENTISTS
Zhang Jiafu

1. About the party members and the non-party scientists.

The party members, as is to be expected, are poorly prepared as scientists, that is, they are distant from scientific work because they have participated in the revolution. The scientific preparation of the non-party scientists is not bad, but has been strongly influenced by bourgeois ideology, as the majority of them studied in America and France. Of the 26 delegates, 14 are non-party. In all in the delegation there are 21 communists, including the translators and other workers.

As a result of ideological re-education, a movement which has especially developed recently, in 1952, open expressions of bourgeois ideology do not take place, but remnants of it still remain.

About the non-party scientists:

The head of the delegation, Prof. Qian Sanqiang, is more or less restrained in political orientation, and relates in a friendly fashion to communists, but [his] ideological and theoretical level is not high, and often he expresses individualism. Bei Shizhang (the director of the institute of experimental biology), Ma Yunzhi (recommended to the post of director of the institute of soil science), Zhang Wenyou (deputy director of the institute of geology), and Peng Shaoyi (chemist) similarly genuinely relate to communists and the Soviet Union. The level of the scientific preparation of these scientists is sufficiently high. Fen Depei, a professor and physiologist, is too self-satisfied, arrogant, and considers himself the only and irreplaceable representative of Pavlov studies in China. This great individualist relates differently to different people in the Soviet Union—he respects some and does not respect others.

Hua Logeng, a professor and the director of the institute of mathematics, is politically very reliable, and tries to learn from the scholars of the Soviet Union, but he still retains remnants of bourgeois ideology, is often arrogant, and considers himself second in mathematics only to academician Vinogradov.

Zhu Xi, a biologist, is a great scholar, but having studied in France has retained several anarchist views.

Zhang Yuzhe is an astronomer, and...[sic].

Zhao Jiuzhang is geophysicist and a great specialist, but extremely retrograde.

Liang Sicheng is a professor and architect. He is too interested in the national form of ancient Chinese architecture and formalist culture; he is a retrograde.

Their stay in the USSR left a significant impression upon the scientists, especially upon the mathematician Hua Logeng and the architect Liang Sicheng, but all the same in regard to ideology it was mixed and their relationship to the party group was difficult. Sometimes, especially during a visit to separate and small groups of scientists, it was simply impossible to determine what they were talking about. For example, the head of the delegation often speaks in a flowery and diplomatic way, but to tell him this is impossible, so that even during the gathering of the entire collective it is very difficult to direct the behavior of all of its members. Among the

translators and workers there are communists, but in general they are still young and unable to help the party organization in any way. I would like the party organizers of the Academy of Sciences to understand the complexity of this situation, and advise the party leaders of the delegation, when it goes to Ukraine and Tashkent, about the best organizations to visit, what questions to pose, and with whom it is best to converse.

2. The department of propaganda of the CC CCP directed the party leaders of the delegation to address the following issues:

a) To what extent did the process of uniting the science workers around the Communist Party of the USSR take place, and how did the communist party re-educate them and organize them for work at the present time? This issue is extremely important right now for China.

b) How about the issue of vigilance; how are the secrets of scientific-research work maintained, and how are the boundaries of scientific work determined? In China, unfortunately, very often problems that are not of a secret nature are kept secret, and secret issues are revealed.

I would like the Soviet comrades to dispense their experience in this area with 2-3 representatives from our party organization.

The Party organization of the delegation intends to present to the party organization of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR all the material it has brought characterizing the state of scientific-research work generally in the Academy of Sciences of China, as well as the state of research in several distinct fields. The information is not entirely complete, but the party organization of the delegation wants to assure the party organization of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR that it has assembled everything possible, and that the Chinese delegation is prepared to answer all questions of interest to the Soviet comrades. These materials are not intended for publication, but in order to acquaint [the Soviet comrades] with the current conditions of Chinese science, as such familiarity will make it possible for the Soviet comrades to render genuine aid to Chinese science. Such aid is necessary for China, as science in China is not at a very high level, and even lower is the ideological level of Chinese scientists. For example, to select the scientific secretary of the academy is almost impossible, as there is no such person who has the high level of preparation and corresponding degree [for this position] who at the same time is a communist. The selection of academicians is a matter that remains unresolved. Such a selection took place under the Guomindang, but the majority of those selected had studied abroad, and there were few scientists from the mainland among them; therefore the matter still remains open, and those selected have not been confirmed and tried. Right now in China great work on the preparation of candidates and doctors of science is being conducted from among the younger generation, but this does not solve our current problem. I very much would like the Soviet comrades to direct their attention to this area and the places where it is necessary to devote special emphasis.

Different by nationality, the Chinese and Soviet communists belong to the same party, and therefore a strong link between them is very important. In agreement with the decisions of the 19th Party Congress, Soviet science must become first in the world. Soviet science must occupy first place, which will mean first place for Chinese science [as well]; therefore the Soviet scientists must show the Chinese scientists the pathways which they must follow. Besides this, the Chinese party organization requests that the Soviet party organization communicate whether or not it is possible to fulfill all of its requirements which the members of the delegation brought here—regarding scientific literature, scientific-research equipment, the requests for Soviet scientists to work in China, and so on. We hope that having become acquainted with the plans of the work of the Academy of Sciences of China for 1953

and for the next five-year plan, although these are still general plans, the Soviet scientists will be able to render us genuine help.