

the evidence he himself presents in the body of the book belies this conclusion. On several occasions during the Soviet-Polish War Lloyd George threatened to go to war with Russia. Although he may have been bluffing, since he lacked the wherewithal to carry through, he nevertheless used the stick of ultimata as well as the carrot of commerce in trying to prevent the Red Army from taking Warsaw. Whether or not his endeavors were effective can only be determined by an in-depth study of Soviet policy and strategy during 1920—a study which has yet to be made.

Ullman tends to dismiss British diplomatic efforts on behalf of Poland as useless, even asserting that Lloyd George was “prepared, once these measures were seen to fail, as he expected them to, to resume his trade negotiations with Moscow” (p. 212). But this implies that Lloyd George was pursuing trade for its own sake, rather than offering commercial concessions for diplomatic purposes. It also suggests that the head of a predominantly conservative coalition would (and *could*) have continued trade talks with a country whose army was occupying Warsaw and tearing up the Versailles settlement. This seems highly unlikely, especially since Lloyd George was on record as saying that “Poland—independent Poland—is essential to the whole fabric of peace” (p. 176).

Before we write off England’s attempts to arrange an armistice between Russia and Poland, it is revealing to consider what might have happened if those who opposed these attempts had been in power. Churchill, for instance, was ready to forget about Poland in favor of building up Germany as a “dyke” against the red tide (p. 202). Henry Wilson, chief of the Imperial General Staff, was even plotting to overthrow Lloyd George, convinced that he was a traitor (or a Bolshevik) because of his willingness to negotiate with Krasin and Kamenev. Ullman’s unraveling of this little-known conspiracy (chapter 7) is the most exciting revelation in this long, fact-filled volume. Equally interesting are the views of this “staunch anti-communist” regarding Poland. “I don’t mind either the Boches or the Bolsheviks over-running Poland,” Wilson confided to his diary, “as I want Russia and Germany to be touching. . . . I never believed in Poland being able to stand alone between those great countries” (p. 141). Considering these were the views of Lloyd George’s critics on the Right, it is perhaps fair to conclude that he was Poland’s best friend in her moment of trial. This is not Ullman’s conclusion, but it seems to flow from the mountains of evidence he has painstakingly unearthed. His mining of that mountain was truly a Herculean task, and the resultant study is a sturdy monument.

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THE COMINTERN AND THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS, 1928–1931. By
Richard C. Thornton. Far Eastern and Russian Institute Publications on Asia,
no. 20. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1969. xviii, 246
pp. \$9.50.

“History, for all its apparatus, appears to us primarily as a form of intuition. To each his own labyrinth.” This quotation from Theodore Roethke, which Mr. Thornton has placed at the beginning of his book, sums up his methodological credo more aptly and tellingly than any reviewer could do. This is an important and useful work, which presents considerable new material and successfully

challenges previous interpretations on a number of points. It would, however, have been more valuable if the author had not shut himself up within the labyrinth of his own assumptions, and if he had not chosen to regard virtually all those who have written previously on this period in the history of the Chinese Communist movement as either incompetent or dishonest.

In a word, Thornton argues that earlier studies have glossed over the differences between Li Li-san's views and those of the Comintern, and exaggerated those between Mao Tse-tung and the International, so as to give the impression that Li, rather than Mao, was Moscow's man. This thesis is, of course, not unlike that of Tso-liang Hsiao, but Thornton formulates it even more explicitly and categorically, basing himself not only on Chinese-language materials but on a number of Russian sources, including some hitherto unexploited ones. He also stresses more heavily the importance of the personal rivalry between Mao Tse-tung and Li Li-san in shaping events.

Thornton wrote this book in the belief that his interpretation was basically similar to that of Moscow, which also saw Mao as orthodox and Li as a heretic. The motivation of Soviet scholars was, however, the opposite of his. So long as Moscow accepted (albeit with increasing misgivings) Mao Tse-tung as the *de facto* leader of a "fraternal party," he could not be depicted in Soviet accounts as having differed sharply with the Comintern. Thornton, on the other hand, seeks to establish that Mao's line was identical with Moscow's because he regards this as discreditable to Mao. It should therefore not have come as a surprise to him that while his book was in the press the Soviets shifted to the opposite extreme on this question, asserting that Mao had deviated from the line of the International not—as in earlier Western interpretations—by his greater prudence and realism, but because he shared Li Li-san's leftist extremism. Thornton, who takes note of this fact in a footnote added on page 224, dismisses the current Soviet view as "un-supportable." There is, on the contrary, solid evidence to support it, and one might even argue that it is here, rather than as regards relations between Li Li-san and Moscow, that there is the greatest scope for revision of previous interpretations of this period.

The merits and limitations of Thornton's contribution are immediately apparent in his treatment of the first major episode covered by his account: the Sixth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, held in Moscow in the summer of 1928. He is the first, and so far the only, foreign scholar to have been granted access to the six-volume stenographic report of the congress, in the Russian language, though some recent works by Soviet authors make use of this document. The most important of these are the essay by Grigoriev on the period 1928–30 in *Komintern i Vostok* (Moscow, 1969), and L. P. Deliusin, *Agrarno-krest'ianskii vopros v politike KPK (1921–1928)* (Moscow, 1972). From this source he has drawn a solid and instructive account which demonstrates clearly the extent of Soviet control of the proceedings, and incidentally corrects previous errors regarding the dating of the congress, which took place not concurrently with the Sixth Comintern Congress, in the late summer, but from June 18 to July 11, prior to the post-mortem on the failure of the Chinese revolution before the wider international forum. One is, however, struck by the differences in emphasis between Thornton's summary of the Sixth CCP Congress and that of some Soviet authors. For example, the (unnamed) "Representative of the Executive Committee of the International" is

quoted as declaring: "A general uprising of the peasantry which is not supported by the cities—or, to put it more accurately, which is not led by the cities—will be defeated, for there can be no victory of an uprising on a large part of China's territory without an uprising in the cities" (Deliusin, p. 400). It is hard to reconcile this and similar quotations with Thornton's view that in the "Comintern's new strategy" the activities of the Communist Party in the cities played only a "diversionary role," the main tactic being henceforth guerrilla warfare in the countryside (p. 58; see also p. 48).

The two issues evoked above—the time-scale of the revolution, and the respective roles of the cities and the countryside—are naturally central to the author's lengthy discussion of the crisis of 1930. Here the documents, unlike the stenographic report of the Sixth Congress, *are* generally available, and in this instance I do not hesitate to assert that the picture he produces of the Comintern line on the one hand, and Li Li-san's line on the other, is a caricature. To take only one example, Thornton has summarized Li Li-san's directive of June 11, 1930, and the International's resolution of June 1930 (which he chooses to date July 23, though it was in fact drafted in April and May 1930) in such a way as to leave out everything in the latter indicating that Moscow expected the decisive confrontation in China to occur "in the very near future," and everything in the former displaying the least realism, thus producing a black-and-white contrast. Like all caricatures, of course, this one contains important elements of truth. It is a fact that most of us who have written about these problems in the past have seen too great a basic identity between Li's line and that of Moscow, and have accepted to too great an extent the "scapegoat theory" regarding his disgrace. If we have been wrong in this, however, Thornton goes quite as far astray by ignoring the evidence showing that in many respects Mao shared and supported Li Li-san's leftist errors. Despite his fondness for unearthing new primary source materials, he chooses to quote from the post-1951 revised version of Mao's January 1930 letter to Lin Piao, thus downgrading both the extent of his optimism regarding a rapid victory of the revolution and his interest in promoting the workers' movement in the cities. Above all, he ignores the fact that Mao, like Li, saw victory in one or several provinces as inseparable from a national revolutionary "high tide," and expected such a tide, during which Soviet power would "burst upon the scene in the whole country and the whole world," as late as October 1930 (*Shih Hua*, no. 2, December 1930, pp. 3-4).

There were, of course, many and deep divergences between Mao Tse-tung and Li Li-san, apart from their irreconcilable personal ambitions, but they were akin in their defiance of Moscow and in their determination to put China first. That is, of course, enough to damn both of them in the eyes of Moscow—though Li Li-san is in fact more gently treated in recent Soviet accounts, no doubt because he actually was more orthodox in his thinking than Mao, and also because he lost out and is no longer an active enemy. In any case, as things stand at present, Mao's line in 1930 remains far more in need of elucidation than that of Li Li-san. Perhaps Thornton would be prepared, on the basis of all the materials he has collected, to give us a second volume exploring this aspect of the period.

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