

# The Pan Hannian Affair and Power Struggles at the Top of the CCP (1953-1955)

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**ABSTRACT:** Pan Hannian (1906-1977), Communist activist from 1925, former senior head of the CCP secret service and deputy mayor of Shanghai after the PRC's founding, was arrested in 1955 for treachery and counter-revolutionary crimes. He was condemned, with his wife Dong Hui, to imprisonment and to *laogai camps* for the rest of his life. His posthumous rehabilitation in 1982 transformed him into a legendary national hero. Illustrative of the political struggles in 1953-1955, the Pan Hannian affair seems to reveal the methods Mao Zedong used from time to time in managing the Party internally so as to maintain his dominant position in the leadership.<sup>(1)</sup>



Pan Hannian  
in early 1950

ly ing democratic personalities to the new Communist regime. He held the prestigious post of deputy mayor of Shanghai from May 1949 until April 1955, when suddenly he became caught up in a top-level power struggle in the Communist regime in what became known as the "Gao Gang-Rao Shushi" affair.<sup>(2)</sup> Pan and his boss, the Shanghai Party secretary Rao Shushi, along with Yang Fan, the chief of Shanghai police from 1949 to 1951, were accused of having shielded a large number of the former regime's secret agents and of having caused serious damage to the people's interests. Pan's reputation was further sullied by the revelation of a clandestine meeting in 1943, while he was a Communist Party secret

Pan Hannian (1906-1977) became a militant Communist in 1925, with remarkable talents as an organiser, diplomat, and communicator. He was put in charge of some highly specific missions by the Party: organising the League of Left-Wing Writers, negotiating with warlords or the Nationalist regime, directing intelligence operations or rallying

agent, with Wang Jingwei, who headed a puppet regime of the Japanese at that time. Charged with treachery (*neijian*), counter-revolutionary acts (*fangeming*) and collaborating with the Kuomintang (KMT – *tewu*), he spent the rest of his life, from 1955 until 1977, between prison and *laogai camps* (the Chinese gulag). His wife, Dong Hui (1918-1979), also a former Communist secret agent, suffered the same fate and died, like him, in a camp in Hunan. In 1982, the Party absolved Pan of all charges, rehabilitating him and his wife posthumously. Their remains were reburied in Beijing's Babaoshan Cemetery, which is reserved for revolutionary heroes and high-ranking Communist cadres.

1. This text benefited from the observations of Marie-Claire Bergère, Yves Chevrier, Jean-Luc Domenach, Alain Roux, and two anonymous reviewers for *China Perspectives*. Profuse thanks to all of them, especially J-L. Domenach, who showed great interest in my work on the Pan Hannian affair. Our discussion on the issue helped me considerably in sharpening my analyses. I also thank the students who attended the seminar offered by Y. Chevrier and me in 2009-2010 at EHESS (School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences), on "First years of the Maoist regime: Framework of political and social history of the 1950s."
2. Gao Gang (1905-1954) and Rao Shushi (1903-1975) were high-ranking Party leaders. Between 1949 and 1952, they were the leaders in charge respectively of Northeast (Manchuria) and East China. Moved to Beijing in 1953 during a reshuffle of central political-administrative organs, they made a scramble for power, attacking some leading lights in the regime. They failed and were accused of having formed an "anti-Party alliance" and a "counter-revolutionary clique." Gao committed suicide on 17 August 1954; Rao was arrested on 1 April 1955 and died in prison during the Cultural Revolution. The best work on the Gao-Rao Affair is by Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics at Mao's Court: Gao Gang and party factionalism in the early 1950s*, Armonk (NY) and London, M.E. Sharpe, 1990. For a perspective different from that of Teiwes and focusing on the structural and faction-based factors in the Gao-Rao affair, see Huang Jing, *Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics*, Chapter 4, "The transition of the Yan'an Round Table," Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 173-210.

Pan was quickly raised to legendary hero status. The charges against him (and Yang Fan) are now regarded as having been part of the first unjust political trial (*yu'an*) of the People's Republic. Over the past two decades, articles and commemorative publications have proliferated, as have fictionalised biographies.<sup>(3)</sup> China Central Television marked Pan's birth centenary with a 30-episode serial focusing on his life and exploits.

Independent of the public's interest in it, the eulogising of Pan met the needs of a post-Maoist restoration of normality within the Party. Archives relating to the Pan case have never been opened to outside researchers, although a few official researchers have had some restricted access, as for instance Yin Qi, author of a richly documented biography.<sup>(4)</sup> Other writers were able to get their hands on pre-1949 Party archives, which are often less sensitive,<sup>(5)</sup> and draw upon the now republished writings of Pan.<sup>(6)</sup> Sources relating to the Gao-Rao affair – Mao's speeches, senior leaders' statements, as well as accounts by former colleagues of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi<sup>(7)</sup> – have helped penetrate the secrets surrounding the charges laid against Pan by revealing the political nature of the inquisitorial trials of the period and by clarifying Mao's crucial role in organising them.

Many biographers and observers believe the suit against Pan stemmed from leftist ideology and Mao's arbitrary authoritarianism. But this interpretation fails to explain why the Gao-Rao affair suddenly flared in intensity towards late March 1955, given that the Politburo had until then been restrained in punishing Rao Shushi.<sup>(8)</sup> His sudden arrest on 1 April 1955 marked a turn for the worse in his case: his mistakes vis-à-vis the Party had become a counter-revolutionary crime. Just two days later, Pan's indictment was decided with no preliminary investigation whatsoever. One might well wonder whether the action against the two men had other political motivations and whether Pan's arrest was really meant above all to point to the existence of a so-called counter-revolutionary clique within the Party. It will not be possible to know with certainty so long as researchers remain locked out of the Party archives. Based on a number of currently available sources, this article seeks to shed some light on Pan – the man, his place in history, and his mysterious trial.

## A young communist scholar in Shanghai

Pan Hannian was born on 12 January 1906 in a village in Yixing County to the west of Taihu Lake in the Yangzi River

delta. It was one of the richest regions in imperial China, noted not only for the abundance of its farm produce and pottery but also for the number of its renowned literary figures, members of the select band of imperial examination graduates. For generations, the Pan family had been made up of scholar-peasants focusing on teaching, tending to the family lands, and raising silkworms. The young Pan Hannian attended new schools in his village and then in the city but was unable to complete his secondary studies due to his family's declining finances. Growing up at the time of the New Culture movement and the vernacular language move-

- Following are some of the best biographies on Pan: Tang Yu (ed.), *Lingluo chengni xiang ru gu – yinian Pan Hannian, Dong Hui* (Lingering fragrance from petals turned to dust – Homage to Pan Hannian and Dong Hui), Beijing, Shenghuo dushu xinzhishi shulian shudian, 1984; *Huiyi Pan Hannian* (Remembering Pan Hannian), Nanjing, Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1985; Zhonggong Shanghai shiwei dangshi yanjiushi (ed.), *Pan Hannian zai Shanghai* (Pan Hannian in Shanghai), Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1995; Xia Yan, *Lan xun jiumeng lu* (In quest of ancient dreams), Beijing, Shenghuo dushu xinzhishi shulian shudian, 1985; (reissued with additions, 2000). The last biography of Pan Hannian, published in 2006, was a reissue of the version published ten years earlier: Zhang Yun, *Pan Hannian zhuan* (Biography of Pan Hannian), Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2006.
- Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya* (Pan Hannian's intelligence career), Beijing, Renmin chubanshe, 1996. Yin says in a postscript in his book that he was able to consult a number of closed archives and documents with the help of senior public security ministry (*Gonganbu*) officials. Few copies were printed of the book's first version, which appeared in 1991, and it circulated within limited politico-legal (*zhengfa xitong*) circles. Updated and completed with the help of new material, the 1996 version won the right to unrestricted circulation. Yin Qi also helped edit the CCTV film on Pan.
- The periodical *Dang de wenxian* (Party Documents), 1993, no. 3, has published the telegrams that Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai sent to Pan regarding CCP-KMT talks between August 1936 and July 1937. They were reproduced in *Pan Hannian zai Shanghai* (Pan Hannian in Shanghai), pp. 209-215. See also Pan's reports to Mao and other central leaders (12 November 1936); and the CCP delegation to Comintern (21 November 1936), *ibid*, pp. 216-229.
- Pan Hannian shiwen xuan* (Selected poetry and prose of Pan Hannian), Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1995.
- For Mao's views, see "Zai Zhongguo gongchandang quanguo daibiao huiyi shang de jianghua" (Speeches at the CCP national conference), 21 and 31 March 1955; "Zai qijie liuzhong quanhuo kuoda huiyi shang de zongjie" (Report to the enlarged meeting of the sixth plenum of the seventh Party congress), October 1955. For accounts of the former colleagues of Gao and Rao: Jing Yuchuan, "Rao Shushi yu Rao-Pan-Yang fangeming an" (Rao Shushi and the counter-revolution trial), in *Dangshi wenxian* (Literature on party building), no. 1, 2008, pp. 37-41. There are numerous accounts of cadres and victims of the Pan-Yang affair, including: Yang Fan, *Yang Fan zishu* (Yang Fan's writings), Beijing, Qunzhong chubanshe, 1989; Luo Qingchang, "Pan Hannian yuan'an de lishi jiaoxun" (A historic lesson from Pan Hannian's unjust trial), in *Pan Hannian zai Shanghai*, *op. cit.*, pp. 363-368; Yang Shangkun, "Huiyi Gao-Rao shijian" (Memories of the Gao-Rao affair), in *Dang de wenxian* (Party Documents), 2001, no. 1, pp. 14-22; no. 2, pp. 16-23, 85; Yang Shangkun, *Yang Shangkun riji* (Yang Shangkun's Diaries), Beijing, Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, vol. 1, 2001 (1955: 19-21 March and 1-4 April), pp. 177-183. The publication of the diaries of Yang Shangkun, who directed the CCP Central Committee general office (*Zhonggong zhongyang bangongting*) from 1949 to 1965, contributed greatly to the understanding of Mao's role in these political trials.
- Yang Shangkun riji*, vol. 1, Saturday 19 March 1955, pp. 177-178, *op. cit.*; Jing Yuchuan, "Rao Shushi yu Rao-Pan-Yang fangeming an," *op. cit.*; Zhao Jialiang and Zhang Xiaojie, *Banjie mubei xia de wangshi — Gao Gang zai Beijing*, (Gao Gang in Beijing – A past buried under a broken tombstone), Hong Kong, Dafeng chubanshe, 2008. Colleagues or those who had been close to Gao and Rao have for many years now been urging the Party leadership to reopen their case. After all, the "counter-revolution" charge against Rao was essentially based on the "crimes" of Pan Hannian and Yang Fan in running Shanghai's public security, and both were rehabilitated in the early 1980s.

ment (*baihua yundong*),<sup>(9)</sup> he devoured the rich literary crop that abounded in the early 1920s. He devoted himself to literary creation, sending poems as well as short essays discussing problems in education and other social phenomena to Shanghai publications.

In 1925, aged 19, Pan went to work in Shanghai. With help from a fellow Yixing resident, he found a job as a proof-reader and then editorial assistant with China Publishing House (*Zhonghua shuju*), which together with *Shangwu* (Shanghai Commercial Press) controlled the country's textbook market. The two publishers also put out several magazines aimed at educated urban readers and had an editorial stable made up of writers, journalists, intellectuals, and academics. Pan excelled at editing work, basking in the company of writers and sharing his passions with a group of young literature enthusiasts who like him were admirers of the *Chuangzaoshe* or Creation Society led by Guo Moruo, Yue Dafu, and Cheng Fangwu. Young Pan and his friends violently attacked all the societal evils: political corruption, warlords' arrogance, big power imperialism, and the elites' ambivalent cynicism. Pan liked to provoke, coming up with eccentric proposals hardly suited to the old order. Many of his friends from that time could hardly have imagined that this "little Pan, so laid back and free as a bird, could one day become a major secret agent for the Party."<sup>(10)</sup>

The Shanghai of the mid-1920s bustled with diverse ideological currents, all sorts of political parties cohabiting and competing. The young Pan joined the Nationalists (Kuomintang, KMT) and then the Communists, allies in a Comintern-backed "united front." After throwing himself into all sorts of propaganda work, he went to the revolutionary bastions of Wuhan and Nanchang during the winter of 1926-1927 to help bring out a small publication aimed at raising soldiers' political consciousness. But the united front collapsed in July 1927. Pan left the Nationalist army and resumed his literary activities in Shanghai's concessions, alongside his friends and innumerable political refugees, militant leftists, writers, or intellectuals seeking to shelter from the White Terror.<sup>(11)</sup> The young activists, especially former students in Japan belonging to the literary groups *Chuangzaoshe* and *Taiyangshe* (Sun Society), continued to drum up revolutionary zeal and to fulminate against the treachery and cowardice of their former allies. In 1928 and 1929, they initiated a debate on the future of proletarian revolutionary literature, hitting out at the "bourgeois sentimentalism and conservatism" of literary forebears such as Lu Xun, Yue Dafu, and Mao

Dun. The Communist Party was then resurfacing gradually and rebuilding its destroyed networks. In mid-1929, it sought to intervene in the fratricidal quarrels in writers' circles. Pan was called upon to lead a Party cultural work committee. His brief was to put an end to polemics and arrange for reconciliation between Lu Xun and other writers. The success of this mission led to the formation in Shanghai on 1 March 1930 of a league of Chinese leftist writers, bringing together Lu Xun and his former adversaries. Pan played a major role in this owing to his talents as an orator and his eclectic spirit.

The writers' league led to a series of literary and artistic groupings (social sciences, film, theatre, music, and so on), which undeniably contributed to Shanghai's cultural effervescence in the 1930s. Their success was facilitated by the emergence of new urban public spaces thanks to the aggravation of the Japanese threat since 1931-1932. Party cultural work authorities such as Pan Hannian, Feng Xuefeng, and Xia Yan, seized the initiative in the domain of artistic creation and social contact.<sup>(12)</sup> Pan was especially active in the matter of communication and building links. "He liked visiting people with differing opinions, frequenting the most varied social milieu, so as to gather information he needed and gauge the real situation in society then."<sup>(13)</sup> He seemed more and more at ease in the changing and open environment of the big city. He spoke the Shanghai dialect, often wore Western-style clothing, and sported gold-rimmed spectacles. He was ever smiling, amiable, and loquacious in the company of his friends. Perhaps the only dark cloud was his unhappy family life, thanks to a marriage his parents had arranged. But Pan would cherish a life-long affinity with this world of the 1920-1930 Shanghai circles he frequented. Some of those friends stayed loyal to him, despite his indictment as a traitor.

9. The New Culture movement erupted in urban areas between 1915 and 1925, led by progressive intellectuals and young students critical of the traditional social order and the conservative Confucian spirit. They advocated democracy and science and they circulated simplified literature for mass consumption, replacing traditional written language with a popular spoken one. The movement influenced an entire generation of Chinese youth.
10. Lou Shiyi, "Sandeli kaishi de youyi" (Friendship born in Sandeli), in *Huiyi Pan Hannian*, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
11. The foreign jurisdictions' tolerance of political refugees was not to last. In the 1930s, the authorities in Shanghai's concessions handed over arrested Communists or political suspects to the Nanjing authorities. On this collaboration, see Frederic Wakeman Jr., *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995.
12. See Xia Yan, *Lan xun jiumeng lu*, *op. cit.*, chapters 4 and 5.
13. Shen Songquan, "Si ru chunjiang shui, kangkai song zhonghun — huiyi Pan Hannian tongzhi de jijianshi" (A thought that flowed like a river in Spring — some memories of comrade Pan Hannian), in *Huiyi Pan Hannian*, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-81 at p. 77.

## A versatile emissary flitting among Ruijin, Moscow, and Shaanbei

Pan disappeared from the literary scene around May 1931, when he was moved to the Party's Special Work Committee (*Teke*). It was formed in November 1927 by Zhou Enlai, at that time the leading official in charge of the Communists' military action. Its mission was to combat the Nationalist government's dismantling of operations and to protect the Shanghai-based central organs of the Party.<sup>(14)</sup> After the betrayal of the former *Teke* chief in January 1931, Pan was called upon to help with its reorganisation alongside Communist leading lights such as Chen Yun and Kang Sheng. He ran the intelligence service and was in charge of keeping in touch with those who had infiltrated the Nanjing regime's intelligence service, rebuilding dismantled networks and sometimes warning Party cadres facing danger.<sup>(15)</sup> At that time, his writer friends might well have run into him in the street, looking like a worker or a professional. Knowing the discipline of clandestine work, they would have avoided speaking.

But the government's relentless repression and the CCP leadership's leftist line made it impossible to maintain the central organisms in Shanghai. Top leaders left. Some took refuge in Moscow and others in the Red base of Ruijin, in Jiangxi province.<sup>(16)</sup> In mid-1933, Pan went to Ruijin and found other Politburo members such as Zhang Wentian, Bo Gu, and Chen Yu, with whom he shared lodgings. He took charge of propaganda work and mass mobilisation. In October that year, the Party sent him to Fujian, east of Ruijin, to negotiate a truce with the chiefs of the Nationalists' 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army, who wished to cease hostilities with the Communists. Pan then spent some months in the provincial capital Fuzhou as CCP representative to a dissident government formed by military chiefs and opponents of Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>(17)</sup> A little after his return to Ruijin, the Party leadership decided in October 1934 to abandon the base under military pressure from the Nationalist forces and to head toward the southwest. Zhou Enlai, who was in charge of the Communist forces, asked Pan again to negotiate with Guangdong warlord Chen Jitang a neutrality pact that would let the Red Army gain passage into the north of the province. Mission accomplished, Pan took part for some months in the Long March. He got to know central leaders, including Mao Zedong, who had been eased out of his military and civil functions by the leaders who had returned from Moscow and who had the backing of Pavel Mif, the

Comintern representative. Mao seemed to like listening to Pan, 13 years his junior. Several accounts have testified to Pan's gift for elocution: It was often left to him to enliven conversations with "vivid and incisive" speech, while keeping his secret work under wraps.<sup>(18)</sup>

A little after Mao regained his post on the Politburo Standing Committee in January 1935, Pan was given a new task: to restore links cut with the Comintern. The Chinese delegation to Comintern put him in charge of meeting in Moscow, in early 1936, the representative of Chiang Kai-shek, who had received Stalin's pledge of assistance in the Anti-Japanese War. Pan maintained contact in Hong Kong with the Kuomintang, but also met Nanjing dissidents, civilians, or military personalities estranged from the Nationalist regime. He then renewed contacts with the clandestine Communist Party in Shanghai and with the central team installed at Bao'an and Shaanbei in China's Northwest. He went there in August 1936 to report to the Politburo the directives from Comintern, the position of the Chinese dele-

14. The full name of *Teke* was "Special Work Committee of the CCP Central Military Commission." It had four services under it: 1) the administration, which oversaw the finances, logistics, and the daily life of the Party's top leaders; 2) the "Red Squads" (*Hongdui*) – also called "the dog-hunters' brigade" – whose task was to summarily execute Communist traitors; 3) the intelligence service, which gathered information and supervised the infiltration of agents into the Nationalists' police and special services; 4) the communication service, which ensured radio contacts among the four services, between Shanghai and rural-based Communist guerrillas, and between the CCP and the Comintern. On the activities of *Teke*, see: Faligot Roger and Rémi Kauffer, *Kang Sheng et les services secrets chinois (1927-1987)*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1987; Byron John and Robert Pack, *The Claws of the Dragon: Kang Sheng the Evil Genius Behind Mao and His Legacy of Terror in People's China*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1992; Frederic Wakeman Jr., *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937*, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-162; *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2003, pp. 132-156.
15. On Pan's work in the special services between 1931 and 1933, see Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan* (Chen Yun's biography), Beijing, Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2005, vol. 1, pp. 103-114; Chen Xiuliang, *Pan Hannian feifan de yisheng* (The uncommon life of Pan Hannian), Shanghai shehui kexue chubanshe, 1989, pp. 16-22. Chen Yun had been one of the leaders in charge of *Teke* at that time, and Chen Xiuliang was a clandestine Party activist in Shanghai.
16. Ruijin County, in the south of Jiangxi Province close to Fujian, hosted the biggest Communist bases in the 1930s, including the soviets' central government and the guerrilla zones' Politburo. The CCP central organs were moved there from Shanghai in 1933.
17. The 19th Route Army was of Guangdong origin. It excelled in Sun Yat-sen's military successes in the 1920s and took the initiative to resist Japanese forces in the Shanghai-Wusong battle of early 1932. In opposition to Chiang Kai-shek's authoritarian policies, the 19th Route Army leaders and civilian dissidents set up a "people's revolutionary government" in Fujian in November 1933, but the Nanjing government's attacks put an end to this experiment two months later.
18. Xu Dixin, "Zhanshi 'fuben' ershiqi zai — jinian Pan Hannian tongzhi" (27 years of injustice – in memory of comrade Pan Hannian), in *Huiyi Pan Hannian*, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-52, at p. 44. There are many accounts regarding Pan's talent as an orator. On his activities and the company he kept at Ruijin, see Liu Ying, "Dui Pan Hannian tongzhi de pianduan huiyi" (Some memories of Comrade Pan Hannian), in Zhonggong Shanghai shiwei dangshi yanjiushi (ed.), *Pan Hannian zai Shanghai*, *op. cit.*, pp. 508-512; Liu Ying, *Wo yu Zhang Wentian mingyun yu gong de licheng* (My journeys with Zhang Wentian), Beijing, Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1997, pp. 44-45; 61-62; 99-100; Zhang Yun, *Pan Hannian zhuan*, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-116. Li Yimang, "Jinian Pan Hannian tongzhi" (In homage to Comrade Pan Hannian), in Tang Yu (ed.), *Lingluo chengni xiang ru gu — jinian Pan Hannian*, *Donghui*, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

Pan-Liao in 1938 at Hong Kong, Pan Hannian is the first from the left on the second line. Liao is the first (with a child) from the right on the first line.



gation in Moscow, and the outcome of his meetings with Nationalist delegates. He returned to Shanghai a little afterwards, this time mandated by the CCP central leadership with meeting different factions of the Kuomintang and preparing the necessary ground for forging a new alliance between the two parties. In March 1937, he accompanied Zhou Enlai to meet Generalissimo Chiang in Hangzhou: a second KMT-CCP front was formalised in July 1937, just as the Sino-Japanese war broke out. The alliance helped the CCP emerge into the open and recover its place at the heart of the national scene.<sup>(19)</sup>

## Deployment of the United Front during the Sino-Japanese War

The second united front gave the CCP much elbow room, which, among other things, helped it open representative units in major cities in the name of “Office of the Eighth Route Army” (as the Red Army was now called). From July 1937 until early 1938, Pan took part successively in heading the “Eighth Route Army Office” in Shanghai, then in Hong Kong. In Shanghai, his mission was to receive and reassign released Communist prisoners, promote social ties under the garb of patriotism in the city, and supervise publication of a daily called *Jiawang ribao* (National Salvation), which helped the Party reach out to several democratic personages,<sup>(20)</sup> writers, journalists, and intellectuals. Between August and November 1937, Pan himself wrote some 20 articles in the daily advancing Communist positions in the Anti-Japanese resistance and in the quest for potential alliances. After Japan overran Shanghai, the daily was published from Guangzhou and then Guilin in Guangxi. On Zhou Enlai’s orders, Pan personally arranged the evacuation of the democratic personages and hundreds of sympathetic intellectuals to Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Guilin, and Chongqing. He also organised groups of artists and writers and divided them among military units.<sup>(21)</sup>

In late December 1937, Pan left the “isolated island” made up of international settlements in Shanghai for Hong Kong. In early 1938, he spent some time in Wuhan, the provisional capital hosting the Yangzi office (*Changjiangju*) representing the CCP’s central leadership. It was under the charge of Wang Ming, who had just returned from Moscow, as well as Zhou Enlai and other top figures. Zhou sought to exploit the political opening in order to implant communist structures in China’s interior as

well as in Southeast Asia. In March, Pan returned to Hong Kong, where he and Liao Chengzhi manned the Eighth Route Army office in charge of regrouping Communist guerrillas in southern China.<sup>(22)</sup> Using their contacts among the overseas Chinese and KMT Leftists as well as other social networks, Pan and Liao sought to boost the CCP’s profile and that of its armed forces, raise funds and resources, and gather all sorts of intelligence.

From 29 September to 6 November 1938, Pan took part in the 6<sup>th</sup> plenum in Yan’an of the Sixth Party Congress, which was meant to settle the differences between Mao’s central team in Shaanbei and the Wang Ming-led representation in Wuhan. With unequivocal backing from Moscow, Mao’s leadership prevailed, and Yan’an restored its representation structures in non-Communist zones. The old security and intelligence services were also overhauled and regrouped under a department of social affairs (*Shehuibu*) led by Kang Sheng, Li Kenong, and Pan Hannian. Pan focused mostly on training action units and secret agents, some of whom later followed him to Hong Kong and Shanghai.<sup>(23)</sup> There he met a student, Dong Hui, 12 years his junior and from a family of Hong Kong bankers. She went on to join his intelligence unit and later became his second wife.

19. Twenty years later, the contacts and talks between Pan and the KMT’s Central Club faction, especially with Chen Lifu and Zhang Chong, would be considered proof of his treachery. Pan was accused, among other things, of having been an agent of the Central Club faction, although Mao knew perfectly well the actual facts: Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-242.
20. “Democratic Personages” (*minzhu renshi*) was a label the CCP put on leading dissidents in the Nationalist regime, leading Communist sympathisers or neutral persons, or those enjoying certain public renown.
21. On the retreat from Shanghai in 1937 and evacuation of writers and intellectuals in 1938 to Guangzhou and in 1940 to Hong Kong after the Japanese invasion, see Xia Yan’s excellent account, *Lan xun jiumeng lu*, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-307.
22. Liao, of Guangdong origin, was the only son of Liao Zhongkai, once the right-hand man of Sun Yat-sen and leader of the KMT’s right wing, assassinated in 1925. Liao Zhongkai’s wife, He Xiangning, was also a prominent personality. She and Sun’s widow, Song Qingling, represented the KMT left wing, which was close to the CCP. Due to historical reasons and geography, many KMT leaders had vast networks of sympathisers among overseas Chinese and among some foreign institutions.
23. Liu Renshou, “Yi Pan Hannian tongzhi ji ta suo lingdao de Shanghai danwei de ruogan qingkuang” (Memories of Pan Hannian and action units under his charge in Shanghai), in *Huiyi Pan Hannian*, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-172.

Pan in 1938 in Yan'an.  
He is the second from the right (with glasses).



## Espionage and counter-espionage

Despite his extraordinary reputation, Pan was more a versatile secret agent of the CCP than a classic spy. It was the Japanese invasion that led to a full scale redrawing of China's political scene and opened up a new phase in Pan's career.

In April 1939, Pan returned to Hong Kong to obtain treatment for an eye problem. Yan'an asked him to stay there and supervise the organisation of an intelligence service in southern China. Pan restructured the existing teams by adding recently recruited agents sent by Yan'an. He established contact with agents from different networks installed in Hong Kong. Among them was the representation office of General Li Du, leader of the Manchurian resistance,<sup>(24)</sup> the Soviet intelligence office for the Far East, the international research institute – a front for *Juntong* (the reporting committee of the Nationalist army), which was Chiang Kai-shek's most powerful secret service – and the private cabinet of prime minister Kong Xiangxi (H.H. Kong). From September 1939, Pan strengthened his network (known as *Pan xitong*) from Hong Kong to Shanghai. He placed a Communist-Nationalist double agent from *Juntong*, Yuan Shu, in the "Iwai Intelligence Agency," which was a branch of the Japanese foreign ministry's intelligence system in China, headed by Eiichi Iwai, Japan's vice-consul general in Shanghai. Pan met him in November and entered into an agreement according to which Iwai subsidised a politically neutral periodical known as *Ershi shiji* (Twentieth century) that Pan was putting out from Hong Kong. In exchange Pan's group provided Iwai's intelligence agency once a fortnight with intelligence gathered and selected by the Hong Kong CCP. It was mostly strategic information on politics in the interior of China, and governmental relations with the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, and Germany.<sup>(25)</sup> Pan frequently travelled between Hong Kong and Shanghai, meeting Iwai several times. In March 1940, Iwai introduced him to the Wang Jingwei government's military supremo, Major General Sadaaki Kagesa, and other Japanese intelligence officials. Pan used money given by Iwai to finance the Communists' secret service activities. From 1939 to 1941, he ran quite a network linking Hong Kong and Shanghai. His Shanghai unit had 30 to 40 agents and possessed two radios, which helped send important intelligence to Yan'an. During the fall of Hong Kong, in December 1941, he obtained Iwai's help to evacuate his team, some to the interior of China and others to Shanghai. He went about Shanghai carrying a residency card issued by the Japanese consulate

and stayed in a luxury hotel room reserved under Iwai's name.

From 1939, Pan was also in touch with Li Shiqun, chief of the collaborationist regime's formidable secret police,<sup>(26)</sup> whose Shanghai headquarters was often referred to by its address, "76 Jessfield Road."<sup>(27)</sup> Li had been a secret CCP agent, and had then worked for the KMT Central Club faction's intelligence service and for the Japanese in 1938. He later rose rapidly in the puppet regime of Wang Jingwei, and to keep an exit option open, he secretly offered his services to the CCP as well. On Yan'an's orders, Pan placed a spy in his entourage right from 1939. The two men were in direct contact from 1942, after Li Shiqun was made governor of Jiangsu and given charge of rural pacification. He provided Pan with useful information on the rural clean-up campaign (*qingxiang*) covering the headquarters of the new CCP Fourth Army in the north of Jiangsu. Li introduced Pan to "76 Jessfield Road" and put him in touch with Zhou Fohai, the other service chief who maintained links with the Nationalists' *Juntong*. Li Shiqun designated his assistant Hu Junhe, another former Communist agent, to serve as go-between for contacts with Pan. In November 1942, these collaborators with the Japanese extended protection to Pan and other clandestine CCP leaders during their retreat from Shanghai to the Communist base of Huainan (in the south of Anhui). Many secret channels linked the two places. All these activities were approved by the central leadership in Yan'an and reported in detail to the department of social affairs.

24. Manchuria was under Japanese occupation from 1931 to 1932. Diverse political and military organised resistance there took care of Manchuria's representation within China or abroad.
25. Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-115; Zhang Yun, *Pan Hannian zhuan*, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-201; Joseph Yick, "Communist-Puppet collaboration in Japanese-Occupied China: Pan Hannian and Li Shiqun, 1939-43," in *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 16, no. 4, December 2001, (pp. 61-88), at pp. 66-69. (I thank Jean-Luc Domenach for getting me this article.)
26. The Japanese occupiers installed power centres in different Chinese regions run by collaborators. In Shanghai, the first puppet municipal authority dates back to 1937. From January 1940, it was answerable to the Nanjing government headed by Wang Jingwei. The ex-Nationalist leader had defected to the Japanese side in December 1938.
27. On Li Shiqun and the secret police of "76 Jessfield Road," see Joseph Yick, "Communist-Puppet collaboration in Japanese-Occupied China: Pan Hannian and Li Shiqun, 1939-43," *op. cit.*; Frederic Wakeman Jr., *The Shanghai Badlands: Wartime Terrorism and Urban Crime, 1937-1941*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

The couple Pan Hannian-Dong Hui  
in the 1940s



In April 1943, however, Li Shiqun and his assistant arranged an unexpected meeting in Nanjing between Pan and Wang Jingwei, the collaborationist regime's supremo. Wang was seeking to drive a wedge between the already feuding CCP and KMT by conveying to Pan his wish to collaborate with the Communists in calling a national democratic parliament. The meeting remained inconclusive, but on his return to the Huainan base, Pan apparently omitted any mention of it to the regional leaders, political commissar Rao Shushi and Fourth Army commander-in-chief Chen Yi.

In Huainan, Pan became a target in a campaign to rectify the Party's work style (*zhengfeng*), which Rao Shushi was trying to use in a drive to settle scores with his rival Chen Yi. Rumours multiplied around Pan regarding his "liberal" conduct (*ziyou zhuyi*), "irresponsible talk" (*xiao guangbo*), and even "dubious" relations with Li Shiqun and other renegade agents.<sup>(28)</sup> In September 1943, the Japanese assassinated Li. When Pan arrived in Yan'an in early 1945, Mao praised his success in intelligence work and expressed the Party's confidence in him.<sup>(29)</sup> Pan seems to have failed to use the opportunity to mention his meeting with Wang Jingwei and explain the circumstances in which it took place.<sup>(30)</sup> It was hardly surprising as Pan, known to be cautious and used to work under perilous conditions, failed to cover his back.

## At the peak of his career

Soon after Japan's surrender in April 1946, Pan returned to Shanghai, and later to Hong Kong, to direct united front work and the intelligence service. As a Cantonese speaker, he felt at home there. He excelled in tapping all manner of contacts to gather information, run a pro-Communist press, and protect the CCP's potential allies. From 1947, he was mainly concerned with meeting, in the free Hong Kong surroundings, all sorts of people – democratic or politically neutral – who were fleeing KMT regime reprisals. He helped them settle in, set up representative organs, and enabled them to publish. When needed, he helped reunite families or overcome financial difficulties. In the spring of 1948, the CCP appealed to other groups to take part in a consultative conference in order to form a coalition government. For one whole year, Pan was given charge of supervising the movement between Hong Kong and the Communist bases in the north and northeast of those who rallied to the CCP's side. Despite the efforts of KMT agents and British authorities' surveillance, some 350 people reached the Communist

zones.<sup>(31)</sup> When Communist victory loomed in late 1948, Pan became the most sought-after person. Everyone flocked to him for information or to forge relations. Pan also played a major role in rallying Nationalist institutions to the new regime.

After the fall of Shanghai in April 1949, Pan was named deputy mayor, mainly dealing with security and united front work. He put his energies into restoring social order in a city gripped by hyperinflation, combating crime, and supervising a campaign to snuff out opponents linked to the old regime.<sup>(32)</sup> On his instructions Shanghai police chief Yang Fan used a number of double agents or turncoats, infiltrated the KMT's clandestine radio stations and appointed Hu Junhe, former Wang Jingwei regime agent, as the head of an intelligence committee. Such obviously delicate use of some double agents led to a few incidents. In late 1951, a public security ministry investigation concluded that Shanghai police had made serious mistakes because of insufficient control over special agents and counter-revolutionary agents. Yang Fan was dismissed, but his immediate bosses – Pan Hannian and Rao Shushi – escaped inquiry at that time.<sup>(33)</sup> Although relieved of his post as director of the intelligence

28. Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, *op. cit.*, p. 168; Zhao Xian, "Pan Hannian he Dong Hui" (Pan Hannian and Dong Hui) in *Pan Hannian zai Shanghai*, *op. cit.*, p. 543.
29. Mao sent Rao Shushi a telegramme dismissing any suspicions regarding Pan. See Zhang Yun, *Pan Hannian zhuan*, *op. cit.*, p. 241, which contains the telegramme dated 23 February 1945.
30. Pan told friends, while he was on conditional parole from 1963 to 1967, that the fear of losing face kept him from revealing the full picture. See Tang Yu, "Aisi he yinian" (Homage and painful memories), in *Lingluo chengni xiang ru gu – huiyi Pan Hannian*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
31. Xia Yan, "Jinian Pan Hannian tongzhi" (In homage to comrade Pan Hannian), in *Huiyi Pan Hannian*, pp. 7-9.
32. On Pan's public security work in Shanghai, see Frederic Wakeman Jr., "'Liberation': The Shanghai Police, 1942-1952," in Yves Chevrier, Alain Roux, and Xiaohong Xiao-Planes (eds.), *Citadins et citoyens dans la Chine du XXe siècle* (City-dwellers and citizens in twentieth century China), Paris, Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2010, pp. 515-535; Yang Fan, "Wuyun sanjin xian zhonghun – daonian Pan Hannian tongzhi" (An upright soul emerges after dark clouds dissipate – In homage to comrade Pan Hannian), in *Pan Hannian zai Shanghai*, *op. cit.*, pp. 395-402; Wang Zhengming, "Chenyuan zhaoxue yingming yongcun" (An injustice overturned, an eternal illustrious name), *ibid.* pp. 403-412; "Gaoshan yongcun, dahe changliu – jinian Pan Hannian tongzhi bainian danchen" (Like eternally standing mountains and eternally flowing rivers – In homage on the centenary of Pan Hannian's birth), in *Dongfangjian* (Oriental Sword), 2006, no. 7, pp. 20-22. Thanks to the Pan Hannian-Yan Fan affair, Wang Zhengming, who had worked under them in Shanghai public security, was jailed twice for a total of 13 years and seven months.
33. The ministerial inquiry revealed an astounding number of these double agents and turncoats – as many as 3,300. Actually it was a figment of imagination stemming from a joke. On this episode, see Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-236.

committee, Hu Junhe continued to work for the Shanghai police until his sudden arrest in September 1954.<sup>(34)</sup>

Pan was also concerned with united front work, which consisted of coordinating relations between the CCP and various socio-professional circles, especially capitalist entrepreneurs who retained a preponderant position in Shanghai society. The authorities acutely needed their cooperation in restoring economic order following the devastation of the civil war and consequent galloping inflation. Pan sought to allay the suspicions of the industrialists and financiers as regards the Communist government's capacity, and helped them restore production by solving their difficulties over funding, raw material, transport, or social conflicts. In the latter half of 1952, Pan oversaw a Beijing-ordered "Five-Anti" campaign against capitalists, but tried to tone down its more inhuman aspects in order to spare adverse effects on the economy. When Beijing decided to nationalise private enterprises, he urged those in charge of the economy to spare a few so as not to scare Chinese capitalists overseas.<sup>(35)</sup>

As mayor Chen Yi was often tied up with his responsibilities over the eastern military region, Pan had to look after the day-to-day work of the municipality. He had to receive and accompany foreign and Chinese dignitaries visiting Shanghai, preside over public meetings, lead mass mobilisation campaigns, and initiate municipal construction. He renewed contact with his writer friends. "The Pan household," recalled friend and colleague Zhao Xian, "was always filled with people during the weekends and holidays. There were old acquaintances and friends from literary and artistic circles, democratic personalities, or those who had worked under him. People spoke without reserve and Pan got much information."<sup>(36)</sup> He was always well turned out, bore himself with elegance, and smoked English cigarettes his wife's Hong Kong family supplied. In fact, Zhao Xian was concerned about him during the Three-Anti campaign in early 1952, fearing that Pan could attract public criticism over corrupt thinking and bourgeois lifestyle.

## The Gao-Rao affair and power struggle at the top

The Gao-Rao affair came at a time of structural overhaul of state and Party institutions and preparations for the Eighth Party Congress. During the winter of 1952-1953, many regional leaders were called to Beijing in order to strengthen central organs and prepare for implementation of the first five-year plan. Among them were Gao Gang, Rao Shushi, Deng Xiaoping, Deng Zihui, and Xi Zhongxun. Gao went

on to preside over the planning commission; Rao was asked to head the Party's organisation department and the government's labour department. After a reshuffle in the government, there was to have been one in the CCP Central Committee and Politburo, the two supreme organs that emerged from the Seventh Party Congress at Yan'an in 1945. Now Mao had differences over several issues with some leaders, especially Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai. They shared the same objectives of socialist transformation of the economy and Chinese society, but did not always agree on the methods and timetable for application of their programme, as for instance the details of farm collectivisation, policies towards the market, retention of private property, and so on. Gao Gang often shared Mao's position, favouring a voluntarist policy to prioritise the state and collective sectors of the economy. In early 1953, Mao used the problems encountered in applying the new fiscal system to severely reprimand the government for having strayed from Party directives.<sup>(37)</sup> This led to Premier Zhou Enlai abandoning the Party coordination structure (*dangzu gangshihui*) and letting sectoral components report directly to the Politburo or, in other words, Mao. Zhou's real powers were thus significantly reduced. He was confined to foreign affairs, whereas Gao Gang was allowed to oversee eight industry-related ministries thanks to his chairmanship of the planning commission.<sup>(38)</sup>

In the ensuing months, Mao set about systematically cracking down on "Rightist tendencies" among his Politburo colleagues Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and the Rural Works Department head Deng Zihu, who advocated "the need to consolidate the new democratic order" (*gonggu xinminzhu zhuyi zhixu*), preservation of the "four great freedoms" (*sida ziyou*), and "real protection for private property" (*quebao siyou caichan*). During a conference on finance and econ-

34. Wu Jimin, "Hu Junhe yu Pan Hannian yuan'an" (Hu Junhe and the unfair trial of Pan Hannian), in *Dang'an chunqiu* (Archival chronicles), 2008, no. 11, pp. 18-23. Notably, the author interviewed Hu's wife, Zhao Shangyun, who lived with him from the 1930s onwards. Hu (1907-1993) spent 28 years in jail. He was rehabilitated in the 1980s and was accorded a comfortable retirement as a Shanghai municipal police official.
35. On Pan's activities during this period in Shanghai, see the articles in the section "Xin Shanghai de fushizhang" (deputy mayor of new Shanghai) in *Pan Hannian zai Shanghai*, *op. cit.*
36. Zhao Xian, "Pan Hannian yu Dong Hui," *op. cit.*, pp. 545-546. Pan's arrest aroused fears among Shanghai's capitalists; see Frederic Wakeman Jr., "'Liberation': The Shanghai Police, 1942-1952," *op. cit.*, pp. 533-534.
37. The new fiscal system unified various existing taxes and established a principle of equality between public and private firms in tax matters. But Mao saw it as an error of "Right opportunism" (*youqing jihui zhuyi*) and "dispersionism" (*fensan zhuyi*).
38. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi (ed.), *Zhou Enlai nianpu 1949-1976* (Chronicles of Zhou Enlai 1949-1976), Beijing, Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, vol. 1, 1997, pp. 285, 297.



omy in mid-1953, Mao resumed his attacks on the defects of the new fiscal system and made Finance Minister Bo Yibo offer self-criticism.<sup>(39)</sup> It was in this context that Gao Gang unleashed a thinly-veiled attack on Liu Shaoqi, stressing his divergences with Mao with regard to development of agricultural cooperatives, policies towards capitalists, and other matters. The meeting turned into a venue for settling scores and lasted many weeks, Mao having let the ambiance become vitiated. Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai also had to make self-criticisms, while Gao became close to Rao Shushi, who questioned the authority of Liu's associates in the Party's Organisation Department. Gao then went on a tour of the provinces in order to recruit potential allies among Politburo members and regional civil and military leaders. He accused Liu Shaoqi and his North China Bureau (Huabei) entourage of having monopolised central power. Gao also spread rumours that Liu had lost Mao's confidence. The situation deteriorated and Mao decided in December to jettison Gao Gang so as to safeguard existing leadership unity. During the course of 1954, Gao and Rao were accused of having built an "anti-Party alliance" to seize power. A series of meetings were held in Beijing, and then in the former jurisdictions of the duo – Manchuria and East China – to denounce their past and current mistakes and to sweep out their adverse influence in the Party and government.

## Pan as victim of the Gao-Rao affair

Gao committed suicide on 17 August 1954 and Rao became the sole target of the purge. In Rao's former fief – eastern China – his critics reopened a case that had been suppressed for three years, of the use of double agents or turncoats by the Shanghai police between 1949 and 1951. At the same time, accusations against Rao Shushi escalated. In the autumn of 1954, the public security ministry officially resumed a criminal investigation. Double agent Hu Junhe and former Shanghai police chief Yang Fan were picked up and taken to Beijing. Before the Party's national conference held from 21 to 31 March 1955, the Politburo had decided to drop Rao from the Central Committee, and he was then expelled from the Party. He was arrested on 1 April for counter-revolutionary crimes in the presence of three senior leaders: Public Security Minister Luo Ruiqing and the two top leaders in charge of the eastern region, Chen Yi and Tan Zhenlin. Two days later, it was the turn of Pan Hannian to be detained in his Beijing hotel after he revealed that in 1943 he had met Wang Jingwei.<sup>(40)</sup> Mao was reported to

have been angry on learning of Pan's confession and declared then and there, "This person can no longer be trusted." On 4 April, at the opening of the Fifth Plenum of the Seventh Party Congress, Mao cited Pan as a prime example of an enemy hiding within the Party. Yang Shangkun noted in his diaries:

*Chairman Mao specifically pointed out, in his speech, that there was a tendency "more to the right than left" [ning you wu zuo] inside the Party. Under such influence, people failed to pay sufficient heed to the danger of destruction of the Party by enemy infiltrators. They had thus let down their guard and this had led to failings. Henceforth, priority should be attached to rectifying Rightist tendencies, to fighting laxity in the political struggle and lack of vigilance. It is only when everyone keeps in mind such problems that we can fight against Leftist tendencies. What is needed is to not let a counter-revolutionary off in the struggle against Right opportunism or to wrong a revolutionary while combating Left adventurism. Take Pan's example.<sup>(41)</sup> He has been in the Party over a long period and most of us know him. It's as if we were sleeping blindly beside a tiger. But soon as we discover it is a tiger, we should open our eyes wide, draw a clear line in relations with him and help the Party to unmask him. Above all, we should never abandon the principles of a Communist for having shared a bed with the tiger.<sup>(42)</sup>*

Charges of counter-revolutionary crime against Pan were made public on 16 July 1955. Pan had dealt with several senior Party leaders during his career, enjoyed great popularity among CCP cadres and writers, artists, and capitalists of Shanghai as well as among prominent non-Communists in China and abroad. A lot of them sought effective proof of his treachery, especially those who had been part of his clan-

39. On the conference proceedings, see Bo Yibo, *Ruogan zhongda juece yu shijian de huigu* (Reflections on some decisions and major events), Beijing, Zhonggong zhongyanyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1991, 1994, pp. 231-254.

40. At the national conference, Mao spoke of two anti-Party cliques led respectively by Gao Gang and Rao Shushi. He specifically named Yang Fan as a member of the Rao clique. At the end of the conference, he urged cadres to report to the Party, either orally or in writing, their mistakes linked to the Gao-Rao affair and their undisclosed past mistakes. Pan was in the Shanghai delegation at the conference and thus felt obliged to explain the past event. On Mao's remarks, see Mao Zedong, "Speeches at the National Conference of the Communist Party of China" (March 1955), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 5, Beijing, People's Publishing House, First Edition, 1977, pp. 154-171.

41. Pan's name is given in the Latin letters in the original text.

42. *Yang Shangkun riji*, vol. 1, 4 April 1955, p. 182.

destine Communist network. The intelligence sector faced great pressure as criticisms swirled within the Party. Disarray reigned as cadres from the ministries of public security, supervision, and state security met for a national conference. Zhou Enlai sought to reassure them while referring to the Pan Hannian affair: “What are you afraid of? It was I who knew Pan the longest and our relations were the strongest. If I don’t worry about it myself, why do you?”<sup>(43)</sup> That said, Zhou quickly put together an investigation team led by general Li Kenong, who was then one of the seniormost officials in charge of civil and military intelligence. The investigators reviewed the correspondence between Pan and the central leadership from March 1939 to August 1948. At the end of three months, Li Kenong signed a detailed report on 29 July 1955 addressed to the Politburo and the Central Committee secretariat. He showed that all of Pan’s activities were in line with central directives, and that he had regularly reported to central leaders, be it in respect of contacts with Japanese secret services or the use of double agents of the collaborationist regime such as Li Shiqun, Hu Junhe, and others. Li Kenong also stressed the decisive character of intelligence provided by Pan in some of the Party’s decisions. He said there had never been a leak of organisational secrets until Shanghai’s liberation, and that some of Pan’s links continued to feed the intelligence services at the time of the investigation. He concluded by recommending prudent handling of the Pan affair. His report was sent to the leadership mentioned above but evoked no response despite three successive reminders.<sup>(44)</sup>

Zhou Enlai was not alone in doubting the fairness of Mao’s decision. Another Politburo member, Zhang Wentian, who had known Pan extremely well, told his wife that Pan’s indictment lacked all proof and that the Politburo had never discussed it.<sup>(45)</sup> As for Chen Yun and Liao Chengzhi, two veterans and former comrades of Pan, they were among the first, after Mao left the scene, to demand his rehabilitation despite intra-Party opposition.<sup>(46)</sup>

Mao’s unshaking resolve led to the total destruction of Pan Hannian and his wife, Dong Hui. In Shanghai alone, the Pan affair led to action against a thousand people, of whom 800 were arrested and condemned to jail terms; some 200 others suffered unfair treatment, which had implications for their families and descendants. Most of them were Communist cadres and agents who were part of Pan’s intelligence team, KMT turncoats, contacts forged through united front work, friends, and relatives.<sup>(47)</sup>

## Conclusion: Mao and the management of intra-Party matters

Over the following years, Mao publicly mentioned Pan Hannian several times. Thus at the October 1955 Sixth Plenum of the Seventh Party Congress, he referred to Pan as a counter-revolutionary who had evaded the Yan’an *zhengfeng* (campaign to rectify the Party’s working style in 1942-1943). Less than a year later, in his major speech “On the Ten Major Relationships,” he said of the “counter-revolutionaries” Hu Feng, Pan Hannian, and Rao Shushi: “We don’t have them executed, not because their crimes don’t deserve capital punishment but because such executions would yield no advantage.” He repeated this on 30 January 1962 at the Conference of 7,000 (*qiqianren dahui*), saying, with extraordinary levity, that Pan had gone over to the Kuomintang and had been an agent of the Central Club faction.<sup>(48)</sup> The aim of the meeting he was addressing was to take stock of the catastrophic Great Leap Forward (1958-1961).

A question that arises is why Mao was so intent on condemning Pan, who had never taken part in the Gao-Rao manipulation and had never acted against the Communist cause or Party unity.<sup>(49)</sup> Mao’s real aim might have been to use the Rao-Pan-Yang affair to arouse within the Party a

43. Luo Qingchang, “Pan Hannian yuan’an de lishi jiaoxun,” in *Pan Hannian zai Shanghai*, *op. cit.*, pp. 363-368. Luo was then a senior cadre in the military intelligence department and simultaneously deputy director of Premier Zhou’s cabinet office. He was a member of the inquiry team headed by Li Kenong.

44. Li Kenong took great risk in making the report at that time. Twenty years later, it was relied on by investigators of the CCP’s discipline inspection commission and played a major role in clearing Pan’s name.

45. Liu Ying, *Wo he Zhang Wentian mingyun yu gong de licheng*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

46. Luo Qingchang, “Pan Hannian yuan’an de lishi jiaoxun,” *op. cit.*, pp. 366-367.

47. Wen Guang, “Pan Hannian yuan’an de qianqian houhou” (Pan Hannian’s unjust trial proceedings), in *Pan Hannian zai Shanghai*, *op. cit.*, pp. 426-433. All the victims were cleared in the 1980s, including Hu Junhe, a veritable “chameleon” in the intelligence world.

48. On Mao’s comments with regard to Pan, see “Zai qijie liuzhong quanwei kuoda huiyi shang de zongjie” (Report to the expanded meeting of the Sixth Plenum of the Seventh Party Congress, 4-11 October 1955), in *Mao Zedong sixiang wansui* (Long live Mao Zedong Thought), vol. 3 (No page numbers), 1967, 1969; “On the Ten Major Relationships” (25 April 1956), in *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, vol. 5, *op. cit.*, p. 323; “Zai kuoda de zhongyang gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua” (Speeches at the expanded meeting of the Central Committee – 30 January 1962), in *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* (Mao’s manuscripts, 1949 to 1976), vol. 10 (Electronic version, no page numbers).

49. Many hypotheses have been put forward. Some Chinese authors say Mao could not forgive Pan for his deceit concerning his meeting with Wang Jingwei. Others point to the prevailing Leftist ideology and simplistic view of Communist cadres in the complex conditions of clandestine work, and their ignorance of complicated relations in the work of united front and intelligence. Some question the possible role of Kang Sheng, the redoubtable head of China’s KGB in the 1940s and during the Cultural Revolution. He had been sidelined during the 1950s. Could Pan’s elimination have weakened Zhou Enlai, as some scholars suggest? This does not seem plausible, especially as Mao had other means of achieving it, as we have seen earlier.

more acute sense of class struggle and a more constant fear of infiltration by hidden enemies.

The Pan Hannian affair came at the start of the campaign to eradicate counter-revolutionaries in the state apparatus (*neibu sufan*).<sup>(50)</sup> During the previous campaign to rectify the Party's workstyle at Yan'an in 1942-1943, thousands of Communist activists and cadres suspected of being infiltrators suffered the worst persecution. This "internal" terror had the specific aim of "upholding the basic principles and disciplinary rules of the Party." This was Mao's explicit message in speaking of the lessons from the Rao Shushi-Pan Hannian affair.

As per Leninist dogma, the Communist Party is the instrument of revolutionary leaders to capture power and realise their transformation projects. In order to preserve combat readiness, the troops need to be purified through regular rectification tests, combating revisionist ideas, and unmasking hidden enemies. For this, the sacrifice of some individuals would be a striking lesson to guide the Party and the masses. During the bloody campaign to eradicate counter-revolutionaries in 1951-1952, Mao had already stressed this educational dimension by speaking of imparting to the population a living lesson and powerfully buttressing the new regime's political authority.<sup>(51)</sup>

Mao had greatly appreciated Pan's talent and success. But the Party no longer needed his services as much, now that it had cornered the near totality of resources in the political arena. On the other hand, the Pan Hannian affair would help Mao intimidate and bring to heel senior Party leaders. Yang Shangkun recalled that on hearing Mao's harsh words against Pan on 5 April 1955, "The atmosphere in the auditorium suddenly grew tense. Central Committee members, including myself, never expected it. We were all surprised; we never thought the Gao-Rao affair could come to this."<sup>(52)</sup> Yang noted, "Several comrades in the Party secretariat [*shujichu*] and Central Committee members spoke, voicing their support for the Chairman's directive to draw the whole Party's attention to the issue."<sup>(53)</sup>

Is there a link between the Pan Hannian affair and the power struggles of the 1950s? Evidently, in Mao's eyes, Right opportunism was being manifested not only in the organisational domain but also in the Party's overall comportment. It should be borne in mind that the Gao-Rao manipulations started out by sowing discord between Mao and other top leaders. Mao readily drew a parallel between his concrete policy orientation and his revolutionary discourse on class struggle.<sup>(54)</sup> With such juxtaposition, he could build up an all round dominant position – on the policy line, or-

ganisation, and theory. Despite the great prestige he enjoyed in the Party and the country, there seemed to be a certain vague competition between Liu Shaoqi and himself. Times had changed: China was no longer at war, and Mao had to more often than not measure up to his colleagues in socio-economic and technical competence, and no longer just in military strategy. •

• Translated by N. Jayaram

50. Luo Qingchang, "Pan Hannian yuan'an de lishi jiaoxun," *op. cit.*, p. 364.

51. Yang Kuisong, "Mao Zedong yu 'zhenya fangeming' yundong" (Mao Zedong and the "campaign to root out counter-revolutionaries"), in Chen Yungfa (ed.), *Liang'an fentu: Lengzhan chuqi de zhengjing fazhan* (Differing voices: political and economic developments on the two sides of the Strait at the start of the Cold War), Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, Taipei, 2006, pp. 31-76, at p. 41. According to official figures, between 1951 and 1952, the campaign led to the arrest of 2.62 million people, 712,000 of whom were executed and more than a million sent to labour camps.

52. Yang Shangkun, "Huiyi Gao-Rao shijian" (Memories of the Gao-Rao Affair), in *Dang de wenxian, op. cit.*, 2001, no. 2, p. 21.

53. *Yang Shangkun rijì*, vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

54. See Huang Jing's excellent study, *Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics, op. cit.*

## Glossary

Babaoshan	八寶山	Mao Zedong	毛澤東
Baihua yundong	白話運動	Neibu sufan	內部肅反
Bo Gu	博古	Neijian	內奸
Bo Yibo	薄一波	Ningyou wuzuo	寧右勿左
Chen Jitang	陳濟棠	Pan Hannian	潘漢年
Chen Yi	陳毅	Pan xitong	潘系統
Chen Yun	陳雲	Qingxiang	清鄉
Cheng Fangwu	成仿吾	Qiqianren dahui	七千人大會
Chiang Kai-shek	蔣介石	Quebao siyou caichan	確保私有財產
Chongqing	重慶	Rao Shushi	饒淑石
Chuangzaoshe	創造社	Ruijin	瑞金
Deng Xiaoping	鄧小平	Shaanbei	陝北
Deng Zihui	鄧子恢	Shangwu yinshuguan	商務印書館
Dong Hui	董慧	Shujichu	書記處
Ershi shiji	二十世紀	Sida ziyou	四大自由
Fangeming	反革命	Taihu	太湖
Feng Xuefeng	馮雪峰	Taiyangshe	太陽社
Fuzhou	福州	Tan Zhenlin	譚震林
Gao Gang	高崗	Teke	特科
Gonggu xinminzhu zhuyi zhixu	鞏固新民主主義秩序	Tewu	特務
Guilin	桂林	Wang Jingwei	汪精衛
Guo Moruo	郭沫若	Xi Zhongxun	習仲勳
Hu Junhe	胡均鶴	Xia Yan	夏衍
Huainan	淮南	Xiao guangbo	小廣播
Jiuwang ribao	救亡日報	Yan'an	延安
Juntong	軍統	Yang Fan	楊帆
Kang Sheng	康生	Yang Shangkun	楊尚崑
Kong Xiangxi	孔祥熙	Yin Qi	尹駙
Kuomintang	國民黨	Yixing	宜興
Laogai	勞改	Yu Dafu	郁達夫
Li Du	李杜	Yuan Shu	袁殊
Li Kenong	李克農	Yuan'an	冤案
Li Shiqun	李士群	Zhang Wentian	張聞天
Liao Chengzhi	廖承志	Zhao Xian	趙先
Liu Shaoqi	劉少奇	Zhengfeng	整風
Lu Xun	魯迅	Zhonghua shuju	中華書局
Luo Ruiqing	羅瑞卿	Zhou Enlai	周恩來
		Zhou Fohai	周佛海