Li Lisan (李立三), His Family and the History of Modern China

**Professor Inna Li (Beijing Foreign Studies University)**

Li Lisan, born in 1899, was one of the key figures in the making of the Chinese Communist Party. Educated in China and France, he became one of the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party in the 1920’s, and the proponent of the so-called ‘Li Lisan line’. In July 1930 the failure of an uprising in Changsha became the reason for the removal of Li Lisan to Russia for ‘re-education’ by the Comintern. He remained in Moscow until 1946, and was thus a witness (and, temporarily, a victim) of Stalin’s purges. While in Moscow, Li Lisan met and married Liza Kishkina, and their daughter Inna (Li Yingnan 李英男) was born in 1944. In 1946 Li Lisan returned to China at the request of the Chinese Communist Party, and took up a number of important posts. He became Minister of Labour in the 1948 Government and remained an important member of the Central Committee even after the 1960 split between the USSR and China which followed Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin, even though Li Lisan’s opponents within the Party had started to circulate rumours accusing him of being a Soviet spy. In 1967 Li Lisan was killed by the Red Guards in 1967 and his family were imprisoned in the infamous Qingcheng prison. After the Cultural Revolution Li Lisan’s family was rehabilitated, and his wife returned to teaching Russian at University. Liza has recently been made a member of the French Legion d'Honneur for her work.

Inna Li is a Professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University, specialising in Russian history and culture of Russia and in the history of Russian-Chinese relations. She is both a participant and a witness of major events in China’s history. As the co-editor and adviser on a number of works on the history of China and for her father’s biography, she is also very well aware of the controversies which surround the events that she will be discussing. Her talk will take the form of a presentation, to be followed by questions. She would be happy to receive questions before the talk via jrh11@cam.ac.uk.

All seminars take place on Wednesdays (unless otherwise arranged) at 5pm in rooms 8 & 9 in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge. Tea will be served at the same venue at 4:45pm. All are welcome.