

THE GREAT CHINESE CULTURAL DEBATE: REVOLUTION AND RENAISSANCE
ACROSS THE TAIWAN STRAIT, 1973-1976

By

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is an intellectual history of the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign in the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign in the Republic of China (Taiwan), from 1973 to 1976. Utilizing archival sources from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, this dissertation is a cross-straits history of the last major campaign of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and of the Mao Zedong era, while also incorporating the broader Sinophone world by introducing the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign at the end of the Chiang Kai-shek era of Taiwan's history.

The chapters of this dissertation move from the grassroots upwards, starting in factories, moving up into government office and universities, to secret internal government reports and leading intellectuals. It incorporates declassified high-level governmental reports, local-level government documents, propaganda, popular media, and academic scholarship. Chapter 1 focuses on the political theory small study groups of Shanghai as sites of local knowledge production. Chapter 2 discusses and disentangles complex and seemingly contradictory rhetoric of the effort to criticize Confucianism in 1970s China. Chapter 3 introduces the first English-language history of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign, as well as how the nationalist Chinese regime in Taiwan discussed and viewed the Cultural Revolution happening in the mainland at that time. Chapter 4 examines the ideas and writings of a leading intellectual figure behind the Cultural Renaissance, Ch'en Li-fu.

My dissertation advances understandings in PRC History, Postwar Taiwanese History, the Cultural Revolution, Maoism, Chinese Nationalism, the history of communism, and the role of Confucianism in modern China. By introducing the Taiwanese and Nationalist Chinese reaction, my dissertation further expands on our understandings of the Cultural Revolution as a global phenomenon and major event of the twentieth century through the inclusion of the broader Sinophone world. This dissertation also shows that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait cannot be wholly separated in the history of Cold War-era China, as people on both sides believed themselves to be partaking in the same debate and spoke at each other in the same language.

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INTRODUCTION: Long-Gowned Scholars, Confucian Classics, and Cultural Revolutions

In his 1919 short story, “Kong Yiji,” the writer Lu Xun, who is often identified as the founder of modern Chinese literature, wrote about the titular character living in a village in post-imperial China. Sharing the same surname as Confucius, and with his given name matching the opening line of a classical text, Kong Yiji has long been interpreted to be a representation of a late imperial Chinese Confucian scholar-official. But instead of being an upright gentleman, Kong Yiji is the town drunk and a laughingstock. The narrator, a young boy who works in his family’s local watering hole, describes Kong as, “the only long gowned customer[...] He had a large, unkempt beard, streaked with white. Although he wore a long gown, it was dirty and tattered, and looked as if it had not been washed or mended for over ten years. He used so many archaisms in his speech it was impossible to understand half he said.”¹ The locals in the bar mock Kong, who still dresses and behaves as if he is living in the Qing Dynasty as an official, although he never held public office himself. He makes very little money transcribing letters for people, and eventually is caught stealing a book, which he punished for by having his legs broken. The last time the narrator sees Kong, he says, “His face was haggard and lean, and he looked in a terrible condition.”

Kong Yiji, this stand-in for a Confucian scholar and even for Confucius himself in a way, was depicted less than eight years after the collapse of the Qing Dynasty as a person completely outdated with the times, and unable to keep up even in a rural village. A person who once would have been a social elite, became a joke to those who knew him. Lu Xun’s story marked the beginning of decades of pejorative and dismissive representations of Chinese Confucian traditions that reached their height during the Cultural Revolution, in particular during the

¹ The full Chinese text, and an accompanying English translation, can be found here: Lu Xun, *Selected Stories of Lu Xun*, translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Young (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2009).

Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign. This depiction of a decrepit, hunched over, morally bankrupt fossil was how Confucian scholars were depicted fifty years later during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, as well. A reactionary who hopelessly clung to ancient ways was how the Chinese communists depicted Confucius in that iconoclastic, revolutionary time. But at the same time, the leadership in Taiwan made Confucius a symbol of the cultural and political values they stood for and defended in China's ongoing civil war. In Taiwan under Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT)² rule, Confucius' birthday was made an official state holiday, statues and images of him were erected around the island, and the "great sage" was praised in official propaganda and newspaper op-eds. In 2004, the Confucius Institute was founded by the PRC government to promote Chinese soft power around the globe, led by the same party that once called for tearing down his legacy. In 2011, a thirty-foot bronze statue of Confucius was erected in Tiananmen Square, within eyeshot of the portrait of Mao Zedong that hangs over the Gate of Heavenly Peace. A few months later, the statue vanished just as suddenly as it appeared. Chinese social media reactions were mixed. One netizen wrote, "The witch doctor who has been poisoning people for thousands of years with his slave-master spiritual narcotic has finally been kicked out of Tiananmen Square!" A professor said, "We have lost our humanity, our kindness and our spirit. Confucianism is our only hope for becoming a great nation."³

Clearly, over the course of the past century, Confucius and Confucianism have occupied a contentious space in Chinese discourse on politics, culture, philosophy, and what it means to be Chinese. During the raucous May 4th Movement, Confucianism was identified as public enemy number one, to be torn down and criticized as the source of feudal China's backwardness and

² I will refer to the Chinese Nationalist Party as the KMT because this is how they abbreviate their party in English. This is from the Kuomintang name, the Wade-Giles rendition of 國民黨. In Pinyin, it would be Guomindang.

³ Andrew Jacobs, "Confucius Statue Vanishes Near Tiananmen Square," *New York Times*, April 22, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/23/world/asia/23confucius.html>.

weakness in the face of foreign imperialism. An intellectual and philosophical tradition that was over two-thousand years old was castigated almost overnight. Confucius as a symbol of Chinese civilization has been burned, kicked, smashed, criticized, chastised, forgotten, revived, extolled, and worshipped at different points in modern Chinese history. Like all representatives of classical civilization, Confucius can, in a sense, be whatever one wants him to be.

In order to explain the kind of position that Confucius occupies in modern China, and to untangle that contentious position, this dissertation is about ideas, rhetoric, culture, philosophy, and history. It explores how those things were produced and disseminated, as well as what they *meant*—all in the volatile concurrent periods of Maoist China and Martial Law Taiwan. I devote much of this dissertation to explaining what words were used by the historical actors, and to explaining why those words mattered/what they meant in that particular time and place. I sought to write an intellectual history that takes the reader from factory shop floors to university classrooms, up into government bureaucrats' offices and the secret meetings of national political leaders. Workers, students, cadres, bureaucrats, professors, intellectuals, secretaries, and national leaders are all among the authors and intended audiences of the primary sources I consulted for my research.

The settings of my project are Shanghai and Taipei in the years 1973 to 1976. These two cities, the most populous in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC), respectively, share blazing hot summers, year-round humidity, the influence of regularly occurring typhoons, and a reputation for being the hubs of modernity and Western cultural and political influence in mainland China and in Taiwan. Shanghai's Bund and foreign concessions were the access points for the most intense Westernization in China in the first half of the twentieth century. Taipei was opened to the Japanese Imperial form of modernization when it

was taken over by the Japanese Empire in 1895 as a result of the First Sino-Japanese War. Japanese colonial authorities made it the administrative center of the Taiwan colony and built much of its still-standing political and administrative buildings in a modernist colonial architectural style. After the handover to KMT rule in 1945, the ROC regime continued to use Taipei as Taiwan's administrative center and most of Taiwan's Western visitors came in through Taipei.

While Beijing is the political center of the PRC, Shanghai was the base of operations for the radical leftists that steered much of the direction for the Cultural Revolution decade in China. The Gang of Four, Jiang Qing, Yao Wenyuan, Zhang Chunqiu, and Wang Hongwen, as well as the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group that ran much the major decisions of the CCP central leadership during the Cultural Revolution time period, were frequently active and based in Shanghai. When tensions mounted in Beijing and elsewhere, the radicals could often relocate to Shanghai for safety. Most of the most widely read intellectuals and political leaders of the Cultural Revolution were based in Shanghai and active in its local politics during the decade. The most widely read intellectuals of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign frequently visited Shanghai. Shanghai was also the site of the Shanghai Commune, which overthrew the Shanghai city government in January 1967. Shanghai's radical credentials are well established, then. It was one of the most rambunctious cities in the rambunctious times of the Cultural Revolution. It also happened to be the site of the most accessible local archives in the PRC for me when I conducted research there in 2019. Trips to archives in other cities at the provincial, county, and national levels yielded much less satisfactory results for my research project. Shanghai thus ended up being the location of most of my grassroots sources that I cite in this dissertation.

Taipei was, like Shanghai for the PRC, the location from which most propaganda, ideology, and policy setting was produced for the ROC regime during Martial Law in Taiwan (1945-1989). Martial Law was a period in which the mainlander-dominated ROC government suspended democratic rights and freedoms for four decades, and the government's highest positions were occupied by a frozen list of Nationalist Party officials elected in the mainland in 1947. The period was marked by the White Terror—a state effort to surveil the population, censor media and information, and imprison anyone deemed a communist sympathizer or Taiwanese separatist. Military, party, and bureaucracy were united in this time period, as President Chiang Kai-shek was also Chairman of the Chinese Nationalist Party and Generalissimo (*da yuanshuai* 大元帥) of the National Revolutionary Army. Curfews were enforced across Taiwan by military police and a drill sergeant was stationed in every high school. Military service was mandatory for all men, and a militaristic culture dominated Taiwanese society. The President spoke to the people of his nation as if they were his subordinates and he their commanding officer. His speeches were called “instructions,” “orders,” or “directives.” He asked the citizens of the ROC to always be prepared for a war to counterattack the mainland and liberate their compatriots from communist rule. Intellectuals and party leaders crafted Nationalist Chinese policy, ideology, and propaganda from Taipei in the mid-1970s. It was in the halls of official government buildings and in the studies of the mostly mainland-born ROC intellectuals crafted the major slogans, imagery, and ideas of the time period I am focused on here in this dissertation.

As far as the time-setting for this dissertation, it follows the genesis, lifespan, and death of the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign (*pi Lin pi Kong yundong* 批林批孔运动), or *Pi Lin Pi Kong*, as I will sometimes refer to it for brevity's sake. This campaign was first

crafted by members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee in the context of the Tenth National Party Congress, held in the last few months of 1973. By the end of the year, the CCP had set its agenda to launch the Campaign to the public with gusto in January 1974. The Tenth Party Congress was held after the Ninth Party Congress of 1969 to deal with the issues that arose as a result of the Lin Biao Incident in 1971. At the Ninth Congress, the Minister of Defense Lin Biao was named Mao Zedong's chosen successor to lead the PRC and CCP after Mao's death. He was declared Mao's greatest student and closest comrade. Only two years later, Lin's relationship with Mao had deteriorated, and he and most of his family died under mysterious circumstances after an assassination attempt on Mao. Following this, the entire People's Liberation Army (PLA) establishment had to be investigated for Lin's allies, and a purge of military officials resulted. At the Tenth Party Congress, Lin's name and legacy had to be stricken from the record, and the Central Committee had to be restructured to replace Lin's allies in the military leadership. The Gang of Four were all given very high-ranking positions, but the moderate Deng Xiaoping was also restored to the party leadership at the same time. The question of who would take over after the octogenarian Mao Zedong's death was on people's minds. Compared to the earlier days of the Cultural Revolution in 1966-'69, the Tenth Party Congress was much more orderly and formulaic, but the radical, revolutionary Maoist rhetoric and imagery of the Cultural Revolution had not vanished. It was still ever-present and it seemed the radicals were poised to start a second Cultural Revolution, or to at least make sure that the first one would never be forgotten or forsaken.

The factional battles and court intrigues of CCP leadership in the last decade of Mao's life have been well-written about by historians and political scientists. The portions of this dissertation that focus on the mainland are focused less on these issues, but more on how the

official ideas espoused by the state were understood and interpreted by Chinese people on the ground, at the grassroots in schools, factories, and offices in Shanghai.

While the Cultural Revolution was going on, the less-well-known Cultural Renaissance was going on in full swing right across the Taiwan Strait. Within the Sinophone world, in a region controlled by the CCP's mortal enemies, the Chinese Nationalist Party were actively trying to combat the ideas conveyed by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Several months after the Cultural Revolution was officially launched in the PRC in the summer of 1966, the ROC-KMT regime declared its own Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign on the 101st birthday of ROC and KMT founder Sun Yat-sen. The Chinese Nationalists looked on at what was happening in the mainland with horror, as they saw the impending death of their ancient civilization and culture at the hands of the communist red guards who were smashing statues in the streets and setting temples on fire. If the communists were going to have their revolution, the nationalists would have a renaissance, a rebirth or revitalization of traditional Chinese culture. While Confucius was labelled a "bastard" and "dick" in the mainland, he was upheld as a wise sage and major figure in the founding of traditional Chinese culture in Taiwan. Two very different versions of ancient Chinese history, traditional Chinese culture, and Chinese philosophy were presented by the two sides during the Cultural Revolution decade.

The Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign gave the nationalists more to work with, and they redirected their efforts to, in particular, extolling Confucianism to the Taiwanese public and to overseas Chinese audiences everywhere in the world. The nationalists equated Confucianism, in particular the official Neo-Confucian orthodoxy of late imperial Chinese dynasties, with Chinese culture as a whole. Taiwanese officials taught people that without Confucianism, there would be no Chinese civilization left in the world. While the Chinese

Cultural Renaissance Campaign started in 1966 and technically has never ended, I focus on its happenings during the same years of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign to do a proper comparative history and analysis of the ideologies of the two regimes.

I hope that this dissertation challenges some of our understandings of what it even means to believe in an idea in the first place, and of the role of propaganda in China and Taiwan in the mid-1970s. In my dissertation, I make arguments about each of the two campaigns, as well as about the two together. First, about the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign, I am arguing against the widely perceived view of it in the field of PRC history today as insignificant, or that it was merely a veiled power struggle between political elites at the top of the communist party, or that its rhetoric and ideas were empty. I argue instead that archival sources and grassroots sources that I found while researching in the mainland showed a great level of engagement and rigor. The party started the campaign of course with suggesting that the people should criticize Confucius, but study groups in factories, communes, schools, and white-collar offices went out of their way to find obscure ancient texts to then read, discuss, and write articles about. The exact details of what they were supposed to criticize about Confucianism were not mandated to them by the state, but instead were, in many instances, crafted by the masses themselves. And so, they participated in an exchange of ideas with traditional intellectuals who worked in universities and for the party.

Second, I argue that the Chinese Cultural Renaissance is a significant moment in 20th century Chinese history, and that it is an important aspect of the global history of the Cultural Revolution. Much recent scholarship on the Cultural Revolution has focused on its global reach, and the ways in which it inspired leftists elsewhere in the world. However, nothing has been written about this global history within the broader Sinophone world, to incorporate the non-PRC

parts of that Sinophone world. My work brings Taiwan into the discussion. This isn't arbitrary, because the Nationalist Chinese that were active in leading the Cultural Renaissance were almost entirely mainlanders who had moved to Taiwan and still considered themselves to be Chinese, and to be in conversation with their mainland compatriots. So my third argument, about the two campaigns together, is that this moment of parallel cultural revolution and renaissance in the Chinese world represents the apex of the New Culture and May 4th Movements of the 20th century in Chinese history, and the apex of modern China's engagement with its past. It seems to me that the two sides spoke about the other as if their opponent was sitting in the back of the room, metaphorically. They occasionally lobbed claims at the other side as if they imagined their enemy was listening to them, and that they were being goaded into a debate. In reality, the two sides were not in direct communication diplomatically at this time period, and movement and communication between the two sides was impossible for regular people in the ROC and the PRC. Ironically, the aftermath of these two campaigns shows that the two sides have continued to decouple, however, further away from each other.

Confucianism, Legalism, and Traditional Chinese Culture

While this dissertation is focused on several years of the mid-1970s, the contents of what my historical actors were actually discussing dealt with a much more ancient and longer history. Because of this fact, I will introduce here to the reader just what everyone was referring to during those two parallel campaigns.⁴

⁴ This section summarizes and draws from these works: Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); Arthur Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1953 [1939]); Sima Qian 司马迁, *Records of the Grand Historian: Qin Dynasty* (史记: 秦朝), translated by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Derk Bodde, *China's First Unifier: A Study of the Ch'in Dynasty as Seen in the Life of Li Ssu 李斯 (280?-208 B.C.)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1938); Justin Tiwald, and Bryan W. Van Norden, editors, *Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy: Han Dynasty to the 20th Century* (Indianapolis: Hackett Press, 2014); Fung Yu-Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, edited by Derk Bodde (New York: Macmillan Company, 1958 [1948]).

Confucius (551-479 BCE) is the single most important person in the history of Chinese philosophy.⁵ For thousands of years, millions of people memorized his every word across East Asia. In order to become a government official, the most sought-after job in pre-modern East Asian societies, one had to be intimately familiar with every word and thought of Confucius.⁶ Confucius' death marked the transition between the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BCE) and the Warring States Period (475-221 BCE) of Chinese history. Confucius was born into a society that was falling apart. Individual vassals who previously pledged their allegiance to the royal family of the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BCE) were, one by one, declaring themselves to be the own kings of their own kingdoms. Quickly, these kings turned on each other in a bid to be the first to reunify “all under heaven” (*tianxia* 天下), the traditional Chinese name for the civilized world.

Confucius believed that he was living through a period of decline, in which society and state were on the verge of total collapse and chaos. He believed that an ancient golden age existed long ago, in which the world was orderly and morality was the most important thing on any ruler's mind. As such, he sought to convince the various lords of his day to adopt the way of the ancient sage kings: the legendary Yao, Shun, and Yu, the Zhou Dynasty Kings Wen and Wu, and the Duke of Zhou. Confucius proposed that the way of the ancient sage kings was the “Heavenly Way” (*tiandao* 天道), a natural order for humanity that the heavens rewarded with good weather and good agriculture.

⁵ “Confucius” is the Latinization of *Kongfuzi* 孔夫子, created by the Jesuit missionaries who first translated Chinese texts in a European language. In Chinese, he is known as Kong Qiu 孔丘, Zhongni 仲尼, Kongfuzi, and Kongzi 孔子. The latter two mean “Master Kong,” an honorary title given to China's most impactful philosophers.

⁶ For a comparative history of the Confucian-inspired East Asian governmental system, see: Alexander Woodside, *Lost Modernities: China, Vietnam, Korea, and the Hazards of World History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.)

Confucius' actions and teachings spawned a massive flourishing of philosophical debate in China. After his death, the "Hundred Schools of Thought" (*zhuzi baijia* 諸子百家) appeared in China as many other people of his social class, the itinerant knights or scholar-officials (*shi* 士), travelled across the middle kingdom in search of a lord who would sponsor them and enact their recommendations. Ostensibly, these wandering "errant knights" as they were called, offered kings the means to defeat their opponents and unify the land. But their thoughts and recommendations, preserved by followers in the classical texts of Chinese philosophy, were much more than mere policy recommendations. They were deeply philosophical debates about the nature of the universe and life itself, as well as human nature, morality, the cosmos, all aimed at one major question: "what is the way?" A.C. Graham said of Chinese philosophers: "the crucial question for all of them is not the Western philosopher's 'What is the truth?' but 'Where is the way?', the way to order the state and conduct personal life."⁷

A smattering of schools of thought (*jia* 家) were busy debating in the courts of kings and in the halls of schools and academies. By the 3rd century BCE, the large Jixia Academy existed in the state of Qi, employing some of the brightest minds of the day as they engaged in scholarship. The followers of Confucius' beliefs, called Confucianism in English, belonged to the "School of Scholars" (*ru jia* 儒家). His most famous successors were Mencius and Xunzi, who differed greatly on the question of human nature. Mencius argued that human nature was fundamentally good, while Xunzi argued that humans were naturally evil, in need of social molding to become good. Mencian and Xunzian Confucianism were the two major branches of

⁷ A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1989), 3.

Confucian philosophy in China until Neo-Confucianism was developed in the Song Dynasty following the widespread popularity of Mahayana Buddhism in China.

One of the other schools of thought in the Warring States period, which won the support of the state of Qin, was Legalism, or the “School of Law” (*fajia* 法家). Legalist thought is best represented by the writings of Lord Shang Yang⁸ and Han Fei.⁹ Han Fei was a student of Xunzi’s, as was his rival, the chancellor of the state of Qin, Li Si. The Legalists argued that kings should not rely on ancient traditions and precedents, but instead that they should be practical, observe the current affairs of the world, and adapt accordingly with useful laws. Strictly enforced punishments and rewards would help to organize society. Military service and agriculture were the two greatest occupations for commoners. All service should be done for the betterment and strengthening of the state, so that it can defeat its enemies and unify all under Heaven. Morality was not a question that a king should be concerned with. Strength, fear, and strict enforcement of laws were the tools that a ruler needed to wield in order to attain supremacy. While Legalism helped the Qin achieve military victory, it would not help in winning over the hearts and minds of the people. The dynasty collapsed after its founding emperor died and an uprising broke out against the cruelty of Qin punishments. Legalism officially fell out of favor, but its legacy was not gone. The Han Dynasty largely kept many of the institutional reforms that the Qin created. Han Dynasty intellectuals sought to create an eclectic philosophy that could incorporate all of the Hundred Schools of Thought into one all-encompassing imperial teleology. Legalism was

⁸ Shang Yang 商鞅, *The Book of Lord Shang: A Classic of the Chinese School of Law* (商君书), translated by J.J.L. Duyvendak (Clark, New Jersey: The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd., 2011 [1928]).

⁹ Han Feizi 韩非子, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu: A Classic of Chinese Legalism, Vol. I*, translated by W.K. Liao (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1939); Han Feizi 韩非子, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu: A Classic of Chinese Legalism, Vol. 2*, translated by W.K. Liao (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1959).

included, and in fact it was needed to establish imperial authority, royal supremacy over aristocrats and vassals, the bureaucracy, and the code of laws.

Legalism largely fell out of favor, but it did periodically have its supporters throughout Chinese history, especially in times of great crisis and reform. Some of Imperial China's greatest reformers invoked Legalism to push forward their agendas. Confucian hardliners always criticized Legalism for being amoral and thus inhumane. The Legalists could counter back that the Confucians were out of touch and that at least Legalism got things done. A classic example was the Han Dynasty debate on salt and iron—a court debate between the Legalist prime minister, Sang Hongyang, and the Confucian academy head, Wen Xue. Each side's arguments were recorded. Sang Honyang and the Legalist side argued that the state should monopolize the salt and iron mining industries so as to help pay for the empire's expenses and to keep tyrannical merchants from overcharging on these essential items. The Confucians argued that the state should not engage in commerce, compete in the economy with the people, or be involved in manufacturing iron goods. They argued along moral lines that the monopolies would send a message to the people that was not benevolent, which would encourage them to be selfish. Emperor Wu ultimately sided with the Legalists, but in the latter half of the Han Dynasty, most of the Confucians' reforms were adopted.¹⁰

Buddhism arrived in China by the end of the Han Dynasty, and it became very popular by the end of the Tang Dynasty. This foreign religion raised novel questions that Chinese philosophy was previously unequipped to respond to: particularly the nature and composition of the universe, a monastic community which challenged the order of feudal Chinese social class

¹⁰ English translation: Huan Kuan, *Discourses on Salt and Iron: A Debate on State Control of Commerce and Industry in Ancient China, Chapters I-XXVIII*, translated with an introduction by Esson M. Gale (Taipei: Cheng Wen Publishing Company, 1973); Chinese version: 鹽鐵論新譯, annotations by Lu Liehong 盧烈紅, edited by Huang Zhimin 黃志民 (Taipei: Sanmin Books, 1995).

and gender, and a promise of salvation after death. Neo-Confucianism was a response to Buddhism, by incorporating some of its elements to make Confucianism adaptable to the intellectual challenges that Buddhism presented. Zhu Xi injected metaphysics and meditation into Confucianism, creating an imperial standard for education in the process.¹¹

In the Yuan Dynasty, Neo-Confucianism was codified as state ideological orthodoxy, and every following Chinese Dynasty agreed. Korea, Japan, and Vietnam followed suit. Rote memorization of the Four Books, and Zhu Xi's commentaries of them, became mandatory education for all boys who wanted to take the civil service examination one day. This process of memorization, followed by learning to understand the meanings of the ancient sounds they were making, and then essay-writing skills, could take twenty years or more in some cases. Some men took the exams a dozen times before they could pass and receive an appointment.

The first words that any child learned to write were the beginnings of a simplified version of the *Four Books*, called the *Three Character Classic* (*sanzijing* 三字經): “Human nature from birth is good. Their natures are similar, but their habits differ.”¹² Another version of the *Three Character Classic* for girls was also made. Confucianism, as a philosophical and scholastic tradition that is over two-thousand years old, is far too complicated to explain in depth here. I will instead elaborate on the aspects of Confucianism that were most singled out by the historical agents in my dissertation as significant, both for its critics and supporters. The most important concepts of Confucian thought that were discussed at length across the Taiwan Strait in the 1970s were benevolence (*ren* 仁), the way (*dao* 道), ethics/virtue (*de* 德), innate talent/genius

¹¹ Chinese Buddhism and its influences on Neo-Confucianism are discussed here: Justin Tiwald, and Bryan W. Van Norden, editors, *Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy: Han Dynasty to the 20th Century* (Indianapolis: Hackett Press, 2014), 68-74, 112-122.

¹² “人之初，性本善，性相近、習相遠。”

(*tiancai* 天才), the doctrine of the mean (*zhongyong zhi dao* 中庸之道), the Confucian-Mencian way (*Kong Meng zhi dao* 孔孟之道), the great commonality (*datong* 大同), and harmony/peace (*heping* 和平). What were the greatest virtues of Chinese philosophy for some, were the signs of a reactionary ideology of oppression for others. Confucianism advocates for social betterment and politics to begin within the individual. One must self-cultivate their sense of benevolence, virtue, and righteousness, and then extend those outwards to one's family, friends, neighbors, society, country, and world. The most important thing for a ruler to do in order to have good politics, economics, culture, relations, and policies is to cultivate their own sense of benevolence. Seeking profit, personal gain, riches, power, and land would not lead one to become a great ruler. If the ruler is not benevolent towards his subjects, then they will end up revolting against him and replacing him with someone who is more righteous than he. Aside from this, Confucianism also heavily emphasized the significance of following the examples set up by the ancient sage kings, and venerating the rituals they came up with. Revering one's ancestors and elders was essential for a person to be good, also. Confucianism was not progressive or linear in its conception of time. Instead, it was famously cyclical, believing that every dynasty goes through the same cycle of military conquest, growth and development, a high-point golden age, decline, and eventual collapse in chaos and disorder.

Legalism, in contrast, presented the world in a very different way. The most important concepts for Legalist philosophy were law/model (*fa* 法), technique (*shu* 術), and legitimacy/circumstantial advantage (*shi* 勢). Legalists did not look to the past to find models to follow. Shang Yang said, "A sage-king does not value righteousness, but he values the law."¹³

¹³ “聖王者，不貴義而貴法。”

They specifically argued that a smart ruler would understand current conditions and adapt to them accordingly. Rulers create laws, not the other way around. Morality, righteousness, ritual propriety, and benevolence were not concerns to the Legalists.

Confucianism was targeted by the revolutionaries of the late Qing and early Republican era as what was holding China back from advancing to greatness. Official Neo-Confucian orthodoxy became the subject of popular ridicule in less than a decade. The Qing Dynasty collapsed in 1911. By 1919, students in Beijing popularized the slogan “tear down the Confucius family shop” (*dadao Kongjia dian* 打倒孔家店). Chinese intellectuals argued that students should learn from the West to take what was most useful from it to fix China’s problems. Confucianism was useless in this context. Certainly old habits die hard, and Confucian beliefs and customs persisted in China even during the revolutionary times. This was in part why the Cultural Revolution was launched in the first place in 1966. It was necessary, according to the Maoists, to uproot the pernicious influence of “feudal” ideas, beliefs, habits, and customs, to criticize and destroy them so that a new socialist kind of mentality could take over.

Traditionalist Chinese nationalists in Taiwan during Martial Law saw the May 4th Movement’s influence as too dangerous and harmful. The KMT and CCP shared in the anti-Confucian critiques of the May 4th Movement, but by the 1960s, they had taken two different views of the legacies of May 4th and of Confucianism. In the 1960s, the KMT feared that what was essentially Chinese was rapidly vanishing from the modern world. Without their traditional culture, Chinese people would soon be unable to distinguish themselves from other peoples. The ROC government thus launched a campaign, the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign, in response to the Cultural Revolution, and in response to the Westernization of Taiwanese society, to try to preserve and pass down traditional Confucian culture to future generations.

PRC History/Cultural Revolution

This section reviews the literature and historiography concerning the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was officially launched in the summer of 1966. It raged across the PRC and made deep impressions around the world for a decade. Officially, the CCP declared that the Cultural Revolution was finished and had been won in 1969 at the 9th National Party Congress. But the Cultural Revolution is often seen as a decade, from its launch in 1966 to Mao Zedong's death in 1976. Much of the rhetoric, symbolism, and the atmosphere of the Cultural Revolution persisted into the 1970s. The last major campaign of the Maoist period was the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign, launched in late 1973 by the CCP Central Committee. It was never officially declared over until after Mao's death, but it largely petered out over the course of 1976.

In the scholarly world, some political scientists analyzed the campaign as it was happening or soon afterwards. Aside from one monograph in the 1980s, most historians have not paid much attention to the campaign in either English or in Chinese. In reform-era China, it bares the mark of the Cultural Revolution decade that makes it taboo for most scholars. Archival sources have been limited, but local archives in Shanghai yielded a plethora of local government and school reports for me, and the propaganda produced during the campaign had been made readily available in the online used book marketplace, and in outdoor used book markets in China's major cities.

Wu Tien-wei's monograph, *Lin Biao and the Gang of Four: Contra-Confucianism in Historical and Intellectual Perspective*,¹⁴ focuses on separating the academic issues from the purely political ones in the Campaign to Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. Wu argues that

¹⁴ Wu Tien-wei, *Lin Biao and the Gang of Four: Contra-Confucianism in Historical and Intellectual Perspective* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983).

considerable contributions were indeed made to the scholarship on ancient Chinese history, archeology, literature, and philosophy during the campaign by Chinese academics motivated to research these topics. It also happened that considerable archeological discoveries were made during this time in China. This was when Qin Shi Huang's tomb was discovered in Shaanxi, as well as a collection of Qin dynasty laws buried in Henan. Wu makes some important foundational points about the campaign's history for this dissertation. Wu says that the campaign had three major phases: the purely political phase in which the campaign was used by the leftist faction of the CCP centered around the Gang of Four to criticize the moderates, personified by Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping; the second phase when the focus of criticism shifted from Lin's actions and policy errors to his supposedly Confucian ideology; to the opening up of the campaign to mass commentary and criticism, at which point it quickly morphed into the subsequent campaigns against the Ming Dynasty novels *Water Margin* and *Dream of the Red Chamber*.

I agree with Wu that the link between Lin Biao's own thought and that of Confucius was weak. Allegedly, after Lin died, some notebooks and papers were discovered in his office and home which showed that he not only plotted with his son and wife to assassinate Mao, but that he was a secret Confucian, writing down quotes from Confucian texts and keeping Confucian ideas in his heart. Even if this is true, the connection between the two is very dubious. They interpret an isolated passage to be some sort of coded language for assassination plots and an attempt to restore capitalism in China. This is similar to the charge levelled against Liu Shaoqi that he too was a secret Confucian, not because he quoted Confucius, but because his idea of communist self-cultivation appeared to be methodologically similar to Confucian self-cultivation—another weak claim. Wu never actually cites the original classical texts that were

under discussion. Instead, the only evidence he provides for the radicals' claims are the newspaper articles that they wrote.

The Criticize Lin Biao, Criticize Confucius Campaign was much like any other national campaign of the Maoist era in that it received its fair share of artistic representation, as Paul Clark notes. Plays, cartoons, posters, and even songs were written for the campaign. Clark points out that the campaign, coupled with the popularity of Mao's poetry during the Cultural Revolution, contributed to a revival in popular interest in classical poetry styles, but he does not provide adequate information to show who exactly expressed this sentiment about the campaign's influence on later Confucian revivalism in the PRC.¹⁵ Andrew Walder says that the campaign constituted a "second cultural revolution" after the first one.¹⁶ The campaign was just one of several in the period from 1973-1976 that involved a reevaluation of Chinese literature, drama, and writing, as the radicals and Mao called for the expunging of Confucian heroes, thought, and writing styles from the canon of Chinese culture.

Wu Yiching's *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins* focuses on the period from 1966-1969, which he characterizes as the most radical period of the Cultural Revolution. He even goes so far as to say that after the detachment of Mao Zedong Thought Brigades to China's universities to curb the most violent factionalism of the Red Guards, and the Worker-Peasant-Soldier unity was emphasized to put an end to factionalism, the Cultural Revolution basically lost its energy, radicalism, and egalitarianism.¹⁷ This book provides a problem for periodization. His interpretation of the Cultural Revolution flies in the face of Andrew Walder's interpretation

¹⁵ Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 47, 147, 173, 212, 214, 223.

¹⁶ Andrew Walder, *China Under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 289-302.

¹⁷ Wu Yiching, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins: Chinese Socialism in Crisis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

of the period from 1973-1976 as a second cultural revolution. While it is true that Red Guard violent factionalism ended after the Mao Zedong Thought Brigades and the PLA re-established order, the assertion that variety of opinion was destroyed along with it poses a problem. Wu's methodology is very useful for this dissertation, however, and inspires emulation. One wonders if the kinds of "marginal" grassroots voices can be found for this campaign or not. If not, then it may confirm Wu's point, but as I will show in chapters 1 and 2, even official publications presented a variety of voices on the subject.

Alexander C. Cook's most recent book covers the time period just after the end of the Cultural Revolution era and thus the end of the Criticize Lin, Criticize Confucius Campaign, but he makes no mention of the campaign and all of his references to Confucius and Lin have nothing to do with the campaign.¹⁸

Richard Curt Kraus called the campaign "obscurantism" that "did little to inspire confidence"¹⁹ in the masses. This points toward a rather common interpretation of the campaign and indeed of the entire post-Lin Biao period of the Cultural Revolution that the Chinese people were just tired of it by the 1970s, and that by then, they were just going through the motions of performing the Cultural Revolution in the public sphere, eagerly awaiting its end. This interpretation of the final years of the Maoist era argues that the Tiananmen Incident after Zhou Enlai's death proves that the masses were ready to be done with it, coupled with all of the so-called "Scar Literature" written in the immediate aftermath, this interpretation could be retroactively applied to describe the Cultural Revolution project as a failed experiment, and to point towards the triumphant capitalism narrative of the post-Cold War era. However, if these

¹⁸ Alexander C. Cook, *The Cultural Revolution on Trial: Mao and the Gang of Four* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹⁹ Richard Curt Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 18.

primary sources analyzed in this paper have to say anything about it, it seems that at least the masses were not totally turned off to Cultural Revolutionary rhetoric by 1974. In fact, I argue that this campaign had a much profounder impact on popular Chinese perceptions of China's past. While Confucius Institutes dot the world map, the philosophy of the master can hardly be described as having taken a resurgent position in popular Chinese political thinking, let alone in the state's thinking. If Xi Jinping's recent insistence that cadres read the Legalist philosopher Han Feizi is any indication,²⁰ it seems that the historical re-interpretation of ancient Chinese thought of the Criticize Lin, Criticize Confucius Campaign has had a much deeper influence than this dismissive narrative from Kraus would seem to indicate.

Dahpon David Ho's chapter titled "To Protect and Preserve: Resisting the Destroy the Four Olds Campaign, 1966-76," in the collection, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, provides some interesting interpretations of the seeming paradox of cultural destruction and cultural preservation during the Cultural Revolution. Focusing on the case study of Red Guard upheaval in Qufu, Confucius and Mencius' birthplace, during the most radical period of the Destroy the Four Olds Campaign, the complex relationships between state and society, center and locality, and preservationists vs. destroyers that characterize the Cultural Revolution in general are teased out. Many locals took pride in Qufu being the birthplace of Confucius and Mencius and saw the three Confucian relics held in the city to be a matter of national culture. One elderly worker even noted that he was there to defend the Confucius Temple from university Red Guards who wanted to destroy it, because, as he saw it, the temple was built by the laboring

²⁰ Chris Buckley, "Leader Taps Into Chinese Classics in Seeking to Cement Power," *New York Times*, October 11, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/12/world/leader-taps-into-chinese-classics-in-seeking-to-cement-power.html>; Alexander Zwagerman, "The Chinese Hobbes – Xi Jinping's favourite philosopher," *Hong Kong Free Press*, June 13, 2016, last updated August 12, 2020, <https://hongkongfp.com/2016/06/13/chinese-hobbes-xi-jinpings-favorite-philosopher/>.

masses.²¹ After months of bitter struggle over control of the temple, the central state authorities stepped in and said that Red Guards must not destroy the temple, but could destroy feudal icons around the area. Grave robbing was one response, and supposedly Confucius' very own coffin was dug up by Red Guards to be destroyed. One wonders how his bones lasted over two-thousand years. Perhaps most significant for our study is this following reflection from Ho: "Instead of slaying the old world, the Cultural Revolution hoisted cultural relics out of limbo and into the melee of modernity. Cultural relics suddenly assumed a living significance to both destroyers and would-be protectors."²² This quote helps us to understand the impact of the Criticize Lin, Criticize Confucius Campaign. Regardless of whether or not the masses agreed with the critiques of Confucianism and embraced Legalism, the campaign still brought these issues out into the front for everyone to see and to think about. In contrast to the Destroy the Four Olds Campaign eight years earlier, the Criticize-Lin, Criticize-Confucius Campaign did not see the burning of Confucian books or the smashing of Confucius statues, but instead saw the creation of statues dedicated to Li Si and Shang Yang, and brought the Confucian canon back into print in China, if only to be highly saturated by biased communist commentaries and vernacular translations.

In the same volume, Jeremy Brown's article, "Staging Xiaojinzhuan: The City in the Countryside, 1974-1976," talks about how the campaign reportedly was unenthusiastically received by local peasants.²³ It also provides context for one of the primary sources discussed in chapter 2. The Tianjian Railway Station was chosen by Jiang Qing as a model work unit to

²¹ Dahpon David Ho, "To Protect and Preserve: Resisting the Destroy the Four Olds Campaign, 1966-1967", in *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, edited by Joseph W. Esherick, Paul G. Pickowicz, and Andrew G. Walder (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 85-86.

²² Ibid., 93.

²³ Jeremy Brown, "Staging Xiaojinzhuan: The City in the Countryside, 1974-1976," in *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, 159.

promote in the press as a national model for workers engaging in the campaign, after she heard that the workers at the train station had been particularly vigorous in their study of Confucianism and Legalism.²⁴ This is made evident by the contents of the articles discussed in chapter 2.

Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals' *Mao's Last Revolution* provides a very detailed history of the entire Cultural Revolution decade, as well as some important details in the sequence of events of the *Pi Lin Pi Kong yundong*. In May 1973, at a work conference to organize the tenth CCP congress, a resolution was passed by the members present declaring that Confucius must be criticized. The committee then invited Yang Rongguo and other academics to come up with theoretical basis for critiques of Confucianism and of Lin Biao. However, the beginning of the campaign was largely focused on the person of Lin Biao and his wife and son for their role in trying to assassinate Mao. Lin was attacked during the first few months of the campaign as a renegade traitor, a revisionist, and a capitalist restorationist. Mao personally endorsed the publication of Yang's article in *People's Daily* analyzed later in this dissertation. MacFarquhar and Schoenhals argue that the campaign then shifted in 1974 to a campaign focused mostly on criticizing Confucianism and appraising Legalism.²⁵ They also argue that the campaign was largely intended to be aimed at Zhou Enlai, as the Gang of Four tried to show by comparison in the media and through the study sessions of this campaign that Zhou was a capitulationist and a capitalist restorationist just like Lin Biao; a charge that Zhou reportedly vehemently denied to his colleagues, suggesting that he understood the hint in the campaign's official rhetoric.²⁶ In December 1973, Mao said in a speech that all reactionaries across time

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Roderick Macfarquhar, and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 366.

²⁶ A colleague recently shared with me a story told to him by a writer active during the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* Campaign, who said that they never intended to criticize Zhou Enlai and that the attempts to tie the campaign to Zhou Enlai were only added to the narrative after the fact when the Gang of Four was arrested and Zhou was deceased. Timothy Cheek, however, notes that a Shanghai newspaper declared only in March 1976 that Zhou Enlai was the new target

venerate Confucius and Mencius and disparage Qin Shi Huang. This was quoted by a Qinghua University big character poster which argued that because Lin Biao quoted Confucius and Mencius in his personal notes and bedroom calligraphy scrolls dedicated to his wife, then Lin Biao was a reactionary himself. Yang Rongguo argued that Confucius was ultimately interested in restoring the slave system of the Western Zhou Dynasty, and that since Lin Biao was revering Confucius, he was a restorationist himself, this time only a capitalist restorationist.²⁷ This was the official line of the party center during the campaign, but that only tells the story at the top. Regardless of what the official line was, it is still true that in the period of 1973 to Mao's death, classical Chinese literature and philosophical texts were reprinted en masse in vernacular Chinese and in the original classical with footnotes. The campaign was used to go after several local and provincial authorities, who were attacked as modern-day Confucians.²⁸ To give credence to those who wanted to oust certain officials, Jiang Qing declared in a June 1974 that there was no shortage of Confucians in the party.²⁹ Soon after that, *People's Daily*, *Red Flag*, *Study and Criticism*, and *Peking University Journal* all called for the masses to critically engage in the theoretical study of Legalism, as part of a larger campaign to get the masses to study political theory more deeply in the post-Red Guard factionalism years of the Cultural Revolution decade. The authors argue, in contrast to Wu Tien-ning, that while some of the histories published during the campaign were good scholarship, most of the scholarship was just polemics.³⁰

of this campaign: Timothy Cheek, *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 188.

²⁷ MacFarquhar, and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 368.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 371-372.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 371.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 372.

A question that I think arises from reading this book is how to periodize the Cultural Revolution. The first three years of the Cultural Revolution were perhaps the most chaotic, and the most infamously remembered for Red Guard violence and a carnival-esque atmosphere across the country. The Ninth Party Congress in April 1969 declared the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution a success and said that it was not yet over. It also restructured the party, declared Lin Biao Mao's successor, and seated a new Central Committee composed of radical leftists who had won the Cultural Revolutionary battle. MacFarquhar and Schoenhals describe the period after Lin Biao's death as a "thaw" in the cultural sphere, as classics were republished and people began to rediscover traditional Chinese literature and thought, with the help of some state-led campaigns to promote the masses' participation in studying political theory. Struggle sessions died down in numbers and the theme post-1969 was unity. From this perspective, the emphasis on the classics in the last three years of the Maoist era does not seem so strange anymore.

Turning to a contemporary Chinese interpretation of the campaign, Hu Angang's three volume *Mao and the Cultural Revolution* interprets the Criticize-Lin, Criticize-Confucius Campaign primarily as an attempt by Mao to ensure the legitimacy of his Cultural Revolution in his later years. Hu argues that the Cultural Revolution was personally launched by Mao as a political intraparty struggle, despite his problematic attempts to turn intraparty struggles into class struggle. He says that Mao sought out an historical precedent to compare the Cultural Revolution to, and he focused on the so-called ideological struggle between the Confucians and the Legalists during the Warring States period, and he took critiques of Qin Shihuang personally at the same time.³¹ Hu's work is not one of cultural, intellectual, or grass-roots history, however.

³¹ Hu Angang, *Mao and the Cultural Revolution, Volume 2: The Red Guards March for Mao* (Honolulu: Silk Road Press, 2017), 294-296.

He is primarily focused on the Cultural Revolution as a policy mistake, a lack of intraparty consensus-based decision making, and an asymmetry in power between the chairman and the rest of the party. He also does not cite any of the new PRC historiography in his English-language sources, so his work is less directly engaging with what this essay is dealing with.

It has been over thirty years since the last monograph of this campaign was written in English. The recent trend in PRC history that incorporates garbology—the collection and use of “garbage” primary sources that are not included in archives because they are considered unimportant—coupled with the change over time since then, and a different focus should warrant another monograph on the topic. What’s more, all of the scholarly treatments that I can find of the campaign focus on how the campaign was initiated at the top, and what it meant for the few central committee members struggling over succession after Mao’s death and the future line to take. It is sometimes alleged that the campaign introduced an entire generation of Chinese to classical literature and thought. I want to test this claim. I want to look at how the masses and local cadres actually talked about classical literature and thought in the final years of the Mao era.

Martial Law/Postwar Taiwanese History

In chapters 3 and 4, I contribute to the growing body of historiography that looks at the PRC and ROC comparatively. Despite their many parallels, the histories of the two regimes have been largely isolated in both the Anglophone and Sinophone literatures, to the fields of PRC History and Postwar Taiwanese History. Julia Strauss’ recent work compared the two regimes’ processes of nation state building and internal personnel management in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Strauss summarizes the scholarship thusly: “a comparison between the large, politically Communist People's Republic of China and the small, politically conservative Republic of China

now confined to the island of Taiwan might seem to be at best misguided. With very few exceptions[...], there is little scholarly work that explicitly engages China-Taiwan (or PRC/ROC) comparisons.”³² However, while the scholarly work of comparative studies between the two is small, Strauss also explains in part why they should be compared: “While they heartily despised each other and represented themselves as being completely 'other' than the rival across the Taiwan Strait, they had much more in common than either was willing or able to admit. They drew on an analogous pre-1949 tradition of *yidang zhiguo*.”³³ My work contributes to the comparative histories of the PRC and ROC by looking at a moment in the mid-1970s when the two sides of the Taiwan Strait were engaged in a great cultural debate over the histories, legacies, and meanings of ancient Chinese thought.

In the process of discussing the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign, I also contribute to the scholarship of postwar Taiwanese history by writing the first historical case study of the campaign in English. In previous Anglophone scholarship, only passing mentions of the Cultural Renaissance Campaign exist if at all. In Dennis Roy’s history of Taiwan, the campaign gets one paragraph of discussion.³⁴ In the over 500-page long volume, *Taiwan: A New History*, the Cultural Renaissance Campaign is never mentioned once.³⁵ The same is true for Jay Taylor’s 700+ page biography of Chiang Kai-shek, despite the fact that Chiang inaugurated the campaign and served as its committee chair for 8 years.³⁶ Bi-yu Chang’s recent monograph on

³² Julia C. Strauss, *State Formation in China and Taiwan: Bureaucracy, Campaign, and Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 9.

³³ *Ibid.*, 74.

³⁴ Dennis Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 144.

³⁵ Murray A. Rubinstein, ed., *Taiwan: A New History*, Expanded Edition (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2007).

³⁶ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

national identity in Taiwan discusses it for one paragraph.³⁷ There are dozens of histories of the Cultural Revolution in English, but none of the Cultural Renaissance.

In Sinophone scholarship, only one monograph is devoted to the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign. Kuo-hsian Lin's *Research on the "Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee" (1996-1975): The Establishment and Transformation of Ruling Political Legitimacy*, published in 2005, is an institutional history of the campaign's guiding committee. Lin argues that the campaign ultimately failed to greatly affect Taiwanese society because it was a state-imposed project from the top-down, led by political elites who tried to inculcate the populace with their elite ideals. Because it lacked participation from civil society, any attempt at cultural hegemony by the state was weak.³⁸ He also argues that the campaign was launched by the government after a series of other cultural campaigns, "centered around mobilizing people's spirits through education and culture for Anti-Communism and Resistance to Russia [*fangong kang'e* 反共抗俄]."³⁹ Such cultural and educational campaigns led by the KMT aimed to promote the ideals of anti-communism, Three People's Principles, patriotism, morality, respect for leadership, and social responsibility. Three People's Principles (literally "Three People-ism," *Sanmin Zhuyi* 三民主義) was the name of Sun Yat-sen's political philosophy and the official ideology of the KMT. The three principles of the people are nationalism, democracy, and livelihood. The nationalism was both civic nationalism for a republic, as well as Han-centric ethno-nationalism for a united modern Chinese nation-state. Democracy was to be codified in a constitution for a five-branched republican government, as well as a form of political tutelage

³⁷ Chang Bi-yu. *Place, Identity, and National Imagination in Postwar Taiwan* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 159.

³⁸ Kuo-hsian Lin 林果顯, "中華文化復興運動推行委員會"之研究(1966-1975) --- 統治正當性的建立與轉變 (*Research on the "Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee" (1996-1975): The Establishment and Transformation of Ruling Political Legitimacy*) (Banqiao: Daw Shiang Publishing, 2005), 6, 128-129.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

that would have military and political leaders guiding the people towards eventual electoral politics. The principle of livelihood was Sun's economic program: land-to-the-tiller reforms and nationalization of major national industries so the government could then invest in providing essential needs to the populace. Taiwanese school children were taught that, "everyone has a duty, everyone should avoid failures, everyone can oppose communism [*fan gong*], and everyone can save the country [*jiu guo*]." ⁴⁰ One of the ideological goals of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign was to equate Confucian orthodoxy (*daotong* 道統) with Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, and to equate Three People's Principles with cultural revitalization and counterattacking the mainland (*fangong dalu* 反攻大陸). ⁴¹ In summary, Lin focuses on the campaign as one imposed from the top-down onto Taiwanese society by the state, emphasizing that it only existed as a real campaign because the government sponsored it; it would not have taken off with the absence of support from civil society. It reflected the concerns of the regime over its political legitimacy in the changing contexts of the 1960s and '70s, when retaking the mainland increasingly became an impossibility, the ROC lost its seat in the United Nations, and its greatest ally, the United States of America, diplomatically recognized the PRC instead.

Building on Lin's essential foundations to the scholarly understandings of this campaign, I focus on its intellectual outputs. While Lin notes the ways in which academics participated in the campaign through research, publications, and educational work, I focus more closely on the ideological outputs of the Cultural Renaissance. I do this through examining the ways in which ROC voices responded to the theoretical claims coming out the mainland during the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign. Chapter 3 focuses on how state media and experts within

⁴⁰ Ibid., 57-58.

⁴¹ Ibid., 85.

the government tasked with keeping an eye on developments in the mainland interpreted the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign internally to other officials and to the Taiwanese public. The fourth chapter of this dissertation will turn to major intellectual contributors to the Nationalists' theoretical response to the Communists, in terms of their own changing reinterpretations of the classics of Chinese philosophy.

Here I want to point out a major discrepancy between the sources I could access in three parts of China with different political circumstances. When researching the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign at a university research center devoted to contemporary Chinese history, I could look at lots of propaganda pamphlets, academic monographs, educational materials produced by university presses, and some scattered internal government materials from the PRC-CCP regime. But I could never see the very top, beyond what was reported in party-approved official histories of the Cultural Revolution decade. Even then, the details on *Pi Lin Pi Kong* are scarce—usually limited to brief entries on a power struggle within the CCP leadership over legacies of the Cultural Revolution.⁴² When researching in mainland China, the archival holdings at Shanghai and Beijing Municipal Archives were capped at the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee and some politically innocuous government departments like the Municipal Public Finance Bureau. While quotes from the center were reported on in these city-level documents and in the national press like the *People's Daily*, again, what was actually going through the minds of Mao Zedong, Jiang Qing, or Zhou Enlai continue to elude me. In contrast, the level of access to top-level government documents in Taiwan is astonishing. Chiang Kai-shek's personal diaries are published for all to see. The entirety of the preserved paperwork of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee could be ordered from the

⁴² For instance: Hu Angang, *Mao and the Cultural Revolution, Volume 2: The Red Guards March for Mao* (Honolulu: Silk Road Press, 2017), 294-296.

National Development Archive Management Administration. The meeting minutes of the KMT's Central Committee are being published by the KMT's Party History Office (albeit gradually and not without some bumps along the road). While I was able to uncover the depth of engagement that peoples' small study groups in Shanghai displayed when studying Legalism and criticizing Confucianism, I recognize that there is an inherent imbalance in my two stories. It is the nature of the sources available given the political climates that the PRC and ROC existed in when I conducted my archival research that one story is decidedly more bottom-up and the latter leans towards looking at the top. I can see the breakdown of funding allocations from the central government to the Cultural Renaissance Campaign. I cannot tell to what extent the CCP center in Beijing directed certain tasks for the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign, however. Clearly, they told the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee to set up cadre schools and study groups around the city for the sake of criticizing Lin Biao and Confucius, and for studying Legalism. They also published propaganda through state-owned printing presses. Beyond that, the people at the bottom displayed impressive initiative and creativity in seeking out obscure classical texts to study, write about, and give reports on to their comrades and their superiors, as described in Chapter 1.

Aside from the current day limitations and availability of archival documents in the PRC and the ROC today, the different nature of the sources from each of the two campaigns that this dissertation analyzes are also revealing of the diverging practices of running a campaign in both regimes at the time. In her comparative study of the two regimes in the early 1950s, Julia Strauss tells us: "In contrast to the CCP's deep ambivalence about the institutionalized inequality inherent to hierarchical state organizations, the leaders of the ROC/Taiwan were enamored of regularity, rules, and institutions--be they legal, executive, or personnel[....] Even when there

were gaps in implementation, how each regime implemented its personnel policy for state administrators suggested a great deal about its core values, and the directions in which it wished to go for the future.”⁴³ In other words, the differences between the archival sources for the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign and the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign are indicative of the diverging political cultures of the PRC and the ROC in the 1970s. The KMT party branches ran small study groups, where they discussed central party documents, not too much unlike the CCP’s own study groups. However, the internal reports for KMT small groups have not been released by the party archives past the 1960s yet.

Chapters Outline

In the Introduction to my dissertation, I provided a brief introductory overview of the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign (*Pi Lin Pi Kong Yundong*) and of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign (*Zhonghua Wenhua Fuxing Yundong*). I also provided an explanation of the most important aspects of Confucian and Legalist philosophy in these campaigns, literature reviews of the previous scholarship written in English and in Chinese about these two campaigns, as well as a discussion of how my dissertation fits into the larger fields of scholarship on the Cultural Revolution in the PRC in mainland China, and on the Martial Law-era ROC in Taiwan. My dissertation is an intellectual history of these two understudied state-launched campaigns which aimed at reevaluating ancient Chinese philosophy, Chinese history, and traditional culture. Chapters one and two focus on the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, while chapters three and four focus on the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign.

In Chapter 1, I establish that the political theory small study groups in the factories, government offices, and schools of the PRC were local sites of knowledge production, in

⁴³ Julia C. Strauss, *State Formation in China and Taiwan: Bureaucracy, Campaign, and Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 75.

conversation with more traditional sites like universities and presses. To make that argument, I used the meeting minutes and reports from study groups in Shanghai. These reports came from city-wide meetings of various groups, local government offices, schools, party committees, revolutionary committees, and factories. I show how study group members actively participated in creative ways to carry out criticizing Confucianism and studying its rival ancient school of thought, Legalism. Rather than the typical view of this campaign as lacking in popular participation, I show that the primary sources from the time period contain evidence of enthusiasm from students, workers, and office staff. While the state encouraged the masses to go about criticizing Confucius, it left them to figure out on their own, just what to read and just what to criticize. The detailed arguments against Confucian philosophy developed over time thanks to the inputs from the masses who participated in the campaign, which the intellectuals and party theorists then reprinted and re-presented back to the masses for further education and propagandization.

In Chapter 2, I examine the rhetorical choices made during the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign. My main intervention in Chapter 2 is to challenge earlier scholarly assessments of late Cultural Revolution rhetoric as disingenuous or even nonsensical. By taking apart those earlier arguments in conjunction with my analysis of the origins, meanings, and implications of the major slogans and rhetorical stylings of the *pi Lin pi Kong* campaign, I show that these were not merely empty words. My argument, after establishing that these slogans were valid, is that the rhetoric carried contemporary political importance while combining the seemingly contradictory languages of Classical Chinese, Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought, and Cultural Revolution-style bombastic sloganeering. My sources for this chapter are varied because I am analyzing rhetoric broadly at the time. I look at comic books, pamphlets, newspapers,

propaganda posters, and government reports to analyze the discourse. I note the most frequently occurring slogans of the time period as well as instances where we can clearly delineate three sources of vocabulary: Marxist-Leninist Mao Zedong Thought theory, classical Chinese historical and philosophical texts, and the earthy vernacular of working-class Mandarin.

Chapter 3 turns to the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign, and in particular how the Chinese Nationalist Party regime in Taiwan used it as a vehicle for response to the parallel campaign happening in the mainland. I argue that the Cultural Renaissance, which has never been discussed at length in English-language scholarship, is an important moment in modern Chinese history, and is an integral part of the broader global story of the Cultural Revolution decade. It is necessary for the field to incorporate the broader Sinophone world into the historiography on the global Cultural Revolution. This chapter is the first Anglophone treatment of the Cultural Renaissance. In this chapter, I use formerly classified internal government reports, and newspapers to explore the rhetoric and tactics of observing their ideological opponents across the Taiwan Strait. The Cultural Revolution presented the ROC with a new opportunity to present itself to the world as the legitimate inheritor and protector of traditional Chinese culture. As such, much of the activities and rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign were chosen deliberately as response to and refutation of what was happening in the mainland during the Cultural Revolution decade. Private, academic, state, party, and military interests coalesced in Taiwan at this time to promote Confucian orthodoxy (*daotong*) as the fundamental basis of Chinese culture. In official ROC sources, the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign was called, “Criticize Confucius Uphold the Qin Dynasty,” to criticize the campaign as a communist plot to destroy China’s traditional culture and civilization. In this

chapter, I also explore the complicated ways in which the nationalists talked about the communist “others,” who were also their compatriots, all under the backdrop of the Cold War.

Chapter 4 focuses on Ch'en Li-fu, a major intellectual active in Taiwan during the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign, and some of the academic work done by the government at the time. Like their mainland counterparts, Taiwanese intellectuals also participated in the creation of school textbooks, academic scholarship, and books written for the public about classical Chinese philosophy. When the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign was launched in the PRC, the ROC launched a drive to publish their own commentaries on the Confucian and Legalist classics. For the campaign, the government funded the publication of a series of modern translations of classical texts, scholarships and fellowships for foreign and domestic scholars to study traditional Chinese culture, exhibits and publications in overseas Chinese communities around the world, and international academic conferences to promote Confucian thought. This chapter is an intellectual history of a leader behind these activities and the ideas they promoted. What may come as a surprise is that, while Ch'en was a self-avowed Confucian who devoted the latter half of his life to promoting Confucian values, he was not simply calling for a return to the past, but he also believed himself to be a modernist and that Confucianism was compatible with modernity and a nationalist revolution.

For the conclusion, I include a broader exploration of the legacies of these two campaigns in the Sinophone world. That would include some discussion of the ways in which the campaigns were repudiated and repurposed by the reformist regimes of Deng Xiaoping and Chiang Ching-kuo in the 1980s and '90s. One of the big revelations I hope to show at this point, however, is that these two campaigns had long-lasting influence beyond their lifetimes, as they affected how Chinese speaking people and scholars around the world continue to interpret ancient Chinese

philosophies in the context of an ever-changing modern world. Some surprising conclusions come out of looking at the rhetoric and ideas of the communists and the nationalists during these two campaigns in the 1970s. The nationalists were not just trying to preserve classical traditions. They also considered themselves to be revolutionaries and modernizers, and that Confucianism was compatible with modernity. The communists also showed a deep level of engagement with classical Chinese philosophy and history. Neither side was simply trying to preserve and carry forward ancient ideas into the modern age. They were both revolutionaries and modernizers who wanted to find what was useful from their ancient past, and to engage in a close critique and engagement with their domestic philosophical traditions so as to strengthen their respective regimes' legacies and legitimacies.

I think that by looking at these two campaigns side by side, we can understand each side better. This helps add to the growing understanding of the Cultural Revolution as a global event. Recent scholarship on the Cultural Revolution and on the Maoist period of PRC History has sought to point out their global connections and interactions with Western leftists, the postcolonial world, and other socialist countries. However, next to nothing has been written about the broader Sinophone world in the context of the Cultural Revolution decade and the Cold War during these years. How many books have been written in countless languages about the Cultural Revolution? And how few have been written in any language, even Chinese, about the Cultural Renaissance? The Cultural Renaissance is grossly under-represented in the fields of modern Chinese History, Cold War History, and even of postwar Taiwanese History, despite its scale, significance, and long life. We can better understand both the PRC and the ROC, as well as Chinese philosophy and the role of antiquity in modernity.

CHAPTER 1: Worker-Scholars: Organizing Mass Participation in Intellectual Discourse

Political Theory Small Study Groups as Sites of Knowledge Production

On September 20th, 1974, the local CCP Committee and the Revolutionary Committee of the Shanghai Municipal Commerce May 7th Cadre School issued the first in a series of reports on their plans for the school's seventh study session. In this report, they outlined the school's curriculum for the subsequent three months. Orientation would last for three days and begin on September 23rd. During orientation, the cadres participating in the reeducation would study CCP Chairman Mao Zedong's "May 7 Directive," originally written in 1966. Ironically for the time, the "May 7 Directive" was originally a letter sent from Mao to then-Minister of Defense and Vice Chairman of the CCP, Lin Biao. In that letter, Mao encouraged Lin to turn the PRC's military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), into "a large school" (*da xuexiao* 大学校), but the connection to Lin Biao was not mentioned in 1974 when the cadre committee school quoted this directive, because by then, Lin had already fallen from political power and died in 1971.⁴⁴ Aside from reading this directive, according to the report, the students at the cadre school would also study other directives from Mao in which he first coined important slogans of the 1970s, such as, "the great majority of cadres should be sent down to perform labor" (*guangda ganbu xiafang laodong* 广大干部下放劳动) and that they should "earnestly read books and study" (*renzhen kanshu xuexi* 认真看书学习).⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The original text of the "May 7th Directive" was reprinted at the beginning of copies of *Quotations from Chairman Mao* until Lin's death. A transcript of the text can be found here: Mao Zedong, "五·七指示" "May 7th Directive," May 7, 1966, *Baidu Baike*, accessed March 3, 2021, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%BA%94%C2%B7%E4%B8%83%E6%8C%87%E7%A4%BA/5331499?fromtitle=%E4%BA%94%E4%B8%83%E6%8C%87%E7%A4%BA&fromid=7699334>.

⁴⁵ One of the most frequent slogans of the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* Campaign was Mao's educational encouragement, "*ren zhen kan shu xue xi*" (认真看书学习). This and other major slogans of the campaign will be analyzed in further detail in the next chapter.

To that end, the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the cadre school's party branch created a cadre reeducation program which they would carry out while "they communicated with and followed the leadership of the larger Shanghai municipal party committee." Thus, this particular cadre school's reeducation program would correspond with the larger ongoing national effort to reeducate cadres at the time. CCP cadres were the rank-and-file members of the party who were tasked with working at the local level in the PRC with the masses across a wide range of contexts. They were pulled from the masses themselves, so that the party's membership could reflect the people they were supposed to serve. Party membership and cadre status required a process of selection, education, training, and official appointment. In 1974, the cadres going through reeducation schools were those "revolutionary cadres" who had survived the Cultural Revolution, or who joined the party because of their activism during the Cultural Revolution. In early February 1974, the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee instructed the city's responsible organizations that, "May 7th Cadre Schools will engage in revolutionary education." After a series of lectures from leading cadres in the beginning of April that year, May 7th Cadre Schools were tasked around China's most-populous city with reeducating cadres in Criticizing Lin Biao and Confucius.⁴⁶ The three-month-long work-study of the seventh session of the May 7th Cadre School was intended to produce reeducated revolutionary cadres by combing the methods of study, evaluation, criticism, and unity. Study, evaluation, criticism, and unity, (*xue ping pi lian* 学评批联), were the guiding educational methods of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign of 1973-1976. *Study* meant reading theory, politics, and history. *Evaluation*

⁴⁶ For a record of the February instruction, see: Shanghai Municipal May 7th Cadre School Revolutionary Committee (上海市五七干校革命委员会), "第五、第六期干部轮训工作总结报告、轮训工作情况调查和今后意见报告、举办小型短期理论班的请示报告" ("Summarizing report of the fifth and sixth sessions of cadre rotating work, report of opinions on the investigation into the situation of polling work, report on creating small-scale short-term theory classes"), October 1974, SHMA, B60-1-97.

meant writing one's own synthesis and interpretation of what one read about. *Criticism* meant sharing one's thoughts with others and then providing feedback on each other's ideas. *Unity* meant that, at the end of the session, everyone must come to a consensus of understanding, a method introduced by Leninist idea of Democratic Centralism. The two-line struggle (*liangtiao douzheng* 两条斗争) meant, in reference to Maoist dialectics, that there is always a principal contradiction between two ideological opposites that must be struggled through until new contradictions arise. The cadre school's education program was based on Mao's claim that class struggle and the two-line struggle between revolution and revisionism could best be learned through personal experience, and, thus a combination of theoretical study and physical labor was the only way to properly establish a new world view.

With "the guiding principles of the great leader Chairman Mao's brilliant 'May 7th Directive'" setting the tone for them, the cadres attending this school session would then spend the next sixteen days reading a selection of Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought theoretical writings. Included in the reading list were selections from Lenin's "On Marx and Engels," "Karl Marx," "Historical Materialism," and "Class Struggle." Following Lenin was Mao's "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," a letter from Mao to his wife and CCP Central Committee member, Jiang Qing, and a 1972 speech from Mao to cadres. All of these assigned readings would capture the core theories of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought that the CCP wanted to emphasize to cadres undergoing reeducation and to new cadres in training. The CCP's then version of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought heavily

emphasized the continuing importance of class struggle and that “the people, and only the people, are the motivating force in the making of world history.”⁴⁷

With their theoretical foundations firmly established, the students at the cadre school would then move on to study China’s ancient history. Because these reports were produced in the context of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, the student cadres were to spend 18 days studying two articles on Qin and Han Dynasty history, written by Luo Siding and published in the theory-focused *Red Flag* magazine. Luo Siding (罗思鼎) was not a real person, but rather the collective penname of the Shanghai Municipal Chinese Communist Party Writing Group, staffed by prominent Shanghai radical intellectuals like Zhu Yongjia, directly subordinate to the leading writers and critics of the Cultural Revolution era and Gang of Four members, Yao Wenyuan and Zhang Chunqiao.⁴⁸ The penname is a homonym for the Chinese word for “a screw,” in reference to PLA soldier Lei Feng’s famous quote: “Be a screw that never rusts” (*yong bu shengxiu de luo si ding* 永不生锈的螺丝钉). After reading Luo Siding, the cadre students would then turn to the Legalist philosopher Han Fei’s text, “The Five Parasites” (3rd Century BCE) and Tang Dynasty scholar-official Liu Zongyuan’s essay, “On Feudalism” (9th Century CE) in the original Classical Chinese, most likely with accompanying footnotes, commentary, and/or modern Mandarin Chinese translation.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ This often-repeated quote in Cultural Revolution decade publications originally comes from: Mao Zedong, “On Coalition Government,” April 24, 1945. It comes from Mao’s “Politics Report for the Seventh Meeting of National Representatives of the Chinese Communist Party.” Information on the speech’s background and the Chinese text reprinted can be found in: Mao Zedong, *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong, Volume III: The Period of War of Resistance Against Japan (II)* (Beijing: People’s Press, 1953).

⁴⁸ While not about Luo Siding, Timothy Cheek discusses the similar writing group based in Beijing, Liang Xiao (Two Schools 梁效): Timothy Cheek, *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 184-188.

⁴⁹ The Chinese text of “The Five Parasites” with a definitive scholarly annotation can be found here: Liang Qixiong, *Han Zi Qian Jie* (Taipei: Taiwan Student Book Press, 2015), 465-470. For an English translation, see: Burton Watson, translator, *Han Fei Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 96-117. The Chinese text of “On Feudalism” can be found here: Liu Zongyuan, “Feng Jian Lun,” *Wikisource*, last updated May 29, 2018, last accessed May 2, 2020, <https://zh.wikisource.org/zh/%E5%B0%81%E5%BB%BA%E8%AB%96>. For

Having completed the study portion of the reeducation program, the students would then spend fifteen days working in the school's fields performing manual labor. Next, they would leave the school and spend another two weeks "living, eating, working, studying, and struggling with the poor and middle peasants in assigned rural work teams for reeducation." Finally, the last five days of their school session were to be spent engaging in study exercises, namely, "writing self-criticisms and resolving questions related to establishing their new worldviews."

A week after the Party and Revolutionary Committees of the Shanghai Municipal Commerce May 7th Cadre School issued their report detailing the work-study program, they created a lesson plan for teaching Marxist-Leninist theory. According to that document, the primary purpose of reading the assigned essays by Lenin "was to understand Historical Materialism." After reading those theoretical writings by Lenin, students would turn to a selection of notable quotations on Historical Materialism from the leading thinkers of Maoist political theory: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, more Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, as well as Mao Zedong's quotations and writings on Historical Materialism—most notably, his 1957 speech, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People." Educators were to employ the four educational methods throughout the study process, ensuring students practiced all of them: study, evaluation, criticism, and unity.

The two municipal committees also gave a detailed description of cadre reeducation's manual labor component. Since it was foundational to Maoist epistemology that a close relationship exists between one's material existence and one's political allegiances, reading political theory alone would not make one revolutionary. In order to reach proletarian consciousness, study had to be combined with manual labor. Fifteen days, thus, would be spent

an English translation, see: Wm. Theodore de Bary, and Irene Bloom, editors, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: Volume I, From Earliest Times to 1600*, second edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 559-564.

on working within the school grounds on agriculture, construction, and public services. The students' construction tasks included digging trenches and ditches, cleaning, building roads, bricklaying, and shoveling coal. Public works included maintaining public hygiene, kitchen duty, and transporting goods. Agricultural work was to be conducted on 114 mu of land.⁵⁰ 76 mu of which were rice paddies; 27 mu grew green vegetables; 4 mu of cotton; 3 mu of peanuts; and 4 mu were devoted to cabbage. Because of the need to rotate crops to stop drought, they also arranged an autumn and winter sowing plan. In the colder months, they were to grow cabbage on 22 mu, "paying special attention to the disposal of waste and pests;" they were also to cultivate 4 mu of barley, 4 mu of broad beans, 8 mu of green manure, and 27 mu of green vegetables, making sure to "protect self-sufficiency and strengthen the work unit in the fall and winter months." Over the winter, they had to "make sure to plan well for the next year, accumulate natural fertilizer, and arrange stored vegetables properly." Subsidiary work included raising 50-60 pigs and growing 1000 fresh mushrooms. To carry out this work, the students would be divided into two groups, each managing 12.5 mu of land and crops. When they had completed their work, the students were expected to "produce a number of documents with thoughts on how they might modernize agriculture through education and new tools." The report noted that "some of these plans could be adjusted slightly, depending on the rain and other weather." The report writers also attached a map of planned land use, which corresponded to the arrangement detailed above.⁵¹ Apparently the cadres were also producing agricultural scientific knowledge through their manual labor and reports as well as growing their revolutionary thought.

⁵⁰ 1 mu (亩) = 1/15 of a hectare of land.

⁵¹ This agricultural plan and work shows an example of the kinds of scientific knowledge production created in rural China in the 1970s described in: Sigrid Schmalzer, *Red Revolution, Green Revolution: Scientific Farming in Socialist China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

On October 31, 1974, the education and production groups at the Shanghai cadre school issued a report on their upcoming study sessions. In working with the poor and middle peasants, cadres were to learn from their “revolutionary spirit” (*geming jingshen* 革命精神). The report declared that “those cadres should embrace the revolutionary spirit of not being afraid of bitterness, tiredness, dirt, and stench.” They were to live with the peasants, eat with them, work with them, study with them, and criticize with them. Study classes would be held November 10th to 15th, and training courses would be held November 9th to 13th. Food rations for all male cadres were 1.5 jin of food.⁵² Female cadres received 1.2 jin of food. For everyone, the food would be quartered throughout the day. This diet was one of many ways that the mostly urban-originating cadres were supposed to live like their rural counterparts, adopting frugal living and enthusiastically embracing hardship.

Finalizing the process, returning to the four-pronged approach to education, the final report dated November 17th, 1974, announced the creation of eleven work units. Every study session at the cadre school, one chosen work unit reported on their focused study topic. At the end of every class session, this chosen work unit would write a study report, which had to explain the chosen work unit’s members’ “progressive thought, progressive experiences, and engagement with other students.” In accordance with the final step of Maoist education, unity, the organizers of the cadre school wanted to make sure that work unit leaders agreed with their students. The leaders and students thus had to discuss and organize their thoughts into one unified report. To foster pollination across bureaucracy, the report suggested it would be ideal if work unit leaders chose students from a different department or district. Everyone was to study the CCP Central Document Number 26, as well. Everyone would study in their groups and

⁵² 1 jin (斤) = 500 grams

engage in discussions with their groups. There were also lecture meetings required for all members given by the leaders.⁵³

Through this series of reports from late 1974 to the beginning of 1975, we see how Maoist pedagogy was crafted and enacted in practice during the period that PRC historians Jeremy Brown and Matthew D. Johnson call “China’s era of high socialism.”⁵⁴ “Study, evaluation, criticism, and unity” highlighted the theoretical and practical political concerns of the CCP after the tumultuous years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1969). Following Mao’s emphasis on combining manual labor with group theoretical study sessions and the processes of struggle, criticism, and self-criticism, the CCP’s cadres long practiced these educational methods in order to develop their revolutionary spirit. “Study” essentially meant reading theoretical works and party documents. “Evaluation” was more of a personal process of individually fitting what one studied into the broader schema of Marxist-Leninist, Mao Zedong Thought theory. “Criticism” brought the study session into the collective realm. Students had to share their evaluations with each other by reading aloud their notes and individual reports, and then submitting to criticism sessions in front of each other. One’s personal theoretical weaknesses and class background had to be exposed to better understand how to evaluate a document. The last step, “unity,” was the most revealing of the post-1969 political and social climate in the PRC.

⁵³ Unless otherwise stated, all of the reports from the Shanghai Municipal Finance and Trade May 7 Cadre School discussed in the previous seven pages can be found here: Shanghai Municipal Finance and Trade May 7 Cadre School (上海市财贸“五·七”干校), “上海市财贸“五·七”干校第七期读书班、第九期轮训班学习锻炼计划及学员登记表” (Shanghai Municipal Finance and Trade May 7 Cadre School 7th School Session, Ninth Training Course Session Study Exercises Plan Student Roster), January 1975, SHMA, A98-2-121.

⁵⁴ Jeremy Brown, and Matthew D. Johnson, editors, *Maoism at the Grassroots: Everyday Life in China’s Era of High Socialism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

In 1969, the radical leadership of the CCP, who had been the ones to launch the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966, shifted their tone from constant rebellion and struggle to unity. Practically, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) sent troops into the factories and schools to unite Red Guard factions together into what were called "Mao Zedong Thought Brigades." At this point, the combined adjective-noun "worker-peasant-soldier" was used to describe the participants in these Mao Zedong Thought Brigades. Mao Zedong Thought Brigades were tasked with uniting formerly rival Red Guard factions together. In order to accomplish this goal, consensus had to be reached among group members and leaders.⁵⁵

As a consequence, by the time the Shanghai May 7th Cadre School went to work in 1974 preparing cadres to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, unity as the final process of study had become paramount, and the entirety of Maoist epistemology was embodied in the school's curriculum. The cadres would turn theory into practice and practice into theory; they would learn from the masses, struggle over ideas, and "unite together" (*tuanjie qilai* 团结起来) in the end to "make revolution" (*gan geming* 干革命). To summarize, through performing manual labor, reading Marxist-Leninist theory, being inspired by the revolutionary spirits of comrades, and following Chairman Mao's orders, workers, cadres, and students gathered up the will to fully participate in and understand the importance of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign.

This chapter of my dissertation analyzes the details of the above-summarized reports and others like them from the same three-year time period: starting with the campaign's initial official

⁵⁵ For an account at the time of worker-peasant-soldiers and Mao Zedong Thought Brigades, see William Hinton, *Hundred Day War: The Cultural Revolution at Tsinghua University* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 185-274. For a recent scholarly study: Fabio Lanza, "'Something Other Than Exploitation:' Workers, Peasants, Soldiers, and Students," Paper Presentation at Association for Asian Studies Conference in Washington D.C., March 23, 2018.

planning and launch in September 1973, ending with Mao's death in September 1976. I argue that the details of these reports, which I found in a major urban archive in mainland China, reveal the ways these study sessions became new sites of knowledge production, in which students discussed, debated, and theorized Chinese history and philosophy to a far greater extent than previous scholarship has assumed. I use the term "student" broadly here to mean participants in the study groups. They could be young people at a senior high school or college level, thus fitting into the traditional category of an "intellectual youth" (*zhishi qingnian* 知识青年), but the kinds of people who joined these study groups could be very diverse. They ranged from elementary school teachers to government bureaucrats, from white collar office workers to steel factory workers, from new party members to senior citizens. In this chapter, I examine a selection of political theory small study groups' (*zhengzhi lilun xuexi xiaozu* 政治理论学习小组) study plans (*xuexi anpai* 学习安排) from a major urban city, on various topics and compare them with the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, to argue for the significance and uniqueness of the study plans, especially in terms of knowledge production. This campaign challenged workers, students, and cadres to evaluate the ways in which ancient Chinese history could be relevant to China's contemporary situation in the mid-1970s. As I demonstrate, the study and work plans for workers, students, and cadres reveal that being a communist in Maoist China required deep theoretical understanding and engagement with socialist society and reconstructive labor, all of which equipped ordinary grassroots cadres to engage in intellectual discourse with professional academics. By engaging in the same sphere of discourse with traditional intellectuals in the PRC, the workers, students, and cadres who made up these political theory small study groups became active participants in the production of knowledge. In

particular, the main fields to which these study groups produced knowledge for were related to Sinology—whether they be in conversation with history, archeology, philosophy, or philology.

Objections to my approach of taking these sources seriously as knowledge production and as voices for intellectual history may include that “this is all just propaganda,” because “is this really the masses’ grassroots thought if it’s published by the state,” and “we cannot see the masses’ thought.”⁵⁶ This may be the case for something like a book compilation of essays by workers, peasants, and soldiers published by the party-run press.⁵⁷ However, the primary sources I rely on most heavily in this chapter are archival holdings, not published books. Many of them were handwritten first and then typed out to be sent internally to those involved most directly in organizing the study sessions. Sometimes these documents were sent to superiors as reports or for approval. Other times they were circulated horizontally across involved groups of people, and some of them were also read aloud or shared with the entirety of the study group and relevant work unit. The tone of voice in the writings indicates a variety of different people involved in writing and speaking. The different styles and levels of clarity in handwriting also reveal a diversity of authors. Some wrote in the clearly-defined square characters that indicate a higher level of traditional schooling, while others wrote in looping cursive shorthand associated with experienced bureaucrats and office workers. Even some indicate the less formulaic writing of a worker who maybe never even finished high school. Certainly by the third or fourth time a document underwent revision, it likely was edited for the final product. However, consider the case of women labor models, which historian Gail Hershatter describes thusly: “they were themselves a collective product: identified, trained, and written about by cadres of the Women’s

⁵⁶ I thank the commenters on my paper presentation at the 2017 session of the “20th Century Chinese History Workshop at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, July 28, 2017.

⁵⁷ For instance: *A Collection of Articles: Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius*, 1st ed. (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976).

Federation, they participated actively in the making of their own careers.”⁵⁸ Just because a report underwent editing does not mean that there was nothing genuine in the words of the workers quoted in those reports. It is also unlikely that we can clearly separate the “authentic” original text written by the “masses” from the edited final, “official,” product.

Regarding the objection that what the participants of the study groups said was just propaganda, I suggest we look at the scholarship on Chinese propaganda. Several works characterize Cultural Revolution propaganda as a shakeup in the propaganda apparatus created in the PRC after 1949. Older English-language scholarship from the Cold War era portrays Chinese propaganda as a tool of a totalitarian system of mass indoctrination aimed at making the entire population believe in the same things to fulfil the state’s goals of building a socialist economy.⁵⁹ More recent works in political science tend to focus on the propaganda state in the Deng Xiaoping era and/or in the post-1989 era. The distinction they draw between the Mao era and what came after it is that, in the Maoist era, propaganda was aimed at promoting class consciousness, however there are many continuities between the eras in terms of the widespread use of propaganda by the state in order to “set the tone” of public discourse in China.⁶⁰

Furthermore, to quote the historian Aminda Smith, “the fact that official reports represented an idealized vision of reeducation does not undermine their importance,” and “to see [their details] as nothing more than propaganda would be to fundamentally misread these

⁵⁸ Gail Hershat, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China’s Collective Past* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 11.

⁵⁹ Examples include: Chang Man, *The People’s Daily and The Red Flag Magazine During the Cultural Revolution* (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1969); Franklin W. Houn, *To Change a Nation: Propaganda and Indoctrination in Communist China* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961); Frederick T. C. Yu, *Mass Persuasion in Communist China* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964).

⁶⁰ Examples include: Daniel C. Lynch, *After the Propaganda State: Media, Politics, and “Thought Work” In Reformed China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008); Kingsley Edney, *The Globalization of Chinese Propaganda: International Power and Domestic Political Cohesion* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

sources.”⁶¹ Rightly so. We cannot throw the “official” sources out as lacking in reliable evidence. While idealized in tone and outlook, the names and direct quotes included in reports were not the complete fantasies of bureaucrats.

Scholarship that portrays the CCP (and indeed the rest of the communist world) as “totalitarian” is largely out of fashion now. The majority of recent scholarship in the field highlights the diffuse nature of thought, politics, ideology, and social life in the PRC. When looking at labor activism in Cultural Revolution-era Shanghai, Elizabeth J. Perry and Li Xun argued, “The remarkable political activism displayed by ordinary citizens during the course of that movement served to discredit the prevailing totalitarian model and to engender new approaches that assigned greater influence to social forces.”⁶² Recent scholarship has noted that provincial and local newspapers often printed very different ideas and interpretations of events from the center, and that the revolution and socialism must be understood in its differing localized instances. Also, there were many things that the central authorities did not necessarily command their subordinates to repeat. For instance, one recent article shows the wide variety of interpretations of the 1954 PRC Draft Constitution by both local cadres and regular people.⁶³ A recent monograph also shows how peasant women in Shaanxi Province conceived of the history of collectivization in China very differently from how their male peers and cadres sent from the central government did.⁶⁴ With a deeper understanding now of the complex processes involved in knowledge production and public discourse in the PRC, as a process going on between state and society across a wide breadth of horizontally-connected organizations and groups, we can

⁶¹ Aminda Smith, *Thought Reform and China's Dangerous Classes: Reeducation, Resistance, and the People* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 86.

⁶² Elizabeth J. Perry, and Li Xun, *Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 189.

⁶³ Neil J. Diamant, and Feng Xiaocai, “Reading (and Misreading) the Draft Constitution in China, 1954,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 20, no. 3 (summer 2018): 153-179.

⁶⁴ Hershat, *The Gender of Memory*.

relook at the study groups formed by students, cadres, bureaucrats, and workers to see them not as unidirectional just from the top to the bottom. There is no evidence in any of my primary sources found in the archives that shows that the PRC government or CCP at any level *told* the participants of study groups what they had to say, think, or read about for conducting the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign. Instead, central or “higher up” offices encouraged that study groups “earnestly read books and study,” and that educational institutions support revolutionary and proletarian students by providing them with access to learning materials from libraries, book stores, government offices, and schools. As the campaign wore on, thousands of educational reading and reference materials were printed by state-run presses for people to study.

Regarding the (in)famous state-society dichotomy debate, I turn again to Hershatter’s conclusions on women labor models in rural Shaanxi: “their stories call into question the idea... that if we could just dig deep enough, the authentic person with an interior persona distinct from the public model would be waiting to reveal herself. An imagined pure interiority, tales of nonnormative personal change, life apart from or in resistance to state discourse, the truth of the self or selves, cannot be recovered through research on [the PRC].... The whole project of a search for the real selves of a real past is chimerical.... [which] suggest[s] that the interior self is itself a historically situated and peculiar idea.”⁶⁵ Scholars of the PRC, the Soviet Union, and elsewhere have found that trying to completely separate the state from society in order to find something “real” underneath the “fake” exterior that the state creates, is increasingly problematic.⁶⁶ For instance, one historian of the Soviet Union found that while reading a

⁶⁵ Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory*, 235.

⁶⁶ For some examples of major publications in this discussion, see: Mark Edele, “Soviet Society, Social Structure, and Everyday Life: Major Frameworks Reconsidered,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 8, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 348-373; Stephen Kotkin, “The State—Is it Us? Memoirs, Archives, and Kremlinologists,” *Russian Review* 61, no. 1 (January 2002): 35-51; Steven Smith, “The ‘Social’ and the ‘Political’ in the Russian Revolution,” *The Historical Journal* 38, no. 3 (1995): 733-743.

personal diary from the 1930s, while the state branded the diary's author as suspect for his family background, he recorded in the "rubbish heap" of his personal diaries that he wanted nothing more than to be "a good Bolshevik."⁶⁷ It is thus likely futile to try to find out what Chinese people *really* thought about Lin Biao, Confucius, and Legalism in the mid-1970s, irrespective of any kind of involvement from the state or its rhetoric. Recent scholarship on memory of the Maoist era in the PRC points towards showing that the idea that most people in the Maoist period were just parroting official political slogans for their own safety is problematic. When these memories are put up against documented sources from the time, and when we consider the continued use and turning of Maoist slogans in the reform era, we can see that this narrative of the Maoist era is one constructed particularly in the context of market socialism in order to make sense of the collectivist past.⁶⁸

Moving on, I build this chapter's methodological and theoretical approach from some recent Anglophone scholarship. Intellectual historians have, in the last two decades or so, turned away from the so-called "Great Texts" that defined earlier Western intellectual history, and moved towards finding intellectual activity in non-traditional sites, like mass media and the writings of what Ross Terrill called "semi-intellectuals."⁶⁹ In line with this trend, PRC intellectual historian Timothy Cheek said that "the most prominent intellectual work of the Cultural Revolution was 'mass criticism'... expressed in earthy and pungent form in 'big character posters.'"⁷⁰ Extending that interpretation, I argue that the small study groups were the

⁶⁷ Jochen Hellbeck, "Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: The Diary of Sepan Podlubnyi, 1931-9," in *Stalinism: New Directions*, edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick (New York: Routledge, 1999), 81.

⁶⁸ The scholarship on post-socialist memory is too vast for this paper to cover all of. For some major works, see: Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory*; Svetlana Alexievich, *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets*, Translated by Bela Shayevich (New York: Random House, 2016 [2013]); Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

⁶⁹ Ross Terrill, *Mao: A Biography*, 3rd Edition, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 51.

⁷⁰ Timothy Cheek, *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History*, 180.

Cultural Revolution's main sites of this kind of "intellectual work," or knowledge production, at least in the post-'69 unity period. The kind of intellectual history that I seek to do in this dissertation follows the methods used by Julian Bourg in *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought*, which utilizes student newspapers, reports from activist groups, television and radio interviews with intellectuals and politicians, posters, and slogans from protestors.⁷¹ Bourg's work will serve as the methodological underpinning to the second chapter of my dissertation, which explores the popular slogans of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign as if they were intellectual products themselves, laced with layered meanings and serving as theoretical and political statements on contemporary issues.

Previous scholarship on the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign has focused on the high politics of the CCP's leadership and the kinds of elite academic publications produced from the campaign. In the last major monograph on the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, Tien-wei Wu argued that "there is no doubt that while the debates [of the campaign]... had some merit and were beneficial to their particular fields in one way or another... [and] after serious intellectual scrutiny, have become lasting scholarship, the fruits of Chinese intellectual endeavors."⁷² Wu showed, then, that the intellectual achievements of the PRC's academia were significant, and that the political situation of the campaign resulted in greater understanding of ancient Chinese history, philosophy, and archaeology. What of the masses at that time, then?

The knowledge production at the traditional academic level has already been acknowledged. Wu's monograph, however, was based on "elite" or traditional intellectual

⁷¹ Julian Bourg. *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

⁷² Wu Tien-wei, *Lin Biao and the Gang of Four*, 10.

writings. This chapter of my dissertation is based on grassroots-level sources from mainland Chinese archives. This chapter thus portrays the grassroots-level of participation and knowledge production in this campaign. By using these reports uncovered from PRC archives, I show, then, that crafting detailed study plans and reporting on educational work at a local cadre school was far more than just slavishly reporting to one's superiors or the boring minutiae of brainwashing. Instead, the study process and its outcomes reveal Maoist work-study as a lengthy process of give-and-take between theory and practice, party and masses, past and present. By the end of their studies, these young cadres came to understand not only their position in Chinese society but also revolutionary China's place in the world and its place in relation to Chinese history as a whole. They thus learned to fulfil the Maoist *and* the Legalist dictate to "use the past to serve the present."⁷³

To show just how ubiquitous and important the political theory small study groups were in China during the Cultural Revolution period, consider how communications scholar Shaorong Huang, a former participant in such study groups in his youth growing up in Cultural Revolution-era China, described them in his later scholarship on the matter. Huang says that these groups and their meetings were so widespread across Chinese society that by the end of the 1960s, "behavioral change was reflected by people's attitudes towards political meetings and group discussions as daily routine. These meetings and discussions had actually become ritualized activities during the [Cultural Revolution]."⁷⁴ Huang called these meetings, and other actions of

⁷³ The phrase "*gu wei jin yong*" (古为今用) appeared in different Chinese writers' works in the mid-20th century, and Mao Zedong expressed the idea to writers and artists in the PRC by the 1950s. The phrase could refer to a slogan of the mid-19th century Self-Strengthening Movement, "Chinese essence with Western methods" (中体西用), and could be a spin on the Confucian saying, "the past negates the present" (以古非今). "Using the past to serve the present" appears frequently in sources from the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign. For example, see: SHMA, B200-3-829.

⁷⁴ Shaorong Huang, *To Rebel is Justified: A Rhetorical Study of China's Cultural Revolution Movement 1966-1969* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 191.

the period, “collective rituals.”⁷⁵ In essence, in the absence of regularly attended organized religion, “Similar to religious rituals, these practices possessed the essential quality of the sacred.”⁷⁶ As a consequence, during collective rituals, “One feels safe to retreat into the collective and do whatever everybody is doing.[...] A ritual has its ritualistic forms which suggest rules and power.”⁷⁷ These rituals, like attending political theory small study groups and listening to speeches at rallies, were daily confirmation and hashing out of politics and ideological worldview.

At the end of this chapter, I turn to an unlikely alternate location. By looking at the situation of scholarship on Chinese Legalism in Republic of China-controlled Taiwan, I show that the legacies of this project are still evident in post-Mao China and around the world. By showing how scholars in Taiwan incorporated the intellectual contributions from mainland grassroots writings produced during the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, we can see the afterlives of the political theory small study groups and their works. I conclude with the argument that intellectual histories of Chinese Communism must include the intellectual work produced at the grassroots, which was serious, cutting edge, and shaped both elite and popular knowledge throughout the PRC period and beyond.

Getting Organized: How Study Groups Conducted Work and Study

In this chapter, I treat the reports of political theory small study groups from workers, students, and cadres together as one genre of documents. That is, worker-written reports and cadre-written reports can be taken together as a category of document in which the individual texts can be read in conversation with one another. Cadre schools and workers’ study groups

⁷⁵ Ibid., 138.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 142.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 143.

inside of their factories differed in terms of length of time spent studying and the depth of assigned readings. Workers were usually only able to engage in theoretical study during the *pi Lin pi Kong* years on the weekends or for a few hours before and after work several days a week. Cadres, on the other hand, went to special schools for months at a time, giving them more exposure than the average factory worker to read political theory and history. For the purposes of this section, however, the documents written by workers and cadres were similar enough to constitute one genre of writing that does not need to be divided along worker-cadre lines at this point. I present in this chapter the first scholarly examination of the reports and notes of political theory small study groups during the *pi Lin pi Kong* time period. It is also the first treatment of this body of writing as serious, legitimate knowledge production engaging in the same field of discourse as the more traditional sites of knowledge production at the time in the PRC—such as universities, magazines, newspapers, professional writing groups, the bureaucracy that made up the ministries of education, propaganda, and culture, and leading party theorists.

Shaorong Huang describes for us what the meetings of these political theory small study groups looked like at the time for participants:

Everyday, a half-an-hour period, usually in the morning, was devoted to the study of Mao's works. During the period, people in a group sat together in a large room reading Chairman Mao's works or quotations. Sometimes they read silently. Other times they had one read loudly for them. They also held discussions frequently. The attendance of this ritual activity was absolutely mandatory. Some people took it so seriously that they didn't answer business phones during the study time.⁷⁸

In many ways, the reports at the beginning of this chapter from the seventh session of the Shanghai Commerce May 7th Cadre School were typical of reports issued from other work units, schools, party branches, and government departments across the entirety of China during the mid-1970s. Study sessions for the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign were usually

⁷⁸ Huang, *To Rebel is Justified*, 145.

organized in a similar fashion to the Shanghai Commerce May 7th Cadre School's at the beginning of this chapter. They began with an opening ceremony, which usually consisted of a speech or a series of speeches from leading cadres. Sometimes they even opened by "singing revolutionary songs together."⁷⁹ Then, all participants were put into small study groups. Inside their small study groups, participants read and discussed the assigned readings for the session. The Shanghai Municipal Public Finance Bureau gave a detailed report in the autumn of 1974 on the bureau's experiences with setting up study groups for conducting the campaign that year: "Starting from June, the ministry and various work units formed a small group to read and study. A criticism group arose out of this and we established a theory study small group. We have 11 comrades participating in this theory study group. People who have participated in and listened to the group number at 98 people, making up 9 theory small groups. The party and youth league started 42 theory small study groups with 405 people participating. The whole ministry has 500 people participating in or learning from the theory small study groups, making up a quarter of the entire membership of the ministry."⁸⁰ After meetings in small groups, everyone would come back together into a large discussion meeting, listen to lectures, and go to workplaces to engage in productive labor. Lectures could be from party leaders, representatives from model work units, and revolutionary intellectuals. Finally, the last step would be to engage in creative work to propagate what the participants had learned from the entire work-study experience. The Shanghai Municipal Public Finance Bureau reported that after their study groups studied political theory and ancient texts, "the groups wrote big character posters to inspire the masses and the

⁷⁹ Shanghai Municipal Public Finance Bureau (上海市财政局), "8月13日批林批孔经验交流会的发言材料" (Documents from the August 13th Meeting on Experiences of Criticizing Lin and Criticizing Kong), August 1974, SHMA, B104-2-602.

⁸⁰ Shanghai Municipal Public Finance Bureau 上海市财政局, "关于我局理论队伍建设的情况" (Regarding The Situation of Establishing Our Bureau's Theory Brigade), July 1974, SHMA, B104-2-603.

rest of their work units[....] The theory small study groups want to stand on the side of the masses and root for the masses[....] The small groups got together and wrote and edited together a selection of study materials for the masses, including Marxist-Leninist perspective biographies of 17 peasant rebellion leaders, 37 Legalist figures, 29 Confucian representatives, all together making 83 people. They also edited together and printed a document called, ‘Introduction to the Major Figures in the Anti-Kong and Pro-Kong Struggle from the Spring and Autumn and Warring States to the Qing Dynasty.’ This document was made for the masses to study and learn from.”⁸¹ Here we see clearly how cadres and bureaucrats used their positions to actively participate in the campaign’s goals and to produce learning materials for “the masses.”

The final products of a study session varied and could include posters, comics, paintings, songs, poems, stories, historical narratives, speeches, newspaper articles, reports, and essays. For instance, one electrical worker and recently initiated party member reported to his factory coworkers that after studying as a worker-peasant-soldier student at Beijing University, he was “urged by [fellow] Beijing University Worker-Peasant-Soldier Students to write my own annotations of passages from *The Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語),”⁸² the canonical text of Confucius’ spoken words. Likewise, the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Public Transportation Group Secretariat reported in their publication *Public Transportation Situation* (*Gong Jiao Qingkuang* 公交情况) that the workers’ reading group at the Shanghai Installation Company wrote their own revolutionary version of *The Three Character Classic* (*Sanzi Jing* 三字經), a 13th century educational primer meant to teach young children the basics of

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Shanghai Municipal First Machine Building and Electrical Industry Bureau (上海市第一机电工业局), “召开‘批林批孔’大型座谈会讲话提纲、发言稿” (Speech Outline and Text at the Convening of the “Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius” Large Symposium), February 1974, SHMA, B173-2-192.

Confucianism and Chinese writing in triplets, which they called “a new revolutionary *Three Character Song* (*Sanzi Ge* 三字歌).”⁸³ Many of the study group reports I found at the Shanghai Municipal Archives were gathered by cadres sent to investigate study groups, or were records of larger meetings in which study group representatives gave speeches. Sometimes the activities of study groups were published in pamphlets.

As with the final artistic products of anti-Confucian study sessions, there were other ways in which study groups and study sessions could show variance. Reports of group composition were important and revealing. The sixth session of the Shanghai May 7th Cadre School had 210 students, ninety more than the previous session, showing that anti-Confucian education was growing steadily during the course of the campaign. To combine socially the revolutionary intellectuals with other members of society and the government, twenty professional intellectuals were invited to attend the session. Of the 210 total students, 111 were “new cadres,” representing 54% of the school. There were also 95 “older cadres,” making up 46% of the session. There were 38 women comrades, making up 8.5%. There were 93 party members, two Communist Party Youth League members, and eleven members of “the masses.” 45 of the attending cadres were under the age of 35. The average age of all of the students was 41 years old. To connect the party with the local city, there were 3 students who were members of the city's revolutionary committee. 17 work unit (*danwei* 单位) leaders attended at that time, and 22 party secretaries

⁸³ Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Industrial Communications Group Secretary Group (上海市革命委员会工业交通组秘书组), “《公交情况》第 271 期 (上海安装公司举办工人读书班、痛批反动《三字经》编写革命《三字歌》)” (*Public Transportation Situation* Number 271, Shanghai Installation Company Held a Workers’ Study Class to Severely Criticize the Reactionary “Three Character Classic” and Compile a Revolutionary “Three Character Classic”), August 16, 1974, SHMA, B246-2-1030-97. The entire text of the *Three Character Classic* can be found here: “三字經” (*Three Character Classic*), translated by Herbert Giles in 1910, last edited August 19, 2015, *Chinese Text Project*, accessed March 3, 2021, <https://ctext.org/three-character-classic>.

were there.⁸⁴ It was always important for those making membership reports like this to include how much of their student body was composed of women, youths, the elderly, and those in party and government organizations.⁸⁵ Overlap was common and the majority of students were men in their 30s and 40s, but the large presence of younger students and a significant contingent of experienced older cadres meant that the different demographic groups of society were supposed to study and discuss together, to learn from each other. The May 7th Cadre Schools were, understandably, mostly attended by cadres, but the presence of those outside of the party was revealing of the educational emphasis at that time on unity among classes and different elements of society.⁸⁶

The study groups also reported differently on how long their study sessions could be. Some people, like the students at the cadre school featured at the beginning of this chapter, spent more than half a year studying, while others held the entirety of their seminars over the course of one week. Exemplary of the latter category that chose compactness in timing their study sessions, the Shanghai Women's Federation small reading group studied documents from the 10th Party Congress for two weeks.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, the Youth Workers' Study Group of the Pudong Shipbuilding Factory spent five months studying the history of the ancient Chinese

⁸⁴ Shanghai Municipal May 7 Cadre School (上海市“五·七”干校), “关于读点法家著作的实施方案” (Regarding Implementing a Plan to Read some Legalist Writings), September 8, 1974, SHMA, B60-1-85-72.

⁸⁵ Reports in other parts of the country could very well have looked quite different. Shanghai was, to be sure, a large, urban, recently semi-colonial city with a cosmopolitan air and strong cultural legacy. The city was also largely Han-majority ethnically at the time. Smaller towns, rural areas, and ethnic autonomous regions of the PRC could have certainly looked quite different in regards to these kinds of reports. My sources did not mention the ethnic makeup of their memberships.

⁸⁶ Starting in 1969, the chaos of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution's warring Red Guard factions was largely quelled by the Mao Zedong Thought Brigades: teams of workers, peasants, and soldiers sent to encourage the radical students to unite under the banner of Mao Zedong Thought. Their main means of breaking down factional rivalries was through education, holding study groups, and encouraging discussion. For a more detailed discussion of how the Mao Zedong Thought Brigades broke down factionalism in favor of unity on a university campus, see: William Hinton, *Hundred Day War*.

⁸⁷ Shanghai Municipal Women's Federation (上海市妇联), “举办二期党的十大文献读书班计划、名单和小结” (Plan, Roster, and Brief Summary for Setting Up a Study Class for Reading Documents From the Second Session of the Party's Tenth Congress), December 1975, SHMA, C31-3-50.

Legalist School of Thought.⁸⁸ In the case of the May 7th cadre schools around the country, cadres could spend three-month sessions studying and working intensively, focusing solely on their reeducation. Factory workers, on the other hand, tended to spend one or two days a week on study while they had to continue their usual work routine for the rest of the week. One frequent comment from many people across fields of labor at this time was that they wished they had “more time to spend on reading books,” as the sixth session of the Shanghai May 7th Cadre School reported after a month of study and labor in September, 1974.⁸⁹

The fact that workers, bureaucrats, and cadres-in-training all shared a common experience of intensive book learning is significant. It means that the small study groups functioned as new sites of knowledge production in late-Maoist China because it shows that the study groups put as much serious intellectual work into their discussions, readings, and writings as the more traditional sites of knowledge production did. Like professional intellectuals at the same time, these “members of the masses” made careful plans to decide on what and when to read, what their study goals were, and how they would make sure that their studies manifested the Maoist educational goals of the Mass Line (“from the masses, to the masses”), practice-theory-practice, and the study, evaluation, criticism, and unity four-pronged approach. The Shanghai City Public Finance Bureau’s Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign Political Theory Small Study Group stated their pedagogical experiences clearly: “We formed a group that met seven times to criticize. Ten comrades in our group wrote, in total, 110 criticism drafts. We understand now that study is the basis, criticism is the necessity, unity is deepened, and that these three connected points cannot be separated[....] You must put study, opinions, and

⁸⁸ Pudong Shipbuilding Factory Power Source Science and Technology Repairs Section’s Youth Discussion Group (沪东造船厂动力科技修工段青年评论组), “读点法家著作深入批林批孔” (Read Some Legalist Writings to Deepen the Criticism of Lin and Confucius), June 1974, SHMA, C21-3-120-69.

⁸⁹ Shanghai May 7 Cadre School, “Regarding Implementing a Plan to Read Some Legalist Writings,” B60-1-85-72.

criticisms together to find the correct outlook.”⁹⁰ The fact that workers and cadres alike both stressed that they wished they had more time to study and write shows that they took their intellectual work seriously and that they really did participate in knowledge production.

Despite limited time for some, many people showed great productivity in their intellectual outputs. Some workers at the start of the campaign who participated in a large city-wide meeting devoted to gathering educational plans and materials for the criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius voiced their concerns that “workers do not have enough time to study theory,” but that, after studying, they realized that the working class must be “the leading force in the criticism of Confucius.”⁹¹ As such, it would follow that workers would and should be able to become scholars and intellectuals themselves. They were to join the production of knowledge in a socialist country and become worker-scholars, although at the time these kinds of students, writers, and artists were usually called “worker-peasant-soldier students” (*gongnongbing xueyuan* 工农兵学员). It was often through performing manual labor, reading Marxist-Leninist theory, being inspired by the revolutionary spirits of comrades, and following Chairman Mao’s orders that workers, cadres, and students found the will they needed to fully participate in and understand the importance of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign.

The most frequently cited problem that workers had with the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign’s study sessions was that reading Classical Chinese was too hard for them. As Latin is to modern Italian, so is Classical Chinese to modern Mandarin Chinese: while the

⁹⁰ Municipal Public Finance Bureau Agricultural Finance Group (市财政局农村金融组), “坚持学、批、联、把批林批孔斗争引向深入” (Persist in Study, Criticize, and Unity to Deepen the Struggle Over Criticizing Lin and Criticizing Kong), May 22, 1974, SHMA, B104-3-531.

⁹¹ Shanghai Municipal Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Experience Exchange Meeting and the Headquarters for City and District People’s Militia (上海市批林批孔经验交流会与市、区民兵指挥部), “机关批林批孔大会会议材料” (Materials from the Office for the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Big Meeting), July 1974, SHMA, B74-1-310.

older language influences the modern especially in literary terms, it takes specialized education and training to be able to understand the classical language. One cannot assume to understand Classical Chinese just because one is fluent in modern Mandarin. Classical Chinese is a separate language and can take years to master its subtle grammar, unusual and rare written characters, and frequent use of unquoted references and allusions to earlier classical texts. Understandably, then, one of the most common problems reportedly encountered by the study groups during the middle of the 1970s was that they lacked the training necessary to understand Classical Chinese. The Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee reported the following quotes from workers after observing several local workers' study groups in August, 1974: "our foundation in Classical Chinese is poor," "we don't understand difficult characters," "the sentences don't read smoothly," and "our brains get all mixed up."⁹² Classical Chinese texts could thus be very difficult for some members of society with education that did not reach to the point of learning Classical Chinese. The presence of rarely appearing, archaic Chinese characters was not encouraging to them. Another group of workers at the study group of the prolific number two garage of the Number Five Shanghai Steel Factory stated frankly in July of 1974, "we are not university students," and "workers don't have time to study."⁹³ The electrical worker who wrote annotations of *The Analects* told his colleagues, "I had to study late into the night on weekends and my eyesight grew worse as I studied Classical Chinese."⁹⁴ The proletarians thus perceived that reading Classical Chinese texts was the kind of task only done by university students and academics in China at that time. When party and government organizations encouraged workers

⁹² Documents from the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Meeting on Experiences of Criticizing Lin and Criticizing Kong (上海市革命委员会机关批林批孔经验交流大会发言稿之一), "我们读《商君书》的一些体会" (Some Understanding from Our Reading of *The Book of Lord Shang*), August, 1974, SHMA, A102-1-33-23.

⁹³ SHMA, B74-1-310.

⁹⁴ SHMA, B173-2-192.

to read Classical Chinese texts themselves, to come up with their own glosses and translations of them, and to deeply understand the progressive or reactionary messages of these ancient texts, workers generally expressed a lack of confidence in such a project. It seemed, at first, to be an impossible task for them to read and understand these texts. For instance, the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee's Culture and Education Group reported at a city-wide meeting for those doing propaganda work that workers they observed around the city told them, "our cultural level is relatively low," and "our understanding of history is poor."⁹⁵ Educators and workers thus faced a difficult problem that they had to resolve in order to carry out the educational aims of the recently launched Campaign to Criticize Lin and Confucius.

Typical solutions to the problem of reading Classical Chinese were listed as reading theoretical works from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Mao to acquire the analytical tools necessary for interpreting these ancient books, and studying documents and reports from other work units, the party, and revolutionary committees. Students would then possess the correct "revolutionary spirit" to get through the classical texts. In the words of the organizers of the May 7th cadre schools around the country, students needed "the correct position and viewpoint" (*zhengque de lichang he guandian* 正确的立场和观点) as a foundational basis before they could properly study Classical Chinese texts, literature, culture, or history. After all, as Aminda Smith wrote, "consciousness raising was the foundation of the revolution."⁹⁶ One party committee reported that they, "formed a study and writing group for workers to attend. The writing group's first paper was too long and complicated for the workers to understand. So the workers said that the

⁹⁵ Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Culture and Education Group (上海市革委会文教组), "1974 年工宣队进驻六周年大会材料" (Materials from the Big Meeting of the Sixth Anniversary of the Stationing of the Propaganda Work Team in 1974), 1974, SHMA, B244-1-468.

⁹⁶ Aminda Smith, *Thought Reform and China's Dangerous Classes*, 99.

committee had removed themselves too far away from the masses.”⁹⁷ The cadres had to come up with ways to make such difficult topics more palatable for their audiences. The Public Finance Bureau reported some details on their theoretical study to make sense of the campaign’s historical materials: “Our members got up early and went to bed late, grabbing all the time they could to study more. For the sake of revolution, we studied theory. Our energy for studying was great[....] The group got its theoretical understanding from articles in *People's Daily* and *Red Flag*. These allowed the participants to truly grasp this kind of work[....] Now, everyone thinks that you need to use the Marxist perspective, position, and method to analyze and correctly evaluate a historical figure. So then, how to use the Marxist viewpoint to discuss Legalist writings? We held a meeting with the Bank of China small study group. They came up with these four aspects: 1. class struggle is the moving force in the development of history; 2. the masses of people are the creators of history; 3. the contradictions between the relations of production and productivity; 4. the historical viewpoint of every condition, location, and time's shifting.”⁹⁸ The group here, in this report, gave insight into how they went about studying theory so as to make sense of the ancient texts that they were supposed to study and criticize.

Fortunately for the uninitiated, revolutionary committees across the cultural, propaganda, and educational sectors of the government, party, and society created a plethora of easily accessible study materials to aid them in understanding the importance of criticizing Confucianism and studying Legalism. Typical study materials of this sort had titles like *Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Essays*,⁹⁹ *Concise Annotations for Terms to Evaluate Legalism and*

⁹⁷ SHMA, B173-2-192.

⁹⁸ SHMA, B104-2-603.

⁹⁹ *Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Essays* (批林批孔杂文) (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Press, 1974).

Criticize Confucianism,¹⁰⁰ and *Reference Materials for Criticizing “The Three Character Classic.”*¹⁰¹ Major state-owned publishing houses like Shanghai People’s Press printed affordable paperback books available for sale at the Xinhua bookstores located in major cities. The various people’s presses around the country also compiled and published the essays, speeches, letters, and findings of worker-peasant-soldier students in their small study groups and at their schools. These texts were cited and used in professional academic writings at the time, too, showing that the small study groups were indeed active sites of knowledge production engaging in discussions back and forth with the elite intellectuals. University presses also produced accessible reference materials that workers found in libraries at their workplaces, neighborhoods, and schools.

As mentioned above, workers unfamiliar with Classical Chinese turned to public libraries to acquire the appropriate dictionaries, commentaries, scholarship, and primary sources for their studies. Workers reported looking up words in Classical Chinese dictionaries like the 18th century Kangxi Dictionary, as well as newer dictionaries compiled by university departments, the Education Bureau, and model work units. Some workers then took it upon themselves to produce their own glosses for Classical Chinese words, as the very prolific No. 2 workshop of the No.5 Steel Factory of Shanghai did.¹⁰² In the process, these workers producing their own glosses were engaging in and criticizing the ancient commentary tradition of China. Informed scholarly commentaries for classical texts have been the most significant means of studying and

¹⁰⁰ Beijing Normal College Chinese Department, and Xinhua Dictionary Compiling Group (北京师范学院中文系, 新华词典编纂组), editors, *Concise Annotations for Terms to Evaluate Legalism and Criticize Confucianism* (评法批儒词语简释) (Beijing: Beijing Commercial Press, 1975).

¹⁰¹ Beijing Municipal Measuring Bureau of Industry Theory Small Study Group, and Beijing Petroleum Machinery Plant Workers’ Theory Group (北京市仪表工业局理论小组, 北京石油机械厂工人理论组), editors, *Reference Materials for Criticizing “The Three Character Classic”* (批判“三子经”参考材料) (Beijing: People’s Press, 1975).

¹⁰² SHMA, B74-1-310.

writing about ancient Chinese texts since *The Zuo Commentaries* (*Zuo Zhuan* 左傳) from the 4th century BCE. The Chinese masses not only read, but also engaged directly with the commentary tradition during the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign. In this way, again, the small study groups were sites of knowledge production. In this case, they were producing knowledge in philology, one of the oldest scholarly traditions of China.

These workers did not produce their commentaries and critiques in a vacuum, then. Other study groups, government bureaucrats, party committees, and academics read and cited them in their own writings. Fudan University Philosophy Department students recorded going to a local factory “to learn from the working class and to unite with the working class for battle. Under the party branch’s leadership, our small group’s eight youth members broke up into separate combat groups [with the workers]. Some of us wrote annotations and commentaries on the so-called ‘classic,’ *The Analects*, and some pernicious folk sayings of the Kong-Meng Way.”¹⁰³ A looping scholarly exchange thus developed during the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign between traditional scholarly voices, government, party, and the revolutionary masses. This further shows that these study groups became sites of knowledge production, operating alongside and in cooperation with other, more traditional institutions of knowledge production like universities and government bureaus concerned with propaganda, culture, and education. The workers became scholars in action by late 1974, or, worker-scholars. Their places of study and work thus became sites of knowledge production. The young cadres who were studying at May 7th cadre schools mirrored the workers they were supposed to learn from in that they turned to

¹⁰³ Shanghai Municipal Committee of the Communist Youth League (共青团上海市委), “共青团六届五次全委扩大会议的通知、日程、名单、讲话、会议发言和情况报告” (Announcements, Proceedings, Rosters, Speeches, and Situation Reports for the Fifth Meeting of the Sixth Congress of the Communist Youth League), June 1974, SHMA, C21-3-119.

combine work with study by performing manual labor that coincided with intensive study at their schools.

The Importance of Being Detailed

The reports from the Shanghai Commerce May 7th Cadre School at the beginning of this chapter stand out from most other reports of the same type for their length and detail. While many other reports from this time period told the amount of time that study group members spent on study and work, their reading materials, and the demographics of their study groups, the reports from the seventh session in late 1974 were exceptionally lengthy and precise. I argue in this section that the painstaking breakdown of what would happen every single day of the seventh school session down to the half day mark is revealing of the importance that the party placed on studying history, theory, and culture in the post-Lin Biao period of Maoist China. As sites of knowledge production, the cadre schools and study groups needed to be detailed like other knowledge production sites about the intellectual lineage that led to the creation of their writings.¹⁰⁴

The details of these reports show that it was very important to the party's radical leadership that new party members thoroughly grasp not just central party directives, but also the fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist theory, Historical Materialism, ancient and modern Chinese history, the threats of long-standing traditions in Chinese culture, and China's position in the world in the twentieth century. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution started with the attack on "Soviet revisionism," as exemplified by the words and deeds of Nikita Khrushchev and Liu

¹⁰⁴ It is likely that similarly detailed and lengthy reports were created by other departments and work units in China at this time, but the only report of this length and detail available to me in PRC archives happens to come from the Commerce May 7th Cadre School. In the summer of 2019, the largest source of relevant materials for my research came from work units involved in public finance, commerce, and public transportation at the Municipal government level.

Shaoqi. It ended with the revitalized attack on Chinese tradition that began with the May 4th Movement fifty years earlier.¹⁰⁵ However, it was at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution decade, in 1966, that the Smash the Four Olds Campaign was launched and Confucian temples and statues were burned and smashed by Red Guards.¹⁰⁶ Ironically, in late 1973, when Confucius himself was named alongside the greatest traitor to the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Lin Biao, the radical youth were not asked to smash statues anymore. Instead, they were to find old copies of *The Analects*, *The Mencius*, *The Three Character Classic*, *The Book of Rites*, and *The Classic for Girls* from the library, and to read them. During the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, workers in China read these “reactionary classics” and “liars’ classics”¹⁰⁷ and, invariably, criticized them. However, for many of them (especially the younger ones), this was the very first time that they had ever actually read the classics of Confucianism themselves. Some of them spent considerable amounts of time writing essays about Confucian philosophy, glossing for ancient words, looking up words in Classical Chinese dictionaries, and giving explanations to their comrades. This was clearly a different kind of campaign from the Smash the Four Olds. If the Cultural Revolution began with iconoclasm and fire, it ended with lengthy book-reading sessions and careful theorizing.

The writings of reactionaries were always available in the PRC, but their dissemination had to be done very carefully. For example, the writings of Trotsky were published in China in the 1950s, with the caution that they were the writings of a Soviet counter-revolutionary.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ During the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, the May 4th Movement’s intellectuals were lauded for their criticisms of Confucianism.

¹⁰⁶ For a detailed study of the destruction of Confucian temples in Confucius hometown of Qufu, Shandong, see: Dahpon David Ho, “To Protect and Preserve: Resisting the Destroy the Four Olds Campaign, 1966-1967,” 64-95.

¹⁰⁷ Shanghai Number 5 Steel Factory Workers’ Writing Group (上海第五钢铁厂工人写作组), 《三字经》是骗人经 (“The Three Character Classic” is the Liars’ Classic) (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Press, 1974).

¹⁰⁸ Gregor Benton, *China’s Urban Revolutionaries: Explorations in the History of Chinese Trotskyism, 1921-1952* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996).

During the Cultural Revolution, reactionary writings were preserved in libraries and in the protected Internal Reference Materials (*neibu cankao* 内部参考), documents only available to party members at various levels of clearance. Chinese youths in the late 1960s to early 1970s got their hands on the writings of Jack Kerouac and materials from Taiwan and Hong Kong through their party member parents' old copies of Internal Reference Materials on book shelves next to the Selected Works of Mao Zedong and Lu Xun.¹⁰⁹

In terms of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, however, this was not a case of secretly reading scandalous literature. The great reactionaries' writings were made readily available for all to read. This was because the party leadership wanted people to criticize Confucianism. In September 1973, Mao Zedong told the Central Committee of the CCP that it was a good time to criticize Confucius.¹¹⁰ Mao and the rest of the party's leaders were concerned after Lin Biao's death with the succession of leadership in the party, and also with the continuity of the revolution. Mao expressed such concerns to Edgar Snow in 1972.¹¹¹ As such, in order to ensure the continuity of the revolution and the legacy of the Cultural Revolution's successes, Mao wanted to make sure that the Chinese masses and the CCP's cadres had the right understanding of where they were at. He thus thought it was acceptable in 1974 to undertake teaching the Chinese people to use Marxist-Leninist theory to study and critically evaluate China's philosophical heritage.

¹⁰⁹ Based on findings of reading patterns during the late Cultural Revolution decade from: Lena Henningsen, "Reading that Matters! Life-Writing about Reading Practices in 1970s China," Paper Presentation at Association for Asian Studies Conference in Washington D.C., March 23, 2018. Lin Biao's son, Lin Ligu, and his friends at the airforce academy were said to have found out about the Beatles this same way.

¹¹⁰ Roderick MacFarquhar, and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 367.

¹¹¹ Edgar Snow, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1972). See also: Robert Jay Lifton, *Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Vantage House, 1968), 19-20.

The Shanghai Commerce May 7th Cadre School's reports at the beginning of this chapter thus show that the importance is revealed in the details. Sixteen days spent studying the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao on Historical Materialism would make sure that the cadres had the properly firm basis in theory necessary to analyze pre-modern China's intellectual history. Eighteen days had to be spent on reading primary and secondary sources of the history of the Confucian-Legalist struggle because the cadres needed to understand China's history and its relevance to the current day. As discussed in the beginning section of this chapter, understanding Historical Materialism enough to make the appropriate theoretical interpretations of China's history was the main intended outcome of reading Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao in the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* study sessions. The CCP's version of Historical Materialism at that time emphasized that class struggle is a constant throughout all periods of history, including during the period of socialism, when the forces of revolution and revisionism struggle for the progress or reversion of history, respectively. From Marx and Engels, Chinese cadres came to understand that class is based on the material reality of one's relationship to the means of production.¹¹² From Lenin and Stalin, they learned that control of the state is an essential part of class struggle for carrying forward revolution.¹¹³ Carrying that idea further, from Mao Zedong, Chinese cadres learned to pay attention to continued class struggle after the socialist transition, and to see that there is a continued struggle between revisionists and revolutionaries over control of the state and thus of the future path of the Communist Party.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Typical study materials during the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* campaign by Marx and Engels tended to include *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

¹¹³ The most common writings by Lenin and Stalin that were read by Chinese students during the latter half of the Cultural Revolution decade were Lenin's *The State and Revolution*, *On Marx, Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, and Stalin's *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*.

¹¹⁴ Chinese cadres read a very wide range of writings by Mao Zedong, depending on a particular point of focus in their studies. Generally speaking, Mao's most frequently read work on Historical Materialism was *On the Correct Handling of Contradiction Among the People*. However, individual speeches and letters by Mao and his close associates were also widely read at this time by the people. These speeches and writings contained further relevant

Studying alone is not enough, however, for Maoists. Mao said, “Human knowledge depends primarily on activities of material production, gradually realizing the phenomena of nature, the characteristics of nature, the regularities of nature, and the relationship between humans and nature. Furthermore, by going through the process of material production, and at various different levels, humans gradually realize the certain common interests between each other. All of these understandings cannot be separated from the activities of material production.”¹¹⁵ In order to foster their knowledge along socialist lines, then, the students at the Shanghai Commerce May 7th Cadre School would spend fifteen days in work brigades conducting hard agricultural labor at their school. In the process of working, it was hoped that the cadres would learn personally through this experience that they would see that Confucian philosophy and Lin Biao’s revisionism were wrong. Continuing along with the line of Maoist epistemology that knowledge develops in accordance with one’s relationship with other humans and the natural world in practice, the cadres’ agricultural learning could not be done by them alone. They had to spend two more weeks at work, but this time, “living, working, eating, and studying with the peasants in the nearby village.” This was the mass line in action: “from the masses to the masses.” The cadres could share what they learned of theory and history with the peasants and in turn learn from the peasants the rustic, earthy wisdom that comes from centuries of farming.

Their month of hard work finished, the cadres would end their study session by reuniting at the school to spend five final days on conclusions. This was the last part of their schooling in a

thoughts from Mao on Chinese history, the role of the masses in intellectual reeducation, and the Maoist critique of the Soviet Union and “Soviet revisionism.”

¹¹⁵ My translation. The Chinese original was reproduced in Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong, Volume I: The Revolutionary Civil War Period* (Beijing: People’s Press, 1951). It can be found online at: Mao Zedong, “On Practice,” July 1937, *Marxist Internet Archive*, last updated 2004, accessed May 4, 2020, <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-193707.htm>.

May 7th cadre school. They had to take all of their work and study experiences together to form the final part of their education: unity. They would write essays on what they learned over the process of the school session, share with each other, show how they changed and developed over the past few months, and resolve any unsolved questions at that point. In the end, their final reports would need to be presented to classmates, teachers, and leaders, and would generally need to be soundly approved before they could move on from the cadre school to whatever their following appointment was. Some would resume study elsewhere or be sent to appointed government work in a wide variety of duties. At the end of their report on a large ministry-wide studying period, the Shanghai Municipal Public Finance Bureau concluded from their studies of theory and history: “Strengthen the Party's theory ranks' leadership. In the course of criticizing Confucius and Lin Biao, our party branch researched a lot, came up with a lot of plans, participated in a lot of activities, and strengthened our theoretical understanding.”¹¹⁶

Depending on the kinds of output that came from study sessions, certain work units and study groups could gain national recognition as revolutionary models, as happened to the Shanghai No. 5 Steel Factory. Model status for a worker, student, commune, or work unit could lead to publication in newspapers and books, invitations to give speeches to other study sessions, and sponsorship from party leaders. For example, during the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, the Tianjin Railway Station's workers and the Xinjiazhuang Commune were both promoted by Jiang Qing as models in criticizing Lin Biao and Confucius.¹¹⁷ On the local scale, the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee promoted the Second Workshop of the Fifth Shanghai Steel Factory, the China Shipbuilding Factory, and the Propaganda Team of

¹¹⁶ SHMA, B104-2-603.

¹¹⁷ Jeremy Brown, “Staging Xiaojinzhuang: The City in the Countryside, 1974-1976,” in *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, 153-184.

Chongming County School as particularly productive work units who produced good study materials and model examples for others to follow in criticizing Lin Biao and Confucius. They thus handed out materials written by and about these model work units to the rest of the city's study groups. These groups were cited in later writings by other groups and educational materials, showing that that they were indeed sites of knowledge production that spoke in the same field of discourse as major traditional intellectual elites did in universities and the relevant government and party departments.

Personalizing Study Reports

Study groups often made things personal to their positions in society at that time. For instance, the youth staff at a Shanghai department store focused their studies on criticizing Lin Biao's son, Lin Ligu, particularly as a bad example for Chinese youth.¹¹⁸ The elementary and middle school students of the Shanghai Railway Workers' No. 5 School focused on criticizing *The Three Character Classic* and Confucian child-rearing traditions for "raising the children of reactionaries to grow up to oppress laboring people."¹¹⁹ Matching their work, bureaucrats studying together in the Shanghai Ministry of Commerce criticized Confucian understandings of business.¹²⁰ Similarly, PLA soldiers stationed at the local garrison of Shanghai criticized Lin Biao's military tactics for "reflecting a Confucian style of fighting," as opposed to Mao

¹¹⁸ Shi bai shi dian "jin xun hua" Study Group (市百十店《金训华》学习小组), "狠批林彪教子尊孔读经的罪行" ("Hatefully criticize the crimes of Lin Biao teaching his son to revere Confucius and to read the classics"), February 15, 1974, SHMA, C21-4-69-45.

¹¹⁹ Lecture Transcript of a Meeting for the No. 5 Elementary and Middle School Party Branch of the Shanghai Railway Workers' Children (铁路职工子弟第五小学党支部在市区中小学批林批孔座谈会上的发言 (讨论稿)), "我们是怎样批判《三字经》的" ("How we criticized 'The Three Character Classic'"), 1974, SHMA, B61-2-88-73.

¹²⁰ Party Committee of the Shanghai Municipal No. 1 Ministry of Commerce (上海市第一商业局党委), "上海市第一商业局党委负责同志和部份站、司基层单位在工会、团委联合召开批林批孔经验交流会上讲话提要" (Outline speech of the experience and communicative meeting to commence criticizing Lin and Confucius of the Shanghai Municipal No. 1 Ministry of Commerce party committee's responsible comrades, stations, departments, work units' trade union, and Youth League Committee), August 31, 1974, SHMA, B123-8-978.

Zedong's revolutionary style of warfare.¹²¹ The Women's Federation of Shanghai held a massive meeting in February 1974 devoted to criticizing the sexism embedded in feudal Chinese culture.¹²² A Tibetan PLA soldier wrote to *People's Daily* newspaper that "for Tibetans, our Confucians are the Lamas who oppressed us before liberation."¹²³ The elderly workers at Shanghai's No. 5 Steel Factory related their criticisms of Confucianism to their own personal life experiences pre-liberation. They recounted examples to their younger coworkers of how Confucian ideas were used to oppress them before liberation, in particular pointing out that their former bosses in Republican China, "quoted Confucian sayings at the workers to keep us from protesting against oppressive working conditions."¹²⁴ All of these diverse and colorful examples from around the city illustrate the many different ways in which Chinese people across a diverse array of life connected the criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius to their own personal lives. They recounted their personal experiences before liberation, criticized the examples of perceived reactionaries, and tried to find out what aspects of their lives were linked to Confucianism and reaction. As a result of this individualized soul-searching, the reports of small study groups contain some of the most novel candid ideas of the worker-scholars. Hidden among the stacks of slogans and minute curriculums were direct quotes from the people, speaking their own intellectual contributions to the then-national discourse on tradition. In the absence of direct contact with the Confucian Classics as educated elites, China's workers noticed what aspects of their pre-liberation lives were influenced by Confucian ideas that they were only in the 1970s

¹²¹ Shanghai Municipal and District People's Militia Command Post (上海市、区民兵指挥部), "批林批孔的材料" ("Materials for Criticizing Lin and Confucius"), March 1974, SHMA, B74-1-310.

¹²² Shanghai Municipal Women's Federation Office (上海市妇联办公室), "召开上海妇女深入批林批孔大会通知、批判稿、主持人讲话稿和大会纪录" ("Minutes, reports, and speeches of the big meeting to commence the Shanghai Women's Federation deeply criticizing Lin and Confucius"), February 1974, SHMA, C31-3-25.

¹²³ *A Collection of Articles: Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius*.

¹²⁴ Shanghai Number 5 Steel Factory Workers' Writing Group (上海第五钢铁厂工人写作组), 《三字经》是骗人经 ("The Three Character Classic" is the Liars' Classic) (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1974).

finally reading for the first time. And so, some older workers at the steel factory remembered that they saw some of the lines from *The Analects* written on banners hung up in the old factory before liberation to tell them that class consciousness and concern for workers' livelihood was improper¹²⁵—that, as Mencius said, “Those who labor with their minds govern people, while those who labor with their physical strength are the governed. Those who are governed feed other people, and those who govern are fed by other people.”¹²⁶ And for the Tibetan soldier, in the absence of a cultural upbringing heavily tinged with Confucian philosophy, he instead tried to figure who were “our Confucians?” He determined that the pre-liberation voices of tradition and reaction were the Buddhist Lamas of Tibet. In this way, the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign extended beyond just the two named figures. The campaign was eventually expanded from just these two to include all Confucians across Chinese history and then to include all reactionaries across history and cultures who seek to roll back the wheels of progress. Thus, Lin Biao was often called a “restorationist” in anti-Lin literature in the PRC. Biographies of Confucius produced at this time also emphasized that Confucius was seeking the *restoration* of a declining slave system. And so, when capitalism was going to supplant feudalism in China in the beginning of the 20th century, the supporters of feudal restoration were Confucians while the progressive bourgeois democratic revolutionaries were anti-Confucian. The trend would continue forever, it seemed, and so Lin, in quoting Confucius and Mencius in his home, was a secret capitalist restorationist in the new socialist society. Such was the argument of many published histories of “the Confucian-Legalist struggle.”

¹²⁵ Shanghai Number 5 Steel Factory Workers' Writing Group (上海第五钢铁厂工人写作组), 《三字经》是骗人经 (“The Three Character Classic” is the Liars' Classic) (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1974).

¹²⁶ My translation of Mencius, 3.A.4.6. Chinese original: “勞心者治人，勞力者治於人；治於人者食人，治人者食於人。” For a seminal English translation of *Mengzi*, see: Bryan W. Van Norden, translator, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008). Full Chinese text can be found here: “Mengzi,” *Chinese Text Project*, accessed May 8, 2020, <https://ctext.org/mengzi>.

The most illustrative example of making criticizing Lin Biao and Confucius personal is the previously mentioned “Big Meeting of the Shanghai Women’s Federation to Deeply Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius.” On Saturday, February 9th, 1974, at 1:30 PM, at the Municipal All-China Federation of Trade Unions’ Assembly Hall, hundreds of women gathered to listen to speeches from speakers representing 18 different work units. Speeches were useful for the knowledge producing process because sometimes, “the educational text could also be a public presentation by an inspirational speaker.”¹²⁷ What’s more, at these gatherings with a roster of speakers and large audience turnout, “There was always good interaction between the speaker and the audience. Since every speech was a ritual, the audience was expected to join the ritualistic activities[....] The atmosphere was usually hot, and the audience rarely felt bored even if the speech itself was boring.”¹²⁸ The speakers shared with their audience what their separate work units had experienced in the earliest days of criticizing Lin and Confucius. Some older women shared with younger women what the oppression of women in pre-liberation China was like for them, stating that before liberation, they were told, “that women should just follow their husbands, that women are only supposed to raise children, that women's fates are decided by their husbands[....] These ideas all just make women slaves.”¹²⁹ Others focused on the patriarchal ideas inherent to Confucian philosophy, like the famous “Three Virtues and the Four Obediences” (*sancong side* 三从四德). Regardless of their focus, the overriding theme of the entire meeting was that criticizing Lin and Confucius was essentially about “defending the fruits of socialism and liberation.” For these women, Confucianism, capitalist restoration, imperialism,

¹²⁷ Smith, *Thought Reform and China’s Dangerous Classes*, 119.

¹²⁸ Huang, *To Rebel is Justified*, 147.

¹²⁹ Shanghai Municipal No. 2 Rotating May Seventh Cadre School Students Zhang Juzhen, Zhu Huifang, He Yuexian, Tang Yunxian, and Zhou Jinhua 上海市“五·七”干校轮训班二支部二组学员张菊珍、朱惠芳、贺月仙、唐云仙、周金华, “林彪孔老是劳动妇女的死敌” (Lin Biao and Kong the Dick are the Enemies of Laboring Women), February 3, 1974, SHMA, B60-2-420-16.

and Soviet revisionism all represented a return to the oppression that women experienced before liberation. The revolution liberated Chinese women, and so any return to the way things were before 1949 was absolutely unacceptable. The fruits of liberation that these women pointed to included access to public education, the opportunity to participate actively in the workplace and party, increased access to modern medicine, and an overall revolutionary sense of self, the “revolutionary spirit” that appeared earlier in the May 7th cadre school reports. Returning to pre-1949 conditions would mean that women would lose access to education and be treated as second-class citizens in comparison to men, according to the speeches at this meeting.¹³⁰ Later that year, a worker study group described the fruits of socialism thusly: “the benefits and results of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution are these: the great majority of revolutionary intellectuals and revolutionary cadres are working on the glorious road of the ‘May 7th [Directive],’ the great majority of intellectual youths are following the great call of Chairman Mao to go to the countryside and receive re-education from the poor and middle peasants. These are the new products of socialism. These are the new results of the Great Cultural Revolution. The Soviet revisionists want us to go back from that. We cannot have that. We cannot allow it.”¹³¹ This idea was shared by the speakers at the Big Meeting.

As Chairman Mao said, “women hold up half the sky.”¹³² In contrast, Confucius said that “Of all the people, women and servants are the most difficult to deal with.”¹³³ Following the

¹³⁰ SHMA, C31-3-25.

¹³¹ Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Public Transportation Group’s Good Citizens Food Products No. 4 Factory Workers’ International Current Affairs Evaluation Small Group (上海市革命委员会工交组织书组益民食品四厂工人国际时事评论小组), “批判苏修尊孔骂秦的反动实质” (Criticize the Counter-revolutionary Essence of the Soviet Revisionists’ Reverence for Kong and Cursing of Qin), August 10, 1974, SHMA, B246-2-1030-18.

¹³² Apparently the exact origins of this phrase are unclear, but it was certainly a ubiquitous slogan of CCP propaganda by the 1970s. For more discussion on the phrase, see: “‘妇女能顶半边天’爆红美国 这句话是谁说的?,” Sohu, Last updated January 24, 2017, accessed May 10, 2020, www.sohu.com/a/125002775_446445.

¹³³ My translation of *The Analects*, Book 17, Verse 25. Chinese original: “唯女子與小人為難養也。” An English translation of the entire text is: Edward Slingerland, translator, *Confucius, Analects: With Selections from*

teachings of his predecessor, Mencius said, “When a man come of age, his father instructs him. When a woman gets married, her mother instructs her as she leaves the gates of the house: ‘When a woman enters the home, she must be respectful and circumspect, and she must not disobey her husband!’ Being obedient is the correct way for wives and concubines.”¹³⁴ A classic of the Confucian cannon, the *Classic of Rites* says, “Outside affairs should not be talked of inside the threshold (of the women's apartments), nor inside (or women's) affairs outside it.”¹³⁵ It also says, “In the ruler's court, parties should not speak of wives and daughters.”¹³⁶ The classical Confucian philosophers insinuated repeatedly that women should stay inside to manage family and household affairs, leaving the public realm to men, as represented in the Chinese idiom, “women rule the inside, men rule the outside” (*nv zhu nei, nan zhu wai* 女主內, 男主外). The dichotomy between Mao’s words and the words of the Confucians was clear and obvious to the women assembled in Shanghai in February 1974. This meant to them that Confucianism was reactionary and oppressive to women, and that they could not go back to the way things were in China before the communist revolution. One all-women study group at a Shanghai May Seventh Cadre School said in a report written after their study session of *The Analects* titled, “Lin Biao and Kong the Dick are the Enemies of Laboring Women,” that, “We laboring women, [...] for thousands of years, were told that women are not people.” And so, Lin Biao’s quoting the Han Dynasty Confucian scholar Dong Zhongshu on “the Three Obediences and the Four Virtues”

Traditional Commentaries (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003). The full Chinese original text can be found here: “The Analects,” *Chinese Text Project*, accessed May 8, 2020, <https://ctext.org/analects>.

¹³⁴ My translation of *Mencius* 3.B.4.3. Chinese original: “丈夫之冠也，父命之；女子之嫁也，母命之，往送之門，戒之曰：『往之女家，必敬必戒，無違夫子！』以順為正者，妾婦之道也。”

¹³⁵ *Classic of Rites*, Book 1, Passage 38. Translation from: James Legge, trans., *Sacred Books of the East: Volume 28, Part 4: The Li Ki* (1885), *Chinese Text Project*, accessed December 30, 2019, <https://ctext.org/liji/qu-li-i#n9510>.

¹³⁶ *Classic of Rites*, Book 2, Passage 86. Translation from *Ibid.*, accessed December 30, 2019, <https://ctext.org/liji/qu-li-ii#n9551>.

(*sancong side* 三从四德), “was like calling for a return to women's enslavement.”¹³⁷ Women's liberation post-1949 in the narrative of the Chinese communists was often focused on the symbolic and real movement of women from inside the domestic sphere to out into the public sphere, joining men in productive communal labor. So any restoration, revision, or reaction against women's liberation meant, according to the speeches of these women assembled in Shanghai in 1974, that women would be sent back to the domestic sphere and would lose the benefits of post-liberation society guaranteed to women: access to education, the right to divorce and marry legally and freely, and political participation through the party, government, and civic organizations such as the Women's Federation.¹³⁸

As demonstrated by looking at the examples from the women of this meeting in their speeches, Chinese people across society thus saw that criticizing Confucianism was entirely personal to them. Theory had to be connected to their personal life experiences. As the Cultural Revolution Leading Group said at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution decade, it was to be

¹³⁷ SHMA, B60-2-420-16.

¹³⁸ I do not want to oversimplify Confucianism as merely equal to sexism or a philosophy meant to oppress women. Scholarship since the 1990s on ancient and imperial Chinese women argues that Confucianism was at least, not initially, intentionally oppressive to women. Instead, the Confucian classics were commenting on social norms for women at their time, not social *ideals* of how a woman *should* be. They also were opposed to social equality across the board, because everyone in society, according to Confucian philosophy, always occupies a social position defined in relation to other members of society, not just women. Men were not equal to each other in Confucianism, either. Instead, many scholars argue, the imperial ideology of China was not necessarily patriarchal, but dynastic. The importance was to maintain the dynastic lineage, whether men or women do that, and women could rule on a man's behalf when no man was able to do so. My intention here, then, is to emphasize the kinds of 20th century interpretations of Confucianism that modernizing Chinese intellectuals held, which was that Confucianism was oppressive, patriarchal, and backwards. For more generous interpretations of Confucianism, see: Li Chenyang, ed., *The Sage and the Second Sex: Confucianism, Ethics, and Gender* (Chicago: Open Court, 2000); Keith McMahon, *Women Shall Not Rule: Imperial Wives and Concubines in China from Han to Liao* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013); Anne Behnke Kinney, trans. and ed., *Exemplary Women of Early China: The Lienü Zhuan of Liu Xiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

“a revolution that touches people to their very souls.”¹³⁹ The study done by these groups, then, was meant to affect people’s very sense of self and humanity.

Outcomes of the Small Study Groups

Of all the of the participants’ physical products of the study sessions during the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, the most remarkable is probably the commentaries that workers, cadres, and students wrote for the Classical Chinese texts that they read. *Pi Lin pi Kong* and its accompanying scholarship and literature were dismissed after the arrest of the Gang of Four as merely a ploy for this “anti-party clique.” To quote one immediate post-Cultural Revolution decade publication’s verdict of the campaign’s academic focus: “‘Criticize Confucianism Evaluate Legalism’ is Fake, Usurping Party and State Powers is Real.”¹⁴⁰ Study groups existed in the PRC before *pi Lin pi Kong* and they continued to exist after it. But study groups during this campaign were tasked with incredibly unusual subjects to study. Reading classics of Marxist-Leninist, Mao Zedong Thought was already normal for cadre schools and party committees by 1974, and major governmental decisions were usually followed by a nationwide study campaign to make sure that cadres and masses were coordinated. But in 1974, the revolutionary immediacy of their study groups expanded to include texts written in Classical Chinese. These classics of the Confucian canon like *The Analects*, *Mengzi*, and *The Doctrine of the Mean*, as well as Legalist philosophical texts like *The Book of Lord Shang* and *Han Feizi*. Popular narratives and pre-modern educational materials like *The Three Character Classic* and *The Zuo Commentaries* also appeared in study plans’ syllabi. And occasionally, much more

¹³⁹ “Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,” August 8, 1966, *Peking Review*, found on the Marxist Internet Archive, accessed on December 28, 2019, <https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/peking-review/1966/PR1966-33g.htm>.

¹⁴⁰ 评“四人帮”的批儒评法 (*Evaluating “The Gang of Four’s” Criticize Confucianism Evaluate Legalism*), Guangzhou: Guangdong People’s Press, 1977.

obscure titles found their way into study groups after perusing libraries, schools, and book stores, like Liu Zongyuan's 9th century political treatise, *On Feudalism*, and the record of a Han Dynasty court debate, *The Discourses on Salt and Iron*. As a result, a massive publishing boom of reprints, translations, commentaries, dictionaries, comic books, academic monographs, and introductory textbooks emerged to support this campaign's goals. The literature that came out of this movement was largely left behind in archives, libraries, and book collections to collect dust and eventually some of the printed materials wound up for sale at online bookstores and used book markets. This body of literature is largely forgotten today, but its significance can still be found. Unexpectedly, evidence of this can be found in Taiwanese Sinology scholarship since the 1980s.

In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars in Taiwan did not research Legalism in part because of the political situation in martial law-era Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek. Perhaps lack of interest, combined with official support for studying Neo-Confucianism in particular, and the Communist implications, made Legalism an understudied subject in Taiwanese Sinology during the Cold War years. It was a politically taboo subject, because of its contemporary relevance and implications. Touching on contemporary politics was avoided by scholars who wanted to do research on ancient Chinese literature, history, and thought. In response to the launching of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution on the mainland in the summer of 1966, in November of the same year, the Republic of China located in Taiwan launched its own "Campaign to Revitalize Chinese Culture" (中華文化復興運動 *Zhong hua wen hua fu xing yun dong*)¹⁴¹ led by a committee that included Sun Yat-sen's son Sun Fo, scholar and descendent of Confucius Kung

¹⁴¹ Also sometimes called, in the very rare mentions it ever gets in the Anglophone world, the Chinese Cultural Renaissance.

Te-cheng, former ROC Minister of Education Ch'en Li-fu, and inaugurally chaired by President Chiang Kai-shek himself until his death. In a "presidential instruction," Chiang Kai-shek declared in 1974 publication by the Ministry of National Defense that "the traitor Mao's 'Criticize Confucius, Uplift the Qin' [Campaign]... is a struggle between 5000 years of Chinese tradition and 20 years of the violent Mao-Communist rule."¹⁴² In official ROC discourse, the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign was not called *Pi Lin Pi Kong*; it was called "Criticize Confucius, Uphold Qin" (*pi Kong yang Qin* 批孔揚秦).¹⁴³ Lin Biao's name was removed from the title of the campaign in Taiwan because it was deemed a relatively unimportant political power struggle within the CCP. The Cultural Revolution was an attack on the entirety of Chinese civilization and culture in official Nationalist Party discourse. Because of the Republic of China's policy towards the mainland of "no contact, no compromise, and no negotiation" (*bu jiechu, bu tanpan, bu tuoxie* 不接觸,不談判,不妥協), mainland books were not published in Taiwan until the 1980s, and even then only in specialized, academic contexts. Reports in Taiwan about the mainland were meant to make the people happy that they were ROC citizens. Internally, the KMT had a central group devoted to following and researching developments on the mainland, and the president received regular updates on mainland news from his subordinates. The ROC propaganda apparatus was constantly listening to and delivering internal reports to the ROC's security apparatus and to the CIA about what they heard in mainland radio broadcasts and newspapers.¹⁴⁴ So, very few people living in Republican China had direct knowledge of what exactly people were saying in the mainland about *pi Lin pi Kong*.

¹⁴² Li Guangming 黎光明, editor, *毛共批孔揚秦運動的背景和陰謀* (*Mao Comm's Criticize Confucius Uphold Qin Campaign's Background and Conspiracy*) (Taipei: Li Ming Culture Industries Company, 1974), front piece. Li Guangming was not a real person, but the penname for Ministry of National Defense publications at the time.

¹⁴³ "Qin" referred to Qin Shihuang and his brutal reign led by Legalist philosophy, as interpreted by Confucian historians.

¹⁴⁴ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 454-455, 513, 522.

However, in the 1980s, as publishing and academic restrictions gradually lifted in Taiwan under Chiang Ching-kuo, the Taipei-based Chuang Yan Press published a 41-part collection of large, hardcover books called *Chinese Literature Appreciation Omnibus* (*Zhongguo jingdian xinshang quanji* 中國經典欣賞全集). Covering classical poetry, songs, prose, and novels, the collection contained reprints of scholarly annotated classical texts, complete with glosses for Classical Chinese terms and modern Mandarin translations for the texts. Innocuous as the collection was on the surface, it was remarkably unique in Taiwan for the time because it included mainland Communist scholarship on the Chinese classics. The reprints of Legalist texts, in particular, were all reprints of mainland Communist scholarship, complete with glosses that contained phrases like “class warfare” and “the feudal mode of production.” The series’ reprint of *The Book of Lord Shang*’s annotations and commentaries are completely a reprint of a mainland Chinese publication from the 1960s.¹⁴⁵ Ironically at this time, while the PRC under Deng Xiaoping’s leadership was moving away from using the theory of class war, Taiwanese scholars were just getting exposed to Mao-era mainland scholarship on a larger scale.

Still, however, scholarship on Legalism that engaged with mainland Communist scholarship was unheard of in Taiwan until the 2000s. The Shang Yang reprint was just a reprint of a mainland text with no Taiwanese response to it. Lin Tsung-shun is one of the few scholars in Taiwan today writing about Legalism, and his most recent monograph would be impossible to find in Taiwan during the martial law era. It includes not only citations to Mao-era scholarship, but also lengthy discussions and incorporations of Marxian theory à la Gramsci.¹⁴⁶ Lin told me in 2017 that “Chinese Legalism as a scholarly subject is about as unpopular in Taiwan as it is in

¹⁴⁵ *Chinese Literature Appreciation Omnibus: The Book of Lord Shang* (中國經典欣賞全集：商君書) (Taipei: Chuang Yan Press, 1984).

¹⁴⁶ Lin Tsung-shun (林聰舜), *儒學與漢帝國意識形態* (*Confucianism and the Ideology of the Han Empire*) (Hsinchu: National Tsing Hua University Press, 2017).

American academia.”¹⁴⁷ That is, Chinese Legalism continues to be overshadowed by the more popular Confucianism and Daoism, but it is no longer too politically sensitive to research it anymore.

That being said, consider how communist scholarship was mostly dismissed in classical Western Sinology at the same time as the Taiwanese discovery of mainland commentaries. The commentaries created by communist intellectuals in mainland China for ancient texts are noticeably absent in the endnotes, bibliographies, and translations of classical Chinese texts published in the Anglophone world. Only Cold War-era specialized studies of communist intellectual history and politics paid much attention to communist scholarship.¹⁴⁸ 20th century Anglophone scholarship on classical Chinese philosophy tended to dismiss scholarship from the PRC as merely “vulgar Marxism,”¹⁴⁹ and instead preferred to focus on other Western Sinologists and the works of some Republican-era Chinese scholars. While political scientists and some intellectual historians in the 1970s and 1980s took an interest in mainland scholarship as an object of study in itself, it was difficult to try to bring the literature from the PRC into the same conversational orbit as Western scholarship at that time. Only very recently have some mainland scholars been translated into English by university presses.¹⁵⁰

While in the 1980s, Anglophone Sinologists mostly dismissed mainland communist scholarship, in Republic-of-China-controlled Taiwan, the absence of any recent scholarship on

¹⁴⁷ Conversation with the author on August 3, 2017.

¹⁴⁸ For example: Li Yu-ning, *Shang Yang's Reforms and State Control in China* (White Plains: M.E. Sharpe, 1977); Li Yu-ning, *The First Emperor of China* (White Plains: M.E. Sharpe, 1975); James P. Harrison, *The Communists and Chinese Peasant Rebellions: A Study in the Rewriting of Chinese History* (New York: Atheneum, 1968).

¹⁴⁹ Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 459.

¹⁵⁰ For instance: Wang Hui, *China from Empire to Nation-State*, translated by Michael Gibbs Hill (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); and Timothy Cheek, Joshua A. Fogel, and David Ownby's interdisciplinary project, “Reading and Writing the Chinese Dream,” and publication, *Voices from the Chinese Century: Public Intellectual Debate from Contemporary China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

Legalism led to the printing of mainland scholarship from the previous thirty years. Tien-wei Wu argued that even though the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign was a political power struggle inside the CCP between the radicals and the moderates, it fostered novel innovations in academia (particularly in history, philosophy, literature, and archaeology) that contributed greatly to intellectual developments on these topics of ancient China and fostered further research later on.¹⁵¹ Wu's monograph focuses on elite intellectual discourse of that time, and while the Taiwanese reprints were usually also from traditional academic publications, I want to emphasize in this chapter of my dissertation that the people who studied and wrote in the political theory small study groups in the middle of the 1970s need to be brought into this story of the reception of the classics in modern China. The people who participated in these study sessions contributed directly to the academic successes of the 1970s in the PRC by participating in the loop of theoretical discourse between traditional intellectual institutions and the non-traditional sites of knowledge production that I discussed in this chapter, in particular the political theory small study groups. The Taiwanese reprints of mainland scholarship on Legalism benefited directly from grassroots participation in knowledge production. While the traditional sites of knowledge production in the PRC like the Liang Xiao and Luo Siding writing groups produced a large amount of educational and reference materials at the beginning of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, the workers, youths, cadres, and bureaucrats who participated in the studying and writing of this campaign created new commentaries on classical texts and figures in the history of Chinese thought like *The Three Character Classic*, Liu Zongyuan's *On Feudalism*, Wang Anshi, Empress Lu of the Han Dynasty, Wu Zetian, Liu Bang, Wang Chong, and Li Zhi. The revolutionary intellectuals of the PRC in turn read the intellectual products of the

¹⁵¹ Wu, *Lin Biao and the Gang of Four*.

theory small study groups and incorporated them into their future writings later on in the campaign's timeline. In a sense, then, the entire country was engaged in a national history writing project during the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign. It was because of this that the small study groups became equal sites of knowledge production to the more traditional ones in this time period. Who among them could have seen that their research would end up published a decade later in Taiwan?

The Liang Xiao and Luo Siding writing groups could only produce so much writing at a time. In their articles printed in major newspapers and magazines of the day, they cited and turned to the writings of notable study groups from factories and work units around the country. They said that the workers inspired them to study harder. They also quoted and referred to the study groups' writings on China's history, culture, and philosophy in these articles. This is clearly an example, then, of how the theory small study groups became sites of knowledge production during the latter years of the Cultural Revolution decade in China. The worker-scholars were pulled into the intellectual orbits of universities, writers, artists, and governmental ministries of culture, education, and propaganda, and vice versa. Let us turn, then, in the next chapter, to analyzing the slogans of this campaign's course as theoretical, intellectual statements representative of the times. As we will see, they were deeply rooted in China's ancient history and in its contemporary concerns.

CHAPTER 2: Making Sense of Rhetoric, Slogans, and Propaganda in the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign

In March 1974, an internal reference material (*neibu cankao ziliao* 内部参考资料) was produced and circulated within the CCP to party members for study purposes. It was part of a series of documents given to party cadres to assist in their study of the classics as a part of the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. The first major installment of cadre “reference materials” (*cankao cailiao* 参考材料) for this campaign was released in February 1974.¹⁵²

During the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign, these internal reference materials usually consisted of brief explanations of what the documents were about and why they were important, followed by a selection of classical texts in their original form, and then modern Mandarin Chinese translations and explanatory notes. The March 1974 document was titled “Liuxia Zhi Severely Curses the Dick Confucius.”¹⁵³ Like other internal reference materials of the same sort, its author(s) remain nameless and publication details are not present.¹⁵⁴ On the top of the front page of one copy is a sentence of calligraphy written by Jiang Qing dated December 1974, in which she wrote, “Please, comrades at the Light-Sensitive Research Facility, read this.”¹⁵⁵ Who exactly this refers to is unclear. It could be some department of photocopying within the party, or perhaps a department involved in movie or stage drama lighting production, which would make sense given Jiang Qing’s role in the film and drama fields during the Cultural Revolution. The text of the document contains two parts: a chapter from the classic Daoist

¹⁵² “林彪与孔孟之道：材料之一（参考材料）” “Lin Biao and the Kong-Meng Way: First Materials (Reference Materials),” February 1974. In author’s personal collection.

¹⁵³ “柳下跖痛骂孔老二” “Liuxia Zhi Severely Curses the Dick Kong,” 1974. In author’s personal collection.

¹⁵⁴ The Mandarin translation does have an author: the education administrator and classical scholar, Zhao Jibin 赵纪彬.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

philosophical text, *Zhuangzi*, and a modern Mandarin translation of it, in which Robber Zhi, who was criticized by Confucius for immoral behavior, is reinterpreted in the logic of the Cultural Revolution to be not just a bandit, but a revolutionary rebel against Confucianism and the slavery system. Like all Cultural Revolution era re-readings of classical Chinese philosophical texts, this re-reading is dramatically different from what was traditionally done in the imperial period by Confucian scholars. *Zhuangzi* as a text pokes fun at Confucians frequently, and it is interesting that Jiang Qing would choose a classic of the Daoist canon for cadres to read to get her point across, when usually during the campaign the radicals deferred to Legalist texts for classical counterpoints to Confucian arguments.

Regardless, the chapter taken from *Zhuangzi* here tells the story of Confucius travelling to meet the Robber Zhi, who commanded an army of “9,000 slaves that ran amuck all over the world, raided the various feudal vassals, destroyed the palaces of slaveowners, tore down their gates, ran off with their horses and oxen, and kidnapped their people.”¹⁵⁶ The text says that Confucius knew Robber Zhi’s brother, and after hearing about him, went to Robber Zhi to try to convince him to give up on his immoral ways and to follow the ways of the ancient sage kings. Robber Zhi then proceeded to scoff at everything that Confucius said, and pointed out all of the horrible mistakes and unfortunate fates that befell all of the model men that Confucius told him to be like. He then told Confucius to leave. When Confucius saw Robber Zhi’s brother again afterwards, he told him that he could not convince the man, to which the brother said he expected such an outcome.

The introduction of the reference material in question argued that Robber Zhi’s criticisms of Confucius’ words “embodied the heroism and revolutionary spirit of the laboring masses,

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

showing that the leading force in resisting Kong throughout history has always been the laboring people.”¹⁵⁷ Robber Zhi was something of a Spartacus-like slave revolt leader during the *pi Lin pi Kong* period, and so he got to speak for the slave masses in classical texts. Given the lack of many credible voices of laboring people in ancient Chinese texts, this document is a great example of the intellectual history presented by the Chinese communists to try to present history using Marxist historical materialist theory.

The fact that Jiang Qing signed off on this document is interesting. It shows that she was reading classical Chinese texts even during the Cultural Revolution, despite her high-modernist iconoclasm. She was particularly critical of sexist ideas in Confucian writings. It is possible that she kept in touch with classical literature during this time period because of Mao’s reanimated interest in classical Chinese literature during the 1970s,¹⁵⁸ and she was searching for useful passages to advance her struggle for power. What’s more, Robber Zhi’s language towards Confucius was biting and straightforward, filled with violent imagery. Given what we know about Jiang Qing’s own way of talking, this passage may have appealed to her for other reasons as well.

In this reference material, several major themes and contradictions of the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign, of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and of Maoism, come to the surface. Yiching Wu argued that Maoism was filled with “ideological ambiguities and Byzantine power struggles,”¹⁵⁹ but also that, “we are often led to view the Cultural Revolution as inexplicably extraordinary or mysterious--as 'the era of madness'

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Mao’s late-life fascination with classical literature is discussed here: Geremie R. Barme, “For Truly Great Men, Look to This Age Alone: Was Mao Zedong a New Emperor?,” in *A Critical Introduction to Mao*, edited by Timothy Cheek (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 269.

¹⁵⁹ Yiching Wu, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins*, 20.

(*fengkuang de niandai*). The explanation of historical events as the result of insanity is really an indication of intellectual impotence; it is another way of confessing that we are incapable of offering intelligible explanations.”¹⁶⁰ With this in mind, we must challenge our (mis)understandings of such a seemingly bizarre time period as the Cultural Revolution and the bizarre rhetoric of the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign, to make sense of what happened. The document quoted at the beginning of this chapter included classical language, profanity, and Maoist rhetoric all in one 14-page document. These three different kinds of languages all coexisted in one movement for a certain period of time, which is not to say that they did not coexist at other times as well, but they all existed together during *pi Lin pi Kong* in a certain way. In this chapter, I will point out that while this coexistence is contradictory and seemingly strange, it is worth taking apart and going into detail about how they served each other, how they mutually reinforced each other, and how they inadvertently pushed against each other or led to unexpected outcomes later on (i.e. the restoration of classicalism in the reformist era).

In this one document, the once-revered philosopher Confucius is called “Master Kong” (*Kongzi* 孔子) in the original classical text, and the profanity-laced “Kong the dick” (*Kong Lao'er* 孔老二) in the introduction, title, and vernacular translation. Marxist terminology like “the slave-owning class” (*nuli zhu jieji* 奴隶主阶级) and “the laboring masses” (*laodong renmin* 劳动人民) exist side-by-side with Confucius’s own attributed words about “The way of sages, and the wishes of everyone under Heaven” (*ci shengren caishi zhi xing, er tianzhi zhi yuan ye* 此圣人才士之行，而天下之愿也). Coupled with Comrade Jiang Qing’s instructions to study

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 3.

these materials, we are presented with a seemingly mysterious text for the time period in which it was produced. How did the decade that began with such iconoclasm as “Smash the Four Olds” and a Red Guard raid on Confucius’ ancestral home, end with classical couplets?

As this chapter, with its focus on the disparate rhetoric of the late Cultural Revolution-decade’s final major campaign, will show, the bizarre rhetoric can make sense. In fact, the seemingly contradictory sources and languages all mutually reinforced each other to present a cohesive narrative about China’s history, present, and future path. I examine the complicated meshing of profanity and slang with classical literary writing and Marxist-Leninist, Mao Zedong Thought ideology, through a focus on the most commonly used slogans of the campaign. I focus on these slogans because of their ubiquity during the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign, and as inspired by Julian Bourg’s study of the May 1968 Paris uprising.¹⁶¹ Bourg provides a useful example for this chapter. He uses slogans found in graffiti art, popular protesters' posters, and student newspapers from the May 1968 uprising in France as primary sources. He also uses intellectual writings, political group reports, activists' writings, newspapers, TV and radio broadcasts, and official government leaders' speeches all as primary sources in his intellectual history of the May 1968 uprising and its aftermath in French intellectual life. He uses and discusses the popular slogans from the protestors not just as small examples of cultural expression, but instead the author treats these slogans as intellectual sources, as philosophical statements and ideas. He treats the slogans as ideas, exploring their many different possible meanings and intentions, how they could be ironic and serious in different ways and how they could sound like other things. The French students used slogans like "It is forbidden to forbid." This includes irony, double entendre, humor, and reveals the ethical and political spirit of the

¹⁶¹ Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*.

movement. I do the same with the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* Campaign because it had different slogans that came from Mao Zedong, from other communist thinkers and writers, and from classical Chinese texts. I analyze and utilize the slogans, just like how Bourq does in his book. The Chinese political discourse in general was filled in the mid-‘70s with idioms, puns, jokes, quotes, and ideological statements.

This chapter turns to an analysis of language and rhetoric in the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign. To do this, I turn to both propaganda publications and to unpublished archival documents to analyze the kinds of words people chose in their attempts to make sense of criticizing Lin Biao and Confucius in the mid-1970s. In the Cultural Revolution, words mattered, and the choices that people made in their rhetoric mattered greatly. As Communications scholar Shaorong Huang argues, the Cultural Revolution, as a whole, could be seen “as a rhetorical movement.”¹⁶² It entailed “collective rituals” that required a wide repertoire of rhetorical tactics to truly be a revolution that “touches people to their very souls.”¹⁶³ It is for this reason that rhetoric and language was so important to the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign.

As Alexander Cook observed: “China's communists used language and symbolism purposefully and advisedly to express their ideological views and political aspirations. In this context, all political actions - no matter how seemingly minor, whether constructive policy initiatives or destructive attacks on rivals, and no matter whether motivated by personal, economic, diplomatic, or other goals - had to be justified and explained using the correct terminology and narrative codes before they could be considered legitimate and acceptable.

¹⁶² Shaorong Huang, *To Rebel Is Justified*, 191.

¹⁶³ This phrase is from a famous editorial that helped mark the official launching of the Cultural Revolution: “A Great Revolution That Touches the People to Their Very Souls,” *Peking Review*, Vol. 9, No. 24 (June 10, 1966), 8-9, <https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/peking-review/1966/PR1966-24d.htm>.

Under Chinese socialism, and especially during the politically perilous era of the Cultural Revolution, speakers and audiences were constantly alert to the heavy freight of meanings that words (so easily dismissed by outsiders as empty jargon) could convey.”¹⁶⁴ This chapter of my dissertation builds on Cook’s interpretation, as well as on approaches to the rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution from other scholars. Recent scholarship on culture, rhetoric, and propaganda of the Cultural Revolution has decisively broken away from the “totalitarian model that downplayed the influence of social forces” on political movements in the PRC.¹⁶⁵ Scholars moved away from focusing on political elites, then, and suggest that, “during the [Cultural Revolution], power was no longer dominated by the Party and government establishment, but shifted to the marginalized.”¹⁶⁶

However, while scholarship on the Cultural Revolution has turned to primary sources that contain the voices of the marginalized, “the laboring masses” as they were called in China at the time, the existing English-language scholarship on the Cultural Revolution is heavily weighted towards what is considered the Cultural Revolution proper—the first three years of it from its launch in the summer of 1966, to its officially declared conclusion at the 9th CCP Congress in 1969. That being said, a “Cultural Revolution decade” is acknowledged both in China and abroad. Some scholars, like Yiching Wu, have insisted on seeing only the first three years as the real Cultural Revolution. There is credence to this interpretation, given that it was officially declared over in 1969, the tone of rhetoric shifted decisively from rebellion to unity, and the Red Guard factions were broken up to send former Red Guards to work units. This is undoubtedly true, but in the difference between proper Cultural Revolution studies and scholarship that

¹⁶⁴ Alexander C. Cook, *The Cultural Revolution on Trial*, 9-10.

¹⁶⁵ Elizabeth Perry and Li Xun, *Proletarian Power*, 1.

¹⁶⁶ Huang, *To Rebel is Justified*, 121.

focuses on the Reform and Opening Up period after Mao, there is a dearth of information in English especially about the time period between the death of Lin Biao and the death of Mao, with the exception of studies of political elites. Only one monograph exists that discusses the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign in detail, and it is over 30 years old now and based on non-archival sources.¹⁶⁷

My study in this chapter, then, acknowledges that there is a distinction between the early years of rebellion in the Cultural Revolution decade, and the more orderly years that followed, but also emphasizes that the iconoclastic and revolutionary rhetoric and imagery of the early years continued to be very prevalent during the post-9th Party Congress order. There were inherent contradictions in the Cultural Revolution, which have been pointed out many times by scholars before. For instance, Shaorong Huang argues that, “The norm of the 'right of rebellion' had its roots in traditional Chinese culture and served as symbolic resource for Mao's revolutionary rhetoric.”¹⁶⁸ Essentially, the Confucian tradition provided some of the tools that “Mao and Chinese communists 'shrewdly exploited [...] to try to transform the thinking of the nation and create a new socialist man.”¹⁶⁹ The neo-traditionalist argument is not unique to PRC history, and is a prominent theory of Soviet history also.¹⁷⁰ I do not want to argue that the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign's rhetoric was a prime example of neo-traditionalism or of ultra-modernist iconoclasm. Instead, in this chapter, I argue that the rhetoric of the movement contained overt and subtle references to both classical tradition and to the revolutionary modern, at the same time. This created some ideas that, to quote other scholars,

¹⁶⁷ Tien-wei Wu, *Lin Biao and the Gang of Four*.

¹⁶⁸ Huang, *To Rebel is Justified*, 108-109.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁷⁰ For discussion of this, see: Michael David-Fox, *Crossing Borders: Modernity, Ideology, and Culture in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015).

appeared to some Chinese people and many outside Western observers to be “bizarre,”¹⁷¹ “stultifying,”¹⁷² “a strange episode,”¹⁷³ “the most perplexing” of “the many unsolved puzzles of the Cultural Revolution,”¹⁷⁴ and “one of the absurdities of the late Maoist phase.”¹⁷⁵ *Pi Lin pi Kong* is thus almost always portrayed in scholarship as nonsensical. Its rhetoric is usually portrayed as empty, meaningless, or merely only a hint at the secret elite political power struggle between so-called “moderates” and “radicals” in the CCP leadership. Instead, I argue, like Chinese Communism itself, the rhetoric of this campaign was modernist, revolutionary, and iconoclastic, while also being influenced and tinged by the traditional legacy that China’s leaders were educated in.

To begin, this chapter is broken into the following sections: (1) explaining the origins and appearances of the major frequently-occurring slogans, and the act of sloganeering, during the *pi Lin pi Kong* campaign (the name of which was a slogan itself); (2) analyzing the uses and meanings of profanity during *pi Lin pi Kong*, while also responding to earlier scholarly treatment of the use of profanity during the Cultural Revolution; and, (3) a reflection on then-contemporary political concerns of propaganda in the late period Cultural Revolution decade. In the final analysis, I argue that these different rhetorics were rooted in history and theory to make clear statements about then-contemporary political concerns.

A Sinological Approach to Slogans

As they appeared in newspapers, books, posters, and archival sources at the time, these were the most frequently occurring slogans of the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign:

¹⁷¹ Perry and Li, *Proletarian Power*, 24.

¹⁷² Cook, *The Cultural Revolution on Trial*, 19.

¹⁷³ Jin Qiu, *The Culture of Power: The Lin Biao Incident in the Cultural Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 78.

¹⁷⁴ Perry and Li, *Proletarian Power*, 177.

¹⁷⁵ Helmut Martin, *Cult & Canon: The Origins and Development of State Maoism*, translated by Michel Vale (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1982), 37.

- Restrain Oneself and Return to the Rites (*ke ji fu li* 克己复礼)
- Government by Benevolence (*ren zheng* 仁政)
- Conscientiously Read Books and Study (*renzhen kanshu xuexi* 认真看书学习)
- Traitor Lin (*Lin zei* 林贼)
- The Theory of Heavenly Mandate (*tian ming lun* 天命论) and The Theory of Innate Knowledge/Genius (*tian cai lun* 天才论)
- Deepen the Criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius (*shenru pi Lin pi Kong* 深入批林批孔)
- The Confucian-Mencian Way (*Kong Meng zhi dao* 孔孟之道)
- Capitalist Restorationism (*fubi zibenzhuyi* 复辟资本主义)
- The Doctrine of the Mean (*zhongyong zhi dao* 中庸之道)
- Confucian-Legalist Struggle (*Ru Fa douzheng* 儒法斗争)
- Two-Line Struggle (*liang tiao douzheng* 两条斗争)
- Criticize Confucianism Evaluate Legalism (*pi Ru ping Fa* 批儒评法)
- Use the Past to Serve the Present (*gu wei jin yong* 古为今用)
- Kong the Dick (*Kong lao 'er* 孔老二)
- And different variations on all of these.

I discuss all of these slogans below. Slogans and official documents may have been rife with approved language that was carefully selected and crafted with the help of bureaucrats, party theorists, and internalized ideology, but that does not mean that they were not saying anything. To reiterate my earlier discussion in chapter 1 on the validity of small study groups, we can read these official-sounding sources and propaganda works for subtle variations in word-

choice, and the deeper meanings behind what was being said. Again, the importance can be found in the details.

A large percentage of *pi Lin pi Kong* campaign rhetoric was completely new to the CCP at that time. There was no previously existing language in official Mao Zedong Thought for analyzing ancient Chinese thought based on close readings of classical texts. While the boisterous socialist language of the Great Leap Forward and other earlier PRC campaigns appears in this campaign too (such as “Dare to Go Against the Tide” *ganyu fan chaoliao* 敢于反潮流, or the above-listed “Conscientiously Read Books and Study”), many of the recurring phrasings of this campaign came directly from classical texts themselves, devoid of any Marxian language (such as “Restrain Oneself and Return to the Rites,” and “Doctrine of the Mean”).

In fact, the most ubiquitous slogan of the entire campaign, besides direct reference to Lin Biao and Confucius themselves, was “Restrain Oneself and Return to the Rites.” “Restrain Oneself and Return to the Rites” is a direct quotation attributed to Confucius, from *The Analects*. It is the first half of a sentence, answering a question from his student Yan Yuan. Yan Yuan asked Confucius about benevolence (*ren* 仁), to which Confucius answered, “Restraining the self and returning to the rites is performing benevolence. Restraining the self and returning to the rites for one day would make the whole world return to benevolence. Performing benevolence comes from the self. How could it come from other people?” Yan Yuan then asked for details; Confucius elaborated, “Do not look at anything that does not accord with the rites. Do not listen to anything that does not accord with the rites. Do not speak anything that does not accord with the rites. Do not do anything that does not accord with the rites.”¹⁷⁶ The “rites” (*li* 禮) in *The*

¹⁷⁶ My translations of the quoted responses. The original text reads: “顏淵問仁。子曰：「克己復禮為仁。一日克己復禮，天下歸仁焉。為仁由己，而由人乎哉？」顏淵曰：「請問其目。」子曰：「非禮勿視，非禮勿

Analects meant the rituals performed by the Zhou Dynasty kings, as recorded in the ancient texts, *The Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) and *The Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮). Confucius lived in the latter half of the Zhou Dynasty, during the Spring and Autumn period, right before the start of the Warring States Period that led to the dynasty's total collapse. As recorded by his followers in *The Analects*, Confucius believed that the era of moral and political decline that he lived in was due to rulers abandoning the old rituals, and that the best way to return to the golden age of the reigns of King Wen, King Wu, and the Duke of Zhou, was to reinstate the rites. The rites were the most important metric for evaluating morality and governance, and thus everything proper would come from ritual propriety.

In the *pi Lin pi Kong* Campaign, criticism of the phrase and its attribution to Lin Biao appeared at the earliest stages of preparation for the launching of the campaign. The first *People's Daily* article to feature criticism of the phrase was the officially-endorsed essay by Zhongshan University philosophy professor Yang Rongguo, "Confucius—A Thinker Who Stubbornly Upheld the Slave System," published in August, 1973.¹⁷⁷ Another article was printed in the newspaper in October. Under the penname Shi Lun, it was penned by the radical writing group based in the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee that also often used the penname Luo Siding. The article, titled "On Respecting Confucianism and Opposing Legalism," gave readers a narrative of the historical context in which the ancient Confucians and Legalists conflicted with each other.¹⁷⁸ These academic-toned articles were followed by a series of news

聽，非禮勿言，非禮勿動。」” The entire original text can be found here: Yang Bojun 杨伯俊, ed., *Lunyu Yizhu Daziben* 论语译注：大字本 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Publishers 中华书局, 2015), 141-142. There is some debate within the commentarial tradition on how to best interpret and translate Confucius' initial response. For a discussion of the commentarial debate, see: Slingerland, *Confucius*, 125-126.

¹⁷⁷ Yang Rongguo 杨荣国, "孔子——顽固地维护奴隶制的思想家" "Confucius—A Thinker Who Stubbornly Upheld the Slave System," *People's Daily*, August 7, 1973.

¹⁷⁸ Shi Lun 石仑, "论尊儒反法" (On Revering Confucianism and Opposing Legalism), *People's Daily*, October 25, 1973.

articles printed in late January 1974 that reported on cadres, students, and workers holding meetings to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius.¹⁷⁹ The “Restrain Oneself and Return to the Rites” idea was targeted in each of these articles.

Suffice it to say that this passage was venerated in the traditional Confucian canon to explain how one should carry themselves in self-cultivation, but in writings of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, it was cited as the most succinct statement of Confucius’ reactionary philosophy. Confucius emphasized to his students that they should try to return to the customs and ways of the earlier Zhou Dynasty. To outwardly display this return, one must practice the codified rituals of the Zhou Dynasty court, the rites (*li* 禮). By practicing the rites, one would become an ethical person.

One of the charges presented to the public against Lin Biao after his death was that he penned Confucian quotations and hung them over his bed; the allegation noted that the scrolls were in Lin’s own calligraphy. One of the scrolls was alleged to have carried the infamous line: “Restrain the self and return to the rites.”¹⁸⁰ At a city-wide meeting of youths, one youth member

¹⁷⁹ “林彪是一个地地道道的孔老二的信徒清华大学党委举办干部和工人学习班，动员群众继续深入批林，继续开展对尊孔反法思想的批判” (Lin Biao is an Authentic Disciple of Kong the Dick—Qinghua University Party Committee Holds a Cadre-Worker Study Session, Mobilizing the Masses to Continue Deeply Criticizing Lin, Continue to Open Up Criticism of Revering-Confucian-Opposing-Legalist Thought), *People’s Daily*, January 26, 1974; “天津冷轧带钢厂开展革命大批判的斗争实践证明” (Testimony of the Realized Struggle of Tianjin Cold-Rolled Belt Steel Factory’s Opening of Revolutionary Big Criticism), *People’s Daily*, January 28, 1974; “上海工人阶级发扬革命精神深入批林批孔工人们说：我们工人阶级不但要消灭一切人剥削人的制度，而且要彻底批判一切剥削阶级的意识形态。反动派要倒退，要复辟，就要尊孔；我们要前进，要革命，就要批林、批孔” (Shanghai Working Class Carries Forward the Revolutionary Sprit to Deepen Criticize Lin Criticize Kong, Saying: “We the Working Class Not Only Want to Annihilate All Exploiters’ Systems, but also Thoroughly Criticize All Exploiting Classes’ Ideologies. Reactionaries Want to Go Backwards, Want Restoration, and Want to Revere Kong; We Want to Advance, Want Revolution, and Want to Criticize Lin Criticize Kong”), *People’s Daily*, January 31, 1974.

¹⁸⁰ The validity of this claim is debatable. The evidence was provided over a full year *after* Lin’s death by an investigative team composed of party leaders tasked with exposing his crimes. The actual banners themselves were never photographed or presented as evidence at any point by the authorities. Based on court documents, official reports, memoirs, and interviews, Jin Qiu says that they weren’t even banners at all but instead were flash cards meant for study: “Like Mao, Lin had a good knowledge of Chinese history. He was especially interested in the theories and concepts of human relations in Confucianism, Legalism, and Daoism. On occasion he asked a history professor to put quotations from the most revered Chinese philosophers, Confucius, Mencius, Han Feizi, and Lao Zi,

present said, “Lin Biao’s using of Kong the Dick’s ‘restrain oneself and return to the rites,’ was an instruction to his son to read the Confucian classics, and was a dream to set up the Lin family as the new rulers of a fascist dynasty.”¹⁸¹ The implication and further charge against Lin was that he had taken up that reactionary philosophical stance, “venerating Confucius and holding Confucian beliefs hidden deep within his heart.”¹⁸² Hidden under his outward revolutionary façade was a secret plot for capitalist restoration in the People’s Republic of China. Lin Biao was called “Traitor Lin,” who ran his own “anti-party clique” (*fandang jituan* 反党集团) of revisionists dedicated to the “capitalist restoration.” One group of Shanghai revolutionary cadres said at a city-wide meeting for party cadres in May of 1974, that Lin Biao “obsessed over these ideas and thought about them all night.” This was why, they concluded, “Criticizing Confucius is a part of criticizing Lin, and his reactionary worldview.”¹⁸³ Hence the common saying at the time, which insisted that, “the point of criticizing Confucius is to deepen the criticism of Lin Biao.”¹⁸⁴ This was the most commonly cited reason at the time for carrying out a campaign that criticized Confucius in the first place. Alexander Cook explains that in the Maoist era, “Chinese audiences understood that before an evildoer faced punishment, he or she had first to be revealed as an inhuman enemy of the people. Having been so revealed, these arch counterrevolutionaries

on flash cards for him to study. After the Lin Biao incident, the investigation group found boxes of such cards at Lin's residence. Some of them held transcripts of Lin's ideas made by his wife, Ye Qun, including his negative comments about Mao.” Jin Qiu, *The Culture of Power*, 78.

¹⁸¹ Shanghai Municipal Intellectual Youth Management (上海市知青办), “召开欢送上山下乡干部、知识青年大会的报告和发言稿” “Reports and Speeches from the Convening Meeting for the Sending off of Cadres and Intellectual Youths Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside,” 1974, SHMA, B228-2-291.

¹⁸² Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Public Transportation Group (上海市革命委员会公交组), “市扩大会议、市委党员干部会议工作讲话、安排” “Working Speeches and Plans from the Municipal Enlarged Meeting and Municipal Committee Party Cadres’ Meeting,” May 1974, SHMA, B246-2-1015.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Shanghai Municipal No. 1 Electromechanical Industry Bureau Party Committee Small Study Group (上海市第一机电工业局党委学习小组), “上海市第一机电工业局党委学习小组学习计划 (草案) 与市会议上发言提纲” “Shanghai Municipal No. 1 Electromechanical Industry Bureau Party Committee Small Study Group’s Plans (Draft) and Outline of Speeches at the Municipal Meeting,” July 1974, SHMA, B173-2-200.

were vilified in the press and expelled from the party.”¹⁸⁵ Lin Biao thus (posthumously) suffered the same fate as many before, like Liu Shaoqi, and after him, like the Gang of Four, of public vilification from his one-time comrades.

Aside from “restrain oneself and return to the rites,” two other frequently criticized concepts in the propaganda of *pi Lin pi Kong* were “the theory of heavenly mandate” (*tian ming lun* 天命论) and “the theory of innate genius/knowledge/talent” (*tian cai lun* 天才论). We can translate the former to mean, broadly, the concept of fate itself, and the latter is similar to the Western notion of “Great Man Theory” in history. The former was identified by Chinese authors in the *pi Lin pi Kong* Campaign with the broad belief in fate, found in religions and idealist philosophy, and thus with traditional reactionary beliefs. The latter was an idealist approach to history that said only “people of great talent and intellect” create history, in contrast to the Marxist conception of historical materialism and a Maoist emphasis on the role of class struggle in particular as the motivating force in the making of history. In Chinese sources, on occasion, the concept was also even tied with the *Übermensch* idea of Friedrich Nietzsche and the Nazis, and Chiang Kai-shek would get tacked on for his supposed fascist proclivities. One text put together in May 1972 by the Beijing University Philosophy Department made just such a connection.¹⁸⁶ Citing Plato, Nietzsche, Hitler, Chiang Kai-shek, Chen Boda, and Lin Biao, they lumped these people together into a lineage of “the theory of innate knowledge” in China, and “super man theory” (*chao ren lun* 超人论) in the West. Either way, the authors argued, “in Western Capitalist Imperialist thought, you go from ‘the super man’ to fascism, just like how in

¹⁸⁵ Cook, *The Cultural Revolution on Trial*, 46.

¹⁸⁶ Internal criticisms of Lin Biao were already common within the CCP soon after his death, but a larger society-wide criticism campaign was not launched until *pi Lin pi Kong*.

China you go from ‘genius’ to fascism.”¹⁸⁷ The specific differences between “super man theory,” “innate genius theory,” and “heavenly mandate theory” were laid out in some explanatory texts like this one, but in a majority of more popular understandings, the three were often used interchangeably. One report to the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Public Transportation Group went into some detail in May, 1974: “Cadres should be the first examples in criticizing Lin and Kong. We sent 10 comrades to go talk to small groups and study meetings. Criticizing Lin and Kong is a big deal. One comrade said that criticizing Lin and Kong is a long-term struggle. Because Confucius’ thinking was propagated for over 2000 years, we have a long-term struggle to prepare for. At first we thought this was a thought struggle, but we see now that it’s a matter of political line. Lin Biao’s ‘*tian cai lun*’ is the same as Confucius’ ‘*tian ming lun*.’”¹⁸⁸ And again in a *People’s Daily* article: “from criticizing Confucius’ ‘heavenly mandate’ to criticizing Lin Biao’s ‘innate knowledge theory,’ [one can] see Lin Biao’s idealist, apriorist, and historical idealist reactionary nature.”¹⁸⁹ The two theories were, thus, often lumped together as two names for the same thing, or Western and Chinese equivalents of the same kind of intellectual phenomenon, from a historical materialist perspective. Such thinking was idealist, anti-Marxist, and denied the significance of class struggle and material reality in explaining historical changes. All that mattered were strong, smart, and talented leaders.

¹⁸⁷ Beijing University 北京大学, “批判叛徒卖国贼林彪的反革命理论纲领---天才论” (Criticize Traitor Lin Biao’s Counterrevolutionary Theoretical Outline—The Theory of Innate Genius), May 29, 1972, SHMA, B244-3-436-42.

¹⁸⁸ SHMA, B246-2-1015.

¹⁸⁹ “北京工艺美术工厂党委带领广大职工深入批林结合开展对尊孔反法思想的批判” (Beijing Arts and Crafts Factory Party Committee Leads the Numerous Staff and Workers to Deepen Criticizing Lin and Unite to Open Up Criticism of the Thought of Revering Kong and Opposing Legalism), *People’s Daily*, January 24, 1974.

Lin Biao was certainly criticized in the press for “promoting ‘*tian cai lun*,’”¹⁹⁰ most likely because of the “chair of the state” (*guojia zhuxi* 国家主席) controversy in 1970-’71. In the aftermath of the 9th Party Congress in 1969, the Party leadership and some provincial level leaderships received a sudden influx of military leaders—many of them were not interested in maintaining long-term political power in the civilian sector. The Military Action Committee, reporting to Mao directly in this time period, was undergoing a series of self-criticisms submitted to Mao personally over the issues of a proposed re-establishing of the state chair position that was left vacant since Liu Shaoqi’s absence at the start of the Cultural Revolution, and over the “genius” (*tiancai*) issue. Several leaders suggested putting into the PRC constitution that Mao Zedong Thought guides everything in the country, and there were three adverbs they wanted to attach to it: “with genius, creatively, and comprehensively.”¹⁹¹ Suggested in a meeting for the 9th Party Congress, Lin Biao did not want the position and suggested that Mao take it, but Mao rejected the offer, saying he did not want to take on another administrative position. The position remained vacant and an intraparty debate appeared to develop over the issue of re-establishing the tainted position and over who would take it. Lin, prone to flattery for Mao, agreed with the proposed “genius” clause, which Mao dismissed and then demanded his generals write self-criticisms for.¹⁹² While this much is clear, it is not clear that Lin actually ever used the words “Theory of Innate Genius.” *The People’s Daily* in 1974 did not give a specific citation for Lin’s use of it, instead just stating that Lin “promoted ‘*tian cai lun*’” and that he “used the idealist

¹⁹⁰ Zha Xi Luo Bu 扎西罗布, and Sang Zhu 桑珠, “批判‘天命论’ 彻底闹革命” (Criticize ‘Tian cai lun’ Thoroughly Carry Out Revolution), *People’s Daily*, January 3, 1974.

¹⁹¹ Frederick C. Teiwes, and Warren Sun, *The Tragedy of Lin Biao: Riding the Tiger during the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1971* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 141.

¹⁹² Further discussion of this controversy in *Ibid.*, Chapter 4.

theory of ‘*tian cai lun*’ as the theoretical outline for his anti-party actions.”¹⁹³ The phrase is in reference to the earlier “genius” clause controversy. In particular, it most likely comes from a speech Mao gave on August 30, 1971, to military and party leaders from Hunan, Guangdong, and Guangxi. He said: “I spoke with Comrade Lin Biao and he said some improper things. For example, he said that a genius only comes along once every few hundred years in the world and that there has only been one genius in the past few thousand years in China. This does not correspond with fact! Marx and Engels were two people from the same era. From them to Lenin and Stalin wasn’t even 100 years. How can you say that only once in a few hundred years one will arise? Chinese history has Chen Sheng and Wu Guang.¹⁹⁴ It has Hong Xiuquan¹⁹⁵ and Sun Yat-sen! This does not accord with fact[....] I am not a genius. I read Confucius for six years. I read Western learning for seven years. Only when I was 25 in 1918 did I start reading Marxism-Leninism[....] A genius is a bit smarter. A genius does not lean on a person, or even a few people[....] A genius relies on one party, and the party is the vanguard of the proletariat. A genius relies on the Mass Line, on collective wisdom.”¹⁹⁶ Direct criticism by Mao wasn’t rare for a CCP leader to receive, but this controversy is believed by some to be one of the main reasons for the Lin Biao Incident. Lin Biao died two weeks later. Taken together, “the theory of genius” and “restrain oneself and return to the rites,” were the two most frequently cited specific ideas that Lin Biao was criticized for believing during the criticism campaign.

¹⁹³ Zha Xi Luo Bu 扎西罗布, and Sang Zhu 桑珠, “批判‘天命论’ 彻底闹革命” (Criticize ‘Tian cai lun’ Thoroughly Carry Out Revolution), *People’s Daily*, January 3, 1974.

¹⁹⁴ Two rebel leaders at the end of the Qin Dynasty.

¹⁹⁵ Hong Xiuquan was the leader of the 19th Century Taiping Heavenly Kingdom rebellion against the Qing Dynasty.

¹⁹⁶ My translation. Speech quoted from: “1971 年毛泽东因何反感林彪鼓吹的‘个人崇拜’和‘天才论’” (What Was the Reason Why Mao Zedong Strongly Opposed Lin Biao’s Promotion of ‘Cult of Personality’ and ‘Theory of Innate Genius’ in 1971), *Chinese Communist Party History News Website*, original speech August 30, 1971, last updated April 22, 2014, accessed May 17, 2021, <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/n/2014/0422/c85037-24926703.html>.

Regarding “the theory of heavenly mandate,” or “fate,” more broadly, some study groups and cadres reported accounts told by elderly workers about how fate was used in pre-liberation days. One issue of the *Public Transportation Situation* internal publication of the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee reported on a meeting of a group of 17 older electrical workers at a state-run company. The assembled workers gathered to criticize the “theory of fate” in the traditional Chinese zodiac. One of them, old worker Zhu, told his story: “My zodiac sign is pig. According to old myths, I should be happy and eat a lot and sleep well. But in the old society, I was oppressed by landlords and capitalists. I was never able to eat full or sleep well. Nowadays, if old people get hurt, they have insurance. Our hard laboring lives have gotten better. This is all because the leadership of Chairman Mao and the CCP are good. The reality of the matter is that if you want to live a good life, you cannot rely on heaven or on fate. You can only follow Chairman Mao and do revolution.”¹⁹⁷ This shows how a worker who lived and worked before and after liberation made sense of a traditional concept like the zodiac, in the context of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign. He began his story with saying his zodiac sign, an indication of first-hand experience with pre-liberation life. He then described the traditional viewpoint of what his sign must mean for him. Then he turned his narrative towards a refutation of “old myths,” based on a materialist understanding of his past as an exploited laborer, and then praised the CCP and Mao Zedong for making these material changes possible. He ended his account with a substitution of fate for revolution. Whereas in the old society, people relied on fate and heaven, after liberation they relied on Mao and on the act of carrying out revolution. This is a perfect example of how some people could make sense of the concepts

¹⁹⁷ Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Public Transportation Secretariat Group (上海市革命委员会公交组秘书组), “公交情况第 260 期批判渗透在‘十二生肖’中的天命论” (Public Transportation Situation No. 260: Criticizing the Pernicious Theory of Heavenly Mandate in “The 12 Zodiac Signs”), August 13, 1974, SHMA, B246-2-1030-34.

being criticizing in the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign. The slogans went beyond just mere sloganeering, then. While the passage includes the slogan of the day being criticized, it appears as a part of his own life story and is given deeper meaning beyond empty rhetoric.

Further showing his secret Confucian proclivities, Lin Biao was also charged with teaching his son, Lin Ligu, to memorize the Confucian classics, and to prepare to one day take over the throne from him in a new “Lin family dynasty” (*Lin jia wang chao* 林家王朝).¹⁹⁸ Lin Ligu was an alleged co-conspirator in the attempt to assassinate Mao Zedong, and a minor target of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign.¹⁹⁹ Supposedly, the family planned to enlist the support of the Soviet Union into staging a military coup, with the help of some of Lin’s allies in the PRC military leadership. In 1971, Lin Biao was Minister of National Defense, Vice-Chairman of the CCP, Vice-Premier of the PRC, and named successor in the 1969 Constitution to Mao Zedong for leadership of the CCP and PRC. His wife, Ye Qun, was a member of the Politburo, a member of the CCP Central Committee, and chair of the administrative office of the Central Military Commission. Their son, Lin Ligu, was Deputy Director of the Office of the Air Force Command of the People’s Liberation Army Air Force. Several high-ranking generals of the PLA were named as allies of the family and the PLA and CCP were purged of over a thousand alleged allies of the Lin family in the aftermath of their deaths. Several of them stood trial alongside the Gang of Four in the late-1970s in an famous major public show trial of the early post-Mao era.²⁰⁰ According to official rhetoric, the purge prevented these co-conspirators

¹⁹⁸ This phrase appears in: SHMA, B228-2-291.

¹⁹⁹ One document criticizing Lin Ligu is here: SHMA, C21-4-69-45.

²⁰⁰ Alexander Cook describes these generals’ trial in: Cook, *The Cultural Revolution on Trial*. Jin Qiu also discusses aspects of the trial, coming from the perspective of a child of one of Lin’s alleged co-conspirators who served time in labor thought reform after the trial: Jin Qiu, *The Culture of Power*. Recently scholarly consensus points most blame towards the general post-Cultural Revolution political climate, Lin Ligu’s dangerous aspirations, and political rivalries between leaders in the party, state, and military after the 9th Party Congress. Most of Lin’s alleged conspirators were later released from prison and viewed as helplessly wound up in a conspiracy they only had tangential involvement in.

from establishing a new “fascist dynasty,” aligned with the “social imperialist Soviet revisionists” (*shehui diguo zhuyi Su xiu* 社会帝国主义苏绣).²⁰¹

These heavy charges aside, the classically inspired slogans continued. During the campaign, the ideology of Confucianism was termed “the Kong-Meng Way” (*Kongmeng zhi dao*), or “the Doctrine of the Mean” (*Zhongyong zhi dao*). The former was a more neutral academic term coined during the May 4th period to describe a certain branch of ancient Confucian philosophy.²⁰² “The Doctrine of the Mean” is both the title of a classic Confucian philosophy text, and a concept in Confucian philosophy. The term has been translated and interpreted in a variety of ways over the centuries, but in essence the concept and text urge the avoidance of excess, encouraging compromise and moderation instead.²⁰³ In Maoist China, however, the text was interpreted explicitly by Mao to be Confucian metaphysics, which denied the existence of dialectics or contradictions. Mao commented on an article on The Doctrine of the Mean by Ai Siqi in 1939 that, “The thought of the Doctrine of the Mean is anti-

²⁰¹ Later official evaluations in the PRC and subsequent scholarship have found this allegation to be unsubstantiated. While Lin and his “clique” were charged in the 1980-’81 trial with anti-party activities and conspiring to stage a coup against Mao in 1971, no evidence was provided of direct contact between Lin Biao’s “clique” and the Soviet Union’s government to cooperate in a coup attempt or assassination of Mao Zedong. Evidence was only provided that Lin may have intended to flee China for the Soviet Union should the planned coup fail. One of the recent works of scholarship to look closely at the Lin Biao Incident, concluded that, “There is no evidence to support the official claim that Lin had been actively involved in planning a final escape to the Soviet Union.” See: Jin Qiu, *The Culture of Power*, 195.

²⁰² The phrase “Kong-Meng Way” appeared in both Communist and Nationalist Chinese academic contexts throughout the twentieth century and is still used to delineate a philosophical lineage of interpreting Confucius in the style of Mencius, as opposed to that of Xunzi, the other great interpreter of Confucianism.

²⁰³ The term first appeared in *The Analects* only once. For a brief translation and analysis, see: Slingerland, *Confucius*, 63. The classic text of the same title has been translated many times into European languages with much debate and differences. The classic English translation is James Legge, trans., *The Doctrine of the Mean* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893).

dialectical.”²⁰⁴ It was thus one of the sources of holding back progress in China, from a Marxist perspective.²⁰⁵

In government reports from lower-ranking cadres, we see clearly how the Doctrine of the Mean was interpreted in Chinese society during the criticism campaign. In an internally-circulated report on how their department was carrying out the campaign to criticize Lin and Confucius, Shanghai cadres in the local branch of the state-owned telecommunications system called the Doctrine of the Mean, “black talk,” “the way of restoration,” “representative of a declining exploiting class,” and “the way of eating people” (*chiren zhi dao* 吃人之到),²⁰⁶ a reference to Lu Xun’s famous short story, “Diary of a Madman.” Similarly, metallurgy system cadres said in a county-level cadre meeting on their efforts in the campaign, “the Doctrine of the Mean in reality is the fascist way!”²⁰⁷ Appraisals of “the Kong-Meng Way” were similar, largely treating the two “ways” as the same thing. Staff at the Shanghai Municipal Archives’ political theory small study group said in their report on the group’s study findings and activities that Lin Biao “held up the Kong-Meng Way as his most valuable treasure.”²⁰⁸ Another study group of

²⁰⁴ Quoted in: Zhang Peigao 张培高 and Yang Li 杨莉, “论毛泽东对‘中庸’的诠释” “On Mao Zedong’s Evaluation of ‘The Mean,” 西南交通大学学报(社会科学版) Journal of Northwestern Communications University (Sociology Edition), February 2018, last accessed January 29, 2021, <http://m.fx361.com/news/2018/0704/3759258.html>.

²⁰⁵ This perspective was presented in various sources of the campaign, in response to Mao’s earlier comments from 1939 to Ai Siqu. See for example: SHMA, B246-2-1015.

²⁰⁶ Shanghai Municipal County Cadres Meeting (上海市县团干部会议), “县团干部会议 (工交系统) 情况反映 (七) 邮电系统干部痛批林彪、孔老二反动谬论‘中庸之道’就是复辟之道” “County Group Cadres Meeting (Industries and Communications System) Reflecting on the Situation (7) Telecommunications System Cadres Criticize Lin Biao and the Dick Kong’s Reactionary Fallacy of “the Doctrine of the Mean” is just the Way of Restoration,” January 30, 1974, SHMA, B246-2-1015-226.

²⁰⁷ Shanghai Municipal County Cadres Meeting (上海市县团干部会议), “县团干部会议 (工交系统) 情况反映 (八) 冶金系统干部狠批‘中庸之道’进一步认清林彪路线极右实质” “County Group Cadres Meeting (Industries and Communications System) Reflections on the Situation (8) Metallurgy System Cadres Hatefully Criticize “the Doctrine of the Mean” and Advance in Clearly Understanding the Extreme Right Substance of Lin Biao’s Line,” February 1, 1974, SHMA, B246-2-1015-230.

²⁰⁸ Speech at the Meeting for the Shanghai Municipal Archives’ Study of Document No. 23 (上海市档案馆在学习 中用二十三号文件交流会上的发言), “批判林彪效法儒家的‘以礼治军’推行资产阶级军事路线的罪行” “Criticize the Crimes of Lin Biao Following the Example of the Confucian School by Promoting the Capitalist Military Line of ‘Leading Armies by Rites,’” September 20, 1974, SHMA, A102-2-4-49.

workers declared, in a report given to the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee, “Looking at the recent history of the Confucian-Legalist struggle clearly shows that the Kong-Meng Way is just the way of restoration and the way of selling out the country.”²⁰⁹ These two “ways” (*dao*) were thus seen as pretty much the same thing, then. To summarize the ideological interpretation in this campaign, they were the ideology of a falling class of reactionaries, on their way out in the progressive march of history—in their own terms, “reversing the vehicle of history” (*lishi daoche* 历史倒车).²¹⁰ So anyone who promoted the Doctrine of the Mean or the Way of Confucius and Mencius was just a reactionary trying to reverse the tides of history to go back to an earlier mode of production. In the case of Confucius, it meant going back from feudal society to slave society. For Lin Biao, it meant returning to capitalism from the socialist stage.²¹¹ Such was the line in the CCP at the time.

PRC propagandists and scholar-workers asserted throughout the campaign that “reactionaries and opportunists inside and outside China all revere Confucius,” that “foreign imperialists all revere Kong.”²¹² Lu Xun even spoke on this matter: “I think that if foreigners come to annihilate China..., [then] Confucius will be worshipped more.”²¹³ As the first example from the modern era, when bourgeois democratic revolutionaries were threatening the failing

²⁰⁹ Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Public Transportation Secretary Group (上海市革命委员会公交组秘书组编写), “《公交情况》 (251-300 期)” “‘Public Transportation Situation’ (No. 251-300),” August 1974, SHMA, B246-2-1030.

²¹⁰ This phrase appears many times in literature of the campaign. Here are some examples from archival, newspaper, and published academic sources from the time that all use the phrase: SHMA, C31-3-25; *People’s Daily*, January 28, 1974; “林彪孔丘都是开历史倒车的反动派” “Lin Biao and Kong Qiu Both Drove the History-Reversing Vehicle of the Reactionary Faction,” *Zhongshan University Journal: Sociology Edition*, no. 1 (1974): 6–20.

²¹¹ This was the main argument of the famous article that launched the campaign publicly: Yang Rongguo, “Confucius.”

²¹² Jilin University School Newspaper Editing Group 吉林大学学报编写组, *林彪与孔老二* (*Lin Biao and the Dick Confucius*), (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishers, 1974).

²¹³ Beijing University Big Criticism Group, and Qinghua University Big Criticism Group 北京大学大批判组, and 清华大学大批判组, “孔老二的亡灵和新沙皇的迷梦——评苏修尊孔反法的卑劣表演” (The Departed Spirit of Kong the Dick and the New Czars’ Pipedream—Evaluating the Despicable Performance of the Soviet Revisionists Revering Kong and Opposing Legalism), *People’s Daily*, January 24, 1974.

feudalism at the end of the Qing Dynasty, the feudalists held on to Confucianism. After the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, the reactionary Yuan Shikai showed his true colors by praising Confucius and calling for the creation of a new dynasty. Once the capitalists had succeeded and the threat of communist revolution was real, Chiang Kai-shek abandoned the iconoclastic modernist language of the May 4th Period in favor of Confucianism. Therefore, for Lin Biao to quote Confucius after the Cultural Revolution, he was throwing his hat in with the revisionists to take on the capitalist road. This was because Lin Biao was “an authentic disciple of Kong the dick.”²¹⁴ A particularly illustrious example of this narrative comes from a document circulated within *Public Transportation Situation*, an internal publication of the Ministry of Public Transportation. The workers’ reading group at Shanghai Anzhuang Company reported in the journal that they criticized the *Three Character Classic* and then compiled and wrote their own new version of it. Broken into twelve stanzas, the third and fourth discuss the history of Confucianism and Legalism:

Kong family shop,²¹⁵ roots are unceasing, sons and grandsons follow, creating a line of succession. Kong the dick, the earliest ancestor, traitor Meng Ke,²¹⁶ is the second. Dong Zhongshu²¹⁷, revered only the Confucians. Song Cheng brothers, also Zhu Xi, Pattern to kill people,²¹⁸ didn’t look at the blood. Wang Yangming, in the abyss, edited the “School of Mind,”²¹⁹ put old things in a new guise. Zeng Guofan,²²⁰ Yuan Shikai,²²¹ Chiang Kai-shek, Dai Chuanxian,²²² in the new century, craftily, traitor Lin Biao, engaged in restoration, the old arsenal, searching through garbage. Reactionaries, all revere Kong. This infamous sound, passed on for millennia.

²¹⁴ “林彪与孔孟之道：材料之一（参考材料）” “Lin Biao and the Kong-Meng Way: First Materials (Reference Materials),” February 1974. In author’s personal collection.

²¹⁵ A term of derision coined during the May 4th Movement to refer to Confucians in general.

²¹⁶ Meng Ke is Mengzi’s given name.

²¹⁷ A Han Dynasty scholar.

²¹⁸ The Cheng Brothers and Zhu Xi of the Song Dynasty are credited with creating Neo-Confucianism, known in Chinese as “School of Pattern.”

²¹⁹ Wang Yangming of the Ming Dynasty was a scholar credited with creating the rival Neo-Confucian school of thought known in Chinese as “School of Mind.”

²²⁰ A late-Qing reformer, provincial governor, military commander, and Self-Strengthening Movement leader.

²²¹ A late-Qing official who became the president of the Republic of China only to replace it with a short-lived new dynasty in the 1910s.

²²² Another founder of the KMT.

The words of Legalists, flow with history, oppose Confucianism, unceasingly. Li Kui of Wei, Wu Qi of Chu,²²³ Shang Yang of Qin, Xunzi of Zhao. There's Han Fei, there's Li Si, Qin Shihuang, did the continuous deeds, broke up fiefs, unification, resisted the stubborn Confucians, burned the classics, opposed going backwards, opposed restoration. Wang Chong of Han, wrote "Doubting Kong," Liu Zongyuan, Wang Anshi, Li Zhi of Ming, Wang Fuzhi, Yan Fu of Qing, Zhang Taiyan, struggled with Confucians, worthy of singing praise.²²⁴

In this new version of the *Three Character Classic*, we see the major figures of Confucianism and Legalism brought up during the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign. In the first paragraph are the reactionaries who were linked with following a Confucian line of thought, while the second stanza lists some of the major Legalist and anti-Confucian thinkers extolled during the campaign for heroically defying reactionaries, pushing history forward, and embracing progressive lines that benefited the laboring masses. Such was the general outline of assertions that are found abundantly in published narratives of the "Confucian-Legalist struggle in the modern age."²²⁵

An understanding of the classical texts was deemed essential to criticizing the former during the criticism campaign. Thus, we often run into the frequent four-word phrases, "Confucian-Legalist Struggle" (*Ru Fa douzheng* 儒法斗争) and "Criticize Confucianism Evaluate Legalism" (*pi Ru ping Fa* 批儒评法) in the positive, and "Opposing Legalism while Revering Confucianism" (*fan Fa zun Ru* 反法尊儒) in the negative. Legalism was interpreted by

²²³ Li Kui and Wu Qi are considered two of the earliest thinkers of Law in Ancient China. Only fragments of their supposed writings survive today.

²²⁴ SHMA, B246-2-1030-97.

²²⁵ See, for instance, these representative published history narratives: Jilin University School Newspaper Editing Group, *Lin Biao and the Dick Confucius*; Kaifeng Normal College Chinese Department 开封师范学院中文系, *五四运动时期的反孔斗争* (*Anti-Confucian Struggles of the May Fourth Movement Time Period*), (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Press, 1974); *中国历代反孔和尊孔的斗争* (*Chinese History's Anti-Confucian and Pro-Confucian Struggle*) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Third Line Bookstore, 1974); *孔老二的亡灵和新沙皇的迷梦* (*The Dick Kong's Lost Spirit and the Pipedreams of the New Czar*), (Beijing: People's Press, 1974).

CCP theorists to be the progressive, revolutionary alternative to Confucianism in ancient China. For instance, Yang Rongguo stated in his famous introductory essay to the campaign, “Confucius—A Thinker Who Stubbornly Upheld the Slave System,” that “those who stood with the progressive stance of the feudal class, and were opposed to Confucius’ School of Scholars (*rujia*), were Xunzi, his student Han Fei, and other Legalists.”²²⁶ Thus, when writers got to the modern era, the revolutionaries of the current day must have inevitably looked favorably upon Legalism while criticizing Confucianism. In the reports of Chinese communists on studying Legalist texts and history, throughout this campaign the struggle was seen as having contemporary relevance. For example, the above-mentioned workers’ reading group at the Shanghai Anzhuang Company wrote in their report from criticizing the Confucian *Three Character Classic* that “the Legalist opposition to Confucianism is not over” and that “reactionaries always revere Confucius.”²²⁷ It was thus the case that reactionaries criticized Legalism and praised Confucianism. This was tied to the “two-line struggle” that dominated Cultural Revolution decade politics: the two lines being the capitalist road of revisionists like Nikita Khrushchev and Liu Shaoqi, and the socialist road taken by Mao Zedong (and whoever happened to be his accepted revolutionary leftist allies at the moment). Lin Biao, Chiang Kai-shek, and the revisionists and imperialists outside China were charged with criticizing Legalism, sometimes on dubious grounds.²²⁸ Regardless, one of the most notorious elements of the CCP’s interpretation of Legalism was that the Communists were associated with Legalists and Mao Zedong was compared to Qin Shihuang, positively. Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist regime

²²⁶ Yang Rongguo, “Confucius.”

²²⁷ SHMA, B246-2-1030-97.

²²⁸ Two scholars argued later that, “In the matter at hand, we conclude that Lin not only did not engage in a power struggle with Mao but in fact had little interest in politics in general and in being Mao’s successor in particular.” Teiwes and Sun, *The Tragedy of Lin Biao*, xi.

in Taiwan ran with this idea, saying that Mao's happy comparison with Qin Shihuang was perfect evidence for the totalitarian and brutally violent nature of CCP rule on the mainland.²²⁹ I will discuss the Nationalist Chinese responses to *pi Lin pi Kong* in chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation, but it is revealing here to note that the Republic of China's government and press called the campaign happening on the mainland at that time, "Criticize Confucius Uphold Qin" (*pi Kong yang Qin* 批孔揚秦). Another one of Lin Biao's alleged crimes, according the CCP, was that he and his son privately referred to Mao Zedong as "Qin Shihuang."²³⁰

Related to all of this seemingly convoluted debate about the history of Chinese thought was an emphasis, during the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign's years, on close textual study. A very common slogan quoted directly from Mao Zedong during this time was, "Earnestly Read Books and Study" (*renzhen kanshu xuexi* 认真看书学习). At the time, one of Mao's recent rare short public statements told the revolutionary masses and party to "research Legalist writings" (*yanjiu Fajia zhuzuo* 研究法家著作). As I explained in the previous chapter, study groups went far out of their way to locate Legalist texts for their reading groups, and the state and university presses went on a massive publishing spree, producing several millions of copies of reprints of classical texts. The people did indeed do some research. Legalism, a political philosophy once studied and advocated by bureaucrats during the Warring States Period, Qin Dynasty, and early Han Dynasty two millennia earlier, and then largely forgotten and criticized by subsequent Confucian scholar-officials until the end of the Qing Dynasty, was now given an unprecedented level of attention by students, intellectuals, cadres, bureaucrats, and the working people.

²²⁹ For instance: Li Guangming, *Background and Conspiracy of the Mao Communists' Criticize Lin Uplift Qin Campaign*.

²³⁰ Geremie R. Barme, "For Truly Great Men, Look to This Age Alone," 261-262.

Several slogans associated with studying were attributed to Mao. His famous “study hard and every day you will improve” (*haohao xuexi tiantian xiangshang* 好好学习天天向上) has become an oft-repeated phrase of encouragement across the Chinese-speaking world. In the Soviet Union, Lenin’s “learn, learn, and learn!” (учиться, учиться и учиться) was perhaps an equivalent ubiquitous phrase that may have at least somewhat inspired the Chinese version. In the mid-1970s, “study hard and every day you will improve” appeared in some children’s and educational materials, but “earnestly read books and study” was more frequently used across the board in discussions of how to carry out the criticism campaign. The phrase already appeared earlier in discussions of the 10th Party Congress from the previous year. Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee reports from around the time of the 10th Party Congress already said that they were, “earnestly studying 10th Party Congress documents.”²³¹ There was already a well-established rhetoric of “studying hard” in the PRC by 1974. To be sure, there was previous precedent in the PRC for criticizing old ideas, customs, and practices, but the *pi Lin pi Kong* Campaign really pushed it to a new level of depth by looking at classical texts, hunting down the etymology of words and the textual origins of phrases that were commonly heard in Chinese society. Other things were also “earnestly studied,” during the campaign, like “Chairman Mao’s military writings,”²³² “revolutionary theory,”²³³ and “Marxist-Leninist, Mao Zedong Thought

²³¹ Organizing Committee of the CCP Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee 中共上海市革命委员会机关委员会, “召开党委扩大会议讨论《关于机关学习十大文件的情况和意见》、《关于加强机关战备工作的意见》及《关于加强机关政治思想工作的情况和初步意见》的通知” (Announcement of Discussing “Situation and Opinions Regarding Organizing Studying Tenth Party Congress Documents,” “Opinion Regarding Strengthening Organizing War Preparation Work,” and “Situation and First Opinions Regarding Strengthening Organizing Political Thought Work” at the Opening of the Party Committee Enlarged Meeting), November 28, 1973, SHMA, A102-2-8-18.

²³² Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Finance Group 上海市革会财贸组, “上海市革会财贸组召开批林批孔经验交流会材料” (Documents from the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Finance Group’s Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Experience and Communication Meeting), October 1974, SHMA, B135-4-616.

²³³ SHMA, B244-1-468.

selected writings.”²³⁴ Because the targets of the campaign were long dead, Lin Biao and Confucius could not be hauled out in front of crowds by Red Guards to be publicly denounced and made to wear dunce caps. They had to be criticized, then, in writing, speeches, and propaganda, and the criticism of them necessitated periods of intense study. It thus makes sense that “earnestly read books and study” appeared more frequently in the campaign.

The word choice for how to deal with ancient Chinese philosophy is very revealing of attitudes that the Party had towards them. Never in the primary sources from that campaign’s time did I see that Confucianism should be “studied,” “evaluated,” “understood,” “researched,” or “read.” Confucianism, its ideas, and its major thinkers were only to be “criticized” (*pi* 批, *pipan* 批判, or *piping* 批评), “opposed” (*fan* 反 or *fandui* 反对), “attacked” (*gongji* 攻击), “ruthlessly criticized” (*henpi* 恨批), or “hit” (*da* 打). Legalism, on the other hand, was to be “studied” (*xue* 学), “read” (*du/kan* 读/看), “evaluated” (*pingjia* 评价), “understood” (*renshi* 认识), or “researched” (*yanjiu* 研究). One could “study” and “read” Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought, and Legalism. Even if you were reading *The Analects* closely and creating line-by-line critical commentaries for it, you were not “reading” or “studying” it. You were “criticizing” it. This verb choice is consistent throughout official, non-official, grassroots, archival, and published sources from the campaign’s duration. It became very noticeable to me as I read a variety of sources that these verbs never varied in their consistency. Clearly, a particular view of these schools of thought and their ideas was being presented and being understood by people in China at that time. “Reading” and “studying” implied learning from a

²³⁴ Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Public Transportation Group 上海市革命委员会公交组, “上海市革命委员会公交组秘书组编写《公交情况》(151-200期)” (Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee Public Transportation Group’s Edited *Public Transportation Situation* (No. 151-200), July 1974, SHMA, B246-2-1028.

model that you then try to imitate in some way. It was not just a matter of familiarizing oneself with the details of an academic subject, but of actively dividing between what should and should not be criticized or praised.

By insisting that the people take the time to actually read the writings of reactionaries, counter-revolutionaries, and enemies, the CCP could potentially run the risk of exposing people to nefarious political ideas that would hurt the CCP's legitimacy. The party's ideologues took the risk, but believed ultimately that there would be less harm than good to come out of this effort. Other regimes sometimes intentionally showcased that which they scorned, for instance the Degenerate Art Exhibition in Nazi Germany showcased modernist art that was to be viewed and then scorned by the public.²³⁵ The CCP put their trust in the methods of the mass line, that the correctness of the revolutionaries' ideas would become obviously apparent to the masses as they put the words of reactionaries and revolutionaries side-by-side. It was believed that a theoretical understanding of Marxism-Leninist Mao Zedong Thought could be reaffirmed and could then be taken up by the masses on their own to analyze and understand China's history and the PRC's place in it. Hence, at the start of the campaign, Mao told the Party that he thought that "Confucius has to be criticized."²³⁶

By correctly evaluating Legalism for the progressive role that it played, and by criticizing Confucianism as useful to reactionaries, one was also fulfilling the demands of another slogan of the campaign: "To use the past to serve the present" (*gu wei jin yong* 古为今用). In the "*New Three Characters Classic*" discussed above, the worker reading group that wrote it said in their introduction to the text that it was done, "to link together with the history of the two-line

²³⁵ Thanks to Charles Keith for pointing this parallel example to me.

²³⁶ Quoted from Roderick Macfarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 367.

struggle, and to accomplish making the past serve the present.”²³⁷ A Beijing automobile factory worker youth study group wrote in an article published in *People’s Daily* that, “We study Chairman Mao’s directive on ‘Using the Past to Serve the Present,’ to realize that we worker-peasant-soldiers are reading Classical Chinese and annotating the classics, all in service of realizing class struggle and the two-line struggle.”²³⁸ This slogan is attributed to a 1964 letter from Mao to Lu Dingyi. Mao connected it to another slogan of modern Chinese history, the late-Qing reformers’ “Chinese substance with Western methods” (*Zhongti Xiyong* 中体西用). Mao wrote, “Use the past to serve the present. Use the West to serve China” (*gu wei jin yong, yang wei zhong yong* 古为今用, 洋为中用).²³⁹ More relevant for the aims of the campaign, however, it calls to mind both Confucian and Legalist expressions. As noted earlier, Confucius insisted on returning to the rites of the Western Zhou Dynasty, and modelling oneself after the ancient sage kings. To turn one’s back on tradition was a shame and would lead to chaos. In contrast, one of the central philosophical points of Legalism was that “One who is smart creates laws, while one who is stupid is controlled by them. One who is wise changes the rites, and is not subdued by them.”²⁴⁰ Similarly, “One who acts counter to antiquity is not necessarily wrong, and one who follows the rites does not accomplish much.”²⁴¹ The Legalists asserted that the past need not be imitated. The point for government was to adjust to the changes of the time and make new laws that fit with the new times. This philosophy was expressly opposed to the Confucian insistence

²³⁷ SHMA, B246-2-1030.

²³⁸ Beijing Automobile Manufacturing Factory Workers Theory Group 北京汽车制造厂工人理论组, “毛主席的革命路线指引我们写出《读〈封建论〉》”(Chairman Mao’s Revolutionary Line Led Us to Write “On ‘Feudalism’”), *People’s Daily*, July 8, 1974.

²³⁹ “致陆定一 [1]” “To Lu Dingyi (1),” September 27, 1964, accessed January 29, 2021, <http://xn--fiqw8jqd0xk8ik.com/news/?11462.html>.

²⁴⁰ My translation of: “故知者作法，而愚者制焉；賢者更禮，而不肖者拘焉。” From Shang Jun Shu Chapter 1.

²⁴¹ My translation of: “然則反古者未可必非，循禮者未足多是也。” Ibid.

on following antiquity's example. It was for that reason that it was deemed progressive by the Chinese communists, later.

We can see, from analyzing these slogans for their origins and different meanings, that they were carefully selected formulations (*tifa* 提法) that carried historical, political, and cultural implications. A scholar in a recent groundbreaking volume called the campaign, “excruciatingly long, drawn-out, theoretically debased, and utterly implausible.”²⁴² In describing the origins, meanings, and implications of the campaign's major slogans, I hope to have shown that the rhetoric of the campaign was not empty of meaning, nor too abstract for people to understand outside of the highest committees of the party. Ironically, while the party's radical revolutionary leadership at the time believed that exposing society broadly to the classics would be of benefit to their revolutionary project, the classical studies of the *pi Lin pi Kong* years ended up contributing to the revival of neo-traditionalism in the Deng Xiaoping era and a positive reappraisal of Confucianism. I will explore these post-Mao era implications more in the conclusion of my dissertation.

“Kong the Dick:” Hurling Profanities at the Classics

In the summer of 2019, at the Confucius Temple (*Kong miao* 孔庙) in Shanghai's weekly Sunday used book market, I found a comic book (*manhua* 漫画) aimed at children, titled *Kong the Dick: A Life of Evil* (*Kong Lao'er: zui'e de yisheng* 孔老二：罪恶的一生). On the cover is a decrepit Confucius sitting alone, hunched over a horse-drawn cart. In his hand he holds a placard with “restrain oneself and return to the rites” written on it. Published by Shanghai People's Press in June 1974, it is 88 pages of hand drawn images and narration. Many comic books and short

²⁴² Vivienne Shue, “Mao's China—Putting Politics in Perspective,” in *Maoism at the Grassroots: Everyday Life in China's Era of High Socialism*, edited by Jeremy Brown and Matthew D. Johnson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 365.

story books like these were printed in China in the 1970s. They are smaller than the standard paperback pamphlets from the time. Sometimes they contained photographs of real people, with dialogue and narration accompanying them. There were also plenty of hand drawn comic books intended for younger audiences. Some of them retold stories from classic novels, and some were print companions to major motion picture releases, retelling the films with photographs of still shots. Another common subgenre in the 1970s was cartoony biographies of famous historical figures. Marx, Engels, and Lenin received countless treatments like this at the time, and during the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign, heroic rebels of the pre-modern anti-Confucian struggle were equally depicted in these comics with the Communist revolutionaries. *Kong the Dick: A Life of Evil*, was a biography of someone to be criticized at the time, however. The historical irony was not lost on me as I held this comic from the late Cultural Revolution decade campaign, while standing in the front courtyard a few yards away from a group of people dressed in traditional robes, burning incense and offering prayers to a large statue of Confucius inside the temple proper.

The most commonly used profanity in sources produced during the campaign undoubtedly was “*lao ’er*,” a slang term for male genitalia. It was always attached to the name of Confucius, so that in nearly all official and popular publications, the sage was called “*Kong Lao ’er*” or “Kong the Dick.” “Confucius” is a Latinization of *Kongfuzi* (孔夫子), created by the Jesuit missionaries who first translated the Chinese classics into Latin in the 16th-17th centuries. His given name was Kong Qiu (孔丘), and in Chinese he is also often called Kongzi (孔子), meaning “Master Kong.” In 1974, even children’s books used the “*lao ’er*” epithet, as seen above. Earlier in the Cultural Revolution decade, during the Smash the Four Olds Campaign, statues of Confucius were sometimes adorned with name tags that said “Confucius the Bastard”

(*Kongfuzi hundan* 孔夫子混蛋).²⁴³ The CCP hit the ground running with the “Kong the dick” nickname. The first *People’s Daily* newspaper article to appear with the phrase “Kong the Dick” was printed in the January 1, 1974 issue in an article titled, “Unite, Strive for an Even Greater Victory!—Reporting on People of All Ethnic Groups and the People’s Liberation Army Officers and Soldiers Struggling Bravely Forward Together in the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign.”²⁴⁴ Even then, a trickling of articles was appearing in the press at the end of 1973 showing that the Party was preparing for an all-out assault on Confucius. While the landmark article by Yang Rongguo still had “Master Kong” in the title,²⁴⁵ an article from November 1973 was already calling him by his given name, Kong Qiu, and said, “class enemies at home and abroad copy that spokesman of the declining slave-owning class Kong Qiu. They try in vain to use this political corpse to create an anti-socialist, pro-restorationist public opinion.”²⁴⁶ By February 1974, Confucius was being called “Kong the Dick” ubiquitously. At a large meeting of the Shanghai Municipal May 7th Cadre School, participating groups presented their experiences and writings in the ongoing campaign. A study group composed of five “laboring women” gave the following conclusion to their assembled fellow cadre students after reading through *The Analects* and Dong Zhongshu’s writings on “the Three Fundamental Bonds and Five Constant Virtues” (*san gang wu chang* 三綱五常): “Lin Biao and Kong the Dick are the mortal enemies of laboring women!”²⁴⁷ We can thus see here a way in which the criticism of Kong was deployed in gendered ways particularly when discussing Confucianism’s historical effects on women.

²⁴³ Daphon David Ho, “To Protect and Preserve: Resisting the Destroy the Four Olds Campaign, 1966-1967,” 64-95.

²⁴⁴ “团结起来，争取更大的胜利！——记各族人民和解放军指战员在批林批孔运动中共同战斗奋勇前进” (Unite Together, Strive for a Great Victory!—Report on Various Ethnicities and PLA Officers and Troops Bravely Advancing in the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign), *People’s Daily*, January 1, 1974.

²⁴⁵ Yang Rongguo, “Confucius.”

²⁴⁶ Hu Zuo 胡佐, and Gan Xiao 甘啸, “五·七干校是社会主义时期的新型干部学校” (May Seventh Cadre Schools are a New Type of Cadre School for the Socialist Era), *People’s Daily*, November 24, 1973.

²⁴⁷ SHMA, B60-2-420-16.

The constant, public use of this sexually charged curse was consistent with the gendered implications of some Cultural Revolution discourse. No one criticized Jiang Qing publicly during the Cultural Revolution for using these sexually-infused words. But, after the Cultural Revolution, public condemnations of Jiang were just as gendered. She has been called a “wicked woman,” “a pretender to the throne,” “white-boned demon,” “the power behind the throne,” and “a wannabee empress.” One book published after the arrest of the Gang of Four explicitly tied the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign to them. The essays inside argued that, “The Gang of Four destroyed the study of Chinese History with their fraudulent so-called ‘researching the history of the Confucian-Legalist struggle,’” and that Jiang Qing “vainly hoped to become Empress” by “lavishing praise on Empress Dowager Cixi.”²⁴⁸ She was compared to a long line of wives and other women companions of the men who led China, from emperors to CCP officials, who seemed to have “overstepped” their boundaries into the public eye.²⁴⁹ These gendered critiques have a deep history in Chinese political writing. In the Han Dynasty, Empress Lu, the wife of Emperor Gaozu and mother of Emperor Hui, was charged with the same sorts of crimes against the nature of a woman in China—in essence, for trying to play an important role in high politics.²⁵⁰ When men have taken similar actions, they have not been, in general, compared to gendered spirits or called “evil men.” Instead they are given gender neutral labels: simply “evil” or “tyrannical.”²⁵¹ This history made it particularly powerful, as rhetoric, when Jiang Qing, a woman, used “*lao ’er*.” This was the most prominent woman in Chinese politics calling attention

²⁴⁸ *Evaluating “The Gang of Four’s” Criticize Confucianism Evaluate Legalism.*

²⁴⁹ For more on the public and official condemnation of Jiang Qing, see: Jeremy Brown, “Staging Xiaojinzhuan: The City in the Countryside, 1974-1976,” 160; Delia Davin, “Gendered Mao: Mao, Maoism, and Women,” *A Critical Introduction to Mao*, edited by Timothy Cheek (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 214-215. An example of a book published during the campaign to criticize the Gang of Four in the late 1970s considered the entire Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign to merely be a tool of the Gang of Four’s “anti-party activities:” *Evaluating “The Gang of Four’s” Criticize Confucianism Evaluate Legalism.*

²⁵⁰ Keith McMahon, *Women Shall Not Rule*.

²⁵¹ For instance, Tyrant Jie of the Shang Dynasty.

to and making fun of the greatest sage of Chinese history, and invoking his genitalia while doing so. One cannot help but be reminded, then, of two-thousand years of Chinese men's patriarchal writings about women in power. The prominence of this highly controversial and dynamic female leader would not last long, as no woman has held such a prominent position in the CCP ever since her fall from power. Jiang Qing was perhaps the furthest we have ever seen a female Chinese political leader go to attack Chinese tradition.

What did it mean, broadly, to call Confucius “dick” in 1974-'76? We can trace this iconoclastic rejection of Confucius to the May 4th Movement. Revolutionaries and reformers argued that Confucianism and tradition must be abandoned in order to modernize China to “save the nation” (*jiuguo* 救國). Chen Duxiu, the first chairman of the CCP, famously argued in his magazine, *New Youth*, that China should endorse “Mr. Democracy” and “Mr. Science” over Confucius, and that “to endorse Mr. Democracy, then there is no other choice but to oppose Confucianism (*Kongjiao* 孔教).”²⁵² Another slogan of the May 4th Movement was “tear down the Confucius family shop” (*dadao Kongjia dian* 打倒孔家店). These slogans were quoted in publications during the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign that discussed the history of the May 4th Movement and of the “Confucian-Legalist Struggle” in the modern era (although, ironically, the originator of these slogans was not mentioned because Chen Duxiu was also criticized by the CCP at that time). It is not exactly clear where “Kong the dick” first originated from. As noted above, its first appearance in the state-run central newspaper *People's Daily* was on January 1, 1974, in a general announcement of the campaign's full launching for the year. It

²⁵² Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, “《新青年》罪案之答辯書” (*New Youth* Letter in Response to a Criminal Case), *Wikisource*, January 15, 1919, last edited 06-28-2020, accessed 05-27-2021, <https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E3%80%8A%E6%96%B0%E9%9D%92%E5%B9%B4%E3%80%8B%E7%BD%AA%E6%A1%88%E4%B9%8B%E7%AD%94%E8%BE%A9%E4%B9%A6>.

appeared in hundreds of articles afterwards before tailing off in the spring of 1975. It appeared in only ten articles from May 20, to December 21, 1975. It only appeared once more after that, in a November 20, 1976 article, ironically, criticizing Gang of Four member Yao Wenyan as someone who “sang great praises to Kong the dick.”²⁵³ References to the phrase since the end of the Cultural Revolution usually put it in quotation marks and treat it as a historical term from that time. It seems the phrase did not stick in the Chinese discourse.

The major work of scholarship on profanity in communist China is Elizabeth J. Perry and Li Xun’s paper, “Revolutionary Rudeness: The Language of Red Guards and Rebel Workers in China’s Cultural Revolution,”²⁵⁴ which tackles the issue of vulgar language during the Cultural Revolution. Divided into nine sections, the working paper begins with a discussion that threads throughout the paper on the similarities and distinctions between the rhetoric used in the French Revolution and that used in the Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. They note in the beginning of the article that the French Revolution was a period in which people changed the way they thought what was considered acceptable language to use in public.²⁵⁵ In China, during the Cultural Revolution, the same thing happened. Swearing became a commonplace rhetorical tactic in polemical writings and in politics, but as Perry and Li argue, this kind of language was a failed attempt by intellectuals to mimic what they imagined the language of the masses to be.

It is indeed well documented in scholarship on the French Revolution, which Perry and Li cite, that language and ideas changed drastically because of the revolution. Since language is the means by which we craft how we think, then a change in language signifies a change in

²⁵³ “姚文元是个尊孔派” (Yao Wenyan is in the Confucius-Revering Faction), *People’s Daily*, November 20, 1976.

²⁵⁴ Elizabeth J. Perry and Li Xun, “Revolutionary Rudeness: The Language of Red Guards and Rebel Workers in China’s Cultural Revolution,” *Indiana East Asia Working Paper Series on Language and Politics in Modern China*, Paper #2 (Bloomington: East Asian Studies Center at Indiana University, July 1993).

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

thought, as Perry and Li argue.²⁵⁶ For instance, when discussing the French Revolution, historian Reinhart Koselleck called this change in thought: “the dissolution of the old world and the emergence of the new in terms of the historico-conceptual comprehension of the process.”²⁵⁷ He is thus attributing the impact of the French Revolution to a change in how people conceived history from something that can be followed, to something that lies in the distant past and should not be emulated. Peter Fritzsche puts this in other terms as “our invention and possession of the past.”²⁵⁸ This invention started with the French Revolution, when people began to conceive of the past in a different way, and the modern subjectivity began. The French Revolution changed the way people thought about the past because it allowed them to believe that political history was not cyclical, that historical precedent did not mean that society should try to follow the examples of previous stories, and that a nation can radically break with an unchanging past to a moldable present and future. Most historians of China argue that this shift from cyclical to progressive historical thought—which is the very indication of modernity²⁵⁹—was first proposed in China by Confucian scholar-official reformer Kang Youwei in *The Book of Great Unity* (*Da Tong Shu* 大同書), and was facilitated by Yan Fu’s influential translations of writings by Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer in the late 1890s-early 1900s.²⁶⁰ Later, the communist revolution of 1949 largely constituted a revolution in how people conceived of time by thinking in communist terms, and stressed the importance of “before liberation” (*jiefang qian* 解放前) and “after

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 1.

²⁵⁷ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, translated by Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), xiv.

²⁵⁸ Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1.

²⁵⁹ Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* (New York: Verso, 1982).

²⁶⁰ Timothy Cheek, *The Intellectual in Modern China*, 31. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *History and Will: Philosophical Perspectives of Mao Tse-Tung’s Thought* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

liberation” (*jiefang hou* 解放后) as the major turning point in modern China’s history.²⁶¹ It stands to reason that, following such a dramatic reshaping in how people thought and spoke, that a formerly worshipped sage would be stripped of his titles and cursed at.

Perry and Li then trace the origins of “rude” language used in Red Guard publications in the early years of the Cultural Revolution decade. Rooted in the northern Mandarin spoken vernacular, the swear words popularized during the Cultural Revolution received official support when Beijing big character posters utilizing the curses were reviewed by Mao Zedong himself and declared “very good.” In essence, it was the student youths of China’s cities who took up the widespread use of curses like “cow devils and snake spirits” (*niugui he sheshen* 牛鬼和蛇神),²⁶² or the slightly more difficult to translate, “*ta ma de*” (他妈的).²⁶³ This language was doubly justified by a broad attempt by Red Guard youths to dismiss “polite” language as bourgeois.

In the section of the essay that is in greatest contrast to what my sources from *Pi Lin Pi Kong* show, the two authors argue that since Red Guards’ writings and workers’ writings were so drastically different, it must be the case that Red Guards in general took over the task of representing workers in the written word and thus anything that claims to be the voice of the workers in the 1970s would just be the Red Guards pretending to be them. In particular, once most of the Red Guards were sent to the villages and the factories to work and learn from the laboring masses, they spread the use of this kind of language to the factory workers and peasants that they were working with. This leads to their conclusion that “China’s Cultural Revolution fell

²⁶¹ Gail Hershtatter, *The Gender of Memory*.

²⁶² This means “cow devils and snake spirits,” a term for monsters or demons that comes from Buddhism, but was later appropriated by Chinese communists to label the worst kinds of people in society. We can see it being used in the famous novel: Mo Yan, *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, 2nd ed. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2012 [2006]), 161.

²⁶³ This word literally translates to “His mother’s,” but Perry and Li translate it in their working paper to “damn it,” likely because of how commonplace the word is. It is used as an adjective in Chinese.

linguistically flat” and that “the language of this period [had] a peculiar uniformity.”²⁶⁴ This uniformity was due to three particular reasons, they argue: that social homogeneity was largely achieved by the 1960s in China and so class-differentiated language was hard to find, that Mao Zedong’s authoritarian rule inspired publications to only follow a small set of linguistic tools, and that China’s intellectuals occupied “an ambivalent position” by the 1960s as both “rewedded to the state apparatus, but now required to masquerade as part of the ordinary masses.”²⁶⁵ The primary sources that I have found from the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* period contest this interpretation. In fact, Perry and Li address *Pi Lin Pi Kong* directly: “Prevalent as such maxims became during the Criticize Lin Biao-Criticize Confucius Campaign, they were never really accepted into ordinary speech.”²⁶⁶ As I argued in the first chapter, the relationship between worker and cadre input into sources produced for the campaign was more circuitous than this. It was not merely the case that intellectual students, teachers, and cadres forced their artificial language upon the workers and peasants or that they were parroting the masses. Instead, the masses themselves participated in this campaign, and knowledge production was made in accordance with the hoped-for goals of sending intellectuals “up to the mountains and down to the countryside” to “learn from the masses.” Also, regarding the “maxims” of the campaign, this chapter earlier shows just how ubiquitous the slogans were, and how they were used and interpreted by different people across Chinese society in different ways. They were deep with meaning, historical background, and contemporary political implications. I do not think that they “fell linguistically flat.”²⁶⁷

In the conclusion of the article, Perry and Li say that the rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution fell flat socially because revolutionary China’s major linguistic shift that is

²⁶⁴ Perry and Xun, “Revolutionary Rudeness,” 15.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 17.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 15.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

comparable to the French Revolution's happened much earlier in the century with the May 4th Movement and its resulting New Culture Movement. They end the article with a verdict that the language of the Red Guards was "a crude attempt by rude youngsters to appropriate the revolutionary culture of the Chinese proletariat."²⁶⁸ Again, as the previous chapter of this dissertation shows, the participation of "intellectual youths" in study groups with workers and peasants deserves a fairer appraisal. This article is over twenty-five years old now. Since then, there has not been any development of a theory of Chinese swearing or theory of swearing during the Cultural Revolution.

For my understanding of English profanity, I rely on the existing scholarship in linguistics, psychology, and history to summarize. For Chinese profanity, however, I turn to the Chinese internet for primary sources from blog posts, book reviews, comments, and discussion posts. It is there that we can find the most vivid discussion of profanity among Chinese speakers. My intervention here is necessary because English language scholarship fundamentally lacks a full analysis and theory of Chinese profanity both linguistically and historically. For my purposes, I focus on profanity during the Cultural Revolution. I argue that we need a deeper understanding of what exactly it means to swear in Chinese, as opposed to what it means in Western European languages, in order to truly grasp the meaning, history, intentions, and power behind profanity that we find in primary sources from the Maoist period.

English-language scholarship on profanity is a small field, but it is better formulated than any scholarship on Chinese profanity. Magnus Ljung argued that swearing, at least in English, serves the following purposes: to express outrage, to express bewilderment, to insult, to emphasize, for comedic effect, and to highlight absurdity. In fact, Ljung's monograph is the only

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 18.

English language systematic comparative study of swearing across multiple languages from different family groups, including Mandarin. The study is not necessarily historical, however, and instead argues that all languages use swearing to convey taboo and emotive language.²⁶⁹ Historians, linguists, psychoanalysts, psychologists, and scholars of literature have all explored why humans swear, where profanity comes from, what it really means when we use particular kinds of swear words, and whether or not we should keep using profanity. From studies of children swearing to empirical analyses of the correlation between use of profanity and professional development, it is clear that in the English-speaking world, we tend to think that profanity is problematic, and sometimes, even particularly dangerous.²⁷⁰ As Melissa Mohr showed, it is a documented fact that Westerners have been swearing for at least as long as they have been writing. To paraphrase her examples, ancient Greek tragedies, Roman centurions, Beowulf, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth I, King Henry VIII, Charles Dickens, Edgar Allen Poe, Mark Twain, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon all swore, with documented evidence.²⁷¹ Whether or not humans actually swear more now than we ever did before is unsubstantiated by historical records. What has changed over time is what we consider to be profanity, and when we consider it appropriate to use it.

When considering and writing about Chinese profanity, we need to distinguish what exactly Chinese speakers think profanity is. In English, the linguistic phenomenon we are discussing here is called “swearing,” “cursing,” and “bad language,” among other colloquial phrases like “talking like a sailor.” All of these terms are inextricably linked with the history of

²⁶⁹ Summary of Magnus Ljung, *Swearing: A Cross-Cultural Linguistic Study* (New York: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2011), chapter 1.

²⁷⁰ In a prescriptive book on swearing, one linguist argues in favor of swearing, and that swearing does not negatively impact one’s career, intellect, or writing: Edwin L. Battistella, *Bad Language: Are Some Words Better than Others?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), chapter 2.

²⁷¹ My historical approach to swearing here is influenced by: Melissa Mohr, *Holy Shit: A Brief History of Swearing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

the English language and of English-speaking peoples. The Chinese translations for these words include “to scold people” (*maren* 骂人), “dirty words” (*zanghua* 脏话), and “bad words” (*huaihua* 坏话). Note that there is no direct equivalent in Chinese for the words “swearing” and “cursing.” This is because profanity holds a different connotation historically and culturally for the Chinese than for the Anglo-Saxons. There is a reason why “swearing” has two meanings in English: first, to speak these offensive words, and second, to declare one’s honesty or allegiance to a god, country, leader, or law. As Melissa Mohr wrote in her expressively titled book, *Holy Shit*, in the history of English profanity, the emphasis has shifted over time between “the holy” and “the shit.” In medieval England, and for those of certain religious persuasions even today, the most offensive and harmful swear words in existence are those that call attention to “the holy.” Phrases like “oh my god,” “god dammit,” and “Jesus Christ” may be unspeakable to these people, but these very same people might say “shit” when they stub their toe, and it is much less of an offense to their beliefs than the religiously-inflected words are. In general, however, thanks to the Enlightenment and the secularization of Anglo-Saxon culture and society, “the holy” is less offensive to most English speakers these days. In the Victorian era and after, the puritanical sexual morals of elite English society pushed people to find “the shit” far more offensive, such that direct references to human anatomy, coitus, and bodily fluids became profane.²⁷² In medieval England, and even for Shakespeare, to say that one had to go “to shite” was perhaps indicative of one’s class background, but not very offensive.²⁷³ By the late 19th century, most “respectable” English elites would avoid such a word and might strike their children for uttering

²⁷² Summarizing Melissa Mohr, *Holy Shit: A Brief History of Swearing*.

²⁷³ Revealingly, “shite” is a word of Anglo-Saxon origin, while “poo” is a French loan word. Many words of Anglo-Saxon origin are perceived culturally as base, while those of French origin are seen as more proper or “clean.” This has to do with England’s history of Norman rule and the role that French played as the legal language of England, in contrast to the coarse words of Germanic origin, which were seen by the French-speaking rulers as barbaric.

it. Thanks to Victorian high culture, even middle class Americans came to prefer to say “your rear” or “down there” instead of more direct references that would have been acceptable for a British peasant to utter without batting an eye several centuries earlier. In fact, the words “donkey” and “cat” increased in popularity since the 19th century directly because their synonyms were too close to inappropriate language for body parts.²⁷⁴

While organizations have sprung up in the United States starting in the 1980s dedicated solely to the cause of stamping out swearing,²⁷⁵ nearly every scholar who has written about the topic argues that not only could we not get rid of swearing if we tried, but actually every society in theory needs to swear. As Lars Andersson and Peter Trudgill argued, swearing has “covert prestige.” We keep using bad language because we actually *like* and *need* it.²⁷⁶ Profanity serves a crucial social role. This is because, as many scholars have noted, such as Ariel C. Arango, swearing is a verbal representation of taboo, something that every culture around the world has developed in some form or another.²⁷⁷ Even languages that do not have swear words still have taboos.²⁷⁸ We need taboo because even if we ban the use of profanity, we always find some other way of representing them.

We can thus see that the Anglophone world has an ambivalent relationship with profanity. It is needed but also English speakers try to avoid it in certain contexts. Speaking taboo words is a kind of social safety valve that releases the pressure that is built up by societal tensions, norms, laws, and contradictions. As Hugh Rawson pointed out, profanity can mean

²⁷⁴ The “donkey” example comes from: Geoffrey Hughes, *Swearing: A Social History of Foul Language, Oaths and Profanity in English* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991).

²⁷⁵ On these groups’ history, functions, and intentions, see: Edwin L. Battistella, *Bad Language*, chapter 7.

²⁷⁶ Lars Andersson and Peter Trudgill, *Bad Language* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

²⁷⁷ Ariel C. Arango, *Dirty Words: The Expressive Power of Taboo* (Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson, 1977).

²⁷⁸ Hughes, *Swearing*.

different things depending on who is speaking them to whom in different contexts.²⁷⁹ Or, as Geoffrey Hughes argued, the exact meaning of a swear word lies only with the speaker's intentions.²⁸⁰ This is a significant and very important aspect of profanity for Chinese as well. As Edward Sagarin said, swearing "might offer stimulus and reward to workers during a joint activity."²⁸¹ A paradox of swearing is that while it almost always invokes taboo imagery, it is almost never directly calling attention to what it literally means. Calling the company policy "bullshit" means that it is unsavory or unfounded, not that it is literally made up of a pile of bovine feces. To paraphrase Wajnryb, "fuck" is a magical word because it can be used in any part of speech to describe nearly any kind of situation.²⁸² "Great fuckin' movie" is a positive use of the word as an adjective. "You stupid fuck" is a negative use of it as a noun. "You really got fucked over" invokes the verb form. The root of the word is perhaps as vague and broad as its use today. Perhaps coming from the Germanic "*focken*," meaning "to use" in a general sense, the modern version is a catch-all. It is in this most versatile of profanities that we can see an important point of this topic: the purpose of profanity is found in the intention of the speaker. This applies in the Chinese-language context as well.

Moving to the second meaning of "swear" in English, we come to one of its less common synonyms: "oath." The connections between these two words and their positive and negative meanings point to the nature of English in the middle ages. Knights "swore" an "oath" to protect their monarchs. For instance, medieval knights would venture forth to avenge their lord with an oath such as: "with god as my witness" or else "may god strike me down."²⁸³ Monks swore oaths

²⁷⁹ Hugh Rawson, *Wicked Words: A Treasure of Curses, Insults, Put-Downs, and Other Formerly Unprintable Terms from Anglo-Saxon Times to the Present* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1989), 4.

²⁸⁰ Hughes, *Swearing*.

²⁸¹ Edward Sagarin, *The Anatomy of Dirty Words* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1962), 25.

²⁸² Wajnryb, chapter 3.

²⁸³ Examples from Hughes, *Swearing*.

to god and church. Because the Abrahamic religions specifically say that “taking the lord’s name in vain” is a sin, it became practice in Europe that one must not mention god at all except in the special, formal occasion of an oath swearing ceremony. Similarly, one’s monarch must not be named casually (this the Europeans had in common with the Chinese). To do so was to take their name in vain, and to commit a sin, or to transgress a societal and cultural taboo. It thus stands to follow that “swearing” could mean two very different things with opposite connotations. This concept of swearing oaths is entirely unique to the West, and according to scholars, really only exists in English, French, and Swedish.²⁸⁴ Swearing was not called “nasty” or “dirty” until the prude norms of the Victorian era took over—when the human body was not to be referred to directly except by medical experts in their own sterilized medical language, taken from the noble ancient Greek and Latin languages. As C.S. Lewis once said, “As soon as you deal with it [sex] explicitly, you are forced to choose between the language of the nursery, the gutter and the anatomy class.”²⁸⁵ Such is the fate of profanity in the Anglophone world.

Using the above understanding of Anglophone scholarship on profanity, I now move to Mandarin Chinese. These two languages are totally different on the matter of profanity, in religious and moral terms. It is not a sin to swear in Chinese, but in Buddhism, words can be violent, and thus violent language dispels negative karma.²⁸⁶ The Buddhist prohibition on violent language is perhaps the closest equivalent that Chinese civilization ever had to the third commandment. That being said, violent language in Buddhism was not merely just talking about the Buddha in casual conversation, but declaring one’s hatred for someone or desire to commit violence towards another living creature. This understanding of violent language would be well

²⁸⁴ Magnus Ljung, *Swearing*, chapter 1.

²⁸⁵ Hughes, *Swearing*, 1.

²⁸⁶ Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 215-218.

understood by Chinese Buddhists, but even for them, it is quite common and acceptable to say “Oh, Heavens” (*Tian a* 天啊). This is no sin in Buddhism. Nor is it a sin in Confucianism nor Daoism to sigh to the heavens. Rather, it is quite common for Confucians to cry out to Heaven in defeat at one’s fate. Confucius himself did this.

The three Chinese terms for swearing—*maren*, *zanghua*, and *huaihua*—all denote three separate categories of language. *Maren* is a specific kind of language. It means to criticize someone, usually to their face.²⁸⁷ This is the equivalent of “fightin’ words” in English. One can find it vocally today in China in displays of road rage. *Zanghua* is “dirty” language, and thus is associated with sex and the discharge of bodily fluids.²⁸⁸ *Huaihua* tends to denote mostly when one says bad things about someone else “behind their back.” This can be gossip, for instance.²⁸⁹ We can see that Chinese profanity carries a more strongly social connection than English profanity does. The potential for social insult and connection to status is more prevalent in Chinese profanity, whereas in English the emphasis on a religious connotation is much greater. The two share a special place for that which is “gross” or “dirty:” “the shit.”

Despite these differences between Chinese and English swearing, there are also many similarities between the two. Both languages allow for profanity to be used as an exclamation (for instance, when dropping a box on one’s toe), as an insult thrown at someone else, and as an expression of amazement. Also, swearing across both languages tends to not call direct attention

²⁸⁷ “骂人” “Scolding People,” *Baidu Baike*, Accessed February 25, 2019, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E9%AA%82%E4%BA%BA>.

²⁸⁸ “脏话” “Dirty Words,” *Baidu Baike*, Accessed February 25, 2019, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%84%8F%E8%AF%9D/4325669>.

²⁸⁹ “坏话” “Bad Words,” *Baidu Baike*, Accessed February 25, 2019, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%9D%8F%E8%AF%9D>. “总喜欢在背后说人坏话属于一种正常的心理，有三点好处” “Always Liking Saying Bad Words Behind People’s Backs Has Three Kinds of Benefits,” *Baidu Baike*, August 8, 2018, accessed February 25, 2019, <https://baike.baidu.com/tashuo/browse/content?id=8a797c6e7d5f7b2ee1e2b4a4&lemmaId=&fromLemmaModule=pcBottom>.

to the literal imagery of the words. Just like in English, “motherfucker” (*cao ni ma* 操你妈) is not usually taken for its literal imagery in Chinese.

The history and culture of swearing in Chinese is most drastically different from that of English in that it lacks such a strong connection to religion. English swearing is inextricably tied to the Anglo-Saxons’ long history with Christianity. Chinese swearing, however, is much less religiously tied. With the translation of Western medical terms into Chinese at the end of the 19th century and into the early 20th century, there arose a class and educational divide in the use of biological terms. There are medical terms in Chinese for human body parts and functions, which are perhaps even more reserved for educated elites in China than in England. The choice to avoid coarse language is even more indicative of class than of religious proclivities for Chinese than it is for English speakers.

Based on a literature review of Chinese profanity, I argue that there is not as much of an established body of scholarship on Chinese profanity than there is for English profanity. Searches of the China Academic Journals Database, China Knowledge National Infrastructure, as well as searches on the mainland Chinese search engine Baidu and book sellers, I have found that while some discussions of profanity certainly exist in Chinese, they are largely done in reference to swearing in other languages, particularly in English. There are no scholarly articles in the CKNI database published before the 1980s with titles, abstracts, or subjects containing the words “*maren*,” “*zanghua*,” or “*huaihua*.” Ruth Wajnryb’s 2004 English-language book, *Language Most Foul*, was translated and published in China by Wen Hui Press in 2008. In nearly all discussions online in Chinese about swearing and its cultural and historical meaning, it is

almost always the case that at least one commentator will bring up this book, and a comparison between English and Chinese swear words then follows.²⁹⁰

Blogs and discussion posts that ask “did ancient Chinese people swear” invariably answer that, “yes, they did.” Careful readers point out that ancient texts and literature feature plenty of examples of *maren*. Even emperors were not afraid to use *zanghua* to debase their enemies.²⁹¹ In stark contrast to European Christian commentators, Chinese commentators would at most criticize an emperor for speaking this way not because to do so is a sin or an offense to some higher power, but because it might sow discord among the populace, and thus reflect badly on the dynasty’s legitimacy to rule. If Chinese women were criticized for swearing, it was usually because they were then seen to not accord with the patriarchal ideal of a Chinese woman being pure and innocent of sex or violence.

One mainland Chinese blogger, writing under the penname A Mo, building on Wajnyrb’s book, attempted one of the deeper analyses of swearing in the language. A Mo’s blog post on the popular music website, *Douban*, was submitted to the site’s “I Love Rock and Roll Music” subsection in 2015. The blog post analyzed *Language Most Foul*. The majority of the post restated the findings of the book and discussed the history and evolution of swearing in Europe,

²⁹⁰ Lin Xu 林衍, “我们为什么爱说脏话” “Why Do We Love Saying Dirty Words,” *China Youth Daily*, September 18, 2013, accessed 02-25-2019, http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2013-09/18/nw.D110000zgqnb_20130918_2-11.htm. “脏话对于一门语言的意义何在?” “What is the Meaning of Dirty Words?,” Accessed February 26, 2019, <https://www.zhihu.com/question/30854927>. A Mo 阿莫, “Bad Taste | 我们和脏话的光荣历史” “Bad Taste: The Glorious History of Us and Dirty Words,” *I Love Rock and Rock Music* (blog), April 23, 2015, accessed 02-25-2019, <https://site.douban.com/sorock/widget/notes/186221/note/495819994/>.

²⁹¹ “古人怎样说脏话?” “How Did Ancient People Say Dirty Words?,” n.d., accessed February 25, 2019; Li Ao 李敖, “盘点: 古代人都用哪些骂人的话?” “Taking Inventory: Which Scolding Words Did Ancient People Use?,” May 15, 2015, accessed February 25, 2019, http://news.ifeng.com/a/20150515/43759279_0.shtml; “中国古人是如何骂人的?” “How Did Ancient Chinese People Scold People?,” *Baidu Baike*, May 9, 2017, accessed February 25, 2019, <https://baike.baidu.com/tashuo/browse/content?id=3b66e4b1a529ca713f122421&lemmaId=&fromLemmaModule=pcBottom>; Zhu Jiujun Talks History 煮酒君谈史, “古人怎么说脏话?” “How Did Ancient People Speak Dirty Words?,” *Baidu Baike*, May 31, 2017, accessed February 25, 2019, <https://baike.baidu.com/tashuo/browse/content?id=4a78326fd2ebf64f2e10862b&fr=qingtian1>.

but then extrapolated these conclusions to apply broadly to China as well. The author concluded that all swearing is alike and serves three purposes: catharsis, expressing anger, and expressing endearment towards one's friends. However, what this article and some other online posts do point out as unique to Chinese swearing is the influence of "feudal" ideas on it.²⁹² That is, many Chinese online commentators note that many Chinese curses point towards one's ancestors or elders. This interpretation of Chinese swearing appears to originally come from a 1925 essay by the famous writer Lu Xun, titled, "Regarding 'Dammit!'"²⁹³ In this essay, Lu Xun coined the term "national insult" (*guoma* 國罵). Lu Xun said that China's national insult is "*ta ma de*." It is often translated as "dammit" in English because of its common use, but literally this means "his mother's." Lu Xun said that this term was China's national curse because, "it doesn't matter who you are, if you live in China, then you will hear '*ta ma de*' or similar phrases. I think this word's distribution has probably followed Chinese people everywhere they have ever stepped foot. The number of times it has been used, I fear, is no less than the polite 'Hello.'"²⁹⁴ He argued that the swear came from lower status people in feudal times, used to denigrate elites by targeting their ancestors, noting that, "in China, the only people who say [*ta ma de*] are 'low quality people,' like a cart driver for instance. Only those with a very high status, like 'scholar officials,' will absolutely not say [the phrase]."²⁹⁵ To paraphrase, because Chinese people do not worship or fear God, but instead fear their ancestors and parents, they swear with them instead of a deity.

²⁹²A Mo, "Bad Taste."

²⁹³ The full text of the original essay can be found here: "论'他妈的!'" "On 'Damnit!'," *Baidu Baike*, last updated November 2, 2018, accessed February 28, 2019, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%AE%BA%E2%80%9C%E4%BB%96%E5%A6%88%E7%9A%84%E2%80%9D>.

²⁹⁴ Lu Xun 鲁迅, "论'他妈的!'" (On "Damnit!"), originally written July 19, 1925, accessed May 5, 2021, <http://www.millionbook.net/mj/l/luxun/f/021.htm>.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

While in English we do have curses like “motherfucker” and oaths like “I swear on my mother’s grave,” the weight and cultural significance of invoking one’s ancestors and elders in Chinese culture are much greater than in English. This is why Chinese has many more insults revolving around ancestors and elders than English does. For example: “bad egg” (*huaidan* 坏蛋), “stupid egg” (*bendan* 笨蛋), “tortoise egg” (*guidan* 龟蛋), “rolling egg” (*gundan* 滚蛋), “confused egg” (*hutudan* 糊涂蛋) “mixed egg” (*hundun* 混蛋), “his mother’s” (*tamade* 他妈的), “fuck your mother” (*caonima* 操你妈), “fuck your ancestors to the 18th generation” (*caoni zuzong shibada* 操你祖宗十八大), and “go to your mother” (*qunima* 去你妈). The presence of “egg” in Chinese swearing refers to a child, so a “mixed up egg” is someone of unknown fatherhood, or “a bastard.” In essence, Chinese has many more swear words pointing to one’s parentage and ancestry than English does. From this, we can thus see once again that, like English, swear words in Chinese are clearly linked to the history and culture of the people who speak the language. English profanity points to England’s Christian past. Chinese profanity points to the Confucian past.

Chinese netizens often point to Lu Xun’s essay, English equivalents for Chinese swear words, *Language Most Foul*, and a host of examples of insults from ancient and premodern Chinese texts when considering what it means to swear in Chinese. However, most, if not all, of these sources were unavailable to the average Chinese person during the Cultural Revolution. Lu Xun’s selected works were certainly available during the Cultural Revolution. Premodern and classical texts were preserved in universities, libraries, museums, and archives in China, but many not for sale to the general public until *Pi Lin Pi Kong* in early 1974. Even then, the focus of study and analysis of classical texts in 1974 was on their political implications, not on the kinds of scholarly linguistic study that we see in the scholarship on swearing in English since the

middle of the twentieth century. Comparisons with English swearing would be unheard of at that time. So, recent discussions on the internet about swearing in Chinese are of a different sort than swearing during the Cultural Revolution would have been. Presumably, insults during the Cultural Revolution would have largely been inspired by the discourse of “speaking bitterness” about pre-liberation China, and by communist propaganda criticizing foreign and internal enemies.

Profanity during the Cultural Revolution in China served several purposes. First, it invoked working class and peasant culture. Second, it served a practical purpose as a means of insult. Third, it proved one’s emotional sincerity. All three of these were essential to political survival during the time period. Slinging insults at revisionists, capitalists, imperialists, and other enemies of the people was one thing, and not new in 1966. The strength of swearing at Confucius, however, was something entirely different. Calling Confucius “a bastard” and “a dick” constituted verbal iconoclasm. Because filial piety is an essential aspect of Confucian philosophy, calling him a “bastard” would be insultingly unfilial to the sage, his ancestors, and his descendants. Indeed, Confucius’s mother was reputed to have been a widow and sources say that he did not know his father growing up. His devotion to respecting his ancestors and the classics thus made him a doubly perfect example of a filial son to Confucian orthodoxy. The point of swearing at Confucius during the Campaign to Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius was to show publicly that, as a communist, one must face the past and tear it down. *Kongzi*, “Master Kong,” became *Kong Lao’er*, “Kong the Dick.” It thus makes sense that in June of 1974, Jiang Qing had to call him “*Kong Lao’er*” to her audience of workers.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ Jiang Qing 江青, “江青同志在”天津市儒法斗争史报告会“上的重要讲话” “Comrade Jiang Qing’s Important Speech at ‘Report at the Meeting for the Tianjin City Confucian-Legalist Struggle History,” June 19, 1974, 会后交保密室, pg. 2.

We see here once again my broader point about slogans and rhetoric during *pi Lin pi Kong*. These words were not empty of meaning. They carried historical, cultural, ideological, and political baggage and implications with them. The past and present could be put together linguistically in a way that might appear nonsensical at glance. But a deeper unravelling of the words' origins and implications in terms of culture, class, and politics points towards their interesting and meaningful importance. Calling Confucius "Kong the Dick" carried with it radical feminist political connotations, declarations about China's perceived foreign and domestic enemies, an Historical Materialist interpretation of the past, a knowledge and acknowledgement of China's Confucian traditional past, and an attempt to take on the language and culture of the working class. *That* was what was going on when Jiang Qing called Confucius "Kong the Dick" in front of an assembly of train station workers and Tianjin party members in 1974.

Revisionism and Contemporary Politics in Slogans

Propaganda pieces in the PRC generally seem to have an imagined opponent and to constitute a rebuttal. While the identity of the imagined opponent is not always stated explicitly, we can make some inferences from the words chosen in documents. During the *pi Lin pi Kong* period, the most apparent and likely opponents with whom the authors of sources were debating appear to be revisionists at large, and the Soviet Union after Stalin in particular. One factory workers' small study group explained in a report on their activities that they chose to study the text of *Mengzi* because, "foreign reactionaries say we don't dare to criticize *Mengzi*."²⁹⁷ They took it as a challenge for them to prove wrong, then. Lin Biao was not accused of being in

²⁹⁷ Shanghai Municipal Number 1 Telecommunications Industry Bureau Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Experiences Meeting Materials 上海市第一机电工业局批林批孔经验交流会材料, "发扬'五敢'精神、联系实际、选批《孟子》" (Carry Forward the Spirit of 'Five Dares,' Connect Practice, Choose to Criticize *Mengzi*), 1974, SHMA, B173-2-192-61.

cahoots with the U.S. or capitalist imperialists. Instead, he was always accused of wanting to work with the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev's leadership, and to make the PRC follow the revisionist path of the Soviet Union, which denied the significance of continued class struggle after revolution within a socialist society. This was partly why some scholars later interpreted the Lin Biao Incident as the result of a political power struggle within the CCP over those in favor of détente with the U.S.A. and those in favor of détente with the USSR. More recent scholarship on the question has firmly stated that, "There is no evidence to support the official claim that Lin had been actively involved in planning a final escape to the Soviet Union,"²⁹⁸ and that, "there is no evidence of [Lin Biao] shaping a coherent programme to appeal to a military-industrial complex, or indeed of any developed policy positions throughout the entire 1966-71 period."²⁹⁹ Regardless of later findings, during the campaign itself and in the primary sources produced at the time, there was an assumed collaboration between "Soviet revisionists" and Lin Biao.

In the Maoist lexicon, after the Sino-Soviet Split, the Soviet Union was almost universally called "Soviet Revisionist" (*Su xiu* 苏修). The term "Soviet Union" (*Su lian* 苏联) was only used during *pi Lin pi Kong* to refer to the time period before Stalin's death.³⁰⁰ Somewhat like how "Kong" was always accompanied by "*lao er*" and "Lin Biao" was often called "Traitor Lin," the Soviets, too, got their tag. The revisionists who had taken over the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, under Khrushchev, were also called "socio-imperialists" and sometimes even "fascists." Fascist designations were also sometimes given to the Republic

²⁹⁸ Qiu, *The Culture of Power*, 195.

²⁹⁹ Teiwes and Sun, *The Tragedy of Lin Biao*, 8.

³⁰⁰ I noticed this when reading my primary sources produced during the campaign, and have not noticed it mentioned anywhere else in previous scholarship. I think it is a significant rhetorical device worth noting.

of China under Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan, but for different reasons.³⁰¹ Sometimes, the leadership of the Soviet Union were also called “the new Czars” (*xin Shahuang* 新沙皇).³⁰² Lin Biao was charged after his death with wanting to kill Mao Zedong, then take over the leadership of the PRC and CCP, secure an alliance with Soviet Union, and then hand over the PRC to the Soviet Union to be a new colony of the new Czars, making Lin Biao their designated vassal for the new “Lin family fascist dynasty.”³⁰³

I say that the Soviet Union and revisionists at large were the imagined interlocutors of *pi Lin pi Kong* propaganda because sometimes documents contained direct attacks aimed at the Soviet Union in relation to the campaign. Some documents claimed that the Soviet Union was busy praising Confucius and lobbing criticisms at the PRC that its people “wouldn’t dare to criticize” China’s great philosophical tradition. However, in all of the primary sources that I have gathered from this time, I cannot find any cited evidence given in the sources for where exactly

³⁰¹ The revolutionary meeting of Beijing University tied quotes from Friedrich Nietzsche, Adolf Hitler, and Chiang Kai-shek together into one text on counter-revolutionary thought: SHMA, B244-3-436-42.

³⁰² For instance: Yan Suo 严梭, “新老沙皇尊孔的险恶用心” “Sinister Intentions of the New Czars Revering Confucius,” *People’s Daily*, August 9, 1974.

³⁰³ For instances of attacks on Soviet revisionism in relation to the criticizing of Confucius, see: B246-2-1030-18 (issue #255); *The Dick Kong’s Lost Spirit and the Pipedreams of the New Czar*; Jin Yuan 靳苑, “资本主义雇佣奴隶制” (Capitalism Employs the Slavery System), *People’s Daily*, June 22, 1975; An Miao 岸苗, “儒家的投降主义和卖国贼林彪” (Confucian Capitulationism and Traitor Lin Biao Selling the Country), *People’s Daily*, August 12, 1975; “在毛主席的无产阶级教育路线指引下 清华大学工农兵学员茁壮成长” (Tsinghua University Worker-Peasant-Soldier Students Grow Up Strong and Sturdy Under the Directions of Chairman Mao’s Proletarian Educational Line), *People’s Daily*, December 7, 1975; Fang Yanliang 方岩梁, “‘大有大的难处’——从《红楼梦》看反动没落阶级的虚弱本质” (“The Difficulties of dayouda”—Observing the Weak Character of a Reactionary and Falling Class in *The Dream of the Red Chamber*), *People’s Daily*, April 10, 1974; *People’s Daily*, January 24, 1974; Luo Siding 罗思鼎, “从王安石变法看儒法论战的演变——读《王荆公年谱考略》” (Seeing the Evolution of the Confucian-Legalist Battle from Wang Anshi’s Reforms—Reading “Considering Wang Jing Gong’s Chronology”), *People’s Daily*, February 5, 1974; *People’s Daily*, August 9, 1974; “珍宝岛地区军民在批林批孔运动中斗志昂扬狠批林彪妄图投靠苏修社会帝国主义罪行决心为保卫伟大社会主义祖国作出新贡献,” *People’s Daily*, April 22, 1974.

Regarding the allegation that Lin and his “clique” intended to stage a coup. Recent leading scholarship on the final years of Lin Biao’s life lean towards the interpretation that there is no evidence that Lin Biao had any plans to carry out a coup or assassination attempt, that these plans were concocted by his son Lin Liguang alone, and that Lin Liguang and Ye Qun convinced Lin Biao to get on the plane that later killed them only at the last moment. See: Jin Qiu, *The Culture of Power*; Frederick C. Teiwes, and Warren Sun, *The Tragedy of Lin Biao*.

the Soviet authorities are believed to have said anything to this effect. Direct quotes and citations are not given, even in texts aimed specifically at debunking Soviet revisionism. In a book published in April 1974 by People's Press, titled *The Soul of Kong the Dick and the Pipedream of the New Tsars*, Soviet revisionists are criticized in vague terms for "holding black meetings" in Moscow for an unspecified "Confucius Society." No details are given for what exactly this refers to. No names or dates are given, and no citations to specific publications are provided. Instead, in general, Soviet "books and magazines" were criticized for saying that Confucius "created a one-of-a-kind Chinese cultural treasure," and that he "arouses respect."³⁰⁴ An article by an unnamed Xinhua News Agency reporter in the same volume said that, "the Soviet Revisionist clique's hack writers once wrote, 'Confucianism's universal theory has materialist ideas in it.'"³⁰⁵ It would be interesting and potentially revealing to look at some Soviet newspapers at that time to see what was reported about *pi Lin pi Kong* in them, if anything at all. Presumably some academic association dedicated to researching Confucianism existed in the Soviet Union, as elsewhere, and this was one of the few attempts in the Chinese literature at the time to directly link the *pi Lin pi Kong* Campaign with specific Soviet activities. However, the charges appear out of context, and sometimes reference materials (possibly left over from the period of Sino-Soviet cooperation) published long before 1974 were cited as "evidence" that the Soviet revisionists were also revealing their reactionary nature by lauding Confucius.

To return to my earlier point and main argument in this chapter, the Soviet targets of this campaign are revealing of the PRC's geopolitical and ideological position in the last few years of the Mao Zedong era. The PRC had recently reached out to the U.S. to resume diplomatic relations, and the two countries famously issued a joint statement condemning "hegemony"

³⁰⁴ The Dick Kong's Lost Spirit and the Pipedreams of the New Czar, 13.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 26.

globally, in part aimed at the Soviet Union. Recent scholarship on PRC national security interests under the Mao era show that the PRC government considered the Soviet Union to be a real potential military threat,³⁰⁶ and it has long been speculated that the leadership at the top of the CCP and PRC state debated about how the PRC should respond effectively to an increasingly hostile outside world, including who to align with over others. Brief attempts to restore PRC-USSR relations in the 1960s all failed and Sino-Soviet tensions reached their zenith in 1969 with the border conflict.³⁰⁷

In fact, not only was the Soviet Union explicitly called out in PRC documents during the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, but the U.S. remained largely unmentioned in almost all sources at the time. Hardly any mentions were given to the U.S. during this campaign, and only passing reference was given in historical narratives written at this time to Western orientalist scholarship that was used to justify China's semi-colonial status after the Opium War. While the Soviet Union was accused, without cited evidence, of praising Confucius over Legalism, the West was never mentioned at all for its relatively long history of scholarship on Confucianism and orientalist fascination with Confucius.

The rhetorical signals given off by propaganda from the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign revealed the philosophical, political, cultural, and historical positions and problems of the PRC in the mid-1970s. While some of the slogans and rhetoric of the campaign were typical or similar to earlier ones in the PRC, the novelty of the campaign is significant and deserves further attention. It relied on both the unlikely utilization of classical references during an otherwise iconoclastic revolutionary time, as well as unprecedented new interpretations of

³⁰⁶ Covell F. Meyskens, *Mao's Third Front: The Militarization of Cold War China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

³⁰⁷ For more on Sino-Soviet relations after the split, see: Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), chapter 3.

classical texts and figures. The campaign venerated one traditionally demonized school of philosophy (Legalism), and demonized the orthodox philosophy of traditional China (Confucianism). In the process, previously demonized Legalist figures like Shang Yang and Qin Shihuang became revolutionary and progressive heroes, while the traditionally worshipped Confucius was turned into “Kong the dick”—a defrocked priest who could only conjure up the smoky spirits of long dead kings in the name of historical reaction. Pre-modern Chinese history was given contemporary relevance, and one tradition was chosen over another.

The slogans of *pi Lin pi Kong* were never just empty words without meaning. Nor were they merely the expressions of an esoteric elite political struggle. Instead, they pointed to real things, real policies, real-world consequences, and were tinged by both (a particular version of) Chinese tradition *and* revolutionary modernity.

CHAPTER 3: The Nationalist Gaze at *Pi Lin Pi Kong*

In this chapter and the following chapter, I discuss the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign and the KMT in Taiwan's responses to the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign. While the Cultural Renaissance was launched officially in November 1966, several months after the Cultural Revolution began to sweep across the Chinese mainland, it was reenergized by the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign. Because the latter was a concerted effort to get the entire Chinese nation thinking about traditional Chinese culture, so as to criticize its "reactionary" elements, the culturally conservative ROC in Taiwan felt their campaign to revitalize Chinese culture was given new life and purpose. The campaign's guiding committee shifted attention in late 1973 to emphasize countering the mainland's claims about Confucianism, Legalism, and Chinese history more broadly. As the self-designated protectors of traditional Chinese culture, the ROC launched a domestic and international campaign that utilized pro-Confucian propaganda and a massive field of Sinology scholarship. I ultimately argue that, by analyzing the ROC-KMT regime's internal discourse about what was happening in the Chinese mainland with the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign, we can come to some deeper understandings of the ideologies of both sides and of their respective limitations. I find that both campaigns were major moments on both sides of the Taiwan Strait in the broader story of decoupling between the mainland and Taiwan that has been happening over the course of the past 120 years since Taiwan was first taken away from Beijing's control.

In this chapter, I move on now from focusing on the PRC to exploring the ways in which the ROC-KMT regime reacted to the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign. The sources I use in this chapter to tell the story of that reaction are intelligence reports from military personnel stationed on the ROC's outlying islands (Kinmen/Quemoy and Matsu) tasked with surveilling

information coming from the mainland, as well as media reports and official publications produced by state-owned presses. This chapter focuses on how state media and experts within the government tasked with keeping an eye on developments in the mainland interpreted the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign internally to other officials and to the Taiwanese public.

Background and Symbolism of Launching the Cultural Renaissance

On November 12, 1966, President Chiang Kai-shek of the Republic of China stood in the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall before a gathering of “one-thousand high level government officials, representatives of the will of the people, and compatriot overseas Chinese representatives” to declare that November 12th would officially change from Founding Father Day (*Guofu dancheng jie* 國父誕辰節) to Chinese Cultural Renaissance Day (*Zhonghua wenhua fuxing jie* 中華文化復興節). November 12, 1966 was the ROC Founding Father Sun Yat-sen’s 101st birthday, according to the traditional Chinese system of telling a person’s age. Chiang filled his speech with quotes from the Neo-Confucian canon and declared that, by carrying forward the Confucian orthodox tradition (*daotong* 道統) of the ancient sage-kings Yao, Shun, and Yu, the Zhou Dynasty kings Wen and Wu, the Duke of Zhou, Confucius, and Sun Yat-sen, Chinese culture would once again be “rejuvenated” (*fuxing*).³⁰⁸ To carry this rejuvenation out, an official guiding committee was formed, guided by “the Three People’s Principles, denouncing Mao, and anti-communism,” according to the Nationalist Party Congress in December, 1966.³⁰⁹ By the time

³⁰⁸ “總統蔣中正主持國父一百一十誕辰紀念暨中山樓落成典禮，總統伉儷以茶會招待各界駐華外交使節及外賓，總統核定國父誕辰紀念日為中華文化復興節，” (President Chiang Kai-shek presides over ceremony to celebrate Sun Yat-sen’s 101st birthday at Chungshan Hall....), November 11, 1966, AHC, 002-110101-00040-032. *Fuxing* can be translated in verb form to “revitalize” or “rejuvenate,” but the noun form “revitalization” or “renaissance” fits with this campaign’s title, as it is usually translated into English as a Chinese cultural “renaissance”—a fitting counterpoint to the cultural “revolution” happening on the mainland at the same time.

³⁰⁹ Lin, *Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign*, 99.

that the Cultural Renaissance was launched, anti-communism was established as a fundamental component of KMT official ideology, alongside its earlier official political philosophy of Three People's Principles. On July 28, 1967, the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee (*Zhonghua wenhua fuxing yundong tuixing weiyuanhui* 中華文化復興運動推行委員會) was formed at the same location as the initial launching of the campaign, Chungshan Hall in the Yangming Mountains north of Taipei. The hall, named after Sun Yat-sen, sat in the green grassy mountains named by Chiang Kai-shek himself after his favorite philosopher, the Ming Dynasty Neo-Confucian Wang Yangming. The assembled committee members elected Chiang Kai-shek to be their inaugural committee chair.³¹⁰ The location and event were rich with symbolism: Chiang, the designated successor to Sun, formally took on the mantle of continuing to revitalize traditional Chinese culture whilst also preserving the line of orthodox succession of legally constituted legitimacy to a Chinese regime, the *Fatong* (法統). The Generalissimo carried the legacies of both the ROC founder's national revolution and of Confucianism.

Furthermore, the three elected vice-chairs of the campaign's guiding committee embodied the campaign's ideological goals, methods, and background. They were editor-in-chief of The Commercial Press, Wang Yunwu (王雲五), financial head for the President's Office and member of the right-wing CC Clique, Ch'en Li-fu (陳立夫), and President of the Examination Yuan and Sun Yat-sen's son, Sun Fo (孫科). These three represented the campaign's ideological and cultural focuses. Wang was an accomplished scholar and editor, Ch'en came from an influential political family and later had a reputation as a Confucian gentleman, and Sun was the son of the founding father of the Republic of China and the Chinese Nationalist Party. The

³¹⁰ Ibid., 100.

Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign's emphases on Confucianism, Chinese cultural traditions, scholarship, education, and Sun Yat-sen's political thought were all represented by these three men.

The Commercial Press published the academic monographs, propaganda articles, school textbooks, and commentaries of classical texts for the campaign committee. Known today as Taiwan Commercial Press, it continues to publish the same series of modern commentaries and translations for classical texts in Taiwan, "Modern Annotations, Modern Translations" (*jin zhu jin yi* 今註今譯). This series has its foundations in the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign. Ch'en Li-fu and his brother Ch'en Kuo-fu³¹¹ once dominated KMT politics in the 1930s and '40s. Their uncle, Ch'en Ch'i-mei, was Chiang Kai-shek's early mentor during the 1911 republican revolution, and Chiang vowed to live up to his ideals after Ch'en was assassinated in 1916 by a monarchist.³¹² The Ch'en brothers exerted great influence over KMT politics during the Second Sino-Japanese War, but their influence weakened after the Nationalist relocation to Taiwan.³¹³ Ch'en Kuo-fu died in 1951 and Ch'en Li-fu moved his family to the U.S., where he took up business and writing about traditional Chinese medicine and Confucian scholarship.³¹⁴ By 1966, Ch'en Li-fu had fashioned himself as a Confucian gentleman and scholar with a keen interest in ethics and education. After publishing a multi-volume work on the Confucian classics, it was at this point that he returned to Taiwan and was invited by Chiang to play a role in the upcoming Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign.³¹⁵ While Chiang sidelined the Ch'en

³¹¹ Ch'en Li-fu himself signed his name in the Wade Giles formulation when publishing in English. Because he is the nearest representative of his family, and because of the KMT and ROC's general preference for Wade Giles over Pinyin, I write the names of his family members also in Wade Giles.

³¹² Chiang and Chen Qimei: Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 18-20, 22-27, 29-30.

³¹³ On the C-C Clique, see: Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 25, 55, 369-370, 430.

³¹⁴ Ch'en Li-fu's retirement and relocation to U.S.A.: Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 444; Ch'en Li-fu, *The Storm Clouds Clear Over China: The Memoir of Ch'en Li-Fu 1900-1993*, edited by Sidney H. Chang and Ramon H. Myers (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1994), Chapter 9.

³¹⁵ Ch'en, *The Storm Clouds Clear Over China*, 230-231.

brothers after the nationalist retreat to Taiwan in favor of less volatile political allies and a broader reforming of the entire KMT party membership, he preferred to keep his rivals close by and under watch as a tactic of neutralizing them as a threat, as demonstrated throughout his career.³¹⁶

Both Ch'en Li-fu and Sun Fo had complicated relationships with Chiang. They had both lived as political exiles in the West after 1949 and abandoned politics until Chiang requested they return from exile to work for his government in the mid-1960s. While they both had their misgivings with Chiang at certain points in history, their symbolic importance was perhaps too good to give up on. Having the son of the founding father and a member of another powerful family in the history of the Nationalist Party would help strengthen the messages of Chinese nationalist unity that Chiang wanted to project to the populace of Taiwan and to the world in 1966. Ch'en and Sun represented two major historical factions of the KMT as well. Ch'en was associated with the ultra-nationalist, traditionalist, conservative faction of the C-C Clique, while Sun was U.S.-educated, more politically liberal, and advocated for continuing the united front that his father had forged with the CCP long after Chiang's Shanghai Massacre in 1927.

Wang Yunwu was an accomplished scholar of lexicography and a successful editor who oversaw the curation of various large collections of encyclopedias, dictionaries, and libraries.³¹⁷ As editor-in-chief of Commercial Press, he oversaw the publication of school textbooks and a massive series of modern translations and commentaries on major texts of the classical Chinese canon, featuring pieces from the Confucian, Daoist, and Legalist schools of thought.³¹⁸ With a

³¹⁶ For other examples of Chiang's political maneuvering of rivals, see: Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 52, 63, 68, 70, 72-23, 97-98, 398.

³¹⁷ On Wang Yunwu's career, see: "Mr. Wang Yunwu's Life Achievements," *Wang Yunwu Foundation*, accessed July 2, 2021, <https://www.yunwu.org.tw/王雲五先生生平事蹟-2/>.

³¹⁸ For a detailed chart of this series of books' first run from 1969 to 1975, see: Lin, *Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign*, 149-150.

lengthy career in publishing, librarianship, museum work, and government service in the education and culture fields, Wang represented the Campaign Guiding Committee's scholastic goals.

The committee chair and vice-chairs were largely symbolic political positions. The regular day-to-day work of the Campaign Guiding Committee was conducted by a group of secretaries who oversaw smaller research committees on public hygiene, promoting the fine arts, academic publishing, education reform, and accounting. Each of these committees had their own secretaries and vice-secretaries. Group composition numbers could vary and some contained subsections of small groups. Membership was pulled from across state and society. Bureaucrats from government ministries, Nationalist Party cadres, China Youth Corps members, civil society associations, public intellectuals, and military personnel all participated in these groups at various points in time.³¹⁹ The committee secretaries met once a week with representatives from the ministries of culture, education, and propaganda. A standing committee of the three vice-chairs and other appointed members met once every three months with representatives sent from the secretary group. And finally, once a year, on Chinese Cultural Renaissance Day, the entire membership all met at Chungshan Hall for the big all-committee meeting. This was the event that Chiang Kai-shek attended and delivered a speech at annually. The three vice-chairs also usually spoke and some other people were chosen to give reports on major decisions and activities of the past year.³²⁰ The list of standing committee members and secretaries was a veritable who's who of cultural, educational, and intellectual leaders in the Nationalist Chinese party, state, and society. Among them included not just the president of the ROC, but also the vice-president of the ROC, the general secretary and vice-secretary of the KMT, the assistant

³¹⁹ Ibid., 105-109.

³²⁰ Ibid., 114-117.

director of the China Youth Corps, KMT central committee members, the Minister of Education, the chair of the Chinese Youth Party, the president of National Taiwan University, the speaker for the Taiwan Provincial Assembly, the assistant director of the Examination Yuan, the director of the National Palace Museum, and humanities and social sciences professors from Taiwan's leading universities.³²¹ Chiang Ching-kuo sat on the Standing Committee as head of the Executive Yuan (Premier), but was never the committee chair like his father, preferring to leave that position to Vice-President Yen Chia-kan, who kept it from 1975 until his death in 1991.³²²

The Campaign Guiding Committee received its funding entirely from the Executive Yuan to pay for office supplies, furniture, office space, publishing and broadcasting fees for related propaganda, transportation, and salaries for 35 staff members.³²³ According to Kuo-hsian Lin, "the source of funds for the Cultural Renaissance Committee shows that its relationship with party and government organizations cannot be separated."³²⁴ While the Campaign aimed at affecting all of society broadly, it was deeply enmeshed with existing party-state mechanisms. This point is important to Lin's argument about the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign. Lin says that, "the arguments about culture and ethics represented in the Cultural Renaissance Campaign suited the tastes of upper class culture, and because they were disconnected from the thoughts that common people had in their everyday lives, they became hypocritical and empty slogans."³²⁵ This parallels common interpretations of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign as well. The emptiness and meaninglessness of a government-led mass campaign

³²¹ Ibid., 121-125.

³²² Ibid., 14. Ch'en Li-fu continued to act as vice-president of the association that entire time and spent much of his time in those decades working for the campaign's goals. Chiang Ching-kuo asked him to become the next chair after his father's death, but Ch'en insisted that Yen take over with his support. This story is recounted here: Ch'en, *The Storm Clouds Clear Over China*, 234.

³²³ Lin, 118-119.

³²⁴ Ibid., 117.

³²⁵ Ibid., 6.

aimed at educating people in culture, history, and philosophy seems reasonable when viewed from the perspective of internal government committee work and financing reports, without looking at sources that show us what people were thinking on the ground.

Looking back at the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign now, it seems clear that it was the ROC's response to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the PRC. They were launched several months apart in the same year, and the contrasting word-choice of a "renaissance" as opposed to a "revolution" seems obviously chosen. However, when looking at the ROC's campaign from within, the regime portrayed it as mostly an internal affair. Chiang Kai-shek's opening speeches that launched the campaign do not mention the Cultural Revolution or the mainland at all. Instead, his speech was filled with quotations from classic Confucian texts and allusions to his status as the flagbearer of the national revolution and cultural revitalization that Sun Yat-sen started. He said, "The Founding Father's Three People's Principles is the inheritor of 5000 years of China's Confucian orthodox traditional culture. Therefore it is a new frontier from something longstanding. It allows the Chinese nation (*zhonghua minzu*) to stand up straight in the world." So Chiang Kai-shek's speech did not even mention the mainland at all. It was filled with quotes from the Confucian canon and established that the Three People's Principles was the modern next step in the Confucian orthodox canon. He made no mention of the communists or the Cultural Revolution at all in the opening speech of the Cultural Renaissance Campaign, but surely the Cultural Revolution was on people's minds, and sure enough Sun Fo's following speech at the event made that clear. Immediately after the president's speech, Sun Fo took the stage:

Nationalism must spread to this corner of the world. Presently, this ideal is not yet realized. That is because the world has seen a new, red communist imperialism. We should tear down and destroy this evil imperialism. That is the strength of the Three People's Principles. As long as communism exists for one day, the world has no peace.

We must unite to struggle, with unceasing effort, to destroy this danger to the world[....] Right now, 'red guards' in the mainland are causing chaos, revealing that bandit Mao cannot control the mainland. Their era of eradication has arrived. We should look at this situation and unite with our compatriots around the world to recover the mainland soon[....] The Founding Father's favorite words were 'universal love' [*bo ai*] and 'the whole world was one community' [*tianxia wei gong*]. 'Universal love' is 'benevolence' [*ren*]. 'The whole world was one community' is 'freedom and democracy' [*ziyou minzhu*]. We commemorate the Founding Father's words, that this was in his heart, and that this was his will.

At the end of the speech, “everyone in attendance shouted: 'Long live the Chinese Cultural Renaissance! Long live the Republic of China!’”³²⁶ While Chiang established the theoretical legitimacy for launching this new campaign, Sun Fo voiced the immediate political concerns of the anti-communist nationalists.

It is for this reason that I argue that, despite the fact that the regime mostly portrayed the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign as an internal affair to the ROC-controlled territory, a very important aspect of the campaign was also to give a strong ideological reaction to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution happening in the PRC. The Cultural Revolution was on the Chinese nationalists’ minds and they felt that Chinese civilization was at stake, in need of saving by the ROC. It was not just a moment in Taiwan’s history, but in the broader history of the Chinese-speaking world.

Pi Lin Pi Kong in Security Reports to Chiang Kai-shek

By 1973, the ROC’s spy network in mainland China was virtually non-existent. Nationalist guerrilla units had been wiped out or retreated out of the country by the mid-1950s. Logistical support for pro-KMT Tibetan and Burmese fighters had fizzled out by the late 1950s. Any remaining spies for the ROC probably would not have made it through the Cultural Revolution, let alone been able to send any messages out of the mainland, given that even

³²⁶ AHC, 002-110101-00040-032.

tangential associations with the KMT before 1949 would put someone in the crosshairs of Red Guards. In the early 1950s, the ROC sent small raiding parties to the mainland coast to sabotage PLA installations and carry out assassinations of low-ranking CCP cadres.³²⁷ The Truman and Eisenhower administrations did not interfere in these raids, but also would not commit to providing assistance for them.³²⁸ Some 10,000 U.S. military personnel and several hundred CIA agents were working in Taiwan by 1957.³²⁹ By 1967, that number reached 20,000.³³⁰ By 1973, the Nixon visit to the PRC, the Shanghai Communiqué, and U.S. withdrawal from Indochina had contributed to vast reduction in U.S. troop placements in Taiwan. Most of the intelligence gathering done on the Chinese mainland was done by ROC agents with funding and equipment provided by the U.S. In exchange, both sides traded intelligence reports on the Pacific region, as the U.S. occupation of Japan, the Korean War, and the Indochina Wars made the region of strategic importance to the U.S. for the entirety of the three decades after the end of the Second World War. ROC air force pilots flew spy planes provided by the U.S. high above the range of radar detection to take photographs of PLA installations and troop movements around China. The other major work ROC intelligence engaged in was maintaining a network of spies in Hong Kong and among overseas Chinese communities around the world (the government maintained its own special “Overseas Chinese Department” to spread pro-ROC and anti-PRC propaganda, create pro-ROC local associations, and fund museum exhibits and scholarships in Chinatowns), as well as translating mainland radio broadcasts and media.³³¹

³²⁷ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*. 454-455; Roy, 125-128.

³²⁸ Ibid., 457; Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 109-110, 123-128.

³²⁹ Roy, 125; Taylor, 490.

³³⁰ Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, 285.

³³¹ On ROC intelligence work: Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 454-456, 516; Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, 208-209. On ROC activities directed at overseas Chinese: Lin, “*Zhonghua wenhua fuxing yundong tuixing weiyuanhui*” *zhi yanjiu*, 60-71, 86-95, 169-175.

These last two tasks were of direct relevance to both the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign and the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign. “Mainland Bandits Information (Newspaper Clippings)” (大陸匪情剪報), and “Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline” (金馬前線綜合情況) were two kinds of official reports produced for internal government use. This chapter relies heavily on these two forms of formerly classified internal government documents as primary sources to understand how the ROC viewed what was happening in the mainland at the time.

During the Cultural Revolution, the Nationalist Party government looked on at the phenomenon both in horror as the destruction of Chinese civilization, as well as a great opportunity for the Nationalists to prepare for a final victory over the CCP. Jay Taylor writes, “Although previously [Chiang Kai-shek] had confided to his diary that he would end his days on Taiwan, the Cultural Revolution had changed his mind.[...] Referring to the Cultural Revolution, he said that, in effect, Mao Zedong was doing all he could to speed the Nationalists' return. The best posture was to watch and wait.”³³² It seemed to the KMT that the communists were devouring themselves from within.³³³ As a result, during the Cultural Revolution decade, ROC internal intelligence reports about the mainland were focused on any signs of anti-CCP internal unrest, power struggles within the leaderships of the CCP and the PLA, and military activities especially in the southern coastal region close to the ROC's actual zone of control (referred to by the ROC as “the free zone”).

The above mentioned “Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline” was a handwritten report by the Secretary-General to the President's Office, Cheng Yen-fen (鄭彥芬), that was

³³² Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 534-535.

³³³ For some more comments from Chiang on the Cultural Revolution, see: Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 531-534.

regularly sent to the president (sometimes several days a week). Usually around a dozen pages in total per issue, archival copies indicate that Chiang Kai-shek read them because of the presence of underlining, circles, and other marks on the pages in red ink, although written comments by Chiang were rare. Reflecting Chiang's major concerns with the mainland, these top-secret reports were divided up into the following sections and subsections: 1. The situation with the military affairs of the communist bandits (1) Ground forces (2) Navy (3) Air Force; 2. Important trends in the party and political economy of the communist bandits; 3. Summary and analysis. The last page of every report was a map of the entirety of the ROC's claimed territory with arrows and comment boxes pointing at significant locations mentioned earlier within the text of the report. Jay Taylor writes that later in his life, Chiang "would simply write on each document shorthand for 'can do' (*ke*) or 'can't do' (*bu ke*) and his secretaries would complete the answering memo."³³⁴ In the case of his reports on the mainland, he did not even write this much, and his secretaries only indicated that the reports had been received and read. In March, 1972, Chiang was re-elected to a sixth term as president of the ROC by the National Assembly. Several months later, Chiang suffered a stroke and slipped into a sixth month coma. After awaking in January 1973, he largely left the day-to-day work of the executive government to his son and then-Premier, Chiang Ching-kuo. He did still receive daily reports from his generals and secretaries, however.³³⁵ So, he was keenly aware of ROC intelligence on the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign and even penned a "Presidential Order" (*zongtong xunshi* 總統訓示) criticizing the campaign and advocating for resistance against it in his 1974 New Year's address to the nation.³³⁶

³³⁴ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 522.

³³⁵ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 579-585.

³³⁶ Li Guangming *Mao Comm's Criticize Confucius Uphold Qin Campaign's Background and Conspiracy*, unnumbered first page. "Li Guangming" was the penname of the ROC Ministry of Defense' publishing office.

During the Cultural Revolution, the first section of “Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline” reported on major movements of troops and military equipment, especially in the southeastern coastal regions near Taiwan, as well as any perceived power struggles within the military command. A frequent refrain in this section of the reports during the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* years was that, “bandit Jiang [Qing]” was promoting setting up criticism sessions and study groups within the military in order to seize power from her rival, “bandit Zhou [Enlai].”³³⁷ The June 28, 1974 report argued in the analysis section: “the communist bandits’ emphasis on the ‘Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius’ Campaign is the actualization of a political struggle. Individual bandits are singled out through bandit ‘big character posters’ to suffer deserving criticism.[...] One can see [from this] the whole political struggle and the reality of the chaotic situation.”³³⁸ An earlier report from February of that year said that, the promotion of an expansion of the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign within the PLA “reveals that bandit Jiang [Qing] is the head leader of the ‘Cultural Revolution faction’ and is grasping for military power.”³³⁹ In this sense, the campaign was mostly presented in these reports as a means for political power struggle within the CCP and PLA leadership. In particular, it was supposedly a tool being wielded by a “Cultural Revolution faction” led by Jiang Qing, against a “conservative faction,” represented by Zhou Enlai. For instance, the March 2, 1974 report said that, “recently, in the bandit zone, some big character posters attacked bandit Zhou’s writings and speeches.”³⁴⁰

³³⁷ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年二月十三日至二月二十日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Front Line February 13-February 20, 1974), February 22, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00191-007; “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年四月十日至四月十七日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline April 10-April 17, 1974), April 19, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00192-003.

³³⁸ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年六月十九日至六月二十六日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline June 19-June 26, 1974), June 28, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00192-013.

³³⁹ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年一月三十日至二月六日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline January 30-February 6, 1974), February 8, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00191-005.

³⁴⁰ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年二月二十日至二月二十七日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline February 20-February 27, 1974) March 2, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00191-008.

The May 24, 1974 report directly claimed, “this campaign is personally led by Mao the bandit Zedong, and Jiang the bandit Qing is in charge of organizing it.”³⁴¹ That interpretation does not differ much from most of the scholarly treatments of *pi Lin pi Kong* either—a viewpoint that I have addressed in the first two chapters of this dissertation. It makes sense that the internal security and military affairs reports of the ROC government under Chiang Kai-shek’s leadership would be concerned with the campaign from such a perspective, however.

While the KMT had their own terminology for referring to CCP rhetoric, it was within these internal reports that the actual rhetoric of the *pi Lin pi Kong* campaign could be included verbatim in Taiwan, albeit within qualifying quotation marks that indicated the political otherness of the communist rhetoric. The qualifiers “so-called” (*suowei* 所謂), “false” (*wei* 偽), “communist bandit” (*gongfei* 共匪), and “Mao-comm” (*Maogong* 毛共) preceded direct quotes from CCP members, mainland newspapers, or even generally used terms within the mainland. For instance, CCP members were referred to in the order of surname-bandit-given name, so Jiang Qing was called “Jiang the bandit Qing” (*Jiang fei Qing* 江匪青). The People’s Liberation Army was called “bandit army” (*feijun* 匪軍). To indicate the illegitimacy of a usurper government, they called state institutions in the PRC “false” ones, like the “false ‘National Publishing Bureau’” (*wei ‘guojia chuban ju’* 偽‘國家出版局’) or the “false ‘Fourth Session of the National People’s Congress’” (*wei ‘sijie renda’* 偽‘四屆人大’). The CCP could be called a variety of things: “bandit party” (*fei dang* 匪黨), “Chi-comms/commies” (*zhonggong* 中共), “Mao-comms/commies” (*Maogong* 毛共). If a mainland institution were to be referred to by its own

³⁴¹ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年五月十五日至五月二十二日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline May 15-May 22, 1974), May 24, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00192-008.

terms, it must always be put in quotation marks, but shorthand titles like “bandit party” or “bandit army” could be left out of quotation marks.³⁴²

The summary and analysis section of the February 15, 1974 edition of “Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline” proposed four aspects to understanding “the deepening development of the communist bandits’ ‘Criticize Lin Criticize Kong’ Campaign and its contradictory struggles.” First, “from a political policy line aspect,” the campaign “can be perceived as a vigorous struggle between the ‘revolutionary faction,’ the ‘conservative faction,’ and the ‘counterrevolutionary faction’ over ‘the products of revolution.’” Second, regarding “the system of political power,” criticizing Lin Biao “can be understood as a reflection of [...] bandit Lin [Biao]’s suggestion that the Chairman of the State position be established.” Third, regarding “control of military power,” Jiang Qing’s “ambitious grab for military power and recent strengthening of the people’s militias as a function of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ shows that bandit Mao’s power relying on the bandit army is already wavering.” The fourth aspect, “economic development measures,” was that the criticisms levied in the campaign were about avoiding going down the path of revisionism.³⁴³ From this analysis we can see the interesting ways in which Chiang Kai-shek’s secretary interpreted the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign to him. Everything that in the CCP’s own terms had a particular meaning was reinterpreted by the KMT to indicate something else. A glossary of specific terms, known as “formulations” (*tifa* 體法), emerged for both parties to talk about themselves and about each other.

³⁴² As an example, all of these phrases can be found in: AHC, 005-010202-00191-005.

³⁴³ All quotes of this report from: “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年二月六日至二月十三日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline February 6-13, 1974), February 15, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00191-006.

The February 22, 1974 issue reported on the campaign becoming more widespread across China. It reported, without comment, that party cadres in Tibet were told by the Tibetan Autonomous Region Party Committee to pay special attention to study materials sent to cadres about the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign. Similarly, in the same issue, it reported that “the bandit Xinhua News Agency instructed its local agencies to strengthen the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign among model work units and people by reading some expert-written materials reported in foreign media.”³⁴⁴ This issue does not include analysis of these details, but merely reports on them. This shows that Cheng was monitoring official media from the mainland in order to follow the campaign’s progression.

The March 8, 1974 issue reported that the “bandit ‘People’s Press’ recently published internally ‘Selected Works of Chiang XX,’ editing together the president’s ‘Pursuing the Establishment of County Government and Politics,’ ‘Essentials of Spiritual Education for Soldiers,’ ‘China’s Fate,’ and other instructions, as ‘Documents for Criticize Lin Criticize Kong.’”³⁴⁵ Presumably, the censored part was originally “Jieshi,” the courtesy name and penname that Chiang used while living in Japan (the Cantonese of “Jieshi” is “Kai-shek”). Within the ROC, Chiang was and is still called Chiang Chung-cheng (Jiang Zhongzheng in pinyin), a name chosen when under Sun Yat-sen’s tutelage to indicate Chiang’s loyalty to Sun. The CCP did not accept this name and referred to him as Jiang Jieshi. So, the other name that the CCP used would be censored even within a quoted source in an internal report. While Chiang was occasionally mentioned directly and criticized during the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign, he was a minor character in the large cast of reactionaries for the

³⁴⁴ AHC, 005-010202-00191-007.

³⁴⁵ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年二月二十七日至三月六日金馬前線綜合情況報告” (Summarized Situation of the Jin-Ma Frontline February 27-March 6, 1974), March 8, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00191-009.

communists to criticize at the time. For example, in the texts mentioned in Chapter 2 discussing the “superman theory” and “great man theory” that connected Chiang Kai-shek with both Western and Chinese “fascism.”

In that same March 8th issue, Cheng also reported that Xinhua News Agency and *People’s Daily* newspaper had published and distributed various other study materials for *pi Lin pi Kong*, such as selections of Lu Xun’s criticisms of Confucianism and the anti-Confucian writings of May 4th Movement intellectuals.³⁴⁶ In this edition of the “Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline,” we can see how the Nationalist Party looked at the intellectual and theoretical products of *pi Lin pi Kong*. Noting that Chiang’s writings were being used as criticism materials, and then in the next line noting that Lu Xun’s writings were being lauded as exemplary anti-Confucian critique, Cheng Yen-fen interpreted the state of Chinese communist theory regarding the campaign to criticize Confucianism. He wasn’t too far off in this regard, but his deeper reading and understanding of the actual study materials promoted by the CCP was not clear. He performed his job of reporting on the major trends of communist China to his superior well, and deeper analysis of internal communist rhetoric and thinking was reserved for specialized policy experts in state-funded research institutions and within the KMT Central Committee’s own Number Four group, dedicated to focusing on analyzing and reporting on the PRC to the rest of the Nationalist Party leadership.³⁴⁷

The April 6th report said that the CCP Central Committee had been promoting cadres to read through all of the study materials they were receiving from party central relating to *pi Lin pi*

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ The Central Committee reports of the KMT are currently being published and released for scholars to read, but as of the summer of 2021, they have not released the documents from the No. 4 group that cover the years that this dissertation is focused on. So far, the reports from up to the late 1960s have been published by the KMT party archives.

Kong. It also reported that “the bandit Shaanxi provincial big meeting for *pi Lin pi Kong* emphasized to attendees that they must strictly oppose the capitalist restorationist tide of denying the outcomes and new products of the ‘Cultural Revolution.’”³⁴⁸

The April 19, 1974 issue claimed, without citation, that “the people of Guangzhou all think that the bandit Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign is aimed at Zhou the bandit Enlai and strengthening centralized power. In general, they regard [the campaign] with indifference.”³⁴⁹ Similarly, Cheng reported on May 3rd that at a meeting of military officials in Guangdong, they reflected on the current situation thusly: “the attitude that ‘*pi Lin pi Kong*’ is ‘criticize dead people criticize ancient people’ who have nothing to do with oneself is becoming widespread.” Later in that same issue, Cheng recorded that thirty people were arrested in Guangdong for “forming anti-Mao anti-communist groups,” and that photos and portraits of Lin Biao were being removed from books. In the analysis section of this edition of the report, Cheng concluded that these recent events showed that “workers were giving a cold reaction” to the attempts made by the “Cultural Revolution faction” to promote the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign’s individual activities.³⁵⁰

The June 28th issue’s analysis section focused on explaining at length recent developments in the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign. It reported that recently provincial and city-level party documents recorded the presence of big character posters in Shanghai, Beijing, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, Hunan, Guangdong, and Sichuan that criticized Zhou Enlai and Li Desheng, as well as big character posters in Beijing

³⁴⁸ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年三月二十七日至四月三日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin-Ma Frontline March 27-April 3, 1974), April 6, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00192-001.

³⁴⁹ AHC, 005-010202-00192-003.

³⁵⁰ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年四月二十五日至五月一日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin-Ma Frontline April 25-May 1, 1974), May 3, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00192-005.

that criticized “the tense current situation, and work stoppages in factories.” Also reported was a recent “armed struggle between enemy factions in Jiangxi that left two-hundred people dead.” Cheng then wrote that, “all of these events indicate that the situation in the mainland is chaotic and that the bandit party is losing control.” Cheng also noted recent party leadership’s “strengthening of so-called ‘study, criticism, and unity,’” as well as “requiring party committees to unite under leading groups” so as to “eliminate the influence of Lin Biao’s power group.” Regardless of the CCP’s stated aims in all of these measures, in the analysis section of the report, Cheng concluded that, by looking at the activities of “the bandit party leadership during this campaign, the chaotic situation of the communist bandits’ daily internal political struggles are visible,” which showed that “this arrangement of the bandit communist system is all becoming an empty plan.”³⁵¹ Cheng was interpreting the CCP leadership’s activities and rhetoric during the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign as a political power struggle and a desperate attempt at eliminating the influences of the Zhou Enlai-led “conservative faction,” and the “Lin Biao power group” so as ensure centralized leadership by “the Cultural Revolution faction” led by Jiang Qing. The individual actions and reports of conflicts at the local level in factional disputes and critical big character posters indicated to Cheng that the CCP was losing control, on the verge of collapse, and widely disliked by the populace. Such an interpretation was in line with the general outlook of the KMT towards the PRC during the Cultural Revolution decade. As Jay Taylor says, Chiang’s diary entries at the time, “suggest that the profound irrationalism of Mao’s Cultural Revolution had caused Chiang to think that Communism would actually fall in China sooner or later—and that his and his son’s mission was to make Taiwan a model that would demonstrate to the world, especially the people on the mainland, ‘the proper path’ for China to

³⁵¹ AHC, 005-010202-00192-013.

achieve its dream of a great nation restored.”³⁵² For the Chinese Nationalist ideology, mainlanders had to be discontent with CCP rule, the CCP was constantly on the verge of collapsing, and the Chinese people could only welcome a Nationalist Party-led liberation with open arms. Such was the basis of ROC political legitimacy in Taiwan during martial law.

The August 15, 1974 report said that, “The ‘big character posters’ have not had many results. In the past two months, heads of the party, state, and military have been criticized. Among those named are Zhou the bandit Enlai and seventy people below him. These activities continue to go on, appearing in false newspapers. This reveals that the so-called united struggle, in reality, has no impact.” Cheng dismissed big character posters as irrelevant and only used for internal power struggles within the communist leadership. His reports indicated that he did not think that the majority of the mainland population could actually be duped into believing the propaganda presented by communists. This issue of the report also described for the first time the re-evaluation of classical Chinese philosophy during the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign. Cheng wrote: “The situation of praising Legalism and criticizing Confucianism keeps being repeated. In the beginning of this campaign, the bandits praised Legalism and criticized Confucianism in terms of absolute affirmation and absolute negation. Lately, regarding Confucian classics like *The Analects*, they already recognize that it includes some experiences of laboring people, and that there are some parts of the text that cannot be criticized. Regarding the Legalist historical figures, they also acknowledge that they had some historical limitations. For instance, there were Legalists who exploited and oppressed laboring people.”³⁵³ This is an interesting comment from Cheng. He pointed out some of the contradictions that arose when

³⁵² Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 534.

³⁵³ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年八月七日至十四日金馬前線綜合情況報告” (Summarized Situation of the Jin-Ma Frontline August 7-14, 1974), August 15, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00193-007.

trying to reevaluate the classics and trying to use the past to serve the present in the mainland. For him, and likely for Chiang as well, this showed that there were some parts of Confucianism that could not be fully criticized or thrown out. Some of it had to be kept, even when its most fierce critics went after it, because for KMT leadership at the time, Confucianism was the most essential core of being Chinese that could not be torn away by revolution.

The September 12, 1974 issue mentioned the “deepening situation of the ‘Criticize Lin Criticize Kong’ Campaign,” by means of a *Red Flag* magazine article calling for people to read Mao Zedong’s writings on military thought so as to oppose Confucian ideas of military strategy that involve using the rites to run an army, and to combine that with the broader criticism of the Kong-Meng Way. Also, a recent meeting in Foshan, Guangdong province was reported on, in which it was revealed that an “anti-Mao, anti-Jiang Qing” traitorous group of ten people had been exposed.³⁵⁴

Continuing to reflect on the treatment of the classics in the mainland, in the October 24, 1974 report Cheng mused that, “in the long term, Mao the bandit cannot completely remove Confucian and Mencian thought from the people’s thought. Jiang the bandit Qing, Wang the bandit Hongwen, and other new rising people will take over, and are already revealing the chaos they will bring to the mainland in the future. After Mao the bandit dies, the mainland will fall into an unstable condition. As time goes by, a big rebellion will probably break out. We should discuss this matter deeply and pay careful attention to grasp control of the future direction for use at the right moment.”³⁵⁵ This was a core belief of Chiang Kai-shek and the leaders of the Cultural Renaissance Campaign, which is analyzed more in the next chapter. They believed that

³⁵⁴ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年九月四日至九月十一日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin-Ma Frontline September 4-11, 1974), September 12, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00193-011.

³⁵⁵ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十三年十月十六日至十月二十三日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin-Ma Frontline October 16-23, 1974), October 24, 1974, AHC, 005-010202-00194-004.

Confucianism was the core identifier for Chinese civilization, culture, and people. It's ethical system could not be stripped away even if one tried to do so. It would always be so deeply rooted, and a foreign ideology like communism was thus unnatural to the Chinese civilization because it countered some of the most fundamental claims of Confucian philosophy. For the nationalists, Mao could only hold onto power through violence and force, but he could not win over the hearts and minds of the Chinese people. Once his grip of power was lost, the nationalists would need to be prepared to swoop in to save the mainland from chaos.

The last time that *pi Lin pi Kong* was mentioned in a report from Cheng to Chiang, he had a lot to say about it. Dated to February 20, 1975, he detailed recent developments within the mainland political situation. On “important trends in the party and political economy of the communist bandits,” he noted that, “the bandits are emphasizing ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat,’” as evidenced by some recent articles in *Red Flag* magazine and *People's Daily* on the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat that encouraged people to study Mao and Lenin's writings on the matter. Cheng summarized in the analysis section of this report that, “the bandit Mao's recent promotion of ‘the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat’ has some use for his secret schemes.” Among them, was the goal of “institutionalizing bandit Mao's thought,” and “to make Marxism-Leninism become orthodoxy” for the state's legal system. Regarding the Criticize Lin Criticize Kong Campaign, “the bandits have encouraged ‘criticizing the Kong-Meng Way’ and ‘the new products of socialism’ as ideological positions” to make sure that cadres would understand “the possibility of the restoration of capitalism” and the need for “continuous revolution.” Cheng's final word on the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign to Chiang Kai-shek was as follows:

"From all of this above, we can see that bandit Mao's system and our traditional culture are contradictory. Bandit Mao's thoughts and theories are contradictory with

implementation in reality. Within the CCP, there are contradictions between new and old ideologies. There are contradictions between the center and the local. All of these different problems are getting more and more intense right now. Bandit Mao is taxing his ingenuity to deceive himself and others with absurd theories. He's mobilizing the entire 'country' to study and discussion all to try hard to combat his fantasies of 'the restoration of the bourgeoisie' and 'revisionism from raising its head.' However, that's all a shadow trying to cover up the [previously mentioned] fundamental contradictions within [the party.] What's more, this situation is the foundation for the coming collapse of bandit Mao."³⁵⁶

This was the opinion of Chiang Kai-shek's secretary near the end of Chiang's life. To these two men, the campaign never ceased to be a signal of internal strife within the CCP leadership, of Mao's illegitimate rule, and of the unnatural ideology guiding the PRC. While reports earlier on in the campaign's lifetime in 1974 were greatly concerned with its implications for military and political leadership matters in the mainland, by 1975, the campaign's theoretical shift within the mainland was noted within the ROC regime to be a sign of Mao and the "Cultural Revolution Faction's" desperate grasp for power, and their impending collapse. The "contradictions" between Mao Zedong Thought and traditional Chinese culture existed, in the KMT's ideology, because communism was a foreign-imposed political ideology that was incompatible with the traditional cultural foundations of China—i.e., Confucian orthodoxy as defined by Chiang Kai-shek. The naturalness of Confucian orthodoxy to traditional Chinese culture for the Nationalists was indicated by Cheng's belief that, "in the longer term, Mao the bandit cannot completely remove Confucian and Mencian thought from the people's thought."³⁵⁷ This fit in with the ROC's goal of making Taiwan act as the "citadel" (*chengbao* 城堡) that would protect Chinese traditional culture, the orthodox Confucian line, and legal legitimacy from otherwise certain destruction.

³⁵⁶ “鄭彥棻呈蔣中正民國六十四年二月十二日至二月十九日金馬前線綜合情況” (Summarized Situation of the Jin Ma Frontline February 12-19, 1975), February 20, 1975, AHC, 005-010202-00195-008.

³⁵⁷ AHC, 005-010202-00194-004.

Pi Lin Pi Kong in the Chinese Nationalist Media

“Mainland Bandits Information” was produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) on a monthly-to-bimonthly basis. It consisted of newspaper clippings and written up reports on foreign and domestic media related to the mainland. During the Cultural Revolution decade, nearly all of these newspaper clippings and reports came from either Hong Kong, Japan, or the United States. Sometimes domestic Taiwanese newspapers were also included. Frequent sources included the *New York Times*, *Asahi Shimbun*, *Yomimori Shimbun*, *China Times*, and *Central Daily News*. The foreign-language newspaper articles were sometimes accompanied by Chinese translations or summaries of their contents, but sometimes the articles were just pasted in with no explanation. Chiang Kai-shek could read Japanese, and presumably officials who grew up in Japanese colonial-era Taiwan did as well. U.S.-trained technocrats and the rising younger generation of Taiwanese-born party members may have been able to read the *New York Times* articles without need for translation. “Mainland Bandits Information” acted as a KMT equivalent to the “internal reference materials” (*neibu cankao ziliao*) of the CCP, but focused all of its contents exclusively on observing happenings in the mainland.

Aside from the “Mainland Bandits Information” series, Chiang Kai-shek and his secretaries also kept track of domestic state-backed newspapers like *Central Daily News* (*Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報) and *United Daily* (*Lianhe ribao* 聯合日報) in the daily diary recordings of Chiang’s activities. *Central Daily News* was the official government newspaper of the KMT. *United Daily* was a private newspaper, but its editor-in-chief and owner, Wang Tiwu, was a member of the KMT Central Committee and espoused strongly pro-KMT editorials. If a newspaper recorded Chiang attending a meeting or delivering a speech, the article in question was usually cut out and pasted into the bound volume of “Diary of the President’s Summarized

Affairs” (*Zongtong shilve riji* 總統事略日記) accompanied by a brief handwritten summary.

This record and the “Mainland Bandits Information” series are the primary sources that I use in this section.

While several dozen editorials dealing with the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign were printed in Taiwan’s three major newspapers from 1973 to 1975, they mostly dealt with the campaign from a macro level, focusing in on what the Nationalist observers in Taiwan saw as the perceived political power struggles that it symbolized at the top of the Communist party-state. Very little reporting was done within the pages of the newspapers on the day-to-day happenings of the campaign on the ground for mainlanders. No photographs from the mainland were ever reprinted in the Taiwanese newspapers. ROC intelligence presumably had access to a plethora of photographs, film, and propaganda coming out of the mainland, but the careful culling of communist materials from ever entering ROC society kept real-world images outside of the imaginations of most Taiwanese people of the time. To be found in possession of any writing or visual materials from the mainland could get one into legal trouble and labelled a “bandit agent.” PRC propaganda came into Taiwan through the military security and surveillance apparatus that kept track of these things for the purposes of informing the central government. It was read over, transcribed, and summarized for internal reports within the state’s offices. The legally allowed media outlets received this information from the government’s own news departments for the relevant ministries, as well as from select foreign media and correspondents in places like Japan, the United States, and Hong Kong.

As a result, photographs of study groups and *pi Lin pi Kong* propaganda posters or comic books were seldom seen within Taiwan while the campaign was going on. Instead, state-sanctioned newspaper editorials and reprints of official speeches were the main sources of

information for Taiwanese people as to the daily goings-on of the last major nationwide campaign of the Cultural Revolution decade. These reports told a story of high-level political infighting between a handful of Communist Party leaders for supremacy of the regime after Mao Zedong's eventual death. The rhetoric of "Criticize Confucius Uphold the Qin" (*pi Kong yang Qin* 批孔揚秦), as it was called in ROC sources, emerged sometimes from the specific writings and speeches of this small cast of characters, and other times from an unspecified collective group: the "Mao-comms," "Chi-comms," or "bandit party." Sometimes specific sources were cited, like *People's Daily*, *Red Flag*, or some widely distributed party documents from large conferences like the Tenth Party Congress. It was not unusual, however, for the newspapers to report something like this: "The Mao-comms' opposition to Confucius, and constant harping away on the same old tune is not a matter of debating over academic thought. It is all only for the purpose of some political power struggle. The political power struggles within the Mao-comm clique do not even begin to reflect reality."³⁵⁸ Like the Cold War-era practices of Kremlinology, even the neighboring ROC regime in Taiwan had to look at their communist compatriots from afar, summarizing in general terms what "they" appeared to be doing.

In early October, 1973, Taiwanese media began reporting on the recent Tenth National Congress of the CCP, noting right away that "the Mao-comms" emphasized criticizing Lin Biao and the Confucian idea of benevolent government (*renzheng* 仁政).³⁵⁹ Soon after, several editorials and guest articles written by prominent ROC-aligned intellectuals were printed in Taiwan's major newspapers dispelling notions of criticizing Confucius and of holding up Qin

³⁵⁸ Qi Jian, "From Confucius to Qin Shihuang: A view of this round of the power struggle within the Mao-comms," *China Times*, November 6, 1973, reprinted in "大陸匪情 (剪報) (六)," October-November, 1973, AHC, 020-190700-0006.

³⁵⁹ Editorial, "'Rebellion' tendency after the Mao-comms' 'Big Tenth,'" *The Central Daily News*, October 1, 1973, reprinted in *Ibid*.

Shihuang too highly. A November 20 *Central Daily* article, titled “Looking at the Mao-comms’ ‘Devalue Confucius Uphold Qin’ Campaign with a Cold Eye,” began: “‘Recently the Mao-comms are in the middle of a so-called ‘Devalue Kong Uphold Qin’ campaign. On the one hand, they ruthlessly abuse Confucius, falsely accusing him of being a ‘defender of slavery ideology.’ And on the other hand, they completely lavish praise onto Qin Shihuang, acclaiming him for extraordinary achievements. Even Qin Shihuang’s most infamously despotic ‘burning of the books and burying the scholars,’ is being reputed as a very correct, progressive measure.” Using an “objective evaluation,” the author stated that, “one cannot say that Qin Shihuang did not make great meritorious contributions to Chinese history[...] but, Qin Shihuang was still a tyrant who committed historical crimes.” On the other hand, “Confucius was an outstanding nationalist[....] Confucius realized a great development: that culture is the foundation of our nation.”³⁶⁰ It is no wonder that mainland propaganda considered the KMT to be followers of Confucius with editorials like this, then. Here was a direct statement tying the ancient philosopher to a modern ideological notion: Confucius as nationalist.

As *pi Lin pi Kong* ramped up in late 1973 in the mainland through announcements from the Tenth CCP Congress, Taiwanese news began to report on some more concrete details of this new campaign. By late November, they were reporting in detail on the publication of articles by Yang Rongguo in the mainland press, and the printing of educational materials for the purposes of criticizing Confucius. They also reported on the creation of “criticize Confucius small groups” nationally across “the bandit party, government, military, and schools.” All of these efforts were deemed a waste of time doomed to fail by the KMT press.³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ Lu Tieshan, “Looking at the Mao-comms’ ‘Devalue Confucius Uphold Qin’ Campaign with a Cold Eye,” *Central Daily News*, November 20, 1973, reprinted in *Ibid*.

³⁶¹ “A Very Rash Attempt and a Hilarious Overestimation of One’s Own Ability: Communist Bandits Fully Launch ‘Criticize Confucius Campaign,’” *Central Daily News*, November 28, 1973, reprinted in *Ibid*.

A December 14th *Central Daily News* editorial reported on a Sino-American academic conference on “the mainland question.” The author contrasted the western scholars’ “research methods of seeking truth from facts, and using documents and materials to do close analysis and to advise us,” with “our scholars, regardless of whether they live at home or reside abroad, who all have serious attitudes and long years of research experience to fully express their superior advantages over matters such as history, culture, and language. All of whom received deep respect from the western academic world for their essays.” The author went on, “the foreign scholars’ research about the mainland question is limited by their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This led to some unavoidable limitations, in particular in regards to questions of culture and thought.” The editorial then explains that the Western scholars in attendance were right to note that Zhou Enlai appeared to be a political target of the campaign, but that they failed to understand “the even greater picture of the Mao-comms opposing Confucius”—i.e. that they were “struggling with the Soviet Union over who has ‘legitimacy’ over the communist world,” and that Confucian ideas “mix with the Communist Party like fire does with water.” As a result, “the Mao-comms using the fallacy of Marxism-Leninism and class struggle to oppose Confucius really is a very rash attempt and a complete waste of energy[....] All of this goes to show that the Mao-comms have already come to the end of their road, and have already reached the most absurd extreme point.”³⁶² Here is an poignant example of the nationalists’ interpretation of Cultural Revolution-era China as incompatible with Chinese culture; along with some comments on western vs. domestic scholarship.

³⁶² Editorial, “The Mao-comms’ Intentions to Slander Confucius,” *Central Daily News*, December 14, 1973, reprinted in “大陸匪情（剪報）（七）,” December 2, 1973, AHC, 020-190700-0007.

A January 18, 1974 special piece for *Central Daily News* by Hong Kong correspondent Li Jinwei (黎晉偉) voiced the concerns of an intellectual with close ties to the Nationalist Party establishment. Li became a Kuomintang member and activist during the Second Sino-Japanese War. He spent most of his career running pro-KMT Chinese nationalist newspapers in Hong Kong, where he also published several books on the history of Hong Kong and on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. During the war, he also worked in the ROC capital in Chongqing as a director for the Kuomintang Central Propaganda Department and later as a Hong Kong representative to the Taiwan-based ROC legislature. Having earlier established a reputation for himself as a Nationalist-establishment-aligned intellectual, he mused from the perspective of an intellectual in his special report on the Criticize Confucius Campaign happening in the mainland at the time. He wrote, “the Mao clique’s ‘Criticize Confucius Uphold the Qin’ has so many fallacies, and its contradictions are endless[....] Our mainland compatriots do not necessarily have a complete understanding of Confucius’ thought. However, they are familiar with what Confucius advocated for: the way of benevolent government, and the principles of loyalty and reciprocity. All of the measures taken by the Mao-comms are tyrannical and not benevolent. This serves to show that the people will never forget Confucius and will continue to revere him. So, the Mao clique have no choice but to launch this ‘Criticize Confucius’ Campaign, which shows that, no matter what, they are incapable of implementing benevolent government. The people on the mainland all clearly know that Mao Zedong is the current day Qin Shihuang[....] As a result of this, the Mao clique have no choice but to launch this ‘Uphold the Qin’ Campaign, praising Qin Shihuang’s burying of the scholars as good. All of that must terrify mainland intellectuals. Whoever would dare to oppose Mao-comms’ delusions,

would have to prepare to be buried as well.”³⁶³ Here we can see in this newspaper article an interesting reflection on the criticism campaign that is more personalized to the author’s own position. The tone of the article mirrors other official media treatments of the campaign, but offers a little bit more of a personal edge to it. The author also asserts, like others before him in the KMT, that the people of mainland China are inherently inclined towards Confucian values, and thus CCP rule is unnatural to the Chinese nation.

An article in *China Times* on May 24, 1974, titled “Bandit Zone Education World Opposes Criticizing Confucius,” reported that, “the communist bandit ‘*Red Flag*’ magazine published an article confessing everything: the bandit zone education world is opposed to bandit Mao’s so-called ‘criticize Confucius.’” As proof of the supposed opposition, the article cited a joint-published essay in the magazine by the revolutionary committees of Qinghua and Beijing Universities, which stated: “after the Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius Campaign started, there were still some people in the liberal arts who defended Confucius. They said nonsense like Kong the dick cannot be completely negated, and *The Analects* can only be commented on, not criticized.”³⁶⁴ The quote certainly sounds like something that would be recorded in a study report from the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign. But as we saw in Chapter 1, these statements were usually followed by a redemption story of how people saw the errors of their earlier assumptions about Confucianism and came to see it as warranting criticism later. That is absent from this article, and instead we can see how the ROC media interpreted mainland reports of reluctance to criticize Confucius as evidence that there was widespread opposition to the entire campaign and to Communist Party rule as a whole.

³⁶³ Li Jinwei, “A Perspective on the Mao-comms’ ‘Criticize Confucius Uphold the Qin,’” *Central Daily News*, January 17, 1974, in “大陸匪情（剪報）（八）,” January, 1974, AHC, 020-190700-0008.

³⁶⁴ “Bandit Zone Education World Opposes Criticizing Confucius,” *China Times*, May 24, 1974, reprinted in “大陸匪情（剪報）（十二）,” May 1, 1974, AHC, 020-190700-0012.

Indeed, as a point of emphasis, the March 8, 1974 diary entry for the President recorded that he read over an article printed in *Central Daily News* stating that his son, acting as Premier, gave a speech to the Legislative Yuan in which he referenced his father in calling cadres accused in the mainland of counter-revolutionary activities, “not our enemies, but our comrades,” because “they will overthrow communist bandit tyranny.”³⁶⁵ It seemed that the official narrative of *pi Lin pi Kong* and impending CCP collapse would be carried on by Chiang Kai-shek’s designated successor.

However, archival sources from Chiang Ching-kuo’s office show he paid little attention to the campaign after his father’s death. Chiang Ching-kuo attended the annual meetings of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee in his capacity as a member of the committee, but not as the committee chair. As mentioned earlier, Chiang Kai-shek’s vice-president during his last term, Yen Chia-kan, took over as president of the ROC and as head of the Campaign Guiding Committee upon the former’s death in on April 5, 1975. Yen delivered the keynote address at the national meeting later that year. Chiang Ching-kuo was photographed in attendance, but he did not speak.³⁶⁶ He symbolically supported the committee’s efforts, but ultimately he let the much more interested Yen take the active role in leading the promotion of Confucianism and traditional Chinese arts. Yen served the remainder of Chiang Kai-shek’s last term as president, until May 20, 1978, when Chiang Ching-kuo was elected president by the National Assembly. Even then, Chiang let Yen continue to lead the Cultural Renaissance Campaign. Yen served as committee chair and sat on the board for the National Palace Museum

³⁶⁵ “行政院長蔣經國指出號召大陸人民的起義和毛共幹部的反正是政府的一貫政策” (Premier Chiang Ching-kuo encourages the policy of supporting mainland people’s uprising and resistance from cadres within the Mao-Comm government), March 8, 1974, AHC, 002-110101-00105-049.

³⁶⁶ “總統嚴家淦蒞臨慶祝國父誕辰暨中華文化復興節慶祝大會” (President Yen Chia-kan celebrates at the big meeting for the Founding Father’s Birthday and Chinese Cultural Renaissance Day), November 12, 1975, AHC, 006-030205-00017-004.

until 1991. Yen spoke at the annual meetings, attended more of the smaller meetings than his predecessor did, and oversaw the committee's activities, including publishing translations of the Confucian classics in other languages and handing out awards and scholarships to officials, scholars, and students.³⁶⁷ In the absence of a foil in the form of the Cultural Revolution for them to oppose, the Campaign Guiding Committee continued to focus on promoting traditional arts and culture. Calligraphy and essay writing contests, academic research grants, Chinese language study scholarships, and the publication of academic and school education books remained important tasks of the committee up to the present day. However, in 1990 the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee was renamed the Culture General Association (*wenhua zonghui* 文化總會). In 2006 it was renamed again to the National Culture General Association (*guojia wenhua zonghui* 國家文化總會). Most recently, in 2010 it was renamed once again to the Chinese Culture General Association (*Zhonghua wenhua zonghui* 中華文化總會), the name that it still functions under. With the exception of the period in which Yen Chia-kan served as committee chair, the rest of the chairs have all been the sitting ROC presidents. The organization still promotes publications, awards, and other activities in the fine arts, culture, and education, but it lacks the Cold War soft power *raison d'être* it once had.³⁶⁸ Nowadays, it continues to exist as a self-proclaimed "Taiwanese culture NGO" that promotes "the strengthening of Taiwanese culture" and "promoting cultural exchanges and cooperation across

³⁶⁷ “中華文化復興運動推行委員會秘書長谷鳳翔簽呈會長嚴家淦奉總統蔣經國核示仍請續任” (Secretary of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement Guiding Committee, Gu Feng-hsiang, sends a letter to Committee Chair Yen Chia-kan to give to President Chiang Ching-kuo for reading), June 28, 1978, AHC, 006-010908-00003-002.

³⁶⁸ The association's history and activities are summarized on their website: <https://www.gacc.org.tw/about-us/history>.

the Taiwan Strait,” through publishing a magazine and books on Taiwanese literature and fine arts, and through sponsoring scholarships and educational exchanges.³⁶⁹

Conclusion Section

In conclusion, through looking at the internal intelligence reports and articles from state-backed media, we can see how the Chinese Nationalist Party regime interpreted the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign. It was interpreted within the broader contexts of both the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the PRC and the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign in the ROC. While promoting traditional Confucian values in education was one of the early activities of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee in the later 1960s, the presence of a nationwide campaign to criticize Confucianism and promote the study of Legalism in mainland China encouraged the nationalist side to especially emphasize printing academic responses. They too printed new editions of the Confucian and Legalist classical texts with annotations and commentaries approved by the state. State-run media printed editorials, opinion pieces, and lengthy articles written by KMT Central Committee members and leading Chinese Nationalist intellectuals to explain at length their interpretations of famous figures like Confucius, Shang Yang, and Qin Shihuang, and the ancient Chinese philosophies like Legalism and Confucianism, alongside their already familiar reporting of the Cultural Revolution as a whole. Their propaganda promoted the idea that the ROC was a citadel preserving Chinese culture, giving it a new life to flourish under until they could prepare adequately to retake the mainland and bring that traditional culture back to their compatriots.

The Nationalist Party regime spoke of the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign internally to itself and outwardly to its people as yet another example that confirmed

³⁶⁹ The Association’s mission statement: <https://www.gacc.org.tw/about-us/mission>.

the Party's ideology. The Party believed that Communist Party rule in the mainland was unnatural to Chinese culture and history, that the KMT was the rightful inheritor of the Confucian orthodox (*daotong*) and legal tradition of inheritance (*fatong*) of Chinese history. That lineage of political legitimacy extended as far back into history as the mythical ancient sage-kings Yao, Shun, and Yu, through the Zhou Dynasty model rulers Kings Wen and Wu and the Duke of Zhou, as interpreted in the philosophy of Confucius and Mencius, and inherited from one dynasty after another, canonized in the twenty-four official histories (*ershisizhengshi* 二十四正史). The ROC was the sole legitimate successor to the Qing Dynasty, carrying Chinese civilization into the modern era. Its political ideology was the Three People's Principles of Sun Yat-sen, and Chiang Kai-shek was Sun's sole rightful successor. As such, KMT propaganda promoted values like patriotism, reverence for the leader (*lingxiu* 領袖), civic and ethnic nationalism, self-sacrifice for the national community, national reunification as a sacred mission of the nation, martial law preparedness for an impending counterattack against the CCP to reclaim the mainland, and a particular version of state-endorsed Neo-Confucianism.

Bi-yu Chang summarizes the KMT's ideological position during the period of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign well:

The KMT's legitimacy was said to derive from its position as successor to Sun Yat-sen, while Sun's legitimacy was based on his political and moral succession to Confucius and Mencius. In contrast, the communist regime was portrayed as being led by a group of foreign ideologues who had no intention of safeguarding Chinese culture and tradition. In this way the ROC was positioned as the only legal Chinese regime: it portrayed itself as representing the *real* China and thus fundamentally different from the notorious *gongfei* (communist bandits), who were guided by foreign ideology. This strategy worked to some degree until the 1970s while the US continued to support the KMT regime. In addition, the anti-communist stance had also been effective at the height of the Cold War in differentiating the ROC and sustaining its legitimacy in terms of gaining the support of other nations. Nevertheless, losing control of the mainland meant the ROC's international legal status was dubious, and the longer the political regime remained outside of China, the less credible its claim to the mainland became. After a string of diplomatic defeats in the 1970s, the ROC government was at best, for many countries, an exiled Chinese

government whose legitimacy had long ceased and whose territorial claim was untenable.³⁷⁰

This ideology was reflected well in both the press and the internal government reports on what was happening in the mainland during the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign. By praising Legalism and criticizing Confucianism, the CCP was playing right into the KMT's hands, confirming their own national historical self-narrative. At the same time, by denouncing the revolutionary iconoclasm of the Cultural Revolution in favor of the conservative traditional values of Neo-Confucianism, the KMT was also confirming the CCP's own narrative, too. Both sides affirmed their beliefs that they were the rightful successors of Chinese history, tasked with bringing the Chinese nation, economy, political system, society, and culture into the modern age, out from a backwards feudal era. They both touted a modernizing ideology that combined modern Western techniques and institutions with the reality of Chinese conditions—Mao Zedong Thought and Three People's Principles, respectively. Both found it necessary to invoke a philosophical lineage that connected them to China's ancient past: Legalism for the CCP and Confucianism for the KMT. Where the CCP portrayed itself as the inheritor of China's long history of peasant rebellions and progressive radical reformers, the KMT saw itself as the successor to a lineage of mandated political legitimacy and a moral philosophy based on benevolent governance and Confucian ethical living.

The KMT press and internal government reports thus criticized the CCP's praise for Legalism and Qin Shihuang as evidence of their unnaturalness to China, and as proof of a regime plagued by internal factional infighting on the verge of civil war and collapse. Well prepared by years of preserving traditional Chinese culture, the ROC could then swoop in to re-establish order and reunify the nation under one government. The ROC had an inherent problem to

³⁷⁰ Chang, *Place, Identity, and National Imagination in Postwar Taiwan*, 29-30.

achieve this goal, however. Internally, they had come to political and economic stability in the 1950s by imprisoning tens of thousands, and executing thousands of intellectuals, Taiwanese independence activists, supposed CCP agents, and pro-democracy political dissidents.³⁷¹ In the early 1960s, the liberal faction of the KMT were stripped of their support from the president when their outlet, *The Free China Journal* (*Ziyou Zhongguo banyuekan* 自由中國半月刊), was shut down after they published calls for constitutional and democratic reforms.³⁷² When intellectuals and local politicians in the “party outsider” (*dangwai* 黨外) movement publicly voiced opposition to martial law and one-party rule in Taiwan, they faced imprisonment, exile, demotions, and censorship.³⁷³ By the 1970s, the ROC’s intellectual establishment was dominated by conservative mainland-born nationalists, and some New Confucians. These intellectuals were thus the main voices of the ROC’s intellectual history at that time, and they are who I turn to analyze in the next chapter.

By looking comparatively at the two campaigns across the Taiwan Strait, I can make some significant arguments concerning the histories of the ROC and the PRC. Both the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign affected Chinese people in deep, but different ways. Based on conversations with people from both sides of the Strait who were in their teens and twenties during this time period, I can say that each movement affected the people in different ways. On both sides, some of the messages and ideas conveyed by the campaigns were internalized in many people’s general understandings of

³⁷¹ For more on the White Terror and Martial Law: Roy, *Taiwan*, 56-94; Strauss, *State Formation in China and Taiwan*, chapters 2 and 3; Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo’s Son: Chiang Ching-kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 211-213.

³⁷² Thomas H.C. Lee, “Chinese Education and Intellectuals in Postwar Taiwan,” in *Postwar Taiwan in Historical Perspective*, edited by Chun-Chieh Huang and Feng-fu Tsao (Bethesda: University of Maryland Press, 1998), 139-140, 143.

³⁷³ Roy, *Taiwan*, chapter 6; Rubinstein, *Taiwan*, chapter 11.

ancient Chinese philosophy, culture, and history. The Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign's most salient outcome were the scores of official government textbooks made for everyone from primary schoolers to university students. People who grew up in the 1960s and '70s (and even the '80s and '90s) in Taiwan recall a litany of public rituals associated with Martial Law more broadly, and with Chinese Cultural Rejuvenation. Speech writing contests, poetry contests, school-wide and nation-wide writing contests in literary Classical Chinese, daily recitations of quotes from the canon of Neo-Confucian and Nationalist classics, and flag raising and patriotic song ceremonies were ubiquitous facets of everyday life for a young person growing up under the Generalissimo's rule. As one person said to me, "You drank it. You breathed it. It was everywhere." Taiwanese people were raised to believe that the CCP was completely anathema to what it meant to be Chinese, that the communists were using an incompatible foreign ideology to *destroy* Chinese culture. It was then the duty, even the fate, of Taiwanese people to preserve Chinese culture in wait for the eventual day that the CCP would collapse from within. The Cultural Revolution seemed to be just such a time when the revolution would devour itself.

The parallels with the mainland during this time period are striking. Maoist ideology certainly permeated everyday life in a similar fashion to that of nationalist ideology in Taiwan. As we saw in Chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation, the slogans, ideas, and rhetoric of anti-Confucianism and a revolutionary Maoist worldview permeated everyday life in the mainland. Red songs, daily recitations of Mao quotes, and a litany of revolutionary rituals color people's memories of everyday life during the Cultural Revolution. Guobin Yang's work highlights the ways in which the Cultural Revolution produced an entire generation of young people who internalized some of the mass mobilizing messages of being a Red Guard even long after the

Cultural Revolution was over.³⁷⁴ I would argue that one of the most lasting legacies of the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign was that it changed the popular impressions of ancient Chinese history in the mainland. Before 1974, it was not mainstream to speak positively of Qin Shi Huang, Shang Yang, or of Legalism. To think of Chinese history in any terms other than those of orthodox Neo-Confucian philosophy would be a minority perspective before the Cultural Revolution decade changed how everyone thought about their nation's history in China. The 2002 award-winning and financially successful film, *Hero*, depicts Qin Shi Huang as a sympathetic character that even his would-be assassin respects because he will unify "all under Heaven."³⁷⁵ An on-screen text at the end of the film verifies the first emperor's greatness for achieving such a divine historical task. This kind of presentation is, I believe, evidence of some influence of the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign.

We see, then, that the Cultural Revolution and the Cultural Renaissance left lasting impressions on the peoples of mainland China and Taiwan, respectively. I cannot explain in great detail here the varying legacies and memories of the Maoist and Martial Law periods in people's imaginations. Suffice it to say that despite the eventual repudiations of both time periods, their legacies could not be fully wiped away. Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening Up and repudiation of the Cultural Revolution decade as "ten years of chaos" that hindered the development of China did not stop it from having significant meaning to the people who lived through it. The complete nullification of Martial Law in Taiwan in 1991 similarly did not rid some Taiwanese people of their perceived sacred mission to preserve traditional Chinese culture.

³⁷⁴ Guobin Yang, *The Red Guard Generation and Political Activism in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

³⁷⁵ For a discussion of this when the movie came out, see: Kahn, Joseph. "ARTS ABROAD; An Emperor Is Reinvented, A Director Is Criticized," *The New York Times*, January 2, 2003, sec. Movies, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/02/movies/arts-abroad-an-emperor-is-reinvented-a-director-is-criticized.html>.

In the changing contexts of both sides of the Strait, however, public repudiation was finally allowed. The Cultural Revolution and Martial Law could be written about, and artists and writers depicted the pain they felt over those time periods.

One major difference between the PRC and ROC during the 1966-1976 decade was that in Taiwan there existed a more sustained political resistance movement. The party outsiders, or the pro-democracy and pro-independence activists of Taiwan sometimes spent years in jail or exile before being allowed to legally participate in Taiwanese politics starting in the 1980s. Some of these activists had been working since the Japanese Colonial Period throughout Martial Law until they could form the basis of a real political opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) formed in 1986. In Mainland China, however, political opposition to the CCP was disorganized, diffuse mostly among a few intellectuals who only voiced their issues publicly in brief moments like the Hundred Flowers Movement, the Democracy Wall Movement, and the eventual 1989 Democracy Movement. Unlike their counterparts in Taiwan, the protesters in Beijing in 1989 were not organized by a pre-existing network of hardened activists, lawyers, and local politicians. The Tiananmen Square protestors were intentionally disorganized and leaderless, and after the June 4th crackdown, they never emerged again as a significant force of political opposition within the PRC. It is for these reason that I consider the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976 to be a significant moment of decoupling for the peoples of mainland China and Taiwan. For all its ethno-nationalist chauvinism and bluster, the KMT could never fully convince a significant portion of Taiwan's population to consider themselves as *Zhongguoren* (中國人). The Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign succeeded in getting some of its points across, but it failed on this one.

I hope that my findings here can illuminate a path towards future historical research that looks at the PRC and ROC comparatively. I am unable here to do a full sociological and anthropological analysis of how PRC and ROC citizens think about and remember the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign and the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign. But I do think that my research into the ideological underpinnings and intellectual work of both campaigns illuminates some answers to the questions that emerge when we think about these two campaigns, both of which are vastly understudied in Anglophone and Sinophone scholarship.

CHAPTER 4: Affirming Tradition in Martial Law Taiwan

In the previous chapter, I focused on how the ROC state and the KMT talked internally to themselves about the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution as it was happening in the Chinese mainland. Now, in this chapter, I turn attention inward to look at what the intellectual establishment in Taiwan had to say about Chinese culture, history, and philosophy; as well as looking at their rebuttal to what was being presented in mainland propaganda during the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* campaign. In particular, I focus on Ch'en Li-fu.³⁷⁶

First I will discuss the existing literature about Ch'en Li-fu and about Taiwanese intellectual history. Then, I give an overview of Ch'en's biography and major events in his life that influenced his thinking. Next I explain his own way of thinking and his expansive writing experiences. I hope to present Ch'en Li-fu as a significant figure of twentieth-century Chinese intellectual history worth analyzing. Much has been written about dissident Taiwanese intellectuals³⁷⁷ but less has been written about establishment intellectuals in the Anglophone literature, especially as applies to the decade covering from 1966 to 1976.³⁷⁸ My dissertation fills in some of that gap by focusing on the major intellectuals of the PRC and ROC during that tumultuous decade in which dissident intellectuals were silenced or repressed by state censorship and persecution. This chapter in particular focuses on an establishment intellectual who had close

³⁷⁶ I refer to him as Ch'en Li-fu, rather than the pinyin version Chen Lifu, because he himself wrote and published under this name in English. Because he is the nearest representative for his family, I would also transliterate the members of his family's names into Wade-Giles.

³⁷⁷ For instance: Tzeng Shih-jung, *From Honto Jin to Bensheng Ren: The Origin and Development of Taiwanese National Consciousness* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 2009); Murray A. Rubinstein, ed., *Taiwan: A New History*, expanded edition (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), chapters 11 and 14; Ye Shitao 葉石濤, *台灣文學史綱* (Outline of the History of Taiwanese Literature) (Kaohsiung: Chun Hui Press, 1987).

³⁷⁸ Scholarship that deals with broader KMT ideology and other scholarship on Taiwanese intellectual history: Chun-Chieh Huang, and Feng-fu Tsao, eds., *Poswar Taiwan in Historical Perspective*, vol. 1, *Studies in Global Chinese Studies 1* (Bethesda: University of Maryland Press, 1998), chapters 7 and 9; Liao Ping-hui, and David Der-wei Wang, eds., *Taiwan Under Japanese Colonial Rule 1895-1945: History, Culture, Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

ties with Chiang Kai-shek, Chiang Ching-kuo, and some of the leading Sinologists of the mid-20th century. By not having a good understanding of establishment intellectuals in Taiwan during the Cold War period, we miss the significance of what the KMT was trying to say and what its ideology really meant in a time of such intellectual fermentation in the Sinophone world. In the last chapter, I focused on the ideas of state actors at the top of the party and government, but in this chapter I focus on a person who was largely left to his own devices during the same period of time, but believed firmly in the legitimacy of the very regime that scorned him over a decade earlier. While living in the U.S., and then again writing his memoirs long after the deaths of both Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo, Ch'en Li-fu had every freedom to criticize the men, the KMT-ROC regime, and the Nationalist Chinese ideology. Even from that context of writing in the post-Cold War era, Ch'en still defended the Chiang's, the KMT's actions and ideology, and his role throughout the twentieth century. He wasn't writing under any outside pressures while living in the United States in the 1950s and '60s, nor while he wrote his memoirs in the 1990s. This chapter contributes to our understandings of official ideology and intellectual history during the Martial Law era of Taiwan (1945-1989).

To be sure, Ch'en Li-fu, like Yang Rongguo in the mainland, was an establishment intellectual with support at the highest level of the ruling party. Ch'en was a KMT member since his 20s. He was Chiang Kai-shek's personal secretary and close confidant for the durations of the Northern Expedition, the Chinese Civil War, and the Second Sino-Japanese War. He was the youngest member of the KMT Central Committee ever elected. While he did not hold top decision-making positions aside from his appointment as WWII-era Minister of Education of the ROC, he was present at most all of the major decisions and debates within the KMT leadership from 1926 to 1950. He knew all of the most important KMT leaders of the Republican era of

Chinese history. He preferred to not argue openly with other central committee members, but he did often personally share with Chiang Kai-shek his opinions on all important matters. Chiang respected Ch'en's opinions and allowed Ch'en to speak freely in front of him, a relatively rare thing for Chiang, who was notoriously easily angered and did not tolerate disobedience among his military subordinates. It certainly helped that Ch'en considered Chiang to be his adopted uncle of sorts, and that Ch'en was completely loyal to the generalissimo, believing him to be Sun Yat-sen's only legitimate successor.

Ch'en Li-fu was born in Zhejiang in 1900. He was educated in Shanghai and Tianjin in China, as well as in Pennsylvania in the United States. He worked in the Chinese mainland during the warlord, civil war, and Second Sino-Japanese War periods. In 1949 he went to Taiwan with the rest of the KMT leadership, but soon afterwards left Taiwan to live in the United States again for sixteen years. At Chiang Kai-shek's invitation, he returned to Taiwan in 1966 to take on more administrative work for the government's Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee and remained there for the rest of his life, occasionally visiting the U.S.

He was a committed nationalist, a self-styled Neo-Confucian gentleman, loyal to the end to Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, a meticulous organizer and engineer by training, a well-published author, and fiercely anti-communist. He longed for Chinese reunification, but only under the leadership of the KMT and Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles. He thought the CCP was never to be trusted, that they could not be relied upon in negotiations or diplomatic solutions to the question of reunification. He thought they were always up to some secret deception even if they appeared amenable, like during the negotiations for the Second United Front during World War II, during the post-war negotiations for a coalition government, and during the Reform and Opening Up policies of Deng Xiaoping. He supported the presidencies

and most of the major decisions made by Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo. He also received the support and trust of those two presidents. Thus, his books received official endorsements and publication support. Ch'en was invited to deliver lectures and to teach at party and military academies. He also often acted as a proxy for the presidents in the United States and earlier for the Japanese and Soviets.

He recalled fondly in his memoirs the vote of confidence that both father-and-son Chiang gave to him for his scholarly endeavors. Chiang Ching-kuo offered the chairmanship of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee to Ch'en, who refused it in favor of former vice-president Yen Chia-kan. Ch'en showed pride in his memoirs when the Chiang's told him that they read his books and that they supported what he was doing with his writing efforts. Ch'en was invited to speak to party and military universities on his intellectual interests, so we can definitely consider him an establishment intellectual. He was not a dissident in any sense of the word.

That being said, what can we learn from looking at the life, work, and the thought of Ch'en Li-fu? I argue: a lot about KMT-ROC ideology during the Martial Law era, especially in terms of culture, philosophy, and history, and the Chinese nationalists' reactions to the Cultural Revolution in the PRC. While the historiography on the Cultural Revolution has become more global recently,³⁷⁹ we are sorely lacking in a close examination of what the Chinese Nationalists had to say about it. Furthermore, the relatively young field of Anglophone Postwar Taiwanese History is lacking in a deeper intellectual history of its major establishment thinkers. There is more on the Taiwanese democracy movement's history under Martial Law, but not on these sorts

³⁷⁹ For instance: Matthew Galway, *The Emergence of Global Maoism: China's Red Evangelism and the Cambodian Communist Movement, 1949-1976* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022); Julia Lovell, *Maoism: A Global History* (New York: Vintage Press, 2019); Alexander C. Cook, *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

of people. Ch'en's views of modernity, revolution, tradition, and Confucianism were sometimes contradictory and conflicting, but they were also certainly deep and argued with conviction, research, and a commitment to both classical Chinese philology as well as the scientific method. Ch'en was not just calling for a return to the past, but he considered himself a modernist, and he wanted to make Confucianism workable for a modern, revolutionary context. Just like how the communists' views of classical philosophy were more nuanced upon closer analysis than previously thought, so too were the Confucianist arguments of KMT figures in Taiwan at the same time.

Historiography/Literature Review

Anglophone and Sinophone scholarly interest in Ch'en Li-fu has mostly focused on his activities in relation to the infamous CC Clique (*Zhongyang julebu zuzhi* 中央俱樂部組織) in the period from the latter half of the 1920s to the early 1950s. His life afterwards has largely been ignored by scholars. While his political career was pretty much over by 1950, he became an relatively successful businessman, writer, and advocate for teaching and promoting traditional Confucian values within the nationalist Chinese community for the second half of his life.

Questions concerning his involvement in the CC Clique with his high-profile brother Ch'en Kuo-fu, in the criminal Green Gang, and in violent anticommunist surveillance work are of greatest concern to both Anglophone and Sinophone scholars.³⁸⁰ Even so, Ch'en Li-fu often gets less attention than his uncle Ch'en Chi-mei or his older brother Ch'en Kuo-fu in the historiography on Republican China. As such, Ch'en's role in Republican-era Chinese history is well documented, but his role in post-war Taiwanese history is much less understood.

³⁸⁰ See Frederick E. Wakeman Jr., *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), and Zhang Xueji 张学继, *陈立夫全传* (*Full Biography of Chen Lifu*) (Beijing: Unity Publishing, 2018).

I argue, however, that Ch'en is a significant figure in the intellectual history of Martial Law-era Taiwan, especially as concerns the internal KMT ruling elite circle. From 1966 onwards, he was at times either leader or co-leader of the publication of leading Sinological scholarship within Taiwan. He was instrumental in making the celebration of Confucius' birthday an official holiday in the ROC. He also cofounded the Confucian-Mencian Studies Society of the ROC and oversaw the translation of Joseph Needham's series on Chinese civilization and science. He crossed paths with some of the leading Anglophone Sinologists of the mid-20th century. He disliked John King Fairbank, not holding back any criticisms of him in his memoirs, and he liked Joseph Needham very much. Of Needham, he said, "What interested him most were China's scientific achievements and scientific ideas in ancient times and their significance in the cultural history of mankind. He wanted to study, make comparisons, and then publish the results. I fully agreed and encouraged him to do this[....] Many years later he produced the magnificent multivolume *Science and Civilisation in China*."³⁸¹ For Fairbank, however, he said he, "did not help to increase the understanding of Chinese culture abroad but, in my opinion, played a negative role. He and his wife, Wilma, actually undermined our government's credibility abroad. They spread rumors, attacked Chinese government officials, and provided false information to the United States government, which helped to produce incorrect policies that eventually benefited the communist forces[....] I personally regard Fairbank's arrogant behavior to be at the same time amusing and regretful[....] I still strongly believe that, to some extent, his activities in wartime China helped bring about the collapse of the Nationalist government on the mainland[....] To some extent, I have wondered if Wilma Fairbank was then actually a Communist."³⁸²

³⁸¹ Ch'en Li-fu, *The Storm Clouds Clear Over China*, 166.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 167.

The editors of the English language version of his memoirs described his writing style as “matter-of-fact” and “straightforward.” He did not speculate about the characters closest to him in his personal life, barely mentioning his wife or children at all, and wrote in an undramatic way about some of the very dramatic moments in twentieth-century Chinese history that he lived through. The editors trace his writing style to the applied science approach of engineering that he was educated in, and that he always wished he had made a career of.³⁸³ Indeed, in Ch’en’s own words, he wrote, “On my return to China in 1925, I made up my mind to devote myself to China’s reconstruction by working as an engineer. I did not expect that I would start a new career in politics right after returning from abroad. It is painful for anyone to give up on one’s lifelong interest and ambition[....] My only purpose in writing my memoirs is to bear witness to history and try to explain some historical events. I participated in many of the great events that took place in China during the past century[....] In writing my memoirs, I recall past events with a heavy heart. I cared little about my political career. I had wanted to be an engineer. Maybe I made the wrong choice in my life.”³⁸⁴ The editors’ introduction notes some of the major events of Ch’en’s life and his opinions of these things, questioning his moral culpability during wartime. Otherwise, they leave Ch’en to speak for himself mostly. Ch’en was asked by the Hoover Institution to write his memoirs so that they could translate and publish them into English in the early 1990s. In 1991 and 1992, the editors visited him in Taipei to hold ten hours of oral interviews with him, taking up 200 pages of transcripts. He also handwrote the memoirs in Chinese some 1,100 pages that were translated into a book around 400 pages in length. The Chinese language version of his memoirs, *A Mirror of Success and Failure* (成敗之鑑 *Chengbai*

³⁸³ Ch’en Li-fu, *The Storm Clouds Clear Over China*, Introduction by the Editors.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

zhi jian), just published the original manuscript, without any editorial notes, introduction, or footnotes that the English version has to put things into context.³⁸⁵

Historian from the PRC and biographer of Ch'en Li-fu, Zhang Xueji, evaluated him this way: "In the period of Nationalist Party rule [in China], many of the most profound, big political conflicts and events bore the influence of the Ch'en brothers, especially of Ch'en Li-fu."³⁸⁶

Zhang's biography is primarily concerned with unveiling the exact details of Ch'en's involvement in anti-communist spy work and running the CC-clique within the KMT. So, Zhang devotes about 70% of the 870+ page biography to the period covering 1925-1950, when Ch'en was an influential member of the KMT leadership. While being sure to expose Ch'en as a reactionary anticommunist, Zhang evaluates the latter half of Ch'en's life in much less demonizing words: "In the later years of Ch'en Li-fu[*'s* life], he devoted himself to the great effort of unifying the ancestral land by promoting traditional Chinese culture. He conducted himself as a Chinese person [*zhongguoren*], identified with Chinese culture; and, regarding his role in the cause of unifying China, he is worth affirming."³⁸⁷ Zhang's biography is focused largely on the political activities of Ch'en and his role within the KMT during the Republican period of Chinese history. He is critical of Ch'en's role in causing the deaths of thousands of CCP members during the civil war, but Zhang does think that Ch'en is deserving of some recognition as a firm believer in the value of traditional Chinese culture and medicine in the context of the modern world. Indeed, Zhang likens Ch'en's worries over the influence of American culture on Taiwanese society in the post-war period to the PRC's own issues with Western civilization overly influencing Chinese society since Reform and Opening Up began.

³⁸⁵ Ch'en Li-fu 陳立夫, *成敗之鑑--陳立夫回憶錄* (A Mirror of Success and Failure—The Memoirs of Ch'en Li-fu) (Taipei: Cheng Chung Books, 1994).

³⁸⁶ Zhang Xueji, *Full Biography*, 2.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

In his own words, Ch'en began his memoirs thusly: "In the past, many people told me I should write my memoirs, but I could not make up my mind to do so until recently, for I thought my life and work during the past decades were not as I intended or planned[....] But I want to point out that as a follower of Chiang I ardently and faithfully did my job."³⁸⁸ Again, he wrote, "Never using the knowledge of my profession has been my lifelong regret."³⁸⁹ He was proud of the work he did for Chiang Kai-shek, critical of political infighting and disunity within the KMT, and confident in his philosophical views, but Ch'en often had a tone of regret in his memoirs: regret for never taking up an engineering job, and regret for the nationalists losing the civil war. The latter he blamed on others within the nationalist party and military leadership, but never on Chiang Kai-shek or Chiang Ching-kuo. Ch'en spent several years putting his memoirs together. They were finally published in 1994, when he was 94 years old. He passed away in 2001 at 101, having lived through the entirety of the twentieth century.

In this chapter, my main sources are Ch'en's own writings. He wrote for different audiences: some for high school aged children and youths, some for other KMT members, and others in a much more rigorous, almost academic way. That being said, Ch'en was not a trained academic philologist, historian, or philosopher. Rather, he was deeply interested in trying to promote the aspects of Confucian thought that he wanted the KMT to embrace and teach to Chinese people. I use as sources in this chapter a sampling of his most important works, including his memoirs, a book he wrote to educate overseas Chinese youths,³⁹⁰ a collection of essays on Confucian-Mencian thought,³⁹¹ and his two-volume commentaries on the Four Books

³⁸⁸ Ch'en, *Storm Clouds*, 1.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁹⁰ Ch'en Li-fu 陳立夫, *中國文化概論* (Introduction to Chinese Culture), Overseas Chinese Youth Book Series (Taipei: Cheng Chung Books, 1989).

³⁹¹ Ch'en Li-fu 陳立夫, *陳立夫先生孔孟學說論叢* (Selected Confucian-Mencian Theories of Mr. Ch'en Li-fu), edited by Ts'ai Hsin-fa 蔡信發 (Taipei: Republic of China Confucian-Mencian Studies Society Press, 2011).

(四書 *si shu*).³⁹² In these books are contained Ch'en Li-fu's views on philosophy, politics, economics, society, history, culture, the world, and the meaning of life. He also fit his own life narrative into these discussions. Ch'en was respected by both Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo, and he was busy in the cultural/intellectual elite circles of the KMT-ROC leadership during the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign. He made sure to share his writings with his colleagues and was proud when they gave him comments on them. As such, his influence and his representativeness of the KMT party leadership's ideology during the period that this dissertation is focused on makes focusing on him a great way to peer into the inner thinking of the nationalist regime as it tried to grapple with the Cultural Revolution happening in the mainland.

Ch'en Li-fu's Life

Ch'en Li-fu was one of Chiang Kai-shek's closest confidants as his secretary for over twenty years, and a man who wore many hats within the KMT and ROC bureaucracy. At different points in his life, Ch'en served as ROC Minister of Education, secretary for the KMT Central Committee, head of the KMT's secret spy ring intent on turning CCP members over to their side, editor for several KMT newspapers, head of the ROC's statistical land survey office, a representative sent to negotiate with the USSR, head of the ROC army's engineering corps' education program, a leading organizer for the 1947 ROC Constitution, head of a traditional Chinese medicine school in Taiwan, and vice-chair of the Guiding Committee for the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign. He was a U.S.-educated engineer by training, but never worked as an engineer outside of his time studying in Pennsylvania in the 1920s. He translated several

³⁹² Ch'en Li-fu 陳立夫, *四書道貫* (*The Confucian Way: A New and Systematic Study of the Four Books*), 2 vols. (Taipei: Taichung Publishing House, 1966).

major works of Western Sinology into Chinese, oversaw the publication of dozens of books, and himself wrote several dozen books on a wide range of subjects. Fluent in English, he spent much of the 1950s and '60s living in New York, managing an overseas Chinese newspaper and running his own chicken farm. He returned to Taiwan at Chiang Kai-shek's request to help oversee the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign. Throughout the 1960s to 1990s, he devoted himself largely to cultural work. He took a personal interest in studying the classical texts of the Confucian canon as well as traditional Chinese medicine, and published a large number of books and articles on the subjects of Confucian philosophy and how to achieve longevity and health. He took up the task of writing his memoirs in the 1980s and '90s, and submitted them upon request to editors at the Hoover Institution in Stanford University. He handwrote them in Chinese and the editors translated them into English. His Taiwanese publishers just published his handwritten memoirs verbatim without notes or editorial.

By that point, Ch'en was witness to some of the most momentous events of 20th century Chinese history. Born in Zhejiang in 1900, he was the youngest of ten children. His father, Ch'en Chi-yeh (陳其業), was a Qing Dynasty official who turned to business after the 1911 revolution. His uncle, Ch'en Chi-mei (陳其美), was Chiang Kai-shek's mentor and led the Shanghai armed uprising against the Qing Dynasty. His brother, Ch'en Kuo-fu (陳果夫), was Chiang Kai-shek's sworn blood brother and also was active in overthrowing the Qing Dynasty. Ch'en Li-fu, however, was a young boy studying the Confucian canon at that time. He started learning English and received a Western education in Shanghai at the age of 13. At the age of 17, he moved to Tianjin and was surrounded by the May 4th Movement spirit. Interestingly, he was not very swept up by it. He thought highly of Sun Yat-sen, but disliked the iconoclastic radical youths around him in Beijing. He thought they were throwing away too much when they decried

Confucianism in favor of Westernization. In 1923, he went to the University of Pittsburgh to study engineering. It was while living abroad that he took a greater interest in politics and current affairs, thanks to reading overseas Chinese newspapers and hanging out with the local Chinese Students Association. Talk of revolution, modernization, and China's position in the world surrounded him then as well. Impressed by America's industrial and technological achievements, he worked in coal mines in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Returning to China in 1926, his brother Kuo-fu recruited him to become Chiang Kai-shek's secretary. Never getting a chance to be an actual engineer was Ch'en Li-fu's greatest regret in life. He had a fascination with machines, technology, and the methodical way of thinking that he learned from studying engineering. He witnessed and indeed took an active part in the Shanghai Massacre of 1927 and, at 29-years-old, was elected the youngest member of the KMT Central Committee. He was their secretary, so he was privy to the meetings of all the KMT's highest leadership. He himself did not speak much at the meetings, but shared his thoughts on some issues with Chiang Kai-shek in private, and he recorded his thoughts in his memoirs decades later. At these Central Committee meetings, he sat with Hu Hanmin, Wang Jingwei, Sun Fo, and Chiang Kai-shek to name a few.

During the Chinese Civil War and the Second World War, acting as Chiang Kai-shek's secretary and representative, he met and crossed paths with Joseph Stalin, Zhou Enlai, Mao Zedong, John King Fairbank, Joseph Needham, General George C. Marshall, and diplomats from Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. He wrote a letter personally to Adolf Hitler, handed to the Fuhrer's ambassador in Nanjing in 1937 (asking Hitler to align with the ROC against the Soviet Union and CCP).

While Ch'en was nearby and crossed paths with such major figures of that time period, he was not a decision maker himself. He faithfully carried out every order given to him by his boss. Chiang Kai-shek respected Ch'en's opinion and always heard out Ch'en's suggestions in private, but Ch'en was never put in a major decision-making position. He was ordered by Chiang to carry out certain directives and to represent him in meetings he could not attend. Ch'en did this all dutifully, as he was incredibly loyal to this man who eventually forced him and his brother to take the blame for losing to the communists. Even then, he still returned to Taiwan upon Chiang's request and still looked favorably upon him long after Chiang's death.

Ideologically, Ch'en and his brother have often been cast as the leaders of the conservative faction in the KMT, and they have been associated with fascist thought within the party. Ch'en Li-fu himself denied this in his memoirs, and referred to himself as a liberal, a nationalist, and a Confucian. He believed that communism was inherently un-Chinese and that the CCP was filled with liars and con artists who would sell out their friends at the first opportunity. He was a faithful devotee of Sun Yat-sen's thought. He believed in a gradual form of political tutelage that would eventually lead from a benevolent dictatorship towards representative democracy. In the meantime, Chiang Kai-shek was the perfect leader to unify China and help bring about that development.³⁹³

Ch'en Li-fu was also an ardent defender of the Neo-Confucian tradition taught throughout imperial Chinese history. He believed Confucianism was the philosophy of the Chinese people. He was also a Han chauvinist and believed that his particular brand of Chinese culture was superior to all others in the world. He recognized the existence of other schools of Chinese thought like Legalism, Daoism, and Buddhism, but believed them all to be inferior and

³⁹³ It is worth noting that the CCP also considers itself to be the successor of Sun Yat-sen.

that Confucianism was the only real way for China to follow. He did not espouse an eclectic kind of Chinese culture that included the traditional three religions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. He thought that the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy taught by imperial officials should be predominant. The realities of modern times forced China to have to adapt, however, and Sun Yat-sen codified the perfect continuation of Confucian orthodoxy into the modern age. Li-fu decried Western capitalism and individualism just as much as he criticized Communist materialism and revolutionary iconoclasm. He believed that Neo-Confucian philosophy combined with Sun Yat-sen's vision was the perfect and only way to ensure China's continued growth and preeminence. He believed that Chinese culture was the most superior in the world and that the rest of the world should learn from China's Confucian example. He found both capitalism and communism to be immoral and ultimately destructive to humanity because they didn't allow people to become really human. He made no apologies for any of Chiang Kai-shek's decisions or any of his actions that led to the deaths of thousands because, as he saw it, the nationalists and communists were engaged in a life and death struggle. The communists were going to destroy the nation, and so killing them was necessary for him.

Ch'en Li-fu wrote most of his works on classical Chinese philosophy and culture later in his life, from the 1960s to the 1980s. Near the end of his life he focused on his memoirs and promoting traditional Chinese medicine. While living in the US after the ROC regime relocated to Taiwan, he decided to focus on a deep study of the classical canon and to devote his attentions to preserving what he thought was the best about traditional Chinese culture. It happened to be the case that this interest coalesced well with the aims of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign. At the same time, the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign in the PRC gave him a foil.

Ch'en Li-fu's Beliefs

Ch'en Li-fu was a Confucian and a Chinese Nationalist who subscribed to the political thought of Sun Yat-sen. He rejected Western liberalism and free market capitalism, as well as communism. He did not think that Sun's philosophy of Three People's Principles, was only applicable to China's problems, or even only to the former Confucian realm of East Asia, but that it was a philosophy which could be of benefit to the entire world. In particular, he thought that Three People's Principles, rooted in traditional Neo-Confucian philosophy, was a panacea to the immorality of both capitalism and communism, and would help to bring about world peace in the nuclear age. While he was a Confucian of the twentieth century, he can hardly be considered a New Confucian. He espoused the traditional philosophy of late-imperial Confucianism that he was educated in, alongside the modern nationalist political thought of Sun Yat-sen and KMT ideological orthodoxy.

Ch'en's study of Confucianism began at the age of seven. Like many other sons of late-imperial officials, his mother He Wen'e (何文娥) was his first teacher: "She was well-versed in Chinese classics and educated us in the Confucian and Mencian doctrines of benevolence and forbearance. She taught me to read *The Four Books* and *I-Ching* [*Book of Changes*]. Through my mother's teaching and guidance I fell in love with Confucian learning, which has had profound influence on my life."³⁹⁴ Ch'en internalized well the traditional Neo-Confucian early education that he received from his mother. He was taught the typical canon and interpretations of them that all imperial-era officials learned: the Neo-Confucian school of philosophy codified by the Song Dynasty scholar Zhu Xi. Unlike many of the other educated youths of his generation in China, he did not reject Confucianism at all, despite studying at a university in the capital area

³⁹⁴ *Storm Clouds*, 3-4.

during the May 4th Movement. He had this to say about the May 4th Movement that swept up his classmates while he studied in Tianjin in the late 1910s:

The most blatant slogan of the May Fourth movement was Down with Confucius [*Ta-tao k'ung-chia-tien*], which I thought was too radical and antitraditional. I had thoroughly studied *The Four Books* and *The Five Classics* and could not agree that Confucius' teaching was that bad. My way of thinking was that any rotten tradition certainly ought to be discarded or rejuvenated but that to condemn old traditions as bad and demand they be destroyed was overemotional and irrational. I was convinced that merely occupying Western or Soviet ways of doing things while negating the values of Chinese cultural tradition could not make China strong. If Down with Confucius was a slogan to awaken the nation, that might be all right; if it was used to reject our traditional culture, such extremism to correct a wrong would only produce a greater loss.³⁹⁵

Unlike many others in his generation, Ch'en looked back negatively on the May 4th Movement. He thought it was throwing out what was most worth preserving in Chinese culture—Confucianism—in favor of foreign ideologies that were incompatible with China's conditions. He wrote later, "Even though we went through the May 4th New Culture Movement, regardless of that, we can clearly see that Confucianism is unchangingly the foundation of Chinese traditional culture."³⁹⁶ The May 4th Movement did force Ch'en to pay closer attention to contemporary world affairs and politics, but not because he was an iconoclast himself.

He had no problems with being called traditional. In fact, he made his goal later in life to preserve traditional Chinese culture. On women like his mother, he wrote glowingly: "my wife, Sun Lu-ching [孫祿卿], a person with great decency, dignity, and all traditional womanly virtues."³⁹⁷ Even in practical everyday matters, he wrote, "I apply the philosophy of the doctrine of the mean whenever I perform any job."³⁹⁸

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 14.

³⁹⁶ Ch'en Li-fu, *Introduction to Chinese Culture*, 16.

³⁹⁷ Ch'en, *Storm Clouds*, 47.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 147.

During the Northern Expedition campaign of 1926-1927, Ch'en accompanied Chiang as he led the National Revolutionary Army of the ROC to defeat warlord armies. He recalled: "I passed small villages along the way. When the peasants saw I wore the uniform of the National Revolutionary Army, they came out to welcome me. Some led my horse, while others brought me tea and even a jug of wine and a chicken. I was deeply moved when I saw their sincere hospitality. At that moment I understood the true meaning of a line from *The Four Books*: 'With baskets of food and jugs of wine, welcome the army of liberation.'"³⁹⁹ This shows that Ch'en easily associated the modern political developments of his times with Confucianism. And again, he related the Chinese Civil War and the White Terror campaign to eliminate the communists to ancient historical precedent: "Any country threatened by communist subversive activities from within and by foreign aggression from without must have sound means to investigate and gather statistics to defend itself. If you have read *Kuan Tzu*, you know that the success of the state of Ch'i during the period of Warring States (403-221 B.C.) came from its knowledge of the common people and its ability to mollify the dukes and princes and to bring them under the control of the ruler. Our revolution started with a phase of military rule, then passed through the political tutelage stage, and later entered a stage of constitutional government. One could say it had to be born from force before it could pass through the kingly way of a benevolent government."⁴⁰⁰ "The kingly way of benevolent government" (*Wangdao* 王道) is a Confucian ideal of benevolent governance. Here, Ch'en combined such an ancient idea with the modern political theory of three stages of revolution espoused by Sun Yat-sen.

After moving to the U.S. in 1950, Ch'en devoted himself to classical studies. He wrote in his memoirs of that period of his life:

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 43.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 64.

I concentrated on the study of Confucius' writings, my second most favorite topic, as the first was studying the *Book of Changes [I-Ching]* [...] in 1961, I finished a 614-page book entitled *The Confucian Way: A New and Systematic Study of the Four Books [Ssu-shu tao-kuan]*. Why my fondness for Confucian teaching? Briefly, it was my mother's influence. In my childhood, everyone had to study *The Four Books*, and many of my generation memorized the Confucian teaching in its entirety. Even today I can still recite long passages. At first, I wanted to systematically rearrange *The Four Books* and annotate them according to modern ideas. I recall Sun Yat-sen's comment that *Ta-hsueh*, the Great Learning, began with the individual, then the family, then the nation, and finally the world. I found that 95 percent of *The Four Books* could be compiled according to that order. The remaining 5 percent required more thought, but I finally managed to categorize it. Chiang was to celebrate his eightieth birthday on October 30, 1966; Ching-kuo wrote me on April 23, 1966, hoping I would return to Taiwan to live. I brought back with me the first copy of the published work *Ssu-shu tao-kuan* as my birthday present to Chiang[...] Many friends had read my book. The historian Ch'ien Mu and others had written reviews[...] Most friends suggested that books on Confucian teaching were perhaps out of date and that no market could be found in the Chinese world or elsewhere. They suggested that no more than a thousand copies should be printed and that I should not take the matter so seriously.⁴⁰¹

But in the end, regarding that one book, "The book has been translated into English, Japanese, and Korean, and the Chinese-language edition alone sold more than 69,000 copies."⁴⁰² Ch'en was proud that he was being associated later in his life with classical scholarship, traditional culture and values, and Confucian virtue.

After returning to Taiwan to serve as vice-chair of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee, "I also worked for the Confucius-Mencius Learning Society, headed by Chiang, and served as his deputy. We published a *Confucius-Mencius Monthly*, sponsored monthly lectures on ethics, democracy, and science, and conducted essay and calligraphy contests at schools of all levels. We encouraged primary school pupils to learn *The Four Books*. We held summer seminars, symposiums for teachers and students and built Confucian temples throughout Taiwan and elsewhere, such as in Germany, the Ryukyu Islands, and in many overseas Chinese communities. I have always believed that Confucianism can help

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 230.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 231.

us develop values that can cure the social illness connected with modern social change.”⁴⁰³ It is clear that Ch’en was deeply devoted to the cause of preserving traditional Confucian culture so that it could be passed on to future generations of not just ROC citizens, but also overseas ethnic Chinese people and even for the whole world.

Moving from Confucianism to the modern political thought of Sun Yat-sen, while Ch’en was studying in the U.S. in the 1920s and becoming acquainted with current affairs and politics, he officially joined the KMT, read overseas Chinese newspapers, and participated in overseas Chinese students group meetings. He wrote in his memoirs of this time, “I carefully studied Sun's international development plan for the first time. I admired his original and brilliant concepts for building highways and railways, constructing three coastal ports, and establishing new industries, all to create a new China. Having observed the United States' achievements, I now felt I must return to my motherland to devote myself to the revolution and national reconstruction. We could not begin without defeating China's warlords[...] I subscribed to his idea of encouraging foreigners to invest in China to launch economic development.”⁴⁰⁴ While leftist ideas from socialism, communism, and anarchism were all popular among both domestic and international Chinese students by the mid-1920s, Ch’en wanted to preserve Confucianism in the modern era. He did embrace some of the leftist ideas that Sun Yat-sen himself also embraced, like economic socialism to develop the country’s economy, and anti-imperialism. However, Ch’en wrote that he never trusted communists and anything else that advocated throwing out Confucianism all together. Ch’en was not extremely traditionalist, however, like, say, Liang Shuming.⁴⁰⁵ He did not dress in Confucian scholar robes, but rather wore western suits and adopted American

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 232.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁰⁵ Guy S. Alitto, *The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

fashion styles and scientific thinking. He understood English well and loved doing any kind of work that allowed him to practice his skills in scientific organization. When it came to ethics and answering the existential questions of the modern and nuclear age, however, Ch'en believed that Confucianism provided the best philosophy for the world. Sun Yat-sen's political thought appealed to Ch'en, then, because of what he saw as the inherently Confucian roots of many of Sun's proposals.

In fact, Ch'en never recognized that the CCP was successful for legitimate reasons. He also did not credit the failure of the KMT to win the civil war to the usual reasons agreed upon by historians of that time period. Instead of crediting it to the rampant corruption within the ROC government, economic collapse, the genuine appeal that communism had for Chinese youths and peasants, or the lack of popular support for KMT ideology or policies, Ch'en blamed the nationalist defeat on divided leadership within the central committee and poor organizational coordination. Socio-economic reasons did not factor into his assessments of the 1949 defeat: "We would never have failed in 1949 if we had truly followed Sun's teachings in the first place."⁴⁰⁶ The problem was a failure within the KMT to properly implement the vision of Sun Yat-sen in a timely manner, because the leadership of the party was too factional and not unified on policies. In particular, Ch'en believed that the period of political tutelage was not fully implemented enough, that the 1947 ROC constitution was not given enough time to properly take effect, and that Sun's plan for land reform was not properly implemented across the country. He blamed the last problem on the Japanese invasion and the communist insurgency:

The meddling of white imperialism actually gave red imperialism an opportunity to rob the people of all land under the guise of 'land reformers.' Sun Yat-sen's goals of 'land to the tiller' and 'equalizing landownership' simply could not be achieved. In retrospect, I wish to record that all reports and government documents show that the land survey efforts of National government in Chekiang in 1928-1930 did not meet rural family

⁴⁰⁶ *Storm Clouds*, 102.

resistance. Peasants were cooperative. I believe it is unfair to state that the Kuomintang did not pay attention to the needs of rural areas or that we betrayed Sun Yat-sen's Principle of Livelihood. Circumstances prevented us from implementing our land program[....] We hoped we could accomplish Sun Yat-sen's law of land reform after the war was won. The failure to enact Sun's land policy truly embarrassed the Kuomintang. We sincerely believed that if the tiller cannot have land, he will not increase his output even under threat of force[....] Today, we still call for China's national unity under the doctrine of the Three People's Principles and that can only mean 'land to the tiller,' which is an incentive for peasants to rise up, take back their land, and launch a revolution to overthrow the communist regime.⁴⁰⁷

Essentially, the ideas and the goals were sincerely there, but implementation failed because of circumstances and inept leadership. Ch'en never blamed the main leader, Chiang Kai-shek, however. He blamed other figures in KMT and military leadership, as well as a general political culture of factionalism and infighting within the party which made it hard to stay on one track for a long period of time. On Chiang Kai-shek as a whole, he evaluated his long-time employer thusly:

From 1925 to 1950 I devoted twenty-five years of my life to the national revolution with Chiang as my supreme commander. I think that I was very close to him and that few were as close to him as I. I took full responsibility for our defeat on the mainland and resigned from active political life by declining many positions Chiang offered me. Even while I earned my living abroad raising chickens, selling preserved thousand-year eggs, and manufacturing peppery chili sauce, I still maintained a good, respectable relationship with Chiang. It was at his suggestion that I had returned to Taiwan to undertake cultural work. How do I see Chiang, his successes and failures? I consider Chiang a great Chinese patriot and a disciple of Sun Yat-sen's who strove to enhance the honor and integrity of the republic that Sun had founded. I also consider Chiang a product of his era, a military-political leader of modern China. His talents were more military and political. Chiang possessed considerable intelligence and courage. Self-educated and highly disciplined, he did not smoke or drink. Chiang was a Confucianist and influenced by the Wang Yang-ming philosophy of the unity of knowledge and action. I never doubted his sincerity and unselfishness in serving the country. He did not manifest the 'I am always right' attitude, and he was not the despot that the Chinese Communists portrayed him as being. To my recollection, Chiang really never severely punished his subordinates, whether military or civilian. To be sure, some of his tactics might have been wrong. He greatly emphasized political maneuvering, and he skillfully used checks and balances to maintain his power. This method of his created distrust, fear, and suspicion; therefore unity among his

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 114.

subordinates was always in doubt. His firm, strong anticommunist beliefs, however, made him the natural leader of our national revolution.⁴⁰⁸

Ch'en believed Chiang was Sun Yat-sen's only real successor and the only person who could lead China after Sun's death. Ch'en rarely criticized Chiang. He did not see any faults with Chiang's grand strategies or major political and military decisions. He was always distrustful of the CCP and the Soviet Union when negotiations were being held with either party, and he voiced his concerns with Chiang in private. But Ch'en never sought to undermine Chiang's rule, and he always carried out any orders Chiang gave him. Ch'en did believe that Chiang had a short temper and was too eager to reward those who flattered him rather than based on merit. But Chiang himself recognized these faults in his character. He frequently wrote in his diaries that he wished he could control his anger.⁴⁰⁹ In a rare moment of criticism, Ch'en wrote:

But unfortunately, Chiang must take ultimate responsibility for the loss of the Chinese mainland to the Communists, although all of us who worked with him share that burden. A final note: no one should forget that Chiang saved Taiwan from communist domination. The signing of the Mutual Defense Agreement with the United States in 1954 was a great achievement. The Kuomintang made Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles a workable doctrine on Taiwan and its offshore islands. We are now, once again, in a position to greatly influence mainland China. Within a twenty-five-year period, Chiang tasted the sweetness of quick victory and the bitterness of defeat. Everything came too quickly, too soon, and too unexpectedly. Regretfully, he did not live to see the fall of Soviet communism. Nor did he see the recent emphasis on economic growth rather than Marxist doctrine in mainland China.⁴¹⁰

Curiously, in his memoirs at a different point, Ch'en lays the blame elsewhere: "If I were to write the history of those years, I would conclude that Chen Cheng and T.V. Soong were mainly responsible for turning the mainland over to the Chinese Communists. The common people quickly began to hate the Kuomintang, but at the outset they only wanted a government to

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 234-235.

⁴⁰⁹ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 2-3, 20, 38, 522.

⁴¹⁰ Ch'en, *Storm Clouds*, 237.

bring them hope. A great psychological turnabout had helped the Communists achieve their victory.”⁴¹¹

Ch'en studied Western science in Tianjin before attending the University of Pittsburgh, where he majored in engineering. While studying in the U.S. in the '20s, he was impressed by his science professors and by the implementation of practical engineering methods in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. Given Sun Yat-sen's call for China to modernize and to train many youth in the sciences, Ch'en found his interest in science coalesced with his political ideals too: "I had been most impressed by the American management system. Its emphasis on practicality and efficiency required that every phase of work be meticulously studied.”⁴¹² Living in America also caused him to notice what was lacking in his own country: "America also practiced individual responsibility at every level. Each level reported to the one above, and each person performed his part of the work process while emphasizing practical results. This type of work efficiency was not yet possible in my country. Anything that could be done in a day would take two or three days, as though to prove that a busy person could not finish his work on time. This time-wasting, work-neglecting mentality was a common disease in all government agencies in China.”⁴¹³

Ch'en internalized a scientific outlook on life. While committed to Confucianism, he sought to develop scientific approaches to doing all of his work. In his later writings on classical Confucian texts, he sought to develop a scientific approach to reading the classics. When he was ROC Minister of Education during the Second World War, he told school administrators to, "use scientific methods to reorganize and teach literature, history, philosophy, and art to build national character based on Chinese tradition.”⁴¹⁴ He also compared education and moral cultivation to

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 180.

⁴¹² Ibid., 21.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 22.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid. 150.

engineering: “Whereas a mining engineer's job is to discover and develop human resources, an education administrator must discover and develop human resources. In America, education work is often referred to as 'human engineering.' This comparison might be a forced analogy, but I believe it is correct.”⁴¹⁵ Ch'en also took pride in developing systematic approaches to filing systems and secretarial work within the ROC bureaucracy when he was Chiang's secretary.

Even though he focused in his later life on traditional culture and Confucian philosophy, he still considered himself a scientifically-minded person. While he was vice-chair of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee, he oversaw the Chinese translation of the British Sinologist Joseph Needham's famous series of books, *Science and Civilization in China*. Ch'en frequently mentioned Needham's work and quoted from his conclusions in his own writings later in life. To him, Needham's scholarship showed that traditional Chinese culture had the roots of modernity buried in its ancient past. The scientific and technological achievements of Chinese civilization before the early modern era were evidence to Ch'en that Confucianism could absolutely be compatible with modernity.

On returning to Taiwan in 1970, Chiang Ching-kuo passed on to me his father's request that I try to revitalize Chinese tradition and culture because I had declined all other party and government posts. The elder Chiang wanted me to be his deputy, vice-president of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Association [Chung-hua wen-hua fu-hsing yun-tung wei-yuan-hui]. That association was supposed to revitalize ethics, democracy, and science [*Lun-li, min-chu, k'o-hsueh*]. The first two spheres already had many advocates, but hardly anyone concentrated on science. I began the project of translating Joseph Needham's multivolume work *Science and Civilization* into Chinese[....] Wang Yun-wu of the Commercial Press happily agreed to publish my translations. With this problem almost solved, Chiang, then president of the association, approved and promised he would provide the rest if my funds were not sufficient. I organized a translation committee under the association's control with myself as editor in chief and Liu Tu, former director of the National Institute of Compilation and Translation, as my associate. In 1986, we had published fourteen volumes with about one-fifth unfinished. I used my spare time to compile thirty volumes to complement Needham's work; entitled the *History of Chinese Science and Technology* series, it covers agriculture, irrigation, the salt industry, and silkworms. So far twenty-two volumes have been published. With Sun

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 148.

Fo, my fellow vice-president of the association, I also organized a committee to reward scientific and technological innovations. Because of the importance of mathematics to science, this committee gave financial awards to top senior, middle, and vocational school students with high grades in mathematics and guaranteed their entry to colleges.⁴¹⁶

Indeed, the three stated goals of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign were science, democracy, and ethics. Ch'en also was involved in leading a traditional Chinese medicine college in Taiwan late in life, and he eventually turned to writing about how he achieved such a long and healthy life, having lived past 100 years old.

On anticommunism, a pillar of KMT ideology, in Ch'en's personal narrative, his anticommunist beliefs grew out of experience in dealing with the CCP during the two united front periods. After what was believed to be a communist attempt on Chiang's life in 1925, known as the Chung Shan Incident, Ch'en was firmly convinced of two things: the CCP could not be trusted, and Chiang was the most suitable leader for modern China.⁴¹⁷ Talking about the Shanghai Massacre and White Terror two year later, he said: "With each passing day, I became more angry toward the Communists who were plotting to destroy us. In reality our national revolution was being fought on two fronts: we faced both the warlords and the Communists[....] For the first time we confronted them head-on. I was not at the scene of the fight, but I instigated the incident and was the first to expose their true face. I ordered an all-out frontal attack on the Communists. My purpose was very simple: I did not want to see the communist influence spread in China. We had to stop it."⁴¹⁸ Ch'en played a key role in the Shanghai Massacre of 1927, when the KMT suddenly broke their alliance with the CCP and killed tens of thousands of CCP members, union organizers, and other supposed leftists. Ch'en was ordered to go to Shanghai ahead of time to try to ascertain the names and locations of all CCP members in the city, as well

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 231-232.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 31-32.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 53.

as to recruit the local mafia, the Green Gang, into the planned purge. KMT cadres, police, soldiers, and Green Gang members were given permission to carry out extralegal arrests, interrogations, and executions of anyone they deemed a problem. The communist party went underground in China's cities after this and shifted attention towards the countryside. Ch'en openly admitted his role in the massacre and did not regret any of it. Specifically, he wrote:

It was a bloodthirsty war to eliminate the enemy within. I must admit that many innocent people were killed. We paid a heavy price. Our purge prevented the Chinese Communists from instigating disturbances and riots in Shanghai. After that, they dared not make a wrong move[...] Most important for the Kuomintang was that the Green Gang not ally with the Chinese Communist Party. That prospect was worse than our cooperation with the Green Gang. Just as every coin has two sides, we cooperated because of mutual gain. They helped us eliminate communist power in Shanghai, which had greatly expanded. I have stated the facts. In this naked power struggle, how to pocket the winnings was the most important task we faced, and theories were irrelevant. Without the assistance of the Green Gang, our national revolution would have been in peril.⁴¹⁹

Ch'en clearly believed the ends justified the means when it came to fighting the communists, and that his party was engaged in a life-and-death struggle for the fate of the most populous country on Earth. After the success of the Shanghai Massacre and the following White Terror, Ch'en was assigned to oversee the KMT's network of spies that sought to infiltrate the CCP and to try to flip the allegiances of members. Ch'en proudly recounted that several thousand CCP members flipped membership under his watch. In order to fight the communists, Ch'en adopted early on a practice that eventually became KMT policy after 1949: learn from the communists in order to defeat them. On culture and propaganda work and spy work, he said,

Just as the Nationalists and Communists competed, so too did their various social organizations[...] This same tactic had long been a favorite trick of the Communists, and now we were merely copying them. But there was a difference between our goals and theirs. Our aim was to protect our political activities among the masses and be constructive. We wanted to lead the masses on the correct course, whereas the Communists really wanted to control the masses and mobilize them to rebel against the government and the Kuomintang. Some people might ask, Was not leading the masses in this way almost a form of control? Of course it was. But the distinction is not an arbitrary

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 62-63.

one. One must remember that in 1927, most of China was anticommunist. Peasants knew nothing about communism. Warlords, foreign settlements, and members of the leading elite in all circles were anti-Communists. Most of them had serious doubts about communism. Thus the Communists inevitably treated all non-Communists as enemies; we wanted to mobilize all non-Kuomintang members to our case.⁴²⁰

Not only did Ch'en despise the CCP or think that their ideology was wrong for China. He delighted in his work against them. He recalled with relish in his memoirs when he went toe-to-toe with the CCP:

The question to ask is why did the Chinese Communists hate the 'two Ch'en brothers' so much? In their publications, propaganda materials, and mass media, we were labeled as leaders of the reactionary CC Clique or the right-wing CC Clique. The Communists identified our family as one of the Four Big Families[...] They claimed that the wealth and power of China were totally centered in the hands of our four families. The Communists also had another favorite slogan: The Country (China) Belongs to the Chiangs, and the Party (Kuomintang) belongs to the Ch'ens, to convey the impression that we two brothers managed, controlled, and monopolized the entire Kuomintang. Their slogan attempted to divide Chiang and me and, at the same time, alienate me from the party. The Chinese Communists also branded the CC Clique as made up of die-hard elements and selfish irreconcilables in the Kuomintang, to set them apart from other liberals of the country. The fact is that those who had a strong, unshaken faith in the Three People's Principles, the most revolutionary doctrine of twentieth-century China, were those whom the Communists feared the most[...] What did we believe in and fight for? First, we believed that the communist ideology would never succeed in the Soviet Union, in China, or anywhere else in the world. If we could not beat them, somebody else would. We also believed that the Communist party, as a political, social, economic, and military institution, would never be accepted by the common people in China. Fundamentally, the tactics it used were brutal, cruel, ruthless, and beyond the tolerance of human nature. For us, Chinese culture and the traditional Confucian family values, ethics, and moral beliefs were deeply rooted in the hearts and spirits of Chinese people. Communism would eventually be rejected by the people.[...] Secondly, we believed that Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles better served the needs of China than any other ideologies or isms of the twentieth century, including communism and Mao Tse-tung's thought[...] Third, we believed that the Republic of China must be maintained and nurtured[...] we wanted to make China an independent, free, wealthy, and democratic nation[...] To some extent, the Chinese Communists also agreed with our efforts at nation building. But the Chinese Communist party has never been an ordinary political party. It behaves like an unarmed army, having a strong organization and strict discipline and being skilled in the techniques of propaganda[....]⁴²¹

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 58.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 214-215.

The fact that the CCP specifically targeted him and his family as enemies was proof to Ch'en that he was so effective at fighting them in the ideological realm. He took immense pride in being an intellectual refuter of Chinese communist theory: "In my 1933 book, *On Vitalism* [*Wei-sheng lun*], I tried to develop a very powerful theory to smash the theory of materialism, which distorted the evolution of our history. The Chinese Communist party went so far as to instruct its members to buy a copy of my book within one year, so they could write articles to attack and criticize my theory. But none of them successfully refuted my original idea. For this reason, the Communists came to hate me even more. But how did their attacks on me turn out? In their criticisms, not one single piece of evidence they presented really undermined my theory. The more the Communists opposed that theory, the more my book sold. That was the first book I wrote to refute the Chinese Communists. I was then so busy that I had no spare time to write more books."⁴²² "My lectures entitled 'On Vitalism' [*Wei-sheng lun*] were published to discredit Marxist materialism [*Wei-wu lun*] and were reprinted several times."⁴²³ Summarizing his arguments against Marxist materialism, he wrote, "I synthesized the teachings of Sun Yat-sen and the Taiwan experience and concluded that the Three People's Principles will eventually replace Chinese communism on mainland China. Lying between capitalism and communism, the guiding principles of *San Min Chu I* would be the best alternative for the entire Chinese nation in the twenty-first century. Once again, I predicted the collapse of communism and communist systems[....] The Chinese Communists reacted by publishing twenty-three articles in its press to attack us. What they published merely allowed the Chinese people to understand better the Three People's Principles without discrediting that doctrine."⁴²⁴ Ch'en did not elaborate on the exact

⁴²² Ibid., 248.

⁴²³ Ibid., 148.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 241.

details of the communists' criticisms of him in his memoirs, but that was not the point for him. He was excited to know that they found his ideas so dangerous in the first place.

While living in the United States for the second time, he was the owner of a chicken egg farm and a chili pepper business, as well as a co-owner of pro-KMT Chinese-language newspapers printed in the U.S.A.: "Now that we owned newspapers, we began expressing our views in the New York Chinatown area, counterattacking the Communists to recover the mainland. I enlisted the services of first-rate professionals to write editorials[...] We gathered the best Chinese men of letters in the United States. Our paper became influential in American public opinion, and virtually every overseas Chinese subscribed to our paper, making it a powerful voice speaking out for the recovery of the mainland and reconstructing our country. Our paper became a spiritual fortress of anticommunism in the eyes of the overseas Chinese."⁴²⁵ Interestingly, he used the KMT idea of Taiwan as a citadel to also describe his newspaper and writing efforts while living in the U.S. His paper, too, was a citadel that would protect and preserve Chinese culture outside of the PRC's control.

Ch'en as a Scholar

In his lifetime, Ch'en authored 28 books, edited seven different series of compiled volumes and textbooks (making up 50 volumes in total), and helped with translating and editing 25 volumes of Joseph Needham's series.⁴²⁶ He published three books before 1949. Starting in 1961, he started publishing again and then proceeded to work on dozens of projects for the rest of his life. He took up studying the Confucian canon intensively upon moving to the United States for the second time in the 1950s. After a decade of living the U.S., he published the over-

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 223.

⁴²⁶ The complete list of his publications can be found here: Ch'en Li-Fu, *A Mirror of Success and Failure*, 422-430; Zhang Xueji, *Full Biography*, 759-763; *Storm Clouds*, 329-332.

600-page, two-volume *The Confucian Way: A New and Systematic Study of the Four Books* (*Sishu Daoguan* 四書道貫).⁴²⁷ This was the writing that he seemed to be most proud of, discussing in his memoirs how he spent close to a decade on the study, research, organizing, and writing for it. Afterwards, he continued to devote himself to the cause of promoting Confucianism and traditional Chinese culture in his writings. He wrote books on Mencius, Confucius, the use of Confucianism for the modern world, the *Classic of Changes*, recommendations for educating children on Chinese culture, traditional Chinese medicine, premodern China's major scientific contributions, an organizational system for secretaries, and many more books on culture and Confucian philosophy. He wrote educational materials for overseas Chinese youths, for ROC school students, for KMT cadres, for the Nationalist Party political-intellectual elite, and for general audiences.

In his capacity as vice-chair of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign Guiding Committee, he was busy with the task of promoting traditional Chinese culture. He gave lectures at Taiwanese universities, spoke to scholars from across East and Southeast Asian and Anglophone academia, and organized countless conferences and meetings. It is in this context of the state-sanctioned Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign that he did most of his writing. The message was pretty much always the same. He did not indicate that he had a profound revelation, change of heart, or major discovery in these years. He certainly became more proficient in the subject matter of classical Confucian texts and the scientific achievements detailed in Needham's series. All of this confirmed what he already believed about the superiority of Han Chinese culture, Neo-Confucian philosophy, and Sun Yat-sen's political thought, however.

⁴²⁷ Li-Fu Ch'en, *The Confucian Way: A New and Systematic Study of The "Four Books,"* translated by Shih Shun Liu (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1972).

Ch'en was certainly meticulous when we wanted to be. He wrote in a meticulous way not just for his memoirs, but also for his other books. The *Systematic Study of the Four Books* reorganized every line of those texts into a new system that followed Sun Yat-sen's logic. In the preface to the book, he traced the origins of the project back to his schoolboy days. He took pride in delivering lectures to cadres and students on party ideology, but believed that the youth were lacking a deep understanding of the nation's "original culture."⁴²⁸ He decided to dive deeply into study of the classics upon moving to the United States: "After taking part in the Government's preparations for reorganization, I relinquished all my positions in both the party and the government and came to the United States to brood over past errors and make further studies."⁴²⁹ Ch'en regarded his work as a novel arrangement of the entirety of the texts of the *Four Books* of Confucianism, *The Analects*, *Mencius*, *The Doctrine of the Great Mean*, and *The Great Learning*. He wrote in the English-language translation of it that the work "has made significant contributions to the improvement of the monumental rendering by James Legge,"⁴³⁰ the first translator of Confucian classics into English. Ch'en thus saw himself as a scholar contributing well to the world and the literature at the time. His English translator called Ch'en "a Chinese scholar. His deep-rooted background in the classics is unequaled by any man of like attainments in his entire native land[....] The result is the production of such an *opus magnum* that I deem it a signal honor to have been entrusted with the task of its translation."⁴³¹ Essentially, Ch'en's version of the *Four Books* begins with the internal elements of an individual human and then extends outwards to his family, friends, neighbors, society, country, and eventually the world.

⁴²⁸ *The Confucian Way*, ii.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, xi.

The text is thorough, offering commentary on every single passage of the classics, along the lines of Zhu Xi and other great commentators of the Confucian canon.

For a less complex rendering of Ch'en's ideas, consider *An Outline of Chinese Culture*, a book that Ch'en wrote for overseas ethnic Chinese youths to promote their education of Chinese culture.⁴³² This book was published as part of a state-sanctioned project of the ROC's Overseas Chinese Affairs Council (*Huaqiao weiyuanhui* 華僑委員會), a government organization that played an active role in the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign. The preface stated that it was made, "to combat the Chi-comms' assault on traditional Chinese culture overseas by teaching Chinese culture properly to overseas Hua people," and that, "overseas Chinese youths in the Americas and Southeast Asia run the risk of being harmed by the lies of the CCP."⁴³³

In this book, Ch'en summarized his views in a more quickly digestible format for a younger audience. He imagined that the book would be read in Chinese-language schools for Chinese migrant youths, in order to combat the attractions of both Western popular culture and leftist ideology. Noting the influence of foreign ideas, he wrote, "unfortunately, when studying other people, we forgot ourselves."⁴³⁴ He thus wanted to show that Confucianism was powerful and significant, claiming that, "in every era of Chinese history, Confucius always occupies an important position. Confucianism never fell from significance even when it was struggling with Daoism and with Buddhism, and even during times of chaos, division, and barbarian conquest. Every time there was some evolution or advancement in Chinese culture, Confucianism was always the main current throughout Chinese history[....] Even though we went through the May 4th New Culture Movement, regardless of that, we can clearly see that Confucianism is

⁴³² Ch'en, *Introduction to Chinese Culture*.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, i-ii.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

unchangingly the foundation of Chinese traditional culture.”⁴³⁵ History aside, Ch’en believed that Confucianism was useful for the modern world. To paraphrase Eric Hobsbawm, Ch’en saw the era of the Cold War as an “age of extremes.”⁴³⁶ Elsewhere, Ch’en warned:

In the current day and age, the way of the gentleman has shrunk and the way of the small man has gotten much larger. People have lost sight of what's important and focus only on individual gain. Lying has overtaken honesty. Violence has overtaken benevolence. Extremes have overtaken the mean. People don't act like humans anymore. As material objects grow in importance in our progressive modern society, so does corruption and greed. There is no limit to it and no morality.⁴³⁷

Ch’en believed, “that life is composed of both spirit and matter, that stress on either idealism or materialism alone would tip the scale out of balance.”⁴³⁸ Ch’en returned to this idea repeatedly throughout his writings. He believed that the Doctrine of the Mean (*Zhonyong zhi dao* 中庸之道) was the solution to this age of extremes. Leaning too much to one side of spirit vs. matter would lead to extremism: either idealism at the expense of economic growth, or materialism at the expense of humanity. This idea is ancient, and is something advocated by Confucius in *The Analects*: “Taking the doctrine of the mean as a virtue to enact is the highest form of virtue! However, it has long been rarely seen among people.”⁴³⁹ Ch’en rejected Marxist dialectical and historical materialism, as well as spiritual idealism. He recognized that the fundamental elements of life were both materiality (*wu* 物) and the mind (*xin* 心). However, he thought that both capitalism and communism both leaned too extremely towards materiality. Ch’en argued that, “Oriental culture puts scholars and peasants at the center of things, which prioritizes honesty [*cheng* 誠] and benevolence [*ren* 仁][...] Western capitalist cultures put

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 15-16.

⁴³⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

⁴³⁷ Ch’en, *Confucian-Mencian Theory of Mr. Ch’en Li-fu*, 155.

⁴³⁸ *The Confucian Way*, iii.

⁴³⁹ *The Analects*, 6:29: “子曰：「中庸之為德也，其至矣乎！民鮮久矣。」”

workers and merchants at the center of things. They prioritize power/force [*li* 力] and money[....] Communist culture prioritizes workers and farmers, criticizing capitalists, but agreeing with them on prioritizing power but with making society more equal. Under communism, there is no freedom, religion is destroyed, life is difficult, and people live in hell. In their culture, music has sound but no joy. It opposes human nature. Capitalism and communism do not correspond with the doctrine of the mean.”⁴⁴⁰ This formulation was very important for how Ch’en understood the world during the Cold War era.

Ch’en sought to methodically analyze the Confucian classics so as to present them to a modern audience in a way that could combat the attractions to liberalism and communism. While Ch’en’s writing is indeed meticulous, detailed, and shows years of good organizational skills as well as deep familiarity with the Confucian classics, some of his bigger arguments about cultures hinge too much on a less scientific belief in cultural and racial superiority. His only excuse for asserting Chinese superiority over other civilizations is that, of five of the major world civilizations identified by Arnold Toynbee in *A Study of History*, the Sinitic, Indic, Slavic, Western, and Arabic, the Sinitic is the largest and longest-lasting.⁴⁴¹ This is itself an oft-repeated and essentialist view of Chinese culture promoted by Han chauvinists. Ch’en expressed no pride for, or interest in Mongolian or Tibetan cultures, nor did he show any interest in schools of Chinese thought other than Confucianism. His view of what constituted as “Chinese culture” was very narrow. While his calls for world peace and attempts to alleviate some of the problems inherent to capitalism, communism, industrialization, and modernity itself were perhaps noble-intentioned, it comes at the cost of marginalizing many others. He has practically nothing to say about indigenous cultures, or even of neighboring East Asian cultures, seeing them largely as

⁴⁴⁰ Ch’en, *Confucian-Mencian Theory*, 219-221.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 189-191; Ch’en, *Introduction to Chinese Culture*, 5-6.

derivative of Chinese culture. While he was certainly critical of “white imperialism,” he did not overtly identify it with the U.S., but instead chose Britain as the exemplar of that. He shared with Chiang Kai-shek a disdain for Anglo-Saxon smugness towards the cause of the KMT. Having lived in the U.S. for nearly twenty years of his life, he had this to say about it in the midst of the Vietnam War era:

She has reaped many benefits from her superior strength and fabulous wealth, but there have been disadvantages too. The ebb in social behavior and outright misbehavior have reached alarming proportions. The rise in crime, especially juvenile delinquency, has justly caused serious concern. If no timely effort is made to do some soul-searching, moral cultivation and appeal to conscience, then the great disaster will come to pass—not from without, but from within. In contrast, Chinese youths in America are noted for their law-abiding nature. Their conduct has turned people’s thoughts to the beneficial influence of Chinese culture, which in turn has evoked the increasing attention recently paid to the study of Chinese and the different branches of Chinese learning.⁴⁴²

In the context of the Cold War and of a divided China, Ch’en sought to mitigate the dangers presented by communism and capitalism by promoting Confucianism. He had no problems with modern industrial technology, scientific thinking, or organization, per say. But he thought that any culture which prioritizes one aspect of existence over another is too extreme, and ultimately inhumane. In his own words: “people don’t seem like humans” (*ren bu xiang ren* 人不像人). It is no wonder, then, that Ch’en and others in the KMT-ROC elite sought to promote Confucianism and a Han-centric version of Chinese culture to ROC citizens and overseas Chinese, as a form of response to the iconoclasm reported from the mainland. The stark contrast between the rhetoric of anti-Confucian propaganda in the PRC and Ch’en’s laudatory praise for Neo-Confucian orthodoxy is revealing of the ideological rift between the Chinese communists and nationalists during the Cold War. While both the CCP and KMT ultimately believed that reunification was their sacred political goal, through the process of the Cold War,

⁴⁴² *The Confucian Way*, vii.

the two sides kept drifting further apart from each other. Especially in the Mao and Chiang years, the two sides presenting two completely different versions of Chinese history, culture, and thought. Only in the Reform and Opening Up period was Confucianism made acceptable again in the mainland, but even then the impact of Maoism continued to exert a great influence on many mainlanders' attitudes towards that tradition. In the 21st century, Confucius has been coopted by the CCP as a hero of Chinese heritage. Xi Jinping has spoken of the longevity of Chinese civilization and the size of its populace as evidence of national greatness, speaking in sometimes almost exactly the same rhetorical stylings that Ch'en Li-fu used several decades earlier. For nationalists like Ch'en Li-fu, this kind of cooptation of Confucianism by the CCP is fraudulent and superficial at worst, or an opportunity for the nationalists to exert some soft power influence over their compatriots at best. However, as Taiwan democratized in the 1990s, the hold of traditional Confucianism and KMT ideology lost its hegemonic influence over the thoughts of everyday Taiwanese people. Many Taiwanese today associate the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign and Confucianism with an imported mainland ideology and the period of repressive martial law. Certainly some Taiwanese people still see Taiwan as the protector of authentic Chinese tradition against the empty posturing of the "Chi-comms." That is due in part to the pervasive influence of the Cultural Renaissance on the populace. In some ways, the two campaigns mirror each other even to this day.

CONCLUSION: Ancient Chinese Philosophy in the Twentieth Century and Beyond

Confucianism, like other previously politicized and taboo topics of the Mao era, became an acceptable topic of academic study in the PRC during the 1980s under Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening Up policies. Academic organizations devoted to the study of Confucian classics emerged. Confucian temples were revived and rebuilt in the '90s and '00s as local community gathering sites and as historical markers. When I was in Shanghai in 2019, the Confucius Temple in the old neighborhood of the city was at once an actual temple where people could burn incense and engage in ancient rituals, the site of a local governmental effort to promote Confucian virtues like filial piety, and the weekly open air used book market. It was at this market that I found tables filled with Cultural Revolution-era memorabilia, including comic books from the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* years. I looked at "Kong the Dick" within earshot and eyesight of a group of people dressed in traditional Confucian scholar-official gowns, burning incense and reciting ancient lines. With towering high modernist corporate buildings visible in the skyline around me, I truly felt like I was in a mixed place, where the past, present, and future collided at a rapid pace. As one bookseller discussed with me his collections of Red-era knickknacks, another book buyer asked me, "Do you think Shanghai is a financial center of the world?"

In Hsinchu, Taiwan, in 2017, I stumbled upon a small temple nearby the campus of National Tsing Hua University by pure accident. Inside, I was amazed to discover not just statues of Confucius and Mencius, but a statue of Chiang Kai-shek staring back at them. "Duke Chiang," as he was called, was adorned with offerings of burnt incense, food, and drinks, just like the Confucian philosophers before him. On that same trip, I recall a conversation with a bartender who, when hearing about my research interests, told me, "I never liked Confucianism

because it was patriarchal and oppressive. Legalism was always more interesting to me!” I was amazed once again by the ways in which I could be totally surprised by the places I study.

Classical Chinese philosophical texts continue to be important components of education and culture in East and Southeast Asia, not just in the PRC and the ROC. The ways in which people in these places discuss these texts today differ greatly from how they were discussed during the Cold War, but we can still see some of the imprints from those two parallel campaigns that made the topic so contentious across the Taiwan Strait. The fact that some popular depictions of Legalism in the Sinophone world depict the first emperor and Legalist philosophers in positive ways is a striking contrast with before the twentieth century. It shows both how significant the May 4th and New Culture Movements were, and the impact of the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign.

In the Sinophone world, and even broader in East Asian countries previously influenced by the Neo-Confucian imperial system, a selection of passages from classical Chinese philosophical texts has been a part of standardized public education in recent years. Japanese schoolchildren read passages from *The Analects*, as do Vietnamese children, in literature and history courses. One of the things that stuck me while visiting the region was the widespread popularity of works of classical Chinese literature like *The Classic of Changes*, *The Records of the Grand Historian*, and *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. They have been made and remade in multiple different languages into popular television dramas and blockbuster films, not to mention that books like these can almost always be found in the literature sections of bookstores. The stories contained in *The Records of the Grand Historian*, such as the philosophical debates of the Warring States Period and the rise and fall of the Qin Dynasty’s Legalist emperor and advisors, are well-known reference points to this day in mainland China

and Taiwan. In the 1910s, with the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the start of the May 4th Movement, “traditional” ideas were criticized for holding back the nation from modernizing. Knowledge in the Confucian classics was no longer considered a necessity for elite social status. Instead, it became the subject of ridicule in popular literature, plays, and film. At certain points in time, both the Nationalist and the Communist Chinese regimes promoted iconoclastic refutations of the legacies and ideas of “feudalism.”

I think that the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign and the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign both represented, in some sense, the climax of that trend of thought in modern China. The 19th century reformist slogans, “Chinese substance with Western methods,” “Use the past to serve the present,” and “Use the West to serve China,” continue to be at the core of concerns over just *which way* China should tread in the modern world. These concerns reached a climactic explosion in the 1970s in the contexts of the Cold War, the Cultural Revolution, and Martial Law. The KMT and CCP presented two different answers to their citizens over which aspects of the past to use, and which ones to throw away.

My dissertation shows that it was not simply that the KMT advocated for traditionalism and the CCP criticized it. The CCP under Mao’s leadership crafted a particular, and relatively new, view of Chinese History and Philosophy, choosing one formerly scorned ancient philosophical tradition over the previous orthodoxy. If anyone in modern Chinese history was well familiar with classical literature and philosophy, it was Mao Zedong. Reports from those who interacted with him in the 1970s note that he was particularly interested in discussing classical Chinese philosophy (as well as Western and Marxist philosophy) in those final years of his life. He eventually even promoted the launching of a campaign that aimed to get the entire revolutionary population of the PRC also thinking about these things.

Chiang Kai-shek also displayed a lifelong interest in, particularly, Neo-Confucian philosophy. He seemed to pay less attention to other schools of Chinese thought, but Confucius, Mencius, and Wang Yangming were frequently quoted by the generalissimo in his diary and speeches late in life. His traditionalism and favor for Chinese imperial philosophical orthodoxy was also inflected with a modern ideology, however. He was, firstly, a Han Chinese nationalist and a modernist. Like Sun Yat-sen, he was anti-imperialist, wanting to see colonialism end in Asia. And also like, Sun, he was in favor of a state heavily involved in guiding the economy towards industrialization and modernization. He was a military man trained in imperial Japanese military academies, who married into a Christian business family, converted to Methodism, and promoted certain Confucian values to the Taiwanese populace, while perhaps ignoring other aspects of Confucian philosophy.

Ironically in both the PRC and the ROC, the two campaigns of the mid-1970s opened the floodgates and people turned their attentions towards reevaluating the past. In the reforming eras in both places from the 1980s onwards, a diversity of opinions emerged regarding these things. Legalism could be praised in Taiwan and Confucianism could be praised in China. The messages, ideas, and images of the two campaigns also did leave their impressions on the peoples of both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Confucius' birthday has been renamed and repurposed as "Teacher's Day" in Taiwan. The current organization in the ROC that used to be in charge of running the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign no longer exclusively promotes Confucianism and traditional Han Chinese culture, but instead has been repurposed to act as a soft power wing of the Taiwanese government. Meanwhile, in the PRC, a specific organization was created, the Confucius Institute, to promote its soft power around the globe.

From the perspective of the current day, it might seem strange to imagine that some fifty years ago, Confucianism and Legalism were so highly politicized and widespread topics of discussion in the Sinophone world. So much so, in fact, that the CCP and KMT even created propaganda materials in other languages to explain the significance of this debate to the outside world. To many outside observers, it seemed esoteric and hard to understand the significance of. Hence some of the scholarly ignoring of the topics.

In the first two chapters of this dissertation, I argued that the Criticize Lin Biao Criticize Confucius Campaign deserved a reexamination, based on an approach that took seriously the ideas and rhetoric found in local-level archival sources produced during the time of the campaign. Rather than dismiss what was said as heady nonsense or the rote repetition of official propaganda slogans, I attempted to explain the meanings and significance of what was being said, and to show that the masses displayed a high level of engagement with the ideas being discussed. Many people really did go read the Confucian and Legalist classics, and learned a lot in the process, about their country's philosophical heritage, and what to do with that heritage in the modern age. Rather than dismiss what was reported said by workers, students, and other people in Shanghai as empty sloganeering, overly complicated Marxist semantics, or crass attempts by intellectuals to sound like workers, I showed that (A) people took the campaign's goals and ideas seriously, and (B) the reactions to the campaign were diverse and thoughtful. *Pi Lin Pi Kong* was thus an important part of the story of the Cultural Revolution decade. No wonder, then, that it was criticized as one of the crimes of the Gang of Four after its end.⁴⁴³ Unfortunately, much of the campaign's significance, meaning, intentions, and ideas were

⁴⁴³ *Evaluating the "Gang of Four's Criticize Confucianism, Evaluate Legalism."*

muddled after the fact, and to this day it is broadly lumped together with a litany of other Mao-era campaigns and radical experiments.

In the latter two chapters of this dissertation, I argued that the Taiwanese/Nationalist Chinese reaction to the Cultural Revolution is worth investigating, that the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Campaign needs its own history as well, and that the Chinese Nationalists cared very deeply about what was happening in the PRC during the Cultural Revolution decade, the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* Campaign giving them even more reason to be concerned than they already were. It is thus a significant element of the global history of the Cultural Revolution, as well as a significant element in the history of Martial Law-era Taiwan. By looking through formerly classified central government archival documents, major newspapers, and the writings of a major intellectual, I found that the KMT was very concerned (and maybe a little excited) about the Cultural Revolution and about Criticize Lin Criticize Kong. The two sides wrote about each other's values as if they believed they were engaging in a very important struggle over the legacy, meaning, and fate of their shared history. That is why I call this dissertation The Great Chinese Cultural Debate. While the two sides were officially not in contact with each other, they often spoke as if they were talking with the other in the backs of their minds. That is a very significant aspect of both the Cultural Revolution and of Martial Law that has not been analyzed before.

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Carries Forward the Revolutionary Sprit to Deepen Criticize Lin Criticize Kong, Saying: “We the Working Class Not Only Want to Annihilate All Exploiters’ Systems, but also Thoroughly Criticize All Exploiting Classes’ Ideologies. Reactionaries Want to Go Backwards, Want Restoration, and Want to Revere Kong; We Want to Advance, Want Revolution, and Want to Criticize Lin Criticize Kong”). *People’s Daily*. January 31, 1974.

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