

CHUS-(Co-)Sponsored Sessions at the 2023 AHA Program Schedule and Full Session Descriptions

Updated on December 8, 2022

The Chinese Historians in the United States (CHUS) will be sponsoring or co-sponsoring the following 10 sessions at the 2023 AHA, to be held in Philadelphia, January 5-8, 2023.

Please note:

- 1) This document contains information about session schedules, detailed description of each session, and full paper abstracts for paper panels. The weblink below each session is the one that appears in the short description of the session in the *AHA conference online program*. The webpage it links to (on the CHUS website) is currently under construction and will be ready within the next week or so.
- 2) **Except for** Session 9 (co-sponsored with the AHA, Sunday Jan. 8, 9-10:30am, in Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Independence Ballroom I), all our sessions will take place in **Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Room 306**
- 3) CHUS Book Launch and CHUS Business Meeting (Friday Jan. 6, 7-8pm and 8-10pm respectively) will take place in **Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, 309/310**

Friday January 6, 2023

1. Roundtable: “Engaging the Studies of Blackness in China: Scholarship and Curriculum Development”

<http://www.chinesehistorians.org/engaging-the-studies-of-blackness-in-china/>

Friday, January 6, 2023: 8:30 AM-10:00 AM

Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Room 306

Chair(s):

Yunxiang Gao, Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University)

Speaker(s):

Yunxiang Gao, Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University)

Danke Li, Fairfield University

Xi Wang, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Guangzhi Huang, Thomas Jefferson University

Ruodi Duan, Haverford College
Zifeng Liu, Pennsylvania State University

Session Description

Inspired by Yunxiang Gao's new book *Arise, Africa! Roar, China! Black and Chinese Citizens of the World in the Twentieth Century* (2022), this roundtable is to promote the study and teaching of Blackness in China. In an open discussion format, the roundtable panelists will share their research and teaching with the audience. Yunxiang Gao will offer her insights on how Afro-Asian studies provides a new approach to race in transnational history, Sino-American relations, Black internationalism and the experiences of Chinese Americans. Ruodi Duan will share her study of Liu Liangmo's role in the municipal campaigns in the early 1960s and use the lens of Liu's cultural and political activities to understand the evolution of modern Chinese conceptions of race and nation in the context of the developments in Africa and the African Diaspora. Xi Wang will share his study of how W.E.B. Du Bois and Robert F. Williams and the PRC leaders had mutually attempted to forge a political alliance but with different agendas during the Cold War. Guangzhi Huang will talk about the interconnectedness of anti-black racism and class in China, especially within the context of African migration to China in the past decade. Zifeng Liu will present his research on the gendered dimension of Sino-African American relations, especially Black women's role and U.S. state surveillance of China-related political activism. Danke Li will share her experience of integrating Sino-African American cultural activities into the teaching of China-U.S. relations as a cultural history.

2. Xinjiang and Central Asia: China's Strategic Shift

<http://www.chinesehistorians.org/xinjiang-and-central-asia/>

Friday, January 6, 2023: 10:30 AM-12:00 PM
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Room 306

Chair(s):

Jessica Ann Sheetz-Nguyen, University of Central Oklahoma

Papers:

Central Asia—China's Xinjiang: Reasonable Concerns and Development Interaction
Baktybek Beshimov, Northeastern University

Necessitated by Geopolitics: China's Economic and Cultural Initiatives in Central Asia
Yi Sun, University of San Diego

Xinjiang—From Strategic Rear to Strategic Frontier
Xiao-Bing Li, University of Central Oklahoma

Will the New Local CCP Secretary Bring about Economic and Security Balance?
Xiaoxiao Li, University of Central Oklahoma

Comment: Harold Tanner, University of North Texas

Panel Description:

Beijing repositioned China by creating a new center of gravity in Central Asia, even though this policy faced new challenges and created new problems with the US. China's policy shift changed Xinjiang's status from the strategic rear to strategic joint in Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Historians on this panel discuss the profoundness and complexity of the issues relating to the conflicts and violence in Xinjiang, as well as different government attempts to find solutions. Moreover, the panelists strike at the very core of the issues to present how people confront difficulties and break barriers such as racial and ethnic conflict and ideological differences to reach their goals of sustaining human dignity and rights while fighting for peaceful coexistence in the fast-growing and diverse world.

Paper Abstracts

- 1) **“Central Asia - China's Xinjiang: Reasonable Concerns and Development Interaction”**, Baktybek Beshimov, Northeastern University

The author explains why China's Xinjiang issue regarding Muslim ethnic minority groups becomes the concern of Central Asian societies, how reasonable and legitimate these concerns are, and what kind of economic opportunities the rapid development of Xinjiang offers to its neighboring states in post-Soviet Central Asia.

- 2) **“Necessitated by Geopolitics: China's Economic and Cultural Initiatives in Central Asia”**, Yi Sun, University of San Diego

on January 25, 2022, China and the five Central Asian countries-- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan -- held a video summit, celebrating the 30th anniversary of the establishment of China's diplomatic relations with the five republics and affirming the multilateral intentions to continue their economic and security cooperation in an effort to create a “common community of destiny.” Largely overshadowed by other international news, this summit and the accompanying joint declaration nonetheless marked an important milestone in China's relations with Central Asia. This paper is intended to take a close look at the development of this multifaceted relationship in the wake of the dissolution of the former Soviet Union during the early 1990s. Although political and diplomatic activities initially focused on resolving the border disputes and overcoming the uncertainties stemming from the new-found independence of these republics, China's relations with Central Asia have increasingly reflected a desire to protect its border economic and security interests in

that region. Even before the onset of the One Belt One Road (BRI) Initiative, a vast network of trade, transportation, and communication, including roads, railroads and oil and gas pipelines, had already linked China closely to Central Asia. In recent years, the BRI, accompanied by over a dozen Confucius Institutes, has further deepened China's economic and cultural influence in the area. Arguably, beset by American-led geopolitical encirclement of China in the Indo-Pacific, Central Asia remains an oasis in China's strategic achievements.

3) “Xinjiang - From Strategic Rear to Strategic Frontier,” Xiaobing Li, University of Central Oklahoma

When the Chinese Communist Party started its governance over Xinjiang in 1949, Xinjiang was the grand strategic rear and base of economic supply to the overall economic development for the whole country. Xinjiang has witnessed shifts of its political and economic positions from the first generation of leadership to the current Xi Jinping administration. To find a breakthrough and establish a system that enables China to further its economic development under the current turbulent economic and geopolitical environment and great changes not seen in a century, Xi Jinping proposed the Belt Road Initiative in 2013. Xinjiang, then, became China's strategic frontier ever since. This presentation tries to answer questions such as “Is China's BRI a response to the *perceived* US strategy to contain China?” and explores such questions by reviewing the brief history of Xinjiang's geopolitical positions under different leaderships and its new role and strategic position in Xi Jinping's BRI strategy and national security.

4) “Will the New Local CCP Secretary Bring About Economic and Security Balance?”, Xiaoxiao Li, University of Central Oklahoma

Ma Xingrui was appointed the Xinjiang CCP Secretary on December 26, 2021 to replace Chen Quanguo, who had come to Xinjiang on August 29, 2016 from his former position as the CCP Secretary of Tibet. At the start of Chen's tenure in Xinjiang, in September 2016, his leadership announced the plan to hire 30,000 additional policing positions in an effort to increase surveillance capabilities in the region. Most of the new hires were associated with convenience police stations. Such tight control over the people halted economic development in the region that has become the main hub for Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative. How has Ma Xingrui been coping with these challenges in Xinjiang? This presentation will briefly review the differences between Ma Xingrui and his predecessor Chen Quanguo and how Ma tries to balance economy and security.

3. Transnational Gender and Women in Modern China

<http://www.chinesehistorians.org/transnational-gender-and-women-in-modern-china/>

Friday, January 6, 2023: 1:30 PM-3:00 PM
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Room 306

Chair(s):

Dewen Zhang, Randolph-Macon College

Papers:

The Making of Modern Female Citizens in Republican Beijing
Aihua Zhang, Gardner-Webb University

*Herlinda Chew: A Chinese–Mexican Woman’s Identity Formation through
Negotiation along the US–Mexico Border, 1900s–1930s*
Xuening Kong, Purdue University

Promoting American Sexuality: The “Glocalization” of American Beverages in Wartime
Shanghai (1930s-1940s)
Haoran Ni, University of Kansas

*Departure from the Household Kitchen: The Great Leap Forward toward Women's
Employment in China, 1958–62*
Hanchao Lu, Georgia Institute of Technology

Comment: Margaret Mih Tillman, Purdue University

Panel Description:

In the twentieth century, Chinese women’s lives underwent great changes under the influence of Westernization and globalization. Chinese women undertook more social responsibilities as citizens rather than staying at home, as most of them had done in earlier times. Their public and global activities even changed the social expectation of Chinese womanhood. Thus, discussing women’s stories not only helps to understand the gender dynamics in China, but also offers an angle from which to study the interactions between China and the West and the formation of modern Chinese society. The four papers of this panel focus on the period from the 1900s to the 1960s and explore, from global and transnational perspectives, how formerly marginalized Chinese women were integrated and mobilized into the modernization and nation-building process in China.

Paper Abstracts

1) “The Making of Modern Female Citizens in Republican Beijing”, Aihua Zhang, Gardner-Webb University

There are two major strands of scholarship on women in Republican Beijing: one focusing on the educated or elite; and the other on the lower class. Sparse attention has been paid to the interactions between the two groups of women beyond the areas of charity and political mobilization. This paper will take up this scholarly insufficiency by examining the Beijing Young Women’s Christian Association’s (YWCA’s) anti- *binü*

(bonded girl servants) and mass literacy campaigns, which were launched in response to the nationwide fervor during the 1920s. Regarding *binü*, the Association not only took action to help emancipate them from bondage, but also taught freed ones to learn employable skills, including skills for paid domestic work in modern terms, with mixed outcomes. In its literacy education, the Association targeted working-class women, who constituted more than half of the city's illiterate population. While not intending to raise class and political awareness among women as the Shanghai YWCA did, the Beijing YWCA was successful in attracting students through a variety of instructional methods and instilled civic consciousness in them. Both programs contributed to the making of independent, literate female citizens in Beijing's modern transformation.

2) "Herlinda Chew: A Chinese-Mexican Woman's Identity Formation through Negotiation along the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1900s-1930s", Xuening Kong, Purdue University

Born with a mixture of three cultures, Herlinda Chew (1893-1939) engaged with Chinese, Mexican, and Anglo-American communities in the El Paso-Ciudad Juárez region while developing friendships with local immigration officers and military troops. She once helped 200 local Chinese residents and their family members cross the border to avoid warfare during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). Moreover, as a mixed-race Chinese, Chew established connections and a sense of belonging to China through multiple relationships in her life, including her husband, her assistance to Chinese individuals in returning to China, as well as her own travel to China with family members. This paper focuses on Chew's life in the border region and the establishment of her transnational connections. I will examine how her negotiation among regional powers and the formation of Chinese identity were under the influence of transnational, national, and regional politics, familial cultural background, as well as her personal goals. I argue that, in addition to "born as a half-Chinese," multilateral borderland lives and transnational travel largely contributed to Herlinda Chew's formation and adaptability of her self-identity. Affiliation with China thus did not necessarily stem from feelings of belonging instilled among overseas families, but rather developed in the intercultural exchanges of daily life. This paper highlights overseas mixed-race Chinese women's agency and challenges preconceptions of nation-centered citizenship in defining overseas Chinese people. It also a-geographizes the concept of "China" by placing the historiography of overseas Chinese in U.S.-Mexico borderlands in conversation with that of modern Chinese history, expanding the focus of both.

3) "Promoting American Sexuality: The "Glocalization" of American Beverages in Wartime Shanghai (1930s-1940s) " Haoran Ni, The University of Kansas

This paper explores how American beverages promoted gendered modernity in China and how the sexuality they presented became cultural targets of criticism that stimulated Chinese nationalism during wartime (1930s -1940s). First, the images of sexy modern Chinese women wearing Cheongsam or swimsuits were often featured in Coca-Cola posters. Watson's Mineral Water Company, the bottling company for Coca-Cola in Shanghai, used these women's images to arouse public desire for sexuality, as

well as for the American Coca-Cola. These posters reveal that Coca-Cola became a common beverage at fashionable women's gatherings, through which the bottling company built a natural connection between American beverages and Chinese modernity. Second, the images of Coca-Cola and ice cream usually emphasized the intimacy and romance between the two sexes: men and women hugged and even flirted with each other in the context of consuming American beverages. This mixed-gender socialization and romance conflicted with the Chinese tradition of physical segregation between men and women. Third, in the 1930s, because ice cream was the favorite of Hollywood actresses, the Chinese audience used the term "ice cream for the eyes" to refer to men's pleasure in watching the erotic scenes in Hollywood movies. It was a time when Japan was invading China, thus Chinese patriots criticized ice cream, as well as the sexy Hollywood movies as American indulgence that would weaken Chinese nationalism in the war. Overall, through discussing the relationship between Western food and sexuality, on the one hand, and modernity and nationalism, on the other, I argue that American cold beverages promoted gender modernity in China; yet, Westernized sexuality and romance stirred up great resentment among the Chinese people during wartime.

4) "Departure from the Household Kitchen: Great Leap Forward towards Women's Employment in China (1958-62)", Hanchao Lu, Georgia Institute of Technology

The Great Leap Forward (1958-62) was the economic and social campaign led by Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that resulted in great famines and ecological disasters. Even the CCP today admits that it was a major mistake that the party had made during the Mao era. This paper looks at a "positive" side of the campaign, arguing that the Great Leap Forward marked the beginning of a large-scale and irreversible trend toward near universal employment of women in China's cities. It takes Shanghai as a case study to examine urban neighborhood workshops established during the campaign that employed hundreds of thousands of women, mostly former housewives, with lower pay and little fringe benefits. By the end of the Mao era, nearly half of China's women workers were employed in this kind of non-state-owned enterprises. This employment pattern created an institution that contributed to high employment rate of women in urban China and deserves attention in the study of women, labor, and state-society relations in the People's Republic of China. It represented a significant departure from the Soviet and communist East European model of industrial development in which the governments during high Stalinist period simply denied that anyone but a worker in heavy industry could be a legitimate part of working class.

4. In the Realm of Modernization and Revolution: Exploring James Gao's World of History

<http://www.chinesehistorians.org/in-the-realm-of-modernization-and-revolution/>

Friday, January 6, 2023: 3:30 PM-5:00 PM
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Room 306

Chair(s):

Zhiguo Yang, University of Wisconsin–River Falls

Papers:

James Z. Gao, 1948–2021: From a Son of Hangzhou to an Explorer of a Cutting-Edge Paradigm

Zhiguo Yang, University of Wisconsin–River Falls

Dangerous Tracks: Risk, Safety, and Crime on China’s Railways during the Mao Zedong Era

Jeremy Brown, Simon Fraser University

Gao’s Perception on War and Society: The Impact of the Korean War on China, 1950–54

Xiao-Bing Li, University of Central Oklahoma

Comment: Xi Wang, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Full Panel Description

A tribute to James Z. Gao (1948-2021), a founding member and the first president of the Chinese Historians in the United States (CHUS), this panel consists of three papers exploring the impact of modernization and Communist revolution on modern China, a defining theme in Gao’s scholarship. Leading the panel is Zhiguo Yang’s discussion of Gao’s life, teaching career, and scholarly accomplishments. Jeremy Brown, a scholar of modern Chinese history, will then discuss the rural-urban dynamic of railway safety during Mao’s era, a topic addressed in Gao’s first monograph. The third paper, to be presented by Xiaobing Li, a specialist in the history of the Korean War, deals with how the Korean War had helped consolidate the Communist rule in China in the early 1950s, which is a major theme in Gao’s acclaimed monograph *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou* as well. Zhiguo Yang will also chair the panel. Xi Wang, the first editor of the *Chinese Historical Review* that published two of Gao’s studies on modern China, will serve as the discussant of the panel.

Paper Abstracts

- 1) **“James Z. Gao, 1948-2021: From a Son of Hangzhou to an Explorer of a Cutting-Edge Paradigm”, Zhiguo Yang, University of Wisconsin-River Falls**

This paper is a tribute to James Z. Gao, a founding member of CHUS and the organization’s first president (1987-1988), who passed away in 2021. It traces his life, education, and teaching career in China and the United States in the context of China’s

social and economic changes during his lifetime. It also describes his success as a history educator in the United States, focusing on the pedagogy and teaching methodologies that Gao applied to making his history courses meaningful and inspiring to his students. Gao devoted his academic career to searching for a paradigm to better explain the role of modernization and revolution in the transformation of China in the twentieth century, and the third part of the paper illustrates such a commitment and his scholarly achievement.

2) “Dangerous Tracks: Risk, Safety, and Crime on China’s Railways during the Mao Zedong Era”, Jeremy Brown, Simon Fraser University

As James Z. Gao found in *Meeting Technology's Advance: Social Change in China and Zimbabwe in the Railway Age*, trains and train tracks had a major effect “on the lives of local people” in China and beyond. This paper examines the unintended consequences of railways in China between the 1950s and 1970s through the lens of danger. How did people whose work, homes, and commutes put them in risky proximity to train tracks deal with new dangers in their lives? How did the Communist party-state’s security apparatus strive to protect what it considered vital infrastructure from protests and sabotage? Drawing from gazetteers and internal public security reports, I explore the rural-urban dynamic of railway safety, which provided convenience to city dwellers but presented disproportionate risks to people who lived in the hinterland. Inspired by James Gao’s approach to social change, I find that trains and train tracks meant different things to diverse groups of people in various places throughout China: they were not only a means of conveyance, they also became deadly threats and targets of protest.

3) “Gao’s Perception on War and Society: The Impact of the Korean War on China, 1950-1954”, Xiaobing Li, University of Central Oklahoma

James Gao contributed to the Korean War history studies by explaining the impact of the Korean War on urban society in his book, *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou*. He moved away from conventional interpretations of political control, propaganda, and law enforcement, and instead explored the “cultural dimension” as the key for the CCP to consolidate power in urban areas from 1950-1954. His research provides a better understanding of the party’s political nature of flexibility through cultural negotiation, consultation with the intellectuals, adaptation to the new environment, and readiness for changes as “the party of learning.” In the formulation and execution of the new policy toward the urban population, the CCP not only asserted its authority over the society but developed an outline for further social transformation. While the continuing revolution rocked urban China, the CCP leadership was also concerned about the moral decay of the rank and file of the revolution. The new urban policy sought to embrace the war in Korea, which required a solid base and stable economic growth. In retrospect, the Korean War moved China to the center of the global Cold War, while contributed significantly to shaping the specific course of Chinese cities.

CHUS Book Launch

Friday, January 6, 2023: 7:00 PM-8:00 PM
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, 309/310

CHUS Business Meeting

Friday, January 6, 2023: 8:00 PM-10:00 PM
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, 309/310

Saturday January 7, 2023

5. “Snapshots: Perceptions and China-US Encounters on Diplomatic, Commercial, Cultural, and Educational Fronts from the Early 19th Century to the Present”

<http://www.chinesehistorians.org/snapshots-perceptions-and-china-us-encounters/>

Saturday, January 7, 2023: 8:30 AM-10:00 AM
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Room 306

Chair(s):

Yanqiu Zheng, Social Science Research Council

Papers:

Black Gold and White Gold: Weaving a Global Network through the Chinese–American Tea Trade, 1815–42

Dan Du, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Ko Kunhua at Harvard, 1879–82: Receptions, Teaching, and Interactions with New England Elites in the Age of Chinese Exclusion

Shuhua Fan, The University of Scranton

Lost Chance? Revisiting CCP’s Policy toward the United States on the Eve of the PRC’s Founding

Tao Wang, Iowa State University

Popular Nationalism, Social Media, and the US–China Trade War: A Case Study of Weibo, 2018–20

Mao Lin, Georgia Southern University

Comment: Guolin Yi, Providence College

Panel Description:

This panel examines the changing perceptions and multifaceted Sino-American encounters from the early 1800s to the present. Dan Du explores how collaboration between Chinese and American traders in the tea trade and Asia's money market helped trigger the Opium War (1839-1842). Shuhua Fan uses the experience of Ko Kunhua, teacher of the first Harvard Chinese class, to examine the interactions between Chinese and New England elites in the age of Chinese exclusion. Tao Wang explores the CCP's handling of several specific issues to reveal the convolution of its US-policy making on the eve of the founding of the PRC. Mao Lin analyzes how Chinese popular nationalism has evolved over time, which has in turn shaped China's response to the current trade war. Using primary and secondary sources, this panel reveals collaboration, conflict, and other features in the multi-layered China-US encounters on diplomatic, commercial, and cultural/educational fronts, contributing to expanding the literature on Sino-American relations.

Paper Abstracts

- 1) **“Black Gold and White Gold: Weaving a Global Network through the Chinese-American Tea Trade (1815-1842)”**, Dan Du, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

The research explores how the collaboration between Chinese and American traders in the tea trade and Asia's money market helped to trigger the First Opium War (1839-1842). The United States was the second largest importer of tea from China in the nineteenth century. To purchase Chinese tea, U.S. traders became the major suppliers of silver from South America to China. However, the rise of opium smuggling between India and China from the late 1820s gave Americans a new way of raising funds: they sold bills of exchange in Asia. A bill of exchange, resembling the *feiqian* or “flying cash” in Tang China, was a paper device that enabled the remittance of money to different locations without physical transfers of cash. British-Indian merchants' demand soared for bills of exchange to remit their proceeds from the opium sales in China back to India and Britain. With the endorsement of prominent Chinese merchants, American traders had sold millions of dollars' worth of bills—generated in the trans-Atlantic cotton trade or issued by the Bank of the United States—in Asia and dramatically reduced their shipments of silver to China. The structural change in the Chinese-American tea trade inflated the American economy and aggravated the silver drain on China. Contributing to the Panic of 1837 in the United States, Chinese merchants' bankruptcies in Canton, and the Qing government's crackdown on opium, these developments provided another steppingstone for the First Opium War in 1839.

- 2) **“Ko Kunhua at Harvard (1879-1882): Receptions, Teaching, and Interactions with New England Elites in the Age of Chinese Exclusion”**, Shuhua Fan, University of Scranton

This paper uses the experience of Ko Kunhua, teacher of the first Harvard Chinese class (1879-1882), to explore the interactions between Chinese scholars and New England

elites in the age of Chinese exclusion. Selected by Francis Knight, U.S. merchant and consul in China, and invited by Harvard, Ko Kunhua, accompanied by his wife, five children, servants and interpreter, arrived at New York City and Cambridge in late August 1879 to carry out a three-year term of teaching at Harvard. How did New England media report on Ko and his family's presence in America? How was the Ko party received by the NYC mayor and the Harvard community? How did Ko conduct his teaching at Harvard? How did Ko interact with New England elites, including his American friends at Harvard and Yale, Harvard alumni at the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, public librarians, and his medical doctors in Boston? What was Ko's position on China's recall of the boys from the Chinese Educational Mission and on America's Chinese exclusion?

Using rich primary sources and secondary works, this paper aims to answer the above questions. The paper argues that Ko made great efforts to adapt to American life while keeping Confucian traditions and his own identity and adopt a unique style to teach the Chinese class and spread Chinese culture in the age of Chinese exclusion. It fills a gap in the study of Chinese scholars in America in the age of Chinese exclusion, thus expanding the literature on nineteenth century China-U.S. relations.

3) “Lost Chance? -- Revisiting CCP’s Policy toward the United States on the Eve of the PRC’s Founding”, Tao Wang, Iowa State University (Co-authored with Niu Jun)

Abstract: Was there a chance for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the United States to reach an accommodation when the People's Republic of China was established? If so, when, why, and how did they forsake this opportunity? Previous works on the CCP's policymaking often approach this topic from the perspective of ideology and focus on such factors as the influence of the Cold War, Sino-Soviet relations, and Mao's revolutionary theory. This approach sometimes overlooks some other factors affecting China's policy making, and tends to give a static analysis of the role ideology played throughout this period.

Recent declassification of new archives—especially several document collections published by local archives in China—has offered an opportunity to delve into China's policymaking in this period. Based on these new sources, this article explores the Communist leaders' handling of several specific issues to reveal the convolution of their U.S. policymaking. It argues that far from predetermined and consistent, China's policy toward the U.S. underwent constant adjustments. CCP leaders remained uncertain about relations with the United States most of the time. And the final decision to give up efforts for a working relationship with the U.S. was contingent on circumstances, including CCP's domestic agenda, U.S. attitude, and the Soviet influence.

4) “Popular Nationalism, Social Media, and the US-China Trade War: A Case Study of Weibo (2018-2020)”, Mao Lin, Georgia Southern University

The United States and the People's Republic of China have been waging what the Chinese social media called "an epic trade war in human history" since early 2018. This ongoing trade war has attracted unprecedented attention from all types of Chinese media. While the Chinese government tries to maintain a tight control of public opinion, it cannot always shape the narrative of the trade war based on official policies. The paper examines how popular nationalism has evolved over time and shaped China's response to the trade war. During the early months of the trade war, China's response was largely defensive. The Chinese public opinion claimed China as an innocent victim of the trade war, initiated by a reckless Trump administration. Many, especially those in social media, were also optimistic, believing that the trade war would be over soon once the U.S. government came to its senses. After the American government-imposed sanctions on Huawei, a popular Chinese high-tech company, the public opinion shifted to an offensive mode. Many now argued that America was not looking for fair trade policies but trying to block China's rise as a global power. Furthermore, the Chinese popular nationalism started to argue that China's model of development was superior to America's liberal democracy. Other issues such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet, Xinjiang, and the South China Sea further confounded the bilateral relationship and led to the rise of popular nationalism.

6. "China in the Socialist World: Translation, Adaptation, and Appropriation"

<http://www.chinesehistorians.org/china-in-the-socialist-world/>

Saturday, January 7, 2023: 10:30 AM-12:00 PM
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Room 306

Chair(s):
Pu Wang, Brandeis University

Papers:
Ilya Ehrenburg in China: "Internal Readings" and Competing Visions of Soviet Revisionism during the Chinese Cultural Revolution
Yaowen Dong, University of Memphis

"Workers Shall Be the Masters of Philosophy": The Reception of Joseph Dietzgen and the Making of Marxist Tradition in Socialist China
Yiming Ma, University of California, Santa Barbara

René Étiemble's Odyssey of Maoism: Illusion and Disillusion of Maoist China in France between the 1960s and 1970s
Ying Xing, The University of Hong Kong

Comment: Pu Wang, Brandeis University

Panel Description

This panel discusses the transmission, translation, and adaptation of Western and Soviet Marxist writers in Socialist China between the 1950s and 1970s. Yiming Ma's paper complicates the notion of "circulation" by incorporating mass movement and transnational transmissions into the formation of Marxist orthodoxy in China. Yaowen Dong's paper investigates the official and underground reception of the Soviet writer Ilya Ehrenberg in Mao's China and the discursive ways in which "revisionism" shaped Chinese political identity. Ying Xing examines the productivity of circulations, focusing on how French and Chinese leftist writers encountered misunderstandings and misinterpretations because of their ambiguous political stances. By discussing the spread of socialism around the globe diachronically and synchronically, this panel presents a transnational circulation of socialist ideas that are not systematically guided from the top, but a stumbling network full of detours and confrontations from all sides.

Paper Abstracts

- 1) **"Ilya Ehrenburg in China: 'Internal Readings' and Competing Visions of Soviet Revisionism during the Chinese Cultural Revolution", Yaowen Dong, University of Wisconsin-Madison**

Since 1959, to prepare for the confrontation with the Soviet Union, the Chinese Propaganda Department of the Central Committee organized scholars, writers, and publishers to translate a series of "revisionist" Soviet literature and political writings that reflect the alleged post-Stalinist Soviet ideological deviations such as humanism, liberalism, and individualism. The access to these books was limited to an "internal" group of officials. While the official publication and circulation of these books were halted in 1966 with the onset of the Cultural Revolution, the chaos of the Red Guards movement had led to a proliferated underground consumption of these "Internal Readings" among Chinese youths. Ilya Ehrenburg's memoir *People, Years, and Life* became an underground cultural icon among Chinese youths who became increasingly disillusioned with the Cultural Revolution. This paper examines the discursive ways in which Ehrenburg's work was curated and consumed in both official and underground settings in Mao's China. While the official deemed his memoir an example of Soviet revisionism, Ehrenburg's pre-war experience in the European literary and artistic circle made him a medium for Chinese youths in underground reading groups to be exposed to western literature, arts, and ideology. Through official presentations and underground circulations, Ehrenburg's memoir unintendedly became a site of intensive ideological and cultural contestation.

- 2) **"'Workers Shall Be the Masters of Philosophy': the Reception of Joseph Dietzgen and the Making of Marxist Tradition in Socialist China", Yiming Ma, University of California, Santa Barbara**

This paper examines the Chinese translations and commentaries on the 19th-century German worker-philosopher Peter Josef Dietzgen in the context of the movement of

mass philosophy learning. Marxists often credited Dietzgen with conceptualizing dialectical materialism independently from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Since the Great Leap Forward, his philosophical works were reprinted, and monographs on Dietzgen from the Soviet Union were introduced and translated in China. As a result, Dietzgen's biography and significance were widely cited by workers and professional philosophers alike till the 1980s. However, the tensions between his class identity and the deviation of his theory of the mind from materialism led to debates over how to characterize his epistemology and situate him in the Marxist tradition. I argue that the consolidation of philosophical orthodoxy in Socialist China was a dynamic process involving not only theoretical debates but also mass movements and transnational circulations.

3) **“René Étiemble’s Odyssey of Maoism: Illusion and Disillusion of Maoist China in France between the 1960s and 1970s”**, Ying Xing, The University of Hong Kong

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a political vogue for Maoist China in France when China was in the heyday of the Cultural Revolution. Disillusioned by Stalinist communism, students became fascinated by Maoist slogans in the *Little Red Book*, and influential intellectuals were keen on visiting China. However, French “intoxication” with Mao, which unexpectedly sparked the May movement, quickly vanished within one decade partly because of the failure of May ’68. The trajectory of René Étiemble, a committed Marxist sinologist, coincided with the short history of French fascination with Maoist China. Whereas René Étiemble expressed reverence for Mao and appreciation for Maoist theories in *Do We Know China* (1964), he deviated from Maoism and criticized French Maoists as misguided intellectuals in the early 1970s. This paper examines the reception of Maoism in France in light of Étiemble’s direct involvement in China and indirect involvement through research and writing. By tracing Étiemble’s twists and turns in his exploration of Maoism, I argue that the spread of Maoist ideas around the globe was not a systematic circulation of ideas guided by communists, but emerged from a set of experiments, failures, detours, and frustrations shared by orthodox and unorthodox leftists who struggled with political impasses confronting Marxism.

7. “Mapping the Important Changes of 20th Century China: Writing History, Political Maneuvers, and National Transformation”

<http://www.chinesehistorians.org/mapping-the-important-changes-of-20th-century-china/>

Saturday, January 7, 2023: 1:30 PM-3:00 PM
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Room 306

Chair(s):

Yao Ping, California State University, Los Angeles

Papers:

Sheng Shicai, the CCP, and the Soviet Influence in Xinjiang, 1933–43

Xiao-Bing Li, University of Central Oklahoma

Writing History in China from the Late Qing to Reformed China

Qiang Fang, University of Minnesota Duluth

Li Dazhao and the Formation of the United Front between the KMT and the CCP

Patrick Fuliang Shan, Grand Valley State University

Comment: Guo Wu, Allegheny College

Panel Description

China was significantly transformed in the 20th century, along with its extreme makeover from empire to republic, from tradition to modernity, and from imperial stability to violent revolutions. The three papers here examine China's dramatic changes from some unique perspectives. Historical writing in 20th century China underwent dramatic changes, as diverse paradigms were adopted for historical interpretation. Yet, the Marxist doctrine introduced from the USSR (also from the West) has dominated China's historiography for decades. The USSR was a matchmaker for the alliance between the KMT and the CCP in the 1920s. Yet, this alliance was forged with the substantial assistance of China's early communists, such as Li Dazhao. The Soviet penetration into China's northwestern frontier of Xinjiang and Chinese communist maneuvers are discussed in the third paper. Thus, a common theme of this panel is to investigate China's dramatic transformation and its special ties with its northern neighbor.

Paper Abstracts

1) “Sheng Shicai, the CCP, and the Soviet Influence in Xinjiang, 1933-1943”, Xiaobing Li, University of Central Oklahoma

From 1933 to 1942, the Soviet Union provided military, economic, and political support to warlord Sheng Shicai's government and sent Russian advisors to Xinjiang by working in Sheng's administration. Soviet leader Josef Stalin's brother-in-law led a Russian economic construction committee to Xinjiang to help the provincial government with the first three-year plan (1937-1940). This paper examines Moscow and Comintern's intention and policy toward Sheng during the 1930s and explains how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) failed to open a western route from Yan'an to the Chinese-Russian border through Xinjiang, to receive Soviet aid. However, the CCP took the opportunity and sent some officers to study military and aviation skills in Russian-

sponsored academies in Xinjiang. The Chinese Communists had their first group of graduates in 1940 capable of forming an independent technical aviation team during World War II. This young group of students from Xinjiang Airlines Training Academy grew into the backbone of the PLA Air Force after the founding of the People's Republic of China, and many of them took leadership roles at the high levels of the Chinese Air Force.

2) “Writing History in China from the Late Qing to Reformed China”, Qiang Fang, University of Minnesota Duluth

Chinese historical writing can be traced back to ancient times. Yet, China's historiography underwent four major overall changes in terms of paradigms. Starting from the Han dynasty, historians were organized by imperial rulers to compile histories of the former dynasty, which centered on the rise and fall of different empires with a focus on former emperors, officials, wars, and legal systems. Very little ink had been spilled on science, medicine, agriculture, and art. In the late Qing dynasty, new historiography from the West was introduced, which differed sharply from the traditional one, as it shifted to people, social changes, and human evolution. In the 1930s, Marxist historians emerged with a clarion call of a historiography based on class theory and historical materialism. After the communist takeover of mainland China, communist historians were compelled to write histories appealing to the political needs of the party, including tweaking and fabricating histories. Mao's death helped loosen the political grip, while historians enjoyed more freedom and thus were eager to deviate from the orthodox Marxist historiography by embracing Western historiography. More importantly, the latest paradigm of historiography markedly demonstrates a wide variety of and interest in microhistories that have been either downplayed or dismissed previously.

3) “Li Dazhao and the Formation of the United Front between the KMT and the CCP”, Patrick Fuliang Shan, Grand Valley State University

This paper investigates the important role of Li Dazhao in the shaping of the first united front between the Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the mid-1920s. In fact, this political alliance was so vital that it changed the history of modern China, as it enabled the Nationalist Party to unify China and to end the warlord era. Traditionally, many scholars focus on Sun Yat-sen and his close relationship with the Soviet Union to interpret the shaping of this united front, which neglects the important role of China's early communists. In this paper, Li Dazhao's role will be highlighted. Li was China's first communist and a co-founder of the CCP. By working closely with his political partners, he promoted this united front and personally supported it vehemently. By utilizing voluminous primary sources, this paper reveals Li's crucial roles in communicating with Sun Yat-sen, in persuading the early communists to embrace the alliance, and in working closely with the Soviet Union for its finalization. In fact, Li worked diligently for this united front for which he ultimately sacrificed his life, as he was executed by the warlord Zhang Zuolin in 1927.

8. “Chinese Women’s Lives in Their Own Voices, 1949 to the Present”

<http://www.chinesehistorians.org/chinese-womens-lives-in-their-own-voices-1949-present/>

Saturday, January 7, 2023: 3:30 PM-5:00 PM

Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Room 306

Chair(s):

Dewen Zhang, Randolph-Macon College

Papers:

Gender, Class, and Religion in the Making of a Socialist Space Engineer

Ruoyun Bai, University of Toronto

From Petit-Bourgeois Daughters to New Women of Socialist China: The Fate of Small Business Owners in Yangtze Delta, 1949–79

Dandan Chen, State University of New York, Farmingdale State College

From Unemployed Youth to Political Consultative Committee Member: Career Mobility and Political Participation Seen from the Life of an Urban Woman, 1960–2000

Shuang Chen, University of Iowa

The Trouble to Grow Up: "Hidden Girls" under the One Child Policy in Contemporary China, 1989–2021

Yu Wang, University of Macau

Comment: Gail Hershatter, University of California, Santa Cruz

Panel Abstract:

Historians of women and gender in the People’s Republic of China have often focused their research either on the Mao’s era or after; rarely have they treated the time frame from 1949 to the present collectively. This panel attempts to examine the lives of women in their own voices using oral history materials by treating this period as a collectivity with its own continuity despite the remarkable changes in the organization of social production and political rhetoric. This treatment allows the panel to discuss women’s experiences from a rather long historical perspective while maintaining a micro historical approach in its focus on the configuration of self-identities in these years as the country itself often was undergoing similar construction and reconstruction in the realms of society, culture, politics, and economy. Using gender as an analytical approach, this panel also considers the issues of the binarity between the rural and the urban, career and identity-making, women and family, technology and politics.

The panelists explore the dynamic between memory and narrative and discuss how the interviewees mobilize memory in their construction of selves and self-identities. The panel papers also reflect on the issue of “double presentations” of the interviewees who are often daughters, relatives, and friends to those who are interviewed. By doing so, the panel talks directly to the issue of “neutrality” in oral history projects. Finally, the panel discusses possibilities, opportunities and challenges of feminist oral history project while engaging with the discourse beyond the field of China studies.

Papers abstracts:

1) “Gender, Class, and Religion in the Making of a Socialist Space Engineer,” Ruoyun Bai, University of Toronto

This paper tells the life history of my mother, Shen Xiaocun, using oral history, micro history and critical interpretive methodologies. Born in 1944, she grew up in a rural family in northern China. As a single child, she was allowed to go to school by a reluctant father; blessed with her mother’s and teachers’ unswerving support, she stood out academically and became enrolled in Beijing Aeronautics and Astronautics University in 1964. From 1969 to 2004, she worked for China’s space industry first as communication and meteorological satellite engineer and then as spaceship engineer, before retiring to take care of my son born in the United States. She and my father migrated to Canada in 2014 to remain close to me and my family.

My mother’s life story might conform to that of an imagined socialist engineer who rose through the socialist education system and, having developed the two key attributes of expertise and political loyalty, successfully turned herself into a cog in the machine. But how well does the identity of “red engineer” describe my mother’s lived experience? Not well, I argue. Through multiple extended interviews with her, I recognize intersecting her professional identity as engineer are experiences of everyday life. These experiences have been inseparable from and structured in different relations to her work and workplace. They are mutually constitutive and constraining; yet it is primarily in everyday experiences that my mother anchors the meaning of her life and finds ways to deal with constraints and vicissitudes of the world. In addition to her dedication to work, I highlight the following experiences – material deprivation during childhood and impact on her later life; de-politization and reclamation of Christianity; and mother-daughter bond she had with my grandmother and with me. I will show how these experiences have significantly impacted the way she makes sense of her life story and proved to be more lasting in effect than her work as engineer.

This paper also reflects on what it means to interview one’s own mother and how the mother-daughter bond can be construed as a critical method in gender studies. In this paper, the mother-daughter bond is meaningful in two ways: it enables and empowers this research project; in my mother’s story, it is clear that the mother-daughter bond that she had with my grandmother was absolutely essential to her work as a young engineer (my grandmother moved to live with us and take care of me once I was born),

and that the bond I have with her has been similarly essential to my career as an academic.

2) “From Petit-Bourgeois Daughters to New Women of Socialist China: The Fate of Small Business Owners in Yangtze Delta (1949-1979)”, Dandan Chen, State University of New York at Farmingdale

This paper defines the generation of Chinese women who were born in the late 1940s and early 1950s as “gongheguo de nü'er” (“Daughters of the People’s Republic”) and examine the interactions among state, society, family, and these Socialist new women through case studies of several women associated with a family of small business owners: The author argues that there are two levels of subjectivity as "daughters of the People’s Republic": 1) individual subjectivity and 2) collective subjectivity, and that these two levels interact and shape each other at the same time. By analyzing the narrative and memories of these socialist new women, the paper reflects on the history of Socialist China from a micro-historical perspective: the inter-city moves of small-business-owner families before and after 1949, the internal divisions and different choices within small-business-owner families in the new society’s road to gongsi heyings (joint state-private ownership) and various life experiences of family members in the city and the countryside during the Cultural Revolution. By combining oral history, micro-history, macro-history, and textual analysis of literature and film, the paper explores some fundamental issues of social change in socialist China from different theoretical perspectives, including: the interplay between rural and urban, socialist transformation, migrations and changes of various economic forms in the Yangtze Delta, the dichotomy of the public and the private in socialist China, and the birth of the "daughters of the People’s Republic" as "socialist new women" at the individual and group levels.

3) “From Unemployed Youth to Political Consultative Committee Member: Career Mobility and Political Participation Seen from the Life of an Urban Woman, 1960-2000,” Shuang Chen, University of Iowa

This paper is a microhistory of the career trajectory of Jun, a woman who lived her youth and middle age in the city of Chongqing between 1960 and 2000. China saw drastic political, social, and economic changes in these four decades. Consequently, individuals living in this period often saw dramatic ups and downs in their lives. Graduated from a science and technology secondary school in 1963, Jun initially had a job as a professional in agricultural science but later gave up the position as she saw the working environment becoming increasingly anti-intellectual. She then worked on multiple positions as a temporary worker until she finally became a high school teacher in the 1980s. Later she was recommended by her school to the District-level Political Consultative Committee as a member.

Using Jun’s case, this paper plans to explore two questions. First, how did social status, gender, and educational background interact with political climate to affect individuals’ career mobility in this period? Second, how did individuals’ attitude toward politics and their own political participation change during these four decades? As most scholarship

and popular literature on this period have focused on the lives of the sent-down youths, this paper sheds light on the lives of the youths who did not go down to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution and instead stayed in the cities. In so doing, this paper also contributes to a holistic understanding of the generation who lived their youth during the Cultural Revolution.

4) The Trouble to Grow Up: “Hidden Girls” under the One Child Policy in Contemporary China (1989-2021),” Yu Wang, University of Macau

This paper focuses on the women who were raised outside their natal families during their childhood in China of the 1980s and 1990s. Existing scholarship often focuses on the psychological disorder this community has experienced while overlooking the complicated roles such an experience has played in the formation of personal memory and identity. This paper adopts the methodology of oral history and analyzes the narrative the informants employed in recalling and reflecting upon their past, as well as drawing organic connections between that past and their current living conditions. The author further regards the conversation with the informants as a cooperation and explores how such a cooperative relationship influences the ways in which the informants narrate their childhood experience and eventually turn the history of “hidden women” to the hidden history of women in contemporary societies.

Sunday January 8, 2023

9. Roundtable: Bridging Cultural and Political Divides: Unique Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching Modern China As CHUS Historians in the Post-Pandemic World ((AHA session #240, co-sponsored by CHUS)

<https://aha.confex.com/aha/2023/meetingapp.cgi/Session/23317>

Sunday, January 8, 2023: 9:00 AM-10:30 AM

Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Independence Ballroom I

Chair(s):

Yi Sun, University of San Diego

Panel:

Dan Du, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Patrick Fuliang Shan, Grand Valley State University
Yi Sun, University of San Diego
Guo Wu, Allegheny College
Qiong Zhang, Wake Forest University

Session Abstract:

The Covid-19 pandemic, first discovered in Wuhan, China in December 2019, has compounded the deterioration of Sino-American relations by exacerbating anti-Chinese sentiments, with some politicians and media outlets fanning the flame. The American public's unprecedented negative perception of China is no doubt attributable to a multitude of factors, both domestic and international, but at least some of these are rooted in the lack of comprehensive understanding of China and its modern history.

Prompted by these urgent concerns of our time, this roundtable explores pedagogical issues related to the teaching of modern Chinese history, especially that of the People's Republic of China (PRC, 1949-), in American colleges and universities. The five of us are members of Chinese Historians in the United States (CHUS), an AHA-affiliated society founded in 1987. Like the majority of CHUS membership, we are Chinese expatriates or naturalized US citizens. With firsthand experiences in many historical events of contemporary China, we have been trained, first and foremost, as professional historians here in the United States. Our distinctive identity lends itself to an ability to cover modern China in a multi-dimensional fashion that goes beyond headlines and soundbites. Simultaneously inhabiting two cultural and intellectual worlds, we feel compelled, and uniquely positioned, to launch a conversation on the current state of American education about China and Chinese history and share our perspectives on how we "CHUS historians" can help make a positive difference.

Our roundtable conversations focus on the following themes:

First, we will reflect on our pedagogical journeys teaching modern China and PRC history, focusing on the common epistemological challenges we face, which stem from our hyphenated identity, and our coping strategies as we strive to teach with professionalism and academic integrity. We will discuss questions such as how to incorporate our insiders' experiences/knowledge/perspectives to empower our teaching and impart a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of a complex subject to our students without either slipping into the role of a China advocate or being perceived as such by our students. (Yi Sun and Guo Wu)

Second, we will share some examples of how our unique analytical lenses and advantages in gaining access to certain historical sources have enabled us to depoliticize and demystify the narratives about some of the key figures, events, or facets in modern Chinese history, correcting misunderstandings and biases that have been perpetuated in the standard Chinese as well as Western history textbooks. (Dan Du and Patrick Fuliang Shan)

Third, we find that the general curricular coverage on modern China and the history of PRC in American colleges and universities tends to be one-dimensional, featuring primarily the political arena and state leaders, an angle that may engender misperceptions of China as being inherently different from, hostile or inferior to, the US. This is where CHUS historians can do much by way of developing wide-angled (top-down and bottom up) curricula and excavating and translating teaching materials that allow our students a more authentic, richly textured, and balanced view of China and its history. (Wu Guo and Qiong Zhang)

Roundtable Participant Position Statements

1) Dan Du

Trained in the field of Capitalism Studies, I teach economic history with a transnational perspective. While scholars in this field have been revising the conventional understanding of capitalism, free market, and their relations with democracy, imperialism, and globalization, it is a challenge to help students, many of whom are more familiar with the Euro-centric narratives, to understand Chinese business culture and trading environment, such as the Canton Trade System and China's model of economic development after its Open-Up policy from the 1970s.

2) Patrick Fuliang Shan

China's historiography in the recent centuries has been politicized, because regime changes have impacted the assessment of historical figures and events. In particular, in the 20th century, a number of regime changes occurred, notably from the Qing Empire to Yuan Shikai's Beijing government, to Chiang Kai-shek's Nanjing regime, and to Mao Zedong's Beijing government. After each change, the latecomer had habitually demonized the former regime by publishing a new revised history for its political maneuvers and purposes. Even for the same government, "internal regime changes" happened, as I myself experienced Mao Zedong's totalitarianism and Deng Xiaoping's reform. I first witnessed Mao as a demi-god but then I saw Mao being regarded as a disgraceful man. Consequently, depoliticizing the recent past has become an urgent mission, in particular for China's expatriate historians (like me) who currently live in the United States. To be specific, I have tried to offer an objective assessment of modern China by fairly reevaluating a number of historical figures, for which I did research on Yuan Shikai, the Seven Gentlemen, Chen Yonggui, Xu Shiyong, and many others. For example, Yuan Shikai was condemned as a historical villain, a vicious dictator, and an obstinate reactionary after his death. Through my studies, I found that Yuan was a reformer, a talented official, and a progressive modernizer during the late Qing dynasty. Without a doubt, he committed serious mistakes. For this round table, I will discuss my efforts to depoliticize and demythologize the recent past, which have significantly enriched my teaching of Chinese history through my introduction of diverse perspectives.

3) Yi Sun

As a historian who grew up in China and received a graduate education in the U.S., and who has been teaching Modern China and U.S.-East Asia Relations at American institutions of higher learning for nearly three decades, I still find it necessary to navigate between my legal identity and cultural identity in the classroom, especially in recent years when the anti-China sentiment has been on the rise. Students' perception of an inherent, though unwarranted, partiality due to my Chinese heritage has prompted a strenuous effort to validate my professional integrity by going out of my way to be "objective" when covering China.

While this uncomfortable reality at an individual level reflects broader societal issues concerning race and ethnicity, it is nonetheless immensely gratifying that, overall, my intimate knowledge and nuanced understanding of China, owing to my professional and personal ties to the country, have been an asset rather than liability in my teaching endeavors by enabling me to offer something that is authentic, unique, and constructive.

4) Guo Wu

Scholars who grew up in China and teach about modern China in American colleges might not need to have a self-imposed pressure to pursue absolute “neutrality” and “detachment.” I will share my reflections on how I stick to my hybrid identities as both an “insider” of contemporary China with memories, experiences, and personal connections, or a “stake,” and an outsider: an observer and researcher of China based in the US often using Western conceptual frameworks to analyze Chinese history, and how students responded to my approach. I argue that CHUS historians should be more assertive to provide alternative angles, source materials, and conceptual frameworks to guide the students and temper the narrative of some existing texts published in the US. For instance, while looking at “conflict”, “control”, “confrontation”, “oppression”, and “resistance”, or “nationalism”, we can also examine the dimensions and phenomena in contemporary Chinese politics and society that reflect “apathy”, “acquiesce”, “acceptance”, “symbiosis”, and “(self-)empowerment”, especially among China’s Generation Z.

5) Qiong Zhang

History education plays a critical role in the training of a well-informed and free-thinking citizenry. Yet the reality of American education about Chinese history seems to fall short of that ideal. This is illustrated by the irony that while Western scholars and observers are keen to point out how standard history texts used in Chinese schools have withheld or effaced certain historical truths about the recent past that detract from the stature of the Chinese Communist Party, the mainstream American history curriculum on contemporary Chinese history is almost guilty of the reverse. Typical coverage of the history of the People’s Republic of China (PRC, 1949-) does not go much beyond major political campaigns, leaders, government policies and policy failures, and incidents of clashes between the state and society. This exquisite focus on political and ideological issues and on China’s state actors deprives our students of the opportunity to understand China and its history in their full complexity. What can CHUS historians do to help address this curricular imbalance?

Drawing on my personal experiences growing up in rural China and witnessing the phenomenal changes of village life both firsthand as I grew up and as an outsider and historian in several provinces where I conducted field research in recent years, I would like to discuss the ways in which a bottom-up perspective can zoom in on how the policies, and their failures thereof, were received and experienced by people in their lifeworld, and how ordinary villagers strived to shape their destinies and create meaning in their lives. I believe the combination of “master narratives” and real-life experiences

and observations can help our students gain an authentic and multi-dimensional view of China as a developing country undergoing economic boom and social transformation.

10 Roundtable: Teaching Contentious China in Polarized American Universities

<http://www.chinesehistorians.org/teaching-contentious-china/>

Sunday, January 8, 2023: 11:00 AM-12:30 PM

Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Room 306

Chair(s):

Yidi Wu, Elon University

Speaker(s):

Yidi Wu, Elon University

Qiong Liu, Virginia Military Institute

Xiangli Ding, Rhode Island School of Design

Lei Duan, Sam Houston State University

Roundtable Session Description

With the rising nationalism and increasing tension between China and the US in recent years, teaching PRC history in the US has not only become more relevant but also more challenging. This is particularly true for historians with Chinese origin. The diversification and internationalization of American higher education have brought different views into the classroom. When teaching about modern China, especially contentious topics such as the Cultural Revolution, Tiananmen Protests, and ongoing suppression in Xinjiang, students with different cultural backgrounds and political ideologies would react very differently. While discussions and debates are helpful for students to understand these topics, we also see confusion and pushback from students.

Our roundtable panelists have experienced challenges with our students and witnessed heated exchanges between students with different political positions. Our discussion explores PRC historians' pedagogies when teaching PRC history in the US, aiming to make the classroom a safe and respectful space for learning and communication. Xiangli Ding will talk about challenges and cultural bias in the classroom, and how he coped with them. Yidi Wu will share her experience using role-playing games and news reports to discuss contentious subjects such as the 1989 Tiananmen Protests and the contemporary struggles of Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. Qiong Liu will discuss various forms of materials in her teaching, students' different responses, and her skills in coping with students' confusion. Finally, Lei Duan will discuss how he approached the issues of Taiwan and Hong Kong in a politically diverse classroom.

