

Report

My research in Taiwan Academia Sinica has been productive largely due to the assistance of the Sylff Research Abroad Award. The panel that I organized on China's socialism in the 1950s has been accepted by the AAS (Association for Asian Study) Annual Conference in March 2013 at San Diego. My essay, *From Singing Girl to Revolutionary Artist: Female Entertainers Remembering China's Socialist Transformation 1945-2012*, has been accepted for publication by the historical journal of *Twentieth Century China*.

More importantly, during my research in Taiwan I gain different perspectives on China's 1949 transition both from archival documentation and local and international scholars. Although my research on China's socialist transformation is based in mainland China, I am fully aware of the importance of multiple perspectives other than voices only from mainland China. I have conducted research in several libraries and archives in Taiwan. In particular, the documents that I have found in the Modern History Archive of Academia Sinica and Taiwan National History Archive have confirmed one of the arguments of my dissertation. That is, the so-called socialist transformation is not limited to the CCP and the 1949 regime transition. Rather, the use of folk art and artist in the state-building project is continuous and interactive, yet different practices across parties and historical divides from the Nationalist Party (GMD) to the Communist Party both before and after 1949. Among the documents that I found, for example, there are unpublished files of the GMD on its propaganda strategies such as the using mass clubs and literary classes before 1949 and the patriotic movement in the 1950s' Taiwan. These all resembled largely what had been exercised by the CCP in their base areas before 1949 and mainland China after 1949. The GMD policies on cadre training and land reform reveal its response to the CCP and cooperation with the US government. Such findings suggest that the socialist transformation is not a singular phenomenon that occurred

only within in mainland China, but a global one including international and changing historical perspectives.

In addition, the communication with local and other visiting scholars also broaden my views, not only on this dissertation, but also on the study of China generally. Workshops on “Regime Transitions” and “Land Reform in the 1950s” that included scholars from both Taiwan and mainland China have stimulated diverse research materials and methodologies on political transformation from the 1911 the Qing-Republican transition to the 1949 GMD-CCP transition. Personal meetings involved more specific discussions and academic exchanges on my research. My host advisor, Professor Chen Yung-fa generously offers his advice on CCP policies and documents. The discussions with Professor Yu Minling and Li Xiaoti on CCP new art reform are particularly inspiring. Our different approaches and foci on both GMD and CCP in mainland China and Taiwan suggest scholars’ broader understandings of China’s socialism in particular and the politicization of culture and people’s everyday lives in general. This also suggests the influence of the present global context on the study of history.

Article

At the time when China is stuck between economic growth and political “stagnation”, when ordinary people are much divided in their attitudes towards their uncertain futures and socialist pasts, the study of China’s socialism has again become one of the foci in the studies of modern China. What is socialism for individuals? What do they remember about the past, and how do they construct their memories according to their current situations? This study explores a variable, local, and personal socialism by examining the competing narratives of the state and individuals, archival and oral records, and memories of different individuals.

My research in Taiwan aims to find new materials and perspectives of the GMD side regarding the 1949 transition. How did the GMD respond to the political strategies during the Civil War (1945-1949)? What was going on in Taiwan when the CCP was undertaking its socialist transformation in the 1950s? For instance, during my research in mainland China, I have found ample evidence of similar practices of the GMD and CCP in the 1940s. The local GMD government opened its Mass Education Hall (Mingzhong Jiaoyüguan) which later was transformed into the People's Culture Hall (Renmin Wenhuaquan) by the CCP after 1949.¹ The CCP also carried out many policies that already had been implemented earlier by the Nanjing government in the 1930s. Educational programs such as schools for commoners and literacy classes for women were held regularly. Similar propaganda strategies, operas, slogans, wall newspapers and popular or mass clubs (the GMD-organized *minzhong jülebu* and the CCP organized *qunzhong jülebu*), were practiced simultaneously in GMD controlled cities and CCP controlled villages.²

The practices of the GMD in the 1950s, however, remained obscure before my research in Taiwan. My archival research opened a window onto this topic that reveals the GMD's response to socialist states including not only the CCP but also the Soviet Union. And yet its specific practices greatly resembled those of socialist regimes. For example, "The National Salvation Regulation on Anti-Communism and Resistance to the Soviet Union" detailed a series of reforms of the GMD on its economic reform, society reform, cultural reform, and political reform movements.³ At the same time, the GMD government launched its patriotic movement entitled "Donating One Dollar for a Plane". Its strategies included "patriotic loan ticket", public announcement of donors, propaganda

¹ Qingdao Gazetteer Office, *Qingdaoshizhi Wenhuaazhi* (Qingdao Gazetteer Culture Volume), (Beijing: Xinhua Press, 1998), 39-40.

² Qingdao Municipal Archive, "*Qingdaoshi Dagang Mingzhongjiaoyuguan Niandu Yusuanbiao* (The Table of the Yearly Budget of Qingdao Municipal *Dagang* Mass Education Hall)" (Qingdao: n.p., Dec. 21st 1946).

³ Modern History Archive of Academia Sinica, *The National Salvation Regulation on Anti-Communism and Resistance Soviet Union*" (Taipei: n.p., May 2nd 1952).

performances and so forth.⁴ All these practices and policies were simultaneously carried out in mainland China during the CCP's "Resistance to America and Assistance to Korea Movement". The similarities between ideologically opposite parties and regimes suggest that socialism and capitalism are an interactive and continuous global phenomenon, rather than an isolated abnormal birth of a particular party.

In fact, I have found more complicated and intriguing political practices beyond Chinese parties during my field work in Taiwan. In the complicated history of Taiwan, which involves not only Han Chinese, but also the Manchu Qing dynasty and Japanese colonial authority, Zheng Chenggong (Coxinga) appears as a very useful historical figure for all the states. The GMD and CCP regimes shaped and reshaped him as its national hero by highlighting his loyalty to the Ming, Han Chinese Dynasty, and downplaying the fact that his mother was a Japanese. Yet the Japanese colonial state (1895-1945), on the contrary, used his mixed blood to consolidate its rule in Taiwan. Therefore, in Tainan I have seen that layered history mixed together in the Temple of *Yanping Junwang* (Zheng Chenggong). In this temple, rebuilt by the GMD in 1964, the label of GMD was put on the top of a Japanese Gate from its original Japanese temple there, and yet the inscription from the Qing emperor was moved from the top to the bottom of the second gate. However, in the family temple of the Zheng clan, the local guard mentioned to me, "We do not have as many visitors as other temples because we are not open enough. Our manager always treats this temple as a private place for the Zheng family and closes its door. How many visitors can we get in such way?"⁵

Today Zheng Chenggong is continuously worshipped in different ways for various reasons by people from different places, and is made and remade into various heroes by different states. Such unexpected findings broaden the historical framework of my dissertation.

⁴ Modern History Archive of Academia Sinica, *The Record of the Founding Meeting of "One Dollar for a Plane" Organization Movement* (Taipei: n.p. May 31st 1951).

⁵ Interview with Mr. Zheng, Feb. 10th, Tainan Taiwan.