



East  
Asian  
History

VOLUME 1 • JUNE 1991

THE CONTINUATION OF *Papers on Far Eastern History*

Institute of Advanced Studies  
Australian National University

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This is the first issue of *East Asian History* in the series previously entitled *Papers on Far Eastern history*. As before, the journal will be published twice a year.

Contributions should be sent to

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Subscription Enquiries  
Annual Subscription Rates

The Business Manager, *East Asian History*, at the above address  
Australia A\$20 Overseas US\$20

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- Cover calligraphy Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿, Tang calligrapher and statesman
- Cover illustration 'Rokuro' [Lathel], by Tachibana Minkō 橘岷江, in  
*Saiga shokunin burui* 彩畫職人部類  
[Illustrations of different types of craftsmen], Edo, 1770

## USING THE PAST TO SAVE THE PRESENT : DAI QING'S HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DISSENT

 Geremie Barmé

### I

I'm attracted to the issues that are taboo; the more you want to hide the scab the more determined I am to pick it off. My aim has been to help cure the sore, not to show it off in order to discredit the Party. If time has run out for the Party and it is fated to fall, then so be it, but as it has the position it does [ruling the country] I'm willing to help it save itself.

... If you believe you're the kind of political party you describe yourself to be, then you shouldn't be afraid of 'deconstruction', you shouldn't go around creating 'memory holes'; you should be able to use the truth to 'reconstruct' the Party.

— Dai Qing, 20 August 1990<sup>1</sup>

Among the intellectual and journalist activists of the 1989 Protest Movement in Peking, Dai Qing's 戴晴 understanding of the government and the Communist Party was exceptional. As the adopted daughter of Marshal Ye Jianying 葉劍英, she had grown up as a member of the Party élite, joined the Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution, was later sent to a cadre school and returned to Peking in the early 1970s to work as a technician in a section of the public security apparatus specializing in surveillance equipment. She later joined the army to learn English at a People's Liberation Army university and ended up working in intelligence. As she had also become a novelist in her spare time, she was assigned to the Chinese Writers' Association as a full-time interpreter and part-time agent. In 1982, however, Dai was forced to quit intelligence work and found employment as a journalist in the *Guangming Daily*, a leading national newspaper, a job that brought her into contact with a range of ordinary people, intellectual and

I am particularly grateful to Dai Qing for giving up so much of her time to talk with me in August 1990. Nicholas Jose, then Cultural Counsellor at the Australian Embassy in Peking, gave me his unstinting support during this trip. My thanks also to Linda Jaivin for her exhaustive reading of this paper and her comments and suggestions, as well as to Timothy Cheek, Frederick C. Teiwes, Mark Elvin, David Kelly, Brian Moloughney and Roger Uren for their helpful remarks, to Perry Link for providing his notes of a conversation with Dai Qing in March 1989, and to Li Kaining for keeping an eye out for bibliographical material.

<sup>1</sup> Tongyu interview. Research for this study of Dai Qing's historiography and her work on Wang Shiwei began in May 1989. My discussions with Dai were, however, interrupted by the dramatic events that occurred in Peking that month. Dai was detained by police in July 1989 following the Peking Massacre of 3-4 June, and not released until early May 1990. She agreed to continue our discussions of her writings and personal history, and I was able to interview her in Peking in August 1990. These interviews were conducted at two locations on three different occasions: 16 August in Dai Qing's apartment in Furongli, Haidian /OVER

/District, Peking; 20 August at Tongyu Village in the Western Hills on the outskirts of Peking; and 25 August again at Furongli. The interviews are referred to in this article as Furongli interview, 16 August; Tongyu interview; and Furongli interview, 25 August, respectively. These three sessions were recorded in full on tape and in written notes.

<sup>2</sup> A detailed biography of Dai Qing can be found in my unpublished paper "The problem with Dai Qing: 'My imprisonment', before and after," presented at the Chinese Studies Association Biennial Conference, Sydney, 4 July 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Dai Qing calls her works 'historical reporting' (*lishi jishi*); my own term is 'historical investigative journalism,' which Dai translates into Chinese as *lishi diaocha baogao*. (Tongyu interview.)

government figures from whom she attained a sharp understanding of the changing mood of urban dwellers and the intelligentsia during the late 1980s.<sup>2</sup>

Beginning in 1986, disillusioned with journalism as it was being practiced in China, Dai Qing embarked on a series of studies of major Party controversies or *causes célèbres* involving leading intellectual figures. She produced two works of 'historical investigative journalism', or 'historical reporting',<sup>3</sup> that in effect challenged the very basis of the Party's legitimacy in the crucial realm of intellectual life. The most recent chapter in her 'reconstructed' Party history, a study of the unrehabilitated Rightist Chu Anping 儲安平, was published in early 1989. At the time of her detention by the police in July 1989 for her part in the Protest Movement, Dai had been preparing to continue the series to include case studies from each of the Party's major cultural and intellectual purges in the early 1950s. Since her release in May 1990, she has said that she eventually intends to pursue her historical investigations.

This preliminary study of Dai Qing and her work offers some observations on the genesis of her historical writings, as well as on the style of "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'," one of her two historical investigations, and its significance.

#### Figure 1

*Dai Qing when she worked in army intelligence, pictured with Marshal Ye Jianying in the late 1970s or early 80s (Courtesy of Dai Qing)*



## II

History must be given back its original mien. But it's also important to express the complexity of human life. It is not a caricature, not simply black and white.

—Dai Qing<sup>4</sup>

The use and interpretation of history are central to all socialist cultures. These cultures impose a unified worldview and attempt to create a narrow and ideologically-based style of historiography in order to justify current political realities and policies. In the case of China, Mao Zedong summed up the utilitarian approach of the Communist Party toward history in his famous 1964 axiom “use the past to serve the present.”<sup>5</sup> When socialist cultures lose their certitude over contemporary policies, their hold over the past is also loosened. History is then reinterpreted in an effort to rationalize policy shifts, volte-face and even ideological collapse. Yet each major official recasting of the past will almost certainly inspire unofficial, even multiple, reinterpretations which undermine the Party's monopoly on truth.

In “Nas soudruh, Winston Smith” [Our Comrade, Winston Smith], an afterword to the Czech translation of George Orwell's *1984*, the philosopher Milan Šimečka remarks that:

In a system in which the past is always in accord with the present, memory convicts the falsifier of lying. When a man has a memory, he can agree with a lie only at the cost of awareness of his own piteousness and cowardice. . . . Memory is the great provoker of disagreement.<sup>6</sup>

Once the past no longer accords with the present, when historical memory and the morality of the historian—the sense of historical responsibility—come into play, the skein of Party history begins to unravel.

This ‘unravelling of history’ began in mainland China in the late 1970s with the re-evaluation of the Tiananmen Incident of April 1976, along with the critiques of the Cultural Revolution and the cautious reassessment of the Party's rule in the 1950s and early 1960s that were formulated by the Party's Central Committee in its June 1981 “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China.”

From the start of this process of historical readjustment, the Chinese leadership spoke of its efforts as being essentially “to bring order out of chaos and return to rectitude [of the past]” (*boluan fanzheng* 撥亂反正). The Party attempted to define the areas of permissible rehabilitation and debate rather than letting the momentum (or *shi* 勢, to use a term common in classical Chinese historiography) of public, intellectual and academic pressure lead where they might. At the December 1978 Party meeting that formalized the direction of post-Cultural Revolution policy, Deng Xiaoping was quite clear about the usefulness of historical re-evaluation:

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Wang Yunxin, “Cong gaoganzidi dao xinwen jizhe—Dai Qing tan xinlu licheng” [From high cadre's progeny to reporter—Dai Qing discusses her psychological development], *Mingbao Yuekan* [Ming-bao Monthly], 1989, no.2, p.43.

<sup>5</sup> This quotation is from a comment Mao wrote on a letter sent to him by the Central Conservatorium in February 1964. See *Mao Zedong sixiang cidian* [The Mao Zedong thought dictionary], ed. Chinese Committee for Research into the Theory and Practice of Mao Zedong Thought (Peking: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Chubanshe, 1989), p.176. See Li Shu, “Zhengque lijie ‘gu wei jin yong’” [The correct interpretation of ‘using the past to serve the present’], originally published in *Guangming ribao* [Guangming Daily], 1 September 1977, and collected in Li's *Zaisiji* [Essay on rethinking things] (Peking: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1985), pp.34–7. This slogan remains part of the Party canon. See Jiang Zemin, “Building socialism the Chinese way,” 1 July 1991, in *Beijing Review*, vol.34, no.27, 8–14 July 1991, p.24.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in H. Gordon Skilling, *Samizdat and an independent society in central and eastern Europe* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), p.121. See also Milan Šimečka, “A Czech Winston Smith,” *Index on censorship*, 1984, no.1, pp.6–10; and G. Barmé, “Memory as the enemy of tyranny,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 May 1988, pp.47–8. Dong Leshan's Chinese translation of Orwell's *1984* has been available in a restricted edition since the late 1970s.

<sup>7</sup> Deng Xiaoping, “Jiefang sixiang, shishi qiushi, tuanjie yizhi xiangqian kan” [Liberate thinking, seek the truth from facts, and unite and look to the future], 13 December 1978, in *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan, 1975–1982* [Selected writings of Deng Xiaoping (1975–1982)] (Hong Kong: Sanlian Shudian, 1983), pp.137–8.

<sup>8</sup> This expression is used by Stephen Wheatcroft to describe the appearance of such figures in the Soviet Union. See his “Unleashing the energy of history: mentioning the unmentionable and reconstructing Soviet historical awareness—Moscow 1987,” *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies* 1, no.1 (1987): 85–6, 97–105.

<sup>9</sup> Li Fangzhi makes a similar comment about Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng, whose controversial writings on Chinese history had a considerable impact in the 1980s. Lu says that their new approach was only possible because they were free of the theoretical constraints of orthodox historians. See *Dongfang zhuanzhi zhuyi lun—Yaxiya shengchan moshi yanjiu* [On oriental despotism—studies on the Asiatic mode of production] (Taipei: Nanfang Congshu Chubanshe, 1987), p.201.

<sup>10</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>11</sup> Originally published by Yale University Press in 1981, Huang’s (Huang Renyu) book appeared in China under the title *Wanli shiwunian* (Peking: Zhonghua Shuju, 1982). This book was extremely popular in the mid-1980s, especially following its reprinting in 1986.

<sup>12</sup> Dai made a point of commenting on Jian in *Wode ruyi* [My imprisonment] (Hong Kong: Mingbao Chubanshe, 1990), a record of her post-4 June confinement. Of all the books she read after she was allowed access to the prison library, Dai records the titles of two volumes in particular, making the point that the events of 1989 had their historical antecedents. She writes with considerable irony that “I re-read William Shirer’s *The rise and fall of the Third Reich* for the third time with great care, then I re-read Jian Bozan’s *Wuxu bianfa* [The 1898 reform movement]. When I was particularly depressed I found solace in [the works of the martial arts novelist] Jin Yong. . . .” See Dai, *My imprisonment*, p.29.

Resolving questions left over from the past, clarifying the achievement and errors of certain people and correcting a number of major unfair, incorrect and false cases, is essential for the liberation of thought as well as for stability and unity. . . . [It] is impossible and unnecessary [for these questions] to be resolved completely satisfactorily. We must concentrate on the broader issues, we can afford to be sketchy; it’s impossible to clear up every little detail, and unnecessary.<sup>7</sup>

As in Mao Zedong’s day, in the 1980s history was to serve a practical and immediate political role. However, the process of re-evaluating the past continued well beyond the limitations marked out by Deng Xiaoping and the 1981 resolution. The impetus of the reform policies, the increasing independence of academic and popular writers, and the Party’s own need to justify each new shift in policy in historical and ideological terms, were factors that combined to undermine the Party’s position as the sole dispenser and interpreter of historical wisdom.

One of the most important developments of the 1980s in relation to Chinese historiography was the appearance and popularity of journalists, filmmakers and ideologues who have acted as ‘mass media historians’.<sup>8</sup> Dai Qing is arguably the most striking ‘mass media historian’ to have appeared in China to date. Like a number of other writers in the 1980s, she actually benefited from not having a professional training in either journalism or history. Given the intellectual strictures that such a training would have imposed in the Chinese context, it would only have served both to hinder her approach and cramp her style.<sup>9</sup>

On the question of the influence of contemporary Chinese historical writings, Dai Qing says that they are like “other products of the ideological sphere: they’re either specialized to the point of absurdity, or just a vast skein of lies. I really detest all those tracts on peasant movements, Li Zicheng, the Boxers and the Taiping Rebellion. All full of outrageous lies. . . . Simply unreadable.”<sup>10</sup> Ray Huang’s *1587, A Year of No Significance*, which was published in Chinese in 1982 and went through a number of reprints,<sup>11</sup> however, had a considerable impact on her. “Now I really pitied our historians.” In particular she liked the way in which Huang reflected and commented on the history he was writing. Regarding the older, established historians of the People’s Republic, Dai is fairly dismissive: Jian Bozan was a man who killed himself in 1968 virtually after Mao had “forgiven him”;<sup>12</sup> Wu Han, the writer of Ming history, “became their [the Party’s] little footman” (*genban’r 跟班兒*); and as for Guo Moruo, she says he was nothing but “a slave’s lackey, one of the biggest lackeys [of them all].” In regard to the people of her generation, those in their 40s, she felt that the sciences had attracted many of the most talented people. Those who went into the humanities, in particular history, found themselves restricted by numerous ideological constraints, and in their professional careers had been forced to spend their time dwelling on historical minutiae. Not surprisingly, it is among this very group that Dai Qing feels her work is particularly appreciated. She waited with

trepidation for scholars to criticize her historical writings for academic weakness: "I know my [historical] work is full of errors; I haven't put all that much effort into it, it's been impossible for me to cover all of the historical materials necessary—but they have failed to do so."<sup>13</sup> Her explanation is that many historians have chosen to protect her: "they know that to a certain extent I have done what they should have but didn't dare or weren't able to do."<sup>14</sup>

One of the earliest and most powerful influences on Dai Qing's thinking concerning history was actually Qu Qiubai's "Duoyude hua" [Superfluous Words], a testament written by Qu in jail while he was awaiting execution in 1935. This autobiographical essay was reproduced as part of a campaign to vilify Qu in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution in a collation of materials produced by the editors of the *Tao Qu zhanbao* [Combat Bulletin on the Denunciation of Qu Qiubai]. The *Tao Qu zhanbao* was a joint product of the Revolutionary Committee of the Peking Academy of Politics and Law and the Politics and Law Commune of the Capital Red Representatives' Congress;<sup>15</sup> it ran for only nine issues. A collection of anti-Qu essays with the full text of Qu's "Superfluous Words" was published as part of a special internal collection under the title *Denounce Qu: A Collection of Materials for the Complete Discrediting of the Traitor Qu Qiubai* in December 1967.<sup>16</sup> Dai recalls being deeply impressed by Qu because in this testament he revealed himself to be a one-time revolutionary leader—the head of the Temporary Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1927-28—who was a human being rather than a man forever wanting to hide behind a mask, even on the eve of his death.<sup>17</sup> One of the relevant passages in Qu's "Superfluous Words" is:

Imprisoned now it would be easy for me to go to my death with a great show of heroism. Yet I cannot bring myself to do so. History cannot, and should not, be deceived . . .

I've had few friends in my lifetime, very few loved ones. Except with my [wife Yang] Zhihua, I have never been entirely honest. Even with Zhihua I would only occasionally reveal something of the truth, for I always hid behind a mask. I said a long time ago that it's a thrill to unmask someone. Not only is it a thrill for the person who tears off a mask, it is also liberating for the person who loses the mask, most of all when you can tear off your own mask. I now deserve to be congratulated for I have finally cast my mask aside!<sup>18</sup>

"All I'd ever seen of them [Party elders] before this was their masks," she remarked.<sup>19</sup> It was a concern that even appeared in "A Pliant Rush Tied to the Waist," an essay about literature written in 1982, the year she gave up writing fiction for journalism: ". . . you can't always cover his [a warrior's] face with a mask; after a time people think the mask is the reality, and he will feel unnatural without one, or be incapable of ever taking the mask off."<sup>20</sup> Another thing she realized when she read Qu's original essay in the Cultural Revolution—as opposed to the stream of denunciations of it—was that it was

<sup>13</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>14</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>15</sup> The *Beijing zhengfa xueyuan geming weiyuanhui* and *Shoudu hongdaibui zhengfa gongshe*, respectively.

<sup>16</sup> *Tao Qu: chedi gaocbou dapantu Qu Qiubai ziliao huibian*. Qu's "Superfluous words" can be found on pages 84–93 of this booklet. See also Paul Pickowicz, *Marxist literary thought in China: the influence of Ch'ü Ch'ü-pai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp.237–8.

<sup>17</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>18</sup> See *Tao Qu*, p.92. Pickowicz offers a summary and discussion of "Superfluous Words" in *Marxist literary thought*, pp.212–18. Qu's testament was also the object of some of the first debates concerning Party history in the late 1970s and early 80s. See, for example, Chen Tiejian, "Chongping 'Duoyude hua'" [A re-evaluation of "Superfluous Words"], *Lisbi yanjiu* [Historical Research], 1979, no.3, pp.25–35. The Party Central Committee published an official circular on "Superfluous Words" in 1985 stating that this document could not be used as evidence of Qu Qiubai having betrayed the Party. See the Shanghai *Jiefang Ribao Baokan Wenzhai* [Liberation Daily Newspaper and Periodical Digest], 23 July 1985.

<sup>19</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>20</sup> "Ji zai yaoji, na rouende dengxinciao" [A pliant rush tied to the waist], in Dai Qing, *Hun* [Spirit] (Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi Chubanshe, 1985), p.74.

<sup>21</sup> See Xiao Rong and Tian Ran, *Wang Shiwei be "Ye baihehua": baren fangtanlu* [Wang Shiwei and "Wild Lilies": interviews with eight people], *Wenxuebao* [Literature Press], 27 April 1989.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Skilling, *Samizdat*, pp.99–122.

<sup>23</sup> See Hu Yaobang, "Guanyudangdexinwen gongzuo" [On the Party's news work], a speech made at a meeting of the Secretariat of the Party's Central Committee on 8 February 1985, published in *Renmin ribao* [People's Daily], 14 April 1985.

<sup>24</sup> Wang Yunxin, "From high cadre's progeny to reporter," p.43.

impossible to make a personal judgment about historical figures solely on the basis of second-hand information. It was necessary to become familiar with their own work.<sup>21</sup> This may be an obvious point, but it is the awareness of the need for sources of truth unsullied by Party glosses and non-official interpretations of historical materials that has been a hallmark of the growth of independent historiography in a number of socialist nations.<sup>22</sup> This very awareness as a youth laid the basis for Dai's future approach to historical materials and has played a role in her increasing tendency to present the readers of her historical portraits with some of the key writings of her protagonists, as she has done in the case of both Wang Shiwei 王實味 and Chu Anping, by including long quotations from their original writings or by appending the texts of their major works to her own studies.

However, it was as a journalist that Dai began to discover for herself some of the truth that had been hidden behind the masks of Party orthodoxy. Her early career as a reporter from 1982—and she was particularly energetic at first, travelling widely to work on stories—brought her into contact with a very different world from the one she was used to. Much of her early writing reflected positive developments resulting from the Reforms, but she also came across deeply disturbing stories. She was excited by the changes that were occurring throughout the society and the possibilities that presented themselves for unconventional and controversial articles. However, it did not take Dai Qing very long to discover that she could never be a successful Party journalist. Although stories abounded, it was forbidden to write about them in the way she wanted. The way news was reported in the mid-1980s was, theoretically, determined by the then Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang's 1985 speech calling for a rationing of public information: eighty per cent good news and only twenty per cent bad.<sup>23</sup> "We don't have news [in China]," Dai reflected on the frustrations of journalism. "How could one possibly be a reporter?" She remarked, "So, I couldn't write news, but I had to do something with myself, didn't I?" "I started interviewing people, every type of person you could imagine, and I began to learn a great deal."<sup>24</sup>

### III

In fact, at every turning point in history people invariably feel the need to see the past in a new light. Otherwise they find it impossible to understand much of what is happening to them in the present.

—Li Shu in conversation with Dai Qing, 1986.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Dai, *Xuezhedawenlu* [Conversations with scholars] (Nanchang: Jiangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1988), p.33.

Dai Qing visited Australia as part of a women's study group in 1984. She recalled that whenever she introduced herself as a reporter for the *Guangming Daily*, a newspaper with a circulation of one million produced for 'intellectuals' (*zhibifenzi* 知識分子), her hosts were invariably as-

tounded. “Do you have one million intellectuals in China?” would be the standard sceptical response. It was only then that she began to realize that the concepts of education, intellectual activity and the thinking élite are regarded in a very different light in countries like Australia.

In early 1986, Dai published the following comment on the word ‘intellectual’:

We presently confuse the expressions ‘intellectual’ and ‘mental worker’. The accepted interpretation of *zhishifenzi* as intellectual, or a member of an intellectual élite, is of a person familiar with the intellectual culture created by humanity, and therefore is a person who is capable of independent thought, who is concerned with society, has a sense of purpose and can play the role of ‘society’s conscience’. But *zhishifenzi* as it appears in our newspapers and documents means a person who has received specialized training and is a mental worker. . . . True intellectuals do not take power. They often remain independent of all groups. Their destiny is to live in the society, to think and speak out, inspiring others with their views, the example of their personality and their actions. They are a rare commodity.<sup>26</sup>

In Dai’s opinion, when intellectuals become officials or apparatchiki in China they abrogate their role as independent thinking people, for they can no longer maintain an autonomous view of society or act according to their personal convictions, and therefore cannot effectively heighten the level of intellectual discourse in the society.<sup>27</sup> This is equally true, she argues, in the case of scientists and technicians in China whom she likens to Vulcan (*jiangshen* 匠神 in Chinese), the god ordered by Jupiter to make the chains that bound Prometheus. “They are as loyal as you could want and carry out their tasks with admirable skill, whether it be to launch missiles or manufacture atom bombs. Sorry, that still doesn’t make them intellectuals.”<sup>28</sup>

Also in 1986, Dai Qing’s fascination with intellectuals of a more independent caste (she was later to identify herself as one of China’s small number of ‘independent intellectuals’ *ziyoupai zhishifenzi* 自由派知識分子) led her to undertake a series of interviews with some forty of China’s most prominent and controversial scholars. Most of these exchanges were published under the heading “Xuezhe dawenlu” [Conversations with Scholars] in the *Guangming Daily*, although not always in their entirety, and a volume of the full conversations appeared in late 1988.<sup>29</sup> The research Dai had to undertake in preparation for these dialogues and the conversations themselves had a direct influence on her own developing view of history and historiography.<sup>30</sup>

Of all of the subjects of her early journalistic work and the men and women with whom she spoke in her “Conversations with Scholars,” two individuals in particular had a direct influence on her decision to undertake her historical archaeology. One was the literary historian and publisher Zhu Zheng 朱正, the other was Li Shu 黎澍, one of the most influential and controversial official historians of the 1980s.

<sup>26</sup> Dai Qing, Xue Yong, “Zhishifenzi, zuojia ji wenxue” [Intellectuals, writers and literature], *Wenhui yuekan* [Encounter Monthly], 1986, no.1, p.52.

<sup>27</sup> In the Tongyu interview she cited Fei Xiaotong, the sociologist and head of the China Democratic League, one of the ‘democratic parties’ under communist supervision, as a typical example.

<sup>28</sup> Tongyu interview. Dai was just such a technician, employed by the Ministry of Public Security from 1972 helping develop directional video cameras for use in surveillance operations.

<sup>29</sup> Dai Qing, *Conversations with scholars*. For the genesis of these interviews, see Dai’s essay “Wo fang xuezhe” [On interviewing scholars] in *Guangming ribao sishinian* [Forty years of *Guangming Daily*] (Peking: *Guangming Ribaoshe*, 1989), pp.542–8 and the postscript to *Conversations with scholars*, pp.266–8. As Dai notes in her postscript, Zhu Houze, the Hu Yaobang appointee as Minister of Propaganda, had made some unpublished remarks on intellectual life at a meeting held at the *Guangming Daily* which encouraged her to pursue this project.

<sup>30</sup> Because of limitations of space, it is not possible in the present study to discuss this aspect of Dai’s work and the influence of these conversations on her historical writings in detail.

<sup>31</sup> Furongli interview, 16 August; *Zhongguo nüjizhe* [China's Women Reporters], ed. by committee (Peking: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1989), 2: 490–1; Wang Yunxin, "From high cadre's progeny to reporter," p.43.

<sup>32</sup> These details come from Dai Qing's article, "Yige cengjing shenchi nijing dui Dang jianzhen buyude ren—ji Lu Xun zhuanlüe jiqi zuozhe Zhu Zheng" [A man who remained constant to the Party despite his suffering—A Biography of Lu Xun and its author Zhu Zheng], *Guangming Daily*, 9 November 1982. Among other things, Zhu edited and published (through the Hunan People's Publishing House) the Luotuo congshu [Camel Book Series], one of the finest collections of essays by contemporary Chinese intellectuals. The series had run to twenty titles when it was brought to an end after June 1989.

Dai met and interviewed Zhu Zheng shortly after becoming a journalist in 1982.<sup>31</sup> Zhu, who was from Hunan, was first singled out as a troublemaker at the age of twenty-one. He had written a complaint to his local party organization about an official who had misused state funds during a trip to Hong Kong. He was punished for his insubordination by being demoted and forced out of the Youth League. He spoke out again during the Hundred Flowers Movement and was sentenced to labour reform in 1957 as a Rightist. Kept under surveillance for over a decade, in 1970 he was declared to be a counter-revolutionary and was not officially rehabilitated until early 1979.

After his final 'rehabilitation', Zhu wrote to the Party Organization Ministry pointing out that as the personnel office of the ruling Party in China they had to exercise far greater caution in dealing with cases such as his. After all, because of their mistaken policies and decisions he had been subjected to over twenty years of persecution. The letter was subsequently published in the Organization Ministry's internal journal, *Zhongzu tongxun* [Party Organization Newsletter] and it caught the eye of Du Daozheng 杜導正, then editor-in-chief of *Guangming Daily*. Zhu's petition impressed the editor so much that he instructed the head of the reporter's section to send someone to interview Zhu. This task was given to Dai Qing. Zhu happened to be in Peking doing some editorial work for *Renmin Wenxue* [People's Literature]. He had no time for reporters and at first he ignored her. She left a copy of her first volume of stories, *Bu 不* [No] for him by way of introduction. In fact, Dai's early fiction dealt with the sufferings, abuse and tragedies of intellectuals under erroneous Party policies. The stories struck a responsive chord in Zhu and when she came back the next morning he said he had read the book that night. This led to her first interview which was published in November 1982. It also led to a friendship which was to weather Dai's own persecution and jailing in 1989–90.

Zhu impressed Dai Qing deeply by the fact that during the long years of incarceration and labour reform he managed to complete his university studies and become an academic writer, specializing in the life and works of Lu Xun. Because of his work in this field he was given the task of setting up the Lu Xun editorial office of the Hunan People's Publishing House, which was to become one of the most enterprising publishers in China in the 1980s.<sup>32</sup>

Dai admired Zhu for his individual courage and his commitment to scholarship. He had even dared to take Lu Xun's widow, Xu Guangping 許廣平, to task for distorting the facts of Lu Xun's life, either unintentionally or to conform with Party orthodoxy, and became involved in a debate to disprove a claim that Mao Zedong had actually met Lu Xun. What most impressed her was that both of these incidents occurred while Zhu was still in jail or undergoing labour reform. Dai says that Zhu's scholastic probity and personal strength have directly influenced her. He was the subject of her first interview and the admiration she felt for him is obvious from the style of the interview.

Dai was herself an avid reader of Lu Xun, and some of her best essays deal with that writer. In her article on Zhu she quotes Lu Xun by way of commenting on her subject:

From the most ancient times there have always been people in China who have buried themselves in their work or battled on in their endeavours regardless. There have also been those who have petitioned the throne on behalf of the people or even sacrificed themselves for others. . . . [Even] the 'official histories' (*zhengshi* 正史) that are no more than the family chronicles of emperors, kings, generals and ministers, can not conceal their lustre, for they are the backbone of China.<sup>33</sup>

Dai's interviewing technique was copied from Studs Terkel, the American writer and author of *Working* and *American Dreams: Lost and Found*, whom she had accompanied on his visit to China when she was working for the Chinese Writers' Association. She recorded her subjects on tape and took copious notes as well.<sup>34</sup>

In my interviews I discovered that Chinese history has been completely distorted; it was [written] to delude the people. In individual terms, every life is in itself a living history, and it is of priceless worth both as history and literature. This is the realization I had.<sup>35</sup>

Getting to know Zhu Zheng led Dai Qing to want to find out more about what had actually led to the persecution of people like him.<sup>36</sup> It also sparked her interest in studying the case of Chu Anping, one of the few Rightists of the late 1950s who remained 'un-rehabilitated' even after the Party's re-evaluation of the Anti-Rightist Campaign in the late 1970s. Dai's study of Chu, "Chu Anping yu 'Dang tianxia'" [Chu Anping and 'Total Party Domination'] was originally to be presented at a scholastic conference organized by Fang Lizhi, Liu Binyan and Xu Liangying to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement. The conference was cancelled due to the purge of 'bourgeois liberalization' initiated by Party leaders in January 1987, but Dai continued her work on Chu and eventually published it as both a lengthy article and in book form in 1989.<sup>37</sup>

During this period (1982-86) Dai Qing appeared to be little more than a journalist reporting on contemporary China; her stories covered everything from industrial projects to the life of soldiers at the Vietnam front. Despite the mundane nature of these topics, Dai always managed to add to her writing a dimension that was fresh and often highly unorthodox.<sup>38</sup> At the same time she was slowly "waking up to the types of external pressures and internal agonies you go through as an everyday journalist in China."<sup>39</sup>

Even with all of the frustrations created by Party dictates, the mid-1980s was an exciting period for Chinese journalists. The reform policies coupled with the general decline in ideological rectitude that came in their wake created an atmosphere in which people were increasingly willing to talk about their past. The increasing economic pressures within the publishing industry and print media, as well as the competition among journalists

<sup>33</sup> Lu Xun, "Zhongguoren shidiao zixinli le ma" [Have the Chinese lost their self-confidence?], in *Qiejieting zawan, Lu Xun quanji*, [The complete works of Lu Xun] (Peking: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1981), 6: 118.

<sup>34</sup> Wang Yunxin, "From high cadre's progeny to reporter," p.43.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.* It is of some value in this context to compare an observation made by the Czech writer Václav Havel: "While I was in prison, I realized again and again how much more present—compared with life outside—the story was. Almost every prisoner had a story that was unique and shocking, or moving. As I listened to those different accounts, I suddenly found myself in something like a 'pre-totalitarian' world, or simply in the world of literature. Whatever else I may have thought of my fellow-prisoners' colourful narratives, there is one thing they were not: they were not documents of totalitarian nihilisation. On the contrary, they testified to the rebelliousness with which human uniqueness resists its own nihilisation, and the stubbornness with which it holds to its own and is willing to ignore this negating pressure." From Havel, "Stories and totalitarianism," *Index on censorship*, 1988, no.3, p.17.

<sup>36</sup> Tongyu interview. For more on the influence of Zhu Zheng, see Zhuang Jian, "Dai Qing zuo jizhe" [Dai Qing turns reporter], in *China's women reporters*, 2: 490–1, and Dai's essay "Laji langyouji" [Meanderings in 'garbage'] in a volume of her writings published in Zhu Zheng's Camel Book Series, *Zhuizhu mogui, zhuazhu shangdi* [Expel the devil and clasp onto God] (Changsha: Hunan Renmin Chubanshe, 1988), p.43.

<sup>37</sup> Furongli interview, 25 August. See also Fang Lizhi, "The Chinese Amnesia," *New York Review of Books* 37, no.14 (27 September 1990): 30–1, for some relevant comments on this aborted conference and historical memory.

<sup>38</sup> See *China's women reporters*, 2: 491. For a sample of Dai's favourite articles from this period, see *Expel the devil and clasp onto God*, pp.1–29. For an example of her unorthodox approach, see in particular "Ershiyi sui, zai Laoshan" [Twenty-one, at Laoshan] in this collection, pp.27–9.

<sup>39</sup> *China's women reporters*, 2: 492.

<sup>40</sup> Wang Yunxin, "From high cadre's progeny to reporter," p.43.

<sup>41</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>42</sup> Furongli interview, 16 August.

<sup>43</sup> Ding Shouhe, Xu Zongmian, Chen Tiejian, Geng Yunzhi, Jiang Dachun and Chen Wengui, "Li Shu xueshu sixiang shulie" [A précis of Li Shu's academic thought], *Zhongguo shehui kexue* [Chinese Social Sciences], 1989, no.3, p.50.

<sup>44</sup> The New Enlightenment Series, founded under the editorship of Wang Yuanhua, was a magazine produced as a book, thereby avoiding official publication restrictions on new periodicals. In the few issues that appeared in 1988–89, the series featured such writers as Wang Ruoshui, Li Rui, Yu Haocheng, Jin Guantao, Xu Jilin, Liu Xiaobo and Gao Ertai.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Li's "Xiaomie fengjian canyu yingxiangshi Zhongguo xiandaihuade zhongyao tiaojian" [An important precondition for Chinese modernization is the elimination of the influence of the remnants of feudalism], *Historical Research*, 1979, no.1, pp.3–19, especially p.14.

<sup>46</sup> Li Shu, "Lun lishidechuangzao ji qita" [On the creation of history, and other questions], *Historical Research*, 1984, no.5, pp.52–61.

<sup>47</sup> From 1979, the journal *Historical Research* became something of a forum for articles on this subject. Li wrote an introduction to a volume of materials on the late nineteenth-century Self-Strengthening Movement as well; see *Historical Research*, 1985, no.2, pp.131–32.

<sup>48</sup> See "Womende daonian" [We mourn], *Xinqimeng 4: Lushan huiyi jiaoxun* [New Enlightenment Series, no.4: The lessons of the Lushan meeting] (Changsha: Hunan Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1989), p.3. A more scholarly and detailed account of Li's work in both academic and ideological debates can be found in Ding *et al.*, "Li Shu's academic thought," pp.47–68, especially p.61.

to find ever new topics and story angles spurred on many 'mass media historians' and writers of reportage. Dai not only was able to discover people and events previously closed off to her because of her upbringing, education and earlier career, but she also became something of a confidant of the people she met.

The delight you could get from interviewing people who were willing to pour out their hearts to you is indescribable. . . . I profited from the intellectual and emotional repression that people had suffered for so long. As soon as they came into contact with someone like me people would experience something of an awakening. There was a kind of empathetic response; they would trust you so much that they'd tell you everything.<sup>40</sup>

In the process of interviewing people from all walks of life and scholars who had been victimized by Party policy such as Zhu Zheng, Dai Qing also began to reassess the nature of Chinese political life which—having enjoyed a relatively sheltered upbringing as a member of the ruling élite—she had never seriously questioned. "What type of Party is it? What did it want to achieve and what has it actually done? Why does it act in the way it does?"<sup>41</sup> "In fact, I was coming into contact with people who were living history, whose lives reflected their own historical truth." It was then she began to think about telling their stories and to write history, and through this endeavour to find some of the answers to these questions.<sup>42</sup>

The other person who played a crucial role in Dai Qing's development as a writer of history was Li Shu (1912–88). Although once denounced as an 'inner-Party democrat' in the late 1950s,<sup>43</sup> Li was actually a Party propagandist who in his later years felt driven into rebellion against orthodoxy. He became a crucial figure in the debates concerning historiography in the People's Republic from the late 1970s. At a meeting on theory in March, 1979, he was the first to voice the belief that the 'new democratic period'—the phase of political and economic liberalism that was a feature of the Party's public platform in the 1940s—had been brought to a premature end with socialization in the 1950s. As editor of the leading official journal, *Lishi yanjiu* [Historical Research], and of *Zhongguo shehui kexue* [Chinese Social Sciences], Li was a guiding hand behind the re-evaluation of major historical questions and tenets in the 1980s. According to an obituary in the controversial *Xinqimeng* [New Enlightenment Series],<sup>44</sup> Li Shu was especially renowned for his views on 'feudalism' in contemporary Chinese politics, holding that it remained a greater threat than 'bourgeois thought',<sup>45</sup> and for his opposition to the excessive emphasis placed on peasant rebellions and their role in Chinese history.<sup>46</sup> He had argued for the re-evaluation of the Self-Strengthening Movement<sup>47</sup> and encouraged independent scholastic thought and disregard for established authorities.<sup>48</sup> As the editor of *Historical Research* he also played an important role in the re-evaluation of Party history,

publishing the theoretician Li Honglin's 李洪林 important essay on Party history in early 1979<sup>49</sup> and producing an editorial note in which he criticized the concept of 'Party spirit' (*dangxing* 黨性, the Chinese equivalent of the Soviet term *partiinost*) as the guiding force in the writing of history. When Li Shu's obituary was published in the *New Enlightenment Series*, the signatories included Wang Yuanhua 王元化, Wang Ruoshui 王若水, Ge Yang 戈揚, Zhu Zheng 朱正, Li Rui 李銳, Li Honglin and Hu Jiwei 胡績偉—all prominent editors and writers who were either purged or forced into exile after June 1989.<sup>50</sup> Before his death Li Shu was a member of the editorial committee of this series, which was banned following 4 June 1989.

Dai Qing wrote of him: "His statement in 1979 that 'historical studies have fallen into degradation and become nothing but the handmaidens of power' gave a whole range of people a shock which took them a long time to recover from! Li was famous for his self-critical stance . . ." <sup>51</sup> Of her own reaction, she said that it "immediately made me love that old man." She searched for his books and looked out for articles, and was eventually able to meet and get to know him. At the time her greatest hope was that her daughter, Wang Xiaojia 王小嘉, a student in the history department of Peking University, would eventually be accepted as one of his research students.<sup>52</sup> Li, however, died before her daughter finished her undergraduate studies.<sup>53</sup>

Li's independent voice, she reasoned, should have become one strain in a chorus of a wholly new symphony of debate; instead Li stood out as a soloist. Among the people Dai interviewed for her series "Conversations with Scholars," Li was the only one she felt who actually responded to her questions with a genuinely fresh perspective, and did not merely come out with the usual set formulations or stock ideas.<sup>54</sup> In that interview, Li said that all history has to be studied afresh but there are many difficulties in actually discerning the contours and details of modern Chinese history.<sup>55</sup> His views were also to have a marked effect on Dai Qing's own understanding of China's history since the late nineteenth century, in particular the role of the 100 Days Reform of 1898, the question of reform in general and her attitude to the Protest Movement of 1989.<sup>56</sup>

As an academic, Li's methodological approach to history also figures prominently in the development of Dai's own style of historical writing. As he wrote:

To avoid mediocrity, be individually creative, reveal the true mien of history and to be capable of drawing lessons from it, it is necessary for a historian to have awareness and courage, and to combine historical morality, talent and perception (*shide, shicai, shishi* 史德, 史才, 史識).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Li Honglin, "Dapo dangshi jinqu" [Invade the forbidden zones of Party history], *Historical Research*, 1979, no.1, pp.20–32, revised and reprinted in Li's *Lilun fengyun* [Theoretical storms] (Peking: Sanlian Shudian, 1985), pp.58–78. The second print run of this book (1986) was not distributed and in 1990 the publisher was ordered by the publishing authorities to destroy the remaining 20,000 copies.

<sup>50</sup> See also the three essays written in *memoriam* by Tang Zhenchang in *Wangshi ru yan huai shizhe* [As fading mists one mourns the departed] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1990), pp.133–61.

<sup>51</sup> Dai Qing, "On interviewing scholars," p.546. An example of Li's self-reflection can be found in his introduction to *Zaisiji* [On rethinking things], a collection of his essays on history compiled shortly before his death. See Ding, *et al.*, "Li Shu's academic thought." Li Shu gave a more phlegmatic appraisal of the fate of the social sciences in general in "Zhongguo shehui kexue sanshinian" [Thirty years of social sciences in China], *Historical Research*, 1979, no.11, pp.3–16.

<sup>52</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>53</sup> Dai commented (Tongyu interview) that perhaps Li was fortunate to go when he did, "otherwise he would have died of anger (*qisi*) in 1989." Wang Xiaojia was unable to continue her studies after graduating from Peking University in 1990 because she declined to denounce her mother.

<sup>54</sup> Tongyu interview. Dai quotes Li's memoirs extensively in her work on Chu Anping. These memoirs were published with other essays in the Camel Book Series under the title *Lun lishi de chuanguang zaoji qita* [On the creation of history, and other questions]. Other collections of Li's writings include *On rethinking things* and *Zaosui* [Early years], the latter being a collection of autobiographical essays which Dai praises as outstanding examples of the modern Chinese memoir.

<sup>55</sup> Dai, *Conversations with scholars*, p.33.

<sup>56</sup> See Dai Qing, *My imprisonment*, p.42 where she refers to Li's impact on her thinking; also Dai's interview with Li in *Conversations with scholars*, p.44. For Li's attitudes to violent revolution and peaceful evolution, see Ding, *et al.*, "Li Shu's academic thought," pp.63–4.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p.60.

## IV

You [the Party leaders] are always carrying on about “creating happiness for the People” and how “he [Mao] is the saviour of the People.” Well, I want to know just how all this happiness has come about.

—*Dai Qing in conversation with the editor of Tian-hsia magazine, 18 October 1985*<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> See Zheng Weihe, ed., *Zhongguozainali?* [Where's China?] (Taipei: Tianxia Wenhua Chuban Gufen Youxian Gongsi, 1989), p.202.

<sup>59</sup> A translation of Wang's four most important essays and speeches can be found in Guilhem Fabre, *Genèse du pouvoir et de l'opposition en Chine* (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1990), pp.149–72. Translations of “Wild Lilies” and “Politicians, Artists” are given in Gregor Benton's *Wild Lilies: poisonous weeds, dissident voices from People's China* (London: Pluto Press, 1982) pp.175–86. For a thorough discussion of these essays and their significance, see Timothy Cheek, “The fading of Wild Lilies: Wang Shiwei and Mao Zedong's *Yan'an Talks* in the first CPC rectification movement,” *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 11 (January 1984): 31–2, 34–5.

<sup>60</sup> Timothy Cheek, “The fading of Wild Lilies,” p.36. Cheek translates the title of Wang's essay “Zhengzhijia, yishujia” as “Statesmen-Artists.”

A brief summary of the case of Wang Shiwei and an overview of the genesis of Dai's work on the subject reveal the difficulties faced by the independent historian in China. They are also of interest in our consideration of Dai's work as a whole, and its significance as historiographical dissent.

Wang Shiwei, a translator and novelist born in Henan, had, like many other urban intellectuals, joined the Communist Party and travelled to Yan'an in the late 1930s. In February–March 1942, when he was twenty-five, Wang published a number of essays which attracted a large and enthusiastic audience in the Communist base area. These writings, the most controversial of which were entitled “Zhengzhijia, yishujia” [Politicians, Artists] and “Ye baihehua” [Wild Lilies], were part of the first serious critique originating within the Party on the lack of intellectual freedom and the right to opposition and freedom of speech, and were aimed at a mass readership. Wang was one of a number of people to voice such critical opinions in the early months of 1942. Others included Ding Ling 丁玲, Luo Feng 羅烽, Ai Qing 艾青 and Xiao Jun 蕭軍.

The Party leaders under Mao Zedong had launched the first Party Rectification in 1942. It aimed to eradicate the remnant influences of Wang Ming 王明 and the ‘Russian Returned Students’ as well as attacking the Yan'an bureaucracy. A number of writers, in particular Wang Shiwei, saw in the rectification a chance to create a space for their independent critiques of the Party. Wang, in particular, used his essays or *zawen*, patterned on the caustic style of Lu Xun, to call for greater ‘democracy’ within the Party. He appealed to young people and cadres to criticize their leaders for a range of problems related to their ‘work style’. In “Politicians, Artists,” Wang lauded the role of the writer as a critical opponent of the powerholders. In “Wild Lilies,” his most famous essay, he pointed out, among other things, the ‘feudal’ characteristics of Party rule, including its hierarchical nature and the corruption that resulted from it.<sup>59</sup> Wang “was certain that the revolution needed the artist as an independent source of remonstrance. first in 1941, then by argument in ‘Politicians, Artists’, and then by example in ‘Wild Lilies’, Wang Shiwei tried to reconcile organized Party work and independent leftist writing. He offered a niche to writers as ‘engineers of the soul’ and mapped out a programme through which they could expose and purge the ‘filth of old China’ bit by bit.”<sup>60</sup>

“Wild Lilies” comments in a number of vignettes on the fading of revolutionary enthusiasm among the young people in the Communist base,

pointing at the callousness of Party leaders who were cleaving to privilege and showing their fellows and subordinates none of the sympathy which their cause purported to espouse. The essay states in often caustic terms that Party cadres were self-indulgent and divorced from the masses, and that they underestimated the frustrations and disaffection of idealistic young people in Yan'an.

Wang's essays and those of a number of other critical writers were published in the Yan'an press and in wall posters. They elicited an enthusiastic popular response, much to the surprise of the leaders in charge of what had started out as a 'rectification' aimed at strengthening Mao Zedong's leadership. As Dai Qing remarks: "Originally, Wang Shiwei and his lot had nothing whatsoever to do with this campaign: they were neither its target nor its chief supporters. Their task was simple: all they had to do was listen to the relevant reports, applaud on cue and write an ideological report or two on demand. That was all."<sup>61</sup> But the spate of unorganized and unexpected protests forced the Party authorities to focus their attention for a time on these unruly and popular intellectual critics and from April to June 1942, the rectification concentrated on the literary renegades.

Wang Shiwei was a research officer in the translation department of the Central Research Institute (formerly the Academy for Marxist-Leninist Studies). In the 1980s, Li Weihai 李維漢 (Luo Mai 羅邁), the acting head of the institute at the time and the man who had overseen the 'struggle' against Wang in the institute, summed up his official view of the incident by saying that: "Prior to the rectification in Yan'an there was a current of thought that favoured extreme liberalism and egalitarianism. . . . Wang Shiwei represented this trend in the institute. . . ."<sup>62</sup> Li declared that Wang and other 'petit bourgeois' intellectuals attempted to hijack the Rectification Campaign, demand 'extreme democracy' and oppose the 'democratic centralism'<sup>63</sup> of the Party. Wang's former connection with and sympathy for the Trotskyites was "uncovered" and "everyone gradually came to a deeper understanding of him, appreciating that his anti-Party stance resulted from an anti-Party motivation; his reactionary thinking led to anti-Party acts in both the political and organizational spheres."<sup>64</sup> Through this struggle, Li averred, the participants came to realize that the disagreement with Wang Shiwei represented a contest between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, that it was a struggle with "most serious political and educational implications."<sup>65</sup>

During the organized reponse to this strand of 'petit bourgeois liberalism', the Party line on culture was also formulated and presented by Mao Zedong in speeches at the May Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art.<sup>66</sup> These 'talks' have provided the theoretical basis for Mainland Chinese culture since 1949.

Ideological re-education or thought reform which involved a process of public denunciation, mass struggle, confessions, personal renewal and

<sup>61</sup> From Dai's study "Wang Shiwei yu 'Ye baihehua'" [Wang Shiwei and "Wild Lilies"], collected in *Xiandai Zhongguo zhishefenziqun*, Liang Shuming, Wang Shiwei, Chu Anping [A group of modern Chinese intellectuals: Liang Shuming, Wang Shiwei and Chu Anping] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Wenyi Chubanshe, 1989), p.52 (hereafter referred to as *Liang, Wang, Chu*).

<sup>62</sup> Li Weihai, "Zhongyang Yanjiuyuande yanjiu gongzuo he zhengfeng yundong" [Research work in the Central Party Institute and the Rectification Campaign], *Huiyi yu yanjiu* [Reminiscences and researches] (Peking: Zhonggong Dangshi Ziliao Chubanshe, 1986), 2: 479-80. This memoir was originally published in *Zhonggong dangshi ziliao* 8 [Materials on CPC Party history, no.8], a restricted publication, in 1983. Dai used this material extensively in her own work.

<sup>63</sup> Li Weihai, "Research work," p.482.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p.492.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p.493. For Dai Qing's view of Li Weihai's response to Wang Shiwei, see *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.51-2.

<sup>66</sup> See Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong xuanji* [Selected works of Mao Zedong], "Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhuishangde jianghua" [Talks at the Yan'an forum on literature and art] (Peking: Renmin Chubanshe, 1969), 3: 824-31; Bonnie S. McDougall, *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an conference on literature and art": a translation of the 1943 text with commentary*, Michigan Papers on Chinese Studies, no.33 (Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1980). Also Xiao and Tian, *Eight interviews*; Cheek, "The fading of Wild Lilies," pp.38-41 and 49-51; David Holm, "The literary rectification in Yan'an," in *Essays in modern Chinese literature and literary criticism*, ed. Wolfgang Kubin and Rudolf Wagner (Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1982); Merle Goldman, *Literary dissent in Communist China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp.34-42.

<sup>67</sup> For a study of this 'model', see Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and purges in China: rectification and the decline of party norms 1950–1965* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1979), pp.30–57; Cheek, "The fading of Wild Lilies," pp.25–58; Peter J. Seybolt, "Terror and conformity: counter-espionage campaigns, rectification, and mass movements, 1942–1943," *Modern China* (January 1986): 47–50; Iaszlo Ladany, *The Communist Party of China and Marxism, 1921–1985: a self-portrait* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1988), p.59.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted by Dai in the Hong Kong version of "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'"; see *Mingbao Monthly*, 1988, no.5, p.3. Note that Dai was using an 'unauthorized' Mao quote, that is, one that had not been published as part of the official body of Mao Zedong's writings. For the original, see *Zai kuodade Zhongyang gongzuo huiyishang-de jianghua* [A speech at an enlarged work meeting of the Central Committee, 30 January, 1962] in *Mao Zedong tongzhi shi dang-dai zui weidade Makesi-Liening zhuyizhe* [Comrade Mao Zedong is the greatest living Marxist-Leninist] (Saitama: Okura Henshū Kikaku, 1974), p.421.

<sup>69</sup> See "Guanyu 'zaipipan' de anyu" [A note on "The re-criticism"], *Wenyibao* [Literary Gazette] 1958, no.2. In his autobiography, Liu Binyan says that before Wang Meng's "Zuzhibu xinlaide qingnianren" [A new arrival at the organization department] was criticized at *Zhongguo qingnianbao* [China Youth News], Wang's "Wild Lilies" was distributed for reference. See Liu Binyan, *A bigger kind of loyalty: a memoir by China's foremost journalist*, trans. Zhu Hong (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), p.68.

<sup>70</sup> Lin is quoted in Fabre, *Genèse du pouvoir et de l'opposition en Chine*, p.123. Lin Mohan was an active critic of cultural liberalization throughout the 1980s and again after 4 June 1989. When asked about the second denunciation of Wang Shiwei, Dai Qing said she had no idea that it had happened (Tongyu interview).

penance, often in the form of manual labour, became the means by which artists and intellectuals were obliged to reorient themselves under the aegis of the Party. The purge of 1942 was part of the continuing displacement of Chinese writers and artists as a cultural élite who saw themselves as both superior to their fellows and the conscience of the society. This displacement was premised on the need for the critical individual to be subsumed within the Party collective. The origins of the 'reformation' of Chinese intellectuals can be found even further in the past, yet in the purge of Wang Shiwei a pattern or a 'model' for the rectification of intellectuals was set for decades to come.<sup>67</sup>

Considerable pressure was brought to bear on Wang and his fellows to recant their errors. Although he was eventually to cave in, for a considerable time Wang Shiwei rejected the criticisms of him, thus becoming the chief target of the purge. He was denounced and 'struggled' (publicly exposed to repeated and lengthy verbal abuse) as both a KMT (Nationalist) spy and a Trotskyite. He was later imprisoned and underwent reform through labour. In 1947, as the Communist forces withdrew from the Yan'an base area, Wang was executed, becoming the first known Chinese writer to die during the Party's 1940s ascendancy for his dissenting views.

Perhaps the most famous comment on the Wang case was made by Mao Zedong in a speech to an enlarged work meeting of the Party Central Committee in 1962, in which he remarked: "There was that fellow Wang Shiwei in Yan'an, a spy planted there by the KMT who wrote an essay called 'Wild Lilies'. In it he attacked the revolution and reviled the Communist Party. He was subsequently arrested and killed. . . . We have our reservations about that, we don't think he should have been executed. But he was a spy, he wrote an article in which he attacked us, and he adamantly refused to repent. He should have been left to undergo labour reform; killing him was the wrong thing to do."<sup>68</sup> Dai used this quotation to preface her study of Wang; it was retained in the Hong Kong version of the work, but cut out of the text as published on the Mainland.

Wang Shiwei was generally known in China because of Mao's implicit attack on him and the other essayists who had spoken up in early 1942 in the "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" and because of a subsequent denunciation in the 1950s. The *Wenyibao* [Literary Gazette] reprinted Wang's "Wild Lilies" along with other previously denounced works by Wang's former cohorts in 1958.<sup>69</sup> The renewed attacks on Wang were part of the purge of Ding Ling and Chen Qixia 陳企霞 orchestrated by Zhou Yang 周揚, then China's 'cultural Tsar' and a literary theoretician who had been active in the original denunciation of Wang, Ding and the others in Yan'an. Lin Mohan 林默涵, then Vice-Minister of Culture, commented that although history did not repeat itself, it was relevant to review the struggle against Wang Shiwei when denouncing the Rightists.<sup>70</sup> In the

Cultural Revolution, when Zhou Yang was himself purged he was attacked as a counter-revolutionary plotter linked to Wang Shiwei!<sup>71</sup>

However, since the Yan'an period and even in the 1980s little information was available concerning the context of the denunciation of Wang Shiwei, its significance at the time, and its vital relevance to the reformist intellectual debates following the Cultural Revolution. Access to his writings free of prejudicial critical attacks did become easier from the late 1970s as Wang's essays were reprinted in a number of anthologies on modern literary history.

In 1981, when Li Weihai gave a speech at the fortieth anniversary of the Central Research Institute's establishment, although he maintained that the denunciation of Wang's 'liberalism' was correct, he recommended that the case against Wang Shiwei as a spy and Trotskyite be re-investigated. As a result of Li's comments Wen Jize 溫濟澤, the man who had written the officially published report of the struggling of Wang in Yan'an, and Li Yan 李言, formerly the Party Secretary of the institute, wrote a petition in support of Li's proposal to the Party Organization Ministry. They received no reply.<sup>72</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that in the second volume of the official *Selected Readings in the Works of Mao Zedong*, published in 1986, there is a footnote which reads ". . . subsequent investigations failed to prove that he [Wang Shiwei] was an informer planted by the KMT or a spy."<sup>73</sup> Whereas the other Party cadres denounced along with Wang Shiwei as spies belonging to a "five Person Anti-Party Clique" had all been secretly rehabilitated by 1982, because of the Party's continuing opposition to even loyal critics like Wang Shiwei, his case could not be so easily overturned.<sup>74</sup>

By the mid-1980s, however, there were those in the leadership who understood the significance of the purge of Wang Shiwei and the pressing need for the issues thrown up by his case to be addressed. In early 1986, Hu Qili, the Party official in charge of ideological work, quoted the Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang as having said that:

In considering our history we can see there are many lessons to be learnt. Starting with the criticism of Wang Shiwei in the Yan'an period, and later [the denunciation of] Hu Feng, right up to the attacks on the "Three Family Village" in the "Cultural Revolution," our experiences surely tell us that to start a movement, beat people with [ideological sticks], turn ideological questions into political ones, and then punish people by administrative means, invariably leads to conclusions [about these cases] that won't stand the test of time.<sup>75</sup>

Despite these indications of a change of attitude among certain Party leaders, and repeated petitioning by his widow, Liu Ying 劉瑩, no official re-examination of the Wang case was made and the process of rehabilitation remained stalled.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>71</sup> See the Fudan University Revolutionary Criticism Writing Group's "Zhou Yang he 'Ye baihehua'" [Zhou Yang and "Wild Lilies": a critique of a counter-revolutionary incident in Yan'an, 1942], *Jiefang Ribao* [Liberation Daily], 29 March 1970.

<sup>72</sup> See Wen Jize's comments in Xiao and Tian, *Eight interviews*, and Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.81 and n. 2.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.97 and the editorial note to the Hong Kong version in *Mingbao Monthly*, 1988, no.5, p.3.

<sup>74</sup> See Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.96-8.

<sup>75</sup> Hu Qili, "Hu Qili tongzhi guanyu gaige he jingshen wenming jianshe deng wentide tanhua zhaiyao" [Extracts of Comrade Hu Qili's remarks on questions pertaining to reform and the construction of spiritual civilization], *Dangshi Tongxun* [Party History Newsletter] 1986, no.10, p.3. Hu Qili's comments were made in April 1986 and published both internally and in *Liaowang* magazine. 'Sanjiacun' [Three Family Village] is a reference to the writers Deng Tuo, Wu Han and Liao Mosha who were denounced for supposedly anti-Party propaganda.

<sup>76</sup> Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.104-5.

## V

I was determined to start from the biggest lies, the greatest injustices. I didn't want to waste my time on those incredibly safe incidents that the Party is doing something about anyway. Why was I determined to write about Wang Shiwei? Because Wang Zhen and gang have such a terrible attitude regarding his case.<sup>77</sup> They think that as it happened half a century ago we should forget all about it. Why should they get away with it? They not only killed the man, now they want to prevent us from even talking about him. This really spurred me on; I couldn't resist the challenge. I don't want to write about some safe figure like Ma Yinchu 馬寅初 and the population problem.

—Dai Qing<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Wang Zhen was appointed by Mao to oversee the 'rectification' of Yan'an cultural workers in 1942. At the time he was a garrison commander and unwilling to undertake this task because of his limited education. He recalls that Mao said to him with a smile, "It's just someone without much education that I want to deal with these cultural people." See Wang Zhen, "Manqiang reqingde duidai renminde shiye" [Treat the people's enterprise with enthusiasm], *People's Daily*, 23 May 1987. See also "Wang Zhen jiangjun he zhishifenzi" [General Wang Zhen and intellectuals], *Guangming Daily*, 18 July 1982. Wang comes in for some special attention in Dai's "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies,'" *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp. 72, 77–8, in particular the note on p. 78. These references to Wang were deleted from the original Mainland publication of Dai's essay and only restored in the book version. Wang Zhen was particularly energetic in attacking cultural 'aberrations' throughout the 1980s.

<sup>78</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>79</sup> Dai was involved in another historical investigation prior to this. "Liang Shuming and Mao Zedong" was published as being co-authored by Dai and Zheng Zhishu (a pen-name used by Wang Donglin) in the January 1988 issue of *Encounter Monthly*, and collected in *Liang, Wang, Chu*. Although heavily revised by Dai, it was substantially Wang's work.

<sup>80</sup> Tongyu interview. See also Dai's comments in Xiao and Tian, *Eight interviews*.

A number of incidents and coincidences led Dai Qing to embark on the numerous interviews and detailed research necessary for her first major independent work of historical investigative journalism.<sup>79</sup>

Wang Shiwei had a special role in Dai Qing's personal history. Although during the Cultural Revolution she had unquestioningly accepted the official version of Wang's case (that he was a KMT spy bent on using his satirical essays to undermine the revolution), the name Wang Shiwei had held an unsettling fascination for Dai Qing from her childhood. This was not only because of the odium attached to it by Party orthodoxy. Rather the reason lay with her stepfather, Tang Hai 唐海, who like so many young idealists of his generation had, upon graduating from university in Shanghai in 1936, gone to Yan'an. Tang was caught up in vicious criticisms levelled against many of these young enthusiasts during the Party Rectification Campaign of 1942. Denounced as 'progeny of the landlord class' and a spy he was jailed during the same movement in which Wang Shiwei was vilified. Although his name was eventually cleared, the experience left Tang mentally unstable. He was denounced again in the 1950s. Dai Qing recalls that during these later purges or whenever he let his mind dwell on the reasons for his illness Tang would become paranoid, his eyes bulging as he declared, "I must work hard at remoulding my thinking, otherwise I'll end up a spy like Wang Shiwei." Dai does not recall when she first heard him speak like this, but when she witnessed one of his attacks after she had become a reporter, possibly in 1984, she decided she had to find out what the Wang Shiwei case was all about.<sup>80</sup>

Dai Qing said that by reading Qu Qiubai's "Superfluous Words" in the Cultural Revolution she knew that to understand a person you could not rely on second-hand information. When she actually re-read Wang Shiwei's essays—which were made available again in various publications during the 1980s—she realized the received official version of the case was a distortion.

In 1985, the first major opportunity to study Wang presented itself: Wen Jize, a leading figure in the Party History Research Institute of the

Central Committee and the head of the journal *Zhonghua yinglie* [China's Heroes and Martyrs] asked her to join the magazine as an editor.<sup>81</sup>

Dai's involvement with this magazine was also the result of a number of coincidences which are linked to her special family background. Although her natural father, Fu Daqing 傅大慶, had been officially classified as a martyr by the Party Organization Ministry, she was never told what work he had been engaged in or how he had met his death. In the early 1980s her mother, Feng Dazhang 馮大璋, heard that a Central Committee Party leader had mentioned her husband in a speech given at the Central Party School and thought this was an ideal opportunity to tell his story.<sup>82</sup> She knew that Li Weihai had founded the *Geming lieshi zhuan bianji weiyuanhui* [Editorial Committee for the Writing of Revolutionary Martyrs' Biographies]<sup>83</sup> and thought this the best avenue for the production of a biography of Fu Daqing.<sup>84</sup> She appealed to old friends such as Nie Rongzhen, Cai Chang and Deng Yingchao, now all Party elders, to support her request, but as Dai had predicted "none of them took any notice"—"people are just like that." Her distraught mother asked Dai, now an active and well-known journalist, to help.

Dai Qing found out who had actually been appointed to take charge of the martyrs' biographies: it was the senior Party historian Wen Jize. He had been a member of the Party's *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan* [Central Research Institute] in Yan'an and before his full-time involvement in the Central Committee's Party History Research Institute, he had headed the research students' section of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Wen readily agreed that a biography of Fu Daqing should be included in the series when Dai approached him. As they chatted Wen asked her whether she could be persuaded to help edit the new journal, *China's Heroes and Martyrs*, that would be publishing Fu's biography. At the time this magazine was still limited to internal reference and had a restricted circulation.

Her initial reaction was to decline the offer: she reasoned that there was no way such a publication could ever print the truth about martyrs. As they discussed the proposal, however, Wen happened to mention the fact that he had been involved with the Wang Shiwei case in 1942 and that he was the author of the *Douzheng riji* [Diary of the Struggle]<sup>85</sup> a detailed and authoritative contemporary account of the denunciation of Wang. Dai had been interested in pursuing Wang's story but had failed to find a suitable opportunity; Wen's revelation provided a perfect entrée. She immediately agreed to help edit the journal. Friends and associates who did not understand her 'hidden agenda' in accepting the job commented that she had embarked on a clever strategic course: while ingratiating herself with the authorities by working on *China's Heroes and Martyrs*, she could continue to write 'graze ball' (*cabianqiu* 擦邊球) articles.<sup>86</sup> Dai denies that she had such a strategy. "I wouldn't have taken

<sup>81</sup> This bimonthly magazine first appeared as a restricted publication under the name *Geming Lieshi Zhuan Tongxun* [Newsletter for Biographies of Revolutionary Martyrs]. The name change was made in early 1986.

<sup>82</sup> This was quite possibly in a speech by Li Weihai who, before his death, was very energetic in his encouragement of Party historians. As early as 1981 he had called for Yan'an period cadres to write their memoirs. Much of the material that was produced as a result of this has been published in the internally circulated book series *Zhonggong dangshi ziliao* [Materials on CPC party history], edited by the CPC Central Committee Party Materials Compilation Committee of the Central Committee Party History Research Office and published in Peking.

<sup>83</sup> This committee belongs to the *Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiushi* [Party History Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China].

<sup>84</sup> A biographical essay on Fu Daqing did eventually appear in another journal. See Zhang Yu, "Xian wei ren zhide Zhonghua yingjie Fu Daqing" [Fu Daqing, a little-known hero of China], *Renwu* [Personalities], 1989, no.1, pp.27–36.

<sup>85</sup> Printed in *Liberation Daily*, 28–29 June 1942. See Goldman, *Literary dissent*, pp.32, 38 and 283, nn. 40, 51, 52. For a translation of this text in the most recent work on Wang Shiwei, see Fabre, *Genèse du pouvoir et de l'opposition en Chine*, pp.191–206. In the 'Avertissement' to his book, an expanded and updated version of his 1980 doctoral thesis, Fabre says, "Ce livre est dédié à Dai Qing, arrêtée au lendemain du massacre de Pékin en juin 1989." Dai quotes Wen's diary a number of times in "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'"; see Liang, *Wang, Chu*, pp.75–6, 79, 80–1, 82–5.

<sup>86</sup> *Cabianqiu* is a term originating in table tennis. 'Grazed ball' or 'edge ball' writing just manages to get by the censors as edge balls in table tennis just manage to count for a point in the game.

<sup>87</sup> The material in this paragraph comes from the Tongyu interview. See also Dai Qing, “Zhonghua yinglie yu 1986” [*China’s Heroes and Martyrs* and 1986], *Dusbu* [Reading], 1987, no.2, pp.122–4.

<sup>88</sup> Dai interviewed Qin, originally a scholar of world history, for *Conversations with scholars*, pp.227–34. For a comment by Qin on his involvement with *China’s Heroes and Martyrs*, see “Yong bu geqiande fengfan—wo yu *Zhonghua yinglie*” [A sail that will never be becalmed—my relationship with *China’s Heroes and Martyrs*], *Zhongguo Tusbu Pinglun* [China Book Review], 1989, no.1, pp.108–10.

<sup>89</sup> Details of this incident and Dai’s work on Liang Shuming with Wang Donglin have been left out of this paper for reasons of space. Dai subsequently helped to get Wang’s article published in the Shanghai journal *Encounter Monthly*. She rewrote sections of the piece and for this reason the editors of *Liang, Wang, Chu* included it in that volume. See n. 79 above. Dai and Qin Xiaoying, fell out as a result of the Wang Donglin incident. Qin, formerly of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, achieved a new status in 1990 as the chief author of the CPC Propaganda Ministry’s four-part riposte to “Heshang” [River elegy], the television series *Shijixing: sixiang jiben yuanze zonghengqian* [On the road: the four basic principles], screened on China Central Television in early August, 1990.

<sup>90</sup> From notes Perry Link, a co-editor of *Dongfang jishi*, made on 25 March 1989 when talking with Dai on her historiography. Professor Link kindly provided this and other quotations from that occasion in a letter to the writer dated 1 June 1990. This is not an exact quotation from Dai and minor stylistic changes have been made to the translation.

the job on if it was a really revolting magazine.” She believed a good job could be made of the thing and argues that the issues produced during 1986 are not at all bad.<sup>87</sup> *China’s Heroes and Martyrs* went public with the first issue of 1986, and from the second issue Dai Qing and Qin Xiaoying, a historian,<sup>88</sup> were listed on the masthead as the managing editors. The editorial committee included such prominent political and cultural figures as Feng Mu, Li Rui, Liao Gailong, Zhang Yu, Huang Gang and Li Shu. The calligraphic inscription for the title of the journal was penned by Deng Xiaoping himself.

Dai Qing had been collecting material on the subject of Wang Shiwei for some time but she only began her research in earnest during the summer of 1986 when Wen told her that he had just received a letter from Liu Ying 劉瑩, Wang Shiwei’s widow, who was living in Hubei. Dai immediately cancelled a holiday she had planned with her daughter to celebrate her passing the entrance examinations for Peking University and went to interview Liu, anxious not to lose this opportunity. Until then she thought she could gather material at her leisure, but now that she knew she could approach Wang’s widow she feared that the elderly woman might suddenly die.

Dai worked for *China’s Heroes and Martyrs* for about a year in the hope that the job would help with her research into other aspects of Party history. She eventually had a falling out with the other editors over their refusal to publish an article by Wang Donglin 汪東林, a man who had become a specialist in the career of the philosopher Liang Shuming. The article, “Liang Shuming and Mao Zedong,” dealt with the relationship between the two men and provided the general reader with previously restricted information on the extraordinary clash between them in 1953.<sup>89</sup>

## VI

I find the actual process of historiography painstaking, even boring: setting up interviews, combing through notes, and so on and so forth. I get a much more immediate pleasure from working on folk art. But I write history because I feel it produces something solid and valuable. I also feel a certain ‘responsibility’ and urgency, because the people who have living memories of important things are ageing, and will soon be gone.

—Dai Qing, 25 March 1989<sup>90</sup>

Dai Qing’s research combined lengthy interviews with people involved in the Wang case, the study of Wang’s writings and other relevant publications. She had no access to secret files, and she actually made a point of avoiding ‘state secrets’ or classified information since to use such material would make her work all that more vulnerable to official

denunciation. "I used just what everyone else could get hold of. It's just that other people haven't been as painstaking in their reading as I was."<sup>91</sup>

It has often been remarked that Dai Qing was able to get privileged information on the people she has written about because of her special family connections. These connections supposedly led to her gaining access to Party archives and interviews with Party leaders or functionaries involved in the cases. The realities of life within the Communist nobility are quite different from the imaginary world of popular belief. Dai has made the point that in her interviews for historical portraits such as "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'" she made no attempt to approach Li Fuchun's family or Nie Rongzhen, people who had been very friendly with her father when he was alive and who could have possibly been of some use in her work. "Forget it!" she responded to a question as to whether she had tried to speak to Party elders for her work. "I have my doubts about how they achieved their exalted positions in the first place—just how many people died in the process? Anyway, they wouldn't give a damn about whose daughter I am, because my father is dead and has no power. They're only interested in seeing the daughters of people who still have some clout. . . . I've seen it all; I'm very clear about the fickle friendships of the official world."

While Dai Qing was fairly circumspect about her use of restricted information, another group interested in Wang Shiwei, He Long's main biographers, tried to use their access to Party files to 'out-research' Dai. He Long, now a member of the Party's pantheon, was the army leader held responsible for Wang's execution. According to Dai, He Long's widow put pressure on the Political Department of the Headquarters of the General Staff of the PLA, to allow the He Long Biography Team (*zhuanjizhu* 傳記組), an official body formed from the investigators (*zhuan'an zu* 專案組) assigned to He Long's case during the Cultural Revolution, to study the relevant Party files in Xing County, Shanxi, where Wang was executed.<sup>92</sup> Dai has said she regrets that they have not had the courage to reveal what they found concerning He's involvement in Wang Shiwei's death.<sup>93</sup>

Fortunately, a large amount of material had been published in Yan'an at the time of the purge and the memoirs of many people involved had also become available in the 1980s.<sup>94</sup> Dai was able to speak with a number of those who were involved with the events of 1942, although others pointedly refused to be interviewed. This latter group included Shu Qun 舒羣, the writer who took over as editor of the arts page of the *Jiefang ribao* [Liberation Daily] which under Ding Ling's editorship had published Wang's essays, among other things (Ding was removed from that position in March 1942).<sup>95</sup> He said he was too busy to speak with her. She also repeatedly tried to see Hu Qiaomu,<sup>96</sup> the chief Party ideologue in the 1980s, when she was working on her conversations with scholars, but he failed to respond to her requests for an interview. She also made a special

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Zheng Weihe, *Where's China?*, p.197.

<sup>92</sup> Dai uses this dramatic episode to start "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies.'" See *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.41. A translation of this passage can be found in Helen F. Siu, "Social responsibility and self-expression," the editor's introduction to *Furrows: peasants, intellectuals, and the State—stories and histories from modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990) pp.15–16.

<sup>93</sup> Tongyu interview. Dai's father had been friendly with He Long in the 1920s, and He stayed with Fu Daqing during the planning stage of the Nanchang Uprising of 1927.

<sup>94</sup> These include such works as *Yan'an zhengfeng yundong jishi* [An account of the Yan'an Rectification], edited by committee (Peking: Qiushi Chubanshe [restricted publication], 1982), and *Yan'an Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan huiyihu* [Reminiscences about the Central Research Institute of Yan'an], ed. Wen Jize, Li Yan, Jin Ziguang and Zhai Dingyi (Peking and Changsha: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe and Hunan Renmin Chubanshe, 1984). Wen Jize gave Dai this second book: "He would never have guessed how useful it was going to be," Dai said (Tongyu interview). Also Li Wei-han's *Reminiscences and researches*, pp.472–97, and Laszlo Ladany, *The Communist Party of China*, pp.52–62.

<sup>95</sup> See Ai Keen, *Yan'an wenyi yundong jisheng 1937. 1–1948. 3* [An account of the richness of the Yan'an Arts Movement, January 1937–March 1948] (Peking: Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe, 1987), p.326. Dai did, however, read a memoir Shu Qun revised after the Cultural Revolution called *Mao Zedongde gushi* [The story of Mao Zedong], which she obtained in a final proof from friends in the Writers' Publishing House. It proved to be very useful. She said it left both her daughter and herself in hysterics. "He'll drop dead without ever waking up to himself," Dai concluded. (Tongyu interview.) Shu Qun died while Dai was in detention.

<sup>96</sup> See *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.74.

<sup>97</sup> See *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.50.

<sup>98</sup> See Dai in Xiao and Tian, *Eight interviews*. Dai is, of course, referring to the gestation of Harrison E. Salisbury's *The Long March: the untold story* (London: Harper & Row, 1985), on which Simon Leys comments: "... on these events, he seems to be throwing a certain light which appears to be precisely the one that Peking wishes to project now." See Leys, "Maoist history, Maoist myth," *Dissent* (Spring 1986), p.239.

<sup>99</sup> Zheng Chaolin (b. 1900) joined the CPC in his youth and later became a Trotskyite and a member of the *Wuchanzhe she* [Proletarian Society]. Zheng, along with other members of the "leftist opposition faction" (*zuopai fandui pai*) of the CPC—the Trotskyites, was arrested in 1952 and released in 1979. See Gregor Benton, "Trotskyist leader Zheng Chaolin released in China," *Intercontinental Press* 17, no.35 (1 October 1979), brought to my attention by Gavan McCormack. Zheng was subsequently made a member of the Shanghai Municipal People's Political Consultative Congress. In June 1989, Zhu Zheng published a volume of Zheng's classical poems, mostly composed in jail, in the Camel Book Series. See Zheng Chaolin, *Yuyin canji* [A collection of the incomplete poems of Yuyin] (Changsha: Hunan Renmin Chubanshe, 1989). I am grateful to W.J.F. Jenner for bringing this volume to my attention.

<sup>100</sup> *Zheng Chaolin huiyilu*. An edited version of the Mainland text was issued in Hong Kong by the Shiyue Shuwu [Trotskyite October Publishers].

<sup>101</sup> So-called 'grey-cover books' (*huipishu*) were works with grey paper jackets produced from the 1960s by a range of publishing houses for extremely limited circulation. They usually consisted of highly controversial materials; many memoirs were printed in this form. By the 1980s the grey covers had disappeared but the books still had "internal publication" (*neibu faxing*) printed on the front. The publishers, writing in an introduction dated August 1982, said that the book was being issued in a limited edition "for the reference of the leading cadres of the relevant organs and specialists in modern history." The main text of this book was completed in 1945; only the last section, "Chen Duxiu and the Trotskyites," /OVER

trip to Guangzhou to speak with the writer Ouyang Shan 歐陽山,<sup>97</sup> the head of the Arts Research Centre in the Institute and Wang Shiwei's superior for a time; but he, too, declined to see her. She concluded that: "Things were far more difficult for me than they were for that American writer, Harrison Salisbury, who travelled around China doing interviews about the Long March."<sup>98</sup>

## Figure 2

The first page of Dai Qing's "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'" as it appeared in the May 1988 issue of *Encounter Monthly* (Shanghai), with a picture of Wang superimposed over a selection of his translations and writings



Dai's resolve to write about Wang was further strengthened after she heard about an incident involving Hu Qiaomu and the memoirs of Zheng Chaolin 鄭超麟, a famous Chinese Trotskyite.<sup>99</sup> Dai had read *Zheng Chaolin's Memoirs*<sup>100</sup> as a 'grey-cover book' 灰皮書 published by the People's Publishing House.<sup>101</sup> She later found out that Zheng was a friend of her father and she visited him for an interview. (One of her abiding interests is the study of China's Trotskyites).<sup>102</sup> Zheng had been released in 1979 after twenty-seven years in jail and was living in Shanghai.<sup>103</sup> His memoirs contained details of the personal lives, loves and affairs—"all the normal weaknesses of humanity written about quite honestly"<sup>104</sup>—of men now idealized as revolutionary martyrs and founding leaders of the Party. According to Dai, Hu Qiaomu, a guardian of the Party's past, had been enraged when he learnt of the appearance of this book and attempted to have it withdrawn from circulation. At the time Dai was told he had said something to the effect that Party archivists should "buy the manuscript and put it in storage."<sup>105</sup> To her mind, Hu's method of dealing with this book was that of a "murderer" out to assassinate the truth. "How could a Party leader in charge of propaganda be so despicable? I believe I have the right to ask him: are you determined to destroy your Party, or what? Your fear of the unspeakable things that may be revealed only proves your weakness. Be honest about what has gone wrong and face up to it. I despised his attitude. . . . The more he wanted to cover things up, the more I was determined to go on."<sup>106</sup> She reasoned that while she would not be able to write anything as authoritative as Zheng's memoir, she could do her utmost to uncover the details of Wang Shiwei's story. Not surprisingly, Hu Qiaomu also failed to respond to repeated requests for an interview on the subject.

Wen Jize provided many clues and much material for this project and another scholar, Song Jinshou 宋金壽, who had been engaged in private research on Wang, "unselfishly made available rare materials that he had been collecting over the years."<sup>107</sup> Song, however, did not want his name directly connected with Dai's final article, "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'," which was published in Shanghai in 1988.<sup>108</sup> Song is a scholar in the Social Sciences Teaching Department of the Steel Institute of Peking who had been engaged to help Wen Jize in the task of collecting reminiscences by old Yan'an cadres of the Central Research Institute.<sup>109</sup> Song Jinshou also wrote a piece on Wang which, while agreeing with the Party's attack on Wang's ideology, questioned the probity of denouncing him as an anti-Party element. Although he distanced himself from Dai's study of Wang, he did, however, collaborate with her in editing a volume containing Dai's essay and Wang's most important writings along with the major denunciations of Wang from the Yan'an period. The unpublished manuscript of this book was still in the hands of the editors of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Publishing House in Peking at the time of writing.<sup>110</sup>

/was written in 1980, after Zheng's release from jail. Dai Qing may have been using the expression 'grey-cover book' generically for books with a restricted circulation.

<sup>102</sup> Zheng mentions Dai's father, Fu Daqing, in *Zheng Chaolin huiyilu*, p.79.

<sup>103</sup> See Dai Qing's *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.93, 106. In this (p.93) Dai makes the point about Zheng that he "has produced new writings constantly" and that none of those released were obliged to denounce their own views. (Tongyu interview.)

<sup>104</sup> Tongyu interview. It is ironic that the editors of the Hong Kong version of Zheng's memoirs saw fit, with the author's permission, to delete the chapter "Lian'ai yu zheng-zhi" [Love and politics], to which Dai was presumably referring. In early 1991, *Kaifang zazhi* [Open Magazine], a Hong Kong monthly, serialized the missing material.

<sup>105</sup> Personal communication from Dai Qing.

<sup>106</sup> Tongyu interview. Hu Qiaomu's less than laudable involvement in the post-1949 fate of Chu Anping is one of the subthemes of "Chu Anping and 'Total Party Domination'." See Dai Qing, *Chu Anping yu "dang tianxia"* [Chu Anping and "Total party domination"] (Peking: Zhongguo Huaqiao Chubanshe, 1989) pp.5, 77, 80, 81, 102.

<sup>107</sup> See Dai's comments in Xiao and Tian, *Eight interviews*. In the first Mainland publication of "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies,'" Dai thanks Song Jinshou for his "sincere and selfless help and guidance" in writing the piece. See *Encounter Monthly*, 1988, no.5, p.41.

<sup>108</sup> Tongyu interview. See Dai Qing, "Wang Shiwei yu 'Ye baihehua,'" *Encounter Monthly*, 1988, no.5. The editors of the journal made a number of cuts to the original text, especially the references to Wang Zhen and Yang Shangkun (see *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.94–5). The full text was published, however, in both the Hong Kong *Mingbao Monthly* and *Liang, Wang, Chu*.

<sup>109</sup> See, for example, Song's written record of Li Weihan's important account, "Research work in the Central Party Institute and the Rectification Campaign," in *Zhonggong dangshi ziliao* 8 [Materials on CPC Party history, no.8] (Peking: Zhonggong Dang-shi Ziliao Chubanshe, 1983), pp.13–50, which contains many details on the Wang case (pp.24–2, 26–7, 28–32, 34, 37, 41–5).

<sup>110</sup> David Apter and Timothy Cheek have prepared a translated volume of these and other important and unique materials provided by Dai Qing entitled “*Wang Shiwei and Wild Lilies*”: *rectification and purges in the Chinese Communist Party, 1942–1944* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharp, forthcoming 1992).

<sup>111</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>112</sup> Tongyu interview. The last section of “Wang Shiwei and ‘Wild Lilies’” deals with the fate of Liu Ying, who only found out about Wang’s death in 1978. Liu, who joined the Party in 1926, is quoted as saying about Wang’s rehabilitation: “This is an internal matter for the Party. Shiwei was framed by the Party as it was in the past; [but] there is no doubt that the problem can now be resolved.” See *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.104–5.

Although Dai Qing gave Wen Jize a copy of “Wang Shiwei and ‘Wild Lilies’” to read shortly before publication, he only had enough time to point out a number of minor factual errors. Dai was convinced that Wen, as a member of the Party history establishment, would want to refer the work to Hu Qiaomu, who would almost certainly have prevented its publication. She made sure Wen would not have enough time to show it to anyone. She later heard that the Party leaders who had read it were made “extremely uncomfortable” by the study.<sup>111</sup> Wang Shiwei’s family, on the other hand, in particular his widow Liu Ying, were deeply moved by Dai’s efforts to reopen the case, although they were concerned that she would be persecuted for writing about him as she had.<sup>112</sup>

## VII

I feel that for a party to maintain its position it cannot simply rely on lies. It must secure itself in facts. If it has done the right thing then there is no problem; if it has been wrong then it must admit it. As for achievements—if there are any—there is no need for someone like me to comment on them, the Party does its own propaganda. . . . The aim of this was to prevent the Party from making the same mistakes all over again. It was entirely for its own good . . .

—*Dai Qing*<sup>113</sup>

We should have been doing this ourselves.

—*A historian at the People’s University, Peking on Dai Qing’s historical writings*<sup>114</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>114</sup> From a comment made to Dai Qing (Tongyu interview).

<sup>115</sup> Zhang Zhenglong’s account of the War of Liberation in north-east China, *Xuebai, xiehong* [White snow, red blood], published in 1989, was the most controversial work of historical reportage to appear in China following the 4 June Peking Massacre. See G. Barmé, “China: the Party has its way with history,” *Index on censorship*, 1991, no.7, pp.12–14. In April, 1991, Dai remarked to the writer that Zhang’s book was a powerful new example of this genre of historical reportage.

Dai Qing’s earlier career as a novelist and her abiding interest in the dramatic force of literature, both fiction and non-fiction, have profoundly influenced her historical writing. In her historical investigations her choice of subjects, materials, editing methods and style reveal both the novelist’s fascination with character and the journalist’s eye for high drama. This approach may well detract somewhat from her abilities as a historian in the narrow sense of the word, yet they have made her a contemporary master of a compelling historical style with a considerable following in China.

Unofficial historical works proliferated in China during the 1980s, reaching an increasingly wide audience towards the end of the decade as modernistic literary experimentation disaffected many readers. They turned to reportage, a form of ‘faction’, in their search for controversy and relevance. Dai Qing’s work belongs to this genre of writing, the practitioners of which include other semi-dissident figures like Liu Binyan 劉賓雁, Su Xiaokang 蘇曉康, Jia Lusheng 賈魯生, Zhao Yu 趙瑜 and Zhang Zhenglong 張正隆,<sup>115</sup> as well as writers who are better at trimming their literary sails before the prevailing ideological winds like Ye Yonglie 葉永烈, Liu Yazhou 劉亞洲 and Quan Yanchi 權延赤.<sup>116</sup> Dai believes her particular style of historical

reporting to be original, and in her comments on this subject she mentioned only two other works which have struck her as being of some interest: one on Hu Feng<sup>117</sup> and another on Peng Dehuai, both of which she found lacking. She argues that not only is there little real challenge in dealing with such figures but that there is the danger that to some extent positive distortions have replaced the negative lies of the past. The study of Peng was by Su Xiaokang, a well-known writer of reportage in exile since June 1989.<sup>118</sup> Su co-authored this highly fictionalized account of the clash between Mao Zedong and Peng Dehuai with two attendants who had been working on Lushan at the time of the 1959 conference. "I'm very sorry," Dai Qing commented on the resultant book, *On the Altar of Utopia*; "you might have access to some historical data, but when it boils down to it you [Su Xiaokang's informants] were still only attendants." As a result, she said, "it just doesn't feel right." "I know it's not right, any high-level cadre's child would know it's off the mark."<sup>119</sup>

Dai Qing herself employs a range of literary devices to comment on the incidents and personalities she discusses. A number of these devices are outlined in the following points with translated examples taken from the text of "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'." These examples may convey some of the sense of the "subversive" narrative style Dai used in recounting the fate of Wang and through which she gave the story of Wang Shiwei a pressing relevance for her readers in late 1980's China.

1 *Commentaries or asides*—often added at the end of an episode or as a historical 'footnote' to the actual text.

For example, after describing the political situation in China in 1942 and the atmosphere of Yan'an when Wang Shiwei published his essays, Dai adds a long descriptive passage about Kang Sheng, the use of a Stalinist-style purge to deal with dissent, the Party's recent history and the Chinese national character:

Kang Sheng had returned to China with Wang Ming from the Comintern five years earlier. It had only been three years since Wang Ming's policy of capitulationism and submission to the KMT powerholders had been obliterated by the cruel realities of war. But they had learnt something else directly from Stalin: they had imported the ideological methods and action plan for the carrying out of 'purges' within the Communist Party itself. This was combined now with the threat of [the accusation of] 'Trotskyism'. The very mention of 'Trotskyism' would make people react with the type of mental and physical terror experienced if you get too close to a 600,000 watt power line. Now, like a bank of dark clouds rolling in from the horizon, this threat slowly crept over the heads of both the Party and non-Party people concentrated in Yan'an and scattered along the war front. Of course, similar incidents were not unknown in the history of China, or even in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1930, in the Central Soviet [in Jiangxi Province], groups of 'students' were tied up and killed. It's an incident that still makes your flesh crawl. Their crime? It was described with a Russian adjective: they were 'Anti-Bolshevik' (members of the AB League).<sup>120</sup> Perhaps such inci-

<sup>116</sup> Ye is known for his 'factitious' writing about the Cultural Revolution, while Liu Yazhou, Li Xiannian's son-in-law, has written about Party elders. Quan Yanchi is the most prolific author of Mao Zedong memorabilia.

<sup>117</sup> Li Hui, *Hu Feng jituan yuanan sbimo* [The unjust case against the Hu Feng clique] (Peking: Renmin Ribao, 1989). Dai says she gave up on the book after discovering that Li was treating Hu Feng as a Rightist rather than a leftist Party ideologue.

<sup>118</sup> Su Xiaokang, Luo Shixu and Chen Zheng, *'Wutuobang' ji—1959 Lushan zhi xia* [On the Altar of 'Utopia'—Lushan in the summer of 1959] (Peking: Zhongguo Xinwen Chubanshe, 1988). An army publishing house also produced a version of Peng's story in late 1989, *Guofangbuzhang fuchenu* [The rise and fall of a Minister of Defense] by Ma Luo, Pei Pu and Ma Taiquan (Peking: Kunlun Chubanshe, 1989).

<sup>119</sup> Tongyu interview. Li Rui, a high-level secretary at the time of the Lushan meeting and a friend of Dai's, wrote his own account, which Dai had not read by August 1990 but felt held great promise since it was actually written by an insider. See *Lushan buiyi shilu* [An accurate account of the Lushan Conference] (Peking and Changsha: Chunqiu Chubanshe and Hunan Jiaoyu Chubanshe [limited internal distribution], 1989). Li's account says much in implicit rather than explicit terms.

<sup>120</sup> This is a reference to the Futian Massacre carried out by Mao Zedong. See Teiwes, *Politics and purges in China*, p.62, and Laszlo Ladany, *The Communist Party of China and Marxism*, pp.34–5, and nn. 15 and 16. In 1989–90, Party history researchers in China also showed a renewed interest in this unrehabilitated and harrowing incident in Mao Zedong's early career. See, for example, Dai Xiangqing's "Lun AB tuan he Futian shibian" [On the AB League and the Futian incident], *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu* [Researches in CPC History], 1989, no.2, pp.22–7, and Dai's "Bixu yi yansu taidu duidai su AB tuan wenti" [A serious attitude is necessary in discussing the purge of the AB League] *Researches in CPC History*, 1990, no.5, pp.43–7. Other writers, however, were extremely critical of popular descriptions of the Futian Massacre as being a result of Mao Zedong's 'temporary insanity'. See Gao Jiangbo, "Tan qikanzhongde 'Mao Zedong'" [On the Mao Zedong craze in periodical literature], *China Book Review*, 1989, no.4, pp.123–4.

<sup>121</sup> Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.49.

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*, p.82. See also p.51 where Dai comments: "It would appear that Kang Sheng had a natural love for political games. As we will see from a speech by him revealed later in our story, these initial efforts in 1942–43 were simply a dry run. It was to be twenty-five years before he could put his skills to a real test."

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, p.97. The text of Kang Sheng's extraordinary speech as quoted on pages 96–7 was provided to Dai by Song Jinshou. In this connection, Dai's text also contains a number of comments on what she calls the "movement sūtra" (*yundong jing*), or movement model. See pp.51–2, 70, and 75–8; and Teiwes, *Politics and purges in China*, pp.30–49. In considering Kang Sheng's role in Wang's demise it is relevant to mention the 'Sovietization' of Chinese Communist politics in the 1940s. The historian Li Shu had remarked on this to Dai Qing; see *Conversations with scholars*, pp.38–9. See also Shu Zhan's "Quanpan xihua yu quanpan suhua" [Total Westernization and total Sovietization], *New Enlightenment Series*, no.4, pp.108–14.

<sup>124</sup> *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.86. Both of the quotations are from Tong Dong's /OVER

dents can be explained away as being the result of a certain immaturity, a blindness, an arrogance, primitive cruelty and carelessness, yet by the time they were in Yan'an the 'Comintern' was treated with all the reverence paid to a shining imperial sword. Add to this the fact that at every turn they would allude to the powerful and imposing name of the USSR, and as a result their wilfulness and arrogance were now a hundred times more overpowering. But there was more: there was a compatibility between the unquestioned authority of the purgers and the submissiveness and acknowledgement of power expected from those who were being purged, such a fortuitous marriage with the traditional Chinese national character. . . . This 'Buddha's halo' has been hanging over our heads for nearly half a century; virtually no-one has been able to escape it. But it is said that there is a cure: the fresh blood of the innocent, sacrificial victims and the fighters for democracy.<sup>121</sup>

Or, again, when commenting on the 'struggling' of Wang Shiwei:

According to He Xilin, Wang Shiwei appeared [at the struggle meeting] with his famous canvas reclining chair—perhaps he was already seriously ill by this point. There may indeed have been a difference between the Yan'an of 1942 and the Red Guards of 1966. Even when dealing with "the reactionary representatives of the bourgeoisie within the Party" (Ai Siqi's expression) [in the 1940s], they did not destroy peoples' health. Seen from this angle, the Chinese 'revolution' has definitely made some progress.<sup>122</sup>

Similarly, when discussing Kang Sheng's views on the methodology and strategy of purges, Dai writes:

The above is taken from a speech Kang Sheng gave to a class of trainees in August 1943. Trainees! When you reflect on the strikingly similar scenes [purges] which appeared and reappeared virtually without respite and which swept this vast land of China for some thirty-five years after this, you really can't help believing in the old saying that "famous masters produce talented students."<sup>123</sup>

While only used a few times in her work on Wang Shiwei, historical commentaries such as the above become a major feature of Dai's later work, "Chu Anping and 'Total Party Domination'."

2 *Juxtaposition* of historical incidents. This is a similar device to the use of commentaries but the writer offers no detailed exposition. Readers are left to draw their own conclusions.

For example:

[After Wang Shiwei's purge] "The comrades who had made mistakes engaged in tearful self-criticisms," the contents of which were not all that different from those made during the "attack on bourgeois liberalization" forty-five years later [i.e., in 1987] for "only wanting democracy, not wanting [the Party's] leadership; only wanting freedom, not wanting discipline."<sup>124</sup>

Or, again, when referring to the fate of He Long, the man believed to have been responsible for Wang Shiwei's death, Dai writes:

He Long was a much-decorated and outstanding soldier, but after the founding of the People's Republic he was only allowed to take charge of sports.<sup>125</sup> One wonders how often [after he was denounced in 1967] this old marshal, who had come from such humble beginnings, thought about the tumultuous past [a

reference to the purge he conducted in the Honghu district]. But he could never dispel his sense of guilt. Not that he was thinking of Wang Shiwei. Two years later [in 1969] he died in miserable circumstances, reportedly due to 'medical malpractice'. Another account holds that he died because of 'delayed treatment'. When his pulse stopped he was, just like Wang Shiwei, still under the cloud of a trumped-up charge, and neither his wife nor children were at his side.<sup>126</sup>

3 *Direct address*, when the reader is spoken to directly. Such remarks are sometimes in the style of 'marginalia'. For example:

By now the reader will certainly have taken note of the fact that this is the beginning of a new way of doing things: organizational methods are employed to resolve scholastic and ideological questions.<sup>127</sup>

Or, when commenting on Kang Sheng's speech on the strategy of the Wang purge (see the first point above):

From this paragraph the reader will definitely get the impression that all that business about "enticing snakes out of their pits" and so on fourteen years later had absolutely nothing creative about it whatsoever.<sup>128</sup>

4 *Footnotes*—These are quite similar to the device used in the previous point but stylistically different in that the reader is not addressed directly and such material, by being placed in a footnote, is 'underlined', although by interceding in this fashion the author does not actually interrupt the narrative flow. For example, a note on Wang Zhen reads:

Starting from that time, Wang Zhen had the reputation of being the "bosom friend" of Chinese intellectuals.<sup>129</sup> Reporters constantly made a thing of this even as recently as the latest session of the People's Congress when he was elected Vice-President. Some have even called him "China's General Patton." Surely such commentators are not very familiar with military history. One must presume they have merely noticed that both men have a common personality trait: they both enjoy cursing their heads off in public. Indeed, Wang Zhen's most unforgettably colourful fits of swearing have occurred since 1976, especially when students of the People's University and Peking University have taken to the streets.<sup>130</sup>

5 *Satire and ambiguity*,<sup>131</sup> both historical and personal, suffuse the whole study of Wang Shiwei. This can be seen in many of the above quotations, yet one of the most outstanding examples of Dai's ironical and ambiguous tone can be found in her elliptical but biting description of Zhou Yang, China's pre-1966 'cultural Tsar', and the question of 'humanism' in the 1940s and the 80s. Dai quotes Zhou Yang's concluding statement on the Wang case in 1942, which explicates the difference between the Party line on culture and Wang's view as being that the former demands that culture must serve the masses, while the latter plays into the hands of "the exploiting classes and dark forces" by talking of "separating art from politics," "serving an abstract humanity," and "expressing an abstract human nature." Dai adds:

/Yan'an memoirs. Although the Rectification of the 1940s and the Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization Campaign of 1987 were different in many regards, Dai views the guiding 'intelligence' behind both movements as being essentially the same.

<sup>125</sup> He Long actually played a considerable role after 1949. This may be an example of Dai relying on her personal impressions of He's later career, showing a preference for dramatic contrast to reliable fact.

<sup>126</sup> Liang, Wang, *Chu*, p.102.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, p.75. This is, of course, also a reference to Hu Yaobang and Hu Qili's comments on the Wang Shiwei case. See n. 75 above.

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, p.96. "Yin she chu dong" [enticing snakes out of their pits] is a reference to Mao Zedong's expressed strategy in dealing with intellectuals, students and workers critical of the Party in 1957, leading to the Anti-Rightist Campaign.

<sup>129</sup> A reference to Wang's introduction to the cultural world at Mao's insistence in 1942. See n. 77 above. Li Weihai records Wang's reaction to reading the critical articles, some by Wang Shiwei, published in the wall paper *Arrow and Target*: "Our comrades at the front are bleeding and sacrificing their lives for the Party and the people of China, and here you are behind the lines with a full belly attacking the Party." See Li, "Research work in the Central Party Institute and the Rectification Campaign," p.483.

<sup>130</sup> Liang, Wang, *Chu*, p.78, n. 1. The student demonstrations Dai is referring to are those of late 1986. Wang Zhen was reportedly in favour of using military force to crush them. Another footnote (n. 3) on p.95 comments on the fate of Zhang Wentian and 'liberalism' within the Party from 1943. Other lengthy notes appear on pp.53 and 73.

<sup>131</sup> Dai Qing was not aware of her own acerbic style or pointed language until the Shanghai-based critic and editor Li Ziyun commented on it in a review of her early fiction. See Li Ziyun, "Putongrende shanliang yuanwang—du Dai Qingde duanpian xiaoshuo" [The wholesome desires of common people: on Dai Qing's short stories], *Reading*, 1983, no.2, pp.72-81. Dai recalls she was very surprised at this reaction to her style /OVER

/as she has always felt her writing is 'warm and mellow' (*wenrou dunhou*). (Tongyu interview.)

<sup>132</sup> This is a reference to the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign launched in October 1983. Hu Qiaomu led the attack on Wang Ruoshui and, by inference, Zhou Yang, the chief proponents of a discussion on 'humanism and alienation'.

<sup>133</sup> *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.88–9. For Wang Shiwei on 'human nature' (*renxing*), see pp.79–80.

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*, p.95.

<sup>135</sup> Furongli interview, 16 August.

<sup>136</sup> See Dai's essay "A pliant rush tied to the waist," p.71. One of her favourite novels of recent years was Stefan Zweig's story of Castello's battle against Calvin, *The Right to heresy*. See her essay on this book, "Shibaizhede shengli" [The victory of the defeated], in *Waiguo wenxue* [Foreign Literature], 1988, pp.289–92.

Forty-one years later he [Zhou Yang] finally realized that "the basis of man is man himself," leading him to talk about humanism and human nature at the meeting held on the centenary of Marx's death [in 1983]. Now it was Zhou's turn to be subjected to criticism. But it was a criticism which, although superficially similar to that aimed at Wang Shiwei, was in terms of its magnitude and organizational energy so much more temperate and harmless as to be virtually non-existent. Zhou Yang's change of heart—if indeed he ever experienced one—certainly didn't come about in the 1950s. His energy and devotion to his job during the years 1953–57 are, even today, legendary. . . .

It is impossible for subsequent generations of Chinese to know whether it ever occurred to Zhou Yang that any great intellectual movement (such as that in Yan'an in the early 1940s) should by all rights have led to an unprecedented [cultural] flourishing, or whether he reasoned that the Yan'an revolution had nothing to do with any of that [i.e., cultural richness]. Nonetheless, the denunciation of 'humanism and alienation' was launched.<sup>132</sup> A year and a half later, Zhou Yang was hospitalized due to apoplexy. He was now capable of no other response. He was seventy-six at the time.<sup>133</sup>

Another tongue-in-cheek remark on 'liberalism' can be read in the context of the 1980s as 'bourgeois liberalism'. Having quoted from a speech by Yang Shangkun denouncing Wang Shiwei, Dai makes a remark which would have particular relevance for readers in 1988, the year when popular outrage at Party corruption, nepotism and economic mismanagement reached new heights, and would directly fuel the protests of April-June 1989:

If you think about it, 'liberalism' really was the greatest enemy of the Party at that time, an enemy obviously so much more dangerous than feudalistic paternalism, imperious despotism, the use of power for personal ends, corruption and incompetence, and so on and so forth. It was surely the greatest threat to the revolution.<sup>134</sup>

It is also worth remarking briefly here on Dai Qing's style of written Chinese. Hers is a very clipped or 'tight' (*jin* 緊) prose, quite unlike the verbose and often flowery language of other writers of reportage. She was told by editors early on in her writing career that one of the most marked characteristics of her style was that she did not use clichés, or 'set language' (*taobua* 套話), a common feature in both classical and modern Chinese prose. It was an observation that greatly amused her because she confessed that the reason she did not write in a clichéd style is that she has never seriously read anything written in it. As a girl and young woman she says she never had the patience to get through the stolid works of Mao Dun (regarded by orthodox literary critics as one of the great twentieth-century masters of the Chinese language) or Ba Jin, let alone the Party press. Even Yang Mo, the favourite of many adolescents in the 1950s and 60s, was too much for her. "Reading all that clichéd language from youth, people develop a writing style that is completely hackneyed."<sup>135</sup> She always preferred foreign literature translated into Chinese.<sup>136</sup> In fact, her reputation for enjoying the 'bourgeois writings' of the West nearly kept her from being accepted into the Party when she was at university. The only Chinese writer she enjoyed, and whose works

were easily available in Ye Jianying's study, was Lu Xun.<sup>137</sup> Of the one newspaper she subscribed to during her school years, the *Guangming Daily*, she read only the academic pages, avoiding the 'wooden language' of the news and commentaries.<sup>138</sup>

The novelist Wang Zengqi 汪曾祺, one of Dai Qing's favourite writers and a veteran literary figure, remarked after reading "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'" that Dai's style of writing was very "composed". He said she uses Sima Qian's "spring and autumn annals style" (*chunqiu bifa* 春秋筆法—here Wang refers in particular to the biography of Han Wudi), that she "writes frankly on the basis of facts," and has "a talent for history."<sup>139</sup> Dai admits that the work of Chinese historiography she is most familiar with are the "Annals of the Han from Han Gaozu to Han Wudi" in Sima Qian's *Shiji* [Historical Records]. She began reading these during the Cultural Revolution because little else was readily available. (The same is true, as it is for many others of her generation, of her early interest in the writings of Lu Xun).

Her response to Wang Zengqi's comments is that she would like very much to achieve the effect of being "composed" in her writing. Dai Qing's understanding of "*chunqiu bifa*" varies from some schools of thought. She sees it as being the careful selection of material and the relating of a story with the minimum of elaboration, and an avoidance of words with either positive or negative connotations (*baobianci* 褒貶詞), particularly common in other Chinese historical works.<sup>140</sup> While this has been her aim, she says, "unfortunately, I've not always been successful; I often can't keep myself from interjecting with comments of my own. Such interjections should be seen as examples of 'distorted writing' (*waibi* 歪筆)."<sup>141</sup> She consciously avoids the judgmental Cultural Revolution style of historical writing. She thinks that to refrain from commenting or explaining things is a sign of respect for one's readers. To force an interpretation on one's readers is evidence that you don't respect them, and in the case of a sophisticated audience you only make a fool of yourself. After all, she argues, some readers have a deeper understanding of what you are writing about than yourself and they see through your exegesis. She says that she aims not for a large or broad readership, but readers who will really appreciate her work, and who may get far more out of it than she can imagine. While not writing with a specific audience in mind, Dai says that she was always interested in her close friends, or "mates" (*gemen* 哥們兒) reading her work, she hoped with enjoyment.<sup>142</sup> She was, however, reluctant to show the article on Wang Shiwei around as she felt her friends and associates would want to prevent her from publishing it, if only to keep her from getting into trouble. So before publication she showed it to very few people.<sup>143</sup>

While a number of substantial and illuminating works have been produced on Wang and the Rectification Campaign by Western scholars—none of which, Dai admits, she consulted for her own work—"Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'" remains unique in China as a work of popular historical

<sup>137</sup> Furongli interview, 16 August. Dai's 1982 essay "Xianshengde buxing yu buxingde housheng" [The misfortunes of Lu Xun and his unfortunate progeny], collected in *Expel the devil and clasp onto God*, pp.35–41, is a perceptive and humorous comment on the legacy of Lu Xun. The publication of this essay—encouraged by the Lu Xun scholar Zhu Zheng—led to something of a controversy. See *ibid.*, pp.42–6, 47–9.

<sup>138</sup> Furongli interview, 16 August. Dai used the expression 'wooden language' (*langue de bois*) a number of times when discussing the common style of Mainland writing. She learnt this expression when reading the Chinese translation of "Language and power in Soviet society—a conversation between Alain Besançon and George Urban" (*Encounter*, May 1987, p.12) in August 1990. She commented that only when she read this conversation did she realize that she had been unconsciously resisting "wooden language" from her youth. After the Cultural Revolution she did begin to read Chinese works, and some of these had a strong impact on her. One in particular was Liu Binyan's controversial work of reportage, "Ren Yao zhi jian" [Shewolf]. Another was "Xiaocao" [A blade of grass], a poem by Lei Shuyan about Zhang Zhixin, the woman cadre who was executed towards the end of the Cultural Revolution. She felt that for once there was a level of truth in such writing. It was works like these that also inspired her to start thinking about writing herself.

<sup>139</sup> See Xiao and Tian, *Eight interviews*.

<sup>140</sup> Traditionally, *chunqiu bifa* is the style that Confucius is supposed to have used in writing the *Spring and autumn annals*. It came to mean using few words but a very subtle choice of language to express approval and approbation in the writing of history.

<sup>141</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>142</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>143</sup> Furongli interview, 25 August. She felt quite confident about the accuracy of the material she had used, especially because of the assistance of Song Jinshou.

<sup>144</sup> See, for example, Benton, *Wild Lilies: Poisonous Weeds*, pp.173–4. For the description of this, see Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.41, 100; also Fabre, *Genèse du pouvoir et de l'opposition en Chine*, pp.117–18. Fabre accepts the story that Li Kenong carried out the execution and makes little of He Long's involvement. He also describes Li's complex political background.

<sup>145</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>146</sup> Dai, "A pliant rush tied to the waist," pp.69–76.

<sup>147</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>148</sup> See *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.42–8, 54–7.

<sup>149</sup> See Dai Qing, *Chu Anping and "Total Party Domination,"* pp.121–322. The study of Chu was originally published in the *Chongxie lishi* [Rewriting history] section of the Nanjing-based journal *Dongfang jishi* edited by Su Xiaokang on the Mainland, and in *Mingbao Monthly* in Hong Kong in early 1989. The book version contains Dai's corrected text.

reconstruction. One of the many revelations in the study—the role of personality clashes in the case, the strength of Wang's personality and the paradigm of struggle that was to be universalized after 1949—was the fact that Wang had been beheaded and not shot or buried alive as previously thought.<sup>144</sup> When investigating this last aspect of the story, Dai was anxious to interview Dai Youqiao 戴友橋, the army man who actually beheaded Wang. Dai Youqiao had told one of the other guards accompanying Wang that he had carried out He Long's order. Dai Qing had managed to track down and interview this guard, using the material she gained to create the atmospheric and chilling opening scene of her study. She also finally located Dai Youqiao in Chengdu, Sichuan. It turned out that after 1949 he had become the assistant chief of the Sichuan Provincial Public Security Office. But by the time she was doing her interviews he was confined in a mental hospital and unable to speak. "He's suffering from acute paranoia, just like Kang Sheng [before his death]. He destroyed too many lives. . . ." She said that for some time she had had a friend in Chengdu keeping an eye on Dai Youqiao's condition, hopeful that during a period of lucidity he could be interviewed about Wang Shiwei.<sup>145</sup>

Dai says that she wrote "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'" so that it would engage the reader, her only major constraints being the total length of the study and her ability to keep the average reader interested in the story. She felt footnoting or excessive explanations would only detract from the drama of the work as a whole. She says that her attitude has always been that: "If you don't understand what I'm saying, then stop reading." Yet perhaps her relationship with the reader is best summed up in a 1982 essay on her work in which she emphasized that above all she wanted to avoid cheating or disappointing her readers.<sup>146</sup> "Of course, I'm sure lots of people have had difficulty with it ['Wang']; but I am just as confident that many readers found more in it than I can ever imagine—one passage probably helping them recall a great string of things."<sup>147</sup>

Apart from the story that Dai allows to unfold in "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'," she also provides the reader with long quotations from Wang's original essays given in historical context.<sup>148</sup> This is the first time any writer has made such a use of Wang's writings in China. In her subsequent work on Chu Anping this technique of lengthy quotation is supplemented by the inclusion in the book-length version of her investigation of major articles from Chu's late 1940s' magazine, *Guancha* [The Observer]. In this way the non-specialist Chinese reader is provided for the first time with a chance to study the political views of a leading and long-forgotten liberal intellectual in their historical context, and with a contemporary gloss.<sup>149</sup>

## VIII

I guessed before I wrote it that my Wang Shiwei piece would attract considerable interest. I didn't anticipate that the Chu Anping piece would also attract such attention. (*Question: Why are the readers interested?*) It may be hard for a Westerner to understand. You live with all the windows open, so the light from any given one holds no particular fascination. But imagine yourself living with all the windows closed. Then one opens a crack; the light is captivating. Or consider another analogy: an emperor with a big harem may be bored by sex. But take a man who has been deprived for some time; the first encounter will be very exciting. In the case of Wang Shiwei, there was the added spice of *fan'an* 翻案 [overturning an official verdict]. The official historiography has painted him as pure evil, so my work gave readers a *frisson* by saying there's virtue in the devil.

—Dai Qing<sup>150</sup>

As someone who began her writing career as a novelist, Dai was attracted by the richness and complexity of history and the personalities involved—indeed, she found they were far more colourful than the bloodless fictional creations of 1980s. “I enjoy ‘waking up’ to historical truth, and then causing readers to ‘wake up,’” she remarked in early 1989. “But I don't feel a ‘sense of responsibility’ toward my readers, because I don't feel I know them personally. My responsibility is toward truth and historical fact.”<sup>151</sup>

The compulsion of the historian to uncover the truth and confront the ‘makers of history’ with their past and the consequences of their deeds, thereby forcing on them a sense of accountability, is something that is far from new in Chinese thought. Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661-721) of the Tang dynasty and the author of the first major work on Chinese historiography, the *Sbitong* 史通, wrote about both the desire of individuals to be remembered by history and the inherent threat that a truthful record of the past could hold:

There is truly none who is not tireless in pursuing merit and fame and impassioned in his thoughts of them. Why is this? Because all have their heart set on immortality. And what, then, is immortality? No more than to have one's name written in a book.

He sees the worthy men and thinks to equal them; he sees the unworthy and his thoughts turn to introspection. Thus it is said that when Confucius completed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, unruly sons were filled with fear. . . . How manifold, then, are the benefits we reap from the uses of history! The study of history is a pressing duty for living men and a fundamental concern of a state. He who rules a state or heads a family—can he afford to neglect history?<sup>152</sup>

Although the case of Wang Shiwei occurred nearly fifty-years ago, some of the key figures who were involved in it are still alive and in power. While such considerations might have caused another writer to shy away from the subject, Dai Qing found herself compelled to comment on it. For example, even though neither Yang Shangkun nor Wang Zhen were major actors in the

<sup>150</sup> From Perry Link's notes of a conversation with Dai Qing on 25 March 1989, with minor stylistic alterations. This is not a direct quotation.

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> From Liu Zhiji, *Sbitong*, Chapter XI (“Waibian: shiguan jianzhi diyi”) (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1978,) 2: 303–4. This translation is taken from Burton Watson, “Some remarks on early Chinese historical writing,” in *The translation of things past: Chinese history and historiography*, ed. George Kao (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1982), p.47.

<sup>153</sup> Tongyu interview. This is the same attitude Dai revealed in her attempt to interrogate Chen Muhua, former head of the Bank of China, when she stood for the position of chairperson of the Chinese Women's Federation in late 1988, one of the most interesting episodes in Dai's career up to that time. See Dai, "Wuhu, Zhongguo funü daibiao!—wo canjia di liujie fudaihui" [Pity China's women representatives!—my participation in the Sixth Congress of the Chinese Women's Federation], in *My imprisonment*, pp.282–92.

<sup>154</sup> The unsteady nature of Party historiography in the first decade and a half of the People's Republic been reviewed by Harold Kahn and Albert Feuerwerker in "The ideology of scholarship: China's new historiography." See *History in Communist China*, ed. Albert Feuerwerker (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1968), pp.1–13. Also Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, *Parteilichschreibung in der VR China. Typen, Methoden, Themen und Funktionen* (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984).

<sup>155</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>156</sup> See n. 75 above and G. Barmé, "My friend the memory hole," *Renditions* (Autumn 1986), no.26, pp.5–6.

<sup>157</sup> The version in *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.39, has the three quotations from Spinoza, Voltaire and the *Analectics*. In the original Mainland version of the piece in *Encounter Monthly*, 1988, no.5, p.22, only the Spinoza and *Analectics* quotations are given, while in the Hong Kong *Mingbao Monthly*, 1988, no.5, p.3, Spinoza alone remains, although it is followed by the contrasting quotations from Mao Zedong and Hu Qili as they appeared in Dai's original manuscript. A full Japanese translation of the text of this work exists (see *Chūgoku Kenkyū Geppō* 44, nos 2–4, [1990]), but none of the quotations are included.

<sup>158</sup> Benedictus de Spinoza, *Tractatus Politicus* 1: 4, in *A theologico-political treatise and a political treatise*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, 1951).

Wang Shiwei case, they both played a role in it. Dai Qing said that were they not now respectively the President and Vice-President of the People's Republic of China she would not have even mentioned them. "They are officials, public servants. People have a right to know about them so they can decide whether they should support them or not. I wouldn't have bothered about any of the skeletons in their closets if they weren't in power."<sup>153</sup> These remarks are of relevance in considering Dai's motives for giving figures like Yang Shangkun, Wang Zhen and Hu Qiaomu the prominence that she does in her writings. It may be seen as egotistical perversity, implying that the historian feels free to act as both a moral judge and jury. Yet on a deeper level it is a direct response to the attempts by these men to restrict access to historical materials and to rewrite and disguise their own as well as the Party's history.<sup>154</sup>

To appreciate Dai's commitment to history and her special perspective, it is crucial to be mindful of her lifelong involvement with the ruling élite. This has made it possible for her to understand the inner workings of the system and its personalities as well as to develop the confidence and assertiveness that made her increasingly outspoken in the 1980s. That she was the daughter of a martyr and only the adopted daughter of Ye Jianying meant that while she was part of the élite, she could never fully identify with it. "But I know just what they're all about," she has remarked.<sup>155</sup> She has all too often been misunderstood on this account by colleagues and others suspicious of her special connections and of her relationship with China's security organs.

The manuscript of "Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'" was originally prefaced by quotations from Spinoza, Voltaire and Confucius, as well as by two long juxtaposed passages by Mao Zedong and Hu Qili. The comments by Mao were from the 1962 speech in which he remarked that Wang should have been sent to labour reform and not killed. The quotation from Hu Qili paraphrased remarks by Hu Yaobang concerning the mistake of treating ideological disagreements as criminal cases. It is noteworthy that Dai's article did not appear until mid-1988, by which time Hu Yaobang had been ousted and three prominent intellectuals and writers (Fang Lizhi, Wang Ruowang and Liu Binyan) had been denounced and purged according to the very schema that Hu Yaobang condemned in his remarks.<sup>156</sup>

The Hu Qili and Mao quotes are missing from the volume *Liang Shuming, Wang Shiwei and Chu Anping*, as they were in the Shanghai *Encounter Monthly* version of the article.<sup>157</sup>

Dai has explained her use of these quotations in the following way: Spinoza's line "I have striven not to laugh at human actions, not to weep at them . . . but to understand them"<sup>158</sup> was there to show that she wanted to distance herself from the Party's factional strife, to step back and look at the whole incident more dispassionately. The quotation from Voltaire, the famous "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it," is an indication of the type of attitude she would like

to see among enlightened Party leaders when they confront the past and their role in history. The third quotation is from *The Analects*: “The faults of a gentleman can be likened to the eclipse of the sun or the moon. If he has transgressed, everyone sees it; if he mends his ways, all will admire him.” It is there, Dai avers, “to help Yang Shangkun and the others face up to things.”<sup>159</sup>

According to the editors of *Encounter Monthly*, “Wang Shiwei and ‘Wild Lilies’” had an immediate and widespread impact on their readers in 1988. The most important reason for this was that it put the Wang Shiwei case—one little understood until then apart from the official Party line—into a historical context. Dai also put considerable effort into elucidating Wang’s quirky personality and evaluating it in terms of his fate.<sup>160</sup> By providing the essential information about his life, his connection with Chinese Trotskyites, his clashes with such figures as Chen Boda (a one-time secretary of Mao Zedong and a leading ideologue up to the time of his political demise in 1970), and his writings, Dai Qing made it possible for the readers to assess the case themselves, helped, in many cases, by forty years of political experience under the Party. This more than any ‘discoveries’ resulting from Dai’s historical investigations gave her writing its polemical edge.

Following its publication in May 1988, other journals on the Mainland were reluctant to reprint “Wang Shiwei and ‘Wild Lilies’” because, Dai believes, it was so controversial.<sup>161</sup> In April 1989, however, the Shanghai weekly *Wenxuebao* [Literature Press] carried a special series of interviews relating to Dai’s historiography.<sup>162</sup> The editorial note to the article points out with regret that the reporters who put the interviews together were unable to speak with critics of Dai’s work on record and a number of those who had given interviews decided to withdraw their remarks prior to publication. The criticisms that were made in private were nonetheless passed on to Dai Qing indirectly so she could respond, incorporate them into a later version of the article, or include them in an appendix.<sup>163</sup>

It is perhaps hardly surprising that responses to “Wang Shiwei and ‘Wild Lilies’” among older Party members were mixed. Wen Jize noted that a number of Yan’an period cadres remarked to him that Dai had “painted too bleak a picture” of the base area; after all, they remonstrated, “brightness and light were the pre-eminent aspects of life in Yan’an.”<sup>164</sup> But reactions within this group were by no means universally negative. In some cases Dai’s writing prompted some veterans to come to grips with the past. This was certainly true in the case of Yan Wenjing 嚴文井, a writer who was twenty-eight years old in 1942, having joined the Party in 1938 and gone to Yan’an. After 1949, Yan went on to become a leading children’s writer and for many years managed the People’s Literature Publishing House, one of Peking’s leading publishers. It was in that position and as a member of the secretariat of the Chinese Writers’ Association that he oversaw the

<sup>159</sup> Tongyu interview. The quotation is from *Lunyu* 19: 21. See Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.39.

<sup>160</sup> Cheek refers to Wang’s personality in passing (“The fading of Wild Lilies,” p.27), but Dai makes constant reference to his idiosyncratic character and the influence it had on the course of events. See, for example, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.68–9, 70, 71–2, 82, 91.

<sup>161</sup> Wang Yunxin in “From high cadre’s progeny to reporter,” p.43, indicates that there was some sort of ban imposed on the piece so as to “limit its influence” (*suoxiao yingxiang*). This was not the case. According to Dai, no other journal dared publish it. *Encounter Monthly* was forced to suspend publication in 1990 and it is popularly held that “Wang Shiwei and ‘Wild Lilies’” was one of the reasons for the closure. Dai did comment that members of the He Long Biographical Team were contemplating legal action against her for revealing He Long’s role in Wang’s death. See Dai, “Wang Shiwei and ‘Wild Lilies,’” p.101–2. Xiao Rong of Peking’s *Literary Gazette* was crucial in collecting the material for Xiao and Tian’s *Eight interviews*. According to Dai (Tongyu interview), Xiao Rong learnt of the plans of He Long’s Biographical Team to take Dai to court and did his best to talk them out of it.

<sup>162</sup> Xiao and Tian, *Eight interviews*.

<sup>163</sup> *ibid.* For example, Tang Tianran’s “Wei ‘Wang Shiwei he ‘Ye baihehua’” yiwen buzheng—Liu Xuewei tanhua pianji [Additions and corrections to ‘Wang Shiwei and ‘Wild Lilies’’: notes of a conversation with Liu Xuewei] was included by Dai Qing as an appendix in *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.108–10.

<sup>164</sup> See Wen’s remarks in Xiao and Tian, *Eight interviews*.

<sup>165</sup> See Yan's comments, *ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> The debate concerning the re-evaluation of Mao's line in literature and art became re-politicized and particularly heated from early 1989. See, for example, Xia Zhongyi's "Lishi wuke bihui" [There is nothing taboo in history], *Wenxue pinglun* [Literary Criticism], 1989, no.4, pp.5–20, written in March 1989; and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences literary apparatchik Zhang Jiong's post-4 June attack, "Mao Zedong yu Xinzhongguo wenxue—ping 'Lishi wuke bihui' yiwen" [Mao Zedong and the literature of New China—a critique of "There is nothing taboo in history"], *Literary Criticism*, 1989, no.5, pp.5–18 and 159. Also Yang Zhenduo's "Wufa huibide bianlun—guanyu wenyi benzhi ji qita wenti yu Xia Zhongyi tongzhi zai shangque" [An unavoidable debate—concerning the nature of literature: other questions and a response to Comrade Xia Zhongyi], *Literary Criticism*, 1989, no.6, pp.33–9; and Jin Sheng, "Huigu dui Mao Zedong wenyi sixiangde yichang 'weijiao'" [Reviewing the attempted 'encirclement' of Mao Zedong's cultural thought], *Zhongliu*, 1991, no.5, pp.36–45.

<sup>167</sup> Dai Zhixian, *Wentan san gongan* (Kaifeng: Henan Renmin Chubanshe, 1989). This book is one volume in the Sishinian guoshi fansi congshu [Series on Rethinking the State of the Nation over Forty Years].

<sup>168</sup> Tongyu interview. The literary historian Chen Danchen agrees with this point in Xiao and Tian, *Eight interviews*. In regard to the uses of 'Trotskyism', see also Cheek, "The fading of Wild Lilies," pp.42–3, 45, and Goldman, *Literary dissent*, p.40.

<sup>169</sup> Tongyu interview.

purge of Feng Xuefeng and was involved in the denunciation of both the Hu Feng and the Ding-Chen 'anti-party cliques' in the 1950s. Yan, who also witnessed the denunciation of Wang Shiwei, said about Dai's work that: "I must thank her for providing us with so much important material, all of it food for thought, and for helping us to rekindle our own conscience."<sup>165</sup>

Qian Liqun, a professor in the Chinese Department of Peking University and a specialist in twentieth-century Chinese literature, said that Dai's work on Wang Shiwei finally provided the reader with "an appreciation of the detailed background of the [Yan'an] Talks."<sup>166</sup> And since its appearance in 1988, other works investigating the effects of Mao's cultural policies have been published. One example is the 1989 volume, *Three Major Cases from the Cultural World* by Dai Zhixian 戴知賢, a professor of Party history at the People's University in Peking, which deals with the cultural purges of the early 1950s: the criticism of the film "The Biography of Wu Xun", Mao's denunciation of Yu Pingbo's 俞平伯 work on *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and the campaign against the "Hu Feng Anti-Party Clique."<sup>167</sup>

The journalists who compiled the interviews for the *Literature Press* special issue on Dai's work were preparing a major seminar on her historical writings to be held in Shanghai in 1989. The demonstrations in Peking and the 4 June Massacre—as well as Dai's own detention—forced them to abandon the project. According to Dai, whose writings were banned by the News and Publications Administration in Peking around the time of her detention, the books and other materials gathered for the occasion were put under lock and key. While public discussion of the significance of Dai Qing's historiography had been momentarily blocked, small groups of scholars and writers in a number of cities have recognized the importance and relevance of her work, and are reportedly pursuing some of the issues raised by her investigations into both Wang Shiwei and Chu Anping, in particular the fate and role of liberalism in twentieth-century China.

One of the central themes of Dai Qing's work on Wang Shiwei was to show that the label 'Trotskyite' was used indiscriminately by Party leaders to condemn and crush intellectuals who either criticized or opposed them. "Any intellectual—and by that I mean anyone who could read—who dared express a different opinion had to be a Trotskyite, that's how they thought. But taken from another angle, who was going to oppose them? Only those people who were imbued with the best things in the human intellectual tradition, for only this type of person would dare view their own independence, their spiritual independence, as being more important than anything else. It's only this type of person who would say what he thought, knowing full well whom it would offend."<sup>168</sup> Dai also said she feels that "psychological independence and the value of spiritual freedom" have been a central theme in her own life and are germane to an understanding of Wang Shiwei's personality.<sup>169</sup>

In his perceptive study of the Wang Shiwei case published in 1984, Timothy Cheek says of Wang's essay "Politicians, Artists" that: "Speaking clearly and reasonably, Wang proposes a vital, independent and useful role for Communist writers as society's caring but relentless critics of evil; . . . [the essay] sets up the revolutionary artists as the active loyal opposition, the public Censor, the Ombudsman of revolutionary society itself."<sup>170</sup> From the late 1970s, this tradition of the writer as the Party's conscience or as loyal oppositionist was revived. The writer of reportage Liu Binyan was recognized throughout the 1980s as a leading exemplar. And perhaps it is no coincidence that Liu Binyan voiced his doubts about the charges against Wang Shiwei, lauding "Wild Lilies" as early as 1983.<sup>171</sup> Su Xiaokang, another writer of reportage best known for his role in the creation of the television documentary "River Elegy" in 1988, was also such a writer until his flight from China after 4 June 1989. As we have noted in the above, Dai Qing is also a member of this group of 'mass media historians'. Like Lu Xun and Wang Shiwei before them, they argued in the late 1980s for a politically relevant literature and an *engagé* culture.<sup>172</sup>

Reflecting on her work in 1990, Dai said that "'Politicians, Artists' was Wang Shiwei's real contribution [to the debate on intellectual freedom under Party rule] was his comments on national forms and his debate with Chen Boda."<sup>173</sup> Both Merle Goldman and Raymond Wylie, using mostly 1942 *Liberation Daily* material, see Chen Boda as the chief antagonist to Wang, and it is this point Dai also makes forcefully when she deals with 'factionalism' (*zongpai zhuyi* 宗派主義) in her text.<sup>174</sup> However, the major 'subtext' of Dai's work is the pressing contemporary relevance for Chinese intellectuals and writers of the story and the fate of Wang Shiwei. "The crux of the matter," she claims, "was the assassination of humanity and the invasion of the self."<sup>175</sup> Ironically, one of the weaknesses of Dai's study is that her fascination with Wang's personality and the actual process of his denunciation, not to mention her desire to score points by commenting on contemporary events and figures, tends to overshadow this aspect of the Wang Shiwei case. Remarking on this in August 1990, Dai says she may have been too concerned with the length of the study or the ability of her readers to digest the details of the debate. "Now," Dai says, speaking in 1990, "I think this ['Politicians, Artists' and the debate with Chen Boda] is the most important thing [about the case]."<sup>176</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Cheek, "The fading of Wild Lilies," p.31; see also p.40.

<sup>171</sup> "Une interview de l'écrivain Liu Binyan," Agence France-Press (Paris), 24 April 1983. See Cheek, "The fading of Wild Lilies," p.58, n. 115a.

<sup>172</sup> In this context it is worth noting that one of Dai Qing's favourite works by Lu Xun is his speech "Wenyi yu zhengzhide qitu" [Art and politics: the parting of the ways], collected in *Jiujiji*, in which Lu Xun argues for a committed culture of protest. See *The complete works of Lu Xun*, 7: 113–21.

<sup>173</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>174</sup> Goldman, *Literary dissent*, p.37; Raymond F. Wylie, *The emergence of Maoism: Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta, and the search for Chinese theory 1935–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), pp.147–51, 179–80; and Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.69–70. Chen Jusun, Dai's Fujian-based informant, was taken into Chen Boda's confidence during the Wang Shiwei incident. Chen Boda told him the 'tricks of the trade': "The most important thing is to attach yourself to the right person and stay with them. The second is to organize your own group . . ." After Mao went to read Chen Boda's wall-poster riposte against Wang Shiwei, Chen Boda told Jusun smugly, "I've latched on [to the right person]." He also successfully found his own followers. In her study Dai remarks that although Chen Jusun died in 1987, she still felt unable to name the man whom Chen Boda enlisted in his clique to attack Wang at the time. (See *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.70.) At Tongyu she revealed that Chen's main Yan'an henchman hinted at in the text was none other than Deng Liqun. In the 1980s, Deng rose to become a leading exponent of the ideological purges that marked that decade. In 1990, with Hu Qiaomu's support, he was also put in charge of the writing of the first official history of the People's Republic.

<sup>175</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>176</sup> Tongyu interview.

## IX

Of course, I'm writing for the sake of the present. If it weren't for this, I wouldn't bother writing about these cases. In my opinion the situation is exactly the same today [as it was in Yan'an], that's why I wanted to tell the truth about these incidents; so people can read about them and think: how come nothing's really changed, why hasn't there really been any progress.

—Dai Qing<sup>177</sup>

<sup>177</sup> Tongyu interview.

<sup>178</sup> See Kam Louie, *Inheriting tradition: interpretations of the classical philosophers in Communist China, 1949–1966* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) pp.27–8; and Wang Gungwu, “Juxtaposing past and present in China today,” *China Quarterly* 61 (1975), pp.1–24.

<sup>179</sup> “*Kuice fangxiang, yi qiu yi cheng*,” a quotation from Mao Zedong's notes on Hu Feng in 1955. See Mao Zedong, “Guanyu Hu Feng fangeming jituande cailiao' de xuyan he anyu” [Introduction and notes on “Materials on the Hu Feng Counter-Revolutionary Clique”], *Mao Zedong xuanji* (Peking: Renmin Chubanshe, 1977), 5: 164.

<sup>180</sup> Dai, “*China's Heroes and Martyrs* and 1986,” p.124. This article was eventually reprinted in *China's Heroes and Martyrs* itself (1988, no.5, pp.71–2, 43).

<sup>181</sup> See Vera Tolz, “‘Glasnost’ and the re-writing of Soviet history,” *Radio Liberty Research*, 18 May 1987 (RL 189/87), p.2. There is a considerable literature on the subject of historical ‘black holes’ in Eastern Europe; see, for example, Milan Šimečka, “Black holes,” *Index on censorship*, 1988, no.5, pp.52–4.

<sup>182</sup> Vera Tolz, “Blank Spots’ in Soviet history,” *Radio Liberty Research*, 21 March 1988 (RL 119/88), pp.2–3. In “Black holes” (see previous note) Šimečka says: “black holes . . . [are] segments of history cloaked in total darkness, devoid of life, of persons, of ideas. Such black holes in history have a destructive effect on our national consciousness and effectively corrode our historical memory. An ordinary person is helpless before them since, unless he is himself an historian, he cannot, by his own research, fill those holes with life.” (p.53.)

The relationship of the past to the present as represented by the historian is one central to the debates concerning historiography, particularly during the People's Republic, have often been marked by the re-evaluation of historical personages and incidents, or by the writing of what in Chinese is termed ‘reflective’ or *yingshe* 影射 history: the use of history as innuendo and allegory for contemporary purposes.<sup>178</sup>

In early 1987, Dai wrote an article for *Reading* about the significance of *China's Heroes and Martyrs*. Among other things, it also provides a key to understanding her views related to questions of Party history at the time:

Since 1978, the intellectuals and pseudo-intellectuals of China, regardless of age (from twenty to ninety), no matter whether they have been attacked by others or have attacked others, have all witnessed with a mixture of pain, delight, bitterness and relief the yellowing pages extracted, one by one, from old files. This has been translated into tearful family reunions and sighs for the months and years that have irrevocably passed. A twenty-eight-year-old driver stares in disbelief at a banner reading “Comrade Hu Feng” at a memorial meeting. There is no way he can convince himself that the man being mourned today was once denounced as a plotter who “had his eye on the way the wind was blowing in the hope of exploiting the situation.”<sup>179</sup> But by now the Chinese all know that a prosperous and strong China depends on its people being intelligent and enthusiastic, and for them to be both of these things they must be able to understand historical truth, for indeed it entwines them at every turn.<sup>180</sup>

This is one of the most concise arguments found in Mainland Chinese writing in favour of doing away with historical lacunae—‘white spots’, ‘memory holes’ or ‘black holes’ as they are called in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe<sup>181</sup>—created by the Party's endless shifts in policy and ideological struggles. Vera Tolz, an analyst of Soviet affairs, offers the following summary definition of what she calls ‘blank spots’. They are:

- 1 Historical events that are never written about in the Soviet Union or are mentioned in the press only once or twice without any details.
- 2 Events that are treated with such bias that the facts are distorted.
- 3 Important historical documents whose publication is proscribed.<sup>182</sup>

Dai's argument is in favour of an open and honest approach to the past. It is an argument that coincided, originally, with the logic of the Party's reform policies in other areas. During various phases of policy formulation in the 1980s openness and honesty, or transparency (*toumingdu* 透明度 or

*gongkaixing* 公開性) as the Chinese translate the Russian term *glasnost*, were spoken of as being essential if the Party was to reform itself and move forward. Dai's interest in revitalizing history was also initially very much in keeping with the general spirit of 1986, during which time even the Party Ministry of Propaganda was run by an extraordinarily 'liberal' figure, Zhu Houze 朱厚澤.<sup>183</sup> But, as we can see, revealing the truth about the past and evaluating it in the present has very serious consequences both for the historian and the reading public.

The past with which Dai Qing is concerned is a living history, and not merely a series of events and accounts of people that simply predate the present in which she and her readers are living. Her concern rather is with the 'momentum'<sup>184</sup> of the past which plays directly on the nature of intellectual and cultural life in contemporary China. The awareness of this 'momentum of history' and the compelling desire to understand it is, to an extent, therefore the driving force behind Dai's historical investigations. As the quotation at the beginning of this section indicates, Dai Qing was consciously using the past to inspire reflection on the present.

The relationship of the past to the present as represented by the historian is one central to the debates concerning historiography. Dai Qing is quite explicit about her interests in the historical 'cases' she has pursued from the mid 1980s. In her writings the shadow of the present is always obvious; it is not the product of Party fiat, but rather the result of both a general intellectual ambience and Dai's idiosyncratic approach to her subject. (As such it should also be seen as having both its relevance and its limitations.) Being someone who grew up in the society that has been created in part as a result of the incidents she describes—she lives in the future of the past which she is studying—Dai has had a vital interest in uncovering the nexus between ideas and motives, and the personalities involved.

Although some members of officialdom like Wen Jize had increasingly admitted that the charges levelled against Wang as a traitor, Trotskyite and KMT agent were false, other leaders have reportedly indicated that they believed a full exoneration of Wang would only add to the deepening crisis of Party legitimacy. Just as Party leaders in Yan'an felt directly threatened by Wang Shiwei's independence and acerbic criticisms, nearly half a century later autonomous intellectual activity and criticism are still perceived as being a danger to Party rule, something that was particularly evident in 1989.

Not satisfied with merely clearing Wang's name, Dai aimed to write people like him, particularly intellectually independent people, into the realm of popular narratives on modern Chinese history. This desire should be seen in the context of the discussions surrounding the question of humanism and the emphasis on human worth as opposed to the Party dogma concerning the 'class nature' of individuals that were central to theoretical and philosophical debates in the 1980s. Whereas in previous decades great effort had been expended in writing people out of history

<sup>183</sup> Zhu was in his mid-fifties when he was given this job. A protégé of Hu Yaobang, he was purged shortly after Hu's own fall in early 1987. For two of Zhu's representative speeches as a liberal Party leader, see *Gaige busheng* [The call for reform], ed. National Affairs Research Association of the Student Association of Hong Kong University (Hong Kong: Jixianshe, 1988), pp.215–33. The publication of Dai's interviews with intellectuals was made possible, she says, because of comments Zhu made on openness during a meeting held at *Guangming Daily*. See n. 29 above.

<sup>184</sup> See Ying-shih Yü, "The study of Chinese history: retrospect and prospect," in Kao (ed.), *The translation of things past: Chinese history and historiography*, p.21.

<sup>185</sup> Tongyu interview. For Chen's remarks, see Xiao and Tian, *Eight interviews*; and Chen, "Ruhe sheng, ruhe si" [He died as he had lived], *Wenlunbao*, 15 July 1988.

<sup>186</sup> Václav Havel, "Stories and totalitarianism," p.16.

and replacing them with either 'the People' or revolutionary leaders, the 1980s saw a fascination among both writers and readers in the role of the individual, the subjective view of reality and the self. The literary historian Chen Danchen 陳丹晨, in commenting on Dai's work, said that the Wang case was an example of an attack on independent thinkers in general, not merely on isolated individuals.<sup>185</sup>

In the lives and writings of Wang Shiwei and Chu Anping, and to a lesser extent Liang Shuming, Dai found a thread of intellectual opposition, or dissent, in twentieth-century Chinese history. The progress of the Communist Party has been marked by the repeated crushing of outspoken critics both within and outside itself. By uncovering the histories of a number of the most outstanding critics of the status quo, Dai found herself both identifying with them and defining her own role in China in the context of their endeavours. This process of historical discovery led Dai inexorably to take an increasingly critical stance in regard to contemporary Chinese political culture; and her writings on history, while originally projected as a mirror on the present, a part of the enterprise of cultural renewal, became instead works of dissent.

When reflecting on the dangerous implications of Dai's historiography, Václav Havel's remarks on history under socialism are noteworthy:

So ideology revealed the historical necessity of what must happen, and at the same time it revealed the historical necessity of itself as that which has come to fulfill that necessity. In other words, history has at last discovered its final meaning. . . . Ideology, claiming to base its authority on history, becomes history's greatest enemy.

The hostility is double-edged: if ideology destroys history by explaining it completely, then history destroys ideology by unfolding in a way other than that prescribed by ideology.

Ideology, of course, can destroy history only ideologically, but the power based on that ideology can suppress history in real ways. In fact it has no choice: if history, by unfolding autonomously, were allowed to demonstrate that ideology is wrong, it would deprive power of its legitimacy.<sup>186</sup>

## X

The faults of a gentleman can be likened to the eclipse of the sun or the moon.  
If he has transgressed, everyone sees it; if he mends his ways, all will admire him.

—The Analects, *quoted at the beginning of*  
*"Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies'"*<sup>187</sup>

<sup>187</sup> *Lunyu* 19: 21. See also Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.39.

"Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies,'" like "Chu Anping and 'Total Party Domination,'" was written with little regard for the carefully delineated structure of Party history and thought, one that is influenced both by traditional modalities and the unique culture of communism that defines time and therefore history itself in terms of Party meetings, speeches and campaigns. The chief Party

document on its own post-1949 history, the 1981 "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China," provides such a carefully calibrated view, with its classification of time in terms of congresses, plenums and Party decisions. The sphere of Party time and space is a world in which 'historical materialism' and its dialectic rule supreme. Its contours are no better summed up than in the words of Anton, the unruly hero of Alexander Zinoviev's novel, *The Radiant Future*:

Soviet history really (and not merely apparently) is a history of congresses, meetings, plans, obligations, overfulfilments, conquests of new fields, new departures, demonstrations, decorations, applause, folk-dances, farewell ceremonies, arrival ceremonies, and so on; in brief, everything which can be read in official Soviet newspapers, journals, novels, or which can be seen on Soviet television, and so on. There are certain things which happen in the Soviet Union which do not appear in the media of mass information, education, persuasion, and entertainment. But all this represents in this context an immaterial non-historic background to real Soviet history. Everything which, to an outside observer who has not passed through the school of the Soviet way of life, may seem a falsehood, demagogy, formalism, a bureaucratic comedy, propaganda, and so on, in fact represents the flesh and blood of this way of life, in fact this life itself. And everything which may seem to be bitter truth, the actual state of things, commonsense considerations, and so on, is in fact nothing but the insignificant outer skin of the real process.<sup>188</sup>

In the world of Chinese political culture, it is the movement (*yundong*)—the seminal *yundong* being the rectification of the early 1940s—which gives life and history a rhythm all of its own. The official discourse concerning Party history maintained a certain steely façade in the 1980s. Yet the decisions at the Party's 1978 Third Plenum and the document on Party history, unintentionally or not, allowed writers and publishers, including Party historians, a new freedom to delve into the past and its workings, of which they were quick to take advantage. Many journalists and popular writers may have been anxious to exploit the past for fame and gain, given the lucrative possibilities opened up by the commercialization of the publishing industry under Reform. At the same time, veteran Party cadres, secretaries and apparatchiki were unwilling to stand by and watch as the Party created its own version of the past, often writing them out in the process. They wanted to tell their own story, or have others tell it for them. This led to a burgeoning 'memoir industry', the products of which appeared in accessible autobiographies, interviews and articles as well as numerous internal publications, both in journal and book form. While the Party laid down the general principles governing the past in its official documents, using its peculiar code of 'esoteric communications',<sup>189</sup> individuals were often anxious to fill in the gaps. This made Dai Qing's work much easier, for many of the people involved in the Wang Shiwei case were, by the mid-1980s, anxious to see him rehabilitated. She also took advantage of the Party General Secretary's remark in 1986 that Wang was the victim of an injustice, as referred to above.

<sup>188</sup> Quoted by Clive James in "Awkward laughter," *From the land of shadows* (London: Picador, 1983), p.274. Again, in discussing the tension between the individual story and totalitarian history, Havel's comments are relevant: "It began with an interpretation of history from a single aspect of it; then it made that aspect absolute and finally it reduced all of history to it. The exciting multiplicity of history was replaced with an easily understood interaction of 'historical laws', 'social formations' and 'relations of production', so pleasing to the order-loving eye of the scientist. This, however, gradually expelled from history precisely what gives human life, time, and thus history itself a structure: the story. And banished to the kingdom of meaning, the story took with it its two essential ingredients: uniqueness and intrinsic ambiguity. Since the mystery in a story is merely the articulated mystery of man, history, having lost the story, began to lose its human content. The uniqueness of the human creature became a mere embellishment on the laws of history, and the tension and thrill inherent in real events were dismissed as accidental and so unworthy of the attention of scholarship. History became boredom." ("Stories and totalitarianism," p.16.)

<sup>189</sup> On this, see, for example, William E. Griffith, "On esoteric communications," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 3, no.1 (January 1970): 47–54.

<sup>190</sup> It is interesting to compare similar developments in the Soviet Union before and during the early Gorbachev era. See, for example, R. W. Davies, *Soviet history in the Gorbachev revolution* (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), pp.1–7, 193–203.

<sup>191</sup> See Havel, “The power of the powerless,” in *Living in truth*, ed. Jan Vladislav (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), pp.55 *et passim*. Concerning the ‘parallel life’ of intellectuals under socialism, see Skilling, *Samizdat*, pp.38–9, 43–4, 123–4.

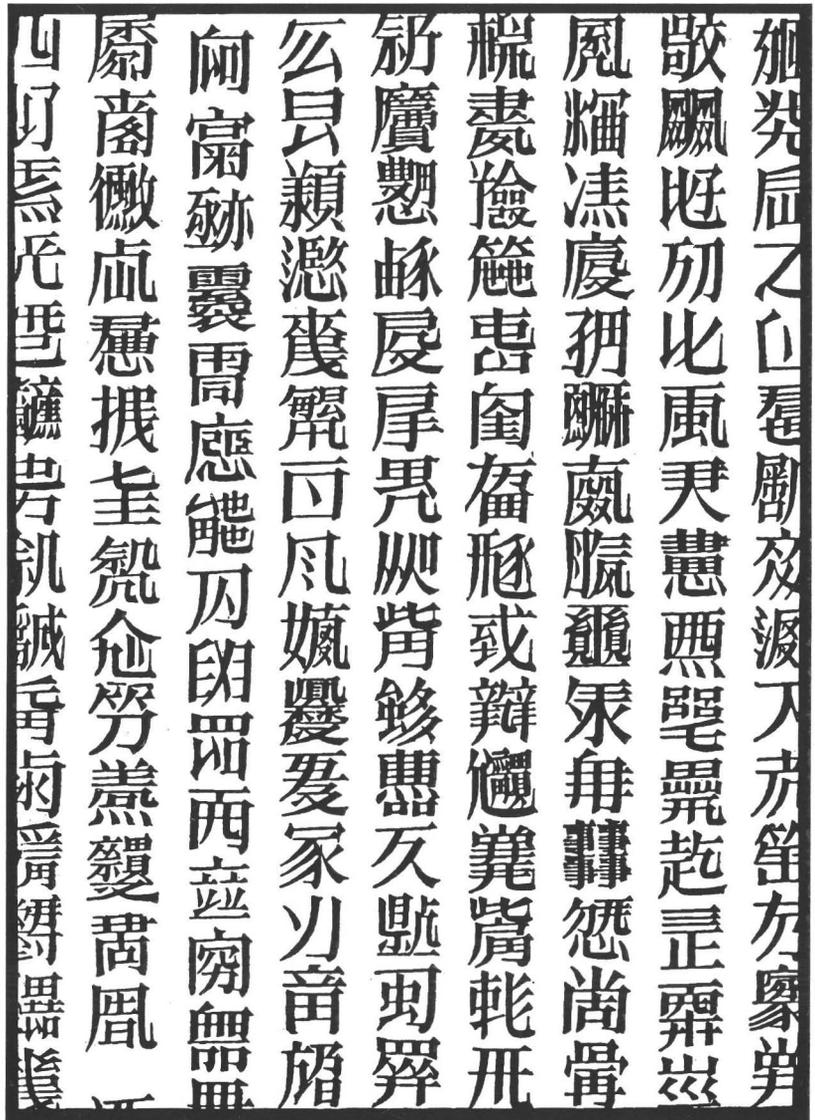
<sup>192</sup> Although the co-authorship is acknowledged in Dai Qing’s *Liang, Wang, Chu*, where Wang’s pen-name Zheng Zhishu is used, Wang did not acknowledge it in his *Liang Shuming yu Mao Zedong* (Changchun: Jilin Renmin Chubanshe, [May] 1989); see pp.365–7. Wang did, however, praise the editors of *Encounter Monthly* for encouraging him to publish his account. See nn.79 and 89 above.

Due to the particular nature of historiography under Party rule, and the possibility of writing ‘parallel history’ or ‘independent history’ in a period of reform or ideological decay such as seen in China in the 1980s,<sup>190</sup> Dai also has had to find and verify hidden truths. These efforts may be seen as part of the enterprise among Chinese intellectuals in the 1980s to “live in the truth,” to use Václav Havel’s phrase.<sup>191</sup>

Dai Qing published three major investigations into the history of modern Chinese intellectuals during the years 1987–89. The first, an essay entitled “Liang Shuming and Mao Zedong,” was, as we have noted, co-authored with Wang Donglin 汪東林,<sup>192</sup> the other two appeared under her name alone. All

### Figure 3

The back cover of the January 1989 issue of *Dongfang Jishi* (Nanjing) in which Dai Qing published “*Chu Anping and ‘Party Empire’*,” showing the Peking artist Xu Bing’s fanciful typographic art. Xu Bing’s work was used as a cover image for Dai’s collected historical writings, *A Group of Modern Chinese Intellectuals: Liang Shuming, Wang Shiwei, Chu Anping* (Nanjing, 1989)



three studies came out in a single volume—*A Group of Modern Chinese Intellectuals: Liang Shuming, Wang Shiwei, Chu Anping*—in June 1989, just as Dai Qing was being denounced by the government for her involvement in the ‘turmoil’ of the Protest Movement and her work banned.<sup>193</sup>

The introduction to this book was written by Zhu Zheng, one of the figures who first inspired Dai Qing to make a study of the fate of modern Chinese intellectuals. In his essay, Zhu comments that the three figures dealt with by Dai represent three different types of Chinese intellectual and three basic modes of national salvation proposed for China in the twentieth century. Liang Shuming was China’s “last Confucian”; Chu Anping, a western educated “democratic individualist”; and Wang Shiwei, a committed communist.<sup>194</sup> All of these figures had also been victims of Party campaigns in the 1940s and 1950s, purges which have shaped contemporary Chinese history and intellectual life. These purges of dissident opinion and independent thinkers form the historical ‘deep structure’ of the 1989 Protest Movement and its aftermath.

Zhu Zheng comments in his introduction that, “I do not know what form of legal process is necessary for a case to be satisfactorily rehabilitated (*pingfan* 平反), but I am confident that in the eyes of the readers of this volume these people have been rehabilitated. After finishing this book, people will surely feel reverence and grief for these noble men (*zhisbi renren* 志士仁人) who offered themselves to China; to them it is immaterial whether an official ruling on their rehabilitation has been made or not.”<sup>195</sup> Dai agreed entirely with Zhu’s comment that “the readers will rehabilitate [the subjects of the three studies] in their hearts” after reading the book and said this was the highest possible praise for her writing that she could hope for.<sup>196</sup>

Liu Xiaobo, the literary critic turned political activist, has a view of independent or unofficial rehabilitation which is not unlike that of Dai Qing. Publishing his opinions in a pamphlet distributed during the 1989 Protest Movement, he said that rehabilitation is “an abnormal and twisted phenomenon in (contemporary) Chinese history.” Liu attacked the very concept as being a form of Party “privilege,” a means by which the Party maintained its own image and ensured the loyalty of its subjects. “As long as the concept of [official] rehabilitation exists there is no chance for democracy and the rule of law in China,” he wrote. In reference to the Protest Movement itself, he criticized the students for calling on the government to “rehabilitate” their movement because, he argues, to plead for rehabilitation is an acknowledgement of the government’s position as the ultimate political and historical arbiter.<sup>197</sup> In her works of ‘historical investigative journalism’, Dai Qing both fills in ‘black holes’ and enjoins her readers to judge for themselves the rights and wrongs of history.

<sup>193</sup> Dai Qing, *Liang, Wang, Chu* was published in June 1989. For evidence of the ban on Dai’s writings, see *Jinzi xiaoshoude shukan mulu* [Index of banned books and periodicals] (Peking: Xinwen Chubanjū, August 1989).

<sup>194</sup> Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, pp.1–2. Zhu Zheng’s description of Liang as China’s “last Confucian” is obviously inspired by the title of Guy S. Alitto’s book *The last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese dilemma of modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). A Chinese translation of Alitto’s book was produced by the Hunan People’s Publishing House, Zhu Zheng’s employer, in 1988.

<sup>195</sup> Dai, *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.3.

<sup>196</sup> On the efforts of the players in this historical drama to have Wang Shiwei rehabilitated, see *Liang, Wang, Chu*, p.80 and n. 2, and Liu Xuewei’s comments on p.110.

<sup>197</sup> Liu Xiaobo, “Pingfan! Zhongguo zuidade beiju” [Rehabilitation! China’s greatest tragedy] ed. *Lianhebao Tiananmen 1989*, (Taipei: Lianjing Chubanshe, 1989), p.277. The writer gave Dai Qing a copy of this essay and she said she was in basic agreement with Liu’s remarks.

<sup>198</sup> Note the reference to Chu in Liu Binyan's autobiography, *A higher kind of loyalty*, p.79, where *dang tianxia* is translated as 'the Party-monopolized country'. Liu thought people like Chu were indeed Rightists, but he felt disquiet at the escalation of the 1957 denunciations.

<sup>199</sup> See Susan Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, ed., *Chinese Law and Government: Party Historiography* (Fall 1986), esp. pp.3–11 and 12–54.

Yet Dai's writing has a more far-reaching effect than simply redressing the wrongs of the Party in an unofficial manner. By writing about these figures, in particular Wang Shiwei and Chu Anping,<sup>198</sup> Dai has trespassed on a realm jealously guarded by the Party—that of access to information on major opponents of the Party, and the right to discuss them in the public domain and provide a historical evaluation of their cases and Party decisions concerning them outside officially sanctioned parameters. The authority of the Party and indeed its legitimacy has always been shored up by its unassailable position as the sole interpreter of history. The Party's control over the past, including the right to revise its version of the past, is always aimed at vindicating its legitimacy in the present and its authority to 'create' the future.<sup>199</sup> Thus, while Dai Qing may have embarked on her historiographical researches in the hope of helping the Party confront its past so as to face the present and the future with greater confidence, in reality her revisionism has proved to be far more open-ended and disquieting.

#### Figure 4

*Dai Qing in retrospect (Courtesy of Dai Qing)*



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## POSTSCRIPT

Reviewing the second edition of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, published for the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China on 1 July 1991, Zheng Chaolin noted that on 7 February 1991 the Ministry of Public Security had issued a "Decision on the Re-examination of the Question of Comrade Wang Shiwei's Trotskyism."<sup>1</sup> Zheng quoted a section of the document as follows:

During the re-examination no material evidence could be found to show that Comrade Wang Shiwei joined a Trotskyite organization. For this reason, the 1946 conclusion that he was 'a counter-revolutionary Trotskyite spy' should be corrected. Wang was mistakenly executed during the war. He is hereby rehabilitated and exonerated.<sup>2</sup>

Zheng said that "the pressure of public opinion" had finally led to a review of the case, and although welcoming this long-awaited decision, he pointed out that Wang was only rehabilitated because no evidence had been found that he was a member of a Trotskyite organization. Zheng also noted the impact of the Soviet re-evaluation of Trotsky on the contents of the official notes of Mao's works,<sup>3</sup> the revision of which, according to informed opinion, has been aimed on one level at the elimination of the influence of Kang Sheng. Zheng read another message in the Ministry of Public Security notice of rehabilitation: although no organizational link could be found it did not eliminate the possibility that Wang was a Trotskyite, in which case his beheading was "well-deserved punishment."<sup>4</sup>

It was noted earlier that in the second volume of the official *Selected Readings in the Works of Mao Zedong*, published in 1986, there is a footnote which reads: ". . . subsequent investigations failed to prove that he [Wang Shiwei] was an informer planted by the KMT or a spy."<sup>5</sup> While the 1991 rehabilitation addressed the question of Wang's Trotskyite organizational ties and his execution, the nature and significance of his critique of the Party in the early 1940s is a matter with far more serious contemporary ramifications.

<sup>1</sup> "Guanyu Wang Shiwei tongzhi Tuopai wentide fucha jue ding."

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Zheng Chaolin's article of 2 August 1991, "Xinban Maosuan yu Tuopai yuan'an" [The new edition of Mao's *Selected works* and the unjust case against the Trotskyites], *Open Magazine*, 1991, no.9, p.49.

<sup>3</sup> Zheng, "The new edition of Mao's *Selected works* and the unjust case against the Trotskyites," pp.48-9.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p.49.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p.155, n.73.

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