

**Anti-Communist Propaganda and Masculinities in Nationalist China, 1927-37**

by

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CCP: Chinese Communist Party

KMT: Kuomintang, or Chinese Nationalist Party (= Guomindang, or GMD)

NLM: New Life Movement

NRA: National Revolutionary Army

ROC: Republic of China

SHAC: The Second Historical Archives of China (Nanjing)

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (= Soviet Union)

## Notes on Transliteration, Non-English Names, and Chinese Characters

In most cases, I use Pinyin to transliterate Chinese terms, except for 1) some famous figures, such as Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek; and 2) scholars from Hong Kong and Taiwan who use Cantonese or Wade-Giles transliteration for their names in English publications. I will not use tone marks for most terms except for some synonyms with the same pinyin (such as *gòng qī* 共妻 and *gōng qī* 公妻, the communization/socialization of wives).

For most Chinese and Japanese names, I put family names before given names. But for contemporary scholars who publish in English, I will retain the order of their names in their publications.

In the body text, I use traditional Chinese characters for consistency. In notes and bibliography, I retain the Chinese titles as they were published, i.e., simplified Chinese for contemporary Mainland publications and traditional for historical materials and Hong Kong or Taiwan publications.



## Abstract

This thesis addresses the relationship between the Kuomintang's (KMT, Chinese Nationalist Party) anti-Communist propaganda and their perceptions and/or constructions of masculinities during the Nanjing Decade (1927-37). This thesis analyzes how the KMT's anti-Communist rhetoric reflected the sentiments they wanted to arouse in their intended audience, as well as how the propaganda revealed their perception of manhood, which (un)intentionally constructed a new image of ideal man through this anti-Communist discourse.

Based on archives, newspapers, journals, books, and other materials, this thesis shows that the KMT tried to depict the (male) Communists as problematic *men*: they were licentious and immature themselves, and tried to deprive other men of their control of women and privileges as patriarchs (Chapter 1); they were unpatriotic, and even tried to emasculate all the Chinese men in front of the Russians (Chapter 2); they were a new generation of dangerous males existing all along China's imperial history, who wrecked the society and families; and they were killers of the good, loyal male citizens of the party-state. But if they turned to the KMT, they would never be counted as disloyal turncoats (Chapter 3).

On the one hand, the Communists' alleged deeds were viewed as threats to other respectable male citizens' manhood, which was based on both family and nation. By depicting the Communists in this way, the KMT propagandists tried to provoke the audience's gendered anxieties about their potential loss of manhood (i.e., their power and privileges as men).

On the other hand, the KMT constructed the Communists as the representatives of

marginalized masculinities or unmanliness, who constituted the countertype of the KMT's vision of ideal male citizens who should never act like a Communist, but ought to form a heterosexual, monogamous family, perform filial piety, love the country, and obey the Party. The KMT used the gendered image of Communists to discipline male citizens and regulate the society.

For the KMT, being more masculine and helping defend Chinese men's manhood implied their legitimacy. Furthermore, when appropriating the late imperial gender ideologies about bandits and male loyalty in their anti-Communist rhetoric, they also tried to make a gendered claim to the imperial power.

By examining how the anti-Communist politics was intertwined with the perceptions and construction of masculinities, this thesis contributes to the historization of masculinities in China and the search for the dynamics of changes, and helps us reflect on the relations between propaganda, masculinity, nationalism, and anti-feminism in contemporary China.

## Introduction: Anti-Communism and Masculinity

In 1935, at the high tide of the Kuomintang's (KMT, or Chinese Nationalist Party) military campaign against the Communists, the Military Committee of National Government published a book called *Red Bandits' Sins* consisting of twenty chapters. The titles of its chapters succinctly summarized the image of Communists in their view and which they wanted to present to the people: chapters one and thirteen were titled "Red Bandits are running dog of Soviet Russia" and "Containing the military resistance against Japanese"; ten to twelve respectively "Murder and arson," "Destroy the morals," and "Break the marriage system."<sup>1</sup> Different from their image in the contemporary Mainland history textbooks as as brave fighters, suppressed progressives, or predestined saviors, the Communists were insane youths, traitors, bandits, or rapists in the representation of the KMT.

Were these labels invented from air or randomly chosen by the KMT? Or did they grow out of the contemporary race, class, and especially gender systems? How were gender norms and ideals embedded in the KMT's anti-Communist propaganda, through which the KMT attempted to regulate the gender system in turn? In this research, I am trying to address the complex relationship between gender and politics through an analysis of the discourse of masculinity and the KMT's anti-Communist propaganda during the Nanjing Decade (1927-37), the high tide of anti-Communism in Chinese history, which will make it clear that gender norms were never

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<sup>1</sup> Guomin zhengfu junshi weiyuanhui weiyuanzhang Nanchang xingying 國民政府軍事委員會委員長南昌行營 [Nanchang camp of the president of Military Commission of the National Government], ed., *Chifei zui'e* 赤匪罪惡 [Red Bandits' sins] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, Feb 1935).

merely “societal” and “cultural” but also political, and politics and propaganda were never ungendered either.

I ask two questions: one, how did the KMT’s anti-Communist rhetoric reflect the sentiments they wanted to arouse in their intended audience? Two, how did the propaganda reveal their perception of manhood, which (un)intentionally constructed a new image of ideal man through this anti-Communist discourse? Relying on the KMT’s documents and publications as main sources, I hope this study will help us understand both the party politics and Chinese masculinities during this period.

### **Anti-Communism in China before 1949**

Socialism and Communism were introduced to China by Chinese intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century but did not gain much currency until late 1910s, when the intellectuals disillusioned by Western powers found hope in the success of the 1917 Soviet Revolution. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was formed by a small group of intellectuals with the help from Comintern in 1921. At the same time, the KMT under Sun Yat-sen also began to collaborate with the Soviet Union, reorganized itself following the structure of the Russian Communist Party, and accepted the Communists to join it without relinquishing their CCP membership in 1924, which marked the beginning of a brief period of coalition of the two parties. Although the rightists within the KMT opposed this decision, the National Government in Guangzhou and Wuhan before 1927 never openly opposed Communism. However, the Beiyang government then in power fiercely attacked these two “Red” parties. In April 1927, the KMT rightists led by

Chiang Kai-shek purged the Communists out the party and established the Nanjing National Government; in July, the leftists in Wuhan also broke up with the Communists and converged their Wuhan government with the Nanjing one. In 1927-28, the Beiyang government was overturned, and the Nationalist government in Nanjing became the legitimate government of the Republic of China (ROC) and formally united China. After 1927, anti-Communism was the official ideology, even though many intellectuals still showed sympathy for Communism; the CCP became a fugitive political organization and moved to rural areas to build its power bases. Communism was since suppressed by the KMT government after the Beiyang government, except for a short period in the early stage of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) when the KMT and CCP collaborated again with continuous minor conflicts.

Anti-Communism before 1949 involved various groups—politicians, intellectuals, and commoners, with the first group attracting most attention from the China scholars: Both Beiyang and Nationalist governments had military campaigns, organizations, laws, and propaganda and ideologies against Communists; famous and ordinary intellectuals expressed their opposition to Socialism and Communism in diaries, newspapers, journals, and books; and the fear of Communists also spread among commoners through rumors and propaganda. It deserves further explanation of the place of KMT's propaganda in this big picture.

### **Governments**

Before 1928, the Beiyang government had its own anti-Communist agenda, which classified

the KMT and CCP as the same cohort.<sup>2</sup> But after its quick demise after the Northern Expedition (1926-28), the KMT took the leading role to suppress the Communists. What were the motivations of the KMT (rightists)'s anti-Communism? Wang Qisheng argues that two major reasons for the KMT rightists' anti-Communism were the potential takeover of KMT itself by the Communists within the KMT and the threats of the Communist social revolution to their personal interests as elites.<sup>3</sup> Yang Kuisong attributes their anti-Communist sentiments to the belief that the Three People's Principles (*Sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義) was fundamentally different from Communism, the suspicion that Communists joined the KMT to take advantage of their party, and their opposition to the Communist social revolutions per se.<sup>4</sup> Iechika Ryōko attributes Chiang Kai-shek's anti-Communism to his disillusionment in the Soviet Union and the social disorder caused by the Chinese Communists.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, as I will show in my research, the agenda of, threats posed by, and worries about the Communist social revolution were highly gendered, and the defense of current order was essentially a reestablishment of ideal gender system and largely from their perspective as men.

Besides the military campaigns against CCP which resulted in the latter's "Long March," the

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<sup>2</sup> Hazama Naoki 狭間直樹, "Kokumin kakumei no butai toshite no 1920-nendai no Chūgoku" 国民革命の舞台としての一九二〇年代の中国 [The 1920s China as the Stage of the Nationalist Revolution], in *1920-nendai no Chūgoku* 一九二〇年代の中国 [China in the 1920s], ed. Hazama Naoki 狭間直樹 (Tōkyō: Kyūko shoin, 1995), 10–19.

<sup>3</sup> Wang Qisheng 王奇生, *Dangyuan, dangquan yu dangzheng: 1924-1949 nian Zhongguo Guomindang de zuzhi xingtai* 党员、党权与党争：1924-1949年中国国民党的组织形态 [Comrades, Control and Contention of the Kuomintang, 1924-1949], Revised and Enlarged Edition (Beijing: Huawen chubanshe, 2010), 92.

<sup>4</sup> Yang Kuisong 杨奎松, *Guomindang de "lian gong" yu "fan gong"* 国民党的“联共”与“反共” [Kuomintang: Unity with Communists and Anti-Communism] (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2016), 37, 48, 312.

<sup>5</sup> Iechika Ryōko 家近亮子, *Shō Kaiseki to Nankin kokumin seifu* 蒋介石と南京国民政府 [Chiang Kai-shek and Nanjing National Government] (Tōkyō: Keiō gijuku daigaku shuppankai, 2002), chap. 3.

Nationalists established many anti-Communist organizations, such as the Sun Yat-sen Study Group (*Sunwen zhuyi xuehui* 孫文主義學會, 1925-26), the Society for Vigorous Practice (*Sanmin zhuyi lixing she* 三民主義力行社, abbrev. *Lixingshe*; also known as *Lanyi she* 藍衣社, or Blue Shirt Society, 1932-38), and the Three People's Principles Youth League (*Sanmin zhuyi qingnian tuan* 三民主義青年團, 1938-47).<sup>6</sup> Some of these organizations such as the Blue Shirt had its origin in European fascism. As for the legal system, the KMT invented crimes like “counter-revolution” (*fangeming* 反革命) and established political prisons such as the Repentance Camps (*fanxing yuan* 反省院<sup>7</sup>) to persecute and detain Communists.<sup>8</sup> The propaganda work can never be separated from these institutional and military support.

Both Beiyang and Nationalist governments had propaganda against Communists, although the Nationalists were also classified as “Red bandits” (*chifei* 赤匪) by the former.<sup>9</sup> The KMT's

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<sup>6</sup> Frederic E. Wakeman, “A Revisionist View of the Nanjing Decade: Confucian Fascism,” in *Reappraising Republican China*, ed. Frederic E. Wakeman and Richard L. Edmonds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 141–78; Kikuchi Kazutaka 菊池一隆, “Sanmin shugi seinendan no sōsetsu to sono katsudō: ‘Hankyō kōnichi’ seinen undō no kiseki” 三民主義青年團の創設とその活動: 「反共抗日」青年運動の軌跡 [The Establishment and Activities of the Sanmin Zhuyi Youth Corps: The Development of “Anti-Communist and Resistance against Japanese” Youth Movements], *Ningen bunka: Aichi gakuin daigaku ningen bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 人間文化: 愛知学院大学人間文化研究所紀要, no. 33 (2018): 1–33; Kikuchi Kazutaka 菊池一隆, “Chūgoku tokumu ‘ran’isha’ no soshiki to ‘hankyō kōnichi’: 1920, 30-nendai o chūshin ni” 中国特務「藍衣社」の組織と「反共抗日」: 一九二〇、三〇年代を中心に [The Organization of Chinese Special Agent “Blue Shirt Society” and “Anti-Communism, Resist Japanese”: Centered on the 1920-30s], *Ningen bunka: Aichi gakuin daigaku ningen bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 人間文化: 愛知学院大学人間文化研究所紀要, no. 34 (2019): 1–36.

<sup>7</sup> Also translated as Reformatory (see Brian Tsui 2020) or Self-examination Institute (see Jan Kiely 2014).

<sup>8</sup> For the “counter-revolution” crime, see Wang Qisheng 王奇生, *Geming yu fangeming: shehui wenhua shiye xia de Minguo zhengzhi* 革命与反革命: 社会文化视野下的民国政治 [Revolution, Counter-Revolution] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2010), chaps. 3–4. For the criminal justice system of KMT and National Government, see Jan Kiely, *The Compelling Ideal: Thought Reform and the Prison in China, 1901-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), chap. 5; Klaus Mühlhahn, *Criminal Justice in China: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), chap. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Shaoqian Zhang, “Visualizing the Modern Chinese Party-State: From Political Education to Propaganda Agitation in the Early Republican Period,” *Twentieth-Century China* 41, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 73–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15215385.2016.1108709>.

propagandic work was always depicted as far less effective than the CCP, but recently historians have paid some attention to the party's official newspaper *The Central Daily News* (*Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報) and other efforts on propaganda, both domestically and internationally.<sup>10</sup> The anti-Communist rhetoric in publications by the Repentance Camps was also worth attention. Brian Tsui argues that these journals depicted Communists as sexually licentious and indifferent to the predicaments of China as a nation, thus denouncing the socialist revolution and internationalism.<sup>11</sup> This analytical framework is quite illuminating and helpful for me to link the anti-Communism with gender issues, as both of the two depictions were gendered (see my Chapters 1 and 2). I will come back to this point later.

The KMT's anti-Communist agenda should be viewed against their general ideological work. During the Nanjing Decade, the KMT gradually replaced its revolutionary cause and

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<sup>10</sup> For monographs, see: Qiliang He, *Newspapers and the Journalistic Public in Republican China: 1917 as a Significant Year of Journalism*, Routledge Studies in the Modern History of Asia 135 (London: Routledge, 2019), chap. 3; Shuge Wei, *News under Fire: China's Propaganda against Japan in the English-Language Press, 1928-1941* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017); Wang Ling-hsiao 王凌霄, *Zhongguo Guomintang xinwen zhengce zhi yanjiu (1928-1945)* 中國國民黨新聞政策之研究 (1928-1945) [Research on Kuomintang's Policies on News (1928-1945)] (Taipei: Guomintang dangshihui, 1996); Cai Mingze 蔡銘澤, *Zhongguo Guomintang dangbao lishi yanjiu (1927-1949)* 中国国民党党报历史研究 (1927-1949) [Research on the History of Kuomintang's Party Newspapers (1927-1949)] (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 1998); Kao Yu-Ya 高郁雅, "Guomintang de xinwen xuanchuan yu zhanhou Zhongguo zhengfu biandong" 國民黨的新聞宣傳與戰後中國政局變動 (1945-1949) [The Interrelationship between the Kuomintang Government's Propagation Policies and the Transformation of China] (PhD diss., Taipei, Guoli Taiwan daxue, 2004).

Also see: Tsuchida Akio 土田哲夫, "Kokumintō seiken to Nankin/Jūkei Chūō Nippō" 国民党政権と南京・重慶『中央日報』 [The Nationalist Regime and The Central Daily News in Nanjing and Chongqing], in *Minkoku kōki Chūgoku kokumintō seiken no kenkyū* 民国後期中国国民党政権の研究 [The Nationalist Regime in Late Republican China, 1928-1949], ed. Chūō Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo 中央大学人文科学研究所 (Tōkyō: Chūō Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2005), 157–87.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Tsui, "Reforming Bodies and Minds: Anticommunism and Transforming Political Enemies in Nationalist China," *Positions: Asia Critique* 28, no. 4 (November 2020): 789–814, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10679847-8606497>.



rhetoric with more conservatism.<sup>12</sup> Anti-Communism was a part or even foundation of the KMT's official ideologies, including “One ‘-ism’” (i.e., the Three People's Principles), “One Party Rule,” and promotion of Confucian ethics.<sup>13</sup> In 1931, just before the Mukden Incident, Chiang Kai-shek restated that anti-Communism was the prerequisite for the resistance against Japanese aggression. In 1934, the National Government launched the New Life Movement (*Xinshenghuo yundong* 新生活運動), aimed to cultivate qualified men and women for the party-state.<sup>14</sup> The ideal people, both male and female, as envisioned by the KMT, were the opposite of the Communists.

### **Intellectuals and common people**

Very little is known about the acceptance of these anti-Communist campaigns which lasted for decades. The only thing we are sure is that anti-Communist discourse did circulate among some intellectuals and many commoners, sometimes in a highly sexualized way.

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<sup>12</sup> The most classical work on this subject is Mary C. Wright, “From Revolution to Restoration: The Transformation of Kuomintang Ideology,” *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (August 1955): 515–32, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2941834>. For the KMT's ambiguity between conservatism and revolutionary ideas, see: Liu Pujiang 刘浦江, “Taiping tianguo shiguan de lishi yujing jiegou: jian lun Guomindang yu Hong Yang, Zeng Hu zhijian de fuza jiuge” 太平天国史观的历史语境解构: 兼论国民党与洪杨、曾胡之间的复杂纠葛 [A Deconstruction of the Historical Discourse of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom's View of History: With a Discussion of the Complex Entanglements of Guomindang with Hong Xiuquan and Yang Xiuqing, and with Zeng Guofan and Hu Linyi], *Jindaishi yanjiu* 近代史研究, no. 02 (2014): 84-99+161. For a more recent work, see: Brian Tsui, *China's Conservative Revolution: The Quest for a New Order, 1927-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>13</sup> Jiang Pei 江沛 and Ji Yaguang 纪亚光, *Huimie de zhongzi: Guomin zhengfu shiqi yishixingtai guanli yanjiu* 毁灭的种子: 国民政府时期意识形态管理研究 [The Seeds of Destruction: Research on the Management of Ideology in Nationalist China] (Xi'an: Xi'an renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), 7–8, 15–17, 120. This book is a rather detailed review of KMT's ideology, although written from the perspective of the CCP's official narrative. Tsui's book is another comprehensive analysis of ideology in Nationalist China.

<sup>14</sup> For a recent study on the New Life Movement, especially its discipline of male/female bodies, see: Fukamachi Hideo 深町英夫, *Shintai o shitsukeru seiji: Chūgoku Kokumintō no shinseikatsu undō* 身体を躰ける政治: 中国国民党的新生活運動 [The Politics of Disciplining Bodies: The Kuomintang's New Life Movement] (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 2013).

Although many intellectuals turned to the CCP or at least the left, there were still many others opposing the Socialist (or Communist) ideology.<sup>15</sup> With regard to the general public, Shi Yan analyzes the rumors about “socialization of wives” (*gōng qī* 公妻) spreading from late Qing era to 1940s,<sup>16</sup> which constituted an important part of the anti-Communist discourses (see Chapter 1). During the Nationalist era, the goal of destructing family system in Communist canons and proposed by early Chinese Communists was picked out as a key ground for anti-Communist discourse, even though the CCP had already made compromises about transformation of family and marriage during their rural revolutions. As I will elaborate, the gendered concerns about family and sexual liberations played a crucial role in the KMT’s propaganda.

In sum, anti-Communism in modern China was a complex phenomenon, as embodied in Republican-era governments’ military campaigns, organizations, laws, and propaganda, as well as in intellectuals’ writings and rumors circulating among common people. The governments’

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<sup>15</sup> Among these people, Hu Shi and Zhang Taiyan gain most interest of historians. As for Zhang Taiyan (Zhang Binglin), see: Hazama, “Kokumin kakumei no butai toshite no 1920-nendai no Chūgoku,” 16–19; Luo Zhitian 罗志田, “Zhongwai maodun yu guonei zhengzheng: Beifa qianhou Zhang Taiyan de ‘fan chi’ huodong yu yanlun” 中外矛盾与国内政争：北伐前后章太炎的“反赤”活动与言论 [International Conflicts and Domestic Political Struggles: The “Anti-Red” Activity and Speech of Zhang Taiyan around the Northern Expedition], *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究, no. 6 (1997): 69–88.

As for Hu Shi, see: Luo Zhitian 罗志田, “Beifa qian shunian Hu Shi yu Zhonggong de guanxi” 北伐前数年胡适与中共的关系 [Hu Shi’s Relations with the Chinese Communist Party in the Years before the Northern Expedition], *Jindaishi yanjiu* 近代史研究, no. 04 (2003): 1-49+6. As for the criticisms of Socialism by people around Hu Shi, see: Zhang Qing 章清, “Hu Shi pai xueren qun” yu xiandai Zhongguo ziyou zhuyi “胡适派学人群”与现代中国自由主义 [The “Hu Shi Scholar Group” and Modern Chinese Liberalism], Revised Edition (Shanghai: Shanghai sanlian shudian, 2015), chap. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Shi Yan 石岩, “Gongchan gongqi’ yaoyan zai zhongguo de shengcheng yu zaoqi liubu” “共产公妻”谣言在中国的生成与早期流布 [The Formation and Dissemination of the Rumors about Socialization of Wealth and Wives in China], *Suqu yanjiu* 苏区研究, no. 01 (2019): 98–118. Shi gives a very thorough review of primary sources about the rumors about “socialization of wives” and their origins. Regretfully, Shi does not make a deeper analysis of these rumors in this article, especially their relations with gender and class.

propaganda was an ingredient of their whole anti-Communist project; it was not merely representation, but also institutionally and militarily endorsed by the state. Informed by some sporadic analyses of gender and sexuality issues by previous scholars, this study intends to further conceptualize the relationship between anti-Communism and gender, especially manhood, through a focused examination of publications by the KMT.

### **Gendering the Anti-Communism**

The rise of anti-Communist politics temporally intersected with the reconfiguration of masculinities in China during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While the construction of masculinities always varies by time and space, some special factors began to contribute to the unprecedented changes after the late Qing period—nationalism, imperialism, new knowledge translated from abroad, and so on. The KMT’s anti-Communist agenda was deeply situated in these trends.

Most importantly, with the changes of international relations, Chinese male elites were compelled to emulate their Western counterparts—seeking a gendered modernity, to reclaim their manhood. During this process, their manhood became tightly entangled with China’s nationhood and their masculinities were “nationalized.” In other words, nationalism began to play an increasingly important role in the construction of Chinese masculinities. Under the pressure of imperialist invasion, especially after the abolition of civil service examination system, the quality of *wu* 武 (martial) won over *wen* 文 (civil) as the hegemonic masculinity in China, which resulted from (and reinforced) an emphasis on militarism and sports—both with a very clear

focus on the male bodies.<sup>17</sup> The ideal male citizen envisioned by the KMT also grew out of this cult of nation and physical strength (Chapter 2).

As feminism gain more momentum in the early twentieth century, women had more room to articulate their views on ideal men,<sup>18</sup> which also resulted in the men's worry about losing control of them. The newly imported scientific knowledge (medicine, sexology, and biology) also helped redefine masculinities in China. Man (masculinity) and women (femininity) were defined as biologically determined and strictly dichotomous.<sup>19</sup> The concept of homosexuality suppressed the homoerotic elements in Chinese men's intra-gender relations. Heterosexuality now became an integral part of masculinity.<sup>20</sup> The heterosexual core family not only became the pursuit of most men, but also loomed large on the state's agenda (Chapter 1). All these three factors

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<sup>17</sup> On military drill, see: Nicolas Schillinger, *The Body and Military Masculinity in Late Qing and Early Republican China: The Art of Governing Soldiers* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016); Wang Shih-Ying 王詩穎, *Guomin geming jun yu jindai Zhongguo nanxing qigai de xingsu, 1924-1945* 國民革命軍與近代中國男性氣概的形塑 (1924-1945) [Nationalist Revolutionary Army and the Making of Manhood in Modern China, 1924-1945] (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2011).

On sports, see: Takashima Kō 高嶋航, "'Tōa byōfu' to supōtsu: Koroniaru masukyuriniti no shiten kara" 「東亞病夫」とスポーツ: コロニアル・マスキュリニティの視点から ["Sick Man of East Asia" and Sports: From the Perspective of Colonial Masculinity], in *Kindai higashi ajia ni okeru hon'yaku gainen no tenkai* 近代東アジアにおける翻訳概念の展開 [The Spread of Translated Conceptions in Modern East Asia], ed. Ishikawa Yoshihiro 石川禎浩 and Hazama Naoki 狭間直樹 (Kyōto: Kyōto daigaku jinmon kagaku kenkyūjo, 2013), 309–42; Ching May Bo 程美宝, "Kindai teki danseisei to minzoku shugi" 近代的男性性と民族主義 [Modern Masculinity and Nationalism], in *Sōgō kenkyū shingai kakumei* 総合研究辛亥革命 [Integrated Studies on 1911 Revolution], ed. Shingai kakumei hyakushūnenkinen ronshū henshū iinkai 辛亥革命百周年記念論集編集委員会, trans. Nii Yōko 新居洋子 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 2012), 465–83.

<sup>18</sup> Kam Hung Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China*, Paperback re-issue, digitally printed version (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), chap. 6. This does not mean that women did not participate in the construction of masculinities in Ming-Qing China, but they did so in a different way.

<sup>19</sup> Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Press, 1995); Howard Chiang, *After Eunuchs: Science, Medicine, and the Transformations of Sex in Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

<sup>20</sup> Wenqing Kang, *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950*, Queer Asia Series (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009).

(nationalism, feminist challenges, and heteronormativity) played a role in one way or another in the KMT's propaganda work, and were all entangled with anti-Communism, as I will show in this research. However, few gender historians studied how the anti-Communism itself—the mainstream ideology in Republican China and seriously executed by the successive governments, was related to masculinities.

As many scholars have pointed out, the politics of masculinity is essentially an “anti-” politics. Michael Kimmel argues that the construction of masculinity always requires a set of “others,”<sup>21</sup> and George L. Mosse uses the concept of “countertype” to imply the same meaning.<sup>22</sup> With respect to Republican China, the Communists can be understood as the Other or countertype in the KMT's construction of model males for the party-state. But in the China field, there has been no comprehensive study on this topic. Only Wang Shih-Ying, in her study on masculinity and the National Revolutionary Army (NRA), points out that anti-Communism was the indispensable character for a model Nationalist soldier, who embodied the ideal masculinity constructed by the KMT;<sup>23</sup> and Takashima Kō hints at the distinction between the KMT's and CCP's respective constructions of masculinity, with the KMT's model middle-class and cosmopolitan, and the CCP's more rural-based.<sup>24</sup> But neither Wang or Takashima

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<sup>21</sup> Michael S. Kimmel, “Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity,” in *Theorizing Masculinities*, ed. Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman, Research on Men and Masculinities Series 5 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 120.

<sup>22</sup> George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), chap. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Wang, *Guomin geming jun yu jindai Zhongguo nanxing qigai de xingsu, 1924-1945*, 152–60.

<sup>24</sup> Takashima Kō 高嶋航, “Kindai Chūgoku no danseisei” 近代中国の男性性 [Masculinity in Modern China], in *Chūgoku jendā shi kenkyū nyūmon* 中国ジェンダー史研究入門 [Introduction to Gender History in China], ed. Kohama Masako 小浜正子 et al. (Kyōto: Kyōto daigaku gakujuitsu shuppankai, 2018), 259–79.

sufficiently elaborated their arguments<sup>25</sup>.

### **Anxiety**

In contrast to the scarcity of research on gender and anti-Communism in China, historians have shown how the hegemonic discourse of anti-Communism was highly gendered in the Cold War United States. For one thing, the image of “Communist women” as oppressed and manipulated puppets often embodied the anti-Communist politics in the West.<sup>26</sup> For another, K. A. Cuordileone delineates how the “hard vs. soft” binary was intertwined with other dichotomies like masculine vs. feminine (or effeminate), Republican vs. Democrat, conservative vs. liberal/communist, and so on. At the center of the stage is the male anxiety during the Cold War, when American men were worried both about losing masculinity (being soft) and the threats of Communism. Therefore, anti-Communism and the defense of American masculinity (especially liberals’ self-defense) were entangled.<sup>27</sup> In addition, Barbara Epstein argues that anti-Communism and homophobia, two of the many fears or anxieties in the Cold War US, were largely paralleled. In the mainstream media, both communists and homosexuals were depicted as threatening the social order, especially the American masculinity.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Besides these two studies, Wang Zheng investigates how the male elites reclaimed their masculinity through anti-Socialism (if not anti-Communism) after the Maoist era, especially by denigrating the Socialist ideal of “Iron Girls.” But her focus is more on contemporary China. See: Wang Zheng, *Finding Women in the State: A Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People’s Republic of China, 1949-1964* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), chap. 8.

<sup>26</sup> Francisca de Haan, “Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women’s Organisations: The Case of the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF),” *Women’s History Review* 19, no. 4 (September 2010): 556–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2010.502399>.

<sup>27</sup> K. A. Cuordileone, “‘Politics in an Age of Anxiety’: Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960,” *The Journal of American History* 87, no. 2 (September 2000): 515–45, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2568762>; K. A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>28</sup> Barbara Epstein, “Anti-Communism, Homophobia, and the Construction of Masculinity in the Postwar

Both of these US historians emphasize “anxiety,” which is also the focus of China historians in studying masculinity. The male anxiety is a crucial point to understand men as gendered beings. Being born with a male body is only the very basic prerequisite to be a *man* socially, or in other words, to hold *power* in a patriarchal society. Manhood is something to be achieved and maintained, and the “idealized model of masculinity is hardly realizable,” so most men (or males) are constantly anxious about whether they can fulfill the standards of performance; a failure to do so would make them labeled as effeminate and lose power.<sup>29</sup> Such a mechanism was not limited to the period under investigation in my research: for example, in late imperial China, the male anxiety about the shrinking opportunities to climb up the social ladder contributed to their emphasis on female chastity to hold women in place,<sup>30</sup> and in the medical texts, there was also a worry about “vulnerable masculinity.”<sup>31</sup>

In short, “masculinity is almost always fraught with anxiety over the perceived lack of what is considered masculine,”<sup>32</sup> or the loss of their gendered power. While on the other hand, crisis tendencies in gender order might “provoke attempts to restore a dominant masculinity,”<sup>33</sup> as illustrated by many rhetoric and policies of KMT—though in Toby Ditz’s view, they might not necessarily be in a defensive posture.<sup>34</sup> Thus, what were Chinese men worried and anxious

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U.S.,” *Critical Sociology* 20, no. 3 (October 1994): 21–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089692059402000302>.

<sup>29</sup> Geng Song, *The Fragile Scholar: Power and Masculinity in Chinese Culture* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ju-k’ang Ti’en, *Male Anxiety and Female Chastity: A Comparative Study of Chinese Ethical Values in Ming-Ch’ing Times*, T’oung Pao. Monographie 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

<sup>31</sup> Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China’s Medical History, 960-1665* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 201.

<sup>32</sup> Martin W. Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 8.

<sup>33</sup> R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 84.

<sup>34</sup> Toby L. Ditz, “The New Men’s History and the Peculiar Absence of Gendered Power: Some Remedies

about in the early twentieth century? How did these anxieties inform, and how were they appropriated by, the KMT's propaganda?

As I mentioned, in China's modern history, several factors contributed to the reconfiguration of masculinities. Among them, imperialist encroachment of China played the biggest role in arousing elite men's anxieties. Indeed, the men's gendered anxiety was never an individual thing, but always related with the larger community and political entity. Their gendered power is derived from, and their masculinities produced in these communities,<sup>35</sup> with the fate of which the men's anxieties are related. In other words, these communities worked as the men's "enlarged self."<sup>36</sup> So, there is never a universal masculinity, but only specific types situated in specific communities.<sup>37</sup> Before the era of nation-states, the dynasty (under which one was born and/or for which one served), clans, or various societies usually worked as the communities for men. This correlation between political entity/community and manhood which was once embodied by the male loyalists and remnant subjects prefigured the nationhood/manhood symbiosis in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>38</sup> After the late Qing period, the male anxiety was increasingly entangled with China's plummeting status in the "world of nations." Even though

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from Early American Gender History," *Gender & History* 16, no. 1 (April 2004): 7, [https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0953-5233.2004.324\\_1.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0953-5233.2004.324_1.x).

<sup>35</sup> For example, masculinities are often created by homosociality, see Martin Huang, "Male Friendship in Ming China: An Introduction," *NAN NÜ* 9, no. 1 (2007): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1163/138768007X171704>. Recently, scholars also study how women's voices influenced the construction of masculinities.

<sup>36</sup> I thank Prof. Jiang Jin for offering me this useful term in a discussion.

<sup>37</sup> Takashima Kō 高嶋航, "'Tōa byōfu' to kindai Chūgoku (1896-1949)" 『東亜病夫』と近代中国 (1896-1949) ["Sick Man of East Asia" and Modern China (1896-1949)], in *Kingendai Chūgoku ni okeru shakai keizai seido no saihei* 近現代中国における社会経済制度の再編 [Reorganization of Social and Economic Institutions in Modern China], ed. Murakami Ei 村上衛 (Kyōto: Kyōto daigaku jinmon kagaku kenkyūjo, 2016), 374. The term he used is *shūdan* 集団.

<sup>38</sup> Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China*, chaps. 4, Epilogue.



things like consumerism and bioscience also contributed to the male elites' growing anxiety, the nationalist issues were always major contributing factors.<sup>39</sup> In Kam Louie's word, the male identity of the educated classes was threatened by both Western values and the rising of women and working-class men; people more and more perceived "West" and/or "male" as powerful and "Chinese" and/or "female" powerless.<sup>40</sup> Wang Zheng, Dorothy Ko and Lydia H. Liu astutely expose how Chinese male elites, after feeling a crisis for China and themselves, attempted to construct a new male subjectivity through reforming women,<sup>41</sup> which exposed how the status of their nation resulted in the men's anxiety about their own status.

Already frustrated by the international politics, Chinese men felt greatly anxious about the rapid social change (including women's movement) as well. Therefore, even without the Communist revolution, conservative men had already been worried by two crises—the potential destruction of familial system, which was the foundation of their manhood, and the endangered nationhood of China, which was tightly intertwined with their nationalized manhood. The Communist ideals almost perfectly fit into these two worries. In Brian Tsui's article cited above,

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<sup>39</sup> Hugh Shapiro, "The Puzzle of Spermatorrhea in Republican China," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 6, no. 3 (December 1, 1998): 551–95, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10679847-6-3-551>.

<sup>40</sup> Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*, 122, 127. This is very similar to the "Manly Englishman vs. Effeminate Bengali" paradigm in British India, although China's semi-colonial status distinguished itself from the colonial India, see: Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate Bengali" in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Mrinalini Sinha, "Giving Masculinity a History: Some Contributions from the Historiography of Colonial India," *Gender & History* 11, no. 3 (November 1999): 445–60, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.00155>.

<sup>41</sup> Wang Zheng 王政, Dorothy Ko 高彦颐, and Lydia H. Liu 刘禾, "Cong Nüjie zhong dao 'nanjie zhong': nanxing zhuti, guozuzhuyi yu xiandaixing" 从《女界钟》到“男界钟”: 男性主体、国族主义与现代性 [From *Women's Bell* to "Men's Bell": Male Subjectivity, Nationalism and Modernity], in *Bainian zhongguo nüquan sichao yanjiu* 百年中国女权思潮研究 [Studies on Chinese Feminism during the Past Century], ed. Wang Zheng 王政 and Chen Yan 陈雁 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2005), 1–29.

the two main threats posed by the CCP according to the KMT's rhetoric were the social revolution against families and World revolution against the nation. Now, the Communist revolution became the biggest threat to the familial system among other factors, and the Soviet aggression under the disguise of Communist internationalism as they perceived was viewed as the most terrible form of imperialism. Both evoked the audience's and revealed the propagandists' own gendered (and classed) anxiety.

### **Defending the Family and Nation**

Such an anxiety caused by imperialism and the change of social structure manifested in the form of nationalism (anti-imperialism) and an emphasis on familial value and social order, while the family and nation were themselves closely intertwined.<sup>42</sup> Both ideological trends were directly against the Communist ideas of world and social revolutions.

**Family.** Historically, family constituted the foundation for Chinese manhood in general. This fundamental status, however, was challenged from time to time. In the New Culture Movement, urban intellectuals began to attack the extended patriarchal family as the root of China's weakness. As Susan Glosser argues, the "redefinition of manhood occupied the primary, if implicit, focus of the family-reform debate." While trying to create new, modern identities, young men in the early twentieth century still took family, especially the qualities of their wives, as the core part of their identities. Their rebellion against their fathers only betrayed their desire for becoming patriarchs of their own small conjugal families (*xiao jiating* 小家庭).<sup>43</sup> At the

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<sup>42</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, "Gender and Nation," in *Women's History in Global Perspectives*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith, vol. 1 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 249.

<sup>43</sup> Susan L. Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915-1953*, Asia--Local Studies/Global Themes 5

same time, their rural counterparts were more eager for the possession of wives. According to Kay Ann Johnson, for most peasants, manhood always entails an ability “to pay a bride price and produce male progeny for their ancestors.”<sup>44</sup> Different from the few urban intellectuals, they never intended to destroy the family system, and to “get wives” was the “the basic, minimal criteria of manhood” for them,<sup>45</sup> who thus constituted a strong counterforce against CCP’s family reform. Therefore, when proposing the social revolution, of which the destruction of family was a key part, the Communists were threatening the manhood of those on whom they intended to rely (and were finally forced to compromise). The Nationalists would emphasize this in their anti-Communist propaganda to arouse the anxiety of their male audience (Chapter 1).

**Nation.** Globally, manhood and nationhood, masculinities and nationalism embody each other in most nation-states.<sup>46</sup> But the specific relations vary in different contexts.<sup>47</sup> As for modern China, Takashima Kō has made a succinct summary: Under the dominance of colonizers over colonized, strength was linked with masculinities—a strong nation means a manly nation, while the dominated equals effeminate. Therefore, remasculinization became a goal of the colonized nation and its men. In this logic, women would seldom feel effeminate. However, while semi-colonized by multiple powers, China did not hold a specific model of masculinity.<sup>48</sup>

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(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 12.

<sup>44</sup> Kay Ann Johnson, *Women, the Family and Peasant Revolution in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 32.

<sup>45</sup> Johnson, 56.

<sup>46</sup> Joane Nagel, “Nation,” in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn, and R. W. Connell (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 397–413; Cynthia H. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Second edition, Completely Revised and Updated (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), chap. 3 (Nationalism and Masculinity).

<sup>47</sup> Sinha, “Gender and Nation.”

<sup>48</sup> Takashima, “‘Tōa byōfu’ to kindai Chūgoku (1896-1949),” 373–75.

Multiple local and foreign forces competed, so did multiple masculinities.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the manhood had already been nationalized with nationalism becoming a way of performing masculinity.<sup>49</sup> As it was the superiority of the West over China that made the Chinese men appear less masculine and even sick in the face of “progressive, powerful and healthy” Western men,<sup>50</sup> the presence of a foreign enemy would be crucial in the defense of manhood, which was a key characteristic in the KMT’s propaganda (Chapter 2). During this process, in Hee Wai Siam’s word, Chinese elite men sought a “shame modernity” with a goal of recovering their masculinity. For these literati, nationalism, as a collective political consciousness of male solidarity, then became a useful way to release their shame in front of the Western men.<sup>51</sup> Such a “shame” can be interpreted as the imminent loss of manhood, a sentiment the KMT went at length to stimulate through their propaganda. In particular, the male bodies became extremely significant as the site for contending for the masculinity of not only individual men, but also of the nation (i.e., sovereignty).<sup>52</sup> So, in the KMT’s visual representation, the images of healthy, strong men figured prominently (Chapter 2). In sum, when China’s nationhood was equated with the manhood of Chinese men, the men, as gendered beings in a patriarchal society, would never allow the existence of the Communist

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<sup>49</sup> Bret Hinsch, *Masculinities in Chinese History, Asia/Pacific/Perspectives* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), 132–34.

<sup>50</sup> Paola Zamperini, “On Their Dress They Wore a Body: Fashion and Identity in Late Qing Shanghai,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 11, no. 2 (September 1, 2003): 317, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10679847-11-2-301>.

<sup>51</sup> Hee Wai Siam 許維賢, *Cong yanshi dao xingshi: Tongzhi shuxie yu jinxiandai Zhongguo de nanxing jiangou* 從豔史到性史：同志書寫與近現代中國的男性建構 [From Amorous Histories to Sexual Histories: Tongzhi Writings and the Construction of Masculinities in Late Qing and Modern China] (Taoyuan: Zhongyang daxue chuban zhongxin, 2015), 103–8. This term was borrowed by him from Hsiao-hung Chang. For the latter point, also see: Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China*, 202.

<sup>52</sup> Takashima, “‘Tōa byōfu’ to supōtsu: Koroniaru masukyuriniti no shiten kara.” Also see:

internationalism, which they perceived as the Red imperialism—even the Communists themselves finally relinquished this agenda. Therefore, when the Beiyang and Nationalist propagandists attacked the Communists’ world revolution agenda and accused them of collaborating with the Russian imperialism, the threat to China as a nation also had implication for the masculinities.

### **Invoking the Imperial Past: Dangerous and Loyal Men**

The defenses of family and nation, however, was only part of the story. In the KMT’s rhetoric, neither the Communists who ruined the familial order nor the Nationalists (and good “masses”) who protected the nation figured themselves in a thoroughly “modern” way. In their rhetoric, we can discern some direct references to the masculinities and politics in the late imperial era, thus allowing us to situate the gendered anti-Communist propaganda in a longer genealogy (Chapter 3).

It has been well known that the KMT (and the Beiyang government) often called the Communists “bandits” (*fei* 匪), a term having a much longer history than Communism in China and a clearly gendered meaning. In late imperial China, certain kinds of males were conceptualized as danger to the social order: rapists, parties (*dang* 党), and bandits, etc. Susan Mann argues that if we conceptualize the late imperial gender system as a continuum, “cloistered ladies” and “bare sticks” represented the two poles.<sup>53</sup> Using Raewyn Connell’s concept, these men embodied the marginalized masculinities in a society. I used her concept of marginalized

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<sup>53</sup> Susan Mann, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History*, New Approaches to Asian History (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5.

masculinity here to define the power relation between different men and masculinities.<sup>54</sup>

Dangerous males were still *men*, and *masculine*, but their masculinities were harmful in elites' eyes. Since the burgeoning of studies on masculinities in Chinese history, marginalized masculinities became a salient topic. For instance, both Kam Louie and Song Geng used *Shuihu zhuan* 水浒传 (The Water Margin) to study this.<sup>55</sup> Containing a potential to challenge the hegemonic masculinity and the power behind it, or to say, the manhood of elites, the marginalized men and masculinities will always be suppressed by the power holders.

For the social order envisioned by the imperial government and the KMT, while fathers and husbands were the beneficiaries thus defenders of the familial order, these dangerous men were the black sheep of this order. By defining the Communists as a new generation of rebels and bandits, the Nationalists also situated themselves as the new authority in a long tradition of masculinity politics.

On the opposite of these dangerous males lay the loyal men, obeying both his father and the Son of Heaven—now the nation. In the KMT's rhetoric, loyalty to the party-state was extremely important and not fundamentally different from its imperial precedent. A good man, whether an official, a soldier or a commoner, should be loyal to the party and nation.<sup>56</sup> However, the KMT was also faced with the same dilemma as their imperial counterparts. As mentioned above, the KMT had an agenda of thought reform for the arrested Communists, who were supposed to

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<sup>54</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 76, 80–81.

<sup>55</sup> Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*, chap. 5; Song, *The Fragile Scholar*, chap. 6.

<sup>56</sup> As Henrietta Harrison argued, after the KMT seized the power after 1928, they reclassified the people as “masses,” transforming the “citizens” into a group of people “whose political will was utterly subordinate to the party.” See: Henrietta Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911-1929*, Studies on Contemporary China (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 229.

change the direction of their loyalty. For the ruling dynasty in imperial era, could a turncoat official once loyal to another dynasty still be counted as loyal? Under the same logic, the image of once deceived Communists who regained their consciousness thus fleeing the evil party was crucial for the anti-Communist propaganda but posed similar paradoxes for the KMT. In 1920s-30s, as during the Ming-Qing transition, loyalty was defined in several ways in different contexts, which showed how masculinities were manipulated for the “image politics,”<sup>57</sup> and the KMT’s claim for power.

### **Framework and Sources**

In conclusion, the perception and construction of masculinities were tightly intertwined with anti-Communist politics, both in the US and in China. I try to address their relationship in Republican China by answering the two research questions I proposed in the beginning, through exploring the propogandists’ perception of manhood, the sentiments they wanted to arouse in their intended audience, and the rise of a new hegemonic masculinity in the KMT’s anti-Communist discourse. Although the politics of masculinity was not always an “anti-” politics in China, as men appropriated women’s image also for analogy besides differentiation,<sup>58</sup> this theory is largely applicable to the KMT’s depiction of Communists as the “Other” or countertype in its own construction of model males for the party-state. At the same time, the Communists’ marginalized masculinities and threats to elite manhood would invoke the anti-Communist

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<sup>57</sup> Ying Zhang, *Confucian Image Politics: Masculine Morality in Seventeenth-Century China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017).

<sup>58</sup> Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China*, 2.

passion in the male audience.

Of course, the KMT attacked the Communists from many perspectives. Theoretically, the Communist doctrines were criticized as fundamentally at odds with the Three People's Principles, and the KMT did have some serious theoretical critiques of Communism. However, this was not always the case. The huge problems of the Communist revolution itself notwithstanding, exaggeration and stigmatization were common and worth analyzing. At the beginning of this introduction, I mentioned the main characteristics of the Communists' image in the KMT's propaganda. In the following chapters, I will illustrate how these points were all gendered and related to masculinities. The KMT tried to depict the Communists not merely as problematic, but as problematic *men*: they were licentious and immature themselves, and tried to deprive other men of their control of women and privileges as patriarchs (Chapter 1); they were unpatriotic, and even tried to emasculate all the Chinese men in front of the Russians (Chapter 2); they were a new generation of dangerous males existing all along the long imperial history, who wrecked the society and families; and they were killers of the good, loyal male citizens of the party-state. But if they turned to the KMT, they would never be counted as disloyal turncoats (Chapter 3).

The KMT propaganda manifested both the men's gendered anxiety through their defense of nation and familial order, and the late imperial legacies of images of dangerous and loyal men. Only through these nexuses might we understand the complicated relationship between anti-Communism and masculinities, and how the KMT's anti-Communist propaganda sought to invoke the male audience's anti-Communist passion while reconstructing the hegemonic



masculinity in China—and finally solidify their power and legitimacy in a gendered way.

### **Primary Sources**

This research relies heavily on the archives of and publications by the KMT and National Government, especially the propaganda departments and special prisons for Communists, including official documents, work plans/reports, books, journals, and newspapers.

The Central Department of Propaganda of KMT (*Zhongyang xuanchuan bu* 中央宣傳部, or *Zhongxuanbu* 中宣部) played a huge role in the anti-Communist work. The archives of this department were restored in the Second Historical Archives of China (SHAC) in Nanjing, and National Chengchi University in Taipei (on behalf of the KMT Party History Institute). Due to several restrictions, I have only used the archives in SHAC and will turn to the archives in Taiwan in the future.

The archives of propaganda department at SHAC include the work reports of the Central Department of Propaganda and local propaganda departments, books authored by politicians or intellectuals in defense of KMT, and the report of KMT's censorship on publications.<sup>59</sup> In addition, due to the communication within the party, some documents of the propaganda offices can also be found in the archives for the KMT Central Training Department (*Zhongyang xunlian bu* 中央訓練部, or *Zhongxunbu* 中訓部).

Besides the party archives, many KMT publications were collected by the Shanghai Library, now all accessible online, including the recordings of anti-Communist speech by KMT leaders,

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<sup>59</sup> For a whole catalogue, also see: Wang Xuhua 王煦華 and Zhu Yibing 朱一冰, eds., *1927-1949 nian jinshu (kan) shiliao huibian* 1927-1949 年禁書 (刊) 史料彙編 [Collection of Banned Books (Journals) from 1927 to 1949], 4 vols. (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2007).

the documents and publications of the Central Department of Propaganda and its local branches, the publications by NRA and those targeted at soldiers, a full collection of KMT's official newspaper *The Central Daily News* (*Zhongyang ribao*) along with its supplement *The Central Pictorial* (*Zhongyang huakan* 中央畫刊),<sup>60</sup> as well as journals published by the Reformatories in several provinces.

Finally, some published collections of resources also include useful materials. For example, the Vol. 25 and Vol. 68 of *Revolution Documents* edited by the KMT itself are respectively about “eradicating Communist rebellions” and the New Life Movement.<sup>61</sup> There are also collections of Chiang Kai-shek's speech and writings which would be useful for this project.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Although the KMT also had other newspapers, *Zhongyang ribao* was the most significant one and will be the focus of my research.

<sup>61</sup> Zhongguo guomindang zhongyang weiyuanhui dangshi shiliao bianzuan weiyuanhui 中國國民黨中央委員會黨史史料編纂委員會, ed., *Geming wenxian* 革命文獻 [Revolution Documents], vol. 25 (Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu gongyingshe, 1962); Zhongguo guomindang zhongyang weiyuanhui dangshi weiyuanhui 中國國民黨中央委員會黨史委員會, ed., *Geming wenxian* 革命文獻 [Revolution Documents], vol. 68 (Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu gongyingshe, 1975).

<sup>62</sup> Jiang zongtong sixiang yanlun ji bianji weiyuanhui 蔣總統思想言論集編輯委員會, ed., *Jiang zongtong sixiang yanlun ji* 蔣總統思想言論集 [Thoughts and Speech by President Chiang Kai-Shek], 30 vols. (Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu gongyingshe, 1966). Available as online version.

## Chapter 1: Perverting Sexual Morality, Destroying Patriarchal Family

In *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels eloquently swore the “Abolition of the family!”<sup>63</sup> which became a commonly acknowledged feature of Communism and Communist parties. However, in 1927, Mao Zedong wrote that:

As for smashing the clan system, superstitious ideas, and one-sided concepts of chastity, this will follow as a natural consequence of victory in the political and economic struggles. If too much of an effort is made arbitrarily and prematurely to abolish these things, then the local bullies and bad gentry will seize the pretext to put forward such slogans as “the peasant association has no piety (*xiao* 孝) towards ancestors,” “the peasant association is blasphemous and is destroying religion,” and “the peasant association stands for the communization of wives (*gòng qī* 共妻),” all for the purpose of undermining the peasant movement.<sup>64</sup>

Through this paragraph, it is obvious that Mao had realized that the radical goals against families were not workable in China and should be abandoned. As mentioned in the introduction, the CCP later worked hard to “get wives” for single peasants to earn their support. Nevertheless, the KMT would still depict them as going to ruin the familial system and social order through 1) their own licentious behaviors and 2) direct attack of the families. Their perverse sexuality and damage of others’ families was not only a threat to elite manhood, but also a countertype to the KMT’s construction of hegemonic masculinity. In the KMT’s propaganda, the *object* of the Communist destruction included women and family but was eventually men, and most *perpetrators* of such destruction were men who were either playboys or, more directly, “bandits.” I will leave the

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<sup>63</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, trans. Samuel Moore, in *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969 [1888]). Online edition, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm> (last access: May 10, 2022).

<sup>64</sup> Mao Zedong, “Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan, February 1927,” in *Mao Zedong and China’s Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*, by Timothy Cheek (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 64. Chinese terms added by me.

discussion of the image of “bandit” (and rapist) to Chapter 3.

## Why Family Mattered

At the ROC’s 1931 National Assembly, the National Government’s progress on suppressing Communists was reported. When listing the “Red bandits’ sins,” the report goes that:

The social foundation of our country is family (*jiating*), while the reproduction and continuation of families rely on young men and women.<sup>65</sup> The bandits, on the one hand, ...agitated young men and women to do all kinds of destructive deeds to rebel against the families, which destroyed the *only* foundation of our society—family; on the other hand, they...tempted the common men and women to freely indulge in carnal desires, which destroyed the new life of family as well.<sup>66</sup> (*italic myself*)

Why did family figure so much in the KMT’s agenda? How did the Communists ruin it in the view of the KMT? And how were these related to manhood? As mentioned in the introduction, family provided a site for the production of masculinities. Filial piety was a key masculine quality in imperial China,<sup>67</sup> which also implied the possibilities for men to be a patriarch themselves in the future. In the beginning of the twentieth century, critiques of traditional families became dominant discourses in China, among which there was some as radical as “destroying family and extinguishing marriage” (*hui jia mie hun* 毀家滅婚).<sup>68</sup> Eventually the monogamous nuclear family replaced the clan and extended family to become the

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<sup>65</sup> The original text was that “the new life (*xin shengming* 新生命) of family is young men and women.”

<sup>66</sup> “Guomin zhengfu jiaomie chifei baogao: Minguo 20 nian 5 yue 12 ri zai Guomin huiyi disici dahui” 國民政府剿滅赤匪報告：民國二十年五月十二日在國民會議第四次大會 [Report on the National Government’s suppression of Communists, at the Fourth conference of National Assembly, May 12, 1931], in *Geming wenxian*, vol. 25, 180 (5308).

<sup>67</sup> Hinsch, *Masculinities in Chinese History*, 7–8.

<sup>68</sup> For a recent study on various critiques of family during this period, see: Zhao Yanjie 赵妍杰, *Jiating geming: Qing mo Min chu dushuren de chongjing* 家庭革命：清末民初读书人的憧憬 [The Quest for Family Revolution in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1895-1923] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2020).

mainstream ideal. Chinese men were not detaching their manhood from the families at all but were just looking for a new specific form as a new site. While the nuclear family was promulgated as beneficial for the Chinese nation, “the primary impetus of the family revolution was the search of young urban males for a new identity in a modernizing, industrializing society.”<sup>69</sup> From the late Qing era, Chinese male elites gave an increasingly important role to their wives and “modern families” to reconstruct a new male subjectivity;<sup>70</sup> They were highly concerned with wives and families as fundamental to their position and image, and “assumed that marriage and family were central to the social and political order.”<sup>71</sup> A desirable family—its specific form determined by contexts though—was an important part of manhood, making the alleged Communist destruction in the propaganda appear as a threat to the audience’s manhood.

In addition to the elite men, the state also promoted the new marriage system. As Mrinalini Sinha argued, the history of the modern nations was closely associated with a “particular historical form of the family—the heterosexual bourgeois nuclear family—and the resulting normative constructions of sexuality and gender identities that sustain this family form.”<sup>72</sup> In 1930, the KMT published the first Civil Code in Chinese history which formally based the marriage on monogamy, equality, and conjugal fidelity instead of patriline, and categorized the concubinage as adultery (though not bigamy).<sup>73</sup> For example, Code 972 regulates that the

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<sup>69</sup> Susan L. Glosser, “‘The Truths I Have Learned’: Nationalism, Family Reform, and Male Identity in China’s New Culture Movement, 1915–1923,” in *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, ed. Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 121.

<sup>70</sup> Wang, Ko, and Liu, “Cong Nüjie zhong dao ‘nanjie zhong’: nanxing zhuti, guozuzhuyi yu xiandaixing.”

<sup>71</sup> Glosser, “‘The Truths I Have Learned,’” 140.

<sup>72</sup> Sinha, “Gender and Nation,” 247.

<sup>73</sup> Lisa Tran, “From Toleration to Prosecution: Concubinage and the Law in China,” in *Marriage, Law and Modernity: Global Histories*, ed. Julia Moses (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 60–63. In this code,

engagement be made by the man and woman themselves, and Code 985 prohibits bigamy.<sup>74</sup> In the New Life Movement, the KMT put much emphasis on the nuclear families, with the duty for maintaining them assigned to women: according to a speech by the high KMT official Li Jingzhai 李敬齋 in 1934,<sup>75</sup> clean and tidy family was the basis of a fine and sound nation (*minzu* 民族) as well as a civilized and strong country (*guojia* 國家); and it was women rather than men who were responsible for the domestic works.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the emphasis on heterosexual marriage and population size can never be separated from the nationalist concerns in China analyzed in the next chapter, which resulted in “an urgent need for modern heterosexual citizens who would constitute and defend the nation.”<sup>77</sup>

While trying to consolidate the nuclear families, the KMT was also attempting to transfer the object of filial piety from the parents (let alone patriarchs) to the state during this period. For

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concubines were viewed as “household members who were not related by either blood or marriage,” 62.

<sup>74</sup> See the excerpts from Civil Code, in *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao: Minguo zhengfu juan* 中国妇女运动历史资料：民国政府卷 [Historical documents of women’s movement in China: Volumes on Republican-era governments], Vol. 1, ed. All-China Women’s Federation and Second Historical Archives of China (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 2011), 243-44.

<sup>75</sup> Li, a UM alumnus, held several high positions in the Henan provincial government before coming to Zhenjiang (then the capital of Jiangsu province) in 1934 to supervise party affairs and the NLM in Jiangsu. For a full resume of Li, see the ROC governmental positions database (中華民國政府官職資料庫, <http://gpost.lib.nccu.edu.tw/>, last access: May 10, 2022); for his temporary transfer to Jiangsu, see “Zhongyang tepai zhidao zhuan yuan, Li Jingzhai dao Zhen jiuzhi” 中央特派指導專員 李敬齋到鎮就職 [The central authority dispatched advising commissioner, Li Jingzhai arrived in Zhenjiang to assume office], *Zhongyang ribao* (Mar 19, 1934): 2 (2) 二張二版; “Su chengli Xinyun cujin hui, tui Li Jingzhai deng wei changwu” 蘇成立新運促進會 推李敬齋等為常務 [NLM Promotion Association established in Jiangsu, Li Jingzhai and others elected as standing members], *Zhongyang ribao* (Apr 18, 1934): 1 (2) 一張二版.

<sup>76</sup> Li Jingzhai, “Xinshenghuo yundong zhong funü yingyou de renshi” 新生活運動中婦女應有的認識 [The awareness that women should have in the New Life Movement], speech at Zhenjiang Chongshi Women’s Middle School (April 17, 1934), in *Xinshenghuo yundong xuzhi* 新生活運動須知 [Must-knows in the New Life Movement], ed. Xinshenghuo congshu she 新生活叢書社 (Nanjing: Xinshenghuo congshu she, 1935), 117-18. I learned this book from Fukamachi, *Shintai o shitsukeru seiji: Chūgoku Kokumintō no shinseikatsu undō*, 190–91.

<sup>77</sup> Matthew H. Sommer, “What Does It Mean to Be a Man in China?,” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, no. 16 (September 2015): 193.

example, they prioritized the position of ROC and KMT flags over that of parents in the new-style wedding ceremony which they promoted,<sup>78</sup> and began to punish abusive parents, support the children's self-defense, limit the parents' authority over adults' marriage and property, and so on.<sup>79</sup> Their focus on family as the basic unit of society and intermediary between party/state and individuals notwithstanding, the KMT did not want the family to be independent of their control. However, in their propaganda, as shown in this chapter, the destruction of patriarchal hierarchy became a crime of Communists. This huge discrepancy will demonstrate how the KMT largely used this accusation as a tool for its political agenda.

After reviewing the importance of monogamous heterosexual marriage and nuclear family for both elite men and the Chinese state, let us move on to the specific representation of the Communist threat to this invaluable gender order.

### **Licentious Youths, Immature Men**

In a 1928 book sponsored by NRA, the author Peng Xingdao 彭興道 devoted a section to describing the “promiscuous love and licentious craziness” (*luan ai yin kuang* 亂愛淫狂) of Communists.<sup>80</sup> Although neither Communism nor Socialism supported “communization of wives” (*gōngqī zhuyi* 公妻主義), in Peng's view, the Communists were de facto practitioners of it. As Brian Tsui illustrated, it was common for the KMT to represent the arrested Communists as

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<sup>78</sup> Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915-1953*, 87–90.

<sup>79</sup> Yue Du, *State and Family in China: Filial Piety and Its Modern Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), chaps. 4–5.

<sup>80</sup> Peng Xingdao 彭興道, *Wo tuichu Gongchandang yilai de beitonng de huiyi* 我退出共產黨以來底悲痛的回憶 [My grieve recollections after quitting the Communist Party] (No place: Guomin gemingjun ershiyi jun zhengzhi bu 國民革命軍二十一軍政治部, 1928).

licentious, irrational youths in their Repentance Camp publications.<sup>81</sup> It was the same case with other anti-Communist publications. According to *The Central Daily News*, the gender and sexual relations in “bandits regions” (*feiqu* 匪區) was horrible: most terribly, there was no idea of integrity and shame among men and women; it was heard that every summer, there were often young men and women bathing together in the river in broad daylight.<sup>82</sup>

These accusations were partially true. As Chen Bilan 陳碧蘭 recorded in her memoir, when the young students were studying at Moscow, Chen Duxiu’s 陳獨秀 son, Chen Qiaonian 陳喬年, once said that:

The revolutionaries (*geming jia* 革命家) don’t have marriage as well as romantic love, but only sexual intercourse (*xingjiao* 性交). The life of revolutionaries is in fluidity so they cannot get married; at the same time the revolutionaries don’t have time and energy to do such kind of stuff as bourgeois romantic love so they don’t have romantic love. Where they go, they work there, and resolve their sexual needs there when they have—just like drinking a cup of water and smoking a cigarette.<sup>83</sup>

While it is not fair to say the KMT’s allegations were fully fabricated, it would be an exaggeration to say that casual sex was widely practiced among the Communists. Chen Bilan herself clearly stated that she opposed the view that Chen Qiaonian embraced.<sup>84</sup> In this chapter, I would like to analyze why the propagandists supposed this *rhetoric* to be effective in terms of provoking their audience’s passion and anxiety (especially in a gendered way), rather than how much it reflected the practices of Communists.

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<sup>81</sup> Tsui, “Reforming Bodies and Minds.”

<sup>82</sup> Liu Qingke 劉慶科, “Feiqu shehui zhong zhi funüjie” 匪區社會中之婦女界 [The women’s sphere in the bandits region societies], *Zhongyang ribao* (March 4, 1936), No. 47 of *Funü zhouban* 婦女週刊 [Woman Weekly]: 3 (2). 三張二版.

<sup>83</sup> Chen Bilan 陳碧蘭, *Zaoqi Zhonggong yu tuopai: wo de geming shengya huiyi* 早期中共與托派：我的革命生涯回憶 [The Chinese Communist Party and Trotskyists in Early Stage: Recollections of My Revolutionary Career] (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu, 2010), 161.

<sup>84</sup> Chen, 161–62. Chen Bilan thought that Chen Qiaonian’s idea might come from the famous Russian revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai (1872-1952).



When it comes to propaganda, one interesting question is: who were Peng (and other propagandists) speaking to? In this passage, he addressed the imagined readers as “friend” (*pengyou* 朋友). Although the term itself was far less gendered in modern era,<sup>85</sup> his other paragraphs betrayed the gender of his target audience: “As long as *your* position is high in the Communist Party, as long as *your* face is beautiful, as long as *you* have money to reserve a room in the hotel, *you* can sleep with many beautiful female Communists, fulfilling *your* sexual desire” (*italic myself*).<sup>86</sup> The imagined reader—the “friend” of the author to whom he bitterly listed the Communists’ crimes, was largely assumed to be a fellow male.

In the book, Peng introduced how the gender relations among Communists were “beast-like.” He introduced the behavior of both men and women: the women sold their bodies under the disguise of women’s movement; the men competed to sleep with the women, and the leaders used their power to get close to them.<sup>87</sup> According to another report, the phenomenon of orgy (*zajiao zhi xianxiang* 雜交之現象) was most common among the male and female representatives in the illegal Soviet government; the conservatives who kept their old habits were belittled, so there appeared incidents of “forced ‘promiscuity and orgy’” (*qiangpo “luan ai zajiao”* 強迫「亂愛雜交」); if an old-style peasant (*jiushi nongmin* 舊式農民) had a beautiful daughter, the CCP party committee members, Red Army soldiers, and even ordinary party

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<sup>85</sup> In imperial China, making friends outside one’s home was mostly a privilege of men. See: Susan Mann, “The Male Bond in Chinese History and Culture,” *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 5 (December 2000): 1600–1614, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2652032>; Huang, “Male Friendship in Ming China.”

<sup>86</sup> Peng Xingdao, *Wo tuichu Gongchandang yilai de beitung de huiyi*, 4.

<sup>87</sup> Peng Xingdao, 4-5. Incidents of this kind did happen among the Communists. For example, they assigned women to be wives of male leaders as a political task, see: Zhu Hongzhao 朱鴻召, *Yan’an richang shenghuo zhong de lishi (1937-1947)* 延安日常生活中的历史 (1937-1947) [History in the Daily Life in Yan’an (1937-1947)] (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2007), 235–40.

members can marry her at will.<sup>88</sup> These descriptions can be read in three layers: first, male and female Communists were paralleled as embodiments of promiscuity and pervert sexuality. For men in specific, the image depicted was that the male Communists were young, immature, and had no sexual morality and self-constraint. As age is a key factor in manhood, which distinguishes boys from men, it was implied that these male Communists were far below the standard of adult manhood, and even not on the appropriate track towards it. Second, the female sexuality was used as a symbol or metaphor for corrupted politics. Third, the messages implied the Communists were making women out of control and possessing more than enough women by themselves, thus threatening the whole family system which was crucial for other adult males.

Furthermore, as for the first point, when mentioning “youths,” the KMT usually paralleled men and women as “young men and women” (*qingnian nannü* 青年男女), while they seldom mentioned women when addressing other alleged crimes. Why? First, the KMT might suppose women would become wives and “womanly” after coming to age thus less related with the Communist events; second, these accusations of youths were highly sexualized, and women were more closely related with sexuality than men in many contexts. The female sexuality was conceptualized as the biggest and maybe the only threat women could pose to men: according a report, in one “bandit region,” there were about 2,000 widows, some of whom would occasionally come out at the sunset, bringing garrison soldiers back home to fulfill their own

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<sup>88</sup> “Feiqu funü de hunyin wenti—chuqi: zajiao luan ai zhuyi” 匪區婦女的婚姻問題 初期：雜交亂愛主義 [The marriage problems of women in bandits region—early phase: the principle of orgy and promiscuity], *Zhongyang ribao* (March 4, 1936): 3 (2). 三張二版.

sexual desire—and none of the local residents thought it as shameful!<sup>89</sup> Here, the Republic's soldiers and decent men were corrupted by licentious women through their sexuality who were cultivated by the CCP.

### **Patriarchal Power in Danger**

Besides the personal behaviors of individual Communists and their negative implications for the society, what the KMT took more seriously was the direct attack on the family system. In this chapter, I will focus more on the endangered order itself and leave the further analysis of these destroyers' image to Chapter 3. Sometimes, the KMT just generally said that the family, social order, or morality were under attack; while at other times some particular points were distinguishable in the alleged Communist threats to patriarchal families: one was the endangered access to and control of (potential) wives, and another was the toppled patriarchal hierarchy among men—both were related to manhood.

One of the felonies allegedly committed by Communists was the “communization (socialization) of wives” (*gòng qī* 共妻, or *gōng qī* 公妻), or “multiple wives” (*duo qī* 多妻). In a book titled *Hunan and Hubei under the Iron Heel of the Communist Party*, it was said that the CCP was cultivating a habit of licentiousness: “some Communists like Chen Duxiu and Xu Qian<sup>90</sup> 徐謙 were known for promoting communization of wives” (*gōngqī zhuyi*): once at a

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<sup>89</sup> Liu Qingke, “Feiqu shehui zhong zhi funüjie.”

<sup>90</sup> Actually, Xu Qian (1871-1940) was not a Communist, but a KMT leftist expelled from the party. But during this period, the leftists were represented as collaborators of Communists and embodying the influences of Communism, thus also analyzed as a part of anti-Communist propaganda here. He was “branded as a communist leader and ordered to be arrested by the Nanking Government since 1927.” See: “George Hsu (Hsu Chien),” in *Who's Who in China* (Shanghai: The China Weekly Review, 1931), 154. Access provided by

conference, Chen proudly introduced a county in Hunan which would distribute a woman to each man thus thoroughly destroying the marriage system; Xu had numerous concubines and led a unimaginably licentious life, with his son practicing “the principle of multiple wives” (*duoqi zhuyi* 多妻主義) and his daughter “the principle of multiple husbands” (*duofu zhuyi* 多夫主義). And many young women even took her as a model!<sup>91</sup>

While the power and privilege that Xu and his son enjoyed would directly cause anxieties in the readers, the charge of the distribution of wives to some extent exposed the classed nature of the KMT’s propaganda, considering the large number of unmarried lower-class men who would probably not take this as a bad thing. The daughter of Xu Qian was a particularly interesting figure. It was less common for the propagandists to mention how the female Communists wrecked the society (than male ones),<sup>92</sup> but here she was not merely a dangerous woman per se. This woman who owned a lot of husbands was the *daughter* of a male high (pro-)CCP leader; her power was derived from her father. In other words, it was a (pro-)Communist man who finally made Chinese men lose their authority and become a male concubine, and who destroyed the marriage system. If this invoked the audience’s anxiety, it was targeted at the CCP male leaders. Overall, this paragraph vividly showed how the KMT depicted the endangered familial order in

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Academia Sinica, MHDB database (<https://mhdb.mh.sinica.edu.tw/mhpeople/index.php>, last access: May 10, 2022).

<sup>91</sup> Zhongyang junshi zhengzhi xuexiao ruwushengbu zhengzhibu xuanchuanke bianzuangu 中央軍事政治學校入伍生部政治部宣傳科編纂股 [Compilation section, propaganda division, political division, new cadet department, Central Military and Political School], *Gongchandang tieti xia de lianghu* 共產黨鐵蹄下的兩湖 [Hunan and Hubei under the iron heel of the Communist Party] (No place, 1927), 29-30.

<sup>92</sup> It is not to say the image of “Communists” in the KMT propaganda was thoroughly male. Female Communists also appeared (sometimes gendered, sometimes not), which I cannot fully cover in the current stage.

every aspect.

### **Control of Women**

In some cases, women became a specific victimized group. In this “(male) bandits ruining good (male-dominated) families” framework, the Communists and woman commoners were conceptualized as the “bare sticks vs. women of good family” as it was in the late imperial era. I will focus on the image of women as victims in this chapter.

In their description, the Communists went to extreme to torture women, singing slogans like “Down with ‘Good Wife and Wise Mother’” and “Break down the integrity, sense of shame, and chastity.”<sup>93</sup> One thing the propagandists liked to mention was the “Wuhan naked demonstration” (*luoti youxing* 裸體遊行), which was an incident occurring during the CCP organized parade on the International Women’s Day in 1927 when the opponents sent some naked prostitutes.<sup>94</sup> The KMT accused the Communists of forcing women to take off their clothes and be on street, and then rushing to watch, applaud, and laugh happily, which allegedly resulted in the suicide of numerous women who embraced the basic chastity (*shao you zhencao guan* 稍有貞操觀). How inhuman were they, asked the author.<sup>95</sup> According to another author, the CCP organized this event on the Labor’s Day, when they organized some prostitutes first but forced women of good family to participate later, to utilize the “mentality of genitals” (*shengzhiqi de xinli* 生殖器的心理) to attract more rascals.<sup>96</sup> In this narrative, the chaste women became the tool of some males

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<sup>93</sup> *Chi fei zui’e*, 8. The original Chinese texts were: 打倒賢妻良母, and 打破廉恥貞節.

<sup>94</sup> Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 300–301.

<sup>95</sup> *Chi fei zui’e*, 8.

<sup>96</sup> *Gongchandang tieti xia de lianghu*, 31.

for other males.

According to the KMT's propaganda, the Red bandits were not only against "Good Wife and Wise Mother" and "integrity, sense of shame, and chastity," but proposed to destroy the whole marriage system: for instance, they had such ridiculous slogans as "uphold illicit sex system," "down with husbands," "uphold adulterers," "liberate divorce, down with romantic love," and "share your wives with all"<sup>97</sup> to tempt common male and female youths (*yiban qingnian nannü* 一般青年男女) into the wrong path of communizing wives (*gòngqī de mitu* 共妻的迷途). They raped women as they pleased (see Chapter 3), and made claims that "brothers could marry sisters, sons could marry stepmothers, nephews could marry aunties (*shenmu* 孀母, lit. uncles' wives), and...the marriage and divorce were totally free (*juedui ziyou* 絕對自由)."<sup>98</sup> For the KMT, these "beast-like" (*shou hua* 獸化) behaviors were making the society promiscuous and all women into beasts and prostitutes.<sup>99</sup>

Did the KMT said these because they were sympathetic to women and could not bear to see them harmed? Not really. What mattered most was that "when the wives committed adultery with others, the husbands could not regulate her."<sup>100</sup> Such an emphasis put on how the men lost control of women exposed the propagandists' deeper (and gendered) anxiety about the Communist revolution. When the author continued to mention that "the husbands were also free

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<sup>97</sup> The original Chinese texts were respectively: 擁護野合制度, 打倒親夫, 擁護姦夫, 離婚自由打倒戀愛, and 有妻大家共.

<sup>98</sup> This is an interesting charge, considering the KMT's own Civil Code published just in 1930 which regulated new forms of marriage. Here the implied contrast might be some specific conditions for marriage and divorce, such as minimum age (clause 974), ban on marriage between relatives (982), and prohibition on bigamy (985), etc. See the excerpts from Civil Code in *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao*, 242-57.

<sup>99</sup> *Chi fei zui'e*, 9.

<sup>100</sup> The original Chinese text was: 凡妻子和別人通姦, 丈夫管他不得, in *Chi fei zui'e*, 9.

to rape others' wives and daughters,"<sup>101</sup> s/he was more likely to depict a hell where the audience no longer owned their wives, rather than a sexual fantasy where they could have sex with others' wives.

Not only was their access to and control of women threatened, the Wuhan women influenced by the CCP's announcement of women's emancipation even allegedly used a slogan of "down with men" (*dadao nanjie* 打倒男界) in their demonstration without scruple, directly challenging the men; at the same time, the tendency of promiscuity prevailed in the city, the women prostituted day and night in restaurants and teahouses and even on the street.<sup>102</sup> In this conceptualization, women rebelling against men equaled prostitutes, and sexual morality was analogized to the obedience to men.

In Peng Xingdao's "grieve recollections," he mentioned how a friend of him turned to be anti-Communist: a certain Mr. Xie Xing 謝星, who studied in Beijing and joined the CCP, had a lover called Ms. Xiao, who studied at the Beijing College of Fine Arts (*Beijing mei zhuan* 北京美專) and was also a Communist. However, Ms. Xiao was moved to administrative offices by Communist officials to be a wife—a total seduction! Then, Mr. Xie furiously announced his anti-Communism.<sup>103</sup> The story was interesting, since the reason for the protagonist's anti-Communist turn was not the Three People's Principles but the loss of a girlfriend—or control of the woman. Anti-Communism was a deeply gendered issue here. The evil male Communists ruined others' life and manhood; and in this story, the senior Communist officials curiously represented the

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<sup>101</sup> The original Chinese text was: 丈夫對於別人妻女，也可隨便亂姦，in *Chi fei zui 'e*, 9.

<sup>102</sup> *Gongchandang tieti xia de lianghu*, 30.

<sup>103</sup> Peng, 5.

hegemonic side. As I will show in the following chapters, the Communists often represented the marginalized men or less masculine men in the KMT's propaganda, but here we can see that a gendered anti-Communism did not always position itself on the side of hegemonic masculinity.

In this story, women were just resources for men's competition. Although Peng questioned "didn't the Communists look down on women too much,"<sup>104</sup> were these women—who "abandoned themselves" (*zigan duoluo* 自甘墮落) in his eyes—really what he cared about? Maybe in some cases the Nationalists did want to present themselves as sympathizers and protectors of women. But as Mrinalini Sinha pointed out (about the British colonies), "the production of nationalist masculinity in national discourse is also enacted via the control/protection of women",<sup>105</sup> in the KMT's rhetoric as well, control and protection were just two sides of one coin. And this kind of protection might echo (implicitly) the men's protection of the Chinese nation analyzed in Chapter 2.

If the Communists deprived the commoners of their control of women, how about their own followers? In the KMT's propaganda, even the Communist soldiers could not enjoy their family life: not only did the soldiers never get any good land as distributions, they did not get any help in their fields either; their family members also suffered: their fathers became porters, their mothers became laundry women, and their wives had to join the comfort team (*weilao dui* 慰勞隊) and even were "forcefully seized by the bandit chieftain as mistress of the fort." In sum, all

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<sup>104</sup> Peng, 5. Next quotation is from page 4.

<sup>105</sup> Sinha, "Gender and Nation," 257. Her argument was evidenced by how the "native" men colonized by the British empire reclaimed their masculinity by claiming the right to control/protect "our" women from foreigners.



soldiers in the Red Army had their “families broken up, members dead, wives separated and sons (children) scattering!”<sup>106</sup>

### **Patriarchal Hierarchy Upside Down**

Although in the KMT’s rhetoric, sometimes it was the general and ungendered authority of parents (including mothers) that was challenged by the Communist revolution—for example, “for a man and a woman to fall in love, the couple need neither the approval of the family heads (*jiazhang* 家長) on both sides, nor a matchmaker,”<sup>107</sup> there was still a clearly gendered point in their propaganda, which was how the kinship hierarchy *between* men was overturned as well. For example, when reporting the suppression of Communists in Hailufeng (in Guangdong province), *The Central Daily News* said that, although the order had been restored, the strange affairs they heard such as sons killing fathers and younger brothers killing older brothers were too horrible to endure.<sup>108</sup>

In another 1930s book on “Communists’ sins,” it was said that “The most horrible thing is that, when the Red bandits killed people, they always compelled the sons to kill their fathers, younger brothers to kill older brothers, grandsons to kill grandfathers (*sun sha qi zu* 孫殺其祖), and wives kill their husbands.”<sup>109</sup> Here, the writers emphasized how the patriarchal hierarchy was turned upside down. The Communist revolution was depicted as not only against “people,” but also against the patriarchal authority, or, against the men’s (potential) power as patriarchs, on

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<sup>106</sup> *Chi fei zui’e*, 4.

<sup>107</sup> “Feiqu funü de hunyin wenti.”

<sup>108</sup> “Gong fei roulin hou de Hailufeng” 共匪蹂躪後的海陸豐 [Hailufeng after the torture of the Communist bandits], *Zhongyang ribao* (April 18, 1928): 1 (2) 一版二面.

<sup>109</sup> *Chi fei zui’e*, 7.

which their manhood and hegemonic masculinity were based.

Even women attempted to overturn the hierarchy. In Wuhan, where the women were allegedly shouting “down with men” and prostituting every day, they even swore to overthrow the parents and parents-in-law (*dadao fumu wenggu* 打倒父母翁姑). If their family heads (*jiazhang*) reproached them a little bit, the Communists would tie and hang them up and parade them through the streets, or fine them a huge amount of money.<sup>110</sup> Now the (potential) patriarchs’ privilege and power were in immediate danger, and the Communist revolution became a threat to their manhood.

From another perspective, these deeds were also against the filial piety. For example, a confessor in the Repentance Camp said that, during the five years when he was detained, his mother had never enjoyed even one moment of happy life, thus becoming ill and not recovering till now.<sup>111</sup> Participation in the Communist revolution was depicted as an offense of filial piety and disqualified them as good men. However, it was ironical that a loyal NRA soldier might also be unable to fulfil his duties as a son, which revealed the inner contradiction in the KMT’s construction of ideal masculinity.

## Summary

In all, the KMT propaganda represented the Communists as endangering the morality and

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<sup>110</sup> *Gongchandang tieti xia de lianghu*, 30.

<sup>111</sup> The narration of Wang Maochang 王茂常, in Zeng Sanxing 曾三省, ed., *Anhui Fanxingyuan fanxing ren fangong xuanyan* 安徽反省院反省人反共宣言 [The anti-Communist manifestations of the repentant in Anhui Repentance Camp], Vol. 1 (No place, 1934), 52.

family system on which many men's manhood was based: In every region occupied by the Communists, "all the rituals, customs, and laws, were destroyed altogether; the relationship between men and women, was especially disorderly; with the heretical idea of socializing wives and the beast-like life, what is called marriage system does not exist"—therefore, the KMT "should suppress them with main forces."<sup>112</sup> The young Communists of both genders were licentious and promiscuous, among whom the males were far from being the decent male citizens for the party-state. In addition, they were not only unmanly themselves, but threatening other men's control of women and power over younger men by possessing more than one woman, encouraging rebellion, and raping women, etc. The Communist social revolution was now a gender crisis for men. Though the intra-gender relations between men do not necessarily involve concrete women, these cases did illustrate how male's gendered power could be conceptualized as access to women.<sup>113</sup>

Before moving on, I want to emphasize that all the arguments regarding to marriage and family analyzed in this chapter were not isolated in the KMT's propaganda: a harmonious monogamous family was the basic unit of the new nation-state envisioned by the Nationalists (Chapter 2), and the image of (male) Communists as the perpetrators of these destructions had a much older prototype from China's imperial history, which was related to the KMT's claim to an imperial order/power (Chapter 3).

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<sup>112</sup> "Shoufu feiqu zhi hunyin banfa: Gan xingying banfa shixing" 收復匪區之婚姻辦法：贛行營辦法施行 [Measures to recover the marriage in bandits region: Jiangxi headquarter measures enforced], *Zhongyang ribao* (June 22, 1934): 1(3) 一張三版.

<sup>113</sup> Ditz, "The New Men's History and the Peculiar Absence of Gendered Power."

## Chapter 2: “Anti-Nation Communists” and Patriotic Masculinity

Nationalism was on the top of the KMT’s Three People’s Principles. Therefore, it is not hard to imagine that accusing Communists of being unpatriotic collaborators of Russia (USSR) became another main characteristic of their anti-Communist rhetoric. This chapter asks: why did the propagandists believe this rhetoric strategy would be workable? Why did they resort to nation and nationalism to agitate the hate of Communists in their audience? Was this rhetoric gendered?

In the introduction, I have reviewed the general literature on the correlation between manhood and nationhood. This correlation was reinforced in China as the imperialist encroachment and nationalist sentiments rose in 1920s-30s. The KMT’s conceptualization of China and Chinese men was consistent with this tendency, as explicitly manifested in many visual cultural products, in which China was unfailingly represented as male, and the strength of a country was equated with the masculinity of a man.

In this chapter, I use the images in *The Central Pictorial* to show how the KMT propagandists personified China or the “Chinese nation” very specifically as a man—whether he was weak or strong, sick or healthy. At the same time, they depicted the protectors of China—either as “masses,” “people,” or soldiers—as a group of men. These visual materials illustrated how the Communists’ attempt to betray China and Chinese nation was represented as an attack on the manhood of the readers, and how the protection of China from Communist aggression was more a men’s task. Against this background, I finally turn to the textual representation of the Communists as anti-China traitors and analyze the implicit politics of masculinity in it.

## China as a Man

Images are a crucial part of propaganda, but how to visualize the “nation” and the Communists’ attack? Personification was an important strategy, which also explicitly showed how the nation was gendered. In the KMT’s propaganda posters, different nations or countries in different status were represented in different ways. But there was one commonality: all the nation/states were male. The following examples are from several issues of *The Central Pictorial* published in 1929.

First, how was the Qing empire (China before the KMT) represented? In a short *lianhuanhua* 連環畫 (sequential drawings to narrate a story) (**Figure 1**), a man in American-style suite, with a scroll of paper titled “Treaty for Renunciation of War” (*feizhan gongyue* 非戰公約<sup>114</sup>) in his hand, eloquently claimed: “This treaty I put forward—do you all support?” Then three men in European or Japanese clothes yelled: “Support! Support!” After this meeting, a group of male soldiers yelled “Peace! Peace!” and marched across China’s national boundary. Then a Chinese man appeared: he is in a Manchu style jacket *magua* 馬褂, smiling innocently and narrowing his eyes, asking a foreign soldier: “Now the world is peaceful. Why do you bring weapons to our China?” The soldier, laughing, answered: “You should have 120% gratitude for us, because we came with weapons to maintain the forever peace in your China!” Hearing this, the Chinese man was shocked, with his mouth open, skullcap flying, and eyes round.

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<sup>114</sup> This should refer to the Kellogg–Briand Pact (official name: General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy, 1928), abbreviated in Chinese as “Treaty for Renunciation of War.”

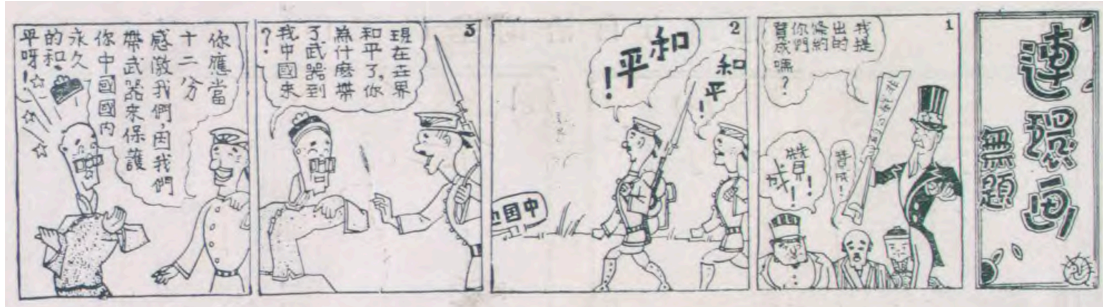


Figure 1. “Lianhuanhua: wuti” 連環畫：無題 [Sequential drawings: no title], *Zhongyang huakan* 3 (August 18, 1929): 6.

Here, the countries were all personified as men, which was a stable pattern in the visual propaganda. The international relations between nation-states were represented as a confrontation of men, or different (and hierarchical) masculinities. In this comic, the man impersonating China wore the Manchu-Qing style clothes. During this period, the Western costumes became a symbol of “Westernized ideals of manly physical vigor, personal style, and sexual allure.”<sup>115</sup> With Chinese men’s manhood bruised and threatened by the West, the new model of masculinity forced them to deal with their own tradition (and their clothes) as a serious problem. The traditional garb was now located very low in the rank of clothes.<sup>116</sup>

Although the temporality of the plot was very clear, the man/China not only represented the contemporary “conservative” forces, but also China’s past as opposed to its future under the KMT. For the KMT, a party at least still formally promoting revolution, the “traditional” China was just like a man appearing silly, powerless, and less masculine in front of men from other nations. The party was coming to masculinize the nation; and masculinization became a source

<sup>115</sup> Robert E. Harrist, “Clothes Make the Man: Dress, Modernity, and Masculinity in China, ca. 1912-1937,” in *Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture*, ed. Hung Wu and Katherine R. Tsiang, Harvard East Asian Monographs 239 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 172.

<sup>116</sup> Zamperini, “On Their Dress They Wore a Body,” 315–17.

of legitimacy.<sup>117</sup>

Ironically, just a few years ago, this image of “traditional” Chinese man was seen as ideal by Beiyang government and used by them to criticize the KMT.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, during the 1930s, the KMT’s ridicule notwithstanding, the old-fashioned gown even had greater power to represent Chineseness and evoke nationalistic sentiments.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, either before or after 1928, this “modern” vision of ideal masculinity and nation-state was never the only version; different masculinities were always manipulated by and embodied different actors in the political struggle.

If China before the KMT was a backward man, how about the 1920s China which the KMT just took over and was going to change? In this image (**Figure 2**), several scrolls of papers, titled *Treaty of Nanjing*, *Treaty of Tianjin*, *Sino-Japanese Treaty* (i.e., Treaty of Shimonoseki), *Xinchou Treaty* (i.e., Boxer Protocol), and *Twenty-one Demands*, stretched their arms and tightly held a young, scary, helpless, and feeble man. The man’s cloth wrote “Chinese nation” (*Zhonghua minzu* 中華民族); and as the journal wrote, contained by imperialism through these unequal treaties, the Chinese nation could not step onto the road of freedom and equality (*ziyou pingdeng* 自由平等, which was written on the road in this image).<sup>120</sup> Both China and the whole nation, though allegedly encompassing everyone, were embodied by a man. Here, the endangered nationhood was visualized as the same as the endangered manhood, while the muscular arms

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<sup>117</sup> As Joan Scott said, references to biological differences could imply power distribution in other fields, giving gender a “legitimizing function.” See Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1070, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/91.5.1053>.

<sup>118</sup> Zhang, “Visualizing the Modern Chinese Party-State,” 74.

<sup>119</sup> Harrist, “Clothes Make the Man: Dress, Modernity, and Masculinity in China, ca. 1912-1937,” 187.

<sup>120</sup> *Zhongyang huakan* 5 (September 1, 1929): 7.

with an ax symbolized the KMT which came to save and re-masculinize the nation/men.



Figure 2. No title, *Zhongyang huakan* 5 (September 1, 1929): 7.

This paradigm of “saving China/men” was a pattern in *The Central Pictorial*. In another drawing (**Figure 3**), a man is lying on the bed. He is “China,” as written on his arm, and was plagued by a series of illness: warlordism, cultural invasion, economic invasion, and Communists (lit. Red peril, *chi huo* 赤禍). The man, or China, was weak and lost virility—or to say, was less masculine. Although the man was called *bingren* 病人, rather than *bingfu* 病夫, it could easily remind the audience of the “Sick Man of East Asia.”<sup>121</sup> Beside his bed, “the savior” Sun Yat-sen holding a bottle labeled “Three People’s Principles,” said: “First take this medicine, then use those in the big bottles!<sup>122</sup> You will recover and become healthy.” Sun, who just died of cancer in 1925, ironically became a more masculine, virile, and heathy figure and the synonym

<sup>121</sup> For the idea of “Sick Man of East Asia” and Chinese masculinities, see the works by Takashima Kō cited above.

<sup>122</sup> The bottles on the table were labeled *General Plan for Nation Building* (*Jianguo fanglue* 建國方略) and *Outline for Nation Building* (*Jianguo dagang* 建國大綱), both written by Sun Yat-sen.



of the KMT in the propaganda. The author tried to inform the audience that the KMT was more masculine, coming to save the Chinese men and China emasculated by warlords, imperialism, and Communists. Being masculine and helping remasculinization in turn implied their power and legitimacy.

Interestingly, the label for Communists was the nearest to the sick man's heart, although we do not know whether the cartoonist deliberately did in this way. On the same page, the image was accompanied by a lyric-format article title "A sad admonishment—to Chinese Communist youths."<sup>123</sup> The lyric listed tons of mistakes of their Communist ideal, calling them to go back to the right way. When the audience read this page, it would be natural to perceive the Communists as a more serious illness than others and the prime culprit for emasculating Chinese men.



Figure 3. "Bingren de jiuxing shuo" 病人的救星說 [The savior of patient says], *Zhongyang huakan* 7 (September 15, 1929): 4.

If the weak men (along with the young, immature men, see Chapter 1) served as a foil for

<sup>123</sup> "Shangxin de zhonggao—dui Zhongguo gongchan qingnian" 傷心的忠告——對中國共產青年 [A sad admonishment—to Chinese Communist youths], *Zhongyang huakan* 7 (September 15, 1929): 4.

the masculine Nationalists who represented the ideal of healthy and patriotic masculinity, the foreign men played this role of foil from another extreme. In this image (**Figure 4**), the Russian man appeared violent, “hypermuscular,” and savage, and even were dehumanized. Compared with both kinds of images, the Nationalists were the idealist men—neither feeble, nor evil or beast-like.



Figure 4. “Shangye jiguan (chihua xuanchuan)” 商業機關（赤化宣傳） [Commercial institutions (Red propaganda)], *Zhongyang huakan* 1 (August 4, 1929): 8.

In sum, when representing an endangered China, the KMT propagandists were telling the audience: your manhood is under threat as well, and Communists were one of the criminals. Although it was a common practice to represent China as a vulnerable woman during this period,<sup>124</sup> I have not seen the KMT doing so in their propaganda so far.

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<sup>124</sup> For example, Paola Zamperini discusses how the male writers used violated prostitutes to signify the declining Qing Empire, see Paola Zamperini, *Lost Bodies: Prostitution and Masculinity in Chinese Fiction*, *Women and Gender in China Studies* 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 76.

## Men as Protectors of China

Then, when China was endangered, who should shoulder the responsibility to protect it? Even though the propagandists might use ungendered terms like “masses” (*minzhong* 民眾) in the texts, the images betrayed how they perceived the protectors as men. In this picture depicting the “masses” helping the National Government seize back the two concessions (**Figure 5**),<sup>125</sup> all the figures representing the “masses” are clearly adult men. The implicit message in this image is that: it is men who should help China defend its nationhood, through which they can regain their own manhood—as shown by the taller, firm man (China/National Government) and the shocked British and Japanese men, which totally reversed the power relations in the “Sequential Drawings” mentioned above.



Figure 5. No title, *Zhongyang huakan* 7 (September 15, 1929): 2.

There was a same pattern in another image targeting Russia (**Figure 6**). The script goes that:

<sup>125</sup> The left board (Lüda 旅大) refers to Lüshun (the Port Arthur) and Dalian (Dairen), which were under the Japanese administration since the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05); the right one is Weihaiwei 威海衛, which was under British administration at this time but returned to ROC in 1930.

“Masses (*minzhong*)! It’s the time to strive and save the nation!” The “Violent Russia” (*bao E* 暴俄) was represented as a tiger (which echoed the image of savage man in Figure 4), and the short swords (or obstacles) on the ground were the Japanese army and the CCP. The most prominent figure was a KMT soldier with gun and uniform, implying his power and leadership. All the other participants from different classes were men. They were the people faced with emasculation by Japan, Russia, and CCP; they were the people who should rise to defend nationhood and manhood.



Figure 6. No title, *Zhongyang huakan* 5 (September 1, 1929): 7.

The following image was titled “National Defense and Soldiers” (**Figure 7**). There were a few accompanying texts going that: “Under the joint attack of Red and White evil forces [i.e., Russia and Japan], our armed comrades, must not be as dispirited and listless (*weimi buzhen* 萎靡不振) as before, but should bestir yourself and keep up your efforts, take the responsibility to solidify the national defense, and to achieve China’s independence and freedom.”<sup>126</sup> Sitting on

<sup>126</sup> “Guofang yu junren” 國防與軍人 [National defense and soldiers], *Zhongyang huakan* 4 (Aug 25, 1929): 3.

the steps, the three men either buried their heads in the arms, or inclined head on his shoulder and fell sleep—quite like dying. In striking contrast to the aggressive and cruel foreign men looking down on them from above, they are weak and less masculine.

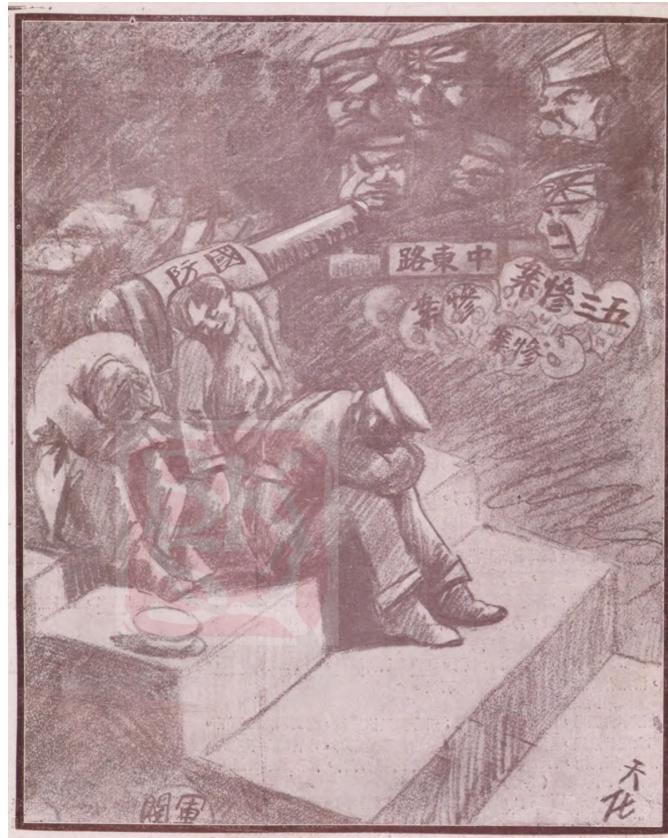


Figure 7. “Guofang yu junren” 國防與軍人 [National defense and soldiers], *Zhongyang huakan* 4 (August 25, 1929): 3.

In other words, the men losing their masculinities were not only the result of China’s tragedy, but also the reason for it. In 1933, Chiang Kai-shek gave a speech titled “The meaning of anti-Communist campaign and the principles of life,” in which he attributed the failure to eradicate Communists to the military leaders and soldiers’ loss of revolutionary spirit and lack of “conscience and courage” (*liangxin xuexing* 良心血性).<sup>127</sup> According to Chiang, their problems

<sup>127</sup> Chiang Kai-shek, “Jiao fei de yiyi yu zuoren de daoli” 剿匪的意義與做人的道理 [The meaning of anti-Communist campaign and the principles of life] (1933), in *Zongtong Jiang gong sixiang yanlun zongji* 總統蔣

lied not only in their morality, but also lifestyles. His wish to discipline the daily life and human body later became a key theme in the New Life Movement.<sup>128</sup> Indeed, throughout the history of modern nations, the discourse of nationalism was often an “important site for the enactment of masculinity,” especially the “production of a militarized masculinity,” which was “based on the defense of the nation.”<sup>129</sup> This was also the case for the KMT leaders who took the brave and patriotic soldiers as the model for Chinese men.

Therefore, when the KMT appealed to the “people” to stand up against the Communists, they were not speaking to an ungendered audience but mainly to men. These images of male protectors of China formed an interesting intertextual relationship with those of men representing China, thus strengthening the analogy between China and Chinese men.

It should be noted that, the KMT did depict women in their propaganda, but mostly women only appeared in the images about gender equality and women’s rights. Considering the KMT’s commitment to producing “woman citizens whose most fundamental role was to be modern, educated, productive wives and mothers,”<sup>130</sup> it is understandable that the KMT envisioned the protectors as male. In some of their anti-Communist propaganda, women were asked to be assistants on the battlefield—but not the fighters as such.<sup>131</sup> When analyzing Xiao Hong’s 蕭紅 (1911-1942) *Field of Life and Death* (*Shengsi chang* 生死場), a novel reflecting a female

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公思想言論總集 [Thoughts and Speech by President Chiang Kai-Shek], Vol. 11, online edition. [http://www.ccfid.org.tw/ccfd001/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2710:0040&catid=132:2014-06-10-07-16-24&Itemid=256](http://www.ccfid.org.tw/ccfd001/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2710:0040&catid=132:2014-06-10-07-16-24&Itemid=256) (last access: May 10, 2022).

<sup>128</sup> Fukamachi, *Shintai o shitsukeru seiji: Chūgoku Kokumintō no shinseikatsu undō*, 33–34.

<sup>129</sup> Sinha, “Gender and Nation,” 256.

<sup>130</sup> Gail Hershatter, *Women and China’s Revolutions*, Critical Issues in World and International History (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 130.

<sup>131</sup> Wang, *Guomin geming jun yu jindai Zhongguo nanxing qigai de xingsu, 1924-1945*, 160–63.

writer's observation of early 1930s China, Lydia Liu pointed out that, Xiao's depictions of village men reflected how the new national identity was largely a male prerogative. Talking about nation elevated men's worth in their eyes and enabled them to have a new identity transcending their class—in short, empowering them or enhancing their masculinity. The new national subject meant quite differently for men and women.<sup>132</sup>

### **Communists as Traitors: Reread the Texts**

So far, I have analyzed how China's nationhood and Chinese men's manhood were analogized in the KMT's publications. As these visual messages were highly gendered, the textual messages produced in the same context might be understood by the same logic: for one thing, for the KMT propagandists and their readers, Communists were not only selling China, but also emasculating all the Chinese men; for another, when they called for "people" to resist Communism, it was more an appeal and duty for men than for women.

For the KMT, the key characteristic of CCP was their complicity with Russia. In *Red Bandits' Sins*, the Communists' status as "running dogs of Soviet Russia" led the whole book: "The hateful Red bandits eagerly sought to 'Redize' (*chihua* 赤化, or Bolshevize) China. Because they got the rubles from Soviet Russia, they repeatedly acknowledge the Soviet Russia as their homeland (*zuguo* 祖國), suffering a lot for being unable to immediately offer the whole China respectfully to Soviet Russia with both hands."<sup>133</sup> It is reasonable to say that the danger of

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<sup>132</sup> Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity--China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 208–10.

<sup>133</sup> *Chifei zui'e*, 1.

emasculatation implicitly ranked the highest among other threats posed by the Communists.

The KMT tried to spread this information nationwide. For instance, before the summer vacation in 1929, the Shanghai branch of Propaganda Department made a new initiative to train the students from rural areas. As the propagandists themselves pointed out, the KMT had done little in terms of propaganda in rural areas, so they wanted the students to transmit the KMT's ideologies to their hometowns.<sup>134</sup> In their outline, anti-Communism was listed as the second important issue, following anti-Japanese. The propagandists hoped the students could tell their fellows in native places that: Communism cannot fulfill China's need; The Soviet Russia (or Third International) is itself an imperialist, and the CCP bought over by rubles are just the same as bandits, having no ability to emancipate the masses but only seeking to change China's sovereignty for rubles. Therefore, we compatriots of the same ancestry (*tongbao* 同胞) should help eradicate the CCP!<sup>135</sup> Again, the key point here was the CCP's motive to extinguish China's nationhood (nevertheless, the effectiveness of their work is suspectable<sup>136</sup>).

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<sup>134</sup> “Zhongguo Guomindang Shanghai tebieshi dangwu zhidao weiyuanhui xuanchuanbu gongzuo baogao (liu yue fen)” 中國國民黨上海特別市黨務指導委員會宣傳部工作報告（6月份） [Work report of the Propaganda department, Shanghai municipal Party Affairs Direction Committee, Kuomintang] (June 1929), 72, in “Guomindang Shanghai tebieshi dangwu zhidao weiyuanhui xuanchuanbu gongzuo baogao” 國民黨上海特別市黨務指導委員會宣傳部工作報告 [Work reports of the Propaganda department, Shanghai municipal Party Affairs Direction Committee, Kuomintang], Jan-Jul 1929. Archive number: SHAC, 722-659.

<sup>135</sup> “Zhongguo Guomindang Shanghai tebieshi dangwu zhidao weiyuanhui xuanchuanbu gongzuo baogao (liu yue fen),” 74.

<sup>136</sup> First, most college students in Shanghai were locals or from the nearby provinces (Jiangsu or Zhejiang), and few of them were from rural areas. See: Liang Chen 梁晨 et al., “Minguo Shanghai diqu gaoxiao shengyuan lianghua chuyi” 民国上海地区高校生源量化刍议 [Some Thoughts on the Quantitative Study of Student Backgrounds in Republican Shanghai], *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究, no. 03 (2017): 85–86.

Second, although the Communists had not done a good job in mass mobilization in rural areas before the Second Sino-Japanese War, the teachers in village schools continuously transmitted the Communist ideas to students. For the rural mobilization, see Chang Liu, *Peasants and Revolution in Rural China: Rural Political Change in the North China Plain and the Yangzi Delta, 1850-1949*, Routledge Studies on the Chinese Economy 25 (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), chap. 8. For the village teachers, see Liu Chang 刘昶, “Geming de Puluomixiusi: Minguo shiqi de xiangcun jiaoshi” 革命的普罗米修斯：民国时期的乡村教师



If the cases analyzed above only showed the implicit relationship between Communism and the crisis of masculinity, their correlation was more explicitly illustrated by the fact that the Communists were paralleled with other problematic men. In 1930, the head of the Nanjing branch of the Propaganda Department Lai Lian 賴璉 pointed out two “bad trends” (*huai qushi* 壞趨勢) to the propagandists in charge of art and literature—one was romantic literature, the other was proletarian literature:

For one thing, the listless and dispirited atmosphere (*weimi* 萎靡, *duitang* 頹唐) in the circle of literature and art, which always take stuff like romantic love, depression, suicide, and obscurity as their gist. This is the so-called “Romantic school” (*langman pai* 浪漫派). For another, it’s a so called “proletarian literature” (*puluo wenxue* 普羅文學) burgeoning recently.

The romantic literature rose during the New Culture/May Fourth period for the elite men’s self-expression, and the leftist writings grew in the wake of successive political upheavals in later 1920s. In fact, some leftist or Marxist writers were themselves former romantic literati. In 1930s, the CCP began to be directly involved in the leftist literary production through the League of Left-Wing Writers (*zuoyi zuojia lianmeng* 左翼作家聯盟).<sup>137</sup> For Lai, this “proletarian literature” was a “new form of cultural invasion”:

The shameless Communist Party received rubble from the Soviet Russia, thus propagating the utterly absurd theory for the Soviet imperialism with all their might. In recent years, we have taken great efforts to resist the cultural invasion of foreign religions and imperialism, but unconsciously neglected this new cultural invasion of the imperialists from the Soviet Russia.

Since “Nowadays, among the common bored literati (*yiban wuliao wenren* 一般無聊文人),

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[Prometheus of the Revolution: Rural Teachers in Republican China], *Zhongguo xiangcun yanjiu* 中国乡村研究 [Rural China] 6 (2008): 42–71.

Therefore, it is not hard to imagine how little achievement the KMT and the students who stayed only for a while could make—if any of them really bothered to preach to their fellows.

<sup>137</sup> Kirk A. Denton, “Historical Overview,” in *The Columbia Companion to Modern Chinese Literature*, ed. Kirk A. Denton (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 7–11; Charles Laughlin, “The Debate on Revolutionary Literature,” in *The Columbia Companion to Modern Chinese Literature*, ed. Kirk A. Denton (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 159–62.

some turned to the romantic side, while others accepted the rubble from the Soviet Russia and were used by the Communist party to work as the vanguard of Soviet Russia's cultural invasion,"

the KMT should correct both bad tendencies:

...every Party member and everyone who loves the Chinese nation should take the responsibility to extinguish the old romantic literature and arts and resist the new cultural invasion, thus establishing the new literature and arts for the Chinese nation—the Three People's Principles literature and arts.<sup>138</sup>

This talk was rather interesting, especially in terms of listing Communists in parallel with the "romantic" literati. In the writings of most famous writers from this school such as Yu Dafu and Guo Moruo, male-male love was an important topic.<sup>139</sup> During this period, many critics "blamed male same-sex relations, a sign of backwardness, for the weakness of the nation," although the writers paradoxically embedded strong national consciousness in these writings.<sup>140</sup> If the weak, not purely heterosexual men had already been a problem for the Chinese men's (collective) manhood and China's nationhood, the Communists presented an equally or even more serious problem.

And the KMT took this "cultural invasion" very seriously. In the censorship report, they criticized all the promoters of these emerging "new literature and arts" (*xinxing wenyi* 新興文藝) and proletarian literature and arts (*puluo wenyi* 普羅文藝) as "blind person riding blind horse" (*mangren xiama* 盲人瞎馬) who unthinkingly followed the imported theories which

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<sup>138</sup> Zhongguo Guomindang Nanjing tebieshi zhixing weiyuanhui 中國國民黨南京特別市執行委員會 [Executive committee of Kuomintang in Nanjing], "Xuanchuanbu qiyuefen gongzuo baogao" 宣傳部七月份工作報告 [The work report of the Propaganda Department in July] (July 31, 1930), 151-52, in "Zhongxuanbu gongzuo baogao/Nanjing tebieshi xuanchuanbu gongzuo baogao" 中宣部工作報告/南京特別市宣傳部工作報告 [Work reports of Central Propaganda Department/Work reports of the Nanjing municipal branch of Propaganda Department]. Archive number: SHAC, 718-34.

<sup>139</sup> Such as Yu's *Boundless Night* (*Mangmang ye* 茫茫夜, 1922) and Guo's *My Childhood* (*Wo de tongnian* 我的童年, 1928). See Kang, *Obsession*, chap. 3.

<sup>140</sup> Kang, 83.

were never applicable to China's situation. These supporters of proletarian literature and arts, according to the censors, optimistically believed they were in advance of the time, but were in fact following the USSR.<sup>141</sup> For them, the USSR was leading Chinese people astray—and Chinese men especially. In addition, in accordance with the logic of Lai Lian, the KMT did categorize the romantic literature such as Yu Dafu's *Sinking* (*Chenlun* 沈淪) as “Communist” (*gong* 共) among various “reactionary propaganda” (*fan xuanchuanpin* 反宣傳品).<sup>142</sup>

In some cases, these two images—feeble and unpatriotic—were merged. In the Repentance Camp publications, the Communists were usually represented as “cloistered, self-absorbed, and psychologically unstable,” “emotionally feeble, insular, and effeminate.”<sup>143</sup> Just like how they could be licentious and immature and threatened other men's families at the same time (Chapter 1), when it comes to the nation, the Communists were also not only dangerous for Chinese men, but were themselves not masculine in the face of both the “responsible adult nationalists”<sup>144</sup> and their Russian leaders (**Figure 8**). This picture directly signaled that, being subordinate to foreigners equaled being emasculated (if not “effeminate”). The image also echoed the “licentious youth” analyzed in the last chapter. In short, the Communist figure was not only a threat to, but also a countertype to a righteous man.

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<sup>141</sup> Zhongyang xuanchuan bu 中央宣傳部 [Central Propaganda Department], ed., *Shencha quanguo baozhi zazhi kanwu zong baogao* 審查全國報紙雜誌刊物總報告 [The general report on the censorship of newspapers, magazines, and journals nationwide] (July to September 1930), 24-25. Archive number: SHAC, 718-896.

<sup>142</sup> “Zhongguo Guomindang Shanghai tebieshi dangwu zhidao weiyuanhui xuanchuan bu gongzuo baogao” 中國國民黨上海特別市黨務指導委員會宣傳部工作報告 [Work report of the Propaganda Department, Shanghai municipal Party Affairs Direction Committee, Kuomintang] (Jan 1929), no page number. Archive number: SHAC, 722-659.

<sup>143</sup> Tsui, “Reforming Bodies and Minds,” 809–10.

<sup>144</sup> Tsui, 799.



Figure 8. “Louluo men! Fandui shouhui Zhongdonglu” 嘍囉們！反對收回中東路 [Lackeys! Oppose the Regaining of Chinese Eastern Railway], *Zhongyang huakan* 3 (August 18, 1929): 3.

However, the hatred against Russia was not always helpful for the KMT. In 1929, China and USSR broke up a military conflict at the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria. After the armistice and before the Sino-Russian conference in 1930, the *Ta-Kung Pao* (*Da gong bao* 大公報, *L’Impartial*) published an article criticizing the USSR for keeping encroaching China’s rights and distracting the government from suppressing the Communists in the south. This report caught the attention of the KMT’s censors. In the censorship report, the author commented: “its word is reasonable, but after all suspicious for inciting hostility.”<sup>145</sup> Ironically, when the same rhetoric was used against the KMT/National Government and not consistent with their pragmatical negotiation with USSR, it would no longer be encouraged. In this case, we can see more clearly how the KMT used their (gendered) anti-Communist rhetoric as a tool for politics.

<sup>145</sup> The original Chinese text was “其言甚辯，然究不免挑撥之嫌耳，” in *Zhongyang xuanchuan bu*, ed., *Shencha quanguo baozhi zazhi kanwu zong baogao*, 14-15. I have not located the original article yet.

## Summary

In this chapter, I delineate how the KMT depicted the Communists as threats to the elite manhood and as the countertype of its own construction of model males: they were unpatriotic, and even tried to emasculate all the Chinese men in front of the Russians. In this way, the KMT sought to invoke the male audience's anti-Communist passion while constructing the hegemonic masculinity as patriotic, nationalist, and loyal to the party-state like an imperial subject to his dynasty and emperor (Chapter 3).

Sometimes anti-Communism means serious theoretical critiques, but in many cases, Communism has not much to do with theories and sophisticated ideology in the political propaganda and people's mind. Most commonly, as shown in this chapter, it was just viewed as external threats to "our" nation.<sup>146</sup> Nevertheless, I try to further analyze how this strategy of othering (and the nationalist politics of anti-Communism in general) can be gendered by investigating how the Communist threats connoted emasculation in Nationalist China. In the introduction, I mentioned that the 1950s United States witnessed both anti-Communism and a deep worry about softening of men and homosexuality, which in Mrinalini Sinha's word illustrated how "at the moments of perceived crises the defense of national and of normative gender and sexual identities often became closely intertwined."<sup>147</sup> This chapter indicated that the KMT's case showed similar patterns and mechanisms.

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<sup>146</sup> For a similar situation in Thailand, where Communist was "simply the enemy of the Nation," thus external to Thainess and normally equated with other countries like Russia, China, and North Vietnam, see Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, Paperback ed (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 169–70.

<sup>147</sup> Sinha, "Gender and Nation," 249.

### Chapter 3: Bandits and Loyal Turncoats—the Late Imperial Legacies

As the first two chapters showed, the Communists were represented as playboys, adulterers, or traitors. While the KMT's promotions of sexual morality, family values, and nationalism were largely conducted in a “modern” way (though often with the help of imperial-era ideology as well),<sup>148</sup> some parts of their propaganda regarding these destroyers of familial order and nation made more direct reference to the imperial past.

In this chapter, I delineate how the KMT situated the Communists in the position of dangerous males in the late imperial gender system, depicting them as a new generation of bandits threatening the elite manhood. Also, they manipulated the concept of loyalty both to construct an image of loyal, anti-Communist soldiers as ideal male citizens (with Communists as the killers of good men), and to persuade the Communists to be “turncoats” without running the risk of being disloyal, i.e., unmanly.

This characteristic was highly relevant to the KMT's conservative turn after 1927-28, especially after the rightists took over the power: in short, they now viewed revolutionary socialism as a threat and committed themselves to consolidating the unequal social relations; their new “conservative revolution” tried to keep intellectuals and urban middle class away from class politics. The key point that “set it apart from the Communist movement it fought against”

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<sup>148</sup> The social order envisioned by the KMT was a mixture of imperial heavenly order and Western-style nation-states. For example, the KMT still appropriated the ideal of “cultivate oneself, put household in order, govern the country” to argue the sequence of reforms in the New Life Movement (self, household, then county, 身/家/鄉). See “Xinshenghuo yundong gangyao” 新生活運動綱要 [Outline for the New Life Movement], in *Geming wenxian*, vol. 68, 3.

was that the KMT valorized the nation and viewed the “confrontational class politics as the ultimate threat to national rejuvenation and social health.”<sup>149</sup> For example, as Liu Pujiang argues, in their representation of the Taiping Rebellion, the KMT gradually put themselves in the position of Qing officials, as the defenders of Confucian order.<sup>150</sup> Thus, what was the particular order they wanted to hold? How did the (image of) Communists fit into their agenda? In this chapter, I will argue that, by depicting the Communists through the gender system ranging from loyal men to dangerous men, the KMT also made a claim to the power behind the system—the power to define masculinities and control the society.

### **A New Generation of Bandits**

The KMT always called and depicted the Communists as “bandits.” To understand the gendered and political implication of this rhetoric, a brief explanation of the place of “bandits” and related groups in imperial Chinese gender system is necessary. Susan Mann summarized the late imperial gender order as a continuum represented by “cloistered lady vs. bare stick” as two poles. Due to the skewed sex ratio, the huge number of unmarried, free floating, marginal young males continuously presented a threat to the social order.<sup>151</sup> Even worse, they would form secret societies and gangs as homosocial relations.<sup>152</sup> These bandits and potential rebels were transgressing the gender norms or performing marginalized masculinities; they were dangerous

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<sup>149</sup> Tsui, *China's Conservative Revolution*, 3–4.

<sup>150</sup> Liu, “Taiping tianguo shiguan de lishi yujing jieyou: jian lun Guomindang yu Hong Yang, Zeng Hu zhijian de fuza jiuge.”

<sup>151</sup> Mann, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History*, 5.

<sup>152</sup> Mann, 13.

men who should be regulated by law. In Qing laws, “Running through the judicial discourse of the rootless rascal is a consistent conflation of certain kinds of crime (extortion, kidnapping, rape, seduction, sodomy, intimidation, robbery, banditry, heterodoxy, and so on) with certain kinds of men.”<sup>153</sup> In other words, this umbrella term of dangerous males can include a huge number of men—rapists, bandits, rebels, whose meanings often overlapped—thus applicable in my analysis of Communists. These men were dangerous in both political and sexual terms.

As I mentioned in the introduction, dangerous males were still *men* and *masculine*, but their masculinities were threatening in the elites’ eyes. Just like some premodern vernacular texts’ positive evaluations of these people, the CCP (and the pre-1928 KMT) also represented the bandits and rebels differently from the post-1928 KMT. According to David Ownby, there were three prototypes of bandits in late imperial elite texts: uncivilized, perverse, and stupid; heterodox and religiously organized; and greedy and profit-seeking.<sup>154</sup> Communists in the KMT propaganda carried all the three characteristics: they were brute and savage, led by a heterodox theory, and receiving money from Russia.

The KMT tried to fit the Communists perfectly in this lineage of dangerous males, and they used exactly the same language to depict the “Communist bandits.” In a book published in 1933 by the Zhejiang provincial government, the propagandist tried to explain “What is the CCP”:

The so-called Chinese Red Army, is not really an army of workers and farmers...It’s merely a motley crowd which some peasants, hooligans, and local ruffians (*nongmin*, *liumang*, *dipi* 農民流氓地痞) were

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<sup>153</sup> Matthew H. Sommer, “Dangerous Males, Vulnerable Males, and Polluted Males: The Regulation of Masculinity in Qing Dynasty Law,” in *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, ed. Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 68–69.

<sup>154</sup> David Ownby, “Approximations of Chinese Bandits: Perverse Rebels, Romantic Heroes, or Frustrated Bachelors?,” in *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, ed. Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 228–31.



compelled to formulate by bankrupt, during the chaotic time and in the remote mountain forests of some southern China provinces like Jiangxi, Fujian, Henan, Hubei, and Anhui. The basis of Chinese Soviet government is not on the real workers and peasants, but on some bankrupt-compelled peasants, hooligans, and local ruffians, as well as unemployed intellectuals.<sup>155</sup>

Then the author repeated some similar things but used the label of “weak-willed youths and unemployed students” instead,<sup>156</sup> which showed how they combined this image of feeble and immature men with other images in various ways as I mentioned in the last chapter.

So, “What is the CCP?” The book continued that: on the one hand, “Internationally, they were Red Russia’s slaves, fed by ruble as animals, to pursue their conspiracy of selling the nation and extinguishing the race (*maiguo miezhong* 賣國滅種)” (see Chapter 2); one the other hand,

Domestically, they were exactly the same as the Green Forest (*lulin* 綠林), Red Eyebrows (*chimei* 赤眉), and Yellow Turban (*huangjin* 黃巾) during Han; Wang Xianzhi 王仙芝 and Huang Chao 黃巢 during Tang; Red Turban Bandits (*hongjinzei* 紅巾賊) during Yuan; Li Chuang 李闖 and Zhang Xianzhong 張獻忠 during Ming; and Sichuan-Hubei religious bandits (*chuan chu jiaofei* 川楚教匪) and Nian bandits (*nian fei* 捻匪) during Qing<sup>157</sup>—nothing more than going to extreme to make disturbances!<sup>158</sup>

In this summary of Communists, the KMT tried to deny any revolutionary nature in the CCP. They were not workers or peasants who were still formally legitimate citizens in the post-Northern Expedition era, but were a new generation of bandits.

Of course, there were similarities and even overlaps between the Communists and the real

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<sup>155</sup> Zhejiang sheng zhengfu mishu chu 浙江省政府秘書處 [The secretary of Zhejiang provincial government], ed., *Chan gong conglun* 劉共叢論 [Essays on eradicating the Communists] (No place: Zhejiang sheng qu xian qu baozhang xunlian ban 浙江省衢縣區保長訓練班, 1933), 6-8.

<sup>156</sup> *Chan gong conglun*, 7.

<sup>157</sup> The first three respectively referred to the Green Forest (*lulin*) and Red Eyebrows (*chimei*) rebellions during the reign of Wang Mang, and the Yellow Turban (*huangjin*) rebellion in late Eastern Han. Wang Xianzhi (?-878) and Huang Chao (835-884) were two leading rebels in late Tang. The Red Turban (*hongjin*) Rebellion led to the collapse of Yuan. Li Chuang (Li Zicheng 李自成) and Zhang Xianzhong were leading rebels in the last years of Ming. The so-called Sichuan-Hubei religious bandits referred to the White Lotus rebellion from 1796 to 1804; and the Nian Rebellion was from 1851 to 1868.

<sup>158</sup> *Chan gong conglun*, 6-8.

bandits. Sometimes they were hard to be distinguished,<sup>159</sup> and there were bandits in the CCP.<sup>160</sup> Also, the Communist revolution did bring about terrible violence. According to Zeng Zhi's 曾志 memoir, for example, when the CCP organized peasant revolutions in Hunan in 1928, some leaders adopted the "scorched earth" policy (*jiaotu zhengce* 焦土政策) to counter the KMT, trying to move all the residents to remote areas and then burn down everything to halt the pursuing KMT troops, which resulted in fierce conflicts with peasants and death on both sides.<sup>161</sup>

But as Hu Shi 胡適 once pointed out, "Regarding the National Government, we must ask them to formally acknowledge that the Communist Party is not bandit (*fei*), but political enemy (*zhengdi* 政敵)...Only after realizing this clearly can they understand that political enemies can never be eradicated solely by troops."<sup>162</sup> In other words, the Communists were not the same as normal bandits, and the KMT knew it. Therefore, their rhetoric and propaganda strategy worth analysis, especially how they appropriated the familiar image of bandits to (mis)represent their political enemy—in a gendered way.

The image of "Red Bandit" was usually clearly gendered. According to a book on how the Communists oppressed people in Hunan and Hubei, these new bandits not only "brutely killed the real peasants," "robbed the peasants' property," "confiscated the peasants' land," and "took

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<sup>159</sup> Phil Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 38.

<sup>160</sup> Billingsley, 229.

<sup>161</sup> Zeng Zhi 曾志, *Yige geming de xingcunzhe: Zeng Zhi huiyi shilu* 一个革命的幸存者: 曾志回忆实录 [A Survivor of the Revolution: The Faithful Records of Zeng Zhi's Memories] (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1999), 53–61.

<sup>162</sup> Hu Shi, "Suowei 'jiaofei' wenti" 所謂「剿匪」問題 [On the so-called "suppressing bandits"], in *Hu Shi quan ji: Hu Shi shilun ji*, 4 胡適全集: 胡適時論集 4 [The complete works of Hu Shih: the collected political writings of Hu Shih, vol. 4], ed. Pan Kuang-che 潘光哲 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2018), 26.

the peasants' firearms,"<sup>163</sup> but also gangraped the widows in Wuhan under the name of "breaking chastity."<sup>164</sup> In Qing laws, "regulation of sexuality aimed to defend a Confucian vision of family-based order against the threat of men who were excluded from that order."<sup>165</sup> The KMT implied that they would take on this duty now.

In *Red Bandits' Sins*, the Communist bandits willfully raped the wives and daughters of peasants.<sup>166</sup> It was said that, in Southern Jiangxi and Western Fujian, they raped women of good family (*liangjia* 良家) as they pleased and prohibited people from locking their doors at night so they could come to have sex with women freely.<sup>167</sup> Here, the reference to "good family (household)" also reminded the readers of the late imperial family order. As analyzed in Chapter 1, the Communists were viewed as threatening the good men's household and their wives and/or daughters—thus endangering their manhood.

In all, the KMT tried to tell the public that: the KMT-CCP conflict was not a political rivalry between two newly emerging Leninist parties, but the continuation of a century-long war against dangerous males in China. By this logic, if Communists were a new generation of bandits, then the KMT naturally had the new "Mandate of Heaven" to eradicate them.

However, this attitude was not the case for the pre-1928 KMT. As mentioned by Ownby, just as the CCP, the Alliance, the Revolutionary Party,<sup>168</sup> and the KMT also had to cooperate with

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<sup>163</sup> *Gongchandang tieti xia de lianghu*, chap. 2. These are the four subtitles of the section "The portrait of Communists' slaughtering of peasants in Hunan and Hubei," 3-11.

<sup>164</sup> *Gongchandang tieti xia de lianghu*, 32.

<sup>165</sup> Sommer, "Dangerous Males, Vulnerable Males, and Polluted Males," 68-69.

<sup>166</sup> *Chifei zui 'e*, 2.

<sup>167</sup> *Chifei zui 'e*, 8-9.

<sup>168</sup> The KMT (officially *Guomindang* 國民黨, Nationalist Party) grew out of the Alliance (*Tongmenghui* 同盟會, a political society founded by Sun Yat-sen and others in Tokyo in 1905) in 1912 and was dissolved by

bandits and adopt a more positive image of these men and the marginalized masculinities for their revolutionary (or rebellious) political goals.<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, in their inner report, the Propaganda Department acknowledged the fact that the NRA consisted of bankrupt peasants and bandits, which was criticized by the Party's opponents in their own newspapers.<sup>170</sup> This illustrated how different representations of masculinities (or gender norms) were dependent on the changing political situations and goals, and connoted different power relations and politics.

### **Loyal Men of the Party-State and their Communist Enemies**

On the other end of the late imperial spectrum of masculinities lay the loyal men. Just like how the imperial court required the loyalty of its subjects, the party-state asked for loyalty of the masses, especially the males.

In Confucian doctrines, the “Three Bonds” is the most crucial principle, which regulates the subject's loyalty to ruler, son's filial piety to father, and wife's subordination to husband. The ruler-subject relation can always be analogized to the other two relations. Female fidelity and male loyalty were not mutually exclusive but constructed each other;<sup>171</sup> and elite women were never cut off from politics.<sup>172</sup> After the Song dynasty, the concern with both male political

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Yuan Shikai in 1913. Sun organized the Chinese Revolutionary Party (*Zhonghua geming dang* 中華革命黨) in 1914 and resurrected the KMT with a new name “Chinese Nationalist Party” (*Zhongguo Guomindang* 中國國民黨) in 1919.

<sup>169</sup> Ownby, “Approximations of Chinese Bandits,” 237–40.

<sup>170</sup> Zhongyang xuanchuan bu, ed., *Shencha quanguo baozhi zazhi kanwu zong baogao*, 59-60. Archive number: SHAC, 718-896.

<sup>171</sup> Weijing Lu, *True to Her Word: The Faithful Maiden Cult in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 9.

<sup>172</sup> Lu, 48.

loyalty and female fidelity grew, and loyalty was increasingly taken as a defining criterion for evaluating a man's moral integrity.<sup>173</sup> After late Ming, the *zhongxiao* 忠孝 (loyalty and filial piety) discourse largely shaped the male officials' self-understanding, self-expression, and behaviors.<sup>174</sup>

For a party dominated by rightists and during its “tutelage” period, loyalty was undoubtedly important. In their propaganda, loyalty was also coupled with filial piety sometimes. As mentioned in the first and this chapter, the Communists were described as ruining the family order, and the participation in the CCP was criticized as unfilial to parents; in addition to the materials cited earlier, a song by Chiang Kai-shek also illustrated this concept, in which he questioned, “bearing you was not easy for your parents, why bother courting death with bandits?”<sup>175</sup>

In 1935, in the middle of the New Life Movement, the KMT publicized the *Dicta for Kuomintang Members*, in which the first two of the twelve codes were: 1) loyalty and courage are the basis of patriotism, 2) filial devotion is the basis of family discipline.<sup>176</sup> As in the imperial era, loyalty and filial piety were paralleled as the fundamental values: political loyalty

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<sup>173</sup> Lu, 30.

<sup>174</sup> Zhang, *Confucian Image Politics*, 19.

<sup>175</sup> Chiang Kai-shek, *Jiao fei shou ben* 剿匪手本 [Manual of suppressing bandits], as cited in: Wang, *Guomin geming jun yu jindai Zhongguo nanxing qigai de xingsu, 1924-1945*, 155. The original Chinese text was: 父母生你本不易，何苦跟匪去送終。

<sup>176</sup> English text from The China Handbook Editorial Board, comp., *China Handbook 1950* (New York: Rockport Press, 1950), 242. The original Chinese text was “一、忠勇為愛國之本。二、孝順為齊家之本，” See: “Zhongguo Guomindang dangyuan shouze shier tiao” 中國國民黨黨員守則十二條 [Dicta for Kuomintang Members, Twelve Codes] (1935), in *Zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji*, Vol. 37, Online version. [http://www.ccfid.org.tw/cccf001/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1682:0010-59&catid=326:2014-06-12-03-42-36&Itemid=256&keyword=黨員守則十二條](http://www.ccfid.org.tw/cccf001/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1682:0010-59&catid=326:2014-06-12-03-42-36&Itemid=256&keyword=黨員守則十二條) (last access: May 10, 2022).

was as important as patriotism (Chapter 2) and familial duty (Chapter 1) for a good *man*—In this text, Chiang hoped the KMT members to teach these codes to more people: fathers to sons, teachers to students (*di* 弟), senior to junior officials, and commanders to soldiers. It seems that Chiang envisioned no women in his party.

Especially, in the patriotic propaganda analyzed in Chapter 2, the male soldiers figured prominently as the protectors of China. This gendered image represented a “model of a politicized, disciplined, militarized, and morally cultivated citizen,” who should be “obedient to Chiang’s leadership and submissive to the Three Principles of the People.”<sup>177</sup> Apparently, loyalty was a key characteristic of KMT’s ideal masculinity. In texts targeting their own soldiers, the KMT never hesitated to use symbols and rhetoric from China’s imperial past to inculcate them. In memorial ceremony for soldiers who died in the battle with Communists, the military leader Yu Hanmou 余漢謀 said,

Since the ancient time, there were seven ceremonies for sacrifices, among which the grandest rite was for loyalty...these soldiers were originally the youths from Sanhe, and the elites from Baiyue.<sup>178</sup> Right at the moment of the very hard situation, they strived with self-cherished loyalty (*gu zhong* 孤忠); pitying that Xiongnu has not been eradicated, how could the men (*naner* 男兒) say they would return home...<sup>179</sup>

According to Yu, ever since the “rebellious bandits assaulted Guangdong and Guangxi” (*nifei fan Yue* 逆匪犯粵, i.e., the Taiping Rebellions), the Communist attack had been the most painful

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<sup>177</sup> Yan Xu, *The Soldier Image and State-Building in Modern China, 1924-1945*, Asia in the New Millennium (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2019), 21.

<sup>178</sup> Sanhe 三河 (Three Rivers) refers to Hedong, Henei, and Henan; Baiyue 百粵 (Hundred Yue, also 百越) refers to people in South China.

<sup>179</sup> *Guomin gemingjun diyi jituanjun duli dier lu jiaogong zhenwang jiangshi aisilu* 國民革命軍第一集團軍獨立第二旅剿共陣亡將士哀思錄 [Collection of mourning for the commanders and soldiers from the Independent No. 2 brigade, No. 1 group army of the National Revolutionary Army who died in the suppression of Communists] (No place, 1933), 21.

experience for people here.<sup>180</sup> Another leader Chen Zhang 陳章 eloquently swore that: the Han 漢 and bandits (*zei* 賊) were irreconcilable—In the past, Yue Shaobao dedicated himself to the country with unreserved loyalty; in the present, Li Chuang was still left among Hunan and Jiangxi. [Our soldiers] killed the bandits while alive and were still loyal even before death.<sup>181</sup> By using “Han” and the icon of Yue Fei, they also referred to the Communists as ethnically alien, which might imply their relationship with Russia.

In this anti-Communist rhetoric, the loyal men should help the Party eradicate Communists; on the other hand, the funeral reminded people that, the Communists were killing the good men of the party-state. The KMT not only situated the Communists in the genealogy of dangerous males, but also put their ideal male citizens into a genealogy of loyal men along the imperial history. The two images constructed each other as the two poles of the spectrum of masculinities. Such a social order imagined by the KMT also implied their power to define it.

### **The Paradox of Double Loyalty**

However, for the new dynasties like Qing after Ming, the “loyalty” of the officials who had once served (but betrayed) the previous one became a tricky issue. This was the same case for the KMT’s agenda of reforming the Communists.

As Jonathan Hay argues, the political subjecthood in late imperial China consisted of two

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<sup>180</sup> *Guomin gemingjun diyi jituanjun duli dier lü jiaogong zhenwang jiangshi aisilu*, 22.

<sup>181</sup> *Guomin gemingjun diyi jituanjun duli dier lü jiaogong zhenwang jiangshi aisilu*, 23. Here, Yue Shaobao 岳少保 referred to Yue Fei (1103–1142), a general leading Southern Song army against the Jurchen Jin dynasty.

types: one determined by the dynasty under which one was born, and another by the ruling dynasty which possessed the Mandate of Heaven. During a dynastic transition, these two subject positions conflicted with each other. Those choosing the former option (i.e., claiming to be the subject of Ming after 1644) could be called “left-over” or “remnant” subjects (*yimin* 遺民),<sup>182</sup> while the others became turncoats (*erchen* 貳臣).

As for the remnant subjects, they felt trauma not as ungendered subjects, but as *men*. As the potential rulers of the state, they were inculcated a deep identification with the imperial government which served as the institutional foundation of their manhood and male privilege, a linkage similar to the one between manhood and nationhood through political participation. Therefore, they would feel emasculated when the Ming was conquered by an alien dynasty, especially when forced to shave their hair, which emasculated them physically.<sup>183</sup> After the dynastic transition, besides committing suicide, the action of recluse and the self-expression by writing or painting became the ways in which they expressed their pains and loyalty to the former dynasty or defended their manhood.<sup>184</sup>

However, the image of loyal man was not the privilege of remnant subjects. As Ying Zhang argued, the early Qing factionalism (*dangzheng* 黨爭) was a forum for image battles, where turncoat officials also appropriated Confucian ethics to achieve specific political goals,

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<sup>182</sup> Jonathan Hay, “Posttraumatic Art: Painting by Remnant Subjects of the Ming,” in *The Artful Recluse: Painting, Poetry, and Politics in Seventeenth-Century China*, ed. Peter Charles Sturman et al. (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2012), 78–79.

<sup>183</sup> Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China*, 83.

<sup>184</sup> This practice was not limited to men. Elite women also wrote political poems as remanent subjects. See: Wai-ye Li, *Women and National Trauma in Late Imperial Chinese Literature*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 92 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014).



constructing their moral images as fathers, sons, husbands, and friends.<sup>185</sup> The meaning of *zhongxiao* varied in different contexts. While the loyalists and remnant subjects have become self-evident representation of loyalty in common sense, turncoats also employed multiple Confucian ideals to unite two conflicting loyalties (to Ming and to Qing), or their two subject positions in Hay's word. In short, during the late imperial era, *zhongxiao* was at the center of literati masculinity,<sup>186</sup> but its meaning was contested and used for different political ends.

It was easier to promote a consistent loyalty to one leader/dynasty/party, and not hard to deny the "loyalty" to a wrong organization or leader (like rebels and bandits). However, the previous loyalty to a once legitimate dynasty was not easy to ignore. As for the Qing court, they interpreted loyalty in different ways during pre- and post-conquest periods: Kangxi praised those who turned to the Qing as people able to "recognize righteous rule and direct their loyalties toward it," while criticizing the others as maintaining mistaken loyalty; however, Qianlong, who categorized all the *erchen* as despicable, articulated that "loyalty was loyalty: no matter to whom it was directed."<sup>187</sup> Similarly, since the CCP was not really a group of rebels, the KMT also had to deal with this paradox of double loyalty when reeducating the Communists. The KMT propaganda on reformed Communists seemed to be a combination or confusion of Kangxi's and Qianlong's positions.

During the Nanjing decade, the KMT established Repentance Camps to reeducate the

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<sup>185</sup> Zhang, *Confucian Image Politics*, 17.

<sup>186</sup> Zhang, 20.

<sup>187</sup> Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 290–91, 294. The quotes are from pp. 290-91.

Communists. Different local branches had their own publications which included alleged self-narrations of the detained Communists who were now reformed. If these people were just temporarily led astray, it seems their coming back to the right way was anything but betrayal. And there were indeed many people saying that they were Communists for a while because of being emotional and irrational (echoing the “immature youth” image). However, this was not self-consistent for everyone. It was clear that many people would probably view their change as disloyalty, so explanation was needed: it was not forced, not a coincident emotional impulse, not influenced by political force, but because of years of learning.<sup>188</sup> In this context, the image of Communists was no longer a dangerous male, but a cheated man—waiting for the KMT to make them mature and masculine.

For instance, a man called Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (yes, the same name as the famous Ming prime minister!) wrote to his previous fellow Communists:

Dear friends from the Chinese Communist Youth League, .....When you saw the huge transformations of our outlook on life and observed me through colored glasses and with subjective prejudices in your mind, you must think I am a “traitor cowardly seeking life and fearing death” (*tansheng pasi de pantu* 貪生怕死的叛徒) or curse me as a “scum selling the interest of proletarian class” (*chumai wuchanjieji liyi de bailei* 出賣無產階級利益的敗類). Friends, did I change really because of the fear of death? If so, why didn't I change under the grave conditions in Nanjing, but only changed my mind after I came to the repentance camp? My huge transformation was absolutely not contingent, but because I have seen through the inside story of the CCP's peep show (*xiyang jing* 西洋鏡)... If you throw your bias away, you'll know I'm not the “scum selling the proletarian class,” but it's you who are the “*hanjian* 漢奸 selling the interest of the nation.”<sup>189</sup>

Here, the KMT played with the concept of loyalty, and combined it together with the newer

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<sup>188</sup> Zeng Sanxing, ed., *Anhui Fanxingyuan fanxing ren fangong xuanyan*, 5. These are the narrations of a man called Zhang Dezhong 張德重.

<sup>189</sup> Zeng Sanxing, ed., *Anhui Fanxingyuan fanxing ren fangong xuanyan*, 13-16. Also see the narration of Pei Yuankang 裴遠康 on pp. 18-19, who said how he endured the torture in Shanghai prison and maintained his loyalty, but only transformed under the peaceful repentance.

concepts like *hanjian* (China's traitor, or Han's traitor) and *minzu* (nation). The loyalties were contested and combined in an ironic way: the previous genuine loyalty to the CCP was proof of his integrity, which in turn legitimized his new loyalty to the KMT. No matter what he did, he was never a disloyal (unmanly) man, so other male Communists should also turn to the KMT as soon as possible without worrying about losing their masculine virtues. But if they refused to change, they would be dangerous males rather than good loyal men.

More importantly, it was implied that there was no disloyal person among the KMT's members and followers, who were constructed as the models for other Chinese men. All the (potential) Nationalist men were masculine in their blood, although they might have made mistakes. As the KMT could not simply deny the loyalty to CCP, they should unite the two conflicting loyalties under different contexts. When appropriating the imperial Chinese gender norms for its political power, the KMT could not avoid the similar inner contradictions.

## **Summary**

In the first chapter, I analyze the KMT's mourning over the object of the Communist social revolution (sexual morality and family order); here, I turn to how the KMT depicted the perpetrator of such destructions: the Communists were viewed as the embodiment of marginalized masculinities, threats to the elite manhood, and the countertype of the KMT's own construction of model males; they were a new generation of the dangerous males existing all along the long imperial history, who wrecked the society and families; they were the killers of the good, loyal male citizens of the party-state. By depicting the crisis (Chapter 1) and the

criminals in this way, the KMT sought to generate anti-Communist passion in their male audience by making them worried about their families and access to women, while reconstructing the hegemonic masculinity as loyal and within familial order with the help of the late imperial norms, through which the party made a gendered claim to the “Mandate of Heaven” to define the gender norms and to achieve social control.

With “nationalism” on the top of its three principles, the KMT constructed the hegemonic masculinity as being patriotic and nationalistic as well (Chapter 2). Though appearing “modern,” this emphasis on patriotism and nationalism could never live without the support of the imperial ideal of loyalty. The “masses” (especially men) should be loyal to the newly born nation-state but also the successor to the imperial authority. Besides the attempt to incorporate imperial ideologies into a modern state, the KMT also had to cope with the nuances within the concept of loyalty itself: while the Communists were viewed as the countertype and enemy of loyal citizens, when they turned to the KMT, these “loyal turncoats” would never be counted as disloyal. The fissures in the hegemonic construction of masculinity persisted.

## Conclusion

In a manuscript titled *A Faithful Record of How Red Bandits Ruined Jiangxi* sent by KMT's Jiangxi provincial branch in 1931, the author eloquently wrote: "As for women of good family (*liangjia funü* 良家婦女) who did not obey the bandits, they let several people gangrape her and then stabbed her vagina with sharp sword; as for men, they mostly cut their penis first (*ge qi yangwu* 割其陽物), made them suffer, and then ended their life with sharp sword."<sup>190</sup> The image of demon-like Communists was more than obviously gendered as male, and their threat analogized as an emasculation of Chinese men.

During the Nanjing decade, the KMT propaganda depicted the Communists both as representatives of problematic masculinities or unmanliness, and as threats to other respectable male citizens' manhood. In the first aspect, the Communists were licentious, immature, and unmanly because of their pervert heterosexual relations and implicit homosexual desires, obedience to Russians, and irrational faith in Communism. In the second aspect, they embodied horrible threats to other males, whose manhood was based on both family and nation, by possessing, raping, or liberating their women, overturning the hierarchy between kinsmen, selling China to Russians, and even directly killing the loyal subjects of the party-state. By depicting the Communists in this way, the KMT propagandists tried to provoke the audience's gendered anxieties about their loss of manhood (i.e., their power and privileges as men), and told them what a good man under the White Sun in Blue Sky should be. They should never act like a

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<sup>190</sup> "Chifei huo Gan shi kuang" 赤匪禍贛實況 [A faithful record of how Red bandits ruined Jiangxi], in *Geming wenxian*, vol. 25, 107 (5235). For the introduction of this material, see p. 155 (5283).

Communist, but ought to form a heterosexual, monogamous family, perform filial piety, love the country, and obey the Party, or put it simply, just act like a good subject under the Ming-Qing imperial rule.

By examining how the anti-Communist politics was intertwined with the perceptions and construction of masculinities, I hope to have a dialogue with the scholarship which try to historicize masculinities in China and look for the dynamics of changes. This research might help us better understand how the social norms about and our perceptions of masculinities are neither determined by nature nor a fully personal thing, but vary by contexts and are often manipulated by the state or party, especially when we believe people's emotions—their gendered anger and anxiety, in this case—are also limited by historically and culturally specific social preconditions.<sup>191</sup> This might help us reflect on the relations between propaganda, masculinity, nationalism, and anti-feminism in contemporary China as well.

In addition, the analysis of the KMT's gendered anti-Communist rhetoric also helps us capture the generality and particularity of the KMT regime. Indeed, the image of rapists (here the Communists) was commonly seen in propaganda around the world, but in the context of 1920s-30s China, it also symbolized the KMT's unique reference to the imperial power during its construction of a new nation-state. On the contrary, the Nationalists (the defenders) were depicted as shouldering the duty of protecting Chineseness from the Communist traitors, but at the same time they were able to do so only by reforming their bodies through military drill and

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<sup>191</sup> Alison M. Jaggar, "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology," *Inquiry* 32, no. 2 (January 1989): 157, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00201748908602185>.

sports imported from the West. These two tensions revealed the KMT and ROC's general dilemma between an imperial past and a modern nation-state future, between an authentic Chineseness and Westernization.

### **Gender, Politics, and Power**

A key concept linking high politics (the KMT-CCP rivalry) and gender norms (masculinities) should be power. As Joan Scott argued, gender is a “primary way of signifying relationships of power,” and a “primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated.”<sup>192</sup> As she pointed out, hierarchical structures relied on perceived male/female relations; rulers “legitimized domination, strength, central authority, and ruling power as masculine”; middleclass reformers and labor and socialist leaders represented workers as feminine and masculine respectively for their competition; and being “masculine” referred to having power in international politics.<sup>193</sup> In Chapter 2 especially, we see how the KMT legitimized their power by their own manliness and remasculinization agenda. For Raewyn Connell as well, the first thing that lies at the heart of “gender” is power relations.<sup>194</sup> For her, any hegemonic masculinity embodies the “currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy,” which guarantees the domination of men over women; and its relationship with other masculinities also implies the gender hierarchy among men.<sup>195</sup> The crisis tendencies in gender order and defense of a dominant masculinity are also correlated with

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<sup>192</sup> Scott, “Gender,” 1067, 1069.

<sup>193</sup> Scott, 1072–73.

<sup>194</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 74, 246.

<sup>195</sup> Connell, 77–78.

changing power relations between men and women or among men.<sup>196</sup> Indeed, the contemporary social order which the KMT defended was hardly not a patriarchal system. The KMT's construction of masculine behaviors and regulation of males' position in the society reflected how the institutionally supported hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy reinforced each other, with the defense against the Communists implying the gendered relations among men and the inner instability of hegemonic masculinity based on power relations.

In the introduction, I proposed anxiety as a key concept to comprehend the relationship between anti-Communist propaganda and masculinities—how the former provoked the worries about the loss of the latter, and how the perception of the latter inspired the former. Considering how the Communist revolution was portrayed as threatening to deprive the men of access to women and their (potential) status as patriarch, and to make them servants of foreigners, it was more than clear that the gendered anxiety over manhood was essentially about power and privilege. Nevertheless, the conceptualization, (re)construction, or defense of certain masculinities were intertwined with struggles and power not only on a personal level, but also on the level of the party and state. In the KMT's propaganda, being more masculine and helping re-masculinize the nation and its men implied their power to rule and lead. And this masculinity politics had a strong institutional support by the state—not only by the propaganda machine, but also the prisons and troops. From the late imperial to the Republican era, both the elite representations of dangerous (marginalized) men and the contested interpretations of male

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<sup>196</sup> Connell, 84–85.



loyalty were linked with the political power to control the society or participate in high politics (being loyal, obedient, and married for power of participation and control, while being disloyal, dangerous, and unmarried for exclusion). When the KMT appropriated these late imperial gender norms in their anti-Communist rhetoric, they also tried to make a gendered claim to the imperial power.

Even today, the mainland Chinese academia is still not so different from its 1980s Euromerican counterpart criticized by Scott, where political history was “the stronghold of resistance to the inclusion of material or even questions about women and gender.”<sup>197</sup> Can we challenge this by framing the relationship between two male-dominated political parties as “gender relations among men,”<sup>198</sup> as intersected with class or even race sometimes?<sup>199</sup> I hope this research can shed some light on the party politics in 1920s-30s China, and further illustrate the entanglement between gender and power politics in Chinese history.

### **Masculinity Politics in Contemporary Mainland China**

After 1949, when the ROC’s central government moved to Taiwan, these gendered anti-Communist agenda continued for some decades, as anti-Communism, masculinity, and defense of Chineseness were even more intertwined there.<sup>200</sup> After the KMT abandoned/lost its position

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<sup>197</sup> Scott, “Gender,” 1070.

<sup>198</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 76.

<sup>199</sup> For example, in the self-narration of a detained Communist called Deng Tonglu 鄧同祿, it was said that “Marx is a Jew. The nature of Jews is the cruelest and despised by all the people around the world. He wants to utilize all the proletarians around the world to fulfill his desire of revenge,” see *Anhui Fanxingyuan fanxing ren fangong xuanyan*, 25.

<sup>200</sup> Wang Hsiu-yun 王秀雲, “‘Bu nan bu nü’: Taiwan ‘changfa’ nanxing de zhili jiqi xingbie zhengzhi, 1960s-1970s” 「不男不女」：台灣「長髮」男性的治理及其性別政治，1960s-1970s [“Neither Man nor

as a dominant, authoritarian Leninist party, this history came to an end in Taiwan, but found an afterlife on the mainland under the rule of the KMT's century-long Leninist counterpart.

Although the CCP had its own history of antiforeign propaganda and gender politics and it might be inappropriate to jump over the Maoist era, a comparison between the contemporary CCP and 1920s-30s KMT can still illustrate many crucial mechanisms in masculinity politics.

In mainland China today, nationalism (anti-foreignism), worries about effeminacy, and antifeminism are closely intertwined,<sup>201</sup> which is clearly illustrated by two recent incidents. In March 2021, when a Chinese feminist activist Xiao Meili 肖美麗 asked a man not to smoke in a restaurant, the furious guy reacted by pouring some hot liquid over her. In the beginning, the netizens were supporting her. But after some notorious ultranationalist and masculinist accounts (which are endorsed by the government) began to accuse her of being a supporter of Hong Kong independence (*gangdu* 港獨) and “nüquan” (女拳, lit. “female fist,” a homophone of feminism/women’s right used by antifeminists), Xiao and her supporters were soon criticized, with their accounts blocked, by authorities. What followed was another ultranationalist and masculinist carnival.<sup>202</sup> This incident should be understood in the context of the state’s current

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Woman”: The Gender Politics of Long-Haired Men in Taiwan, 1960s-1970s], *Taiwan shehui yanjiu jikan* 台灣社會研究季刊 [Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies], no. 112 (April 2019): 99–146.

<sup>201</sup> There has been much literature on the nationalized masculinity in contemporary China. For example: Geng Song and Derek Hird, *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China*, Women and Gender in China Studies, volume 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 115–19; Charlie Y. Zhang, “Deconstructing National and Transnational Hypermasculine Hegemony in Neoliberal China,” *Feminist Studies* 40, no. 1 (2014): 13–38.

<sup>202</sup> Lai Fu 來福, Chen Yiduo 陳一朵, and Yang Rui 楊睿, “Xiao Meili shijian: ‘Gangdu’ weilie yu ‘xingbie kongbu zhuyi’” 肖美麗事件: 「港獨」圍獵與「性別恐怖主義」 [Xiao Meili’s Incident: “Hong Kong independence supporter” hunting & “gender terrorism”], *Initium Media* (Duan chuanmei 端傳媒) (April 09, 2021). As for the HK-related accusation, their evidence was her support of the democratic campaign in 2014, which had nothing to do with those independence demands which appeared much later.

demonization of feminists by labeling them as “foreign hostile powers.”<sup>203</sup> For many men, just like the KMT’s audience in the 1920s-30s, the threat to Chinese nation and challenge of their gender privilege can never be separated. And just like how the KMT labeled the Communists as Russia’s collaborators and disrupters of Chinese gender order, the CCP propagandists now use almost the same vocabulary for the feminists who are allegedly “endorsed by the US” and “deliberately provoking the gender antagonism.”<sup>204</sup>

Coupled with this defense of nationhood and manhood is a deep worry about feminization of Chinese men (boys). In 2020, the Chinese Ministry of Education seriously replied to a CPPCC (Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference) proposal about “preventing the feminization of male youths,”<sup>205</sup> in which they listed several policies to re-masculinize the boys.<sup>206</sup> In these two cases, the CCP did just like what the KMT did in the 1920s-30s: they represented themselves as the defenders of Chinese nationhood and manhood while portraying any offenders as challenging male power and betraying China. In this way, they tried to construct their ideal gender norms with which they can regulate the society, to provoke the males’ anxieties and ensure their obedience, and to consolidate and legitimize their power in a gendered way.

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<sup>203</sup> Wang Zheng, “He wei guowai zhengzhi shili” 何为国外政治势力 [What is foreign political powers] (April 2, 2015). <https://chinesefeminism.org/2020/07/10/何为国外政治势力/> (last access: May 10, 2022).

<sup>204</sup> The mainstream antifeminist discourses use totally the same rhetoric as the KMT, which, for instance, said in 1927 that the CCP was “not promoting gender equality, but provoking gender war” (並不是主張男女平等，實在釀成男女鬥爭), see *Gongchandang tieti xia de lianghu*, 33.

<sup>205</sup> The original Chinese text was: 防止男性青少年女性化.

<sup>206</sup> “Guanyu Zhengxie shisanjie quanguo weiyuanhui disanci huiyi di 4404 hao (jiaoyu lei 410 hao) ti’an dafu de han” 关于政协十三届全国委员会第三次会议第 4404 号（教育类 410 号）提案答复的函 [Reply to the No. 4404 (Education No. 410) Proposal at the Thirteenth National CPPCC, Third Conference], Chinese Ministry of Education (December 8, 2020), [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xxgk/xxgk\\_jyta/jyta\\_jiaoshisi/202101/t20210128\\_511584.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xxgk/xxgk_jyta/jyta_jiaoshisi/202101/t20210128_511584.html) (last access: May 10, 2022).

The CCP is even going further in some respects. While the KMT tended to dehumanize and depict the foreign powers and Communists as beasts, it seems the CCP prefers to promote a “War Wolf” model of “hypermasculine” (in Western terms) men: for them, the better way is to be fiercer than the beasts, rather than defend the civilization against them. Adopting their logic and furthering it became a preferable option to gain power over the foreigners.

### **Future Direction**

This research can only cover part of the story for the current stage. For one thing, the anti-Communist propaganda (especially those mainly targeted men) should never be understood separately from the CCP’s promotion of their own ideal masculinity, which is why I use the plural form “masculinities” in the thesis—the KMT’s version of masculinity was far from the only one at its time. For another, the KMT’s women-targeted propaganda and representations of female Communists are also crucial for understanding the gendered image of Communists. A comparative framework will be adopted in my future research.

Temporally, I hope my future research can cover the whole range of the KMT’s revolution and rule from Guangdong to Nanjing (early 1920s to 1949). If possible, the subjects of this research will be extended to the KMT’s predecessors and audience, i.e., the Beiyang politicians and the intellectuals (including both the famous ones like Hu Shi, and the anonymous writers for newspapers or tabloids) during the late Qing and Republican era.

As discussed above, the gendered anti-Communism had an afterlife in both mainland China and Taiwan, which I hope I can study further. Especially, in the Reform-era mainland, if anti-

Communism was forbidden by the CCP, market economy and neoliberalism at least made anti-Socialism possible—and in a gendered way. In early twenty-first century, there even appeared a “Republican heat” (*Minguo re* 民國熱) championed by many male intellectuals. Is there any relationship between their nostalgia for the “Republican style” (*Minguo faner* 民國範兒) and the anti-Communist (or anti-Socialist) masculinities? I hope my future research can provide some hints.

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