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ABOUT

Tempus: The Harvard College History Review is the undergraduate journal of the Harvard University Department of History. The journal was founded in 1998 to publish original historical scholarship by undergraduate authors. In the spring of 2009, *Tempus* transitioned to an online format. After a brief return to print from the spring of 2013 to the spring of 2019, and a second digital stint during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Tempus* is now a hybrid publication with both digital and print issues. Any Harvard undergraduate student can submit a history paper to the Editorial Staff for consideration for the JOURNAL; many submissions are papers first prepared for Harvard classes. Works in FORUM and PROFILES are authored by *Tempus* editors. To submit, email the Editorial Staff at tempus.harvard@gmail.com. Submission guidelines, additional information, and past issues may be found online at www.tempustheharvardcollegehistoryreview.com.

This issue was designed and laid out by Felix G. Chen.

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

As the field of history is ever-evolving, this issue of *Tempus* foregrounds the stories of people at the heart of the study of history. The pieces we selected explore historical actors' actions, ideas, and relationships. This semester, our editorial board was privileged to read a selection of incredible writing, and the following pages consist of the pieces that we felt best represented the diverse scholarship produced by our peers.

In our FORUM section, we have two short pieces examining American history. Allison Jones' "The Legal Suppression and Reemergence of Cherokee Women's Matrilineal Authority" explores how colonialism disrupted Cherokee communities' matrilineal authority, consequently economically and socially disenfranchising women. Meanwhile, Henry Santamaria's "From Coal to Hydropower: Shaping American Cultures of Public Ownership and Social Engineering" examines the shift from private to public ownership over energy infrastructure. While it is a story of resource change, it ultimately sheds light on how our resources influence social order. Our final piece weaves together the personal and the historical, challenging traditional forms of historical writing. Sophia He's "Wheels of my Family" uses wheels as a motif to tell the story of her family, from her great-grandfather, Chuan, to herself.

In our JOURNAL section, we feature Dalal Hassane's "(Un)Reporting Genocide: Narrative Production and Erasure in *Al-Ahram*'s Coverage of the Anfal Campaign." This piece analyzes the Egyptian *Al-Ahram* newspaper's feature of the Anfal Campaign, examining its silenced Kurdish voices. We have as well Dailan Xu's "From Rankean 'Scientific History' to Chen Yinke's Historical Scholarship: Objectivity and Culturalist Sentiments between Western and National Learning." This piece examines how the nineteenth century German ideal of historical "objectivity," and Rankean methodology of *Quellenkritik* was transmitted to Republican China and reshaped through the scholarship of Chen Yinke, revealing a tension between "scientific" historiography and cultural nationalism.

We hope the pieces will allow you to travel with us to different corners of the world. As we present different styles of writing, we hope this encourages you to broaden your own scope of historical knowledge and understanding and ask yourself, "What is history?"

Sincerely,

Alia Al-Wir

Editor-in-Chief, 2025-2026

WHEELS OF MY FAMILY

Sophia He

i.

It was the 1940s, before the Chinese Revolution. My grandpa, A-Yu, was an eight-year-old boy born into a farmer's family. His father, Chuan, worked in the countryside in southeast China. Farming was not his only job. During the off-season, Chuan carried poles on his shoulders; on each end was a string that held a basket full of small sugar candies wrapped in colorful papers, and he roamed through the streets with heavy footsteps weighed down by all the candies. He shook the rattle drum in one hand, and the crispy and rhythmic sound echoed throughout the valleys, along with his constant refrain: "Sugar candies for sale! Sugar candies for sale!"

Despite their efforts, Chuan's family was poor, so poor that they had to sell one of his children. A-Yu was the second oldest in his family. He had an older brother, a younger brother, and a younger sister, the baby of the family.

"We can't! We can't sell any of the boys! They need to go to school. They need to continue on our legacies and create families," Chuan whispered loudly in a husky voice with his wife in the back of the storage room. Tears streamed down his wife's face, just like the stream behind their house when there was a lot of rain in spring, but she did not say a word. Chuan patted her shoulder, showing a grim though determined face. They both knew they had no choice. A-Yu saw all of this behind the bathroom door.

The next week, they sold his youngest sister to a wealthy family in a city far, far away for \$2,000, hoping that she would have a better future. A few years later, they heard the news that a Japanese bomb hit that city. They were so worried but could not do anything. Years later, A-Yu went there to find his sister. Some said the family moved away, but others said a bomb was dropped.. His sister was never found.

The family still experienced much financial difficulty, and despite selling a child, had to seek help with food from other families. Once, A-Yu followed Chuan to a wealthier family to borrow rice. They went into their stock room and saw that linen bags packed with rice filled the entire floor. The owner of the house glanced at Chuan and saw that he was poor, then decided not to lend him any rice at all. It was at this moment that A-Yu promised himself to study hard and provide his family with a better future.

ii.

A-Yu only went up to fifth grade in school. His family could only support the full education of one child, and since his younger brother was the highest achieving, he got that opportunity. A-Yu found employment as a factory worker, where he worked to produce flour from beans. He created a family consisting of two daughters and one son, living in a one-room factory dorm with a cob-bled-together kitchen so that they could save the money to buy food from the factory cafeteria. Under their roof made from colorful pieces of plastic tarps, they ate their meals with pigs roaming around and in between them.

After the end of the Cultural Revolution in the 1980s, land ownership became allowed for the public. The family physically separated. My grandma lived in the countryside and worked in the fields, while my grandpa labored in the factory. A-Yu, however, was transferred to the public cafeteria of the factory because he was getting old; his previous station had long-term negative health effects that could lead to asthma.

In the fields, my grandma carried vegetables on her tricycle to sell at the village center. Every weekend, my grandpa rode his bike for an hour and a half to unite with the rest of his family, riding through rain, snow, and the blazing-hot sun.

My mom was boarding at a middle school in the city at that time, and she also rode her bike for two hours every weekend to come back home. She would eat at the public cafeteria where my grandpa worked. Between each meal, my mom would stop in front of every glass-framed green bulletin board with the only copy of the latest newspaper edition, advertisements for renting apartments, and

posters from the government with soldiers wearing green uniforms saluting to the Chinese five-star red flag. My mom would not let go of any character, not even the ones between the seams of the newspapers, sticking her nose onto the glass panel to see. She recalled those times as some of the best of her childhood.



c. October 8, 1990, Dongmen, Shenzhen, China
The first McDonald's in China opened around the time that my mother was a freshman in college. China was then known as the “bicycle kingdom,” evident in the bicycles that filled the streets in the picture.¹

iii.

A-Yu's job in the factory provided better educational opportunities for his children. When my mom was in elementary school, she heard from her grandma that her dad was unable to afford rice out of his poverty. She decided then that she wanted to become more powerful when she grew up to protect her family. She worked hard to gain acceptance into one of the best middle schools in town, leaving her village and biking for two hours each way every weekend to go back home. She biked her way from the beginning to the end of high school, until she fulfilled her wish of going to Beijing, the “big city,” for college.

After college, my mom worked at a law firm in Beijing for a few years. She then enrolled in law school but still worked part-time. It was during this time that she bought her first car, being the first person in her family to do so. She drove through the city filled with skyscrapers that her middle teacher said were so tall that one's hat would fall off by looking at them.

1. Baidu Baike, “温饱、洋快餐与走向世界的中国美味：舌尖上的改革开放40年 [From Basic Sustenance to Western Fast Food and Chinese Cuisine Going Global: Forty Years of Reform and Opening on the Tip of the Tongue],” image “China's first McDonald's,” accessed March 4, 2026, <https://baike.baidu.com/tashuo/browse/content?id=51917f417f91f85471672f7c>.

My mom, fighting her way in the vast city, did not return home often anymore. One task followed another. She went on to pursue various agendas, first in Beijing and then across the world with her two twins. Like the gases and smoke that darkened the city's skies, my mom's life became burdened with responsibilities that drove her more and more distant from the fields of her childhood.

iv.

Seven years ago, our last stop before my family moved to America was the countryside where my grandparents lived. Awakened by the wake-up call of the crow, I went into the yard of the house where the chicken den was. I saw a tricycle in the yard. It had always been my favorite form of entertainment in the countryside since there was no other activity that actually seemed appealing to me as a child. Sweeping chicken manure in the yard and listening to Beijing opera were the most common options. My more preferable one was taking a trip to the nearby pond to carry buckets of water for washing clothes, though over the years, the water from the pond became no longer usable after being contaminated with debris. Riding the tricycle was the move. I asked my grandpa for permission; he agreed. I walked the tricycle down the lane, accompanied by my grandpa.

I started riding the tricycle slowly at first, wobbling and turning the handlebars in all different directions. Then, I grasped the technique and began to ride faster. My grandpa said, "Be careful. Don't go so fast." I did not stop. I kept going faster and faster until my grandpa's voice turned from a reminder to a warning, from a warning to a shout, and from a shout to the sound of wind against my ears. He started chasing after me, but I could not hear him anymore. The setting sun covered the fields with a gleam. The sun seemed to have lit up orange cabbages and blazed the oranges on the trees. The pupils of my eyes turned golden as if the sun took their places. I stood up from the tricycle and opened my arms, with the running footsteps of my grandpa trailing behind me.

On my plane to America, I was even closer to the sun, so close that I wished my hand could reach over the cabin windows and touch it.

v.

From walking on two limbs to using bicycles, tricycles, then cars, the wheels of my family somehow bridged the lives of three generations. For my mom, her car was more than just a way to get from one place to another; it was freedom. Her car gave her access to places and opportunities that had once seemed impossibly far away. But with this progress came a cost. The same engines that brought us closer to our dreams are now warming the planet. The smokestacks that gave

jobs to millions, including my grandpa, are the same ones that have darkened our skies and melted our glaciers.

As I rode that tricycle through the countryside last year when I visited my grandparents for the first time in six years, my thoughts changed. I was just a kid, racing against the wind. But now, sitting thousands of miles away in a country my grandpa could only have imagined, I wonder what that wind carried. Was it just the air of the countryside, or was it the sigh of a planet that has borne the weight of our progress for too long?

The auto-industrial age gave my family the tools to build a better future, but it also burdened the Earth with its relentless churn. We are left with the question: how can we keep moving forward without leaving the world behind?

Moreover, as I sit here now, I realize that the moments bringing me the most joy aren't tied to cars, skyscrapers, or even airplanes. Instead, they are the simple, tricycle-like moments—where laughter echoes on a dirt road and the wind rushing past carries a sense of freedom no machine could replicate. Perhaps the more important question is not just how to move forward, but how to cherish and protect the precious relics of the past.

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Baidu Baike. “温饱、洋快餐与走向世界的中国美味: 舌尖上的改革开放40年 [From Basic Sustenance to Western Fast Food and Chinese Cuisine Going Global: Forty Years of Reform and Opening on the Tip of the Tongue].” Accessed March 4, 2026. <https://baike.baidu.com/tashuo/browse/content?id=51917f417f91f85471672f7c>.

THE LEGAL SUPPRESSION AND REEMERGENCE OF CHEROKEE WOMEN'S MATRILINEAL AUTHORITY

Allison Jones

Introduction

Wilma Mankiller, the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, said of her tribe, “Despite everything that has happened to [the Cherokees,] we have never given up and will never give up.”¹ The Indian Removal Act of 1830 seized Cherokee land east of the Mississippi River, and in 1838 the Cherokees were forced west on the Trail of Tears (*Nunna daul Tsuny*, or “Trail Where We Cried”).² Their land in Indian Territory, promised in perpetuity, was further expropriated after the Civil War due to their alliance with the Confederacy and the Treaty of 1866.³ Oklahoma statehood in 1907 eventually ended the institution of communal land by breaking up Cherokee territory through allotment and weakened the Nation’s matrilineal system where women led households and clan identity came from the mother.⁴ This

1. Carolyn Johnston, *Cherokee Women In Crisis: Trail of Tears Civil War, and Allotment, 1838-1907* (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2010), 145, <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/998>.

2. Russell Thorton, “Cherokee Population Losses during the Trail of Tears: A New Perspective and a New Estimate,” *Ethnohistory* 31, no. 4 (Autumn 1984): 289-300, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/482714>.

3. Johnston, *Cherokee Women in Crisis: Trail of Tears Civil War, and Allotment, 1838-1907*.

4. Ahnawake Carroll, “Cherokee Nation Tribal Profile,” *Tribal Law Journal* 3 (August 2018): 1-19, <https://lawschool.unm.edu/tlj/common/docs/volumes/vol-3-carroll-ahnawake-chokeee-nation-tribal-profile.pdf>.

shift imposed European patriarchal structures onto the Nation. Historians Theda Perdue and Carolyn Johnston both demonstrate that matrilineal governance was central to Cherokee society and that federal policies intentionally dismantled the structures that protected women's authority. Today, Cherokee women face high rates of domestic violence, prompting the Cherokee Nation to enact legislation to combat these crimes. Ultimately, nineteenth-century settler colonialism, forced removal, and land allotment in Indian Territory dismantled Cherokee communal land and matrilineal authority, stripping Cherokee women of economic and social power and creating conditions that have contributed to alarming rates of domestic violence.

How Removal and Allotment Dismantled Matrilineal Authority

Before Europeans moved into Cherokee territory in the early eighteenth century, the Cherokees controlled land across eight modern states: Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.⁵ The 1828 discovery of gold in Georgia escalated demands for Cherokee removal, and the state responded by extending jurisdiction over Cherokee land and nullifying Cherokee laws.⁶ Although *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) affirmed Cherokee sovereignty, federal leaders ignored the ruling.⁷ Their refusal to enforce federal law weakened the matrilineal political structure that Theda Perdue identifies as central to Cherokee governance. The 1835 Treaty of New Echota, signed by an unauthorized minority of Cherokee leaders acting without consent of the National Council, provided federal justification for removal despite overwhelming Cherokee opposition.⁸ The 1838 removal, carried out “with rifle and bayonet,” imprisoned families in stockades and forced them westward to Indian Territory (roughly half of present-day Oklahoma).⁹ About one-fourth of the 16,000 Cherokees died from exposure, starvation, and disease.¹⁰ This violent displacement dismantled clan networks and the matrilineal system that gave women authority over household, property, and community life. Although the Cherokee

5. Theda Perdue, “Clan and Court: Another Look at the Early Cherokee Republic,” *American Indian Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (Autumn 2000): 562–569, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1185890>.

6. Thorton, “Cherokee Population Losses during the Trail of Tears: A New Perspective and a New Estimate.”

7. “*Worcester v. Georgia*,” Oyez, accessed December 10, 2022, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1789-1850/31us515>.

8. Mary E. Young, “Indian Removal and Land Allotment: The Civilized Tribes and Jacksonian Justice,” *The American Historical Review* 64, no. 1 (October 1958): 31–45, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1844855>.

9. Thorton, “Cherokee Population Losses During the Trail of Tears: A New Perspective and a New Estimate.”

10. Kenneth P. Davis, “The Cherokee Removal, 1835–1838,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1973): 311–331, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42623406>.

Nation rebuilt its government and schools, removal permanently weakened the structures that sustained women's power.

After the Cherokee Nation rebuilt its government and schools in Indian Territory, the Civil War fractured Cherokee political unity as Principal Chief John Ross's support for the Confederacy deepened internal divisions and further accelerated a shift toward male-dominated governance.¹¹ In place of clan-based leadership rooted in matrilineal leadership, political authority increasingly flowed through male-controlled councils modeled on U.S. constitutional norms. Federal pressure pushed the Nation toward a patriarchal political model that reduced women's authority. Postwar treaties and the Dawes Allotment Act further eroded communal land.¹² Theodore Roosevelt called allotment "a mighty pulverizing engine to break up the tribal mass," acknowledging the federal goal of dismantling Cherokee communal and political systems.¹³ A decade later, the Curtis Act of 1898 dissolved tribal governments and forced Cherokees to use U.S. courts with all-white juries and judges, stripping what remained of women's formal authority by replacing clan-based governance with U.S. legal control.¹⁴ This suppression was not addressed until the 1970 Principal Chiefs Act restored the right to elect tribal leaders.¹⁵ Elected as Principal Chief in 1985, Wilma Mankiller noted that "[e]arly historians referred to [Cherokee] government as a petticoat government because of the strong role of the women in the tribe."¹⁶ Her election marked the reemergence of matrilineal political values that federal policies had systematically suppressed.

How Jurisdictional Limits Exposed Cherokee Women to Violence

Historically, Cherokee women held powerful leadership roles, advising in council houses, shaping decisions through their clans, and holding rights to property and divorce. Johnston argues that federal policy dismantled matrilineal leadership, shifting political power away from women. Settlers' ideals of "true womanhood" reinforced this shift by pushing women into domestic roles and normalizing patriarchal control. Early legal changes reflected this transition. In

11. Perdue, "Clan and Court: Another Look at the Early Cherokee Republic."

12. "Cherokee Nation History Course." The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. Accessed on December 10, 2022, https://indigenousgov.hks.harvard.edu/sites/g/files/omnum6806/files/hpaied/files/cherokee_nation_history_course.pdf.

13. Johnston, *Cherokee Women In Crisis: Trail of Tears Civil War, and Allotment, 1838-1907*.

14. "Curtis Act (1898)," Oklahoma Historical Society, last accessed December 10, 2022, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=CU006>.

15. Cherokee Nation, "History," accessed on December 10, 2022, <https://www.cherokee.org/about-the-nation/history>.

16. Stephen Miller, "U.S. News -- Remembrances: First Woman to Lead Cherokee Nation," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 7, 2010, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/newspapers/u-s-news-remembrances-first-woman-lead-cherokee/docview/399145836/se-2>.

1809, the all-male Cherokee National Committee replaced earlier clan-based governance.¹⁷ The 1817 matrilineal property law remained, but the 1827 constitution, modeled after the U.S. Constitution, moved power away from clans and excluded women from office.¹⁸ Johnston shows that these early legal changes removed the protections women had in matrilineal governance. The erosion of sovereignty deepened their vulnerability. When tribes lost the ability to police non-Native offenders, violence against Native women rose sharply. In *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe* (1978), the Supreme Court ruled that tribes lacked “inherent criminal jurisdiction” over non-Native perpetrators, leaving most violent crimes unprotected.¹⁹ The Violence Against Women Act offered partial remedies in 2005, 2013, and 2022, but limits remain. These gaps have allowed abuse to continue with little consequence.²⁰

The Cherokee Nation has worked to rebuild protections. In 2022, Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. introduced the Cherokee Family Protection and Violence Against Women Act, granting the Nation authority to prosecute domestic violence within its 7,000 square mile reservation.²¹ Tribal Councilor Candessa Thee emphasized, “We’re supposed to treat one another as sacred.”²² Given that a 2016 National Institute of Justice report found that four in five Native women experience violence, with 96 percent of those victimizations committed by non-Native perpetrators, restoring tribal legal authority is essential to rebuilding the safety once supported by matrilineal governance.²³

Conclusion

European settler colonialism and U.S. federal expansion resulted in diminished land and the weakening of matrilineal authority. Forced removal and allotment dismantled communal land and the matrilineal system that once gave Chero-

17. Theda Perdue, “Traditionalism in the Cherokee Nation: Resistance to the Constitution of 1827,” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 159-170. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40580890>.

18. Carroll, “Cherokee Nation Tribal Profile.”

19. André B Rosay, “Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men,” Office of Justice Programs, accessed on December 10, 2022, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249822.pdf>.

20. “Violence Against Women,” National Congress of American Indians, accessed on December 10, 2022, <https://www.ncai.org/policy-issues/tribal-governance/public-safety-and-justice/violence-against-women>; Cherokee Nation, “Chief Hoskin, Deputy Warner Propose ‘Cherokee Family Protection and Violence Against Women,’” *The Claremore Daily Progress*, September 15, 2022, https://www.claremoreprogress.com/oklahoma/chief-hoskin-deputy-chief-warner-propose-cherokee-family-protection-and-violence-against-women-act/article_84e7984a-3505-11ed-85c8-eb0309e339a0.html.

21. Cherokee Nation, “Chief Hoskin, Deputy Warner Propose ‘Cherokee Family Protection and Violence Against Women.’”

22. Chad Hunter, “Cherokee Nation Enacts Family Protection Act,” *Cherokee Phoenix*. October. 6, 2022. https://www.cherokeephoenix.org/news/cherokee-nation-enacts-family-protection-act/article_3abe5142-4427-11ed-a5b3-433ab757b3fb.html.

23. Rosay, “Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men.”

kee women economic and political power. Losing matrilineal protection made women more vulnerable to violence, a pattern that persists today. The Cherokee Nation has worked to restore the authority it once held over its land and people. Cherokees continue to embody what author Gerald Vizenor calls “survivance,” a combination of survival and resistance.²⁴ Vizenor argues that Native Americans were not conquered by European colonizers, nor do they merely exist as relics of history; rather, they continue to resist U.S. efforts to undermine their sovereignty. This idea applies to Cherokee women as well: although land loss disrupted the structures that empowered women, their leadership endures. Through legislation such as the Cherokee Family Protection and Violence Against Women Act, the Nation reinforces its sovereignty and its commitment to protecting women as essential to its future.

24. Gerald Vizenor, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*, University of Nebraska Press, 2008.

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FROM COAL TO HYDROPOWER: SHAPING AMERICAN CULTURES OF PUBLIC OWNERSHIP AND SOCIAL ENGINEERING

Henry Santamaria

Throughout American history, energy infrastructure has both reflected and shaped cultural values. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century rise of coal fueled American industrialization, with its direct extraction of minerals from the earth contributing to a system of private ownership and investment. However, cultural ideas about energy have transformed over time, leading to changes in the perceptions of who owns infrastructure and thus who it is intended to benefit. Beginning in the 1920s, large-scale public infrastructure projects emphasized the development of hydropower, with dam construction later accelerating under the New Deal as a response to the Great Depression. The federal government harnessed the power of rivers such as the Tennessee, Columbia, and Colorado to bring electricity and energy access to rural regions of the country through programs such as the Tennessee Valley Authority.¹ This emphasis on publicly owned infrastructure sharply contrasted with the view of private ownership that emerged earlier in coal production. The transition from a purely coal based industrial energy regime to the early twentieth-century emergence of large-scale hydropower transformed cultural ideas about the ownership

1. *Tennessee Valley Authority Act of 1933*. Public Law 73-17, 73rd Cong., 1st sess. (May 18, 1933).

of energy, leading to an emphasis on public investment and a view of energy infrastructure as a means of social engineering.

Through the direct extraction of mineral resources from the land and the use of railroads as transportation infrastructure, coal production fostered a culture of private ownership of energy resources. The June 1843 issue of *Hunt's Merchant's Magazine and Commercial Review* examined the state of coal infrastructure in Pennsylvania, arguing for the importance of private ownership of coal resources in response to a proposed state tax on the commodity. The publication asserted that “by the exclusive efforts of individual capital and enterprise, those two great public improvements, the Schuylkill navigation and Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, were projected and completed... individual enterprise and industry having thus reclaimed and enriched an extensive district of barren and uncultivated lands, constructing at an immense outlay of private capital the existing facilities for the developments of its mineral resources.”² Through these claims, the magazine emphasized the importance of privately held transportation and extraction infrastructure in fostering the broader economic productivity created by coal. In the mid-nineteenth century, American industry thus understood private investment as the driving force shaping America’s emerging wealth and energy infrastructure. This demonstrated the broader system underlying coal as serving the individual interests of those who owned its means of production, perpetuating a view of coal and energy resources more broadly as privately held commodities.

The mid-nineteenth-century conception of energy resources as purely private property was further shaped by the emergence of transcendentalist ideas of the human relationship with nature. In his 1841 essay, “Wealth,” Ralph Waldo Emerson emphasized the importance of coal in America’s private wealth creation. He characterized the resource as “power and civilization” and argued that it represented the ability of Americans to turn raw materials into productive industry.³ Emerson’s view of coal as fueling private industrial development demonstrated the importance of the system of private ownership that facilitated its use. This in turn reflected his broader view of nature, asserting belief in the use of the human mind to creatively transform and harness the power of nature into commodities beneficial to human activity. Through allowing individuals to produce wealth by privately possessing a single material commodity, coal shaped broader cultural ideas about the nature of energy as serving to enrich its producers.

2. “Coal Trade of Pennsylvania,” *Hunt's Merchant's Magazine and Commercial Review* 9, no. 6 (June 1843): 545–546.

3. Ralph Waldo Emerson. “Wealth.” In *The Conduct of Life*, (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1860) 1–8.

Through its reliance on private property to drive wealth creation, coal fostered a culture of industrial labor characterized by harsh conditions for workers. Historian Thomas Andrews describes the brutal conditions faced by Colorado coal miners in the late nineteenth century. He asserts that “dependence on fossil fuels had hidden costs, which miners and their families often paid with their lives. Instability and violence underground invariably engendered more of the same on the surface.”⁴ This culture of labor demonstrated the social implications of coal’s private ownership. Rather than serving the interests of the public through providing a supply of energy, the culture of violence and abuse of labor that resulted from the extraction of coal established private wealth creation as its primary motive. Thus, the system of private ownership underlying coal did not emphasize energy infrastructure as holding social benefits, further shaping ideas about who should experience the benefits and costs of energy production.

In contrast to coal’s focus on private extraction, the introduction of large-scale hydropower in the United States in the 1920s reoriented industrial labor to the construction and maintenance of publicly owned infrastructure. Through the construction of dams, large-scale hydropower emerged through newly conceived ideas about harnessing the power of the natural settings of rivers. In *The Organic Machine*, historian Richard White details the emergence of large-scale hydropower along the Columbia River of the Pacific Northwest, describing the extent to which federal planners viewed this natural setting as an opportunity for public investment in infrastructure. He details how, “Because most western waterpower sites on non-navigable rivers lay on federal lands, and because the government authority over interstate commerce gave it control over other sites on navigable rivers, the federal government could assert control over virtually all hydroelectric developments.”⁵ Thus, the development of hydropower was from the start a federal project that emphasized publicly owned infrastructure because of established public land ownership. The accompanying transformation of the Columbia through the construction of the Bonneville and Grand Coulee dams further demonstrated hydropower’s emphasis on public investment. Through reshaping the purpose of energy production to public investment and public benefit in contrast to coal’s exploitation of labor through private property, the emergence of large-scale hydropower infrastructure radically transformed how Americans defined cultural ideas surrounding energy resources.

The transformation of the Columbia River was part of a greater national emphasis on public investment, establishing federal control of energy resources

4. Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America’s Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 140.

5. Richard White, “Putting the River to Work” in *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 53.

for the perceived social benefit of the nation. In a 1924 article published in *The Nation* entitled “Muscle Shoals- Ours,” *The Nation*, a liberal publication in favor of public ownership, argued for the importance of federal investment in the Muscle Shoals of Northern Alabama following attempts by industrialist Henry Ford to buy out the Tennessee River’s Wilson Dam for private ownership. The article asserted, “let it not be forgotten that such control is vested in the public now. The problem is not like that of the railroads. There is no proposal that the nation buy at a huge outlay and plunge into the operation of a great privately owned industry. The nation owns Muscle Shoals.”⁶ This emphasis on the contrast between railroad infrastructure and hydroelectric dams directly illustrates how dissatisfaction with coal’s privatization informed the emergence of hydropower. In this view, public investment already dominated large-scale hydropower, creating an argument for continued public ownership as a reflection of changing cultural views on energy.

Another issue of public ownership highlighted by the article was the importance of scale. After noting the five-hundred-mile radius of transmission and regional importance of the Dam for electrification in the Southeastern United States, *The Nation* argued that “The power at Muscle Shoals is far too great for any one state to use or control. It is the king-pin in the forthcoming development of the electrified industry.”⁷ Ideas advocating federal ownership of the energy resources generated by Muscle Shoals centered on the motivation of harnessing large-scale resources for the public good. If the nation owned the infrastructure for the generation of large-scale hydropower, an equitable distribution of energy resources for electrification could occur. This viewpoint informed a broader culture of public ownership and investment as contributing to the economic and social prosperity of the public, shaping the eventual expansion of federal use of Muscle Shoals established under the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1933.⁸

Building on the foundation laid by federal planners in the 1920s, the New Deal radically reshaped the national culture surrounding public ownership of energy resources as an aspect of national economic recovery. Among the largest of the New Deal hydroelectric projects was Nevada’s Boulder Dam, intended to provide electrical power to large portions of the American Southwest. In his September 1935 Boulder Dam Dedication Speech, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt expressed his view of the importance of the Boulder Dam as an investment for the good of the nation. He argued that despite significant public cost of construction, “In the expenditure of the price of the Boulder Dam during the depression years, work was provided for 4,000 men, most of them heads of

6. “Muscle Shoals, Ours,” *The Nation*, 1924.

7. “Muscle Shoals, Ours,” 1924.

8. *TVA Act of 1933*, Pub. L. No. 73-17.

families, and many thousands more were enabled to earn a livelihood through manufacture of materials and machinery.”⁹ Thus, the systems of labor underlying the development of large-scale hydroelectric infrastructure were viewed as a public investment in economic recovery in addition to efficient electricity generation. Through developing large-scale hydropower using federal control of resources, infrastructure such as the Boulder Dam reflected a changing cultural conception of the role of public investment in shaping energy production in the context of the Great Depression. Harnessing available natural resources in a time of economic crisis, Roosevelt’s viewpoints reflected how changing cultural ideas about energy production as a source of economic prosperity and social good shaped federal decisions and infrastructure development during the New Deal.

In addition to shifting ideas about ownership of energy, the emergence of hydroelectric dams appealed to the technological sublime, generating a vision of social progress through technology. The term technological sublime, coined by historian David Nye, describes the awe created by the power and scale of technology, instilling a vision of a greater notion of human progress behind its construction.¹⁰ In the context of hydropower, the technological sublime behind dam infrastructure influenced social theorist Lewis Mumford, who in his 1934 work *Technics and Civilization* provided a vision for the development of infrastructure as a project of social engineering and liberation from labor through human progress.¹¹ Mumford argued that “the next step toward reorienting our technics consists in bringing it more completely into harmony with the new cultural and regional and societal and personal patterns we have begun to develop.”¹² This lofty vision greatly influenced the developers of New Deal hydropower, informing their desire to alter the social fabric of the nation through public infrastructure development.¹³ Further, Mumford’s ideas demonstrated another facet of how hydropower transformed the cultural perception of energy. The wide scope of the technology utilized in dam infrastructure generated feelings of the technological sublime, leading to Mumfordian cultural ideas asserting the power of energy to generate social progress.

Despite this vision of large-scale hydropower as producing social progress, infrastructure construction often produced unequal social and economic effects. In this vein, White describes how rural communities in the Pacific Northwest often faced adverse environmental effects in the decades following dam construction

9. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “Boulder Dam Dedication Speech,” September 30, 1935.

10. David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 1-16.

11. Richard White, “Putting the River to Work” in *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 55-56.

12. Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1934), 434.

13. White, “Putting the River” 57-58.

along the Columbia River. He argues that the flooding of the Columbia Basin, including the 1948 flooding of Vanport, Oregon, often harmed the rural communities it originally hoped to bring prosperity to, reflecting “the replication of the very injustices it hoped to remedy.”¹⁴

The flooding of the Columbia Basin demonstrated the broader duality of the social effects of New Deal hydropower. While expanding access to electricity in rural areas, the flooding it caused often worsened the very social inequality it hoped to alleviate. This represented a significant rupture with the vision of social progress Mumford put forth. While those who developed energy infrastructure in the era of the New Deal espoused a mission of serving the broader public interest, established dynamics of geography and social class informed the benefit or harm communities experienced. Thus, the cultural shift toward public investment reflected an often-contradictory relationship with the social engineering it promised to create.

Though the continued use and growth of fossil fuels such as oil and coal accompanied the emergence of large-scale hydropower, the public emphasis placed on hydropower remains influential to cultural ideas about energy. The postwar dominance of oil has largely eclipsed large-scale hydropower in the United States, but the latter continues to make up forty-six percent of renewable energy use in North America, demonstrating the lasting effects of the technological investment in hydropower infrastructure ushered in by the New Deal.¹⁵ Additionally, the emphasis on centralized planning that emerged from early twentieth-century large-scale hydropower continues to have enduring effects of infrastructure development. From the mid-twentieth century onward, systems of hydroelectric power generation influenced a global shift toward comprehensive planning of energy production infrastructure evident in contemporary examples such as the People’s Republic of China’s Three Gorges Dam.¹⁶ Thus, state control of energy resources, shaped by a culture characterizing energy production as holding the power to produce social and economic progress, has continued to display its enduring global importance.

While the emphasis on centralized planning and public investment in hydropower that emerged from the early twentieth century endures, the social good hydropower promised to produce has often been obscured by the environmental

14. Richard White, “The Power of the River” in *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 74–76.

15. International Renewable Energy Agency. *Renewable Energy Highlights* (11 July 2024). Abu Dhabi: IRENA, 2024. https://www.irena.org//media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2024/Jul/Renewable_energy_highlights_FINAL_July_2024.pdf.

16. Marta Ponseti and Jordi López-Pujol. “The Three Gorges Dam Project in China: History and Controversies.” *Historical Materials* (HMIC) 14 (2006): 153–156.

cost and unequal effects of its development. Through the flooding of the Columbia and rivers across the American South, Mumford's vision of energy production as social improvement faced destruction by the very waters it hoped to harness to create liberation and progress. Beyond the New Deal, the notion of how energy infrastructure has resulted in varied effects on the lives of those it attempts to serve continues to hold immense power in discourses on renewable energy and environmental justice. Thus, the legacy of the transition to hydropower resonates in calls for equitable access to renewable energy and the disproportionate environmental impacts still inflicted upon marginalized communities. While hydropower ushered in a cultural shift toward publicly owned energy resources, the complex dynamics of who these resources benefit and disadvantage continue to inform contemporary discourses on the relationship between energy and human cultural and social affairs.

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(UN)REPORTING GENOCIDE: NARRATIVE PRODUCTION AND ERASURE IN AL-AHRAM'S COVERAGE OF THE ANFAL CAMPAIGN

Dalal Hassane

Introduction

T*his is my intention, and I want you to take serious note of it. As soon as we complete the deportations, we will start attacking them everywhere according to a systematic military plan. Even their strongholds. In our attacks we will take back one third or one half of what is under their control. If we can try to take two-thirds, then we will surround them in a small pocket and attack them with chemical weapons. I will not attack them with chemicals just one day, but I will continue to attack them with chemicals for fifteen days. [...] I will not mention the name of the chemical because that is classified information. But I will say with new destructive weapons that will destroy you. So I will threaten them and motivate them to surrender.*¹

These were the 1987 words of ‘Alī Ḥasan al-Majīd, chief of the Iraqi Ba’ath Party’s Northern Bureau, and overseer of the regime’s “counterinsurgency” ef-

1. “Chemical Ali in His Own Words: The Ali Hassan al-Majid Tapes,” Human Rights Watch, published 2004, <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/campaigns/iraq/chemicalali.htm>.

forts.² al-Majīd was the cousin of then-Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the very man who appointed him to the position.³ al-Majīd's tactic of choice for combatting the Kurdish insurgency, chemical gas, earned him his chilling namesake, "Chemical Ali," in Kurdish communities.⁴

The choice of chemical weapons was rooted in a systematic effort to depopulate the Kurdish countryside, which was an invaluable resource for the guerilla fighters due to the region's mountainous terrain.⁵ Joost Hiltermann, in his seminal book, *A Poisonous Affair: America, Iraq, and the Gassing of Halabja*, identifies al-Majid's usage of chemical weapons as part of a "two-pronged strategy to defeat the insurgency," which consisted of depopulating the countryside and eliminating the threat of Kurdish resistance leaders and groups.⁶ Hiltermann writes further that "[t]he regime soon realized that the peshmergas'⁷ main vulnerability was the rural population that sustained them, and that by gassing civilians it could break the rebels' fighting spirit – demoralize them to the point of paralysis."⁸ And thus began a policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide,⁹ concealed by a regime-imposed narrative of counterinsurgency.

This narrative has manifested through numerous mediums; however, a prominent means through which the counter-narrative of counterinsurgency has permeated into regional understandings of Iraqi state violence in the late 1980s is mass media. I focus on journalistic representations of the counterinsurgency narrative to uncover the ways in which Egyptian publication *al-Ahrām*'s coverage of Iraqi military operations during what the regime called the Anfāl Campaign indeed concealed the genocidal nature of these campaigns to place the logic of security and unity against a common enemy at the forefront of wartime rhetoric.

I argue that *al-Ahrām*'s rhetorical usage of Iraqi-Arab saviorism in the Kurdish north, conflation of the Kurdish people with the targeted landscape, and no-

2. Joost R. Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair: America, Iraq, and the Gassing of Halabja* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 93.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid, 93-94.

7. The Peshmerga ("those who face death" in Sorani Kurdish) were the guerilla forces that fought in the northern region of Iraq throughout the Ba'ath Party's rule. Their roots are believed to trace back to the 1940s, though their presence in the region became more prominent in the 1960s with the rise of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq. Today, they are considered the main armed forces in Iraqi Kurdistan, split in two factions respective to the competing political parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). For more information, see Aziz et al. "The Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga: Military Reform and Nation Building in a Divided Polity," 227-228.

8. Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair*, 94.

9. Kerim Yildiz and Kurdish Human Rights Project, *The Kurds in Iraq: The Past, Present and Future*, (Pluto, 2007), 54.

tions of political and religious obligation all further a linear Iraqi state history of counterinsurgency, effectively silencing Kurdish lived experiences of genocide. Through close analyses of *al-Ahrām* articles, I uncover the silences engineered by allied state rhetoric and their implications in erasing a people that was subjected to a mass ethnic cleansing campaign in the 1980s.

***Al-Ahram* and Situating Egypt's Geopolitical Performance**

It is necessary to situate the importance of the Egyptian state's geopolitical position during this period. The 1980s fell under the shadow of many wars and geopolitical clashes, many of which directly affected Egypt. Such an example was the June 1967 War, through which Egypt, as one of "the leading paragons of militant Arabism,"¹⁰ faced a heavy defeat after Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula.¹¹ Ḥosnī Mubārak ascended to the Egyptian presidency in 1981, the beginning of a decade categorized by immense economic devastation for Egypt, rooted in several issues, including unemployment and inflation.¹² As a result, Egypt's dependence on Western aid grew under Mubārak, which further complicated its geopolitical role in the region.¹³ The United States's support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War was relentless, expanding across military, financial, and intelligence aid.¹⁴ The United States was not unique in its support for Iraq, as West Germany and France provided the technology necessary for Saddam Hussein's government to produce lethal weapons like poison gas and protected the country from suffering international sanctions.¹⁵ This stance was a crucial blueprint for Egypt's foreign policy in light of an increasing economic dependence on wealthy, "Western" states.

Mubārak's leadership steered Egypt towards a closer political and economic relationship with Iraq, and after decades of tension under the leadership of Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir and Anwar al-Sādāt, they officially restored their diplomatic ties in 1987.¹⁶ This came after Egypt provided Iraq with military and logistical aid throughout the 1980s in its war with Iran.¹⁷ Egyptian ties with Iraq would weaken on the eve of the 1991 Gulf War, but throughout the 1980s, Egyptian-Iraqi relations were at a crucial peak, which would infiltrate political, economic, and

10. Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Beacon Press, 2009), 23.

11. Ibid, 125.

12. Mahmud A. Faksh, "Egypt and the Gulf Crisis: The Role of Leadership Under Mubarak," *Journal of Third World Studies* 9, no. 1 (1992): 41.

13. Ibid.

14. Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis*, 155–156.

15. Ibid.

16. Faksh, "Egypt and the Gulf Crisis," 45.

17. Ibid.

cultural sectors of Egyptian society. Such an example is journalism, and in the case of Egypt, one of its most prominent publications, *al-Ahrām*.



Figure 1: *al-Ahrām*'s December 2, 1983 issue, featuring an interview with Saddam Hussein and an accompanying political cartoon.¹⁸

In the case of *al-Ahrām*, which was first published in Egypt in 1875, its cultural and political influence in Egypt is not to be underestimated, with its estimated circulation in 1985 reaching 550,000.¹⁹ The private publication is known to have a more state-aligned leaning and to appeal to government officials and other bureaucrats.²⁰ William Rugh identifies Mubārak's presidency as a period of greater "freedom" of press in comparison to Nāṣir and Sādāt; however, loyalty to the regime through the so-called "national press" persisted.²¹ While Mubārak attempted to place a performative front of reform and "freedom of press," his regime still carried out arrests and intimidation of journalists which occurred under previous regimes.²² In Figure 1, a 1983 article of *al-Ahrām* features an interview with Saddam Hussein, in which he describes his ill perceptions of Syria, Iraq's Ba'thist rival.²³ Accompanying the article is a political cartoon depicting Hussein as he holds a bottle with a smaller Ayatollah Khomeini, supreme leader of Iran, encapsulated. The cartoon appears emblematic of the depiction of a mighty Hussein adamant in his commitment to defeat the Persian "enemy," elusive of the "*Qādasiyya*" narrative he sought to purport during the Iran-Iraq

18. *Al-Ahrām*, December 2, 1983, 5.

19. Rugh, William A, *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics* (Praeger, 2004), 121.

20. Ibid, 131.

21. Ibid, 156-157.

22. Rugh, *Arab Mass Media*, 156.

23. *al-Ahrām*, 2 December 1983, 5.

War.²⁴ This large interview report is just one of many examples of *al-Ahrām*'s usage of its platform to give voice to the Hussein regime, enabling its silencing of anyone the regime deemed its "other."

Despite the fact that *al-Ahrām* and other national publications like *al-Akhbār* and *Al-Jumhuriya* occasionally published reports that did not demonstrate full approval or support of the regime, their support for the regime and its institutions was still very much ingrained in their journalistic practices.²⁵ It is these historical truths that urge readers of history to assess the connection between the state and journalism in countries like Egypt, which was undergoing critical geopolitical and economic transformations that affirmed it as a key state actor at the height of the Iran-Iraq War and the Anfāl Campaign. Egypt's decision to strengthen ties to Iraq, particularly in light of the United States' and other powers' alignment with Saddam Hussein during this period, was one that would undoubtedly affect its journalistic coverage of Iraqi policy, which would include furthering state narratives which silenced realities of genocide like those of the Kurdish people.

Historical Context

Historian Dina Khoury has written extensively about the history of the Iraqi military and security apparatus under the Ba'th Party. She writes that during the Iran-Iraq War, the regime prioritized the "logic of counterinsurgency" in the Kurdish north and framed it as an effort to control Kurdish militants who were accused of collaborating with Iran.²⁶ However, as Khoury emphasizes, this framing "gave cover to what became a policy of ethnic cleansing of the Kurdish population that included the use of chemical weapons,"²⁷ which often becomes buried beneath the countless records of state archives that detail its military policies. The "counterinsurgency" narrative becomes increasingly important as one counters its past and present implications in Arab collective memory of the Ba'th Party.

As anthropologist Nadjé Sadig al-Ali contextualizes, the Anfāl Campaign was framed as "a counter-insurgency operation but in reality a carefully planned and executed programme of ethnic cleansing in which between 50,000 and 200,000 people are estimated to have been killed, most of them men and adolescent boys."²⁸ The prime justification for this campaign was the monetary aid Kurdish

24. This is in reference to the Battle of Qādasiyya, fought in 636 CE, in which leader Sa'd bin Waqqāṣ led the Arab Muslim victory against the Persian Sasanian Empire, a crucial historical moment in Islam and the Muslim conquest of Persia. Hussein framed the Iran-Iraq War as the "Second Qādasiyya," which attributed not only a religious narrative to the war, but one of anti-Persian sentiment. See Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime*, 57.

25. Rugh, *Arab Mass Media*, 157.

26. Ibid, 110-111.

27. Ibid, 111.

28. Nadjé Sadig Al-Ali, *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories from 1948 to the Present* (Zed Books, 2007), 165.

insurgents accepted from Iran as Hussein's violence in the north intensified.²⁹ A brutal example of this intensification was the March 16, 1988 chemical gassing of Halabja, a city on the Iran-Iraq borderland, which killed an estimated 5,000 people and injured 10,000 more.³⁰ Iraqi military forces used a combination of different chemical agents, including mustard gas, Sarin, and Tabun, which have held lasting health implications on survivors, children of survivors, and current inhabitants of the city.³¹ However, despite overwhelming evidence of Iraq's culpability in the attack, the Iraqi regime was quick to blame Iran for the usage of chemical weapons in 1988.³² It is crucial to note that Iran indeed facilitated large-scale violence in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, but its role in the region was often scrutinized to the point of erasing any Iraqi responsibility or accountability for its genocidal campaign in the north.³³

These realities of genocide and ethnic cleansing were forcefully silenced by, most notably, the Iraqi state, which placed its geopolitical motives and its supposed efforts at defending Iraq against a common enemy at the forefront of a singular political history. The Anfal Campaign, during its most intense years and in the following decades, was known in the Arabic-speaking world as a security operation which placed the interests of the Iraqi people at the heart of all decision-making. Should we accept the narrative of the regime, the campaign was not a genocidal project that subjected the Kurdish minority to chemical gassing, mass incarceration, and forced uprooting. It is this rhetoric that permeated the reporting in outlets like *al-Ahrām*, which became major mechanisms in reproducing state violence and erasure.

Uncovering Silences

Historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot writes that “[h]istory is the fruit of power, but power itself is never so transparent that history is whatever we make of it. The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.”³⁴ It is indeed this challenge that faces modern Kurdish historiography, for even historical narratives that appear to counter Orientalizing histories of the Middle East have overshadowed and erased non-Arab communi-

29. Ibid.

30. Pierre Razoux, “The Halabja Massacre,” in *The Iran-Iraq War*. Translated by Nicholas Elliott. (Harvard University Press, 2015): 438–439, <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674915701-030>.

31. Muhammad, Belal A, Salih A Hama, Karzan A.M Hawrami, Salar H Karim, Gasha S Ahmed, and Hawbush M Rahim. “Long-Term Health Complications of Chemical Weapon Exposure: A Study on Halabja Chemical Attack Survivors (Iraqi Kurds),” 26. *Inhalation Toxicology* 36 (1), (2024): 26–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08958378.2024.2301985>.

32. Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair*, 7.

33. Ibid, 122–123.

34. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 2015), xxiii.

ties such as the Kurdish people of northern Iraq. However, uncovering the ways in which these silences manifest through mediums such as journalistic publications is an essential undertaking that unveils the ways Kurdish histories can and must be brought to the forefront of Middle East historiography.

I grew up listening to my mother's stories of growing up Kurdish in Ba'thist Iraq. She and her siblings survived the 1988 Halabja Massacre, which would subject them to a childhood of frequent uprooting, from Iraq to Iran to Syria, and ultimately, to the United States. Though my knowledge of my familial roots in southern Kurdistan and intense histories of Ba'thist violence was built into understandings of my own ethnic identity from a young age, I soon realized that this genocide was not of public knowledge in both American and Arab spaces. A significant root to this lack of understanding is the remnants of Saddam-era nostalgia in Iraq, often attributed to lasting wounds of the exploitative U.S. occupation of Iraq in 2003, which also led to the "cleansing" of any memories of the Ba'th regime and its atrocities in Iraqi textbooks.³⁵

This essay is situated in a growing scholarly conversation about Kurdish history and historiographies of global self-determination movements more broadly. It aims to uncover facets of state manufacturing of genocide denial which extend beyond the covertly political, although it must be noted that the political—especially in the case of states like Egypt and Iraq—infiltrates endless spheres of cultural and societal influence. Most importantly, this essay aims to uncover silences of Kurdish histories of genocide under Saddam Hussein, which have yet to make their way to the center of mainstream histories of the modern Middle East.

Whose Liberation? Manufactured Saviorism in Northern Iraq

The notion of "liberation" varied vastly across Kurdish and Arab communities. While Kurdish rebel and guerilla groups were fighting in the north under the violent suppression of a nationalist regime, Iraqi-Arab notions of "liberation" were grounded in the defeat of not only the Iranian regime's influence in the northern Kurdish region, but also of the presence of any groups perceived to be a threat to Saddam Hussein's and the Ba'th Party's sovereignty, particularly those of non-Arab affiliations.

A January 24, 1988 *al-Ahrām* article, "Death of the Commander of the Iraqi Fifth Army," reported on the discovery of a wrecked plane in northern Iraq, and read the following:

35. Amanda Raquel Dorval, "The Iraqi Ba'ath Archives: Collective Memory Loss and Authoritarian Nostalgia in the Post-Saddam Era," *Libraries (University Park, Pa.)* 5, no. 2 (2021): 205, <https://doi.org/10.5325/libraries.5.2.0204>.

وجاء ذلك بعد ساعات من بيان عسكري عراقي ناشد المواطنين الأكراد بتسهيل مهمة القوات العراقية للعثور على الطائرة وأشار إلى أن الطائرات قد فقدت خلال تدريبات عسكرية. ومن الجدير بالذكر أن الجيش الخامس العراقي يتولى رسمياً مسؤولية الدفاع عن مدينة “كركوك” البترولية وأجراء من شمال العراق ضد الهجمات الإيرانية والمتمردين الأكراد في جبال كردستان.

This came hours after an Iraqi military statement called on Kurdish citizens to cooperate with the Iraqi forces’ efforts to locate the aircraft, indicating that the aircraft had been lost during military training.

It is worth noting that the Iraqi Fifth Army is officially responsible for defending the oil city of “Kirkuk” and operating from northern Iraq against Iranian attacks and Kurdish rebels in the mountains of Kurdistan.³⁶

First, the vague nature of Kurdish “cooperation” with the Iraqi regime evades the possibility of forced cooperation, which was characteristic of the Iraqi regime’s security and military efforts in the north.³⁷ There is room for speculation in this phrasing, which moves the reader to ponder whether “cooperation” was really a clearing of the Kurdish villages in the area to locate the wrecked aircraft. However, the phrasing of this report does not offer confirmation of what “cooperation” really entailed, implying an effort to conceal the violent efforts of the Iraqi regime in these areas. Furthermore, it collapses hierarchies of power which were inherent in the political dynamics between the Iraqi state and Kurdish forces. This rhetoric works to absolve Iraq and the Ba’th Party of any abuse of power; rather, it foregrounds an “equal” playing field that imposes a choice upon the Kurdish people to ally with the Iraqi state, its supposed counterpart.

Following this part of the passage, the notion of “official responsibility” to “defend the oil city of Kirkuk” is one that resurfaces colonial rhetoric. In his analysis of Mark Sykes’ Orientalizing view of the Kurdish question during the creation of Iraq’s modern borders, Mohammad Kareem references Edward Said’s notion of the “Orientalist imagination”—particularly, the negation of any preexisting history of the “other”—as a problematic justification for the responsibility of colonial rule over territories in the modern Middle East.³⁸ This logic appears in the Ba’athist rhetoric of “defending” Kirkuk, one of the most oil-rich cities of Iraq. Kirkuk’s designation as an oil-rich city is an important one, par-

36. “Masra’ Qa’id al-Jaysh al-Khamis al-’Iraqi [Death of the Commander of the Iraqi Fifth Army],” *al-Ahrām*, January 24, 1988, 1.

37. Ariel I. Ahram, “‘There Should Be No Life’: Environmental Perspectives on Genocide in Northern Iraq,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 26, no. 4 (2024): 391, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2023.2254555>.

38. Mohammad Sabah Kareem, “The Post-Ottoman Order in the Middle East: Mark Sykes and the Complexity of the Kurdish Question,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 5 (2022): 939-940, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2021.1888695>.

ticularly considering what Said terms “imagined geographies,” in the context of imperial domination of the “Orient” on the basis of geographic understandings rooted in the perspective of the “Occident,” which disregard lived experiences and counter-histories.³⁹ Dominant accounts of Kurdish cities situate Kirkuk as a sight of deep economic, and therefore, political significance. Little do these accounts address the mixed demographics of the city—with Kurdish, Assyrian, Turkmen, and Arab communities—which complicate understandings of its significance in societies beyond empire and the state. In the case of the Iraqi state, its implied duty to oversee the economic and political sectors of Kirkuk—even if this meant controlling the people—signals a dehumanizing and othering view of the Kurdish communities of northern Iraq, as if they were not worthy of doing so themselves.

Moreover, the last line of this passage, which justifies Iraq’s presence in the Kurdistan region in order to operate “against Iranian attacks and Kurdish rebels in the mountains of Kurdistan,” reaffirms Iraq’s intention to maintain its militaristic dominance over the region and, consequently, its people. While there is certainly no denying that Kurdish political parties—most notably, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)—collaborated with Iran in search of financial and military support in their fight against Iraqi state violence, the conflation of political party support with civilian culpability was one that held grave circumstances for Kurdish communities in the north.⁴⁰

Writing of the frequent justifications of state violence against the Armenians, Palestinians, and Kurds in the post-Ottoman order, historian Rashid Khalidi emphasizes that state designations of these communities as “terrorists” have often been weaponized in order to make government violence against these groups appear excusable to the international community. He writes that “[e]ntire peoples can be condemned and treated as pariahs, effectively excluded from the human community, and subject to any form of inhuman treatment if this label can be successfully attached to them.”⁴¹ Such was the case for the Kurdish people during the Anfal Campaign, when the decisions of political leaders at the time, which, regardless of political morality, were often made in the face of life or death at the hands of state violence, were pinned onto the most vulnerable communities who had no say in any political decision-making. This is certainly what appears in *al-Ahrām*’s coverage, as the focus on “Kurdish rebels” obscures any acknowledged-

39. Edward W. Said, “Invention, Memory, and Place,” *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2000): 181, <https://doi.org/10.1086/448963>.

40. Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair*, 90.

41. Rashid Khalidi, “Unhealed Wounds of World War I: Armenia, Kurdistan, and Palestine,” in *Time for Reparations*, ed. Jacqueline Bhabha and Margareta Matache (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021): 181, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1f45q96.15>.

ment of the civilian presence in the region and solely emphasizes Iraq's efforts at mitigating a growing threat from both Iranian forces and Kurdish rebels alike. The silences in this piece, the lack of acknowledgement of the civilian population, indeed exclude Kurdish people from all walks of life from "the human community," in Khalidi's words.⁴²

The designation of the Kurdish people of northern Iraq as collaborators with Iran—or, through explicit state rhetoric, "Iranian agents"⁴³—was one that subjected them to intense surveillance and militaristic rule at the hands of the Iraqi state. In the words of this article, which repeated Iraqi state rhetoric, there was no distinction between Iranian forces and Kurdish rebels, particularly due to both actors' presence in the "Kurdish mountains." The "power of differentiation" of bordered spaces, as termed by Pamela Colombo and Estela Schindel, is reflected in the language of this piece: Kurdish civilians, no matter their political affiliation, who lived in proximity to the Iran-Iraq border would be immediately associated with the Kurdish political parties that collaborated with Iran and the broader contexts of Kurdish-Iran relations.⁴⁴ However, according to this Egyptian article, Iraqi presence in this region is permitted due to the regime's need to protect Kirkuk and other economically and politically significant areas from the threats of both Iranian and Kurdish forces, both of which were to be viewed in the same light without any regard for dynamics of power and domination.

Moreover, characterizing the "Kurdish mountains" for what they were was a noteworthy and deliberate choice at marking the "otherness" of the Kurdish people, who were inherently tied to the Iranian state not only by political affiliation, but also geographic proximity. While Iraq certainly viewed its power over any lands that fell within its modern borders—including Kurdistan—as a given due to its position as the sovereign state in the region, its geographic othering of Kurdistan and admittance of the region's defiance of the borders drawn in the post-Ottoman order were crucial in maintaining its narrative of counterinsurgency and security in the most intense years of the Iran-Iraq War. In turn, the rhetoric *al-Ahrām* deployed in this article unveils the contours of saviorism that enabled and prolonged Iraq's security and military efforts in the Kurdish north. Iraq was heavily surveilling, monitoring, and occupying the region as part of a unified, national effort on the premise that it would defend and liberate it against any threat to its sovereignty, be it the Kurdish rebels or the Iranian state, which were arguably two sides of the same coin.

"No Friends But the Mountains": Landscapes of Ethnic Cleansing

42. Ibid.

43. Hitermann, *A Poisonous Affair*, 107.

44. Estela Schindel and Pamela Colombo, *Space and the Memories of Violence* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014).

Halabja appears in Egyptian headlines on May 1, 1988, in an *al-Ahrām* article titled, “...And Halabja Remains to be Freed by Iraq after being Pursued by Iranians: Predictions of Next Summer and Escalation of the Death War.”⁴⁵ This headline falls under two larger ones, which read “*al-Ahrām* Witnesses the Liberation of Al-Faw” and “The Report of the Triumphant... and the Defeated,” respectively, indicating the issue’s strong emphasis on a liberatory narrative of Iraq’s war effort.⁴⁶ The latter half of the article—the section titled “Halabja and its Exploitation,” in particular—introduces Halabja, “the only Iraqi location that continues to be in the hands of the Iranians,” with a heavy focus on its climate and mountainous landscapes.⁴⁷ This section then delves into the demographic makeup of the city, acknowledging its predominant Kurdish population.

Following a discussion of Halabja’s Kurdish demographics, the article states, “Since the first years of the war, the population was evacuated and the area became a small military station... until the Iranians came in huge crowds and took control of it.”⁴⁸ This rhetoric poses problematic and ahistorical depictions of the sociopolitical realities of Halabja at the time. While Iranian influence was indeed an overwhelming force in the city, Kurdish presence persisted during 1988. To undermine the presence of a significant Kurdish population is to minimize the scale of damage caused by Iraq’s chemical weapons usage.

A 1991 Human Rights Watch report details the Arabization campaigns which took place in the years prior to the 1988 chemical bombardment of Halabja.⁴⁹ The report writes that “[b]etween 1975 and 1989, the government razed more than 3,000 villages and several towns including Halabja and Qala Diza.”⁵⁰ Following this contextualization, the report states that the campaign intensified “after Kurdish rebels took advantage of the long-running war between Iraq and Iran to reclaim 23,000 square miles of their mountain homeland.”⁵¹ As the Kurdish resistance reclaimed these lands, the Hussein regime began using chemical weapons on the civilian populations of the region.⁵² The report unveils that Halabja, contrary to the May 1 *al-Ahrām* article, was not an empty mountainous town in the countryside whose sole purpose was a military post; rather, it had

45. “Hadith al-Muntasir.. wal-Mahzum! [The Talk of the Victor.. And the Vanquished!],” *al-Ahrām*, May 1, 1988, 3.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. “Whatever Happened to the Iraqi Kurds?,” Human Rights Watch, 11 March 1991, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1991/iraq/>.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

a significant Kurdish inhabitant population before Saddam Hussein began using chemical weapons.

Moreover, the *al-Ahrām* article reads that “[t]he seizure of the city was easy especially—as Iraqi sources assert—because of their help from Jalal Talabani, Kurdish rebel and fugitive to Iran.”⁵³ The article implies the direct responsibility of Talabani, a prominent leader and Peshmerga fighter at the time, for Iran’s “seizure of the city.” However, nowhere does it mention the responsibility of the Iraqi government in its gassing of the Kurdish civilians of Halabja, which occurred over one month prior to the publication of this article.

While the wording and information included in the article indicates deliberate attempts at writing a particular history centered around Arab unity against a common non-Arab enemy, so too does its silences. Kerim Yildiz writes in *The Kurds of Iraq* that “[t]he Ba’athist lexicon described the *peshmerga* as ‘saboteurs’; Jalal Talabani, the leader of the PUK, as an ‘agent of Iran.’”⁵⁴ The Iraqi military framed its efforts in the northern region as efforts which aimed to counter any forces that would pose a threat to the country, including the PUK, of which Talabani was leader; therefore, the Iraqi systematically targeted areas which were considered “PUK strongholds,” even if this meant targeting civilian-inhabited villages.⁵⁵

Regardless of the collaborations between Kurdish political parties such as the PUK and Iran, nothing warranted the catastrophic usage of chemical weapons, which were deployed in civilian-populated areas. To assume a collective responsibility of the Kurdish people, whose sole crime was their ethnic affiliation and language, for the political choices of regional parties and organizations was to enable a large-scale ethnic cleansing campaign in the name of security and counterinsurgency. Khalidi writes that “Kurdish civilians paid most of the price for their people’s being dragged into this great-power game, as they did again and again in subsequent years,” citing examples such as the 1988 Halabja Massacre and the regime’s suppression of the 1991 Kurdish uprisings.⁵⁶

The choice to center responsibility of the violence in Halabja on a Kurdish rebel under the premise of “collaboration with Iran” without any mention of either the Iraqi army’s ethnic cleansing and Arabization campaigns which began years prior or deployment of chemical weapons on the city is a choice that illuminates the silences of state histories which are not limited to Iraq, but also extend to Egypt, a supposed arbiter of Arab unity.

53. “Hadith al-Muntasir.. wal-Mahzum!,” 3.

54. Yildiz, *The Kurds in Iraq*, 26.

55. Ibid, 27.

56. Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis*, 152.



Figure 2: Al-Ahram, May 1st, 1988, “Investigations” Page, “...And Halabja Remains to be Freed by Iraq after being Pursued by Iranians: Predictions of Next Summer and Escalation of the Death War.”⁵⁷

The Kurdistan region of Iraq is and was a vital geographical landscape due to its prominent agricultural production; moreover, its northern geographic location is an integral part of Iraq’s water supply, as Ariel Ahram writes: “Roughly half the volume of the Tigris arrives as precipitation in Iraqi Kurdistan. The remainder flows from Turkey and Iran through Iraq Kurdistan.”⁵⁸ Two key dams in the northern region, Derbendikhan and Dukan, were vital components of Iraqi irrigation infrastructure, and after the start of the Iran–Iraq War, Saddam deployed Iraqi forces to the north in defense of what he deemed to be crucial fiscal components of Iraqi society.⁵⁹ However, it was the Kurdish people who paid the price for this supposed counterinsurgency campaign, which “stressed the organic connection between guerillas and the natural environment.”⁶⁰ In the late 1980s, the Iraqi government launched systemic efforts to relocate Kurdish farmers and other civilians from “forbidden” areas into government-built camps to counter any “illegal agricultural production.”⁶¹ These efforts at harnessing the northern Kurdish region’s agricultural lands in order to maintain domination over the land, as concealed by an effort to defend against Iran, paved the way for denial of the regime’s genocidal tactics, such as the use of chemical gas.

57. *al-Ahrām*, 1 May 1988, 3.

58. Ahram, “Environmental Perspectives on Genocide in Northern Iraq,” 382–383.

59. *Ibid*, 391.

60. *Ibid*.

61. *Ibid*.

This heavy focus on Kurdish landscapes, particularly in the Iran-Iraq borderland on which Halabja lies, appears in *al-Ahrām*'s May 1, 1988 article, when the writer introduces the city:

وهي منطقة محدودة في شمال العراق او بالتحديد جنوب السليمانية .. هي عبارة عن سفح جبل من الجبال العالية في المنطقة - متصل بأرض سهلية محدودة المساحة تنتهي بجبل آخر يدخل ضمن الحدود الايرانية .. وتتصل ببخيرة دربندخان التي تعتبر مصدر الماء والحياة لعدد محدود من السكان - اقل من الف نسمة - كان يعيش في حلبة ممتلئة الرعى والزراعات الصغيرة .. وهم من الأكراد بالمنطقة والمناطق المجاورة كردية.

*It is a bordered area in northern Iraq, or specifically south of Sulaymaniyah. It is a foothill of one of the high mountains of the region - connecting to a limited plain that ends with another mountain that falls within the Iranian borders. It is connected to Lake Derbendikhan, which is considered the source of water and life for a limited number of residents - less than a thousand people - who lived in Halabja, practicing herding and small farming. They are Kurds, so the region and the surrounding areas are Kurdish.*⁶²

To begin, the connection between Halabja and mountains which lie on the Iran-Iraq border situates the city at the cusp of the clashes between the two states. In the context of this article, however, it creates a connection between Halabja and Iran in such a way that blurs the line between politics and geography. Here, I turn once again to the “power of differentiation,” which marks the establishment of borders and their manifestations of structural dominance.⁶³ In an article as pivotal as this, particularly with regard to its alerting of Arab powers’ obligation of supporting Iraq, the elimination of any distinction between the geographic space and its inhabitants was crucial in maintaining an imagined obligation of Iraq to assert its control in the region in any way, shape, or form. The blurring of geographic boundaries between Iran and Iraq served the Iraqi regime’s benefit, in this case, because it allowed for greater room in marking an undisputed association between the Kurdish people and Iran.

Additionally, the undermining of Lake Derbendikhan’s significance to Iraq was peculiar due to the Iraqi state’s intense focus on both Derbendikhan and Dukan as major sources of water infrastructure.⁶⁴ In fact, as mentioned earlier, they were key areas of Iraqi surveillance and military deployment,⁶⁵ which raises greater uncertainty around the minimizing of its economic and political significance in this piece. However, what accompanies this statement is a minimizing of Halabja’s population itself, which in effect minimizes the scale of damage and

62. “Hadith al-Muntasir.. wal-Mahzum!,” 3.

63. Pamela Colombo and Estela Schindel, “Introduction: The Multi-Layered Memories of Space,” 17.

64. Ahrām, “Environmental Perspectives on Genocide in Northern Iraq,” 391.

65. Ibid.

threat caused by the Iraqi military and security forces' occupation of the region. These were the same people who practiced "herding and small farming" in the city, which, once again, was a much more significant fact than it appeared due to the Iraqi government's heavy surveillance of what it deemed to be "illegal agricultural production in the mountains" during this period.⁶⁶ This signals another attempt at undermining the geopolitical and economic importance of the region to Iraq in order to conceal its inherent weaponization of state power. Additionally, coupled with the final line of this passage, "They are Kurds, so the region and the surrounding areas are Kurdish," the focus on the landscape's importance to the small population of Kurdish villagers—and Kurdish villagers only—reaffirmed the construction of this Kurdish "other" which permitted the Iraqi state to exert any form of control over its communities in northern Iraq.

An understanding of landscape politics is necessary in uncovering the intersections of geography and geopolitics with the structures of violence which infiltrated the most intimate, vulnerable aspects of human life. In the case of the Kurds of northern Iraq, it was their very homeland, from the vast mountains of Hawraman⁶⁷ to the clear shores of Lake Dukan, which was weaponized to facilitate their uprooting, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. The resurfacing of this weaponization of landscape, which indeed manifested through language, in *Al-Ahram's* reporting was a rhetorical attempt at normalizing and enabling the ethnic cleansing of Kurdish people under the guise of the regime's obligation to maintain its arm of control over its geographic elements, and by extension, its people.

Unfaithful Affiliations: Political and Religious Obligation

Landscape politics and the manufacturing of Iraqi liberation from Iranian occupation and violence were not *Al-Ahram's* only rhetorical decisions aimed at erasing Iraq's genocidal intentions and tactics. The publication also invoked political and religious urgency to garner support from the broader Arab world for Iraq and its political agendas with respect to Iran and the Kurdish north.

The May 1 piece, an object of analysis in the prior section, also emphasizes this sense of political urgency and obligation in its concluding sentence:

66. Ibid, 392.

67. Hawraman is the mountainous region that traverses the Iran-Iraq border, connecting the Kurds of both regions through their shared landscape. On both sides of the border, the people of the region speak Hawrami, a dialect of Kurdish which shares linguistic similarities with its Sorani counterpart, the most common dialect spoken in southern Kurdistan, modern-day northern Iraq. Its mountains and caves were sites of hiding for many Peshmerga fighters and their families, who were under heavy state surveillance during this period. This was another key feature of the region that subjected it to large-scale bombardment by the government.

والخلاصة: أن الصيف القادم سيكون بحق أشد سخونة من أي صيف مضى: ولكن يكون العرب بالفعل قوة حقيقية تدعم العراق الذي يصد خطرا ويحرس البوابة الشرقية للامة فإنه عليهم أن يتجاوزوا حدود بيانات الكلام قبل أن يفوت الأوان.

*In summary: this coming summer will truly be more heated than any previous summer. But for the Arabs to be a real force in supporting Iraq, which repels danger and guards the eastern gate of the nation, they must go beyond the limits of rhetoric before it is too late.*⁶⁸

This chilling sentence, one that evokes a fear of impending violence at the hands of Iran, a non-Arab enemy, is one that also holds tangible implications. This statement reads as an ultimate test of Arab loyalty, of whether Arabs can truly “be a real force in supporting Iraq,” through monetary and militaristic loyalty. The years following the 1967 Six-Day War and the 1973 War resulted in a growing fervor for demonstrations—performative or not—of a united front against any threatening forces against the “Arab World.” This final sentence, the last sentence one will read of this article, urges direct action from neighboring Arab countries. Moreover, the framing of Iraq as a power “which repels danger and guards the eastern gate of the nation” is a dangerous one, as it not only conceals the genocidal nature of Saddam Hussein’s actions during the Iran Iraq War, but also excuses his actions as efforts of security and protection against any dangers to the Arab world. Presumably, this also includes Kurdish people who were accused of collaborating with Iran—including Jalal Talabani—those who lie on the “eastern gate of the nation,” whose extermination was deemed excusable by the regime and its allies on the premise of counterinsurgency.

In a May 22 article—published over two months over the Halabja Massacre—titled “The Leader Khalid to *al-Ahrām*: ‘The Iranians Consider Us Infidels And Do Not Believe We Recite the Book of God,’” both religion and the usage of Iraqi soldiers’ accounts of chemical weapons exposure were utilized to the benefit of a united war effort against a non-Arab enemy. The piece features an interview with an Iraqi soldier named Khaled Mahmoud, who was seeking treatment in a London hospital after being exposed to chemical weapons in Halabja.⁶⁹ His account in the article states the following:

وكان المكان الذي تمركزنا فيه بمنطقة حلبجة صخوريا عندما وصلتنا الإشارة بضرية كيمياوية ... بسبب استمرار المعارك في المنطقة من ناحية أخرى .. ولذلك جلسنا فوق المنطقة الصخرية ونحن نعلم أن المنطقة ملوثة بالكيماويات .. والمواد الصفراء والخضراء واضحة لنا فلم يكن أمامنا بديل أخرى سوى أن نتحملها.

68. “Hadith al-Muntasir.. wal-Mahzum!,” 3.

69. “Al-Ra’id Khalid li-l-Ahram: al-Iraniyun Ya’tabirunana Kufaran wa-La Yaqsidun Anana Natlu Kitab Allah [Major Khalid to al-Ahram: The Iranians Consider us Infidels and do not Believe we Recite the Book of God],” *al-Ahrām*, May 22, 1988, 8.

ويستطرد الضابط العراقي قائلا: وهذا هو الفرق بيننا وبين الإيرانيين وقوات اية الله الخميني ايماننا بالله حقيقي وليس مجرد شعارات .. ولكنهم - يقصد الإيرانيين - يكرهون العرب كرها غريبا .. تراه في عيونهم .. وتصرفاتهم .. والغريب أنهم يتهموننا بالكفر .. ويظنون أنهم هم فقط المسلمون والمؤمنون.

The place where we were stationed in the Halabja area was rocky when we received the signal of a chemical strike ... because of the ongoing fighting in the area on the other hand ... so we sat above the rocky region knowing that the area was contaminated with chemicals ... and the yellow and green materials were clear to us, so we had no other choice but to bear it.

The Iraqi officer continued, saying: This is the difference between us and the Iranians and Ayatollah Khomeini's forces. Our faith in God is real and not just slogans. However, they - meaning the Iranians - have a strange hatred for the Arabs. You see it in their eyes and their actions. What is strange is that they accuse us of infidelity and think that only they are the Muslims and believers.⁷⁰

It was not unusual for the Iraqi state's historical accounts of Halabja to make use of personal testimonies of Iraqi soldiers affected by chemical gassing. In fact, this was one of many examples. In the weeks and months following the attack on Halabja and other northern cities of Iraq, "Iraq paraded these soldiers in front of the visiting UN team in Baghdad as Exhibit A of Iranian resort to poison gas, making sure that the victims said as little as possible and only parroted the party line,"⁷¹ which indeed resurfaces in this Egyptian interview of an Iraqi soldier seeking treatment in London. However, as Hiltermann emphasizes, the UN experts did not visit the affected areas, but acknowledged that there were many cases in which Iraqi soldiers themselves were affected by chemical weapons deployed by the Iraqi army.⁷²

Depicted in Figure 3 is an Iraqi soldier seeking treatment for exposure to chemical weapons. He sits in a hospital bed, eyes averted from the camera. Alongside this photo, though not present in Figure 3, is an image of Khalid Mahmoud in an incredibly intimate state, lying on the hospital bed with his wounds exposed.⁷³ The decision to include both photos in such an article, which emphasizes the suffering of Iraqi soldiers at the hands of chemical weapons, tacitly centers the voices of those who participate in the perpetuation of the regime's "counterinsurgency" narrative. Not only does *al-Ahrām* center the Iraqi state through the platforming of state-aligned rhetoric, but it also does so through its use of imagery and the depiction of select individuals who suffered at the hands

70. "Al-Ra'id Khalid li-l-Ahram," 8.

71. Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair*, 174.

72. Ibid, 174-175.

73. Ibid.



Figure 3: May 22nd, 1988, “The Leader Khalid to Al Ahram: ‘The Iranians Consider Us Infidels And Do Not Believe We Recite the Book of God’”⁷⁴

of supposed Iranian weapons. Juxtaposing this imagery with the imagery in Figure 2, the May 1st, 1988 article, Kurds in Halabja are all centered in a straight line, beneath an image of a northern landscape in which a singular Iraqi soldier searches for a plane wreck.⁷⁵ The image of the Kurdish “other,” to be aligned with the state perception of Iran, is strategically invoked through the usage of the imagery of a Kurdish “monolith.” Whereas singular Iraqi figures are matched with outspoken voices echoing regime rhetoric, monolithic images of Kurdish people are matched with their melding with Iran as a singular non-Arab enemy or, collateral damage of their landscape.

In an abrupt shift towards the discussion of religion immediately following an account of exposure to chemical weapons in Halabja, Mahmoud begins to emphasize how his experience in the borderland proves the “difference between us and the Iranians,” deploying inherently othering rhetoric to describe the non-Arab enemy.⁷⁶ Moreover, he does not specify responsibility of the attack on either side; rather, he implies it through his insistence on Iran’s hatred for the Arabs and their own infidelity (in light of their accusations of Arab infidelity). He states that the Iranians’ “strange hatred for the Arabs” is apparent “in their eyes and actions,” and the placement of this statement immediately after his account of chemical attacks in Halabja creates a silent link between chemical weapons usage and Iran’s “anti-Arab” actions. This phrasing signals the selective affiliation of Iraq

74. “Al-Ra’id Khalid li-l-Ahram,” 8.

75. “Hadith al-Muntasir.. wal-Mahzum!,” 3.

76. “Al-Ra’id Khalid li-l-Ahram,” 8.

and Iraqi Arabs with the northern region in order to imply Iranian culpability in the Halabja Massacre. When the Kurdish countryside is described in such a way (as in the May 1 article) to create an affiliation between the land and the people, and thus an urgent need to control both, Iraq stands at a distance from the land. Or, for example, when there is an overwhelming presence of Iranian forces and Kurdish rebels in the “Kurdish mountains” (as in the January 24 article), there is once again a distance between the Iraqi state and the Kurdish “other.” However, through a striking usage of religious and Arab nationalist rhetoric, Mahmoud’s account and *al-Ahrām*’s reporting of his account force a link between the Iraqi city of Halabja and the state in order to promote a pan-Arab unification against a common non-Arab enemy.

Despite Iraq’s vibrant Shi’a population, religion and the usage of ethno-religious myths have often been tailored in order to intensify this perception not only of a non-Arab enemy, but also of a non-Sunni enemy.⁷⁷ This is essential when considering Saddam Hussein’s infamous massacres of Iraq’s Shi’a community in the south; most notably, the 1982 Dujail Massacre.⁷⁸ While these were the words of an Iraqi officer, who could have been Sunni or Shi’a,⁷⁹ their centering in this article—especially given its title, “The Iranians Consider Us Infidels And Do Not Believe We Recite the Book of God”—reflects an effort at furthering a narrative of religious superiority across the Arabic-speaking world.

Said argues that contestations over space and territory are often rooted in “overlapping memories, narratives and physical structures,”⁸⁰ which are certainly what appear across all articles of analysis in this essay, but are especially standout features of this May 22 piece. The steering of the religious narrative to fit within a discourse of an ethnic struggle against a common enemy, the uplifting of an Iraqi soldier’s firsthand account of being exposed to chemical weapons while being stationed in Halabja, and the situating of Halabja’s landscape as one which witnessed Iraqi casualties at the hands of the Iranians all form puzzle pieces of a state narrative of counterinsurgency and national struggle, which indeed transcended the borders of Iraq to infiltrate the journalistic spheres of neighboring Arab countries like Egypt. The fate of this narrative in national headlines, and its role in burying the lived experiences of Kurdish people under discourses of state obligation, national struggle, and prevention of any threat to Arab sovereignty,

77. Alireza Raisi, “Alliance and Sectarian Attitudes in the MENA: The Case of Arab Opinion towards Iran,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 52, no. 1 (2025): 228–50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2023.2251120>.

78. Michael J. Kelly, “The *Anfal* Trial against Saddam Hussein,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 9, no. 2 (2007): 235–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520701368628>.

79. Iraq is not only a country with mixed ethnic demographics, but it also has its rich religious diversity, with Shia and Sunni Muslims, Christians, Yezidis, Zoroastrians, Jews, etc.

80. Said, “Invention, Memory, and Place,” 182.

has proven to be complicit in furthering denial of what the Anfāl Campaign truly was: a genocidal project.

Conclusion

Kurdish studies is an ever-growing field that lies at the intersections of nationhood, sovereignty, identity, indigeneity, and ethnicity, as Shahrzad Mojab discerns in her foreword to late Kurdish scholar Amir Hassanpour's book, *Essays on Kurds: Historiography, Orality, and Nationalism*.⁸¹ The multifaceted nature of Kurdish studies stresses its interdisciplinary importance, for a singular lens of analysis obstructs understandings of the structures of power which infiltrate countless societal spheres, be it arts, literature, history, or politics.

In the case of *Al-Ahram*, its role as a prominent and historic Egyptian journalistic outlet marked the intersections of such spheres, and thus the importance of analyzing in pieces in such a way that reflects their political, historical, and rhetorical complexities. Across the pieces I've analyzed in this essay, elements of manufactured saviorism, landscape politics, and the weaponization of lived experience and faith were prominent ingredients of a nationalist discourse that dominated the Arabic-speaking world's perceptions of Saddam Hussein's efforts in northern Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War and the Anfāl Campaign.

Studies of landscapes as spaces of erasure underscore the importance of unpacking the manifestations of violent systems in space in order to garner a more nuanced understanding of the underlying subjectivities of such systems.⁸² Landscapes and notions of landscapes are not solely constructed by the institutions which make their forceful interventions into such spaces, but they are also heavily influenced by the experiences of their most vulnerable inhabitants. Understanding regime manipulations of space in nationalist rhetoric—and the adoption of this rhetoric beyond state borders—allows one to understand the ways in which these systems infiltrated the daily lives of Kurdish people in northern Iraq. It allows us to uncover the silenced histories of stateless communities, which have been buried under decades of nation-state rhetoric like that of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party and Arab nationalism more broadly. To refer to Trouillot's thought once more, unearthing the silences of history as it has been constructed in the past and present enables the uplifting of counter-histories and the creation of new spaces of memory.⁸³

81. Amir Hassanpour, *Essays on Kurds* (Peter Lang US, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3726/b15600>.

82. Pamela Colombo and Estela Schindel, *Space and the Memories of Violence: Landscapes of Erasure, Disappearance and Exception*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137380913>.

83. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, xxiii.

And indeed, it was not just saviorist narratives and landscape that were forced into the toolbox of regime power during the 1980s. The weaponization of lived experience, coupled with the exaggerated usage of religious and political obligation, was a central component of the journalistic tactics *Al-Ahram* deployed in order to further the Iraqi state's view of itself as a leader of a unified effort against Iran and any forces that would pose a threat to its Arab sovereignty, thereby erasing the genocidal truths that were buried under layers of regime rhetoric.

It becomes more important than ever to uncover the silencing of Kurdish histories in dominant histories of the modern Middle East, and the means through which these silences are constructed. In the case of mass media, *al-Ahrām*'s crucial positioning as a cultural emblem not only in Egypt, but in the Arab world more broadly situates it as a vital source of cultural, historical, and political memory production. While Kurdish people like myself have inherited intergenerational memories of genocide and forced displacement, we have yet to see these truths reflected in prominent mediums across the Middle East. Thus, the unveiling of the reflections of power in dominant discourses in the region which facilitate the silencing of indigenous histories is what creates space for the writing of new narratives which transcend the boundaries of modern nation-states.

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FROM RANKEAN “SCIENTIFIC HISTORY” TO CHEN YINKE’S HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP: OBJECTIVITY AND CULTURALIST SENTIMENTS BETWEEN WESTERN AND NATIONAL LEARNING

Dailan Xu

Introduction: Foundation of “Scientific” History in Republican China

“At the very center of the professional historical venture is the idea and ideal of ‘objectivity’,” wrote Peter Novick in *That Noble Dream* (1989).¹ This “objectivity question,” a German idea originating in the nineteenth century, underpinned the professionalization of history as a discipline.² Leopold von Ranke, often called the father of modern historical scholarship, advanced the “scientific” study of history using philological methods and archival research to study modern nations instead of antiquity.³ His belief that historians should present the past “as it actually was” (“wie es eigentlich gewesen”) laid the foundation

1. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession*, (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1.

2. *Ibid.*, 21.

3. *Ibid.*, 26; George C. Iggers, *The Image of Ranke in American and German Historical Thought*; Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 37.

for a tension between objectivity and the construction of national identity.⁴ As historians professionalized their discipline, Ranke's concept of *Objectivität* developed alongside national historiography, creating a paradox between the pursuit of objective scholarship and its political use.⁵

This German paradigm deeply influenced Japanese and Chinese historians.⁶ In China, many founding figures of Chinese modern historiography, including Liang Qichao, Fu Sinian, Gu Jiegang, Yao Congwu and Chen Yinke sought to modernize historical studies with empirical rigor while navigating the crisis of national survival during the Japanese invasion.⁷ Adopting the method of *Quellenkritik* (source criticism), many scholars who studied in Europe during the 1920s to 1930s utilized historical sources, including archives and fieldwork, beyond classical texts.⁸ Though grounded in its proclaimed objective approach, the pursuit for scientific history was deeply intertwined with cultural nationalist concerns.

Chen Yinke (1890–1969), who received Western academic training and deep immersion in Chinese classical learning, exemplified this dual commitment. Known for his philological precision, use of historical and poetic sources, and linguistic mastery across Indic and Inner Asian languages, Chen embodied his famous dictum “independence of thought, freedom of spirit.” He has since become a symbol of intellectual integrity and cultural nationalism, because of his personal detachment from politics.

Since the 1980s and 1990s, scholarly and popular interest in Republican-era intellectuals has grown, culminating in what came to be known as the “Chen Yinke Fever,” commemorating his non-Marxist and independent poetic aesthetic.⁹ This wave of admiration emerged particularly among liberal intellectuals, who celebrated Chen's apolitical stance, literary sensibility, and refusal to conform to Marxist orthodoxy. He was memorialized not only as a “master of

4. George Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, 67. “Science” here refers more to the German word “*Wissenschaft*”, a broader sense of human science or, say, scholarship. “Scientific history” refers to adapting rigorous methodology to history writing. (See George Iggers, *New Directions in European Historiography*, Wesleyan University Press, 1984). Also Shih-Chien Su, *Modern Nationalism and the Making of a Professional Historian* (Academia Press, 2014), 3.

5. Shih-Chien Su, *Modern Nationalism and the Making of a Professional Historian*, Academia Press, 2014, 15.

6. *Id.*, 12.

7. The Republican period in Chinese history refers to 1911 to 1949, which is from the fall of the Qing dynasty (1616–1911) and the establishment of Republic of China (ROC) to the overthrow of the ROC and the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

8. Mark C. Elliott, “Le Chine Moderne: Les Mandchous et la définition de la nation.” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 61, no. 6 (Novembre–Décembre 2006): 1450, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40284717>.

9. Yeh Wen-hsin, “Historian and Courtesan: Chen Yinke and the Writing of Liu Rushi Biezhuàn.” *East Asian History* Number 27, June 2004, 60.

national learning,” but also as a symbolic figure of cultural dignity in an era of political upheaval.¹⁰

The broader context for this resurgence of interest lies in the so-called “Republican Fever,” which reflected a nostalgic yearning for the perceived intellectual freedom and cosmopolitanism of the Republican era.¹¹ The publication of Chen’s biography renewed academic discourse, and media portrayals elevated him as “the one to whom Chinese culture entrusted its fate.”¹² While during the Anti-Rightist Movement he had been labeled a “white expert” (白專) and criticized for “favoring the past over the present” (厚古薄今), later narratives reframed him as a patriotic figure who declined opportunities to leave the mainland, choosing instead to endure adversity and pursue truth.¹³ Yet this posthumous idealization often reduces Chen into a symbol rather than engaging with the complexity of his intellectual contributions. These appropriations underscore how historical figures are continually reinterpreted in light of contemporary political needs.

This paper argues that Chen’s work embodies the unresolved tension between the ideal of historical objectivity and deeply felt obligation to preserve traditional culture. His scholarship, rooted in Rankean philology yet emotionally infused with culturalist sentiment, offers a lens to understand how history writing in modern China functioned both as a developing discipline and a process of reconfiguration of a “Chinese” cultural identity and historical consciousness.¹⁴ This paper first traces the transnational transmission of historiographical methods into Chinese academia via Chen’s training and writings. Then it examines how emotional and cultural commitments shaped his approach to history, especially in the context of Chinese modernity and its political environment.

10. Ibid., 58.

11. Tu Hang, *Sentimental Republic: Chinese Intellectuals and the Maoist Past* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2025), 83; The ideas of many intellectuals passed away in the 1950s–60s were drowned during the subsequent Cultural Revolution.

12. Ibid., 58.

13. Yeh, “Historian and Courtesan,” 2004, 69.

14. Overseas scholarship since the 1970s has disputed the narrative convention of the PRC, where history has been written in a linear progression, fusing academic vocabulary with current political agenda. An instance would be the use of “da yi tong”, or the grand unity. Instead, they argued that “Chineseness” was the result of an intentional process of nation-building. There seemed to be a tension between the geographical boundaries, the institution and centralized state, and the cultural sense of China, which came into an uneasy tension with the rise of modernity. (See Yeh Wen-hsin, *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (University of California Press, 2000), 3.

As historical ideas should be understood in their full intellectual context, this study weaves together “historiography,” “historian,” and “historical context”.¹⁵ By analyzing Chen’s life and works, it reveals how “Chinese” historical traditions were often forged through cross-cultural engagement, returning from abroad as localized responses to international scholarly trends.¹⁶ The overlapping influences between historiographical traditions offers a transnational perspective to discern certain historical conventions that have been called “Chinese” and taken for granted by the new generation. However, modern historiography was very much under the influence of those who had studied overseas and came back with new questions and sources in response to academic trends, laying the foundation for history as a discipline in modern China.¹⁷

The Arc of Journey: From Western Learning to Shaping Historical Field in Tsinghua

Chen Yinke’s academic formation began during his years as a visiting student at Harvard and in Berlin in 1910s–1920s, which cultivated his research focus, methodology and analytical framework. He arrived at Harvard in 1919 during the winter semester with an initial interest in European history shaped by his earlier experiences in Europe.¹⁸ The New-Humanist and professor in comparative literature Irving Babbitt resonated with Chen’s interest in the relationship between Buddhism and Western thought, and read languages like Sanskrit and

15. Wang Fan-sen, “王汎森:《柳如是别传》是陈寅恪晚年的史学实验”, from *Sanlian zazhi*, 2019. <https://www.lifeweek.com.cn/article/80844>. Accessed May 6, 2025. Peter Novick, 6: “We historians [...] are professionally sensitized to the historicity of intellectual life: [...] the emergence of ideas and [...] their total historical context.”

16. The usage of the “West” is usually seen as abstract and generalizing. What I try to reference here is Western learning or *Xi Xue* (西學) in Chinese, which embodies a Chinese way of looking at the Western powers at that time.

17. I acknowledge that due to the length of this paper, it could not go deeply into many of Chen Yinke’s writings. Nevertheless, this paper will be a beginning of my engagement with Chen’s scholarship to draw cross-cultural historiographical comparisons and situate the intellectual within his historical moment. I have strong interests towards the “Republic Intellectuals” in China for their unique position between the traditional and modern, a period of chaos and co-existing and changing of political ideas, institutions and possibilities for China in between its cultural continuity and Western influences, in short, a case study of *Xixue Dongjian* (西學東漸).

18. He first studied “History, Government and Economics.” Chen Huaiyu, *zai xi fang fa xian chen yin ke* (“Discovering Chen Yinke in the West”), 24–25; Lin Wei, “Chen Yin ke de ha fuo jing liyu yan du yin du yu wen xue de yuan qi” (“Chen Yinke’s Harvard Experience and the Start of studying Indic Philology”). https://www.sohu.com/a/653154602_121119018. Accessed April 28, 2025; He originally wanted to go to Germany but could not go because of the First World War. Despite this, Chen still took courses in relation to German history, for instance “Modern German History” and “Goethe’s ‘Journey in Italy,’” for his first two semesters of courses in the spring of 1919.

Pali.¹⁹ Both Chen and Babbitt shared a hope to embrace foreign learning while preserving cultural identity. Babbitt had broad influence on Chinese intellectuals, such as Tang Yongtong, Wu Mi and Chen Yinke, and had inspired some of their interests in Buddhism.²⁰ After philosophy student Yu Dawei introduced Charles R. Lanman to him, Chen soon shifted to Sanskrit studies under Lanman's guidance for his interest in Buddhism. Their relationship developed into a deep connection as mentor and friend. Lanman spoke highly of Chen in a letter to Harvard President Lawrence Lowell.²¹ In his diary entry of September 24, 1919, Lanman noted: "First meeting of my course in Sanskrit. Six fine promising fellows turned up & I am very pleased" and Chen (written as *Tschen*) was one of the six students.²² In 1921, Chen left Harvard to study at the University of Berlin, where he continued his study in Oriental studies, particularly Sanskrit and Pali, as well as expanding his linguistic repertoire to include Tibetan, Manchu, Mongolian, and other Inner Asian languages. Being in a German academic institution in the early 20th century, Chen was exposed to the contemporary debates on the Rankean methodology. Trained in Qing evidential learning, or *Kaozheng Xue*, during the late Qing, Chen embraced the Rankean "Scientific History", where his acquired Western philological methods had roots in *kaozheng*.²³

Intellectual historian Yü Ying-shih has described Chen's Harvard years as the first "turn" in his intellectual development, from Western to Oriental studies.²⁴ In his earlier career, Chen focused more on philology than history, as his language and methodology prepared him well for his later historical contributions.²⁵ After returning to China in 1925 to teach at Tsinghua University, Chen taught

19. Wu Mi, compiled by Wu Han, *Wu Mi Riji*, vol.2 ("Diary of Wu Mi", 「吳宓日記」). 37. Chen discussed Buddhism with at Babbitt's home until late at night, in the company of Chen's friend Wu Mi and Babbitt's wife, who made them grape syrup and pastries. Babbitt's wife was born and grew up in China. However, Babbitt didn't learn Chinese. "七月十四日, 赴巴師Prof. Babbitt宅, 約定會晤時間。晚八時, 偕陳寅恪君及錫予同往, 巴師與夫人陪坐。談至十一點半始歸。巴師述其往日為學之閱歷, 又與陳君究論佛理。夫人則以葡萄露及糕點進, 以助清談雲。" Chen Huaiyu, 204-205.

20. Ibid., 236.

21. Lin, Wei, *ibid*. From a quoted letter of Chen to his sister in Lin's article in 1923 when Chen was in Berlin, he wrote "I knew I had interest in studying Tibetan... I noticed two things: one is history... the other is Buddhism."; Yeh Wen-shih, *Historian and Courtesan*, 61.

22. Harvard University Archives, Charles R. Langman Papers, Box 4, diary of 1919.

23. Yü, "Shilun Chen Yinke de Shixue sanbian," in *Chen Yinke Wanian Shiwen shizheng*, 335. *Kaozheng Xue*, or Qing evidential learning, is a kind of early modern philology in China, an empiricist approach that corresponds to textual criticism, most prominent during Qianlong and Jiaqing emperors' period in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).. For more study on Evidential Learning, see Benjamin Elman's *Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*. (CLos Angeles: UCLA Asian Institute Monograph Series: 2001. Second edition.)

24. Yü Ying-shih, *shilun Chen yinke shixue sanbian*, 337. Q. Edward Wang, "Chen yin ke de zhi xue xing qu", 376.

25. Ku-ming Kevin Chang, "Philology and the Institute of History and Philology at Academia Sinica: Chen Yinke, Fu Sinian and the Chinese Oriental studies," 385, 390.

courses in Buddhist text translation, Sanskrit, and Mongolian studies. He was one of the founding members of the Research Institute for National Learning (國學研究所) alongside Liang Qichao and Wang Guowei.²⁶ After 1935, his focus shifted toward medieval Chinese history, given limited access to foreign-language sources and perhaps due to a sense of national duty during the Sino-Japanese War.²⁷ As scholar Da Yuwei noted, Chen likely relinquished his strength in Sanskrit to contribute more directly to Chinese historical studies in a time of crisis.²⁸

This change in research reflected the exigency of external pressures of twentieth-century China and historian's self-evaluation of one's position in the fields. Chen's training abroad enabled him to bring rigorous language-based methodologies into Chinese historiography. Through this synthesis, he renewed the historical discipline in China with international trends while remaining rooted in traditions.

From Historical Fact to Historical Insight: Chen Yinke's Methodology

Chen Yinke's methodology was rooted in the maxim articulated by Zhang Zhidong, "using Chinese learning as substance, Western learning for application" (中學為體, 西學為用). Like many Republican-era intellectuals, Chen positioned himself between Chinese and Western traditions, insisting on cultural continuity while integrating foreign methods.²⁹ He expressed this duality as "absorbing the study from the outside, while not forgetting the position of the original nation," reflecting a cultural nationalist stance (民族本位主義).³⁰

His historical approach was influenced by Rankean Quellenkritik and philological approach.³¹ Both Ranke and Chen emphasized empirical evidence and source-based analysis. Chen's engagement with epitaphs, official documents, literary texts, and multilingual sources—Sanskrit, Tibetan, Mongolian, Manchu, Hebrew, Persian, and others—demonstrated rigorous comparative methodology. His 64 notebooks, later compiled by Ji Xianlin in Peking University, document his distinguishing linguistic range and commitment to cross-cultural source

26. Yeh, "Historian and Courtesan," 62.

27. Zhang Guogang, "Chen Yinke liude shiqi bolin de hanxue yu yindu xue" ("The Sinology and Indology in Berlin during Chen's Period Studying in Germany") in *Chen Yinke and Twentieth Century Chinese Academia* (Zhejiang renmin press, 2000), 219. Yü Ying-shih, "Chen Yinke de xueshu jingshen he wannian xingjing," in *Chen Yinke Wannian Shiwen shizheng*, 3-4.

28. Chen Huaiyu quoted Yu Dawei, 116, "站在中国学术发展的立场, 权衡轻重. 他觉得由他领导南北朝唐代历史的研究, 更为急需. 所以他放弃了独步天下的梵文知识, 赖在南北朝当代集中精力. 就他所发表的研究成果来说, [...] 政治和文化的主流," Ge Zhaoguang, Accessed May 8, 2025, iahs.fudan.edu.cn.

29. Yü, *Xueshu jingshen he wannian xinjing*, 11.

30. Cited in Yü Ying-shih, *xueshu jingshen he wannian xinjing*, 12. See Chen Yinke *Kan cha bao gao*. "必須一方面吸收輸入外來之學說, 一方面不能忘本來民族之地位."

31. Yü Ying-shih, *Wannian xinjing*, 21.

analysis.³² His notebooks contained extensive book lists, including 170 titles on Central Asia, and 200 on Tibet. From those booklists, one could infer that Chen had taken seminar-styled classes, a form first advocated by Ranke.³³ Yu Dawei recalled that Chen wished to write a “New Mongolian History,” and had already published “The Study of Translation of Yuan Dynasty Han Names” and “Mongolian Stream” but was not able to carry out his wish because of life turbulence and insufficient time.³⁴ Chen’s scholarship is often categorized into the historical source school (史料派) in Chinese historiography, along with other contemporaries of the New Cultural Movement, as they believed in pure scholarship, importance of historical sources, and rejected Marxism.³⁵

For the emphasis on “new sources,” Chen led the use of non-Han sources to study borderland histories, used poetry as a historical source and found ways to combine Western theory and Chinese traditions, thereby establishing a new trend in Chinese academia.³⁶ In the case of the Six Dynasties, he viewed poetry as more of a “primary source” in a Rankean sense, because of its unintentionality, compared to the official history compiled by the dynasty to glorify the imperial ruler.

Though grounded in the search for objective “historical facts,” Chen insisted on the importance of “historical insight”—the interpretive understanding derived from evidence.³⁷ He resisted anachronist interpretations in scholarly writing, “using history for present purposes,” particularly those imposed by Marxist teleology.³⁸ In his critique of Feng Youlan’s *Chinese History of Philosophy*, Chen warned against reading ancient texts through the lens of modern ideology. Chen

32. Other notebooks includes themes of Buddhist texts of Lotus Sutra, Manichaeism, Mathematics (primarily calculus), Ming dynasty literature Jing Ping Mei (《金瓶梅》), Tangut, Korean, Turfan Funde (copied text of Upāli Sūtra), Old Turkic, and Tocharian Languages, many with annotations in German. Ji Xianlin, Cong Xue Xi Bi Ji Ben Kan Chen Yin Ke Xian Sheng de Zhi xue Fan wei he Tu Jing. (“Looking at Chen Yinke’s Methodology through his Study Notebooks”) from *Ji Nian Chen Yin Ke Jiao Shou Guo Ji Xue Shu Tao Lun Hui Wen Ji* [The Anthology of Commemorating Chen Yinke’s International Scholarship Symposium] (Zhong Shan University Press, 1989), 74–87, 75–76.

33. Ibid., 88. Seminar refers to a style which professors assigned extensive reading lists of sources and scholarly works, and students presented oral and written reports; Zhang Guogang, *Chen Yin Ke Liu de shi qi bo lin de han xue yu yin du xue* (Sinology and Indic Studies during Chen Yinke’s Time in Germany), from *Chen Yin ke yu ershi shiji zhongguo xueshu*, 213. Since there were no copy machines back then, students copied down the book names on their notebooks; Ranke used to organize seminars in his own home with an emphasis on sources in his teaching. (Anthony Grafton, *Footnote: A Curious History*, 53).

34. Yü Ying-shih, “Shixue sanbian”, 338.

35. Wang Fan-sen, <「主義崇拜」與近代中國學術社會的命運——以陳寅恪為中心的思考>, from *Zhongguo jindai sixiang yu xueshu de puxi*. Shanghai Sanlian Press, 2025. 456–457. Despite the categorization, Chen did not identify with the New Cultural Movement, as Wang noted in the article.

36. Ge Zhaoguang, 7.

37. Quoted in Yü Ying-shih, *xueshujingshen he wanian xingjing*. His original words were “finding historical insights in history” (zai shizhong qiu shishi在史中求史識).

38. Yü Ying-shih, *Xueshu Jingshen he Wannian xinjing*, 23.

wrote that through collecting and organizing the sources, the historian “whether consciously or unconsciously, often tends to interpret the intentions of the ancients based on the era they lived in, the environment they were situated in, and the doctrines they were influenced by.”³⁹

Chen proposed that “the new scholarship in an era must have new sources and new questions. Using these sources in order to study new questions is the new trend of this era’s scholarship.”⁴⁰ He formulated theoretical frameworks and posed historical questions to examine the transformation of Chinese culture in the modern world—a central concern Yü identified as one shared by many intellectuals navigating the tension between “internationalization” and the “nationalistic nature” of academia.⁴¹ Grounded in multilingual sources and interdisciplinary analysis, Chen’s research investigated how China had historically adapted imported cultures, specifically through examining the interaction between Han and non-Han groups and the transmission of Buddhism.⁴² His rigorous methodology drew upon his training in primary source languages, oriental philology, and Quellenkritik, yet it equally emphasized the need for new questions and perspectives.⁴³

Lectures on the Six Dynasties – Chen Yinke’s National Culturalist Sentiments

Chen Yinke’s *Lectures on the Six Dynasties*, delivered at Tsinghua University in the 1930s and 1940s, offer insight into his methodology and interpretive framework. Drawing from a wide array of sources, Chen analyzed the social, political, and cultural aspects of the relationship between *Han* and *Hu* (non-Han northern nomadic people), particularly focusing on the Xianbei elite and the Northern

39. Ibid., “然若加以聯貫綜合之搜集，及統系條理之整理，則著者有意無意之間，往往依其自身所遭際之時代，所居之環境，所熏染之學說，以推測古人之意志。” Such note resonates with Ku Chieh-kang notion that “the act of history writing was itself a historical act.” (See Lawrence Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China’s New History: Nationalism and the Quest for Alternative Traditions*, (University of California Press, 1971), 10.

40. Quoted in Jing Shuhui “‘Mutual Proofing of Literature – History’ Method: and the Study of Six Dynasties,” 167–183, 168.

41. Yü, Xueshu jingshen he Wannian Xingjing, 25. Ge Zhaoguang, “學術的國際化”，“學術的民族性”。

42. Marxist historians to challenge his methodology. Chen’s methodology was criticized by Marxist writer Guo Moruo (郭沫若). Guo called Chen a Capitalist historian, and it is their task to “use his advantage” and “overcome him”, “資產階級的史學家只偏重資料[...]我們可以採用他的長處[...]就在資料佔有上也要超過陳寅恪。” See Guo Moruo “Wen Shi Lun Ji,” (Beijing People’s Press, 1961), 15, 26

43. Yü Ying-shih, 5. What made Chen’s scholarship significant was not only his use of new questions, theories and new sources, but also how he responded to Western academia’s trend in Oriental studies with Chinese sources on the North-west borderland studies; Ge Zhaoguang, *Yulu de xueshu: Chongfan xueshushizhong kan Chen Yinke de Yi yi*, 13; Yü, *Shixue Sanbian*, 342.

Wei dynasty's Sinicization policies.⁴⁴ His analytical framework—including social class, religious, nation-state, economy, marriage, and geographical factors—derived from a European historiographical vocabulary acquired during his training abroad.⁴⁵

Chen viewed the transformation of Xianbei nobility into a Confucian-educated elite as a strategic redefinition of identity and political legitimization rather than natural assimilation.⁴⁶ His interpretation challenged traditional narratives that framed Sinicization as a civilizing mission, emphasizing instead its disruptive and coercive dimensions. The emotional and rhetorical weight of Chen's prose reveals his empathetic engagement with historical subjects.⁴⁷ He describes the policy of Sinicization as a deliberate severing of ethnic memory, using the evocative phrase “to sever people's nostalgia for their homeland.”⁴⁸ His own phrase, “to understand with empathy” (「了解以同情」), echoed the Rankean ethos of understanding the world of historical actors.

44. The word “Sinicization” has been problematized by historians of New Qing history and hotly debated in the U.S. academia in the late 20th and early 21st century. Mark Elliott, who took issue with the word Sinicization (漢化) in the context of Manchu Qing dynasty, has defined Sinicization as “the hoary notion that the Chinese ‘their conquerors, founded on a belief that the Chinese urge to ‘civilize’ (wen-hua) or, somewhat more naturally, to assimilate (tonghua), is nigh irresistible and is not to be underestimated in interpretation of the Qing or any ‘alien Interlude in Chinese history.’” Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 27. He argued not only for a distinction between “a shift in cultural practices” and “a shift in one's self-perception or in how one is perceived by others”, but also a discontinuity and fluidity of the concept of “Chinese” over time. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 28.

45. Yü Ying-shih cited the diary of Wu Mi in *Shilun Chen Yinke Shixue Sanbian* 「試論陳寅恪史學三變」, that Chen was reading *Cambridge Ancient History*, *Cambridge Medieval History* and *Cambridge Modern History*.

46. An illustrative example Chen provides is the imperial edict abolishing northern languages and enforcing standardized speech (“斷諸北語，一從正音”). On the surface, this may appear to be a linguistic reform aimed at administrative unification. Yet Chen interprets it as a deeply ideological move: the erasure of linguistic plurality serves as a metaphor for the eradication of ethnic difference. Language becomes a powerful political tool, not only for communication but also for the suppression of alternative cultural memories. Even seemingly mundane changes—such as new forms of dress, hair styles, and official rituals—signify the imposition of a Confucian symbolic order that reorients elite identity toward Han traditions. For instance, Chen emphasized the transformation of attire and head wear (“衣冠”) as emblems of a Confucian concepts, representing moral hierarchy, social order, and textual literacy.

47. Chen's language revealed the dialectical tension between coercion and unconscious adaptation. He juxtaposes the terms “unconsciousness” and “compulsoriness” to characterize the Xianbei's reluctant path toward cultural assimilation. These terms underscore the passivity and external imposition inherent in the reforms. Chen's argument hinges on the idea that the seemingly external changes, such as clothing, language and surnames, were in fact tools for fundamentally reshaping identity. He employs antithesis to contrast the appearance or form with essence or content, arguing that altering external markers was necessary to transform the Xianbei ethnicity into a culturally Han ruling class. This perspective aligns with his broader historiographical approach, which emphasizes the role of elite cultural integration in state formation and central power consolidation. Chen Yinke, “Wei Jin Nan bei chao shi jiang yan lu,” from *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Shi Yanlu*, ed. Shengnan Wan (Anhui Normal University Press, 2023).

48. Ibid.

This reading resonated not just with contemporary anxieties on tension in ethnic relationships during the Republic era, but also with the crisis from external powers. Just as the Xianbei struggled to maintain cultural identity under Sinicizing pressure, early 20th century Chinese intellectuals grappled with reconciling Confucian heritage with the demands of modern nationalism, or what has been termed “China’s cultural crisis,” referring to a disruption in the continuity of Chinese tradition. Chen’s historical inquiry, situated amid Japanese imperial encroachments, echoed larger debates over cultural continuity and “national essence” in modern China.⁴⁹

Methodologically, Chen focused on empirical methods like philology and rigorous analysis to verify facts, with the interpretive tools of European social history. His citation of official texts like Wei Shu, the “Treatise on Official Clans”, and reinterpretation of dynastic historiography reflected both the Qing-styled textual analysis and Western historical sociology, for instance his attention to the socio-economic factors in historical process.⁵⁰ He aspired to introduce a “pre-stream” (yuliu 預流) in China, a Buddhist term, denoting one who anticipates intellectual trends before they become mainstream and does not feel bound to conform to the existing practice.⁵¹

Chen’s emphasis on “ethnicity prioritization” (民族本位) reflects a form of cultural nationalism rooted in synthesis. Drawing on his reading of the Northern Wei, especially the tensions between Cui Hao and the Xianbei nobility, Chen stressed that Sinicization was not a simple replacement of one culture by another. As he interpreted Emperor Xiaowen’s reforms, the crucial issue was how to integrate the Xianbei aristocracy with the Han gentry so that political authority and social prestige could be consolidated within a unified order. Reading Chen’s text in his contemporary political context, modernization, like Sinicization in

49. Lawrence A. Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History: Nationalism and the Quest for Alternative Traditions*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971, 3. The study of “National Essence” or “National Learning” was a response to the Westernization and the New Cultural movement. The intellectuals leading the movement, like Ku Chieh-kang, wanted to preserve the continuity of Chinese cultural identity in its traditional form; Interestingly, Ku Chieh-kang, another Republican-era historian of antiquity, had an interest in China’s inner Asian frontier and his historical writing from 1930–40 has a presentist lens of “melding past and present”, which corresponded to the Warring state (past) and the Warlord era (present).

50. Chen Yinke and Shengnan Wan, “Wei Jin Nan bei chao” (2023), 254–258.

“From the conflicts between Cui Hao and the Xianbei nobility in the early North Wei period, it appears that Sinicization and Xianbei traditions were incompatible. Therefore, when Emperor Xiaowen promoted Sinicization, his focus was on how to ensure that Xianbei aristocracy would accept the Han gentry culture. This means how to combine the Xianbei aristocracy and Han gentry into one, not only make the Xianbei aristocracy hold political status, but also social status, thereby consolidating Northern Wei’s rule and ultimately annexing the Southern Dynasties.” (Lectures on Six Dynasties, 245).

51. See Chen Yinke, 《敦煌劫餘錄序》, (An Analytical List of the Tun-Huang Manuscripts in the National Library of Peiping” Compiled by Chen Yuan, Published by the National Research Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica.

the Northern Wei, required the preservation and rearticulation of historical substance. For Chen, the challenge of modern China similarly lay in combining Western methods with the enduring moral and historical continuity of the Confucian tradition, ensuring transformation without cultural rupture.⁵²

Both Ranke and Chen Yinke shared a focus on historical particularity, insisting on the uniqueness of the time period. They emphasized individuality and striking a balance between objectivity and historian's empathetic and imaginative engagement, as they both faced the transition period of the formation of the nation-state and the forging of a national consciousness, to a certain extent.⁵³ Ranke's view of the state, grounded in Christian and idealist metaphysics, contrasts with Chen's more pragmatic, cultural-materialist orientation. Chen's analytical style bridged the German historicism's rigor, while keeping a distinctly Chinese concern for cultural civility, or *wen* (文), as the metric of historical change, striking a difference between the Rankean notion of state as organic entity and Chen's analysis of dynastic transitions through strategic cultural policies.⁵⁴ Much like Chen Yinke, Ranke in his later stage also evolved into a mental state of nostalgia and maintained ambivalence to the political situation, for instance the German unification of 1870–71, which had direct impact to the direction and selection of subject in his scholarship, tackling between the national and the universal in terms of German history.⁵⁵

Nostalgia for the “Spirit of Chinese culture” and Freedom for the Apolitical Academic

Chen Yinke's stance toward history and politics represents the complexity of Republican intellectuals—many of whom were situated between “cultural loyalists” (文化遺民) and cultural nationalist sentiment.⁵⁶ Amid the twin crises of “internal disintegration and external aggression” (內憂外患), these intellectuals demonstrated a crisis consciousness to the dismantling and collapse of tradition—what they viewed as the substance of Chinese culture.⁵⁷ For Chen, the threat

a 「以中华文化为正, 吸收外来文化之精华」.

53. Leonard Krieger, *Ranke: The Meaning of History* (The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 242–243.

54. See Peter K. Bol's “*This Culture of Ours*”: *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford University Press, 1994) on the literary view of culture.

55. Ibid., 306–307, 311. Similar to the three changes of historical scholarship periodized by Yü Ying-shih for Chen Yinke, Krieger's analysis of Ranke's historical scholarship was also periodized into four synthesis.

56. The translation of *Minzu* poses an ambiguous question regarding the distinction between culturalism and nationalism. *Minzu* seems to convey simultaneously a sense of “nation” as the institutional / political state (*guojia* 國家), “ethnic group” (*zuqun* 族群) or race (*zhongzu* 種族), and of a sense of cultural entity. Different translations evoke different connotations of historical continuity.

57. For deeper understanding of the crisis mentality (憂患意識) of modern Chinese intellectuals, see Gloria Davies, *Worrying about China: The Language of Chinese Critical Inquiry* (Harvard University Press, 2007).

came from forced ideology such as Marxist-Leninism and Nationalist Party's Three Principles, which he viewed as corrosive to academia.

Chen's nostalgia was not for the disappearance of the "institutional order," but for the "abstract cultural ideal" and moral values.⁵⁸ The crisis that China faced was not only a socio-political one, but more importantly, a spiritual one. His commemorative elegy for Wang Guowei, who committed suicide in Kunming Lake in 1927, revealed a view of intellectual death as an act of cultural mourning:

For today's China is facing calamities and crises without precedents in its several thousand years of history. [...] how can those whose very being represents a condensation and realization of the spirit of Chinese culture fail to identify with its fate and perish along with it? This was why Wang Guowei could not but die.⁵⁹

Chen seemed to understand his colleague deeply and disputed the common view that Wang died because he was a loyalist to the Qing. He wrote in an inscription that "[Wang] died to manifest his will for independence and freedom, which is not related to the grudges of one person or the rise and fall of a dynasty."⁶⁰ Chen respected Wang for his independent spirit to preserve scholarship untainted by politics. The juxtaposition between the nostalgia for the past and the strive for independence and spirit has shown a mindset of "intellectual modernity," an ambivalent attitude toward the past and present and an effort to reconcile cultural inheritance.⁶¹ As Yü observed, Republican-era intellectuals like Chen defy easy categorization as conservatives who insisted on preserving Chinese traditional culture nor progressives who saw the West as a model.⁶² Through his mourning, Chen expressed an ideal of a pure academia with academic freedom and disentanglement of scholarship from politics — a wish not only unfulfilled, but trampled upon.⁶³

After 1949, Chen's historical focus shifted dramatically. With his eyesight failing and political pressures intensifying, he wrote more literary-historical works such as *Zai Sheng Yuan* and *Biography of Liu Ru Shi*, writing about the understudied lives of women in lower social strata through the genre of *tanci* (彈詞) during that time.⁶⁴ These works, dictated rather than written, were deeply personal and

58. Yü Ying-shih, *xueshu jingshen he wannian xingjing*, 14–15; Wai-ye Li, "Nostalgia and Resistance: Gender and Poetry of Chen Yinke," 2.

59. Chen Yinke, "Qinhua daxue Wang Guantang xianshen jinian beiming" 清華大學王觀堂先生紀念碑銘, in *Jinmin guan conggaobao* erbian, quoted and translated in Wai-ye Li, "Nostalgia and Resistance," 1. "Elegy on Wang Guowei" (「王觀堂先生輓詞并序」).

60. Memorial site「王觀堂先生紀念碑銘」"先生以一死見其獨立自由之意志,非所論於一人之恩怨,一姓之興亡。"

61. Wai-ye Li, *Nostalgia and Resistance*, 3.

62. Yü Ying-Shih, *xueshu jingshen he wannian xingjing*, 11.

63. Wang Fan-sen,〈「主義崇拜」與近代中國學術社會的命運——以陳寅恪為中心的思考〉455–456.

64. *Tanci* literally means "plucking rhythms", a popular literary and opera genre form in the Jiangnan region.

emotionally resonant—Yü Ying-shih termed them as *xin shi* (心史), or “History from the Heart”.⁶⁵ Chen’s later writing implicitly expressed critique and sentiment in poetic language. He deemed it to be an encoded system with hidden meanings waiting to be deciphered and understood by future generations, as conveyed by the poetic lines “weeping for the ancient, saving as a gift for posterity.”⁶⁶ This poetic line expresses a historical consciousness connecting a dialogue between the past and the future, unable to deal with the present.⁶⁷ In between what’s said and what’s hidden, the play of words and imagination, the writing of *xin shi* further proved that the scholar’s subjective “personal journey” and objective historical sourcing were both “a participating in historical experience” and “a response to poetic imagination.”⁶⁸ In an era when apolitical detachment itself became a political act, Chen embedded memory, empathy, and cultural critique into his historiography. His blending of intuition and analysis fulfilled the Rankean vision of the historian to combine narrative history to analytical historical and historical imagination and empathy with historical subjects.⁶⁹ This emphasis on empathetic understanding is a lesser-known, hermeneutic dimension of Ranke’s approach, rooted in his belief in divine providence.⁷⁰

Reflection: Why Study Chen Yinke Today

Comparing Chen Yinke and Ranke reveals how two scholars, shaped by distinct intellectual traditions, both sought to reconcile empirical rigor with deeper cultural meanings. Placing Chen under the influence of Rankean historiography helps Western scholars to situate Chen’s scholarship and methodology.

Studying Chen Yinke illuminates the transnational currents that shaped modern Chinese historiography. This adoption of philological approaches and cross-cultural interactions while remaining grounded in tradition enabled an awareness of the intrinsic connection between tradition and modernity.⁷¹ Chen absorbed Western methods not as a passive recipient but as an active interlocutor. His engagement with figures like Lanman, Babbitt, and Ranke helped forge a

65. Wai-yee Li, 8.

66. David Wang, 〈痛哭古人, 留贈來著〉——陳寅恪, 唐君毅, 隱微寫作, from *Weiji shike de Zhishi fenzi*. NCCU Press, Taipei, 2023.

67. Ibid., 11.

68. Ibid., 9. According to Yü Ying-shih, the decisive “natural endowment” (bingfu, 「秉賦」) of Chen Yinke as a historian were not merely his usage of sources, social background, family traditions, or special overseas journey, but rather it was his memory, gift (「作性」), perception (「悟性」), and “sensibilities” (「感性」), fully manifesting in the “imagination of history”. Yü, *Chen Yinke de Xueshu Jingshen he Wannian Xinjing*, 8; 354.

69. Grafton, *Footnote: A Curious History*, 92–93.

70. Axel Schneider, “Reconciling history with the nation?: Historicity, national particularity, and the question of universals.” 2003, pp.120–130.

71. Q. Edward Wang, *Inventing China Through History: The May Fourth Approach to Historiography* (State University of New York Press, 2001), 205.

modern Chinese historical scholarship, bringing their influence, which otherwise might not have reached the Chinese context.

This paper will serve as an initial attempt to respond to intellectual history that challenges national historiographical boundaries and examines how values, beliefs, and concepts such as “scientific history,” cultural continuity, and exceptionalism, traveled and transformed.⁷² Defining moments of intellectual encounters, Chen lived at the crossroads of multiple intellectual worlds, and his work embodies the complexities of adapting foreign methodologies to local cultural and political conditions.⁷³

Future scholarship would benefit from greater attention to intellectual sensibility, especially through the interplay between public and private writings to gain a closer understanding of the formation of their method and immediate context. As Joseph Levenson noted in his study of Liang Qichao, the tension between history and value, emotional loyalty and intellectual modernity, shaped the psychological landscape of many Republican-era thinkers.⁷⁴ How did these individuals navigate the paradoxes of cultural rupture and continuity? How did their historical writing help define and shape modern Chinese identity? Beyond the historical insights it yields, studying Chen Yinke today invites reflection on the broader dilemmas of intellectuals in a fractured and politicized modernity.

72. For more discussion on the trend of transnational history, see Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

73. The “encounter” in the sense of intellectual history could be simply an inspiring conversation between Chen and his professors at their home or the proof of reading certain books.

74. Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate*, Berkeley: University of California Press: 1968.

98. See Axel Schneider (2009), *Zhenli yu lishi: Fu Sinian, Chen Yinke de shixue sixiang yu minzu re tong* for a thorough response, reflection and critical response to the Levenson’s history and value tension in the case of Fu Sinian and Chen Yinke.

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