

# Modern Confucian Objection against Communism in China— the Unique Case of Xu Fuguan<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The article investigates the political views of one of the most prominent representatives of the so-called second generation of Modern Confucianism, Xu Fuguan. It reveals his unique position within this intellectual movement. Even though all other adherents of Modern Confucianism were focused upon metaphysics and ontology rather than political theory, Xu believed that these lines of thought could not contribute enough to solving the various urgent social and political problems of modern China. In this regard, the present article focuses upon a critical analysis of Xu's critique of the Chinese Communist Party. The author presents and evaluates his critique mainly with regard to his search for a resolution of the problematic and chaotic political and social situation of China during the first half of the 20th century. In conclusion, the author provides a critical evaluation of Xu's social democratic thought and particularly of his attitude towards the Chinese Communist Party.

**Keywords:** Xu Fuguan, Modern Confucianism, Mao Zedong, Communism in China

## Moderni konfucijanski ugovor proti komunizmu na Kitajskem – unikatni primer Xu Fuguana

### Izvilleček

Članek predstavi politična stališča enega najpomembnejših predstavnikov tako imenovane druge generacije modernega konfucijanstva, Xu Fuguana, in opozori na njegov edinstven položaj znotraj te intelektualne struje. Čeprav so bili drugi pripadniki sodobnega konfucijanstva bolj kot na politično teorijo osredotočeni na metafiziko in ontologijo, je Xu Fuguan verjel, da ti pristopi ne bi mogli veliko prispevati k reševanju negotovih družbenih

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in političnih problemov sodobne Kitajske. Tako se članek osredotoča na kritično analizo Xujeve kritike kitajske komunistične partije. Avtor predstavi in ovrednoti njegovo kritično stališče predvsem v zvezi z njegovim iskanjem rešitve problematičnega in kaotičnega političnega in socialnega položaja Kitajske v prvi polovici 20. stoletja. Na koncu prispevka avtor kritično ovrednoti Xujev socialdemokratski pristop in še posebej njegov odnos do kitajske komunistične partije.

**Ključne besede:** Xu Fuguan, moderno konfucijanstvo, Mao Zedong, komunizem na Kitajskem

## Introduction

Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1903–1982) was a Chinese intellectual and historian who made important contributions to Modern Confucian philosophy. He belonged to the second generation of Modern Confucians, who after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 lived and worked in Taiwan, Hong Kong and United States of America. The philosophy of Modern Confucianism is distinguished by a comprehensive attempt to revitalize traditional (particularly original Confucian and Neo-Confucian) thought by means of new influences borrowed or derived from Western philosophical theories. Therefore, Modern Confucianism of the 20th century is defined by a search for synthesis between Western and Chinese traditional thought, aiming to elaborate a system of ideas and values, suitable to resolve social and political problems, not only for China but for the whole modern world.

Xu Fuguan was the only member of the second generation of Modern Confucians who started his professional career in military and political affairs. When studying at the military academy in Japan, he became inspired by socialist ideas and Marxist philosophy, as lectured, interpreted and translated by the famous Japanese anarchist and communist, Kawakami Hajime. After his return from Japan, Xu became a military and political strategist in the Nationalist Party. In 1943 he was sent to Yan'an as a negotiator between the party and Communist guerrillas for the establishment of a united front in the resistance against Japan. Although he was at first inspired by the socialist ideas and enthusiasm of Mao Zedong and the Communist cadre in resolving China's difficult social and political situation, he changed his position when faced with their actual political and social actions. From then on, Xu Fuguan started to emphasize the presupposed hypocrisy and inhumanity of the Communist Party's ideology. After returning from Yan'an, Xu became one of Chiang Kai-shek's closest advisors regarding the reformation of the Nationalists to gain more popular support, and an analyst of the ideological and political strategies of the Communists. However, disappointed by the

corruption and incompetence of the Nationalists as well as the “inhumanity” of the Mao’s Communist regime, Xu decided to pursue an academic career after he met his teacher, Xiong Shili. Xu shared his critique of the Communist Party with other Modern Confucians.

As already noted, Xu Fuguan belonged to the second generation of Modern Confucians, who strove for a revitalization of their own cultural identity in the sense of “transplanting old roots” (*Chong zheng jiu xue de genji* 重整舊學的根基) of their own tradition because they saw this method as the only way for a possible survival of the cultural tradition from which they arose. This renovation of the “roots,” however, should not merely serve as a tool for the survival of Chinese tradition. The members of the second generation hoped that it could also provide new methods for the elaboration and further development of ethics on a global level.

### The Peculiar Case of Xu Fuguan

The members of the second generation of Modern Confucianism, in addition to Xu, included Mou Zongsan (1909–1995), Tang Junyi (1909–1978) and Fang Dongmei (1899–1977), and these all dealt with the problem how to re-evaluate and adapt the Chinese intellectual tradition to meet the needs of modernization. Most Modern Confucians understood modernization as a kind of rationalization of the world (Rošker 2013, 88). Most of the members of the Modern Confucian movement were proceeding from the supposition that the Chinese ideational tradition lacked a coherent development of rational and logical reasoning, which belongs to the crucial precondition for the development of scientific thought and technological innovations. In their view, the prevailing currents of traditional philosophy were focused upon ethical and moral thought, particularly upon questions linked to the inner moral cultivation (see for instance Ott 2017, 80–82). In the traditional binary category of “internal sage and external ruler” (*neisheng waiwang* 內聖外王), this inconsistency manifested itself in the domination of the former over the latter<sup>2</sup>. Lee Ming-Huei (2001, 15) states that while most Modern Confucians saw the inner sage as a basis for the concept of the external ruler, the latter was never understood as being merely an extension of the former. Their aim was to establish the subject within the complementary relation between both poles. The development of science,

2 An important methodological step had already been taken previously by Mou Zongsan, with his concept of the self-negation of the moral Self (*daode ziwode kanxian* 道德自我坎陷, see Mou 1975, 123)

democracy and modern technology, however, was a crucial for the advance of modernization. They thus explored their own tradition for authentic concepts comparable to the two Western paradigms essential for modernization, i.e. the concepts of subjectivity<sup>3</sup>, and of reason and rationality.

In search of a new philosophical basis, most of the Modern Confucians focused on metaphysical and ontology-related issues, which they recognized in the context of Western ideas and philosophical systems. They thus emphasized the importance of establishing ontology and metaphysics as the basis for Confucian renovation.

Xu Fuguan, however, was practically the only representative of the second generation who did not consider metaphysics and ontology as appropriate frameworks for understanding ancient Chinese thought, and much less for the development of its interpretation. He argued that it was precisely the pragmatic nucleus of Chinese traditional thought that did not lead to any composition or any structured and coherent conception of a metaphysical and ontological system, as has been established, for instance, by the ancient Greek philosophers (Rošker 2013, 88).

According to Xu, in Chinese antiquity the idea of ethics developed directly from the mythological society, and was based on the divine core of the human being. Thus, ethics was not connected with metaphysics, and even less with religion. According to Xu, ethics, morality, all the central Confucian virtues as well as all of Chinese traditional culture, are based on the sense of “concerned consciousness” (*youbuan yishi* 憂患意識). For Xu, concerned consciousness is the realization of the consequences of individual’s actions and decisions that emerge from the sense of responsibility.

Xu Fuguan comprehended and discussed human beings within the framework of socio-political history, as an individual struggling according to or against historical processes, while other Modern Confucians emphasized the transcendent nature of human beings. In this sense, Xu Fuguan’s position is a materialistic one, while most of other representatives of the second generation could be regarded as idealistic.

The ideals of Modern Confucians were not limited to the quest for revitalization and rehabilitation of the ideological tradition from which they arose. For them, it was clear that the intellectual process of modernizing Confucianism could only begin on the basis of its synthesis with the ideas imported from the Euro-American philosophy, since it represented the cultural background from which modernization actually emerged. The presupposed acceptance of the Western models

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3 According to Jana Rošker (2018, 262), the historical positioning of the notions of subjectivity and autonomy as were developed in the Chinese intellectual tradition, was elaborated by several Modern Confucian scholars, particularly by Mou Zongsan (1971) and Tang Junyi (2000).

of democracy and science, which ought to lead China from a backward to a modernized society, has therefore led to a new reflection on the role and meaning of the Confucian intellectual tradition. The main guiding principle for Modern Confucians was to revitalize the traditional Chinese intellectual tradition based on the original Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties, combined with a deeper knowledge of Western philosophical concepts and cultural specifics. Of course, this process did imply the reproduction of a Confucian intellectual system of thought, albeit one based on the reinterpretation and redefinition of Confucian concepts through Western philosophical systems (Chang et al. 2018, 53).

In the process of modernization, the second generation represented the position that China must preserve and develop important elements of its own traditions, as these contained the seeds for its democratic and scientific development. Contrary to most other Chinese intellectual currents at that time, which believed that Confucian ideology was the main obstacle for China's modernization, the second generation was convinced that it was compatible with both science and democracy, and that East Asian societies would fail to develop modern democratic social systems insofar as they did not originate from and consider various segments of the Confucian tradition (ibid., 97).

In this regard, it is important to mention Xu Fuguan's argument that Confucian theory is inextricably compatible with democracy, since already in classical Chinese texts, such as the *Book of Documents* (*Shu jing* 書經), the records are found that people are the basis (*minben* 民本) of the state as well as an important and active subject in constructing a righteous and harmonious society. Although these records are vague, Confucius took over this idea, and Mencius then upgraded and elaborated it further, explicitly stating that the people are the most important element in a state, and the ruler the least (Mengzi, *Jin xin xia*).

On the other hand, Xu points out that in the autocratic Chinese history such presumably democratic elements could not be realized in practice, and therefore the idea of the subject as a political actor failed to develop (ibid.). He also claimed that the realization of Confucian "democratic" ideas failed to be realized in practice because there was no legal system in the autocratic society that would protect the rights of the people, as well as regulate and judge the actions of the rulers (ibid., 17).

Regarding the development of science, Xu claimed that, although Confucianism did not contain a scientific dimension, it did not suppress or disapprove science as such. He claimed that Chinese tradition did not develop a methodology suitable for the development of scientific research because such an approach would be

naïve, but instead it developed a methodology based on the cultivation of personality (Rošker 2013, 104). Xu argued that this originates from a perception of the world that is based on the concept of “concerned consciousness” in ancient China, in contrast to the sense of curiosity, which was the basis for understanding humans and the world in ancient Greece, and resulted in the pursuit of objective knowledge, especially regarding the development of metaphysics and science. According to Xu, Modern Western thinkers inherited this position but shifted from “knowing” as a way of education to knowledge as a persistent search for power through possessing and controlling the external material world (Ni 2002, 283). According to Xu, Western science treated people as a mechanistic integral part of nature, while in Confucianism humans always remain at the forefront of interest. Nature is therefore interpreted through the lens of the human (Rošker 2013, 103). Besides, the Confucian tradition was not interested in abstract laws of the objective world, but it objectified the world through moral virtues.

Xu argued that traditional Chinese culture is composed of three dimensions: despotism, Confucianism and peasant society. For him, the latter embodies the true spirit of traditional Chinese culture, while the true Confucians were supposed to be the protectors of this against despotic exploitation (Lee 1998, 16–17).

Born in 1904, Xu Fuguan was the only member of the second generation of Modern Confucians who came from a poor rural background, and was always closely and emotionally connected to the suffering and striving for survival of peasants. Hence, it is not surprising that in his youth he enthusiastically embraced the socialist idea of the common good for all members of the society.

### **Xu’s Encounter with Marxism**

Already as a young student, Xu became familiar with the ideas of Marx’s and Engels’ materialism through the reading of Sun Yat-Sen’s political philosophy on the “three principles of the people” (*sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義). Even before devoting himself to a deeper study of Marxism, he had already participated in the Wuhan campaign of the leftist clique of the Nationalist Party against Jiang Jieshi’s (Chiang Kai-shek’s) massacre of communists and workers of the trade union in Shanghai.

After completing his studies in China, Xu could not survive as a teacher or professor at the faculty, so he decided to pursue a military career which he followed from 1926 to 1942. He attended a military academy in Japan and frequently attended lectures at Meiji University, where he became familiar with the works of the first influential Japanese Marxist, Kawakami Hajime. When Xu arrived in Japan the Japanese Communists were actively participating in trade unions and on

university campuses, despite the severe repression and police control they faced. At that time, many Chinese and Taiwanese students, among which were later famous intellectuals and politicians such as Guo Moruo and Li Dazhao, were strongly influenced by Kawakami's translations and interpretations of Marxism (Lee 1998, 43). After Xu became familiar with Kawakami's works, he often organized readings of Marxist texts at the military academy.

According to Xu, before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War socialist ideas inspired all Chinese political groups, and to some extent even surpassed the May Fourth demands for democracy. For Xu, the socialist idea of the common good was compatible with Confucian humanism; in his opinion, this was one of the reasons for its popularity among young Chinese intellectuals. On the other hand, Marxism, which originated from the West and was at the same time critical of it, coincided with the tendency for westernization, as well as with the rejection of Western imperialism (Xu in Lee 1998, 44). Thirdly, for Xu, Marxism provided concrete guidelines for practical action in a transitional society.

However, in 1931, Xu and many other Chinese students studying in Japan strongly protested against the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. The Japanese military police arrested them, and he was expelled from the academy half a year before completing his studies.

After returning to his homeland, Xu was disappointed and outraged over Chiang Kai-shek's conciliatory policy towards Japan. However, already in June 1932, Xu started working as a colonel of the Nationalist Party (GMD) in Guangxi. During his military career, he was rarely involved in direct battles. The duties he was carrying as a commander in Guangxi were mostly linked to strategic and political planning and ensuring public safety. During the Sino-Japanese war, Xu occupied increasingly high positions as a strategic and political adviser, and the conflict made a strong impact on him. He witnessed death, sickness and hunger, as well as rampant corruption in politics. In 1942 he was transferred to Chongqing, where he served as a military instructor. Soon after that, Xu was offered a position of an adviser to the Alliance in Yan'an (Lee 1998, 52).

Given his interest in socialist and Marxist ideas, it is not surprising at all that Xu found himself in close company with the leading Communist politicians. His task in Yan'an, which he visited in 1943, was to establish a liaison with the Communist army as part of the United Front to resist Japan, and as the negotiator between the Communist guerrillas and the Nationalist government with regard to lifting the blockade of weapons, food and medicine by the latter if the former would hand over the occupied territory and army. Xu met up with some of the key figures of the Communist Party, namely Zhu De (1886–1976), Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)

and Liu Shaoqi (1898–1969), and expressed deep respect for their idealism, patriotism and self-sacrifice.

However, for Xu, Mao Zedong (1893–1976) was undoubtedly the most charismatic personality of all. Although he was 11 years younger than Mao, they both grew up in similar social conditions. In addition, they were both experienced in the field of military strategies and loved philosophy, literature and history. During their five long conversations, they dealt with a variety of topics, and Xu was deeply impressed by Mao's vision of revolution and by his analysis of Chinese history (Lee 1998, 52).

Xu and Mao attributed great importance to the peasant population, and they were equally disturbed by the arrogant and superior attitude of the intellectual elite towards peasants. First and foremost, they both criticized the exploitative and oppressive attitude of local autocrats towards the peasant population. Nevertheless, Xu Fuguan did not agree with the Communist idea of class oppression, which was seen by Mao and his comrades as the main reason for the poverty in rural areas. In contrast to Mao, Xu claimed that in addition to the polarity between landlords and tenants, there was also a huge number of owners and partial owners of land (such as his own family). Therefore, in his opinion, improvements to the means of production and resources were much more important than overthrowing the dominant production relations (*ibid.*, 53).

Xu thus claimed that the class struggle would not help much in resolving the problems of the China's countryside. Still, he partially agreed with Mao's Agricultural Collective Project, arguing that in order to solve the problems of the rural population it would be necessary to remove harmful factors, such as corruption and exploitation by local property owners, because only in this way would it be possible for the peasants to plan their own survival independently and without external interventions. However, he emphasized the danger of the deforming and destroying of interpersonal relations that could happen in the name of collectivism and the class struggle.

Even though he served under the Nationalist government, Xu remained a secret admirer of the Chinese Communist Party. When he heard Zhou Enlai's speech on international politics in 1937, he declared that there was no one in the GMD who was as gifted and intelligent as Zhou. The reason why he never joined the Communist Party was that he saw a great discrepancy between Marxist theory on the one hand and the Communist reality on the other. Xu's enthusiasm for the Communist Party diminished in 1940, when he travelled to the Taihang Mountains as a Nationalist guerrilla supporter. He initially advised the guerrillas to try and understand the Communists and learn from them. But



when he met with the local population, this positive view of the Communists changed radically.

In order to expand its Red Army, the Communist Party seized all the property of the villagers, and fed young boys on the condition that they had to join the army. Such exploitation of the population was something that the GMD also did, but Xu initially hoped that the Communist Party (CCP) would be different in this respect and truly protect the poor (*ibid.*).

In addition, he soon became aware of the duplicity of the CCP as it worked to consolidate its power. In the areas under the control of the GMD, the Communists defended “freedom and democracy,” and spread slogans such as: “The ones who have money, contribute money; those who have power, contribute power.” They thus advocated “cooperation between workers and capitalists.” In those times everyone was attracted to such slogans. On the other hand, in the areas under Japanese occupation, which could not be governed by the Nationalists, Xu saw that the Communists used denunciation and the breakdown of local communities to take full control under the pretext of resolving the conflict between the oppressors and oppressed (*ibid.*).

### Xu’s Critique of the Communist Party

One of the stories that most shocked X, was about a son who denounced his father, the result of which was that the whole community wanted to publicly execute the man. In fact, the son himself was supposed to kill his father, but could not do it, as he fainted and collapsed on the ground. All the villagers then covered their heads and cried. In that moment, a member of the Red Army came by, picked up a knife and killed both father and son.

Xu recounted this story along with his recent attitude towards Communism in an essay entitled *The humanness of the Communist Party* (*Gongchandang de renxing* 共產黨 的人性), published in 1951, when he was already in Taiwan. In this he emphasized that the mutual slaughter and destruction of cohesion and coherence of the local communities in the name of class struggle would never end under the Communist regime. He argued that, if the relationship between father and son is devalued and denied, then no other interpersonal relationships are possible. Xu was enchanted by the Marxist aspiration for social justice, but was equally horrified by the idea of the class struggle and its tactics of denunciation and betrayal, which were allegedly necessary in order to achieve this justice (Xu in Lee 1998, 129). In this sense, Xu defined Communist ideology to be in its essence a denial of universal humanity.

In his essay entitled *The lesson given by the Soviet Union to humanity* (*Renqu sulian suo geiyu renlei de jiaoxun* 人去苏联所给与人类的教训), written in 1953, Xu explains why the class struggle will continue after the defeat of the bourgeoisie. Since the Communists deny humanness, they will sooner or later regard the workers themselves as their potential enemies. And even dictators who are at the top of the hierarchy of political power must continue to fight with their comrades in order to maintain their position. This necessarily lead to an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and denunciation in interpersonal relations. Because of their disregard for the intrinsic value of human beings, the Communists were used to resorting to violence to resolve conflicts (ibid.).

Here, we might already see a first connection with Xu's later turn to Confucianism, because the abovementioned story is very similar to the famous Confucian criticism of the son who denounced his father who stole a sheep:

子路： 葉公語孔子曰：吾黨有直躬者，其父攘羊，而子證之。」  
孔子曰：「吾黨之直者異於是。父為子隱，子為父隱，直在其中矣。」

Zi Lu: The Duke of She informed Confucius, saying, "Among us here there are those who may be styled upright in their conduct. If their father have stolen a sheep, they will bear witness to the fact." Confucius said, "Among us, in our part of the country, those who are upright are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son, and the son conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this." (*Lunyu* 2018, 18)

Xu also questioned the position of the Communist Party, saying that it could not come to power without a military fight, and thus made efforts to arm itself, and at the same time transform each of the Party's members into both politicians and fighters. He also condemned their secret police, who worked inside and outside the Party. Within the Party, it controlled all members who were prevented from any personal relationships beyond the organization. Outwardly, it carried out various strategies to win over the Nationalists. According to Xu's analysis, the Communist Party would be able to defeat the GMD for two reasons. First, it recruited the peasant population, which consequently became part of their army. The GMD failed to establish its power in the countryside because it did not care enough for the people's struggle for survival, and were mostly occupied with getting the support from the domestic and international political elite. In addition, the CCP used "democracy" as a convenient tool to win domestic and Western support. Prior to assuming leadership over a particular area, it underlined the freedom of association. When it gained power, it then banned

people's independent activities and integrated all groups into the military wing of its organization (Chang et. al 2018, 63).

### Xu's Shift to Academia

After six months in Yan'an, Xu returned to Chongqing and became Chiang Kai-shek's advisor, confidant and secretary. In this position Xu was quickly promoted, and became the general's daily reporter on the functioning and strategy of the CCP. Even after the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1945, Xu remained an indispensable advisor about the strategies used against the CCP and the reformation of the GMD. He thus moved back to Nanjing with the Nationalist government.

According to Lee (1998, 65), the relationship between Chiang Kai-shek and Xu at the time was comparable to the typical traditional Confucian relationship between the ruler and one of his ministers. The later clash between Chiang Kai-shek and Xu was due to land reform, which was for Xu the only possible way to defeat the prevailing power of the CCP, while Chiang did not see this as a top priority. Instead, in order to maintain his political power, he sought allies among the bourgeoisie and warlords in the countryside. In August 1945, the war with Japan ended. To Xu, it became clear that the Nationalist Party would not sacrifice its new political power in order to carry out land reform (ibid.).

In 1949 Xu Fuguan, disappointed by the incompetence and corruption of the GMD as well as the manipulation and "inhumanness" of the CCP, decided to finish his political career, leave the GMD and dedicate himself fully to academic life. This shift happened when he met Xiong Shili, who became his teacher. In addition to his faith in nationalism and socialism, he began to believe in democracy, and was convinced that Confucianism, especially its humanism, was of key importance for the modernization of Chinese society.

The first "proof" of Xiong's influence was Xu's foundation of the academic journal *Academic Monthly* (*Xueyuan*) in 1947 in Nanjing. When the situation in the GMD deteriorated after the Sino-Japanese war, Xu's efforts for political reforms began to diminish. In the same year, Chiang Kai-shek asked him to establish secret combat units that would prolong the *status quo* of the Party's power, which also disappointed Xu. He considered that such plan was far from his original idea of a complete reorganization of the GMD. He gained the feeling that there was no one in the military or political circles who was honest and determined enough to save China, so he adopted Xiong's idea that academic research is the key to the nation's rehabilitation and that the solution to

China's problems lies among its intellectuals. Xu persuaded Chiang Kai-shek to financially support the *Academic Monthly*, whose aim would be the establishment of a connection between the government and university professors (Lee 1998, 82).

Xiong Shili believed that a democratic republic would promote creativity. He therefore encouraged his students to study biology, psychology, Western philosophy, sociology and political science, in order to interpret Chinese classical texts more scientifically. While most of Xiong's contemporaries considered that Chinese culture (or Confucianism) had nothing in common and Western culture and science, he argued they were compatible because Ancient Chinese thinkers had already begun with rudimentary scientific research. In addition, he was convinced that Confucian ontology and morality were as crucial as science for the contemporary world. This position inspired Xu, and after 1949 he chose the Chinese history of ideas as his main field of research, and studied it according to Xiong's recommendations. Despite his great respect for the teacher, Xu retained intellectual autonomy and developed his own method of academic research. However, Xu and Xiong shared their enthusiasm over socialism, patriotism and democracy.

In 1949, Xu and other Modern Confucians found exile abroad. Xu and Mou moved to Taiwan, Tang to Hong Kong and Fang to the United States. Xiong decided to stay in his homeland although Xu persistently tried to convince him to follow him out of the country.

In *Manifesto for Re-evaluation of Chinese Culture as a World Heritage* (*Wei Zhongguo Wenhua Jinggao Shijie Renshi Xuanyan* 為中國文化敬告世界人士宣言) initiated by Zhang Junmai (1886–1969) and written by Xu, Tang and Mou in 1958, the authors emphasized that the reason why Chinese people accepted Communist ideology so easily was mainly because of its resistance to the aggression of Western capitalism and imperialism. In its dynamic power, Communism managed to meet the Chinese social and political demands of the time. The anti-imperialist movement of the Chinese people was mixed with the premise of fighting for their own independence and survival, as well as with the desire to propagate their culture in the modern world. According to them, this positive requirement had been incorporated in the spiritual life of the Chinese people from time immemorial. For these authors, Marxism was therefore only a temporary tool (or phase) for achieving the positive demands and goals of the Chinese people.

In this context, however, the authors of the manifesto listed a number of reasons why, in their view, the dictatorship of the Communist Red Army would not exist for a long time as a guiding principle in Chinese cultural and political institutions in mainland China (Chang et al. 2018, 19). In the ideology of the Red Army the

authors saw a discourse that is contrary to human nature, and *a priori* violates the rights of individuals. According to them, Communist ideologies are dogmatic and constitute an obstacle to the free development of humanity. The danger of mutual slaughter and political purges is always present as a mode of action, because in Communist ideology everyone is treated as a potential enemy. Any expression of disagreement with the leaders' positions leads to a struggle for dominance among fractions. There is only one solution to avoid bloodshed, which is a free and democratic elective system along with the fundamental rule of law, with these laws put forth by the people themselves. Only in this way will the transfer of political power be possible through a peaceful process (*ibid.*)

## Conclusion

As we have seen in the article, Xu's argument of the Communist negation of humanness, which he experienced especially through the story of father and son, and which was carried out in the name of class struggle, was for him as well as for other Modern Confucians a crime against Chinese culture and human civilization in general. For Xu, in Communism a person is judged and valued exclusively on the basis of the social class to which he or she belongs. He believed that in Communist regimes all people are treated as impersonal figures, subordinated to the manoeuvring of their leaders. His trust in the Communist Party, which promised the building of a socialist China, was destroyed precisely because of its denial of humanness, which, in his opinion, is at the heart of Confucianism and the Chinese tradition in general. Therefore, for Xu as well as for other members of the second generation of Modern Confucians, the only possible way for modernization of China was the implementation of democracy based on Confucian tradition.

Xu Fuguan's position regarding the Communist regime in China and its alleged inhumanness and destruction of interpersonal relations seems to be very problematic, and in the first place too generalized. First of all, the horrible social situation in mainland China improved after the Communist Party defeated the government of the GMD. Not only because they managed to consolidate the rural areas and provide concrete solutions and actions regarding the survival of the people, but also in terms of strategic solutions concerning the future economic and social development of China. In this situation, the main problem was precisely the survival of the devastated and hungry people and not any concern as to how China could (or could not) become a democratic and modernized society. In this respect, Xu's accusation of the inhumanness of the Communist Party seems exaggerated and even inappropriate. After 1949, the connections between Taiwan and mainland China were cut off, and

thus Xu and other Modern Confucians were not aware what was going on in the Great Leap Forward and in the Cultural (or Great Proletarian) Revolution. Only at that point Xu's supposition of the danger of Communist ideology and its strategies concerning the consolidation of political power became relevant, and thus also plausible. In this sense, his fear of the destruction of interpersonal relations, devaluation of humans as well as the inhumanness of the Communist ideology set out by Mao Zedong and the Communist cadre seems almost visionary.

However, if Xu Fuguan's approach to political, social and economic analysis were really founded on Marxist grounds, then such a critique of the Communist regime in China in the mid-20th century would not be possible. In this regard, it becomes obvious that Xu Fuguan's critique of the Communist Party's struggle for resolving China's situation at that time was politically deficient, and often unjust.

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