CHAPTER 5

THE WHEEL TURNS FULL CIRCLE: FROM CRITICAL INHERITANCE TO ICONOCLASM. 1970-1974
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With the Anti-Confucius campaign began a new era in Chinese Communist historiography. It was a tremendous mass movement, once again involving, virtually every Chinese in questions of ideology, politics and history. The uniqueness of this campaign lies in the realization among a section of the CPC, in particular Mao Zedong, that verbal or written denunciations were not enough to overthrow the fundamental historical legacy represented by Confucius and that a handful of scholars or communists could never bring about the desired change. All the people had to be involved. Not only that, it was with reference to contemporary developments, tendencies and personalities, (Lin Biao in this case), that anti-Confucianism had any chance of success in influencing people's ideas. This was the rationale behind the fusion of the campaign to criticize Lin Biao (Pi Lin) with the anti-Confucius (Pi Kong) campaign. Thus Pi Lin pi Kong (PLPK) was launched, pi Lin transmitting a contemporaneity to pi Kong and pi Kong providing the continuity to pi Lin.

The objective here is historiography during PLPK. But a brief digression into the origins of pi Lin and the reasons behind its amalgamation with pi Kong, would be necessary. For this linkage raises a whole host of questions pertaining to the nature of historiography during PLPK: what were the similarities between Confucius and Lin Biao and whether there was any historical basis for comparing two figures so far removed in time and age; why Lin Biao was supposed to be the harbinger of Confucian ideas in socialist China; why, despite such ideas, he was able to stay in power for so long and why were such baffling historical issues as the reign and personality of China's first Emperor, Qin Shi huangdi and the Legalist philosophy were discussed in the PLPK campaign - to name only a few.

The reported coup by Lin Biao in September 1971, is passe now and the Lin Biao affair, however unsatisfactorily it may seem to researchers, has long been dispensed with. But the unexpected rise of Lin Biao from the rank of Defence Minister, to that of successor to the highest office and his equally unexpected
fall, remains till today a singularly bizarre phenomenon in the politics of Communist China. The antecedents of Lin Biao's rise to the top can be discerned in the unprecedentedly dominant role the People's Liberation Army (PLA) came to play in Chinese politics. Faced with an unexpectedly resistant Party apparatus, which had, as Mao perceived it, become increasingly bureaucratized and hence alienated from the masses, Mao turned to the backbone of the CPC - the PLA - and the Army's role was concretized in the 'Three Supports-Two Militaries'.

The rampant chaos in Chinese society, resulting from the violence of 1967-68, provided the PLA with the opportunity of playing an even more important role in running the country. In the first instance, the task of the PLA was twofold: first, to bring an end to the violence which was threatening the existence of the state system itself and secondly to assist the RGs. But the Army's attempt to achieve the former, totally negated, as it were, the latter. Far from stepping out to assist the Radicals in their revolutionary efforts, the Army seemed to be turning against them as it attempted to stabilize the situation by breaking up the organizations of the RGs, purging some of the leaders and sending a number of them to the countryside. This process was aided by the factionalism and absence of discipline among the RGs themselves. Instead of the mass based organization they had hoped to set up with the aid of the military, what was actually proposed to be set up was the 'Revolutionary Committee' (RC), based on a triple alliance of the workers, representatives of mass organizations and veteran Party members.

But the setting up of these RCs was prevented by the squabbling and the feuding of the RGs and therefore, pending their formation, the Army moved in to fill the gaps created by the non-functioning of the party and administrative organs and took up the task of discharging major political and civil functions on the provincial level. This resulted in a near total dominance of the PLA and catapulted Lin Biao and the Army on to the national...

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1 Not exactly unprecedented in the true sense of the word since during 1949-52, PLA personnel ran China's provinces through "military control committees" and "military and administrative committees" and also exercised their discretion in many matters. By 1954 however, when the civilian power structures were constituted, the military forthwith handed over responsibility. The circumstances are thus in no way comparable.

2 The phrase as a whole signifies active participation by the military men in the administration, as the military. 'Three Supports' is, support Industry, Agriculture and the Revolutionary Leftists. The 'Two Militaries' are Military Administration and control in economic units and military training to the R.G.s.
stage and from that time on, both consolidated their control of China. Nonetheless, it would not be out of place here to mention that by the end of 1967, Lin Biao did not command the allegiance of the Army as a whole. There was a growing divisiveness within the Army which was not only gradually undermining Lin’s authority, but also isolating him to some extent. This would go a long way in explaining why the coup attempted by him and his supporters failed.

By mid-1968, the PLA was performing all the core duties of the CPC; it even sent its own propaganda teams to the various functional organizations - the PLA had truly become a ubiquitous organization. Although in September 1968 a dramatic new policy regarding the military was initiated - “Chairman Mao has instructed that military cadres must be transferred to other posts and the armed force units must also be dispatched to other places” - this move only marginally affected the dominance of the military.

The Ninth Party Congress of the CPC held in April 1969 can easily be termed the high point of Lin Biao’s career. The new Party constitution approved on 14 April 1969 declared, “Comrade Lin Biao is Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s close comrade-in-arms and successor.” Lin’s promotion notwithstanding, there is some evidence to suggest that Mao was not entirely satisfied with the turn of events in the post-June 1968 period, especially with the manner in which the military was dominating the RCs and the marginalizing of the mass organizations. For although the Communique described the Ninth Congress as a “Congress of Unity” Mao, in his speech reportedly referred to “the problem of the army” which “exists in... (our).... work.” The “our work” obviously referred to the process of Party rebuilding, which was in fact the dominant aspect of Mao’s strategic plans regarding the CPC. In late-1967, even as the formation of the RCs was under way, the task of Party reconstruction was begun

6 Ninth Congress Documents in Ibid., pp. 16-49.  
7 Speech to the First Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee, Issues and Studies (Taipei), March 1970, pp. 95-97,
by 'liberating' those Party cadres who confessed their mistakes and accepted reeducation by the masses. ('Liberation' meaning allowing them to resume duties). This policy of rehabilitation of cadres constituted a very explosive theme during the PLPK campaign in 1973-74. But the factionalism among the RGs cast shadows on the process of 'liberating' the cadres, since those concerned were supported by one and opposed by another group. Although most of the RG organizations were disbanded by the military, there were still some provinces, notably Shanghai, where some of the RG leaders continued to be supported by the regional military commanders. Moreover, overall propaganda was still controlled by the CR Group at the Centre where Jiang Qing, Chen Boda and other radicals held sway. Immediately after the Ninth Congress therefore, these forces demanded a leading role in the Party Committees which were being reconstituted, because of their leading role in the CR.

Beginning in 1970, there was a systematic denunciation of these "class traitors" and "bad elements", accusing them of "anarchism", "lack of discipline", "bourgeois factionalism" and "petty-bourgeois thought." 8 There was also a repudiation of ultra-leftism, (the more active of the RGs were sent to the remote parts of the country), 9 many RGs were arrested and an article in Renmin Ribao cautioned:

"It is dangerous to succumb to the principle: 'if it is the will of the masses, it will be put into action'." 10

These tactics produced a drastic change. Far from implementing the proletarian revolutionary line of Chairman Mao, the Radicals were now seen as following the erroneous and harmful trend of ultra-leftism. 11 To what extent Lin Biao opposed or supported this move against the Left, is not very clear and needs more investigation. In fact Lin's position with regard to the Radicals seems to be rather complex. Till such time as the Army intervened in the political struggle, Lin Biao had not given any indications of being with the Radical group. He was a faithful follower of Mao Zedong, (evidenced in his efforts in politicizing the PLA), but also fully attentive to the Army's professional demands. During the CR however, he was increasingly identified with the Radicals

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8 CNA, No.790, 6 February 1970, pp.3-4.
10 Ibid, p.79.
11 Mao was also not exactly pleased with the RGs. In a meeting with five top RG leaders, Mao reportedly broke down and was quoted as saying to them: "You have let me down, and what is more, you have disappointed the workers, peasants and army men of China." As quoted in Parris Chang, "Mao's Great Purge", Problems of Communism, vol. 18, no. 2 March-April 1969, p.3.
and all his major pronouncements during this period are definitely in their favour. Whether it was his personal loyalty to Mao or considerations of power which motivated him, the fact remains that in the late sixties, he constituted an important link between the PLA and the Radicals and his cause was seen as synonymous with the Left by and large. And it must not be forgotten, that it was under his aegis, that in January 1966 Jiang Qing had been appointed as the PLA advisor on cultural matters, as a result of which she had been able to dictate policy measures in the field of Art and Culture.

The steps taken to contain the activities of the RGs notwithstanding, the reinstatement of most of the former Party cadres who had been accused of being ‘capitalist roaders’ and purged during 1966-67, was a major source of discontentment and tension among the Radicals. They felt particularly cheated, since in the first place they were used to destroy the old party machinery, but when the Party reconstruction began, they were not only left out, but were sent to the countryside. They were told that despite their active role in the CR - rather because of it - their outlook had not changed and they were still indulging in activities which obstructed the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao. The majority of the RGs were a prey to confusion and bewilderment.

These tensions surfaced somewhat unexpectedly at the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee at Lushan in August - September 1970. With the support of Chen Boda and some of the top military leaders, Lin Biao took up the question of re-establishing the post of State Chairman, which had been removed from the new draft Chinese People's Republic Constitution. This new draft in effect confirmed Zhou Enlai as the de facto head of government, since Zhou now outranked both of Lin Biao's government posts as Vice Premier and Minister of Defence. Mao apparently was no longer in favour of a single successor. Lin Biao probably realized that once the Army was relegated to the background, his own position would consequently be jeopardized.

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13 This was apparently a direct affront to Mao's views on the matter. He commented on this with considerable bitterness in his 'Talks' during August-September 1971. "Do not establish a State Chairman and I will not be State Chairman- I said this six times... Even if there had been six thousand sentences they wouldn't listen. My words... are not worth anything." "Summary of Chairman Mao's Talks to Responsible Local Leaders during His Tour of Inspection," (Hereafter cited 'Talks'), Chinese Law and Government (IASP, New York) (hereafter CLG), vol. 5, nos. 3-4, Fall-Winter 1972-73, pp.31-42.
When Mao had raised the slogan, 'Bombard the Headquarters' and utilized the PLA, he was doing so to combat revisionist tendencies and a bureaucratic style of functioning which he perceived would undo the efforts of twenty five years of revolutionary struggle. It had certainly never been Mao's intention that the exceptional role of the Army, demanded by the exigencies of the situation, should be anything in the nature of a rule. But after 1969, as the Party sought to reassert its control, the Army seemed loath to relinquish its newly acquired power and its role as institution builder and increasingly Mao identified this resistance and unwillingness with Lin Biao's growing ambitions. While it would be clearly misleading to take the view that Lin's rapid rise to the top could have been without Mao's support, it should be pointed out that Mao himself had never specifically stated who was to succeed him. Lin Biao had been projected as Mao's successor and Mao's attitude of seeming concurrence, was never actually made known. Despite the fact that Lin Biao had played a major role in building up the Mao cult in the sixties, it is rather obvious he was also deliberately fostering his own identification with the "great leader, great teacher, great helmsman" of China.

Having identified Lin Biao as the man responsible for obstructing Party rebuilding and attempting to usurp Party leadership, Mao was planning his own measures to deal with the situation. These consisted in starting a campaign against Chen Boda and in the reorganization of the Peking Military Region. Meanwhile the political pendulum at this stage was swinging back - by the end of 1968, revolutionary activity had definitely given way to reconstruction and the adoption of somewhat moderate policies - in the fields of Agriculture, Industry and Education. While speed was still being emphasized, the extremes were being condemned and now sought to be avoided. What was more important, the sanctioning authority was Chairman Mao. "Chairman Mao has said that it is essential to pay equal attention to the interests of the state, to collective interests and to individual interests," and that "we should pay attention to the masses' problems in real life."  

14 It could well be that he was stating a fact when he reportedly wrote to Jiang Qing that he was forced to "unwillingly concur with others on major questions against my will," 'Mao Tse-Tung's Private letter to Chiang Ch'ing', CLG, vol. 1, no.2, p. 97.
16 From August 1970, there was no mention of Chen in the press, nor was he seen publicly. Then in a joint editorial on the 55th anniversary of the CCP there was indirect criticism of Chen as the "big careerist" who claimed to be a "humble little foreigner" words used by Chen to describe himself at some time when he was head of the CR group. See, Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation. (Hereafter QCD) China Quarterly, No. 48, October-December 1971, p.787.
17 Mao himself outlined the measures he took in his "Talks", n. 13, pp. 37-38.
Despite the dramatic nature of the alleged coup by Lin Biao, the developments which led up to it, gave it a grim, inevitable logic. There was no way in which Lin Biao could have openly voiced his differences - if he had any - with Mao, without putting an end to his career. He no longer enjoyed Mao's favour either; it was only a matter of time before he too went the Peng Dehuai way. The various measures in the aftermath of the Lushan Plenum thus seemed to force his hand. Gathering together the remnants of his supporters, he reportedly designed an outline plan for a military coup entitled 'Project 571', in Shanghai. (571 in Chinese is a homonym for armed uprising). However as things transpired, Lin's daughter revealed his plans and he was forced to flee the country.

"Lin Piao died on 12 September 1971.... He fled.... towards the Soviet Union in a plane which crashed in the People's Republic of Mongolia."21

The foregoing analysis should not imply that the situation in the aftermath of the Ninth Congress was as clearcut and well defined. On the contrary, this phase was characterized by uncertainty and confusion. The attempt has been to identify the conflicting trends which emerged only at the Tenth Party Congress in August 1973. If anything, the situation became even more enigmatic after the failure of Lin's alleged coup, not the least due to the manner in which Beijing reacted to the entire affair.22 Above all, official confirmation of Lin Biao's death came nine months after the incident.

While Chinese sources did not give any reason for the time gap, it seems highly probable that an immediate publication of the news of Lin Biao's death and his conspiracy could have produces, a backlash of violence. The Army in 1971 was not a monolithic entity and this near incredible revelation could possibly have strained the PLA to breaking point.23 Secondly, the Investigation Team had a great deal of spadework to do - the documents which were reportedly recovered from the site of the plane crash had to be examined and the nature

20 Full text of 'Outline of Project 571' in CLG vol. 5, nos. 3-4, Fall-Winter 1972-73, pp. 46-57.
and background of the coup had to be established, supporting evidence gathered; Lin Biao’s personal history had to be reviewed and then presented in a convincing manner to the people, who only recognised Lin Biao as Chairman Mao’s successor. This necessitated a meticulous attention to details - a time consuming process. Thirdly, the creation of a public opinion against Lin Biao was a necessary pre-requisite to the announcement of his treachery. He would therefore have to be criticized throughout the country, without naming him. Whether on account of these reasons, the authorities were justified in withholding information is now a moot point.

1972 was declared as the year of the pursuit of the “Liu-type swindler”.\textsuperscript{24} Thus began the campaign to thoroughly denounce and criticise Lin Biao with a considerable broadening of its scope in the coming years as the details of the Lin Biao affair were gradually disseminated to every sector in China. Lin Biao was never mentioned or criticized by name - he was called a variety of opprobriums - political swindler, ambitionist, traitor, double dealer, conspirator, renegade, bourgeois careerist..... and always ‘Liu-type’. His name appeared in print only at the Tenth Party Congress of the CPC.

The major issues on which Lin Biao seemed to disagree with Mao Zedong, his ambitions and plans were set down in ‘Project 571’. Whether or not Lin Biao actually wrote ‘Project 571’ and whether or not changes were made in it, prior to making it public, the entire document is pervaded with a deep sense of dissatisfaction and injury with the situation prevalent in China of the mid-sixties. On the internal condition of China, the tone is extremely harsh and critical. The chaos was seen as the direct result of the Cultural Revolution, which was initiated by a “group of despotic men who oppressed the masses and ruthlessly silenced all opposition.” A great deal of ire was directed towards Mao and his style of leadership. Mao was called a “Trotsky” and “social fascist”\textsuperscript{25} and was also likened to Shi Huangdi, the first Emperor of China in the latter’s inhuman suppression of

\textsuperscript{24} CNA, No. 879, 5 May 1972,p.1. Interestingly, by not using the name of the person being denounced, the CPC is utilizing a fundamental element of Chinese culture- To be nameless is to be less than human and it is quite natural to imagine the worst of somebody who is nameless. The process of antipathy for the person against whom the criticism is being directed, is thereby facilitated, rather than being confusing or misleading. For more details on this theme see, L. Pye, ‘Communications and the Chinese Political Culture’, \textit{Asian Survey}, vol. 18, no. 3, March 1978, pp 221-46.

\textsuperscript{25} ‘Outline of Project 571’, n. 20, p.48.
dissent. Lin Biao also disapproved of China’s foreign policy. Above all, Lin expressed much admiration for Confucius and his precepts. The walls of his bedroom were reportedly lined with scrolls of Confucian sayings. On this last ground, Lin Biao was called the modern day Confucius and in this may be traced the genesis of PLPK. The masses were encouraged to wholeheartedly denounce all those who continued to worship Confucius, whose thoughts stemmed from Confucianism, who upheld conservatism, who worked for the restoration of the old order and who opposed the emerging revolutionary forces of progress - viz, Lin Biao. In fact, many of the criticisms which were directed against Lin Biao, most of the stands taken in the historical debates of the early seventies and the defense of the Cultural Revolution which was taken up, stem from a rebuttal of the charges made in ‘Project 571’, attributed to Lin Biao.

This aspect has led many commentators to suggest that PLPK was basically a fierce factional struggle by proxy, between the Radicals and the Moderates for gaining political control. Such a view does not take into account the various dimensions of the campaign within the broader ideological framework of “mass movements” in China. Right from the time since the expanding mass base of the Communists had begun to figure as a major force, mass movements have served as powerful vehicles for the education and participation of the Chinese masses in the political process. In fact, these mass movements have played a crucial role, not merely in terms of mobilization by the CPC, but in terms of the change they have managed to bring about in the participants, and the transformation they have facilitated in much of traditional Chinese thinking.

There is no denying that PiLinpiKong, or for that matter, other mass movements in the PRC, encompassed a power struggle as well. But to arrive at an objective conclusion - as far as that is possible, quite apart from the prima facie evidence - it is imperative to consider the ideology which lies at the heart of the issues involved.

The Anti-Confucius Campaign and the subsequent ‘Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius’ campaign has to

be examined essentially from three aspects: first, as yet another major effort by the CPC to uproot "old traditions, old customs, old manners and old habits" i.e. in terms of a revolution in the "superstructure," second, as an essential concomitant to the revolution in education and third, as an inevitable fallout of the revolution in historical studies.

The process of transforming the traditional Confucian culture has had a fairly long history in the twentieth century. Spearheaded at first by the May Fourth radicals and then by the Communists, Confucius and his philosophy has always been the most obvious target for those, who identified the progress of China with throwing off the shackles of the past. When the Communists took over, it was not merely Confucius, but an entire system that was being opposed, and for the first time the masses of the Chinese people were sought to be involved in ushering in change. In his 'Talks At The Yenan Forum on Literature and Art' in 1932, Mao Zedong pointed out the necessity of a total transformation in Chinese culture to combat the old feudal and bourgeois strains, for only then, "can we have a literature and art that are truly for the workers, peasants and soldiers, a truly proletarian literature and art."28

But the thinking which prevailed for more than two thousand years, cannot be uprooted in two or three decades. Leaving aside the illiterate masses who revered Confucius, a significant number of intellectuals who were in a position to evaluate the man and the myth impartially, continued to foster the perpetuation of the latter. But, the Anti-Confucianism which erupted in 1974, was the first of its kind — hitherto, denunciations of Confucius had been carried out by the literate, the intelligentsia; now the population of China, to a man, was sought to be involved.

The beginnings of the 'Criticize Confucius' campaign were somewhat academic and literary29 - in late 1969, a few articles were published criticizing the Confucian and bourgeois concepts of education. But these academic origins soon became obscured when anti-Confucianism acquired the dimensions of a mass-movement, incorporating social, political, religious, cultural and even economic issues. The denunciations

28 *SWMIT*, vol. 3, p. 78
29 These articles emerged as a reaction to the favourable assessments of Confucius' ideas on education, which we earlier saw dominating the discussions on Confucian philosophy during the fifties and early sixties.
of Confucius which occurred in 1969, were essentially directed at those pockets of resistance which persisted in their belief in Confucian ideas regarding Education, as opposed to proletarian education. These criticisms acquired momentum only by the end of 1972, but in September 1971, the Lin Biao affair took place. It was only in October 1973 that the first article connecting the criticisms of Lin Biao and Confucius came out. The first official confirmation of this linkage however came only in the shape of the 1974 Joint New Year editorial in the Renmin Ribao, Honggi and Jiefangjun bao, which emphasized that criticizing Confucius is a component part of the criticism of Lin Biao. Significantly, the Tenth Party Congress of August 1973, which is considered by some analysts to have launched the Pi Lin pi Kong campaign, did not mention Confucius at all. What was stressed however was, that the Chinese people, “should do a good job of criticizing Lin Biao and rectifying style of work...” and “make full use of that teacher by negative example.”

The articles by Prof. Yang Rongguo and Prof. Guo Moruo, are considered the ideological forerunners of the campaign, since they outlined the themes of the communist historiography on Confucius and the debates which followed. But these articles, along with others which appeared at the time, were debating serious historical questions, which is apparent in the meticulous footnoting. This obviously implied frequent reference on the part of readers, of such scholarly texts as The Analects, The History of Ancient Chinese Thinking, The Concise History of Chinese Philosophy etc. A first impression of these articles seems to be that they were intended for people whose knowledge of Chinese history, philosophy and literature was fairly high. Nevertheless, attempts were made to dispel such ideas once the ‘Criticize Confucius’ campaign was taken to the masses. As Honan Radio pointed out in September 1973, “whether or not we have read Confucian books, we cannot say that we have not been influenced by his reactionary ideology. We must not regard criticism of Confucius as something that concerns a few specialists, a few specific departments or a few fronts only... (it) is a cardinal issue involving the whole Party and all the people.”

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31 see n. 27.
Radio once again explained the necessity to involve workers, soldiers, peasants and intellectuals. “A revolution in the cultural sphere involves every individual and seeks to achieve the most radical rupture with traditional ideas.” Till such time as the masses were not actually involved, ‘Criticize Lin Criticize Confucius’ could never bring about the desired revolution in ideas, customs, manners and habits.

However, we shall begin with a summary of the themes in the articles of Yang Rongguo and Guo Moruo. Both historians agreed that the transition from the slave to the feudal system in Chinese society occurred between the Qun-qiu (Spring and Autumn) 770-476 BC and Warring States period 403-221 BC. The slave owning aristocracy, over a period of time and for a variety of reasons such as increased infighting among the various states, slave rebellions, development of new techniques in agriculture etc, gradually declined in strength and the system of private property came into being. It was in this period of change, considerably resisted by the slave owners, that Confucius was born, in a family belonging to the declining aristocratic class. The thinking of Confucius was therefore the expression of the philosophy of the ruling classes. The Confucian concepts such as ‘benevolence’, ‘filial piety’, ‘loyalty’ etc were geared toward the perpetuation of the interests of the dying aristocracy. Confucius opposed the ideology of the rising landlord class - Legalism - on the ground that, if the laws governing the relationship between the slaves and the aristocrats were codified, there would no longer be any respect for the rule of the slave owners and that it would destroy the system of order between the ‘noble’ and the ‘mean’. Legalism, propounded by Shang Yang, was adopted as the state philosophy by Shi Huangdi, the first Emperor under whose rule China was unified for the first time in 221 BC. The successes of Qin’s rule were attributed to his adoption of the progressive Legalist philosophy. The pre-49 interpretations of Shi Huangdi’s reign, portrayed him as a rather despotic and tyrannical ruler. But, in the articles which appeared in the early seventies, Shi Huangdi’s achievements are rather impressive. His infamous policy of ‘burning of books’ and the ‘burying of Confucian scholars’ was lauded as an instance of effective dictatorship over the reactionaries and restorationists in his regime. Despite representing the progressive forces, the Empire of Qin collapsed rather quickly; his failure according to Yang Rongguo, lying less in the ruthlessness of his rule which aroused the oppressed to rebel and more in not suppressing his opponents thoroughly.

35 Ibid.
This then was the progress of the history of pre Han China which was to be taught to the people of China. However may the arguments be debated and whatever be the manner of presentation, the refrain was constant: that Confucius was the propagator of a moribund, decaying philosophy, that whenever the followers of Confucius tried to violate the laws of history, they inevitably suffered, that these dying forces were always on the lookout for ways and means to stage a comeback and hence the utmost vigilance had to be exercised in suppressing them. The fate of Qin stood out as a grim warning.

It was attempted to impress upon the Chinese people that even in the period of socialist construction, there were class enemies who were trying to restore capitalism. "Wang Ming, Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao and Co. who represented the interests of the bourgeoisie invariably reflected this class character in practicing revisionism and resorting to the doctrine of Confucius and Mencius. This was especially true of Lin Biao who came from a landlord capitalist family and who all along refused to remould his world outlook." Therefore, "the criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius is a serious class struggle and a thorough going revolution in the realm of ideology in China today."36

After the 1974 joint New Year editorial, more official exhortation followed. Among the Chinese leadership, it was vice-chairman Wang Hongwen, who in a 'Report to the Study Group of the Central Committee', forcefully delineated the dominant theme of the day. "We must deepen the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius and combine the criticism of Lin Biao with the criticism of Confucius. To criticize the spreading poison of Lin Biao we must strike down the Confucian shop."38

The first major editorial on this theme appeared in Renmin Ribao on February 2nd 1974, in which it was also revealed that the "mass political struggle" was initiated and led by Chairman Mao. This editorial systematically listed the crimes of Lin Biao and Confucius. The extremely simple and narrative style of

this editorial, after the ponderous academic analyses, obviously implied that the masses were being drawn into the struggle. The earlier historical articles had made oblique and indirect comparisons between historical and contemporary personalities, the February 2 editorial was a direct comparison between Lin Biao and Confucius.

1. Confucius' reactionary programme for restoring the slave system: 'restrain oneself and restore the rites' was advertised by Lin Biao;
2. Confucius' preaching that some are born with knowledge with Lin Biao's reactionary concept of innate genius;
3. Confucius held that 'only the highest who are wise and the lowest who are stupid, cannot be changed' and Lin Biao also vilified the working people;
4. Confucius praised 'virtue', 'benevolence' and 'righteousness', Lin Biao "clamoured" that those who rule by virtue will thrive, those who rule by force will perish;
5. Confucius advocated the philosophy of 'recoiling in order to extend', Lin Biao was also quick to miraculously change according to his circumstances;
6. Confucius advocated the doctrine of the mean, Lin Biao blustered that this doctrine was reasonable;
7. Confucius propounded that those who labour with their minds govern those who labour with their hands, Lin Biao slandered cadres going to take part in physical labour as a disguised form of unemployment.

The editorial was thus geared to making the masses aware of the historical parallels and continuities and hence the need to exercise the utmost vigilance against their restoration. But, by the time this editorial came out, it was evident that yet another mass campaign had taken China by storm. Wang Hongwen's January 14 Report becomes virtually a kind of watershed in the campaign. The object in focussing upon Wang's Report is to emphasize, that it was the point where phase one of the Campaign ended and phase two began. While the
former was muted and low key and largely academic in nature, (although efforts at mobilization had begun), the latter was characterized by mass participation, great deal of activity and even some violence. With the realization that Phase Two began soon after Wang's Report, the significance becomes evident. Secondly, this distinction also serves to bring into view the undercurrent of factional struggle. Because along with the problem of mobilization, the Radicals were confronted with the graver matter of the kind of verdict that was being passed on the Cultural Revolution. Slowly and steadily, the achievements of the CR were, as they saw it, being dismantled, and the Radicals were being pushed back. But, the division of the PLPK campaign is not a watertight one - the phasing is primarily for convenience in study, in which the continuum should not be lost sight of.

It must be kept in mind that by the end of 1973, a new radicalism had begun to sweep the country, (though sporadic efforts were seen in 1972). In every sector, the paramountcy of ideology, more accurately, of 'correct' ideology, through the two-line struggle, was sought to be reinforced. Education, Culture, Literature, Art, Economy — everywhere it was emphasized that "if the (political) thought is not raised higher, if the Line is neglected then even if the economy shows temporary success, there is a danger that the class enemy may gain power. Did we not see this happen before and during the Great Cultural Revolution."

The crux of the matter was thus the 'two-line' struggle. The study of class struggle and the two-line struggle in history was essential precisely in the pointers it provided, for the present class and the two-line struggle. A heightened awareness of, and vigilance in, the two-line struggle, had to be preceded by an understanding of the crucial importance of 'correct' ideology in raising political consciousness. The emerging radicalism and increasing revolutionary fervour, as the radicals perceived it, hinged on the denial and negation of the "new born" things and reversal of the verdict on the CR. To rejuvenate the situation and PLPK as well, a restructuring was required. The broad guidelines for subsequent action as given in Wang's Report were:

(i) The linking of historical criticism with the criticism of contemporary society (i.e. the criticisms of Lin Biao and Confucius);

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40 *CNA*, No. 937, 19 October 1973, quoting *Renmin Ribao* editorial of 15 August.
(ii) The primary responsibility in taking this linkage and the lessons thereof to the masses, would rest with the rank and file of the CPC;

(iii) The framework of action was to be similar to the first stages of the CR.

The kind of activity which was sparked off in February-March 1974, did recall China of the mid-sixties and it was Literature, Art and Culture which once again scored the parallel. The radical patron of Culture, Mme Jiang Qing once again came to the fore after having lain low from 1969 to 1973. In January-February 1974, The North China Area Literature and Art Festival was held in Beijing, in which a play, *Going Up to Peach Peak Three Times* was put up by the Cultural authorities of the Shaanxi province. This play was viewed as a critique of launching a CR on an ill-prepared China. Subsequently, many other groups and associations across the country brought out denunciations of this and other plays. The Model Revolutionary Plays of Jiang Qing once again became the epitome of the right approach and henceforth, the only correct line to be followed in the field of Culture.

But a rather significant development occurred almost simultaneously with the intensification of the campaign and which would be well to keep in mind. Amidst the plethora of radical injunctions of "going against the tide", "it is right to rebel" and "conditional obedience" etc, there appeared on January 12, an article in *Renmin Ribao* entitled, "Obey Directives in All Actions", which sought to establish an identity between the spirit of going against the tide and obedience - between revolution and production. But by then, PLPK had become a mass campaign. On the one hand, Party Committees were warned not to in any way dampen the enthusiasm of the masses in the criticisms and on the other, meetings and rallies were held in the Universities, factories, Army and communes all over the country. The criterion for being considered good or bad was whether an individual approved or not of the CR and its "newly born" things. PLPK thus became not just a continuation but a necessary result of the CR. With articles, wall-posters, study sessions, broadcasts, rallies, meetings

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41 *Renmin Ribao* article, Chu Lan, (literally meaning First Wave and it is said, was a pseudonym for Mme. Jiang Qing herself), "Comment on the Shaansi Opera, Going Up To Peach Peak Three Times," February 28, 1974. Trans. in *Peking Review*, no. 11, 15 March, 1974, pp. 7-9. This article criticized the opera as a "very poisonous weed that negates the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and tries to reverse the verdict on the renegade Liu Shao-ch'i's counter-revolutionary revisionist line." p. 8
and criticisms being simultaneously encouraged and promoted by the official organs in a country as large as China, the effect was bound to be tremendous.

Reporting on the course of the campaign, an editorial in *Renmin Ribao* on February 20 stated, “Under the leadership of the Party’s Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao, a large scale movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius is developing vigorously throughout the country. Workers, peasants, soldiers, revolutionary cadres and revolutionary intellectuals in many places are now first and foremost concentrating their criticisms on Lin Biao’s crimes in following Confucius’ line of “restraining oneself and restoring the rites” and trying to restore capitalism. This has brought quite good results.” 42

Indeed, in the opening months of 1974, numerous reports from the fields of Industry and Agriculture, indicated the fight by the workers and peasants against revisionist activities and restorationism. With March came a blitz of *dazubao’s* (big character poster) attacking Party leadership, criticizing the authoritarianism of the local and regional Party leaders and generally voicing complaints and grievances. Obviously, discussions of what happened two thousand years ago would serve no purpose unless there were lessons for the present.

In the first quarter of 1974, the situation was both intriguing and complicated and defied attempts at identifying the controlling factors. Different political overtones emanated from different provinces making the efforts at demarcating the line between the Radicals and the Moderates an extremely convoluted task. The directives from the higher echelons too, present a bewildering variety of injunctions. “The Right to Rebel”, “Party Discipline”, “Going Against the Tide”, “Unity”, “Capitalist Tendencies” “Material Incentives” etc. Cadres had been instructed not to obstruct the development of the Campaign in any manner - but at the same time, they had to take care that production was not affected. As early as January 1947, a *Renmin Ribao* directive had demanded obedience to the Party in all things, but also required them, (the cadres), to face the severe test of daring “to let the masses loose” in PLPK. It would therefore seem logical to conclude that, if the Campaign was more or less directed by the CPC, no single faction could gain the upper hand.

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In any case, in the latter half of the first quarter of 1974, the campaign, particularly in the provinces, seemed to acquire a momentum of its own and appeared to be largely unaffected by and indifferent to, the power struggle at the Centre.\textsuperscript{43} As the campaign proceeded and developed, changes in emphasis and interest were noticeable at the provincial levels. The protagonists in the provincial debates were less interested in Central debates. Instead they became involved with the issues they were faced with, in their daily lives and in as much as they saw a negation of the "new born" things at their level. From time to time, directives were issued by the Centre in an attempt to broaden the base of their understanding. The study circles organized by the Party Committees went a long way in outlining and explaining the various issues, but when it came to implementation, the orientation was localized. Almost all aspects of the domestic situation were placed in the framework of PLPK. The magnitude becomes fairly obvious in the fact that everywhere, everything was sought to be placed in the context of the criticism of the 'old' and the decadent, i.e. Confucianism, and a defence of the 'new'. The thrust of the campaign now seemed to be less historical and more contemporaneous.

Beginning in April and gathering intensity in the next two months, the injunctions from the Party Centre stressed such concepts as 'Unity', 'Party Leadership' and 'Production'. As signified earlier, appeals for unity and reminders not to neglect production were more or less intermittent since 1969, but they acquired greater fervour during early 1974 as production output seemed to be in some peril. Increasingly brought into prominence at this juncture, was Mao's precept which had been widely publicized during the CR, that "there is no fundamental conflict of interests within the working class." Now therefore, both in the countryside and in the cities, PLPK had to go hand in hand with production, which was on no account to be jeopardized. And in the fresh course of action outlined, were two notable salient features: (1) It was essential that leaders at all levels stood in the front rank of the movement, and (2) that a number of backbone elements were trained.

In fact, the handling of PLPK as a whole, reflects the hand of experience. It was almost as if the desirability of revolution was nonetheless accompanied by the necessity of avoiding past mistakes. Very few desired the disruptive violence of the CR, hence right from the beginning, injunctions were delivered which in effect tended

\textsuperscript{43} For account of international press coverage of the Campaign, see Donald Koblitz, "'The Future is Bright, the Road is Tortuous': On the Campaign to Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius," \textit{CLG}, vol. 10, no. 4, Winter 1977-78, p. 71.
to control and check the enthusiasm of PLPK, or at any rate, modify it. Innumerable articles in Renmin Ribao, while lauding the CR, warned against the repetition of its glaring errors like factionalism, disunity and infighting. In March came another piece of sobering advice. “During criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius, the time of sowing must not be missed.”44 This is not to suggest that the campaign was drawing to a close, but that there seemed, in May 1974, to have been a fresh restructuring of priorities in the higher echelons, in which the Moderates seemed to have had the greater say.

4th May 1974 was the fifty-fifth anniversary of the MFM and the significance of the latter in the midst of Pi Lin Pi Kong was celebrated with an unusually large number of demonstrations, meetings and rallies. The tone of the Renmin Ribao editorial, “Commemorate the 55th Anniversary of the May Fourth Movement” to mark the occasion, seemed to convey the impression that PLPK was certainly not approaching an end.45

Even so, by the end of May, PLPK took a new turn. The primary aim of the campaign — that of raising the ideological level and revolutionary consciousness — was sought to be achieved in a measure which largely precluded actual physical activity as far the criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius was concerned - in the creation of squads of theorists, “to strengthen the ranks of the Marxist theorists.” This was done, said a Hongqi commentary, to “ensure the domination by Marxism of all spheres...” to promote struggle-criticism-transformation on all fronts in the correct manner, to deepen the criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius and to oppose revisionism.46 From then on, there were numerous reports about the creation, role and training of these theorists all over the PRC - they were “springing up like bamboo shoots after spring rain.”47 There were the ‘worker-theorists’ in Gansu, the ‘peasant-theorists’ in Heilonjiang, theorists in a Kirin store and a Zhejiang factory and ‘fighter-theorists’ in the PLA. After first raising the theoretical level of their own Marxism-Leninism, these theorists would then take it to the masses, so that apart from their immediate role as a ‘backbone’ force in PLPK, they could in the long run, “enable Marxism to dominate all spheres of the superstructure, including philosophy, history, education, literature, art and jurisprudence.”48

44. Renmin Ribao, 3 March 1974.
45 Trans. in Peking Review, no. 19, 10 May 1974, pp. 17-18.
47 QCD, China Quarterly, No. 59, July-September 1974, p. 629.
48 As quoted in Peking Review, n. 46, p. 5.
Criticized by the Soviet Union as a move which obviously indicated lack of popular or mass support, the creation of the 'theorist squads' was nevertheless soon established as a policy. It seemed fairly logical that as more and more people participated in the movement, someone had to tell them the basics. These squads were even sought to be included in the 'new born' things and more and more squads were formed at the grass roots level, testifying to their popularity. Together with production, the training of a "mammoth contingent of worker-peasant-soldier theorists" dominated the Chinese media for the next two months.

In the first place, these theorists, by holding study sessions with the intellectuals, attempted to comprehend the various facets of Marxism-Leninism and the issues involved in the PLPK campaign. Then they put down their understanding in simple language, which could easily be grasped by the masses. The syllabus of these theorists, at first glance seems rather formidable. They had to "...study works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and by Chairman Mao diligently....It (was) also necessary to study history, including some works by the writers of the Legalist school and apply the Marxist stand, viewpoint and method in doing so." It could be argued that chronologically, the creation of the 'theorist squads' should have come before the criticism was encouraged on a mass scale. Nonetheless, it is a moot point now.

In July 1974, in another sudden move, PLPK was linked up with the production drive. During June and July, rather good reports of the economy, indicating the "excellent situation" prevailing all round began to come up, but which at the same time warned people not to neglect their work in any way. Production was not to
slacken or be affected. A report from Jiangsu urged upon the people to "stay in the working places - the revolution must be carried on in the spare time." It was also stressed that production lagged where there was a lack of sufficient revolutionary spirit. It therefore followed, that Party leadership had to be obeyed in all things and the political line emanating from the Centre had to be followed. And what did emanate from the Centre at this point of time was the injunction: "Grasp the Revolution, Promote Production." But, to most people there seemed to be an inherent contradiction in this precept. This apparent paradox was sought to be explained in an editorial carried by *Xinhua Daily*.

"...Revolution is the motive power of production, revolution moves production, if revolution is carried on well, production will be more, better, cheaper, if revolution is not carried on well, production will deviate from the correct direction, production indeed cannot be carried on. Revolution and production are in a dialectical relation." 54

Ostensibly, "grasp revolution, promote production" seemed the perfect balance between the two major tasks before the Chinese people. But in effect, it created difficulties for the provincial leadership in the matter of implementation. If studying was emphasized, they were accused of neglecting production, and if they encouraged production, they were guilty of the grave error of political deviation. In striking out a medium, the leaders in the provinces were undoubtedly called upon to exercise a great deal of ingenuity, though the via media was often at the expense of production.

In October, on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, a joint editorial came out in *Renmin Ribao*, *Hongqi* and *Jiefangjubao* entitled, 'Forward Along The Great Road Of Socialism' which definitely marked a turning point in PLPK in that the key to deepening the movement now lay in reading and studying "conscientiously and exerting ourselves to digest works by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and by Chairman Mao...we must continue to criticize Lin Biao's counter revolutionary line, and specially for the present, study Chairman Mao's military writings and criticize Lin Biao's bourgeois military line." 55

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52 The only report which actually admitted that production had dropped when the Campaign began, was from a Canton Steel Rolling Plant in mid-July. Cited in *CNA*, no. 970, 16 August 1974, pp. 6-7.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., p.6.
55 QCD, *China Quarterly*, no. 61, March 1975, p. 176.
as well, more or less put a stopper to actual physical struggle; the emphasis was on study, more particularly, the study of history. Further, development of the Marxist theoretical workers contingent was to continue.

This editorial notwithstanding, PLPK had indeed passed the active stage. All other articles merely underscored the need for further study. Even instances of sporadic radicalism could not camouflage the fact that mass participation and active mobilization no longer characterized PLPK. Apart from innumerable articles and editorials on the need to strengthen unity, security and to create contingents of theorists, reports also began to speak of the simmering down of the campaign. 56

The national newspapers however continued to exhort the masses to “deepen” the struggle to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, to carry the struggle through to the end. As Koblitz remarks in a very pithy comment: “...ideological campaigns in the PRC never die, rather they linger on to confound the obituary writers and confuse the editorialists.” 57 Thus, not only the Lin Biao clique of traitors, renegades and revisionists were denounced continuously but many other activities going on in other parts of the country, were closely linked to the campaign. 58

These stray incidents served only little purpose, for with the ebbing away of the mass character of the movement, PLPK seemed to have lost its raison d’etre. While no official statement even resembling something like a summing up emerged, an editorial in Renmin Ribao on 28 November 1974 could probably approximate to a kind of official assessment. According to this editorial the excellent situation which existed in the country then, had been “brought about in the course of the struggle and is an outcome of the criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius...has consolidated the gains of the GPCR and its far reaching influence on China’s socialist cause has manifested and will continue to manifest itself more and more wholly.” 59

56 Koblitz, no. 43, p. 78.
57 Ibid, p. 79
58 See QCD, China Quarterly n. 55 p. 182
But *PLPK*, as one observed it in mid-1974, comprising historical debates and their contemporary ramifications and involving the masses, did not recur. In fact, the historical articles which were published in late 1974 seemed to be once again of a higher degree of literary and academic sophistication. Further debate on Confucius and his modern day representatives seemed to have more or less withdrawn to the intellectuals and their domain.

Even after the upheaval of the Cultural Revolution, during which China's schools and Universities had been closed for upwards of five years, education continued to be a field of controversy. The educational institutions reopened in 1970, (some schools had begun to teach somewhat earlier), but the revolutionary fervour subsided only fitfully; teaching was intermittent and did not resume in a regular manner until 1972. But even after five years of revolution and convulsion in the field of education, traditional ideas regarding education and its methods, continued to persist among many members of the academic community - the source of these ideas was Confucius and the Confucian literati, who had flourished unchallenged for upwards of two thousand years. Thus, the anti-Confucianism which surfaced in 1970 has essentially to be seen in the light of, opposition to 'proletarian education' that had cropped up in China's educational institutions. While the reinstatement of former teachers and professors, who had been removed from their posts in the late sixties, was facing problems, resumption of classes was also still struggling with tricky political questions: What was to be taught, how was theory to be made relevant to the practical aspect of everyday life, how could teachers avoid the pitfalls of bourgeois learning which emphasized 'theory' etc.

The debate between the moderates and the radicals revolved around the basic question: 'Should University education serve the day's practical purposes only or should theory be taught?' How much of the traditional teaching programme should be omitted and how much retained, continued to be discussed. Most of the changes which had been effected were the result of the struggle during 1965-1968, but it was evident that these reforms were highly controversial, and even more difficult to put into practice. Between June 1970 and July 1971,

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60 Between June 1970 and July 1971, various articles in the Chinese press continued to debate the meaning of 'revolution in education'. Even after the long struggle, the problems in education were still seen as 'open questions' and their resolution was "a task of a long-term struggle." CNA, No. 1008, 12 January 1973, p. 5.
various articles in the Chinese press continued to discuss the ‘revolution in education’, the success of which was seriously jeopardised by the ‘old’ Confucian ethics still extant among the older generation of the intellectuals. And they were not the only ones— even in the ranks of the comparatively younger academicians, there were many who neglected the revolutionization of thought and “clung” to feudal, bourgeois and revisionist ideologies.

The eighth issue of the *Hongqi* in July 1970 brought out a special edition on the “revolution in education” and there was yet another edition in the June 1971 issue. In the Editor’s foreword to the latter, there was a list of the various contradictions which had to be resolved before the proletarian education system could be definitely established and which clearly reveals the range and extent of the prevailing problems and differences. These contradictions emerged in the relationship between—

(1) Politics and Vocational Study.

(2) Leadership and Masses and Unity and Struggle.

(3) Destruction and Construction.

(4) Formal Study and Learning other things.

(5) Theory and Practice.

(6) Using, Remoulding and Training the Three- in -one combination teaching staff.

(7) Self reliance and running Schools through State aid.

(8) Popularizing education and raising Education standards.

(9) Classroom and society.

(10) Revolution on the Education Front and Revolution in other fields. 61

While these articles attacked the opposition to the revolution in Education, other articles striking at the root of the evil - Confucius - also began to appear. Among the earliest were those which appeared in the June and July issues of *Hongqi* in 1969, which attacked the ‘Ghost of Confucius’ Shop’ and explained actual class struggle. On January 19, 1971, *Renmin Ribao* published “Criticism and Repudiation of the Educational Thinking of Confucius” by the Writing Group of the CPC Shandong Provincial Committee. These were all part of the

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ongoing 'Revolution in Education'. More importantly, the opposition to this revolution was seen as stemming from those studying the Arts. In the mid and late sixties, the attacks by the Radicals had been particularly severe on the students and teachers of the Social Sciences. The latter had moreover to bear up with Mao Zedong's devastating indictment of their usefulness in Chinese society: "Students of History, Philosophy and Economics have no concern with studying reality, they are the most ignorant things of this world."62 Before these criticisms could acquire momentum, the Lin Biao affair took place. It was only after PLPK had spent its fury, so to say, the criticisms of Confucius once again came back to the academic sphere.

PLPK - as did the CR before it - saw tremendous activity among the youth of China, increasingly brought into focus in the national news media. In the schools, the young students exhibited considerable "rebelliousness" at the gradual erosion of revolutionary ideals in the day to day teaching, which the CR had attempted to bring about. The teachers were criticized for favouring the old techniques of teaching and studying in the classrooms, for emphasizing book learning rather than practical work, wanting absolute obedience from their students, reintroducing the old system of examination and in general, not implementing the new revolutionary policy of open door teaching.

In this matter, a letter from a fifth grade student at the Number One Primary School in Peking was published in Renmin Ribao on December 28, 1973. This letter was in defiance of the unquestioned sway of the teacher in the classroom 63 and it immediately inspired innumerable other school children to similarly turn against what they perceived in their own fashion, the erroneous tide. Thus began the exposing of revisionist concepts such as "teachers' dignity and intellectual education comes first", "reference to text books in examinations is cheating", "practical work is unnecessary in learning" etc, which had gradually been staging a comeback.

Then of course, there was the case of the rebellious Liaoning youth, Zhang Diesheng and his "provocative answer to an examination". This was published in Liaoning Daily on July 19, 1973. Zhang had turned in a blank sheet in the examination and on the back of the sheet had expressed his inability to answer the questions since

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63 QCD, China Quarterly, no. 58, April-June 1974, p. 415.
he had spent eighteen hours a day in manual labour. As a result he was much too fatigued to study and he did not wish to waste the time of the examiners by giving random answers. But, “one source of comfort to me is that I have let nothing interfere with collective work.”  

64 Renmin Ribao lauded this provocation and concluded that “all proletarian revolutionary fighters must have this spirit of going against the tide.” 65 It was further contended that this was not a question of method but a question of line. The Radicals were striking back at the retreat from the policies of the CR, which were sought to be extended into the field of education.

There were numerous other instances - another one should suffice: Zhong Shimin, a student from the Army unit, voluntarily gave up his college seat because he had secured it on the basis of a recommendation from his father to the University authorities. In his application he wrote that he “gradually came to realize that entering by the ‘back door’ is no trifling matter, but is an important question concerning what line to follow...This is a question of line...If such ideas are allowed to develop, they will lead to the emergence of a privileged class and revisionism...”

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Then there was the case of the xia xiang youth, who rebelled against the idea of being transferred back to his home city from the village. In a letter to his father, who had advised him to accept the transfer, he wrote about how “disturbed” he was at that idea. “...it is not in compliance with the real, the most fundamental and the greatest interest of my family and myself. This most fundamental interest is eliminating the system of private ownership and breaking with old concepts.”

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Another notable feature in Education during PLPK, was the re-entry — considerably reinforced — of the Worker Propaganda Teams in China’s schools and universities. The Dangdong Municipal CPC Committee organized a forum for “all members of the worker-propaganda teams on the educational, literary, art and health fronts”, at which it was decided that:

64 Text of letter in CLG, vol. 7, no. 3, Fall 1974, pp 87-90.
65 Yang P'u, “In praise of ‘A Provocative Answer to an Examination”, CLG, Ibid., p. 93.
66 Trans. in Ibid., pp. 94-100
67 QCD, China Quarterly, No. 57, January-March 1974, pp 211-12
(a) schools should serve not merely as instruments for acquiring knowledge but also the interests of the proletariat;

(b) the primary task of the worker-propaganda teams was to strengthen Party leadership, destroy the elite character of the institutions and make them instruments of the proletariat;

(c) it was necessary to carry the proletarian educational revolution through to the end by implementing the Party’s basic line. 64

The charge of deterioration in Education standards was sought to be countered by highlighting the achievements of the new crop of freshly graduated peasant-soldier-worker students and the xia-xiang youth. It was stressed that they could achieve such brilliant results only through revolutionary practice. 69 Much publicity was also given to the more than 2000 students of Qinghua University who had concluded their studies in the high tide of PLPK. Along with this, was given a striking list of the achievements of these graduates as they returned to the rural areas to apply their knowledge with beneficial results. Many favourable assessments were made of the new educational system, which combined teaching, productive labour and scientific research, and which was now taking shape after an intense period of struggle in China’s colleges of Sciences and Engineering. This new system consisted of the establishment of links between colleges and factories, or rural people and communes, thereby integrating college education with the three revolutionary movements — class struggle, production and scientific experiment.

There was another important policy measure with regard to the shang shan xia xiang youth. 70 According to the figures in Chinese newspapers, by 1973 over 8 million youths from the urban areas had been initiated since 1968. Barring 2 million who had returned to the urban areas in order to complete their education, of the rest it was expected, that they would permanently settle in the villages and countryside. As of 1974, there

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68 QCD, China Quarterly, No. 59, July-September 1974, p. 637.
70 Meaning, 'up to the mountains and down to the countryside.' Refers to the policy of sending the urban educated youth to the rural areas to learn from the peasants so that their education did not comprise merely a university degree. On social attitudes of the xia xiang youth see, D. Gordon White, "The Politics of the Hsia-hsiang Youth", China Quarterly, no. 59, July-September 1974, pp. 491-517.
seemed to be no slackening of its pace. The increasing number of correspondence courses being offered by the various universities during 1973-74 for the *xia xiang* youth in order to “help them link their study of revolutionary theory and cultural and scientific knowledge with practice” seems to support this view. Like others, this policy had its share of problems - the most disturbing being the attitude of youth and peasants which led to adjustment problems. It was hoped, that with the kind of ideological remoulding that was going on during *PLPK*, the adjustment process would be facilitated.

In the number five issue of *Hongqi*, the RCs of Beijing and Qinghua Universities expressed the hope, that “if the movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius goes a step further in smashing the ‘golden rule’ of old education, then it will certainly generate an even more profound and extensive revolution with respect to the system of education, the contents of teaching, the method of teaching, the relation between the teacher and the student and many other aspects clearing the way for the strong and healthy growth of the socialist new born things.”

Insofar as the rural areas were concerned, in the course of time it was discovered, that popularizing education was greatly facilitated if instead of asking the peasant to attend classes, the classes were brought out into the fields. Other measures widely publicized were: increasing participation of the poor and lower middle peasant in the matter of teaching, open-door schooling and correspondence courses in the countryside.

The criteria for the enrolment of students in China’s institutions of higher learning, for long a subject of controversy, also came in for a more radical revision. Hundreds of meetings were held at the provincial and municipal levels all over the country and it was decided that the methods to be adopted were: voluntary application, recommendation by the masses, approval by the leadership and review by the schools. This could be

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71 It was estimated that about two million educated youth from the cities would be part of the *shang shan xia xiang* campaign each year. Figures cited from *Chinese Education* (IASP, New York) (hereafter CE) vol. 7, no. 1, Spring 1975, p. 3.

72 In 1973, a book was published in China: *Have A Warm Concern For the Growth of Educated Youths Going Down To The Countryside* designed both, to promote the Campaign, as well as make the people aware of its inherent problems. Ibid., p. 4.

73 Ibid., p. 8.

74 By means of this innovation, there was a notable advance in the “course of the struggle against the revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao and the struggle against the doctrine of Confucius and Mencius which for the last several thousand years have despised peasants and labour.” *The Revolutionary Committee of the North Western Agricultural Institution, “Bring the Agricultural University Down to the Countryside”*. Trans. in Ibid., pp. 22-32.
supplemented by investigations, visits, fora and discussions, and was all part of the tremendous revolution in Education.

In the afore mentioned Beijing and Qinghua University article, it was pointed out, "in our country, the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius have had traditional influence, especially among the intellectuals. The shape of many teachers' bourgeois world outlook aside from having its social class origins, can also be found to have its ideological origin in the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius." The key to it all was therefore a sincere class feeling and an adequate comprehension of the 'two-line' struggle. At the same time, one had to be on guard against the bourgeois and revisionist tendencies, which could only be effectively achieved by wholeheartedly participating in PLPK and concentrating at the same time on the tasks ahead.

The criticism of Confucius' educational ideas in the PLPK Campaign, stands in total contrast to the earlier decades when it was widely believed to be the only redeeming feature of his philosophy. Now, the arguments of the fifties and early sixties were not only denounced, but the problems in the way of changing the educational system were seen as resulting from the persistence of revisionist and restorationist ideas. The widely held belief in the early sixties, that it was Confucius who was responsible for making education available to the masses was now decisively dismissed. On 27 September 1973, Tang Xiaowen wrote an article in Renmin Ribao contesting Confucius' exclusive claim to setting up a private school where all could study. The Spring and Autumn period he said, saw the establishment of many schools and Confucius' school was one among many. The reason he was lauded during the feudal era was because his education served the repressive and reactionary policies of the ruling class. The Mass Criticism Group of Beijing and Qinghua Universities also pointed out that Confucius' "work in education was an important aspect of his activities for counter-revolutionary restoration."

A number of other articles appeared, variously condemning the elite character of Confucius' education, his use of education as a tool in upholding the exploitative ruling classes and suppressing the slaves, the

75 QCD, China Quarterly, no. 60, October-December 1974, p. 824.
76 n. 36, p. 13.
78 Renmin Ribao, 26 January 1974.
authoritarian basis of the teacher-disciple relationship he advocated, the down-grading of the role of labour in education and for having instructed his students to make education a means for becoming an official. Clearly, there were absolutely no grounds for inheriting the pedagogic views of Confucius.

The Anti-Confucius Campaign encompassed not just a grass roots criticism of Confucius and his representative in contemporary times, Lin Biao, but also denoted a rather active phase in the revolution in historical studies. The themes in the profusion of historical material produced in this period, were mainly three: Criticism of Confucius and Lin Biao, glorification of Qin Shi Huangdi and the struggle against restorationism. The major issue in the Campaign was that of struggle, which ever since the sixties, had dominated every aspect of Chinese thinking. In the first place, the progressiveness of ‘class struggle’ and its role as a major force in the march of history, had to be instilled even more strongly in the thinking of the intellectuals and historians. For the latter, ‘struggle’ was to be the leitmotif in the new historiography as the necessary means to the progress towards Communism. For the Chinese people, emphasis on ‘struggle’ could not be more essential. Even though a revolution had taken place, until the final goal was attained, there had to be a constant struggle against the revisionist and restorationist forces trying to stage a comeback and restore the old order.

The sixties, as we have seen, were taken up by a tremendous effort at reforming the Chinese historians in a epochal CR. Then came the Lin Biao affair and for the first time, criticism of Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao, because of their belief in Confucian values, made their appearance. Confucius now became synonymous with restorationism and all those who continued to propagate Confucianism in Socialist China were, ipso facto, restorationists.

In mid-72, more written works appeared underscoring the necessity of world history - the appeal being made particularly to the youth of China. “Chairman Mao has taught us: ‘No political party can possibly lead a great revolutionary movement to victory unless it possesses revolutionary theory and a knowledge of history and a profound grasp of the practical movement’.” Thus, failure or victory of the revolution hinged on how well one was aware of world history. Not only this, the Chinese Revolution was part of the world revolution, “all the
revolutionary tasks we undertake are closely linked to the revolutionary struggles of the world's peoples." 79 Apart from attempting to kindle interest in world history, these articles aimed at establishing the one-ness of Chinese and non-Chinese history.

"The world today is a development of the world yesterday... reading of world history will help us obtain a better understanding of the fact that the Chinese people and the oppressed people and nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America shared the same experience in the past and are facing the same common task of struggle against Imperialism." 80

In fact, these articles urging the importance of history, made the following salient points:
(a) that on a thoroughgoing and deep study of history depends the success of the revolution;
(b) that it is not just Chinese history that has to be studied, but world history as well, since it would "benefit the promotion of mutual support between the people of China and other countries in revolutionary struggles and this will help in the still greater development of world revolution";
(c) that although the study of the past was essential for a balanced comprehension, it was the present which had to be emphasized;
(d) the tools for the most correct study were Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought; the key, class struggle.

Further historical works appeared in mid-72 which have a direct bearing on the amalgamation of the criticisms of Confucius and Lin Biao, even though their relevance to the linkage was not immediately evident. (In fact, it was not until a year later, in August 1973, that their role in PLPK became clear.) As already mentioned, the first article connecting the two criticisms appeared in October 1973. Various explanations have been put forward in analysing this move, particularly in the light of the question that immediately comes to mind when the criticism is reviewed vis a vis the elevation of Shi Haungdi - what was the interrelation?

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80 Ibid.
Among the charges levelled against Lin Biao during 1972, one of the most serious was that he was a secret worshipper of Confucius, that the walls of his bedroom were lined with the scrolls of Confucian precepts and while conspiring against Mao Zedong, he constantly enjoined Confucian maxims on his followers. Confucius was probably the most consistently reviled figure, but the aura around him remained, still a matter of sanctity and reverence for the majority of the Chinese. The Communist leaders were beginning to arrive at a disturbing conclusion: that their efforts so far had not been enough to throw out the "Confucian shop". In any case, criticisms of Confucius and his role in 440 BC China sounded too remote and distant to hold any deep significance for the average Chinese in the twentieth century. The two years of criticizing Lin Biao on the other hand, had considerably destroyed Lin's reputation and standing in China. Only when it was driven home that it was because of his Confucian leanings, that Lin had attempted to assassinate Mao, the full import would come through and at the same time, bridge the remoteness of the two figures. A yet deeper awareness of the historical parallels between the two was being conveyed to the Chinese in the castigation of Confucius and Lin Biao as 'restorationists'. Both attempted to stem the irreversible tide of history at extremely crucial and critical junctures. Confucius, as the representative of the dying aristocracy tried his best to reverse the transition of the slave to the feudal system, Lin Biao, the twentieth century Confucius, attempted to stop the victorious march of socialism and restore capitalism.

The historical articles in the context of the Lin Biao affair concentrated on justifying Shi Huangdi's harshness. The significance of eulogizing harshness with a simultaneous criticism of "wavering behaviour" and Confucianism, was clear enough. In 1973, four booklets had been brought out by the People's Publishing House to meet the needs of the peasants, workers and soldiers for deepening the criticism of Confucius and Lin Biao. They were selected passages from Lu Xun's criticisms of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius; two volumes of Collection of Articles in the Criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius and an Anthology of Statements Since the MFM by Reactionaries, Feudal and Bourgeois Scholars Worshipping Confucius. In March 1974, it was
reported, on the basis of incomplete figures, that nearly 200 million copies of these booklets had been distributed. Heilongjiang Radio stated that 1.5 million copies of these books on the criticism of Confucius had been published in the provinces and the Harbin Bookstore alone sold 400,000 copies.

The preparation and dissemination of these materials had a direct bearing on an important goal of Chinese communist historiography, viz, the 'popularization of history'. The meaning of the term 'popularization' is best explained by Mao Zedong in his "Speech at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art."

"What is meant by popularizing and by raising standards...?" Popularization means to popularize among the workers, peasants and soldiers and raising standards means to advance from their present level... What should we popularize among them?...only what is needed and what is readily accepted by the workers, peasants and soldiers themselves...Popular works are simpler and plainer, and therefore more readily accepted by the broad masses of the people today. Works of a higher quality, being more polished, are more difficult to produce and in general do not circulate so easily and quickly among the masses at present. The problem facing the workers, peasants and soldiers is this :...they are illiterate and uneducated as a result of long years of rule by the feudal and bourgeois classes and therefore they are eagerly demanding enlightenment, education...which meet their urgent needs and which are easy to absorb, in order to heighten their enthusiasm...It is wrong to belittle or neglect popularization. (But)... If popularization remains at the same level for ever, year after year...What would be the sense of such popularization. The people demand popularization and, following that, higher standards..."

It was only in the 1974 joint New Year editorial, as we have seen, that the crimes of Lin Biao and Confucius had been listed in black and white so that even the unlettered could join the campaign. Despite that oversimplification, a basic textual reference was essential, if the criticisms had to be more than a mechanical exercise. In May 1973, the Chinese Literature Department of the Beijing Teachers' University had published a small book, *Elementary Knowledge of the Grammar of Classical Language*. This was again publicized in

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84 _Peking Review_, no. 12, 22 March 1974, p. 4.
85 As mentioned in Koblitz no. 43, p. 71.
86 _SWMIT_, n. 28, pp. 80-83.
87 _CNA_, No. 967, 19 July 1974, p. 3.
January 1974. The February-March issue of *Study and Criticism* included a small dictionary of Philosophers, who figured in *PLPK*. This was a cooperative work of thirty units and it was said that it could be further revised and enriched. In this dictionary, the doctrine of Confucius was described as *Ren* and *Yi* - benevolence to all, belief in Heaven and disdain for manual labour. Furthermore, in an attempt to make the masses comprehend the Classics, the rare characters were annotated and many of the more sophisticated idioms were rephrased in colloquial language.

Criticisms of the old concepts were made in extremely simple style and put in a familiar setting - the proverbs used by the people in daily life were subjected to a serious class analysis and then explained to the people. “Peasants, workers and soldiers were encouraged to overcome their educational handicaps and read the original texts of classical Chinese Literature. They were given every inducement to write detailed commentaries on these works, many of which the man in the street could not read with any comprehension, until called upon to study them in the anti-Confucian drive. Annotated critiques of Confucian classics and commentaries were produced by the masses and distributed fairly freely.”

More importantly,

“Cadres were instructed that they must overcome the apathy of the masses, impress upon them the importance of the movement and reject the view that the workers, peasants and soldiers so lacked culture that they could not criticize Lin Biao and Confucius.”

Yet another interesting development in the movement was the large number of television transmissions devoted to it each day on the Canton and Beijing services. One programme monitored from Canton “appeared to be a live transmission of a discussion meeting at the Beijing People’s Publishing House.”

The fact that an illiterate individual was first encouraged to learn the basic characters and then to hit out

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88 *Xuexi yu pipan* (*Study and Criticism*) appeared in September 1973 resembling *Hongqi* in style and format. It was extremely radical in tone and believed to be controlled by radicals in Fudan University. It was stopped in October 1976, but it contributed a great many articles to *PLPK*. At first Mao’s calligraphy was used for the title of the journal, but this was stopped after the first four issues. A number of its articles were even reprinted in *Hongqi* and *Renmin Ribao*.

89 *CNA*, n. 87.

90 Ibid.

91 Leo Goodstadt, “Drama on the Opera Circuit”, *FEER*, vol. 86, no. 39, 4 October 1974, p. 27.

at the traditional fountainhead of reverence, is full of staggering implications for the process of ideological reeducation. At any rate, channelizing the energy of the masses against sacrosanct beliefs, generating consciousness against the subtle and not so subtle continuance of old values, beliefs and traditions, is in itself a worthy effort. To be sure, most of the criticisms were of a very elementary and puerile nature, often unsubstantiated and full of exaggerations, which defied logic and rationality. But it seems that the criticisms aimed mainly at raising the level of ideology and hence everyone was encouraged to do so - even at the cost of ridicule.

More works continued to pour out of the Chinese press. Whereas articles on Confucius and his times, such as those by Prof. Yang Rongguo and Prof. Guo Moruo, could be viewed as part of the anti-Confucian trend in historical analysis and a continuation of the revolution in historical studies, those by the younger scholars, which discussed 'restoration' in the past as well as the present and in the context of the two-line struggle, were all part of the historical issues which were being introduced into PLPK.

Prof. Yang's article, along with that of Guo Moruo's, as mentioned earlier, were considered the ideological forerunners of the Campaign. Indeed, the general consensus among Chinese communist historians, regarding the controversial historical questions of the day, (viz, the place and role of Confucius in History, the dispute over periodization in Chinese history, peasant rebellions, the role of the masses etc.) shaped itself only around the stand taken by Prof. Yang.93 We are, of course, here concerned with the evaluation of Confucius.

According to Prof. Yang, it was in the latter part of the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC) that Confucius (551-479 BC) was born, in a family of declining slave owners, when the transition from the slave to the feudal order was taking place. During this time there was great upheaval and disorder. The entire system of 'ownership of land' was gradually changing - private ownership came about and the individual economy began to develop. The struggle of the slaves and the masses against the slave owners intensified. Changes were taking place in the ideological sphere as well and two different kinds of class ideologies sprang up - Confucianism and Legalism. The former reflected the philosophy of the decaying slave owner class and the latter that of the rising

landlord class. The criteria for such a judgement according to Prof. Yang, were the following questions:

"a) Whether they promoted the development of the new system or tried to preserve the old system;

b) Whether they served the need of the newly rising class or tried to turn history back;

c) Whether they advocated the rule of law suited to the development of the new age or stubbornly tried to preserve the so-called rule of 'rites' in the old system;

d) Whether they tried to solve contemporary problems with the current actual struggle in mind or used subjective concepts to define the developing objective reality." 94

Applying this class analysis, the Chinese Communist historians have ruthlessly torn apart the Confucian Classics - particularly during PLPK - possibly sacrificing many abiding truths in the bargain. But, it must be remembered that an abiding truth for the Communist historians is that "in class society, everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception is stamped with the brand of class." 95

Thus, as Yang pointed out, the thinking of Confucius, as a member of the declining aristocracy, was an expression of the thinking of the ruling class and his entire philosophy was geared to the interests and perpetuation of the slave owning class at a time when intense struggles were taking place against the aristocracy. The criticisms of Confucius could be broadly outlined as:

a) Against the key precepts of Confucianism - ren (benevolence) and yi (harmony)

b) Against the political activity of Confucius.

There seems to be no article even remotely in favour of ren. It was universally denounced as a facade behind which Confucius shielded his cruel and heinous crimes. Very few of the scholars who had assessed ren positively in the early sixties seem to have written anything during PLPK and a few notable ones came up with self-criticisms. Thus Feng Youlan said:

"One can see that, to Confucius, 'benevolence' meant a moral quality that only the 'superman' should posses...by the 'superior men' Confucius meant precisely slave-owning aristocrats." 96

95. Ibid.
But Feng's criticism was markedly moderate in tone compared to other attacks on ren. The Mass Criticism Group of Beijing and Qinghua Universities, for instance, charged that,

"[Confucius] habitually spoke of benevolence and righteousness, preached the doctrine of the mean.... He put on the appearance of loving not only people but even birds and fish. Actually he was a hard hearted and ferocious demon. Once with a pretence of benevolence a disciple of his handed out some porridge for the toiling slaves. Regarding this as an offence against the 'rites of Chou', Confucius flew into a rage and immediately sent people to break the pot and bowls and spill the porridge on the ground. This was an example of Confucius' 'the benevolent man loves other.' He was a hypocrite!"97

The political activities of Confucius, in his capacity as State official, were further expressions of his desire to preserve the aristocracy and the slave-system. He opposed the ideology of the rising landlord class - Legalism - on the ground that it would negate the system of order between the noble and the mean. Thus, when Confucius was the acting Prime Minister of the State of Lu, he had a famous social reformer, Shao-cheng Mao, arrested and executed on account of "gathering a crowd to form an association, proposing heretical views and confusing right and wrong."98

Yet another means by which Confucius maintained strict class distinction was his 'idealist apriorism'. In the words of Prof. Yang,

"he (Confucius) held that, 'only the highest, who are wise and the lowest, who are stupid, cannot be changed' because this had been ordained by Heaven. Therefore, in order that the various classes remain intact, 'to ensure that the Prince is Prince, the Minister is Minister, father is father, the son is son', Confucius advocated the rectification of names as a solution to pull the changes in the society back to the original order."99

Standing in direct opposition to Confucius was the upholder of the Legalist school of thought, Shang Yang.

98 Yang Jung-kuo, n. 93, pp. 11-12.
who served as an official in the State of Wei and who advocated that "legislation should be made according to the social developments of the time." Hence the reforms that he proposed were such as to facilitate the change of the slave to the feudal order. He was against the concept of 'benevolence' as it was merely a device to turn back the wheels of history. To gradually put an end to clan aristocracy, Shang Yang specified that even the slaves "could attain noble rank through farming and war and raise their political status", whereas the members of the ruling class "could not get noble rank if they did not show merit in the war." Shang Yang also elaborated a system of laws for the newly rising landlord class and suggested that the "punishment should be extended to all ranks of people." Another famous Legalist, Han Fei violently criticized the system of returning to the rites since he considered it highly reactionary "not to talk about how to rule in the present", but of the achievements of the past rulers. Han Fei suggested the emancipation of the slaves and the utilization of their services disregarding their social status. He also urged the people to have faith in themselves to better their lot, rather than accept the worst as being pre-ordained by Heaven. 100

It was this philosophy of the rising feudal system that the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huangdi, (259-221 BC) adopted. Thus, the unification of China came about under his rule, for the first time, in 221 BC. His achievements, as recorded by the Chinese Communist historians, are highly impressive. Shi Huangdi initiated many far reaching reforms. He brought an end to the rivalry among the feudal states and established a unified, multi-national state; he constructed roads having a uniform width throughout China, thus connecting the far flung borders with the Capital, he unified coinage, weights and measures and the written language; he established a system of decrees to replace the system of land ownership by the declining slave owning aristocracy and propagated a unified legal system based on rewards and punishments. 101

Thus, Shi Huangdi, hitherto denounced as a despot and tyrant, was rehabilitated. His policy of 'burning of books' and 'burying the scholars' for which he had most often been condemned, was now analysed in the class

100 Ibid., p. 7.
101 For more details about Qin Shi Huang's achievements, see Hong Shidi, "The Role of Qin Shi Huangdi in Progressive Historical Change", The First Emperor of China, n. 81, pp. 154-161.
context and hence interpreted differently. When he brought about the unification of China, "in order to consolidate the political system and the economic base of the newly arising landlord class, there was urgent need to establish a culture adapted to it so as to secure the predominant position within the superstructure of the Legalist ideology of the newly emerging class ... the reactionary Confucian scholars utilized their position in the cultural sphere in various ways to create public opinion in favour of restorationism..." "Burning of books and the burying of scholars’ was merely Shi Huangdi's "revolutionary" policy for the purpose of assailing the restorationist forces of the slave owning aristocracy and consolidating the dictatorship of the newly emerging landlord class.

Not only that, according to Lo Siding, Shi Huangdi was not at all opposed to the existence of divergent views; On the contrary, he was rather "fond" of literature; he "stifled only the opposition which worked covertly in conspiratorial activities." Nevertheless, despite representing the progressive forces of his time, the Qin Empire collapsed rather quickly and the First Emperor’s failure lay not in his ruthlessness and barbaric cruelty to the the slave owners and slaves, but "precisely in the lack of thoroughness of Qin’s dictatorship over the reactionaries." And after all, as the leader of the landlord class, his policies were designed to uphold the interests of the landlords and consequently bound to oppress and exploit the masses of the people which thereby intensified the contradictions between the rulers and the ruled.

From this entire analysis, some basic and fundamental conclusions were drawn by the Chinese Communist historians:

That a thorough grasp of class struggle in the ideological sphere was imperative;

That for the success of the revolution, it was crucial that effective dictatorship be exercised over the counter-revolutionary restorationists;

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102 It is stated that this destruction of literature and the mass execution of scholars was carried out by Shi Huangdi on the advice of his Prime Minister, Li Ssu. But, as Derk Bodde has pointed out in his book, China's First Unifier: A Study of the Qin Dynasty As Seen In The Life Of Li Ssu (280-208) (Hongkong University Press, 1967), "this destruction was not a complete innovation with Li Ssu (or Qin Shi Huang, for that matter) for before his time, sporadic attempts to wipe out the ancient records had already been made by the feudal lords. This fact is attested to by Mencius... (thus) Li Ssu simply carried out on a large scale what had already been practiced ...the loss moreover caused...was much less than scholars later on have supposed..." p. 162.

103 T'ang Hsiao-wen, "A Refutation of Some Confucian Fallacies Concerning the Qin Dynasty", The First Emperor of China, n. 81, pp. 199-200.


105 Ibid.
That the masses alone were the motive force in history.

The entire argument was neatly summed up thus:

"Historical experience merits attention. Today, the use of the Marxist viewpoint to seriously study the causes of the downfall of the Qin Dynasty and to sum up the law of class struggle between restoration and counter-restoration at that time is of significance for our further comprehension of the laws and characteristics of class struggle during the Socialist period and for deepening our criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius."\textsuperscript{106}

The spirit of iconoclasm which burst forth against Confucius in the early seventies sharply distinguishes this period from the earlier decades. The hectic tirades against Confucius and his present day followers appeared to be totally inexplicable, especially when barely a little over a decade ago, certain aspects of Confucianism had been discussed and hailed in the most glowing terms. What precipitated it? Shades of the May Fourth rhetoric could be discerned—but the Chinese historians and intellectuals denouncing Confucius in the early twenties had a very definite purpose and were motivated by rather urgent considerations. China in the seventies, was in no way comparable to China in the twenties. She had acquired a very substantial status in the international arena, was widely acknowledged as a potential great power and had successfully demonstrated her capacity in tackling internal and external problems of great magnitude. So, why the need to ruthlessly denounce a tradition which was not ostensibly preventing China in its progress and development.

The power struggles within the CPC provide a seemingly fitting explanation - that there was indeed a tremendous power struggle ever since the mid-sixties there is no denying, as also that historical analogies were used to condemn contemporary trends and personalities. But then, the campaign to criticize Lin Biao had been in progress for nearly two years and in due course would have been concluded. Why was there the need to fuse it with the anti-Confucius campaign? After the numerous historical analogues and their present day counterparts have been identified and the historical writings have been examined to establish and pinpoint the political targets, a great deal remains unexplained. Besides, the issues in the PLPK campaign were long standing ones—not just

\textsuperscript{106} Yang Guangshan, "The Lesson of the Experience of Qin Dynasty's Downfall.", \textit{The First Emperor of China}, n. 81, p. 209.
born of the Liu Shaoqi or Lin Biao crises. Admittedly, these crises precipitated further struggle which in turn affected the course of the campaign. The final section shall attempt to place these questions in perspective. Suffice it here to say that with exceptions, the anti-Confucian historiography of the early seventies could be seen as the logical culmination of a trend initiated even before 1949, primarily by Mao Zedong. Discussions on Confucius had started out with exploring how the Chinese historical legacy could be critically summed up and inherited. But inheriting the "valuable legacy" had proved to be a way to propagate values at direct odds with those the Communists had been trying to instill. There would therefore be no more inheriting - it would have to be totally rejected.

If there is one word which may be specified as characterizing the theme of PLPK, it is 'restorationism.' There is hardly any aspect in the historical discussions, which was unaffected by the apprehension of the danger of old forces trying to stage a comeback. Mao had been concerned with this problem ever since the late fifties and the CR may be partly seen as an outcome of those misgivings. If the leaders of the CPC, tempered in the revolutionary struggles, had not proved immune to the persistence of old influences, the youth of China were in an even more vulnerable position. The ethics of constant struggle had been sought to be inculcated in the youth during the CR. PLPK was yet another major attempt to reinfuse the entire population of China with the importance of a constant vigil against the restorationists who could be lurking anywhere - including, within the vanguard of the proletariat, the CPC.

With this motivation, historiography during PLPK was, not surprisingly, characterized by a uniformity which discouraged any deviation whatever. The very process by which constant vigilance was impressed upon the people, was a mighty struggle. Confucius was unqualifiedly repudiated - or else, ren could still undo more than half a century of efforts.

Such was the magnitude and scale of Pi Lin Pi Kong and such was the hope and aspiration of its historiography. But as Hong Shidi remarks in the context of the struggle between the Confucianists and the Legalists, under such circumstances, "it was no accident that a debate and political struggle erupted two thousand
years ago The Legalists were emphasizing the present while slighting the past and the Confucianists were using the past to criticize the present. In 1973-74, the restorationists and revisionists were equated with the latter and the revolutionaries with the former. In the power struggle between the Radicals and the Moderates, the former accused the latter of the same mistakes as were committed by Confucius and his followers - attempting to turn back the wheel of history. The voluminous writings of 1973-74 do bring up numerous instances of both sides taking snipes at each other under historical guises, but to negate a mass movement merely on the strength of such attacks and oblique criticism, would be a rather unhistorical and inadequate assessment of Pi Lin Pi Kong.

107 Refers to the practice of the Confucian scholars who constantly invoked the 'Golden Age' of the Sage-kings to criticize various practices of the Chinese Emperors. See n. 101.