FU SSU-NIEN: A LIFE IN CHINESE HISTORY AND POLITICS

Fu Ssu-nien, Chinese scholar, educator, and political and social critic, was one of the most colorful and influential intellectual figures in twentieth-century China. Wang Fan-sen’s biography of Fu’s extraordinary life and contributions offers the first in-depth examination and serious recognition of his role in the intellectual and educational development in modern China.

Fu’s life, spanning five decades of tumultuous political change in China, in many ways embodies the dilemma faced by modern Chinese intellectuals; dissatisfied with the model of the traditional literati, they lacked a professional, academic model to take its place. Fu’s early years as a student leader of the May Fourth Movement and subsequent life as an activist were born of intellectual dissatisfaction; as an educator and as founder of the Institute of Philology and History at Peking University and the Academia Sinica, he worked to fill the void by professionalizing Chinese research and education.

Wang traces Fu’s leading role in cultivating modern Chinese academe and, in particular, his efforts to establish a “modern” historical discipline with an emphasis on objective analysis of primary sources. He also tells the less well known story of Fu’s struggles with political foes and his involvement in wartime politics. Fu’s efforts to improve history as a professional discipline in China made him the target of attacks by left-wing intellectuals on the one hand and of conservative Chinese historians on the other. A liberal intellectual in wartime China, he was caught between his opposition to communism and his opposition to corrupt elements within the ranks of the Kuomintang. His attempts to separate historical studies from politics, along with his hostility to the Communist Party, brought particularly harsh criticism after he left the mainland for Taiwan in 1948. All of the above have served to obfuscate Fu’s role. Wang’s analysis offers a new, scholarly account of Fu’s intellectual life and that of the academic community he helped to shape in the 1930s and 1940s. Incorporating an impressive array of archival material, including original papers and correspondence from Fu’s private collection, this book fills a major gap in the cultural and intellectual history of modern China.

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Abbreviations

CCP  Chinese Communist Party
FSNC  Fu Ssu-nien ch'üan-chi, Taipei, 1980
FSNP  Fu Ssu-nien Papers, Institute of History and Philology, Taiwan
IHP  Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica
KMT  Kuomintang (Nationalist Party)
PRC  People’s Republic of China
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1896 On February 13 Fu is born in Liao-ch’eng, Shantung.
1898 The Hundred Days Reform.
1901 Fu enters the village school.
1904 Outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War.
1905 China abolishes the civil service examination system. Fu enters a new elementary school but continues to be tutored by his grandfather in the Confucian Classics.
1909 Fu continues in elementary school with tutoring by his grandfather and enters the middle school of Tientsin prefecture, where he develops a close association with Manchu nobility (the family of Ying Hua, who was the founder of the Ta-kung pao).
1911 Outbreak of the Wuchang Revolution.
1913 Fu enters the preparatory school of Peking University.
1914 Fu reads and admires K’ang Yu-wei’s Pu-jen tsa-chih.
1916 In autumn Fu enters the Chinese department of Peking University.
1917 Late in this year Fu has his first contact with Hu Shih, which changes Fu from a conservative to a zealot.
1918 In August Fu organizes about twenty classmates to establish the New Tide Society.
1919 In January Fu heads the editorial board of the journal New Tide and writes the opening remarks of the journal. The New Tide immediately becomes very popular, its influence nearly equal to that of the New Youth, published by a group of professors. On May 4 Fu leads the student demonstration. In winter Fu goes to England to study experimental psychology at University College of London University.
1923 Fu moves to Berlin to study at Berlin University and completes
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an in-depth study of Mach’s *Analysis of the Sensations* and *Mechanics*.

1925 Fu’s interests gradually turn to history and comparative linguistics.

1926 Northern Expedition launched in June.
In winter Fu leaves Berlin University and returns to Shantung, later assuming the post as dean of the School of Letters at Chungshan University, Kwangchow.

1927 In March KMT armies reach Nanking and Shanghai.
In autumn Fu sets up the Institute of Philology and History in Chungshan University.
In winter during the Kwangchow Riot instigated by Chang T’ai-lei, a radical activist of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Fu is almost executed by the CCP.

1928 Fu founds the Institute of History and Philology (IHP) of Academia Sinica and begins the archaeological excavation of Yin-hsü of Anyang, Honan.

1929 In spring Fu moves the Institute of History and Philology to Peking.
In autumn Fu teaches at Peking University.

1931 In September the Mukden Incident and the Japanese seizure of Manchuria occur. Fu challenges his colleagues with the question, How should intellectuals serve their country?

1932 In May Fu sets up *Tu-lü p’ing-lun* with Hu Shih, Ting Wenchiang, and others.
In October Fu publishes the first volume of *Tung-pei shih-kang*, an abstract of which is sent to the Lytton Commission in an attempt to prove that from ancient times the Chinese government had controlled Manchuria. *Tung-pei shih-kang* is severely criticized. Fu debates with Chu Hsi-tsu on Ming history.

1933 In February the Japanese conquer Jehol.
In spring the IHP is moved to Shanghai, but Fu remains in Peking and teaches at Peita.
Fu is jointly appointed director of the Institute of Social Science, Academia Sinica, and director of preparations for the National Central Museum.

1934 After divorcing his wife, Fu marries Yü Ta-ts’ai.
Fu takes part in debates on the issue of national medicine.
In winter the Institute of History and Philology moves to Nanking.

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1935  
Fu publishes I Hsia tung hsi shuo.  
Fu confronts the particularization of northern China, which stirs up the December Ninth student movement.

1936  
In winter the Sian Incident occurs. Fu strongly supports Chiang Kai-shek and severely denounces Chang Hsüeh-liang.

1937  
Fu serves as acting secretary-general of the Academia Sinica.  
After the outbreak of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, Fu participates in the Kuo-fang ts'an-i hui.  
In autumn Fu moves the Institute of History and Philology to Changsha.

1938  
In spring Fu moves the Institute of History and Philology to Kunming.  
In July Fu serves as representative of the Kuo-min ts'an-cheng hui.

1940  
Fu publishes Hsing ming ku-hsün pien-cheng, largely drafted before 1937.  
In autumn Fu again serves as acting secretary-general of the Academia Sinica. He becomes seriously ill and almost dies.

1945  
In April Fu serves as fifth-term representative in the Kuo-min ts'an-cheng hui.  
In July Fu represents the Kuo-min ts'an-cheng hui in a visit to Yenan.  
In the Kuo-min ts'an-cheng hui Fu attacks the premier H. H. Kung and his clique. This contributes to Kung's resignation. On August 14 Japan surrenders.  
In autumn Fu serves as acting president of Peita.  
In winter Fu settles unrest in the wake of student demonstrations.

1946  
In January Fu attends the Cheng-chih hsieh-shang hui-i.  
In May Fu announces his decision to exclude all "turncoat professors" from Peita.

1947  
In February, after witnessing the drastic deterioration of the economy, Fu attacks the premier T. V. Soong and his clique. Fu's three famous articles calling for Soong's resignation are published, contributing to Soong's resignation.  
In June Fu goes to the United States for surgery and lives in New Haven, Connecticut.

1948  
In August Fu returns to Nanking from the United States.
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In winter Fu attempts suicide and later moves the Institute of History and Philology to Taiwan.

1949  In January Fu is appointed president of Taiwan University.

1950  In December Fu dies of hypertension suddenly in the Provincial Assembly of Taiwan.