




RESEARCH ARTICLE

‘A sea of blood and hate’: Mass mobilization of emotion in China’s Anti-narcotics Campaign, 1949–1952

Thomas Chan 

Department of History, Indiana University Bloomington, Bloomington, Indiana, United States of America
Email: chanta@iu.edu

(Received 27 March 2024; revised 1 September 2024; accepted 16 September 2024)

Abstract

This article analyses how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) created and spread new forms of subjectivity and social belonging in the formative years of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) (1949–present). Specifically, it examines how the CCP blended medical and emotional discourses to foster communal hatred of narcotics users and promote social cohesion. Building on scholarship that conceptualizes hatred as a way of producing and animating subjectivity, the article argues that the CCP saw it as a key tool of unification, bringing people together to commit acts of emotional and physical violence against drug users and traffickers. Propaganda officers and police forces worked hard to persuade people to hate drug users and traffickers, writing anti-narcotics songs, plays, and skits to make hating an entertaining and interesting activity for audiences. The article underscores how the CCP encouraged mass participation in the ostracizing and killing of narcotics producers, consumers, and traffickers to spawn a shared social hatred of them, and shows how people responded to state efforts to incite hate. To conclude, the article considers the unlikely agency of some accused drug criminals who resisted the tides of public and state pressure, and challenged their accusers.

Keywords: Anti-narcotics Campaign; violence; emotions; mass rally; early People’s Republic of China

Introduction

In September 1952 in Chongqing, a large city in southwest China, a crowd gathered to watch a public trial of people accused of dealing or using drugs. In a scene mirrored across the nation, people rushed towards the prison transport and screamed insults, and physically struck and spat at the accused as the police guided them towards the stage in front of the crowd. At the end of the public trial and mass struggle session, the police pronounced the accused guilty, and, accompanied by waving flags, chanting slogans, and beating drums, shot several of them in front of the baying crowd. After witnessing the killings, an audience member remarked that coming to anti-narcotics

rallies and watching the executions ‘is more fun than eating popsicles!’¹ How did the police and government officials persuade ordinary people to not only accept intracomunal violence, but to celebrate it as entertainment? What happened in the moments after the accused stepped off the prison transport and before the killing that made their deaths so entertaining to onlookers?

Part of the reason why people reacted so strongly to drug crimes was because of China’s tortured history with narcotics. The British empire’s use of opium trafficking to pay for its empire led to the Opium Wars (1839–1842, 1856–1860) and the forcible opening of Chinese ports to opium trafficking.² Drug use and trafficking quickly became a flashpoint for debates about the Qing dynasty’s (1644–1911) weakness, Western imperialism, and China’s (in)ability to develop into a ‘modern’ nation.³ Following the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo, Imperial Japan trafficked large quantities of narcotics through Northeast China, while simultaneously portraying rising usage of narcotics as a symbol of Chinese degeneracy so as to legitimate Japan’s ascent as a colonial power.⁴ Narcotics became a symbol of China’s humiliation and weakness on the global stage. While there had been proper and improper ways to consume narcotics that demonstrated class status in late nineteenth-century China, the Qing issued an edict in 1906 to gradually eliminate both the domestic cultivation and consumption of opium.⁵ Alongside legal measures, private and state-sponsored anti-narcotics associations in China produced copious amounts of propaganda that deglamorized the conspicuous consumption of opium.⁶ After the fall of the Qing, propaganda, clinical studies, and government policy during China’s Republican-era (1912–1949) continued to reshape the figure of the drug user from a conspicuous consumer of recreational narcotics into a damaged degenerate. Republican propaganda and anti-narcotics measures created an image of drug offenders as an impoverished and worthless group of people who did not belong in a modernizing China and linked any opium consumption to incurable addiction.⁷ The question that remained unanswered due to the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese (1937–1945) and Chinese Civil (1945–1949) wars was whether

¹Luo Ruiqing, ‘中共中央转发罗瑞卿关于全国禁毒运动第五号简报’ [The Central Committee Forwards Luo Ruiqing’s Fifth Report on the National Anti-narcotics Movement], 14 September 1952. Lit: ‘比吃冰棍还痛快’. Accessed through: Databases on the History of Contemporary Chinese Political Movements (中國當代政治運動史數據庫).

²Carl A. Trocki, *Opium, Empire, and the Global Political Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade, 1750–1950*. Asia’s Transformations (London; New York: Routledge, 1999); Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (eds), *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839–1952* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

³Brook and Wakabayashi, *Opium Regimes*.

⁴Miriam Kingsberg, *Moral Nation: Modern Japan and Narcotics in Global History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), pp. 49–54.

⁵Xavier Paulès, *Living on Borrowed Time: Opium in Canton, 1906–1936*, (trans.) Noel Castelino. China Research Monograph (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2017); Brook and Wakabayashi, *Opium Regimes*; Yangwen Zheng, *The Social Life of Opium in China* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁶Brook and Wakabayashi, *Opium Regimes*.

⁷Xavier Paulès, ‘Anti-Opium Visual Propaganda and the Deglamorisation of Opium in China, 1895–1937’, *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2008, pp. 229–262.

people would help or hinder nationwide efforts to eradicate drug crimes and drug criminals.⁸

After the CCP seized control of China in 1949 following its victory over the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party; KMT) in the Chinese Civil War, it put this question to the test and started a nationwide Anti-narcotics Campaign (1949–1952; ANC). Carried out in tandem with the Land Reform campaign (1949–1953), the attack on drug traffickers and users initially lacked leadership, focus, and consistency.⁹ Following orders from the CCP's Central Committee, local officials increasingly relied on violent forms of punishment to police drug offenders. Central leaders called for less leniency in favour of harsher punishments, mass mobilization, and intensive propaganda.¹⁰ Mass rallies where officials publicly burnt confiscated drug hauls demonstrated that the CCP was committed to combating the evils of opium and was not simply running a resale racket.¹¹ Following the shift towards harsher punishments, the campaign saw more success in stamping out drugs.¹² The CCP tried to bury offenders under a deluge of propaganda, mass surveillance, coercion, and state violence.

While the ANC has been relatively understudied due to the relatively low numbers of deaths compared to other political movements, here I focus on the ANC to analyse the emotional and psychological impacts of the campaign to provide a different understanding of violence in the nascent CCP state.¹³ In particular, I examine the mass rally—the visceral and communal experience that underpinned the entirety of the Anti-narcotics Campaign—and nearly all policing efforts during the Mao era (1949–1976). The mass rally is a productive site of study because it helps capture how and why ordinary people choose to participate in intra-communal violence and political movements. Mass rallies, played a critical role in the CCP's efforts to elicit intense emotional reactions, especially rage and hatred, towards drug offenders. Local and high-level officials focused on hatred in nearly every planning document

⁸I use the terms 'drug offender' and 'drug criminal' to refer to the Ministry of Public Security's (MPS) broad category of people accused of all drug-related crimes—producing, trafficking, smuggling, and using—and 'drug user' to refer specifically to people who smoke, inject, or take drugs of any kind. While campaign rhetoric stipulated that the most evil and unrepentant drug offenders should be punished, local police files reveal a starkly different story. Many local police lamented that local people were so angry that they indiscriminately attacked anyone they knew who used or sold drugs. Often the police themselves also violated the campaign's stated orders, as we see in the last section of this article. While I would like to clearly delineate each time between users and traffickers when discussing punishment, I have no reliable way of doing so based on the sources; in addition it would not reflect the historical reality, where many users were also punished alongside traffickers and smugglers. I also have anonymized the names of every accused drug offender or user who appears in the text, and the names of audience members or CCP cadres quoted below. While nearly all of the victims have passed away, I do not wish to sensationalize their individual stories or affect their surviving descendants by bringing attention to sensitive histories their families or friends would rather remain private.

⁹Yongming Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History, and State Building* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), p. 96; Brian James DeMare, *Land Wars: The Story of China's Agrarian Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019).

¹⁰Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades*, p. 97.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 104–105.

¹²This success was also due also to the CCP's newfound strength after they consolidated power through Land Reform and the Three and Five anti-campaigns. *Ibid.*, pp. 106–107.

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 105–107.

of the Anti-narcotics Campaign. Indeed, in a 1952 report to Chairman Mao Zedong (1893–1976) and the Central Committee, Minister of Public Security Luo Ruiqing (1906–1978) identified a lack of hatred as the cause of the campaign's failure in several cities and as a key problem to rectify.¹⁴ As I demonstrate below, the success of the ANC relied on everyday and contingent factors that created the emotional landscape of the campaign, from pre-existing stereotypes around drug users to local cadres' ability to write emotionally charged song lyrics that rally-goers enjoyed, in dialects they could understand.

Party leaders saw instigating hatred against drug offenders as a crucial way for the PRC to consolidate power and secure popular support because it helped the Party build emotional resonance and connection with people in the audience. Leaders' focus on instigating an emotional reaction in people is not unique to the Anti-narcotics Campaign; emotions feature prominently in CCP rhetoric through to the present day.¹⁵ Their consistent focus on emotions throughout the Mao era underscores the need for analysis of how and to what effect the state incited particular emotional responses towards designated enemies and how that affected the targets of their ire. Current scholarship on mass rallies and policing in Mao's China takes for granted that hatred featured in these rallies but does not examine its origins or effects in detail.¹⁶ This scholarship glosses over why Party leaders focused on that specific emotional response and how they elicited it.¹⁷ By paying attention to hatred in the ANC, I highlight the importance of the emotional terrain in driving political campaigns in addition to their political context and ideological content. The history of how the police and the public treated drug users during the early years of Communist Party rule in China further highlights the continuities between the PRC and earlier governments. Current scholarship has speculated about how pre-1949 propaganda informed the CCP's efforts; this article reveals how campaign-planning documents relied on dehumanizing tropes from propaganda work under the Qing and Republican governments to instil hatred against drug users.¹⁸

Police and Party officials used the negative perceptions of drug use, established through nearly 50 years of propaganda, to spark hatred in people.¹⁹ Hatred as a

¹⁴Luo Ruiqing, 'Second Report on the Anti-Drug Movement (禁毒运动第二号简报)', 24 August 1952. Accessed through: Databases on the History of Contemporary Chinese Political Movements.

¹⁵For example, campaigns against counterrevolutionaries, landlords, intellectuals, KMT sympathizers, and class enemies all feature strong emotional responses in some form or another.

¹⁶Julia C. Strauss, 'Paternalist Terror: The Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries and Regime Consolidation in the People's Republic of China, 1950–1953', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2002, pp. 80–105; Julia Strauss, 'Morality, Coercion and State Building by Campaign in the Early PRC: Regime Consolidation and After, 1949–1956', *The China Quarterly*, no. 188, 2006, pp. 891–912; Michael Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics: A History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

¹⁷Elizabeth Perry has noted how Mao consistently focused on the critical importance of emotional work in driving the CCP's revolution forward but has not specifically discussed the role of hatred within this broader context. She and others have discussed that Mao-era rallies elicited a variety of emotional responses, but here I focus more specifically on how cadres incited hatred in the people over other emotions. See Elizabeth J. Perry, 'Moving the Masses: Emotion Work in the Chinese Revolution', *Mobilisation*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2002, pp. 111–128.

¹⁸Paulès, *Living on Borrowed Time*.

¹⁹Paulès, 'Anti-Opium Visual Propaganda'. Images of drug criminals as diseased, impoverished, and ever-present threats to the Chinese people were very common.

visceral, affective experience produces not only emotional or psychic consequences but also material and social ones. Hatred was useful for Party leaders not because it made people hate individual drug users but because it helped the police create a communal social identity based on a shared hatred of drug offenders writ large. Producing hatred against drug users was central to the early PRC state's consolidation of power because it helped produce and naturalize differential inclusion even in the absence of visible markers of racial or ethnic difference.²⁰ Hate generates and secures a collective identity by casting the everyday person as the victim of a real or perceived injury. As cultural theorist Sara Ahmed writes, hatred animates people by constituting the ordinary subject as a victim in crisis who suffers due to the invasion or presence of others.²¹ In this broad sense, hatred creates the figure(s) of the 'other' in a flexible and adaptable way based on perceived grievances or wrongs. Hatred also organizes social relations because it is impossible to contain within specific individuals. As Ahmed writes, hatred creates flexible figures of difference, 'aligns the figures together, and constitutes them as a "common threat"... Hate ... circulates between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement.'²² Because of this perceived threat, hatred easily flows from one 'threatening' individual to another, and in doing so marks members of that group as more dangerous and worthy of hatred than other people.

Hatred helped create community because it allowed the state to equate the individual drug offender with the fearful spectre of drugs. An act of revenge against one individual became an endless crusade against a faceless enemy that the state could repeatedly cite as an existential threat and mobilize people against. Indeed, Ahmed writes that the figure of the bogeyman is

... a ghost-like figure in the present, who gives us nightmares about the future, as an anticipation of future injury ... such a discourse of 'waiting for the bogus' is what justifies the repetition of violence against the bodies of others in the name of protecting the nation.²³

Hatred turned the spectre of drug offenders into a direct threat to the Chinese people and the Chinese nation, creating a crisis in which the state's use of violence against drug offenders was both necessary and a service to the people. CCP leaders and public security officials attempted to forge new emotional and affective bonds between themselves and the Chinese people at mass rallies. At these events, they came together and inflicted emotional and physical violence on the accused individuals that they conflated with the phantom of drug crimes that had haunted Chinese cultural imaginations for over a century.

Focusing on hatred expressed during mass anti-narcotics rallies builds on new scholarship in the history of emotions by highlighting the importance of everyday

²⁰For a discussion on the intertwining of affect and race, see Christopher P. Hanscom and Dennis C. Washburn (eds), *The Affect of Difference: Representations of Race in East Asian Empire* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), p. 5.

²¹Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014; 2nd edn), pp. 43–44.

²²Ibid., p. 44.

²³Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 46.

and discursive practices in facilitating that emotion. Scholarship has shown how the connection between hyper-visibility and vulnerability to hatred is unstable and mediated through specific physical spaces and social relations.²⁴ Examining the cultivation of hatred at anti-narcotics rallies highlights how police forces interwove symbolic, systemic, and everyday violence by using propaganda and cultural memories to mark drug offenders as hyper-visible and socially acceptable targets of hate. The police also used specific ways of managing audiences to cultivate the searing hatred of the Anti-narcotics Campaign. Propaganda bureau cadres' choice of local folk songs, different types of stage performances, and language was just as important as the staging and timing of rallies in generating hatred. The role of these discursive practices and everyday mechanisms highlights how hatred is a socially produced phenomenon that requires specific circumstances and staging, from elevating deviance to hyper-visibility to pairing lyrics drawing on historical memory with a popular local storytelling tradition.

Both national and local reports on the Anti-narcotics Campaign highlight the government's intention to incite rage and hatred towards drug users. This article draws on local documents from Shanghai because the city was a major site of action for the CCP's Anti-narcotics Campaign and a place that the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) asked other locations to emulate. Planning documents from Shanghai's various propaganda bureaus detail the strategies cadres used to provoke anger in people and turn them against drug offenders. The MPS explicitly forbade the public circulation of these reports, intending them for internal use only, so the documents are less prone to exaggeration or misinformation than materials circulated publicly. These documents are candid about the failures of the campaign and in their assessments of where cadres could use further training or improvement. In the documents, hatred and anger consistently appear as both tools for anti-narcotics efforts and benchmarks for measuring the effectiveness of the campaign.

Breaking free from 'a century of humiliation': Why the mass rally?

High-level political leaders and policing officials wanted people to fight against and hate drug criminals. Xu Zirong, Deputy Minister of Public Security, stated in a July 1952 report that 'mobilizing the masses to thoroughly wipe out this pollution and scum [drug criminals, large traffickers] left over from the old society all at once is the key to eliminating the drug epidemic'.²⁵ Xu then instructed officials to convene mass meetings where they could convey the significance of the Anti-narcotics Campaign and inspire the people to fight against drug criminals.²⁶ By encouraging people to turn

²⁴Edward Hall, John Clayton and Catherine Donovan (eds), *Landscapes of Hate. Tracing Spaces, Relations and Responses* (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2022); Edward Hall and Ellie Bates, 'Hatescape? A Relational Geography of Disability Hate Crime, Exclusion and Belonging in the City', *Geoforum*, no. 101, May 2019, pp. 100–110.

²⁵Xu Zirong, 'Xu Zirong's Report on the Problems of the Anti-narcotics Movement' (徐子荣关于禁毒问题的报告), 28 July 1952. Lit: '充分揭露其罪恶事实, 发动群众, 把这些旧社会遗留下来的污毒和渣滓, 来一次集中的彻底的扫除, 这是肃清毒品流行的中心关键'.

²⁶Ibid.

in drug offenders, officials hoped to create solidarity between the state and society by engaging people in the government's anti-narcotics activities. Minister of Public Security Luo Ruiqing also noted in August of 1952, in his second report to the Central Committee on the Anti-narcotics Campaign, that state efforts were not successful in many places because officials 'had not aroused the masses' hatred for drug criminals and their zeal for turning in suspected criminals'.²⁷ Luo's third report to the committee the following month stated that to spur the campaign on, officials should continue to arrest large numbers of offenders and hold major public trials in places where people were particularly indifferent to the campaign's messaging. At these trials, Luo stated,

Each city should sentence a few to more than ten major drug criminals of bad class status, who are evil, whom people have great anger towards, and who haven't repented to death. At the same time, punish a separate group of them leniently, to fully communicate the [campaign's] policy and bring the [Anti-narcotics] Movement to a climax to achieve the goal of smashing the arrogance of drug offenders, mobilising and educating the masses, and dividing and demoralising drug criminals.²⁸

Hatred functioned as a method to select those to be executed. Popular ire directly impacted on the Central Committee's decision to target certain people over others. Both the deputy minister and minister identified the mass rally as the key to inspiring people's zeal and hatred, and to eradicating drug criminals.

Historical trauma and memories surrounding narcotics directly shaped the structure of the campaign. For example, political leaders prohibited local officials from using any form of written propaganda and instructed them to destroy any physical trace of the campaign or paper trail, due to American accusations that China was smuggling drugs to Japan.²⁹ Central leaders feared that if foreign spies found written anti-narcotics materials, they could smear the nascent PRC as a weak, drug addicted country. Officials wanted the campaign to be a cathartic communal break with China's tortured history with narcotics. To accomplish this, they emphasized that the Anti-narcotics Campaign was a patriotic and nationalistic movement, a direct strike against

²⁷Luo Ruiqing, 'The Central Committee Forwards Luo Ruiqing's Second Report on the National Anti-narcotics Movement' (中共中央转发罗瑞卿关于全国禁毒运动第二号简报), 24 August 1952'. Lit: '没有激发群众对毒犯的仇恨心和检举毒犯的积极性'.

²⁸Luo Ruiqing, 'The Central Committee Forwards Luo Ruiqing's Third Report on the National Anti-narcotics Movement' (中共中央转发罗瑞卿关于全国禁毒运动第三号简报), 1 September 1952. Lit '每个城市判上几个至十几个成分坏、罪恶和民愤极大又拒不坦白的大毒犯的死刑, 同时从宽处理一批, 全面交待政策, 将运动推向高潮, 以达到打下毒犯气焰、发动教育群众和分化瓦解毒犯的目的'. Those treated leniently were drug criminals who either committed offences that were considered minor, who did not have bad class status, who repented by coming forward to the police, or who the masses did not 'hate enough'. As shown below in the last section, however, lenient treatment was not guaranteed even if one met these criteria.

²⁹Central Committee Propaganda Bureau, 'Instructions from the Central Ministry of Public Security on Anti-narcotics Propaganda' (中央宣传部、中央公安部关于禁毒宣传的指示), July 1952. Also noted in Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades*, p. 100.

American imperialists and those who were trying to poison China's people at home and its image abroad.³⁰

From the top down, the Anti-narcotics Campaign was structured around non-permanent modes of communication and propaganda. Even after the conclusion of the campaign, officials in the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee's Propaganda Office worked hard to erase written remnants of the campaign. In a report from June 1953, officials noted that several districts and work units had not returned campaign materials and if the oversight was not rectified quickly, they would provide a list of those who had lost campaign propaganda materials.³¹ In another case, officials accused a local propaganda bureau cadre who had lost several documents relating to the campaign of 'making a severe mistake' and the cadre himself asked for punishment to 'rectify his lack of responsibility' because his mistake 'could have caused great harm to the Party's work'.³² Some officials were so concerned about missteps that in their internally circulated written reports they substituted a circle for the character 'drugs' and a triangle for 'opium'.³³

Rallies, ranging from massive public trials and struggle sessions to neighbourhood meetings, became the default methods of the campaign because of the restrictions on written materials.³⁴ In a September 1952 survey report on one of Shanghai's anti-narcotics work units, local officials noted that since the start of their work on 24 February 1950, they had convened 190 large and small rallies, and educated 35,664 people about the dangers of drugs.³⁵ Officials noted that holding public trials and hearings in local districts helped spread campaign propaganda further, to a greater depth, and showed the government's resolve to stamp out drugs.³⁶ Similar rallies were held nationwide and 'according to official statistics, the campaign held a total of 764,423 propaganda meetings nationwide, through which 74,595,181 people were educated'.³⁷ Through rallies, people personally witnessed the government's crusade against narcotics and heard speeches, plays, presentations, and testimonies about the dangers of drugs.

Rallies stimulated public investment in the campaign by making it personal and by highlighting ordinary people as the victims of drugs. Even among people initially disinterested in the Anti-narcotics Campaign, officials found success by making them feel like aggrieved victims of drugs and therefore entitled to feel angry and demand

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Shanghai Municipal Archive (SMA) A22-1-41-45 '通知, 滬委宣辦' (Notice, Shanghai Committee on Propaganda), 10 June 1953, pp. 1-2.

³²SMA A59-1-40-39, '關於 Anonymized name 同志遺失 "禁毒工作幾項佈置" 文件初步處理意見' (Opinions on Comrade XX's Loss of 'Anti-narcotics Work Arrangements' Documents and First Steps Towards Punishment). Second document, '關於遺失 "禁毒工作幾項佈置" 文件的報告' (Report on the Loss of 'Anti-narcotics Work Arrangements' Documents), 21 June 1953, pp. 1-3.

³³SMA A71-2-905, part 2, 大坊區西寶興路00運動中9號-14號的宣傳情況報告 (Dafang District Xibaoping Road [the 00 in the title is the censoring over the text for 'jin du' (anti-narcotics)] Anti-narcotics Movement, the Ninth to the Fourteenth Propaganda Situation Report), 14 September 1952, p. 67.

³⁴See also Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades*, p. 104.

³⁵SMA A71-2-905, part 2, '禁毒工作概況總結' (Complete Report on the Situation of Anti-narcotics Work; hereafter 'Complete Report'), 5 October 1952, pp. 52-53.

³⁶Ibid., p. 53.

³⁷Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades*, p. 103.

the punishment of drug offenders. Some Shanghai officials, for example, noted that rural people had an ambivalent attitude towards the campaign and felt narcotics were an urban problem. After targeted rallies in the countryside, officials noted that rural people,

... deeply understood how widespread drugs were, not only that they spread to the cities and towns but also to the countryside; many laborers have been harmed by drugs ... suffered the breaking up and scattering of their families and the tearing apart of wife and son.³⁸ Consequently, the masses at each of the public trials fought to take the stage and denounce [drug offenders] and demand the government severely punish producers, smugglers, and big drug traffickers.³⁹

This was not the first time the Party worked to mobilize disinterested people in political expression. During Land Reform in the late 1930s and 1940s, even when many villages did not have evil landlords to struggle against, the CCP used the language of bitterness to ‘invent and reinforce a dualist, totalitarian ideology that opposed the pure “we” to the evil “they”’.⁴⁰ ANC officials highlighted the threat to people’s families and communities to help stir up flagging public interest and bridge the gap between the goals of the campaign and people’s lived realities.

People’s hatred for drug offenders increased in cases where the police could personalize the campaign during rallies. In a report from Shanghai, officials noted that drug offenders’ public confessions in particular ‘increased the masses’ hatred towards drugs and inspired their determination to stamp out drugs’.⁴¹ Anti-narcotics guidelines from Dafang village near Shanghai instructed officials to draw from the lived experiences of local people and use real life examples in their propaganda to explain the dangers of drugs.⁴² Similarly, a report from Dafang district’s propaganda bureau specified that officials should hold a public trial to deepen people’s hatred for drug criminals and create a hostile atmosphere that would make offenders isolated and pressure them to confess.⁴³ First, officials used real world examples to get uninterested people invested in the Anti-narcotics Campaign. Hatred was critical because it brought people to the campaign and then wove individual stories into collective goals.

³⁸The idioms used for breaking up and scattering one’s family and the tearing apart of wife and son are the same ones that feature prominently in pre-1949 propaganda against narcotics: see 家破人亡 and 妻离子散 respectively.

³⁹SMA A71-2-905, ‘Complete Report’, p. 53. Lit: ‘扭轉了農村地區群眾對禁毒無所謂的思想認識，他們深刻明確了毒品流行，不光流行於市鎮也流行到xx的農村。有許多的勞動人民受了毒品的危害...遭受到家破人亡，妻離子散，因此群眾在各個審訊會上爭著上台控訴要求政府嚴厲到裁製，運，販的大毒犯’.

⁴⁰Guo Wu, ‘Speaking Bitterness: Political Education in Land Reform and Military Training Under the CCP, 1947–1951’, *The Chinese Historical Review*, vol. 21, no. 1, May 2014, pp. 5–8.

⁴¹SMA A71-2-905, ‘Complete Report’, p. 53. Lit: ‘尤其是聽到毒犯自己所講出的罪行，增加了群眾對毒品的仇恨激勵群眾肅毒的決心’.

⁴²SMA A71-2-905, part 2, 大坊宣傳工作總結 (Dafang Propaganda Work Concluding Report), 15 September 1952, p. 63.

⁴³SMA A71-2-905, part 2, 大坊區肅毒委員會報告 (Dafang District Anti-narcotics Committee Report), 11 September 1952, pp. 56–57.

'Every wrong has its perpetrator': Where, when, and whom to hate

To stir up personal and group hatred, officials used a variety of cultural products to make hating people fun and entertaining. Officials penned anti-narcotics lyrics for popular folk song genres, such as *fengyang* songs, and for commonplace instruments such as the *erhu*, a two stringed vertical fiddle.⁴⁴ They paired these with the popular oral storytelling form known as *kuaiban*, where a performer uses a set of bamboo boards or bones to produce a beat or rhythm to which they chant or sing a story or didactic lesson.⁴⁵ Officials wrote lyrics for songs performed with drums or other everyday percussion instruments similar to a tambourine.⁴⁶ Audiences could attend anti-narcotics plays or short dramas and skits acted out on stage during rallies.⁴⁷ Finally, the CCP's anti-narcotics rallies mobilized tropes from the Republican period that linked drug use with death, poverty, disease, and imperialist aggression against China to spark emotional responses.⁴⁸

Officials appealed to local tastes. Shanghai officials wrote separate scripts and lyrics in both local dialects and standard Mandarin for a popular local song-storytelling form known as *pingtan*.⁴⁹ Finally, comedic methods such as *xiangsheng*, or crosstalk, were used to make the campaign more entertaining.⁵⁰ Critically, all of these different storytelling methods and performances were relatively low-budget, popular, and, like nearly all forms of music, had a long history of being used for political messaging.⁵¹ Through cultural products like songs, skits, and plays, officials attempted to make mass rallies not simply didactic indoctrination experiences, but familiar and entertaining festivals of hate.

As audiences entertained themselves by singing or following along to whichever skit or song cadres performed, the lyrics or script dehumanized drug criminals and tried to move people to hate and struggle against them. For example, a song to the beat

⁴⁴SMA A22-1-59, '禁毒鳳陽歌調' (Tune for an Anti-narcotics Fengyang Song), undated (most likely August 1952), pp. 86–87.

⁴⁵*Kuaiban* are generally humorous and fun and can also often involve improvisation as well as adhering to more standardized conventions. SMA A22-1-59, 禁毒快板 (Anti-narcotics *Kuaiban*), undated (most likely August 1952), pp. 82, 84, 85, 90. Some of these *kuaiban* are also written in local dialects to make their appeal as wide as possible.

⁴⁶These songs are called 鼓調 (*gudiao*), SMA A22-1-59, 鼓調 (*Gudiao*), undated (most likely August 1952), pp. 87–88.

⁴⁷SMA A22-1-59, '禁毒雙簧' (Anti-narcotics *Shuanghuang*), undated (most likely August 1952), pp. 76–81.

⁴⁸For more details on these stereotypes, see Paulès, 'Anti-Opium Visual Propaganda'.

⁴⁹SMA A22-1-59, '揭發檢舉烟 毒犯 (評彈或山歌調)' (Uncovering and Turning in Drug Criminals (*Pingtán* or *Shange* Song Tunes; hereafter 'Uncovering and Turning in Drug Criminals'), undated (most likely August 1952), pp. 88–90.

⁵⁰The English language analogue to crosstalk is probably something like the famous 'Who's on First' skit. SMA A22-1-59, '茲將上海市禁毒宣傳計劃報告于后, 請審查批示' (Shanghai Anti-narcotics Propaganda Plan Attached for Review and Approval), 8 August 1952, pp. 27–28.

⁵¹See Joshua Goldstein, *Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-Creation of Peking Opera: 1870–1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007) for more examples on how music was shaped by and used to further political goals in Qing and Republican China. See Brian DeMare, *Mao's Cultural Army: Drama Troupes in China's Rural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), for more examples of the PRC state using plays, skits, and song to spread their political messaging to Chinese people.

of a percussion instrument begins by noting that drugs and the bad customs of the old society turn people into ghosts and ruin the country step by step, so that it becomes destitute rather than rich.⁵² The song then states that Chiang Kai-shek's (1887–1975) British and American imperialist masters purposely used drugs to poison China and its people.⁵³ The song laments the tragedies that have befallen the Chinese people because of narcotics—the sickly people, bankrupt families, and ruined lives. However, after Chairman Mao's victory, the song claims, the people

really have the strength to kill them [drug criminals], and imprison them; they dare not run rampant any longer ... they share a mother with the counterrevolutionaries who tried to poison our new China ... we will zealously accuse them, [we] shout that they cannot hide, [we] won't allow them to disturb the peace of our society, [we] won't let them poison our health.⁵⁴

The song not only focuses on killing and imprisoning drug criminals but also on creating and bringing to bear a collective, unified Chinese people against their enemies. The song uses hatred for drug criminals to unify and direct people's anger and action, while attempting to pull in less enthusiastic listeners with a series of escalating directives in the second half of the song.

A *pingtan* song similarly narrates how Western imperialist powers brought drugs to poison China, the traitor Chiang Kai-shek's complicity and guilt, and the evil of those who helped spread drugs throughout China. By contrast, the song declares the Communists' anti-narcotics work a breath of fresh air and calls on people to thoroughly wipe out drugs.⁵⁵ The references to Chiang Kai-shek here and in other scripts revived not only the historical trauma of the Opium Wars but also linked drug criminals to one of the PRC's mortal enemies. These songs tied drug criminals to familiar tropes from earlier propaganda efforts, casting offenders as pawns of Western and Japanese imperialism, traitors, and poisoners of China. Comics in one of Republican China's most popular magazines, *Modern Sketch*, for example, often portrayed drug users as selling out their wives and children to Western imperialism, and propaganda from 1936 inscribed characters for opium on bombs raining down from planes on helpless Chinese people.⁵⁶ The CCP's song lyrics cast Liberation—as the 1949 revolution was known at the time—as a dramatic break, a fresh chance for the people to unite behind an incorruptible government and wipe out the evils of narcotics. Here the Anti-narcotics Campaign is portrayed as a patriotic and hopeful movement, a chance for China's people to realize their strength, to act as one, and refuse to be poisoned and

⁵²SMA A22-1-59, 'Gudiao', 87–88.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 87–88.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 88. Lit: '解放了的人民著實有力量, 殺的殺, 關的關, 管的管他們不敢再猖狂...他們與那反革命分子本是一娘養, 企圖毒害新中國人民一片壞心腸。同志們, 我們的國家光輝萬丈, 我們的力量銅壁鐵牆, 我們的眼睛雪樣亮, 大力檢舉叫他無法可隱藏, 不許他擾亂社會治安施伎倆, 不許他危害我們的身體健康'.

⁵⁵SMA A22-1-59, 'Uncovering and Turning in Drug Criminals', p. 89.

⁵⁶For example, see 洛宗宝 (Luo Zongbao), '北平戒毒后的里里外外 (The Aftermath of Beijing's Anti-Drug Work, Inside and Out)', 时代漫画 (Modern Sketch), n.d., 13, SMA. For the image of planes dropping bombs, see 禁烟半月刊 (Anti-narcotics Monthly) 1, June 1936, reproduced in Paulès, *Living on Borrowed Time*.

oppressed any longer. For example, a *kuaiban* script states that while the Chinese people stood against drugs since Liberation, drug use persists. The script calls on people to 'be more vigilant, eliminate drugs and banditry ... Everyone must come forth and accuse [offenders]; everyone has a responsibility to fulfil; we must not be paralysed and negligent; wiping out drugs and drug offenders is just like fighting off the American ghosts back on the front lines.'⁵⁷ The lyrics here directed audiences to the ongoing 'Resist America, Aid Korea' campaign that accompanied China's entry into the Korean War (1950–1953) and made fighting drug offenders as important as fighting enemy soldiers. Drugs created a kill or be killed situation: there was no room for complacency. These songs attempted to energize people and inspire them to stamp out narcotics and narcotics users by highlighting the strength and possibilities of the present, the potential of the still-revolutionary moment of early 1950s China.

Other performances sought to spur people into action by underscoring the dangers that drugs posed to the Chinese people and nation. Many songs focused on emotional appeals by showing the damage drugs could inflict on individuals. For example, the lyrics to a five-line chant began with: 'I think back to the tears of my mother and father // how heroin deeply damaged their lives ... drug dealers forced me into prostitution'.⁵⁸ The chant continues, 'Who can one so full of hate appeal to [?] The lamb already in the tiger's jaws cannot resist ... everyone must be more vigilant, report drug producers, smugglers, and traffickers ... do not miss this opportunity to save China'.⁵⁹ A *kuaiban* script similarly states that 'many weak-willed people take drugs and become opium ghosts [addicts]. Young people who take drugs fall into hooliganism and thievery; older people who take drugs die within a few years ... women who take drugs, so many of them fall into prostitution; it's like a sea of suffering.'⁶⁰ Here, the lyrics make clear that narcotics pose a threat to every segment of society, while hitting all the key propaganda tropes of the prewar years, such as prostitution, falling into hooliganism, and a rapid procession to death. A pre-1949 comic titled 'The Course of the Opium Smoker', for example, highlights a man's precipitous fall from wealth and happiness into destitution and death after he started using drugs. Along the way, the man loses his wife and child before literally turning into a walking skeleton in the last panel.⁶¹

These stage performances also echoed the imagery and language of early twentieth-century anti-narcotics efforts that cast violence as the solution to narcotics use and trafficking. Hospitals in the Republican era made drug users sign a form stating that they consented to the death penalty should they relapse following treatment and newspapers published stories on those who failed to stay clean being paraded through

⁵⁷SMA A22-1-59, 'Anti-narcotics *Kuaiban*', p. 85. Lit: '人民應該多警惕，肅清毒品除匪患...大家起來要檢舉，人人有責都應該，我們不可麻痹來疏忽，只要肅清毒品犯，好比前綫打退美國鬼'.

⁵⁸SMA A22-1-59, '禁毒小調' (Anti-narcotics Small Tunes), undated (most likely August 1952), p. 87. Lit: '想起爹娘淚汪汪，白粉毒深把命傷...毒販逼我做妓娼'.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 87. Lit: '滿腹怨恨向誰訴，羊落虎口難反抗...大家提高警惕心，檢舉製，運，販...挽救的機會莫錯過'.

⁶⁰SMA A22-1-59, 'Anti-narcotics *Kuaiban*', p. 85. Lit: '不少意志薄弱人，吃仔上當變成鴉片鬼。年輕人吃仔毒品后，墮落下去做賊痞，老年人吃仔毒品后，不到幾年就要毒死變牌位，婦女吃仔毒品后，很多人墮落娼門入苦海'.

⁶¹溥仁 韩 (Han Puren), '吸食鴉片者之过程 (The Course of the Opium Smoker)', *Health Monthly* (卫生月刊), vol. 1, no. 2, 1934, p. 57. For more examples of the pre-war tropes, see Brook and Wakabayashi, *Opium Regimes*; Paulès, *Living on Borrowed Time*.

hospitals before being executed.⁶² Similarly, a *kuaiban* script that featured throughout the ANC tells the audience that to cure the evils of drugs they must ‘cut off the cancerous tumor, chop off the devil’s hands, and free themselves from the ghost of those who have fallen into the tiger’s clutches’.⁶³ The *kuaiban*’s reference to a ‘cancerous tumor’ cast narcotics, and proximity to narcotics, as an illness or tumour affecting the figurative body of China.⁶⁴ Rather than a complex socio-economic problem that cannot be solved by simply cutting it out, the *kuaiban* casts drug use and trafficking as a metastasizing yet removable cancer. The subsequent reference to the devil’s hands also mirrors the moralizing language of many Republican era anti-narcotics associations that promoted the view that opium was a tool of the devil in order to justify extreme actions against drug offenders.⁶⁵

Finally, the last line of the *kuaiban* invokes the animalistic portrayals of drug users in Republican-era newspapers and propaganda posters. Depicting users as threatening beasts like tigers implied that China and her people must fight and kill them to avoid being overwhelmed by the evils of drugs. Indeed, by invoking the ghosts of those who had fallen, the *kuaiban* explicitly informs the audience that the failure of past efforts has doomed people to death. Historian John Dower has shown how propaganda images of animalized Japanese in the United States and demonic Americans in Japan spurred racialized hatred and violence in the Second World War.⁶⁶ ANC propaganda, while not overtly racializing, cast narcotics criminals not as simply people to hate, but as tumours, devils, and animals to be violently eradicated. The *kuaiban* ends by stating that only after fighting drug criminals can the people reach a utopian future of everlasting peace, in a rich and strong nation. Mass rallies attempted to unite audiences by invoking a shared battle against the implacable and deadly spectre of narcotics.⁶⁷

Dehumanizing imagery of the drug user as a skeleton or walking corpse also featured prominently in campaign propaganda. For example, the script of a popular style of two-person skit called *shuanghuang* focuses on the story of two friends: Yi, an opium smoker who began to avoid social situations, and Jia, his non-smoking friend who comes looking for Yi. As they broach the topic of Yi’s opium smoking, Jia pretends not to be able to hear Yi when he says he has taken up using drugs and makes him repeat it louder and louder. Yi angrily asks Jia if he still cannot hear him now that he is shouting so loudly that the whole neighbourhood can hear. Jia replies, ‘I heard a while ago. I was just afraid the rest of the neighbourhood couldn’t hear.’⁶⁸ Jia models responsible behaviour, as per the campaign, by making his friend’s drug problem public which contributes to his collective shaming and punishing. The two then discuss whether smoking opium makes you fatter or thinner, before Yi breaks into song:

⁶²‘The China Weekly Review’, 16 March 1935, William S. Ridge Papers, Hoover Institution Archive.

⁶³SMA A22-1-59, ‘Anti-narcotics *Kuaiban*’, p. 85. Lit: ‘從此根治了毒害割去了這毒瘤，斬去了魔掌除去了虎倀’.

⁶⁴Ari Larissa Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body between China and the West* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

⁶⁵For example, a film commonly shown at anti-narcotics association meetings in Shanghai before 1949 was titled the *Devil’s Needle*.

⁶⁶John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993).

⁶⁷SMA A22-1-59 ‘Anti-narcotics *Kuaiban*’, p. 85.

⁶⁸SMA A22-1-59, ‘雙簧’ (*Shuanghuang*), undated (most likely August 1952), p. 78. Lit: ‘我早聽見了，我就是怕他們諸位沒聽見’.

Speaking about opium, opium, opium's harm to people is really deep; listen to me when I talk about its harms. When I wasn't addicted, I was in good spirits and healthy; when I wasn't addicted, I was so happy and full of joy; if you smoke and get addicted it's so difficult to deal with; the whole body aches, you can't drink tea or swallow food, sniveling, crying, yawning; shoulders can't bear anything, hands can't carry a basket; dispirited and listless, too lazy to even move, can't work at all, you're like a walking corpse...⁶⁹

Yi's song demonstrates the myriad physical and spiritual problems purported to accompany narcotics usage. It portrays narcotics users as skeletal remnants or shells whose humanity had been scraped out of them by their habit. Yi's list of physical effects also reveals his unsuitability for labour and, by extension, his inability to contribute to building the CCP's vision of socialism. Jia agrees and says, 'smoke opium once and you're addicted; your spirit and body both are damaged so much; [it] damages your health; you smoke till you're just a skeleton without any spirit left ... afterwards your family is reduced to ruin and scatters everywhere; a family's fortunate life is destroyed completely'.⁷⁰ The play continues to discuss opium's history in China and its different varieties before talking about the CCP's glorious campaign to rid China of this evil. The play concludes with Yi, now cured of drug addiction thanks to the CCP's intervention, asking where Jia is going. Jia triumphantly replies, 'I'm going to report my uncle!'⁷¹ While propaganda bureau cadres obviously intended this play to be humorous, it conjures up classic tropes mentioned in anti-narcotics propaganda. Not only does opium turn a lively man into a living corpse, it destroys his family in the process. Critically, however, the play leaves open the possibility of saving the drug user and casts informing on users and sending them to drug rehabilitation centres as a positive, even life-saving, act.⁷² The play portrays the unrepentant drug user, by contrast, as unable to contribute to society and as someone whose actions actively harm the collective. Moreover, unlike stories and plays from the Late Qing, which also dwelled on the dangers of opium, Jia and Yi's dialogue steadfastly refuses to consider any of the allures of narcotics. Zheng Yangwen's examination of anti-opium songs and vernacular literature about opium, for example, highlights how even negative portrayals could not help but mention 'the sunny side of consumption' and 'although they aimed to give the people moral lessons, they also wrote at length on how to smoke as well as on the pleasures of opium'.⁷³

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 78. Lit: '唱說鴉片，這鴉片，鴉片害人真不淺，聽我把它的害處談一談。沒有鴉片癮，精神抖擻身體健，沒有鴉片癮，身心愉快真喜歡，要抽上癮可就不好辦，周身上下筋骨酸，茶不進口飯不下嚥，鼻涕眼淚打哈欠，肩不能擔擔，手不能提籃，精神萎靡懶得動彈，不事勞動，不能生產，像行尸走肉一般。'

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 78–79. Lit: '可真是的，這鴉片煙一抽上了癮，精神上，肉體上都有很大的損失，損壞了健康，抽得骨瘦如柴，精神萎靡... 到後來傾家蕩產，妻離子散，把家庭的幸福生活都給破壞掉了。'

⁷¹Ibid., p. 81. Lit: '我去檢舉我舅舅。'

⁷²These clinics were spaces of incarceration rather than spaces of restoration or rehabilitation. Jan Kiely, *The Compelling Ideal: Thought Reform and the Prison in China, 1901–1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

⁷³Zheng, *The Social Life of Opium in China*, p. 137.

Finally, some songs conjured up images of seething, generational anger that justified violence. One *kuaiban* script rages, 'speaking of drugs hurts my heart; I'm so filled with hatred I can't help but kill someone; words alone can't make the anger in my heart and head disappear; the harm caused by drugs is too savage ... as the saying goes, every wrong has its perpetrator. Who will we settle this sea of blood and hatred with?'⁷⁴ Rather than merely reminding people of the dangers of drugs, this *kuaiban*'s lyrics and imagery smoulder with rage and cry out for revenge. The script even states that killing someone is necessary not just as punishment but to relieve the hatred and anger that the speaker, and by extension the audience, feels because of the damage inflicted by drugs. The speaker feels that he must kill someone or be consumed by his hatred and rage. Killing the target of hatred becomes a transformative experience that rights a wrong and cleanses the speaker and, by extension the audience, of their anger. This *kuaiban* attempted not only to get people on the side of the state; it also tried to get them to hate drug criminals so much that they felt compelled to kill them.

'Even killing him doesn't lessen my hatred and anger': The effects of hate on audience and accused

What did all these official guidelines and techniques do to people who attended rallies? How did audience members feel after officials whipped them into a frenzy and how did the accused feel after crowds assailed them? Internal reporting from cadres and police officials who organized and attended anti-narcotics rallies partially reveals how audience members reacted. These reports fall into what historian Neil Diamant has called the 'investigative report' category, or reports 'conducted in a reasonably objective manner' whose 'verbatim quotes from officials and ordinary people provide a very candid and frank look at the interface between state and society'.⁷⁵ While it is likely that the sources play up the beneficial effects of cadres' work, their confidential nature (many of them are stamped either secret or top-secret) also means that they frankly assess the shortcomings of cadres' work and areas for improvement. The reports also contain direct quotes from audience members and accused drug criminals, even when their testimonies did not align completely with the goals of the campaign. For example, when asked about the campaign in 1952, one particularly humorous drug user inquired, 'I thought liberation happened three years ago. Are there still drug offenders?'⁷⁶

Mass rallies brought strangers together by putting them through a shared emotional experience. The experiences of people at rallies were not uniform, but coming

⁷⁴SMA A22-1-59, '禁毒宣傳 (快板)' (Anti-narcotics Propaganda (*Kuaiban*)), undated (most likely August 1952), p. 90. Lit: '提起毒品心就傷, 不由殺人恨滿腔, 一言難消我心頭火, 毒品的禍害太猖狂...這血海的深仇跟誰來算賬'. The idiom used here means a blood debt so large it is an ocean of blood, or a deep-seated and implacable hatred. The script also states shortly afterwards that since drugs have come to China, it is as if a sharp knife has been plunged into China's heart.

⁷⁵Neil Jeffrey Diamant, *Embattled Glory: Veterans, Military Families, and the Politics of Patriotism in China, 1949-2007* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 2009).

⁷⁶SMA A71-2-905, '擴大會情況報告' (Report on the Situation at the Enlarged Mass Rallies), 21 August 1952, p. 82. Lit: '【我】認為解放到現在三年了, 現在還有毒犯嗎?'

together and hating a drug criminal helped people find common ground, at least for a brief and intense moment. Hatred made people care about the travails of strangers, feel sympathetic and aggrieved on their behalf, and form a shared community with both them and the new state that fought against narcotics. The testimonies of people who witnessed large anti-narcotics rallies reveal how audiences reacted when people came to the stage and spoke against drug criminals and when, in some cases, drug criminals came forward and apologized to the furious crowds.

Some participants used the anti-imperialist messaging of the campaign to turn mundane anti-narcotics work into a crusade against perceived evil and inhumanity. Officials quoted a Mr Li, resident of Shanghai's Dafang district, who stated, 'some people in the past were close and friendly with the American imperialists. They said Americans help China, but in reality they're killing China. They [American imperialists] brought drugs to poison China ... Every day that imperialism doesn't die is a day that the people know no peace. Some people think America is good. These people have no humanity.'⁷⁷ Mr Li envisioned a world where the people and Party battle for China's survival against the intertwined evils of American imperialism and drugs. The centrality of American imperialism in Mr Li's testimony here reflects the importance of the 'Resist America; Aid Korea' campaign that accompanied China's entrance into the Korean War in the autumn of 1950. The ANC, like Land Reform and other campaigns, shifted the focus of anti-imperialist messaging from Japan to America due to fears that 'class enemies would use the conflict [the Korean War] to push back against the new regime'.⁷⁸ Mr Li conceived of the campaign in martial terms, noting that imperialism, and by extension drug criminals, must die. He rhetorically justified punitive measures both as service to an imagined unified 'people' and a strike against murderous imperialists.

Imperial Japan's use of narcotics to fund their imperial ambitions meant that linking drugs to imperialist aggression was believable and relatable for audiences. As historian Miriam Kingsberg has shown, the Kwantung Army used the revenue from drug trafficking to fund expansionism, 'culminating in the invasion of Manchuria in September 1931 and the establishment of the state of Manchukuo six months later'.⁷⁹ The Japanese were not alone in profiteering from drugs, however, as the KMT, CCP, and various warlord regimes during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s relied on opium as a source

⁷⁷SMA A71-2-905, part 2, '關於17日各界代表擴大會議后群眾中的反映:8市區2級人民擴大聯席會議'(Responses from the Masses after the Mass Rally of People's Representatives on the 17th: 8 Municipal Districts and 2 of the People's Mass Rallies; hereafter 'Responses from the Masses'), 20 September 1952, p. 68. Lit. '有的人過去對美帝很親善, 說他們幫助中國, 實則是殺害中國。他們老早就把毒品暈倒中國來毒化中國後來運槍炮給國民黨來叫我們自殺自只有與聯用科學建設來幫助我們才是真的好朋友。帝國主義一天不死, 人民一天不安。個別人認為美國好, 這人沒心肝'.

⁷⁸DeMare, *Land Wars*, p. 117. Resist America; Aid Korea also became a central part of Party efforts to consolidate domestic control, both through bandit suppression and the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries. See Jeremy Brown, 'From Resisting Communists to Resisting America: Civil War and Korean War in Southwest China, 1950–51', in *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China*, (eds) Jeremy Brown and Paul G. Pickowicz (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 105–129.

⁷⁹Kingsberg, *Moral Nation*, p. 111.

of revenue.⁸⁰ In contrast to the CCP, the police in Manchukuo either ignored or outright accepted bribes from traffickers in exchange for legal immunity, while simultaneously helping the state continually push the borders of Manchukuo deeper into Chinese territory.⁸¹ This longer history meant that rally-goers could easily make the link between past Japanese imperialism and ongoing American aggression in Korea. Mr Yu, for example, spoke at a rally in Gaoqiao near Shanghai, stating, 'These things are all imperialist ways of hurting people ... After the Japanese invaders the Americans continued using these things to hurt the Chinese people. To destroy our country and make us unable to live well. These imperialists, they don't take drugs themselves.'⁸² Beyond calling attention to the hypocrisy of imperialist nations and shifting the terrain of anti-imperialist rhetoric from Japan to the United States, Mr Yu again highlighted drugs as a tool of empires, both past and present, in their quest to dominate China and destroy the lives of Chinese people.

Other audience members at the September 1952 rally reflected similar sentiments, but they criticized the KMT more explicitly than Mr Li while valorizing the CCP. Mr Lin, who had taken drugs in the past, stated, 'under the leadership of the CCP, everything is impartial; before, the KMT were frauds and cheats. [They] prohibited [drugs] over and over, but never got rid of them. Because of this, they sold off our lands; if only Liberation had come a few years earlier it wouldn't be like this.'⁸³ Mr Lin's words reflected the CCP narrative that the KMT had deceived people and sold China out to imperialists while just pretending to care about eliminating drugs. But now that the CCP was in power, things had become much better. Mr Lin also reiterated a common trope of former smokers, namely, wishing that Liberation had come earlier. Often, when former smokers spoke up at rallies, they included a similar line in their testimonies to excuse their drug use or draw attention to the historical circumstances that caused it. This facilitated the necessary admission of guilt, but in an excusatory and defensive way.

Mr Lin's testimony also included one of the ways that accused criminals or reformed users tried to carve out space for themselves within the campaign. Beyond his attempted self-exculpation, he also opted for an offensive rhetorical strategy. He followed his above statements with the following charges: 'From our district alone, Dong Zhuo (the district head under the false regime) himself smoked and sold drugs. Cao Cao was also a false district head who trafficked drugs.'⁸⁴ Mr Lin here strategically redirected any public anger at him for his past drug use towards the much more heinous

⁸⁰Kingsberg, *Moral Nation*, pp. 113–115. Chen Yung-fa, 'The Blooming Poppy under the Red Sun: The Yan'an Way and the Opium Trade', in *New Perspectives on the Chinese Revolution*, (eds) Tony Saich and Hans Van De Ven (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995).

⁸¹Kingsberg, *Moral Nation*, pp. 119, 126.

⁸²SMA A71-2-905, part 3, '高橋鎮區禁毒宣傳統計表' (Gaoqiao Village District Anti-narcotics Propaganda Statistics Report), September 1952, p. 18. Lit: '這東西都是帝國主義害人, 都是美帝國主義, 以後日本侵國主義, 美帝國主義繼續用這東西來毒害我們中國人民。使我們亡國不能過好日子, 帝國主義他們自己不吃的'.

⁸³SMA A71-2-905, part 2, 'Responses from the Masses', p. 68. Lit: '今天在共產黨領導下真是大公無私, 過去國民黨是掛羊頭賣狗肉禁來禁去禁不掉。結果把我們的地賣掉了, 假如早幾年解放就不會如此了'.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, p. 68. Lit: '單從本區 (anonymized NAME) (反派政府時大坊區的長) 自己又吸毒又賣毒, (Anonymized NAME) 也是販毒的偽區長'.

crimes of the two people he accused. While he regretted his past usage, the two men in positions of power who colluded with the KMT to sell drugs, use drugs, and exploit the people had driven him to it. Mr Lin cast his crimes as acts of desperation and distanced himself from those in positions of power whose drug crimes instead showed indulgence, greed, or collusion with oppressive regimes.

During the 1950s, many people bonded with others by expanding on pre-1949 propaganda tropes, in particular the notion that drug use destroyed one's family and home, often using the exact same phrases to describe the phenomenon in their statements.⁸⁵ For example, one Mr Fu stated, 'Smoking drugs is something that we knew was bad; after the meeting, it's even more clear. Selling one's wife, child, even disregarding one's ancestors, taking the bones out and selling the [ancestor's] coffin to buy drugs. It's really a big danger.'⁸⁶ Drug crimes violated fundamental human relations, those that helped define and give meaning to one's conception of humanity—care for a spouse, children, and reverence for one's ancestors.

Similarly, a Mr Zhu stated, 'my father smoked opium in the past; he sold off all our furniture and even the ground our home was built on ... the person speaking bitterness, everything they said about the dangers of taking drugs was right. I have a younger brother who I was told was given to other people, but actually he was also sold by my father. Listening to others speaking bitterness, I feel myself really sympathizing with them.'⁸⁷ Beyond reinforcing familiar tropes of drug users selling off furniture, home, land, and even their own family members to support their drug habits, Mr Zhu's statements also indicated his newfound feelings of community with others who had suffered at the hands of drug users and traffickers. Hearing others speak of their shared bitterness towards drug criminals at the rally and listening to others with tales like his own helped Mr Zhu gain a sense of solidarity and common ground with others who had similar experiences. The CCP displayed a similar understanding of crowd psychology through their use of the 'inducing bitterness with bitterness' technique during the Land Reform campaign.⁸⁸ Rallies united people not only through hatred but also through sympathy that served as the basis for a shared anger towards drug criminals even though they may not have impacted on everyone individually. Rallies even helped engage people who were personally uninterested in anti-narcotics work. A Mr Lu stated, 'before, I didn't know drugs were that harmful. Yesterday at the public mass trial I finally realized they're harmful enough to destroy homes and families. I listened to other people's accusations and shed tears.'⁸⁹

Anti-narcotics rallies appealed to those across the social spectrum, reaching not only younger rural men and poorer people but also older people and women. For example, a report from Dafang district notes that at a rally an older woman who usually did

⁸⁵The common phrases are 家破人亡, 妻离子散, and others like it.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 68. Lit: '吸毒本來是知道不好的, 開了大會后, 更知道清楚了, 賣女人, 賣孩子, 連祖宗都不要x拜了, 尸骨把棺材賣去吸毒, 真是危害不少'.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 68–69. Lit: '我的父親過去也吸毒, 屋裏家具地皮都被他賣脫。那天訴苦的人所說的吸毒的危害的確如此。我有一個弟弟說是過放給別人, 其實也是被父親賣給人家, 聽人家訴苦面想自己確很同情'.

⁸⁸Wu, 'Speaking Bitterness', p. 10. Lit: '以苦引苦'.

⁸⁹SMA A71-2-905, part 2, 'Responses from the Masses', p. 69. Lit: '過去不知道毒品如x危害, 昨天去開了公審大會才曉得它害得家破, 妻離子散, 我聽了人家的控訴也流淚了'.

not participate in political meetings actively sought out and joined them. The woman reportedly stated, 'I totally support the government's campaign. I had to come and listen.'⁹⁰ The brevity and vagueness of her testimony contrasts with the detail of many of the other testimonies officials recorded. One can read this either as a fictive transcript or perhaps that of someone who did not want to talk or share much information about herself. Even if it is read as entirely fictitious, the testimony highlights that the state wanted these rallies to appeal broadly and draw together a wide variety of different social groups in support of the new regime. Officials in Dafang district also recorded the collective testimonies of many local younger women. According to a report, the women stated, 'Those who smoke drugs have no face [no shame]. They sell their wives, their own coffins. They really don't have any face. To marry a drug addict is really like striking your own brow.'⁹¹ Beyond officials' refusal to consider local women as anything other than a large group and their refusal to name individual women in their reports, the testimony also highlights that officials wanted to communicate to their superiors that rallies brought people of all types together in support of the Anti-narcotics Movement. These reports use women in identical fashion to pre-1949 propaganda, namely as pitiable victims of the male drug criminal's actions. Unlike Land Reform, where women stood at the forefront in many villages because 'they were emotionally vulnerable and easily shed tears', reports from the ANC portray women as sympathetic figures but never as acting subjects.⁹² Men perpetrate drug crimes; women suffer the consequences. In a patriarchal society, focusing on the deleterious effects of drug crimes on pitiable dependents like women and children reinforced the stereotype of the drug criminal as the antithesis of an idealized, productive, and forward-looking man. A good citizen built the nation through hard work and communal solidarity; a drug criminal harmed society's most vulnerable and disintegrated a basic unit of society—the family.

For some audience members, the hatred that these depictions generated justified killing drug criminals. For example, a Mr Zhou stated, 'the anti-narcotics policies of the CCP are right. It's like a dream I couldn't even have imagined under the old false government. At these rallies we killed some [drug criminals], arrested some, and fought some. As far as I can see, after this anti-narcotics movement, nobody is left smoking drugs.'⁹³ The campaign's work to inspire hate in audience members resonated

⁹⁰Ibid. Lit: '政府這一運動我交關贊成,我要來聽'.

⁹¹Ibid. Lit: '吸毒的人不要面孔,賣了女人賣棺材,真不要面孔。嫁給吸毒人X其觸眉頭'.

⁹²Wu, 'Speaking Bitterness', p. 13. The author notes here as well that many women's husbands tried to forbid them from speaking but the women insisted. The different historical context of Land Reform and the ANC also influenced the roles of women between the two campaigns. Women featured prominently in speaking bitterness during Land Reform in the late 1940s, partly because the campaign dovetailed with movements to end feudal marriage practices and introduce new marriage and divorce norms. The ANC, by contrast, was a more focused campaign aimed at practices historically stereotyped as male dominated, that did not lend itself easily to promulgating the CCP's new views on gender relations. For more on the experiences of women during Land Reform, see DeMare, *Land Wars*. For more on the new marriage law, see Jennifer E. Althenger, *Legal Lessons: Popularizing Laws in the People's Republic of China, 1949–1989*. Harvard East Asian Monographs 411 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018).

⁹³SMA A71-2-905, part 2, 'Responses from the Masses', p. 68. Lit: '禁毒在共產黨領導下政策的正確。想反派政府時做夢也想不到。這次大會有殺的關的敵的。我看經過這次禁毒運動X沒有人吸毒了'.

so strongly with Mr Zhou that he cast killing, arresting, and fighting against drug criminals at a rally as not only a way to stamp out drugs, but something that he longed for and dreamed about. One Mr Ma was less passionate than Mr Zhou, but stated, 'Shanghai [recently] shot dead four big drug criminals; this is the only way to really stop the spread of drugs.'⁹⁴ A rally-goer named Mr Yu reported, 'my father in the past smoked opium; when he ran out of money, he would often go steal other people's things. Today he is dead and there isn't anybody stealing things anymore. Production in the family is also good.'⁹⁵ Yu's testimony does not say whether his father was killed in the Anti-narcotics Movement, but he cast his drug-using father's death as a positive thing. The death of his father fixed both a social problem for the local community and an economic, emotional, and moral problem for Mr Yu's household. Statements similar to Mr Zhou's, Mr Ma's, and Mr Yu's are common in ANC reports.

Beyond spurring audience members to attack the accused, mass rallies increased social and public pressure on drug criminals, making them feel isolated and cornered by the twin forces of state and society. A report from Shanghai's municipal Anti-narcotics Committee in October 1952 noted that mass rallies and trials were extremely effective. In Shanghai alone, in addition to a rally attended by over 10,000 people, officials had held over 500 rallies and trials.⁹⁶ Officials noted that the meting out of judgements (death, imprisonment, or release) terrorized many criminals into confessing and asking for leniency rather than trying to evade capture. The report quoted one offender who, after witnessing judgement being passed, said, 'I was going to wait and see how things played out, see which way the wind was blowing, but after seeing them kill those who wouldn't confess, I can't wait anymore; I have to confess.'⁹⁷ Officials reported that 'most drug offenders, under this pressure, decide to confess; more than 1.5 times as many have confessed and registered than we had before [in the first half of the campaign]'.⁹⁸

Increased pressure, however, also had unintended consequences. Officials noted that sometimes people were so angry at drug users that they disobeyed official guidelines to show leniency to those who confessed. Officials had to reassure users not to be afraid and come forward.⁹⁹ Other offenders were so scared of what would happen to them that they committed suicide; officials particularly wanted to stop the trend of offenders jumping from buildings.¹⁰⁰

For some spectators, even killing drug criminals was not enough. Testimonies from people hurt by drug criminals made a Mr Chen so angry that he joined the communal

⁹⁴SMA A71-2-905, '禁毒宣傳工作情況簡報' (Summary Report on the Anti-narcotics Propaganda Work Situation), 30 September 1952, p. 8. Lit: '上海槍殺了四個大毒犯, 這樣才能徹底禁止毒品流行'.

⁹⁵SMA A71-2-905, part 2, 'Responses from the Masses', p. 69. Lit: '我父親過去吸大烟, 沒了錢常去偷人家東西, 現在他死了偷東西的人沒有了, 家中生產也好了'.

⁹⁶SMA A22-1-59, '關於禁毒運動宣傳工作的初步總結報告' (Summary Report on the Anti-narcotics Movement's Preliminary Propaganda Work), 22 October 1952, p. 41.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 41. Lit: '原來我要看看苗頭, 望望風色的, 看到拒不坦白的殺掉頭, 再不坦白不行了'.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 42. Lit: '多毒犯在此壓力下向政府坦白登記者亦較前增加一倍半'.

⁹⁹SMA A22-1-59, '郊區十二個市鎮禁毒運動宣傳工作開展情況的檢查報告' (Inspection Report on Starting Anti-narcotics Propaganda Work in Twelve Suburban Cities and Towns), 3 September 1952, p. 22. Lit: '也即很容易把群眾的注意力引導到這些人身上。因為當群眾還沒有接受黨的政策以前, 對吸毒者意見是很大的'.

¹⁰⁰SMA A71-2-905, 'Report on the Situation at Enlarged Mass Rallies', 21 August 1952, p. 81.

viewing of their public execution. After watching, Mr Chen stated, ‘Those four people who were shot to death, one of them was a 28-year-old young man; he cried really pitifully. But listening to his crimes and how he hurt around eight families, even killing him doesn’t lessen my hatred and anger.’¹⁰¹ Mr Chen’s testimony highlights the success of the CCP’s efforts to create community through hatred. Despite being personally unaffected by the accused, after hearing accounts of their crimes Mr Chen felt so angry on behalf of his fellow citizens that he felt a visceral and personal hatred for the drug criminals on stage. For people whipped into a frenzy like Mr Chen, drug offenders ceased to exist as individuals with complex histories and situations. Mr Chen and others like him saw the accused as objects of hatred because they hurt China and its people. The drug users were enemies that society, through its authorities, needed to kill. Even an attempt by one of the criminals to assert his own humanity by piteously wailing and protesting his innocence did nothing to ease Mr Chen’s rage. Not only did Mr Chen watch these people die, their deaths left him unsatisfied.

The CCP used hatred to depict drug crimes as threats to society and turned individual crimes into a spectre endangering the people. Not only did the rallies bring people together to inflict violence against an enemy, but they justified repeating that violence by getting people so angry that they saw a wrong done to other members of the community as an attack against themselves. The rallies not only worked to punish drug criminals, but to unify people. They created an emotional atmosphere in which people felt aggrieved on behalf of others, took collective revenge against criminals who had no connection to them personally, and felt grateful to and identified with the new government that helped them take this revenge. Hatred justified the violence of the rally and bound people from all walks of life together in a shared emotional experience.

‘I don’t know what to do to make it right’: Individual attempts to resist

How did the accused respond to the concerted pressure that cadres and the gathered masses placed on them at rallies? What did they feel when faced with the baying crowds? How did they respond to the charges hurled against them? Accused drug criminals, particularly those brought forward for public arraignment at the mass rallies, generally suffered harsher punishments than any others in the campaign. There are far fewer testimonies from the accused than there are from rally participants, a drop within an already small pool of historical sources. Moreover, testimonies from the accused in their own words, rather than as referenced in the notes of a cadre or policing official’s report, are rarer still. This section examines one of the few surviving first-hand records from an accused drug user, Mrs Zhu, among other sources. She detailed her experiences in the Anti-narcotics Campaign and wrote a letter of complaint to her local government office. The document survived because a local cadre included the letter when he forwarded his report up the chain of command. The indignant woman protested her and her husband’s innocence and asked the government to get local police officials and people to leave them alone.

¹⁰¹SMA A71-2-905, ‘Responses from the Masses’, p. 69. Lit: ‘幣的那四個人中一個28歲的青年哭了是很可惜，但聽到他的罪惡害了八家多少，殺掉也不解恨’.

Accused criminals suffered not only the physical violence inflicted on them at these rallies, but the emotional violence of the audience haranguing them and feeling cut off from everyone around them. People who were accused realized that the police could always accuse them again in the future and force them into another gruelling ordeal in which they had to protest their innocence to an angry crowd that saw them as an untrustworthy enemy. Despite this, sources show that even when faced with a state and society certain of their guilt, some accused still found ways to protest their innocence and resist their accusers. Unlike earlier examples of former drug users who strategically redirected the focus of the crowds away from their own crimes towards the more heinous crimes of others, Mrs Zhu directly refuted the charges.

Mrs Zhu's letter clarifies that the police saw anyone with prior drug use or even proximity to drugs as perpetually suspicious and potentially guilty. In her letter, Mrs Zhu notes that the police directed her and her husband, Zhu Yuanzhang, to join an anti-narcotics meeting on 14 September 1952. When she attended the meeting, the chairman asked her husband to present himself. Zhu Yuanzhang did not attend, however, because he was busy and had applied for leave. When Mrs Zhu reported this to the chairman and said she would represent her husband, the chairman replied, 'How can you alone represent two drug smoking criminals?'¹⁰² She responded by telling the chairman that her husband never even touched cigarettes or alcohol, let alone drugs, and that, while she herself used to smoke drugs, she had stopped 18 years earlier. She tried to prove that she had reformed by referring to the state's healthcare system and emphasizing the passage of nearly two decades. When she stopped using drugs, because she had been addicted to taking them by injection, she had to stay in Tongde Hospital for a long time, which, she reminded officials, they could check and verify.¹⁰³ Finally, she noted that her dealer, who had worked at a hotel and then a teahouse, had died of illness long ago and that she could not provide any further information to the police.¹⁰⁴

Despite her claims, officials remained doubtful and forced her to attend a series of subsequent meetings, first with her residents' committee and a CCP cadre Li, where she explained her story again and provided proof of her stay at Tongde Hospital.¹⁰⁵ After this meeting, the police made Mrs Zhu attend a mass public trial on 27 September, and on 20 October a cadre Luo instructed her to attend another meeting that evening. At the meeting, Cadre Luo declared: 'People like you [drug users] have not confessed enough; today you must provide additional information.'¹⁰⁶ Luo then told Mrs Zhu to speak up, and she dutifully reported her story, which was unchanged. Unsatisfied, Cadre Li told her to 'bring supplementary information to the resident's committee, the women's federation, or the police station within three days, or we're going to really punish you'.¹⁰⁷ A day later, Cadre Li visited Mrs Zhu again and told her: 'if you've

¹⁰²SMA B1-2-1323, '報告 一九五二年, 十月廿七' (Report, 27 October 1952), p. 96. Lit: '妳一個人怎可代表得起兩個吸毒犯呢?'

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 97. Lit: '我從前 會吸過鴉片烟, 已戒除十八年了, 戒烟時曾因打針中毒, 在同德醫院住了很久, 這是可以調查的'.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 96. Lit: '你們這件的人都是坦白不夠的, 今天還要補充材料'.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 97. Lit: '限三天內將補充材料送至居委會或婦聯, 派出所, 否則, 要從嚴處理'.

got any smoking paraphernalia still, you better turn it over soon'.¹⁰⁸ She replied, 'I quit eighteen years ago; I destroyed all my smoking paraphernalia; I really don't have anything to give you.'¹⁰⁹ The following day, she thought back again to her past and remembered the names of two of the people who used to sell her drugs, one named Yuan Shao who had died long ago and one named Lu Bu who had died the previous year. She promptly went to her resident's committee, told Cadre Luo, and asked him to report it. She ends the paragraph by noting that this was really the whole truth of her situation.¹¹⁰

The cadres' distrust of Mrs Zhu and her husband shows how little the police trusted not just drug users, but anyone close to suspected users. Notably, the two cadres never stated a reason for suspecting Mrs Zhu and her husband of using drugs other than her previous drug use. At the first meeting, despite her husband never smoking cigarettes, let alone using drugs, the person leading the meeting referred to the two of them as 'two drug-smoking criminals'.¹¹¹ Despite Mrs Zhu telling cadres that people in their neighbourhood could vouch for her husband's abstinence, his association with Mrs Zhu and her past crimes meant that officials classified him as a drug user as well.¹¹² Mrs Zhu's history of drug use not only marked her as perpetually guilty in the eyes of cadres, it influenced how they viewed her husband and marked him as guilty too.

Cadres Li and Luo remained deeply suspicious of Mrs Zhu herself, repeatedly calling her to a series of meetings, mass rallies, and public trials. Each time, the cadres forced Mrs Zhu to repeat her story in front of a hostile audience to make her feel isolated and under attack. At each event, the cadres harangued her, despite having proof that Mrs Zhu had stayed at a hospital for an extended period in the past, her testimony that she had quit using drugs, and their failure to produce any evidence to the contrary. The two cadres repeatedly accused her of withholding information about her past drug use and keeping her smoking instruments, which implied that she was still using. Cadre Li even declared that if she did not produce more information officials would punish her harshly. Every time Mrs Zhu produced testimony or proof to support her story, the cadres dismissed or ignored it outright and plied her with more questions. To the two cadres, her past drug use made her untrustworthy, guilty in perpetuity, and incapable of quitting the habit.¹¹³

This view of drug users as guilty from the moment they started using helped justify the state's imposition of various types of violence on them. The cadres not only forced Mrs Zhu to relive the violence of her past in a hostile context but their use of her past to accuse her in the present implied that they could do the same thing again in the future. The campaign forced narcotics users to confront not only the emotional and physical violence of the crowds but also the knowledge that the state could, at will, put them through the same gruelling ordeal repeatedly.

¹⁰⁸Ibid. Lit: '你現在如存有烟具, 應早日交出'.

¹⁰⁹Ibid. Lit: '戒除已十八年了, 所有烟具早已銷毀, 實在沒有烟具可交'.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 96. Lit: '妳一個人怎可代表得起兩個吸毒犯呢?'.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 98.

¹¹³An even more cynical interpretation of these events is that the two cadres did not care much about her innocence, but calculated that attacking people like Mrs Zhu would further the goals of the campaign.

Like other offenders, throughout her letter, Mrs Zhu consistently locates her drug use well before the arrival of the CCP. Even when she finally provided additional information to the cadres, the information was useless because the dealers she recalled were already dead. Her strategy resembled Mr Lin's, mentioned above, who cast his drug use as the result of the KMT's failures. Both their strategies capitalized on the campaign's rhetoric of 'before today, punish lightly; after today, punish harshly', which cadres repeatedly emphasized to reassure reluctant drug users and obtain more confessions. Despite the apparent leniency of the campaign's rhetoric, Mrs Zhu's testimony shows that campaign officials had considerable leeway in interpreting and applying it, in her case directly threatening to punish her despite evidence that she had stopped using drugs 18 years prior.

Beyond protesting her own mistreatment, her central complaint in the letter concerns the cadres' treatment of her husband. In her words, 'My husband, Zhu Yuanzhang, is already 65 years old. He's never even touched cigarettes or alcohol. Our neighbours can verify and prove this. During the campaign, he was accused of being a drug user and made to enter a drug user's small group.'¹¹⁴ Beyond highlighting his advanced age and long history of abstinence, she stressed that their neighbours could vouch for his behaviour. During the Anti-narcotics Campaign, officials called on neighbourhood associations and residents to act as informants and root out any drug use in their midst. Mrs Zhu here reversed the typical dynamic of the campaign by using these same systems of surveillance and reporting to prove her husband's innocence rather than guilt.

Finally, while Mrs Zhu praises the CCP for their efforts, she uses their own campaign slogans against them. Her letter begins by stating her support for the new government's 'mighty Anti-narcotics Campaign' and her certainty that 'under the government's vigorous implementation and the people's energetic help they [drugs] will certainly be thoroughly destroyed; every citizen's most ardent hope is that this mighty campaign achieves great success'.¹¹⁵ Then she notes that 'in carrying out the Anti-narcotics Campaign, the situation is very complex because individual mistakes are unavoidable'.¹¹⁶ After setting herself up as appropriately sympathetic to the campaign and its zealous managers, she states that the cadres consistently told people to 'master the material and handle the cases according to the facts' and then enquires:

... is this [accusing her and her husband] mastering the material and handling the cases according to the facts? In the past I did smoke drugs, but I already quit 18 years ago. All the people I used to deal with before are dead; I have no way of testifying [against] and reporting on them. My drug using paraphernalia is long destroyed; I really can't turn anything over. Now Cadre Li wants me to turn over supplementary materials even though I have nothing to turn over. No matter what I do, I don't know what to do to make it right. I want the large meeting of

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 98. Lit: '我丈夫 (NAME) 現已六十五歲, 香煙酒類從不沾口, 裏弄居民可以證明, 這次被指為吸毒犯, 把他列入毒犯小組'.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 96. Lit: '目前本年已展開偉大的禁毒運動, 百多年未使我們國家人民受害無窮的烟毒, 在政府的大力執行和人民的積極幫助下必然可以徹底潰滅, 這一偉大運動獲得重大成就這是全市人民最熱烈期望的'.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 96. Lit: '在禁毒運動進行中, 情況是很繁複的, 因為個別的誤會是在x難免的'.

the people's representatives to stand in for the people and solve the problems, especially to report the true facts. Please investigate.¹¹⁷

Here, Mrs Zhu directly turns one of the campaign's mottos against the cadres and calls attention to the way their actions contravened the campaign's ostensible focus on present-day offences and on using evidence as the basis for punishment. Her testimony also underscores how hopeless and isolated she feels and how deeply her past drug usage marked her as a target for the cadres during the campaign.

Despite the overwhelming forces arrayed against them, accused drug users were not entirely without recourse and some, like Mrs Zhu, even directly pushed back against the campaign. A note appended to Mrs Zhu's letter asking cadres to investigate and, if her claims were true, to apologize to her demonstrates that these protests were ineffective at obtaining genuine redress. Accused people, however, did not simply sit back and let the campaign wash over them. Some fled, some fought, some tried to hunker down and wait out the campaign, and some confessed to lighter crimes in hope of leniency.

Conclusion

Emotions and hatred played critical roles in driving political participation and defining belonging throughout Mao's China, from mobilizing people against hated enemies of the people to killing a local landlord to joining political campaigns out of fear for one's own life.¹¹⁸ In this article, I have shown how Party leaders, local propaganda cadres, and ordinary people created a situation in which hatred and violence against social outcasts became expected and woven into the social fabric. Conceptually, by focusing on the mass rallies of the Anti-narcotics Campaign, I have shown how the lived experiences of drug offenders and audience members, on the one hand, and the emotional, political, and social contexts of early 1950s China, on the other, played equally critical roles in creating a landscape that normalized hatred and violence against a marginalized group of people.¹¹⁹

Recent scholarship has examined the roles of social media and digital landscapes in cultivating and spreading messages of hate and race-based hate.¹²⁰ Beyond extending the geographic and temporal focus of these conversations, this article also calls attention to how the state deploys everyday strategies of mobilization, in the absence of visible markers of racial difference, to create hate and define social life and death.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 98–99. Lit: ‘辦事處 anonymized name 同志常說，【掌握材料確實辦理】，這就是掌握材料據實辦理嗎？我過去是吸過烟毒的，但在十八年前就已戒除，從前經手的人都已死亡，無法檢舉，烟具也早已銷毀，實在交不出來，現在 anonymized name 同志連要跟我補充材料，我再沒有什麼可補充的，想來想去，不知怎樣是好。我想人民代表大會政協會議是替人民解決問題的，特地把事實經過報告。即請查辦。此上’。

¹¹⁸Joseph Esherick, Paul Pickowicz and Andrew G. Walder (eds), *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*. Studies of the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

¹¹⁹Hall, Clayton and Donovan, *Landscapes of Hate*, p. 7.

¹²⁰Gregory J. Seigworth and Carolyn Pedwell (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader 2: Worldings, Tensions, Futures*. Anima: Critical Race Studies Otherwise (Durham: Duke University Press, 2023); Hall, Clayton and Donovan, *Landscapes of Hate*.

The importance that state forces placed on everyday ways of inspiring hatred and making it palatable and fun for audiences underscores both the use of affect in complicating neat material and discursive divides and the importance of hatred in producing differential inclusion to help legitimize the new PRC state.¹²¹

While scholars have demonstrated how political and organizational factors underpinned the success or failures of mass campaigns in Mao's China, the success of the Anti-narcotics Campaign, and campaigns more broadly, also depended on constructing an emotional terrain that moved the campaign towards its goals. While the CCP enjoyed far more social and political control of Chinese territory than the KMT, the Party's use of emotional work was equally critical to their ability to create new senses of community and support in areas where they lacked power, such as urban centres like Shanghai. Party leaders themselves were keenly aware of this, directing officials to use hatred to help choose appropriate targets for public killings. Mass rallies and trials were places where people congregated and became unified through a shared hatred of drug criminals. The relatively short duration of the rally itself also meant that participants did not have a chance to let their emotions cool off before making a decision. Once mobilized, emotions are powerful drivers of political participation and identity creation, leading people to participate in not only inter but intra-communal violence.

The everyday actions and refinement of techniques at the grassroots level also highlight the contingency of this emotional work. Through trial and error, cadres discovered a wide variety of techniques to get people to hate drug criminals, from highlighting how drugs destroyed people's villages and lives to tying those struggles back to the national campaign to making hatred a fun experience for audience members. Cadres relied on a variety of cultural productions that made hating drug criminals both more familiar and more enjoyable for the assembled crowds. The constructed and contingent nature of this hatred underscores the importance of contesting representations, historical memory, and cultural productions that foment hatred to incite violence.

Acknowledgements. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Paul Pickowicz, Karl Gerth, Micah Muscolino, Wendy Matsumura, and Eunice Lee for their generous engagement with various versions of this article. An initial version of this work was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference and the UC San Diego-East China Normal University research symposium during which participants provided valuable commentary. I am very grateful to the editors and two anonymous reviewers of *Modern Asian Studies* who provided insightful feedback that greatly improved this article.

Funding statement. Part of this research was funded by the Fulbright Foundation, the Esherrick-Ye Family Foundation, and the American Council of Learned Societies.

Competing interests. The author declares none.

¹²¹Hanscom and Washburn, *The Affect of Difference*, p. 6.

Cite this article: Chan, Thomas. 2025. "A sea of blood and hate": Mass mobilization of emotion in China's Anti-narcotics Campaign, 1949–1952'. *Modern Asian Studies*, pp. 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X24000465>