

In the Name of Confucius Film Notes for Panel Remarks

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Doris Liu, film director (centre), Michel Juneau-Katsuya (left), formerly chief of Asia-Pacific, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and me at panel after festival viewing of [In the Name of Confucius](#)

There is a good deal of positive commentary about this film, which has now evidently won six awards, linked under a photo of Doris Liu at its premiere in Washington on the header page of www.david-kilgour.com. Congratulations to Doris on the large amount of time, skill and research she put into it.

In 2013, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) passed a resolution calling on all Canadian universities and colleges to cease hosting Confucius Institutes (CIs). The U. of British Columbia, the U. of Manitoba, McMaster U. in Hamilton, L'universite de Sherbrooke du Quebec, and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) have all taken principled positions. What about the practices of other education institutions that still host the CIs across our country?

Former CAUT executive director James Turk has noted that any university hosting a CI is compromising their integrity by allowing the Beijing party-state to have a voice in curriculum, texts, and topics of class discussion. He adds that CIs are “essentially political arms of the Chinese government...and should have no place on our campuses”.

David Mulroney, former Canadian ambassador to China, notes, "We're seeing really the end of the free ride that Confucius Institutes have had, particularly in North America".

The CIs have nothing to do with the famous fifth century BC Chinese philosopher. Mao Zedong loathed Confucius, even destroying his grave, but the party-state in Beijing knows that many foreigners admire him.

Materials used by CIs often reflect problematic interpretations of history. Professor June Dreyer at the U of Miami noticed that the CI headquarters earlier recommended the use by CIs of material which blamed the U.S. for starting the Korean War as it “manipulated the UN Security Council” to approve an army “consisting mainly of US troops” who worked “to enlarge the aggression against Korea”, not bothering to mention the North’s invasion of the South.

Professor Emeritus Perry Link of Princeton, a China scholar, years ago described Beijing censorship as a “giant anaconda coiled in an overhead chandelier”. Link: “The Soviet Union, where Stalin’s notion of ‘engineering the soul’ was first pursued, in practice fell far short of what the Chinese Communists have achieved in psychological engineering.” Elsewhere he spells out that China’s post-1949 constitution provides citizens with freedom of speech, etc, but its preamble “also sets down the inviolability of Communist Party rule, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong-Thought, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the socialist system...” A report on world press freedom for 2017 by Reporters without Borders indicates that China is 5th worst in the index (175th), followed by North Korea at 180th.

The film features Sonia Zhao, who left China to work with a CI at McMaster U. in Hamilton. “I thought (it) was a cultural organisation,” she says, but discovered that even

in a democratic Canada, she felt nervous “all the time”. “I had to think twice before I said anything.”

Zhao’s was a practitioner of Falun Gong, an exercise-meditation movement that emphasises truthfulness, compassion and forbearance. Since 1999, practitioners have been persecuted by the Chinese party-state, partly because it was practised by 70-100 million people by the regime’s own estimate in the late-1990s. Though peaceful and non-political, the repression resulted in hundreds of thousands of practitioners jailed and many dying as victims of the regime’s barbaric practice of forced organ harvesting.

The documentary exposes propaganda in CI literature used in schools and universities in western democracies, which promotes the totalitarian teachings of Chairman Mao being taught to children in Canada today.

Officials in Beijing make little attempt to hide the real purpose of CIs. Largely independent from their host universities, CIs are controlled from Beijing, with a constitution and bylaws drawn up by the Chinese regime with little transparency. Xu Lin, the Director-General of the CI headquarters, known as ‘Hanban’, says on camera that their work is “an important part of our soft power. We want to expand China’s influence”. She adds: “The foreign universities work for us.”

The Toronto District School Board, as we saw, was not filled with pro-Beijing stooges. Confronted with the evidence, the board ultimately voted to terminate the district’s relationship with the CI. Others, such as McMaster University, have done the same. In the United States, two universities, Chicago and Pennsylvania State, cut ties with CIs - as have at least three in Europe.

It is not a ‘Confucius’ revolution, but the exporting of the values of a brutal, corrupt, cruel dictatorship. “An oppressive government,” said Confucius, “is to be feared more than a tiger”. We need to wake up and stop this collusion. [*In the Name of Confucius*](#) is a film everyone involved in China policy and education policy should watch. Confucius must be turning in his grave. Merci.