

'Now I can use my pen!' says novelist Pa Chin

The Call delegation had the honor of talking with one of China's best-loved cultural figures, novelist Pa Chin.

Although the "gang" locked up Pa Chin's personal library, prevented visitors from coming to his house, and forced him to go to work growing vegetables in spite of his advanced age, he never gave up his confidence in socialism and the masses. The people also never gave up their confidence in him, continuing to read his books despite efforts by the "gang" to ban them.

In English, the best-known of Pa Chin's writings is his trilogy, The Family, which was published in New York as far back as 1931.

Today, Pa Chin is a vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress and chairman of the Shanghai Writers Bureau. Below are some of the remarks he made to us:

The "gang of four's" reactionary cultural line goes back a long way. Chiang Chun-chiao wrote more than 100 articles in the 1930s, and Chiang Ching wrote quite a number as well. They were trying to get famous quickly.

But these articles were no good. Many of Chiang Chun-chiao's writings, for example, written under the pseudonym "Ti Ke," were attacks on Lu Hsun and China's anti-imperialist cultural movement of those days.

Later, when the "gang" put on their "left" cover, they tried to hide this past and attack those who knew about what role they had really played. Some people were deprived of their political rights as a result of the "gang's" persecution. Others simply stopped writing in the face of so

many attacks. Some even died.

I suffered comparatively little.

When they first started criticizing me and accusing me of being a "bourgeois writer," I studied the criticisms very seriously. I thought to myself that in the old society, I had been a novelist for more than 20 years. I knew that many of my writings contained errors. I believed that I should study Chairman Mao's writings and make a deep self-criticism of my own weaknesses.

But then I saw that this "gang" was going against what Chairman Mao had always taught us. Gradually, I began to see their true face. The way they tortured our comrades showed me that they were fascists. I began to connect up their past in the 1930s with their present, and I saw where they stood.

After Premier Chou and Chairman Mao died, the masses showed very clearly how they felt about the "gang."

I'm a writer from the old society. I've been writing since 1928. I got my education from Chairman Mao and Premier Chou. After liberation, I tried to use my pen to praise socialism. But the "gang" called me a "reactionary authority" and took the pen out of my hands. I didn't write anything in the last 10 years, not even a diary. I wasted those 10 years. Even my children suffered for the crime of being related to me.

Now I can use my pen to write. Some other writers kept working in secret during their years of persecution, and we are now publishing some of these works.

I'm 74 and I don't have much time left. But I want to do some more work. We've had difficulties because of the "gang's" sabotage, but we have a bright future.