

non-democratic governments, motivated by ideologies such as Confucianism, have also prevented famines (a valid criticism one might expect from a China specialist).

Wemheuer's comparative study is a valuable reference work to recent literatures on these two famines, with the caveat that readers should be cautious about his discussion of the USSR. It is a corrective to the prevailing trend of "intentionalist" interpretations that have acquired wide political support despite their scholarly inadequacies, and as such is an important book to read for anyone convinced of "famine-genocide" views.

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WU, YICHING. *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins. Chinese Socialism in Crisis*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) [etc.] 2014. xii, 335 pp. Ill. \$49.95; £36.95; €45.00.

Yiching's Wu's masterful social history of three phases of the Cultural Revolution as they played out in three different Chinese cities is the single best book I have ever read on the subject and one of the very best books I have read on any aspect of Maoist Era China in a long time. It is path-breaking in every sense and both changes the ground rules and raises the bar for future scholarship on what was perhaps the most intense and important, but remains one of the least understood, episodes of mass political mobilization and internal contestation (without the complete overthrow of the regime in power) in modern history. Most previous analyses of the Cultural Revolution have focused on elite politics and Mao's Machiavellian designs and their horrific effects on others in the top echelons of China's political and social hierarchy. What work has focused on social history has tended to confine its perspective to individual cities or incidents – notably, the original Red Guard mobilization in Beijing in Spring 1966 and the January 1967 Shanghai People's Commune movement (though some have also examined such other episodes as the July 1967 Wuhan Incident or 1968's "Mango Fever"). For many scholars, both within China and around the world, the Cultural Revolution – especially its most heady years of 1966–1969 – remains a veritable black box, especially at the grassroots of urban China. Though not the only, or even the first, effort in this vein, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins* takes the largest and most significant steps to date towards bridging this notable and unfortunate lacuna.

The opening chapter boldly frames the study as intimately connected to the present day. Wu sees the Cultural Revolution not as a discrete episode of chaos, but as part of an historical continuum of post-1949 Chinese political and social history. The schisms and rifts it laid bare during the 1960s and 1970s have opened up anew since the 1990s, as the reform project has failed to deliver the broad-based growth and gains many hoped for during the 1980s, creating a profound anxiety within the Chinese state surrounding any discussion of the latest and most extreme pre-reform period of intense contestation (pp. 4–6). The second chapter summarizes the politics of class and of history during the Maoist period. The primary conclusion is that the vitally important questions of how classes are defined, of the

persistence or impermanence of historical and family legacies from before 1949, and of the nature of class struggle and revolution after liberation were left dangerously and precariously unsettled or ambiguous by the mid-1960s (pp. 50–51). Thus, the book sets out in its core chapters (three through five) to explain three essentially important series of events that came to define critical phases of the Cultural Revolution at the grassroots in three different Chinese cities: class and family background politics in Beijing in the summer and autumn of 1966; Shanghai's January Storm in early 1967; and popular radicalization of politically unflavored social elements in Changsha (capital of Hunan Province) in late 1967 and early 1968.

Chapter Three traces the tragic arc of the Yu family's fortunes as Beijing erupted in rebellion in 1966. Centering principally on Yu Luo, a twenty-four-year-old factory apprentice from a well-to-do family in 1966, but drawing in the stories of many others in his kinship, political, and personal circles, Wu draws on memoirs, Chinese and English secondary sources, and a treasure trove of previously unexamined or underutilized primary documents to discuss how ideas of class background (derived through one's family), revolutionary consciousness, and violent conflict and insurrection came to be contested in the Cultural Revolution's first phase. The basic writings, deeds, and fate of Yu Luo are famous. The detailed contours of his life and thinking, as well as of his family and friends, are not well known, however, and this chapter brings significant and illuminating new data to light. It is also expertly written as a gripping narrative that manages simultaneously to support Wu's larger theoretical argument at key points.

Chapter 4 explores the Shanghai power seizure of January 1967, in which militant workers' groups (many loosely or directly led by Wang Hongwen, who would go on to become a key member of the so-called Gang of Four) took power in China's largest city and declared a "people's commune", only to be supplanted quickly by a military-linked "revolutionary committee" that would become a model for a new form of local governance across the country in the Cultural Revolution's next stage. In Shanghai, the issues that came into play were economic and material, rather than bloodline or background, dimensions of class and class struggle. Much more scholarship has been produced on the Shanghai episode than on the earlier Beijing uprising, and Wu draws expertly on all that is available, along with newspapers and primary documents, to retell the story with greater nuance and granularity than has been previously offered. He also weaves into the narrative a consistent engagement with and focuses on the larger significance of popular mobilization and its cooptation in this important second phase of the Cultural Revolution. Once the Shanghai model of revolutionary committees (pp. 124–130) spread throughout China, a new order emerged and subsequent uprisings would have to struggle against an increasingly entrenched set of arrangements and actors.

Perhaps the most significant such challenge occurred in Changsha in late 1967 and early 1968 and is the focus of Wu's chapter 5. In the capital of Mao Zedong's home province of Hunan, many of those who had lost out from earlier rounds of mobilization and from the Cultural Revolution itself – rusticated youth (urbanites who had been deprived of their education and sent to work in the countryside as teenagers); demobilized soldiers; workers in collective sector enterprises (which were systematically neglected, relative to the better-funded and favored state-owned firms); rural-to-urban migrant workers who lived on the margins of city society; new graduates unable to find good jobs in the planned economy; low-level cadres and government workers; and teachers, students, and intellectuals who had encountered political difficulties between the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957 and first rounds of Cultural Revolution mobilization – coalesced into groups loosely affiliated with

the Xiang River Storm and Thunder movement. Many of these groups later banded together more formally in October 1967 to form what became known as the Hunan Provincial Proletarian Revolutionary Great Alliance, or Shengwulian (pp. 156–157). In January and February 1968, the Shengwulian came under intense criticism from central and local leaders and institutions, notably the PLA, Hua Guofeng, Kang Sheng, and even Mao himself – leading it to disband amid heightening repression (pp. 185–188). The story of the Shengwulian and the Changsha uprising has been left mostly untold in previous scholarship and Wu does an incredible job of bringing new sources to bear on what is clearly the most detailed and nuanced account available to date. Moreover, this narrative clearly situates the final victory of the revolutionary committee model and of a particular political coalition within a larger arc of Cultural Revolution politics and social transformation. From this perspective, the episodes of 1966–1968 are not a discrete period of chaos, but part of a more continuous progression of Chinese politics from 1949 through to the present day.

Chapter 6 explains the enduring influence of the Cultural Revolution on Chinese politics and society, elaborating just how the arc described in chapters 3 through 5 was not broken, but extended by the events of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Reform and opening, in other words, were the natural next steps in a long chain. China's near-obsessive focus on stability maintenance and persistent repression of popular mobilization since 1989 also have their roots in the machinations that cemented the position of a new ruling class during the critical Cultural Revolution years. Thus, "it was really the Cultural Revolution and its manifold ramifications that made possible – and imperative – for China's ruling stratum to resolve to change its mode of governance [...] In a crucial sense, post-Mao reform may be understood as a continuation [...] of the process of political rebuilding and restructuring in the wake of the Cultural Revolution mass movement" (p.217). Understanding the critical juncture of the Cultural Revolution years is, therefore, the linchpin to unraveling the larger puzzles of contemporary Chinese political and social history.

The final epilogue extends and reinforces this argument, but adds little to the story. Also, despite the book's generally comprehensive and impressive nature, there is a glaring omission in the analysis of the period from mid-1968 to late 1976, essentially from the suppression of the Shengwulian until the death of Mao. While no single work can cover everything, greater attention to these critical years could have helped bridge the gap between the core empirical chapters and the larger theoretical and macro arguments. That said, this is a truly incredible book and every scholar of contemporary China should read it.

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ANDERSON, MATTHEW. *A History of Fair Trade in Contemporary Britain. From Civil Society Campaigns to Corporate Compliance.* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2015. ix, 230 pp. Maps. \$90.00; € 84.79. (E-Book: \$69.99; € 66.99.)