

PARK, ALYSSA M. *Sovereignty Experiments. Korean Migrants and the Building of Borders in Northeast Asia, 1860–1945*. [Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute.] Cornell University Press, Ithaca (NY) 2019. xviii, 284 p. Ill. Maps. \$49.95. (E-book: \$24.99).

This is a significant and timely study, and a first book of unusual maturity. *Sovereignty Experiments* analyses the situation of Korean migrants in the Maritime province of Russia and the Tumen River valley of China's Jilin province, from the middle of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century, highlighting the conflicting claims and policies enacted towards them by tsarist and Soviet Russia, late-Qing and republican China, and the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo. In addition, the book shows evolving perceptions of the migrants in Chosŏn Korea itself and, after the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, by Korean patriots in exile. The impressive array of primary and secondary sources in Russian, Korean and Chinese, on which Alyssa M. Park draws, lends substance to her presentation of this research on border-crossing people between four states as transnational history. Indeed, the choice of topic and the author's linguistic skills find their perfect match in the outcome we have before us. And the icing on the cake is that it is very well written.

The book's title and especially the abstract on the inside flap of the dust jacket also point to a larger argument: that the efforts by all the states concerned to exercise their power over Korean migrants led to greater elaboration of concepts of sovereignty in these countries and eventually shaped the borders between them. Especially in Chapter three, Park shows how defining the allegiance of people became a tool for controlling territory. However, she does not emphasize this aspect, instead preferring to demonstrate in engaging detail how official attitudes to the migrants and their own senses of identity developed and changed over the long period under study (the history of Koreans in the Russian Maritime ended abruptly with their deportation to Kazakhstan in 1937; the Koreans in China remained in the region, which, since 1952, has been known as the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture). More than any conclusive evidence about the impact of the migrants on international relations, readers of *Sovereignty Experiments* will find a social history of the migrant communities and a contribution to the history of borderlands. These key concerns of the book also save it from becoming a study of the migrants as a passive population, managed by Korean, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese administrations as those power holders saw fit. Far from it, we are constantly granted insights into the various strategies that the migrants devised for circumventing the regulations imposed on them and defying the administrators' expectations.

Park does a good job of acknowledging the spate of recent and brand-new dissertations and monographs on the cross-border Korean diaspora, although she omits Jon K. Chang, *Burnt by the Sun: The Koreans of the Russian Far East* (Honolulu, 2016). She would also have benefitted from the old classic by Owen Lattimore, *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict* (New York [1932]; 1935), which discussed the status of Koreans in Jiandao (Korean: Kando) in a chapter entitled "Aliens and the Land".

The publisher is to be commended for allowing the author to include a number of useful maps and historical photographs (although not for setting the footnotes in tiny print). One of these photographs, which both appears in the book and is used for the dust jacket, shows a market street in Vladivostok with Russian, Chinese, and Korean types captured by the camera "between 1918 and 1922" – a suspiciously late dating considering the long queue worn

by the tall male figure, whom we see from the back. Wearing the queue was required under the Qing dynasty, which collapsed in 1911; the queues were cut off soon thereafter. The Chinese were the largest East Asian population in the Russian Far East and the one Russian officials most often compared with the Koreans. In this comparison, the Chinese were usually found wanting and, contrary to the Koreans, were only seldom naturalized as tsarist subjects. They also get their due share of attention in this book. However, on pp. 54–55, 194–96, and 249, Park wrongly conflates two Russian terms, which she must have encountered all too frequently in her reading of the Russian archives and the Far Eastern press: *khunkhuzy* and *manzy*. Both of these terms expressed derision towards the Chinese, yet only the former (borrowed directly from the colloquial Chinese *hong huzi*, Red Beards) was used to designate Chinese outlaws. The latter term (of complex linguistic origins) was employed by Russians as a slur applied to the Chinese in general, whether they were thought to be law-abiding or not.

Since the Chinese migrants in Russia appear in Park's thoroughly researched and well-crafted book, perhaps she could have looked more into the changing attitudes of the state in the late Qing and the Republic of China towards Chinese communities beyond the nation's borders, a process that has already been the subject of a considerable body of historical writing. Her larger argument about the influence of migrants on nations – both on their nation of origin and the states hosting them – would have been strengthened by being extended to that story, too.

The Koreans, who are at the centre of this book, initially crossed the borders into China and Russia as migrant labourers and then became settlers in both countries. Park has successfully described and analysed this transformation, increasing our knowledge about the migrants themselves and on ways in which Korea, China, Russia, and Japan coped with the challenges to sovereignty and racial uniformity that they presented.

Mark Gamsa

Department of East Asian Studies, School of History, Tel Aviv University  
PO Box 39040, Tel Aviv 6997801, Israel  
E-mail: [gamsa@tauex.tau.ac.il](mailto:gamsa@tauex.tau.ac.il)  
doi:10.1017/S0020859020000243

WEMHEUER, FELIX. *A Social History of Maoist China: Conflict and Change, 1949–1976*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2019. xv, 331 pp. £59.99. (Paper: £22.99; E-book £24.00).

Seventy years after the inauguration of the People's Republic and more than forty years after Mao's death, the history of Mao-era China is finally emerging as a field with its own institutions, publications, and dedicated undergraduate courses. However, historians wanting to teach the Mao years are not well served with textbooks. Maurice Meisner's *Mao's China and After*, while excellent background reading, is too detailed for classroom use, and other textbooks cover China's "long twentieth century" from the late Qing to the present, rather than China's socialist years. Felix Wemheuer's *Social History of Maoist China* fills the gap. With slightly over 300 pages, it is concise; it is also up to date, based on the best available Chinese and Western scholarship, clearly presented, readable, and balanced. It is likely to