

one of the most rapidly changing and difficult fields of sinological knowledge, and this is one reason that von Glahn's research surpasses any other synthesis on the ancient economy of China.

I will now turn to von Glahn's mention of his "allegiance" to the California school (5–7). In my view, this statement is the expression of a conviction: historians of China, especially economic historians, should start from the texts and their evolving concepts. This approach helps us to fathom the limits of the western categories we have to use in writing about the economy, and, as von Glahn himself emphasizes, it is the way to keep at a distance any linear perspective of economic growth and the neo-classical idea of the market as the single driving force behind economic development and wealth. This is a cautious opinion I would like to support by a very brief comment on the sixth and seventh chapters devoted to the crucial change between 755 and 1350, the "transition" which von Glahn labelled as Song-Yuan-Ming before and as Tang-Song in this book. In any case, I prefer this second stance, because a phase of this transition deserves to be singled out: the first half of the tenth century. Of course, our knowledge of this period is very limited because of the lack of sources but, rather than the "Economic consequences of the An Lushan rebellion," which above all were legal, fiscal, and financial as the relevant seven pages of the book show very clearly, it would be useful to stress the changes which occurred in the Southern Ten Kingdoms over the course of a century, between the end of the ninth century and 975, when these states preserved their autonomy precisely by economic means. I understand their policies both as the real economic consequences of the disintegration of the Tang empire and as the crucial foundation of Song economic development that von Glahn focuses on: "the rise of rice economy" was largely based on the experience of the Wu-Yue kingdom's reclamation of the Taihu region and the building of the maritime dyke; "the return to mercantilist fiscal policies" was inaugurated and developed by each Southern state, in hope of creating wealth through monetary competition which aimed at the reorientation of merchant networks, as well as maritime trade linking the coastal regions with overseas countries, especially Korea and Japan. Of course, this historical reality is introduced in the book, but the shock of "Wang Anshi's new policies" in the 1070s would deserve to be put more clearly in contrast with this long-term experience of the South. This perspective sheds light on two aspects closely linked to von Glahn's argument: first, the difficulty the Song state had in managing regional inequalities and hence the turn under Shenzong to more of a command economy, which is supposed to be the best way to make the regional disparity serve the reinforcement of the state; second, the growth of the market, especially during the Southern Song, when the court would once again reconstruct and protect imperial power in the wealthy South, in a dynamic that von Glahn calls "the great leap forward in economic productivity," which was the result of a clear reaction to the reforms and the rejection of the reformers.

In conclusion, this book is both a scholarly book worthy of a prize, and an easy reading textbook: the language is very clear and always accurate, even in the most technical passages. There is no doubt that it should be high on any list of recommended first readings on China. It is clearly the best global history of China available today, as Jacques Gernet's *Le monde chinois* was more than forty years ago.

*The Rise of Political Intellectuals in Modern China: May Fourth Societies and the Roots of Mass-Party Politics.* By SHAKHAR RAHAV. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 256 pp. \$74.00.

REVIEWED BY TZE-KI HON, State University of New York at Geneseo ([hon@geneseo.edu](mailto:hon@geneseo.edu))  
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For half a century since the publication of Tse-tsung Chow's path-breaking monograph, the May Fourth Movement has consistently been attracting scholars' attention. More than other events in

modern Chinese history, the May Fourth Movement has had a special claim on those interested in the complexity of Chinese modernity. Indeed, part of the allure of the May Fourth Movement is the term itself. Combining two separate events—a popular protest in Beijing on the May Fourth of 1919 against the Treaty of Versailles, and a cultural renaissance launched by the *New Youth* magazine (1915–23) to critique Confucian tradition and to replace classical Chinese with the vernacular—the May Fourth Movement signifies the uneasy partnership between political activism and cultural enlightenment, nationalistic awakening and individual liberation, anti-imperialism and total westernization. Covering a wide variety of events ranging from cultural iconoclasm and scientism to student activism and women liberation, the May Fourth Movement reveals the inner tensions of Chinese attempts at reconstituting their polity and society in the midst of national crises. Due to its complexity and multidimensionality, there is no one single May Fourth in current scholarship. Instead, there are a multitude of May Fourths, such as the literary May Fourth, the nationalistic May Fourth, the feminist May Fourth, the liberal May Fourth, the scientific May Fourth, and so on. This plurality of May Fourths helps to bring scholars of different specializations into a dialogue when “May Fourth” serves as an all-encompassing symbol of the Chinese quest for building a modern and strong nation. At the same time, the plurality of May Fourths makes it hard to pin down what “May Fourth” really means when there are so many different renditions.

In *The Rise of Political Intellectuals in Modern China: May Fourth Societies and the Roots of Mass-Party Politics*, Shakhar Rahav reminds us that, fundamentally, what made the May Fourth Movement unique and memorable was its political activism. In the Preface, Rahav links May Fourth to recent mass protests around the world—the “Arab Spring” in Tunisia and Egypt, the “Occupy Wall Street” in the United States, the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine. In a tone both poignant and personal, he explains his motivation in studying May Fourth. He writes:

My interest in Chinese intellectuals was sparked during a seminar with Vera Schwarcz at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. There I was constantly struck by the parallels I could see between May Fourth intellectuals and Israeli intellectuals struggling to enlighten their society.... At some point, I realized that since the case of May Fourth intellectuals had been presented as a successful case of changing society under the guidance of a handful of visionary intellectuals, I wished to learn from those whom I saw as my Chinese counterparts how to change my own society, while better understanding my own role in it. (ix)

This self-revelation gives us a glimpse of Rahav’s purpose of writing about May Fourth. It also provides us an angle to understand why he focuses on a local figure, Yun Daiying 恽代英 (1895–1935), to shed new light on May Fourth.

A leader of student movements in Wuhan in mid Yangzi River valley, Yun Daiying gradually made connections with national student organizations, and eventually in 1921 travelled to Shanghai to participate in the first party congress of the Chinese Communist Party. In Yun’s brief life, Rahav finds an intriguing story that shows “the importance of sociability and the interaction of social networks with ideology for understanding May Fourth” (7). Contrary to the conventional picture where May Fourth is described as spreading from Beijing to various parts of the country, Rahav discovers that the spread of May Fourth was actually dynamic and multi-faceted in that local political leaders (such as Yun) played crucial roles in shaping the contour and contents of the movement. To make his point, Rahav emphasizes the local roots of political activism in Wuhan (Chapter 1). He gives special attention to Yun’s experiences in organizing local associations such as the Good Student Society (*Hao xuesheng she*), the Mutual Aid Society (*Huzhu she*), and the Benefit the Masses Book Society (*Liqun shushe*) (Chapters 2–3). He links Yun’s success in Wuhan to his expansive social networks across the country in the 1910s and 1920s (Chapter 4). By the time Yun became a leader of the Chinese Communist Party in the early 1920s, he had clearly worked

his way from the periphery to the center, bringing with him years of experience in mass mobilizing and political radicalism into the national network (Chapter 5).

Of Yun's many achievements, Rahav puts a premium on his relationship with the Beijing-based Young China Association (YCA, *Shaonian zhongguo*). Rahav devotes the entirety of Chapter 4 to discussing Yun's relationship with the YCA, emphasizing that local and central leaders needed each other for mass mobilization, social networking, and ideological uniformity. Particularly, he highlights the "dialectical relationship of social network and radical ideas" between Yun's organizations in Wuhan and the YCA in Beijing. He suggests that the organizations in Wuhan "did not so much 'emanate' (to use Dirlik's wording) from Beijing as they were deployed from there, even while emanating from elsewhere" (107). He reiterates that "in the case of Yun Daiyun and his circles, the networks emanated from Wuchang, where they originated in places like the school or the Benefit the Masses Book Society bookstore" (107).

While it is refreshing to read Rahav's account of Yun's political activism, it is not completely clear how he is able to support his argument for a "dialectical relationship" between local and central organizations. It is true that Yun brought years of experience of political organization in the local region to the YCA, but it is also true that Yun's local organizations were given a new political meaning after being incorporated into the ideological framework of the YCA. Certainly the relationship between Yun's local organizations and the political structure of the YCA can be understood as reciprocal because one side could not fully function without the other side. At the same time, the relationship can also be seen as hierarchical if one looks at it from the perspective of power. As Rahav admits, central leaders made final decisions on policies, strategies and tactics. He writes:

Beijing and Shanghai in my account therefore form loci for the exchange of ideas and for the juxtaposition and expansion of local and regional networks of radicals from across China. The YCA fulfilled a similar function of connecting different networks with one another; it thus constitutes a network of networks. (108)

Being "a network of networks," the YCA was the hub, the nerve center of the nationwide organization, and Yun's organizations in Wuhan served the YCA in implementing its policies. A prime example of this top-down relationship is Yun's failed attempt to publish a book series with the YCA (119–22). Despite his initial success in convincing several leaders of the YCA to publish a book series, his plan was eventually rejected because of the lack of interest among the top leaders in his socialist-anarchist vision. This event clearly shows that Yun might have had access to some YCA leaders based on his success in local organization, but coming from the periphery, he had formidable disadvantages in securing a leadership position at the center.

As a whole, despite his ambition and efforts, Rahav does not tell us anything new about May Fourth political activism. Certainly Rahav is innovative in tracing May Fourth political activism from a bottom-up perspective, and Yun's case is a convincing example of grass-roots mobilization. However, in effect, Rahav's bottom-up account affirms the conventional top-down narrative. It is especially clear in Chapter 5 where Rahav describes how the local, small organizations were absorbed and incorporated into the national network of the Chinese Communist Party for mass mobilization (125–45). Consciously or unconsciously, Rahav proves that local experience alone did not make one a leader at the center; instead, leaders at the top always had the political power and the organizational support to control local cadres and local organizations.