

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.

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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

become the standard textbook for graduate and undergraduate courses and to remain so for years to come.

The book delivers precisely what the title promises. It is a *social* history: while high-level politics are discussed, the book's focus is firmly on the workers, peasants, cadres, etc. that make up China's population. Unusually, and in my view refreshingly, Mao does not occupy central stage. Wemheuer notes the instances in which Mao put his stamp on events, but also shows that many features of the new society cannot be traced back to the Chairman himself. It is a history of China *under Mao*, starting from the foundation of the country and ending with Mao's death. Wemheuer keeps references to pre-1949 China to the strictest minimum; even the formative Yan'an period receives only a cursory glance. This is unusual – most comparable works emphasize the heavy weight of history on the shoulders of China's leaders – but it works well. I was surprised how little prehistory is needed to make sense of Chinese socialism; perhaps China is not as *sui generis* as area specialists assume.

The book's central argument is that despite its professed egalitarianism, the PRC under Mao was a deeply unequal society. Inequality resulted from five interlocking binaries. Household registration, which marked people as rural or urban, was the most fundamental and pervasive. It intersected with permanent, hereditary class status (based on socio-economic position at the time of the revolution and passed on through the male line, even when labels no longer reflected actual socio-economic status), ethnicity (Han versus ethnic minority, with positions of real authority mostly reserved to Han), occupational rank, and gender (understood here as a mechanism to slot people into social positions). With the exception of class, these hierarchies were introduced for reasons of expediency; if they were acknowledged at all, they were seen as temporary fixes that would disappear in later stages of socialist development. However, as Wemheuer shows, the categories introduced in the 1950s and early 1960s deepened over time, and by the time of Mao's death they formed a rigid system of inclusion and exclusion that colored every aspect of people's lives. One outcome was that only those "inside the system" – urban people working in state institutions – were full beneficiaries of socialism; rural Chinese lived at best "semi-socialist" lives (pp. 18, 21–22). It is this structure of interlocking binaries that set Mao-era China apart from other socialist societies; it is this structure, too, that made PRC society unstable and generated wave after wave of protests and campaigns.

Wemheuer employs his framework of interlocking hierarchies consistently enough to impose order on a mass of historical events, and flexibly enough to avoid rigidity. His introduction explains the aim of the book and its approach to sources. Chapter One lays the groundwork by introducing his analytical categories. Subsequent chapters proceed chronologically: Chapter Two covers the period of "New Democracy" and post-war reconstruction; Chapter Three the transition to socialism and the first Five-Year Plan; Chapter Four the Great Leap Forward and the ensuing famine; Chapter Five the interlude between the Leap and the Cultural Revolution; Chapter Six the "hot" phase of the Cultural Revolution; Chapter Seven Mao's final years from 1969 to 1976. Chapter Eight, finally, deals with the legacy of the Mao years in Reform Era China. Wemheuer takes periodization seriously: the way he divides his chapters is fairly conventional, but he explains his choices well, and many chapters contain further discussions of the micro-chronologies of specific periods. Chapters alternate between fast-paced narration of events (Chapters Two, Four, and Six) and in-depth examinations of institutions (Chapters Three, Five, and Seven).

One can quibble with the details of Wemheuer's framework. Instead of occupational rank (which drops out of the narrative after the introduction), I would emphasize "place" in the sense of membership in a work unit or agricultural collective – surely one of the most

important determinants of social position in the PRC. Wemheuer is to be lauded for treating gender as a crucial (though unacknowledged) aspect of all social relations, as important and pervasive as class or ethnicity. Ethnicity – in the sense of assigned membership to the dominant Han Chinese category or to one of the fifty-five officially acknowledged minority groups – is treated somewhat schematically, with Tibet often standing in as representative for other ethnic groups. Class status and rural/urban registration are discussed throughout the text and drive the narrative. Class labels (and associated political labels such as “rightists” and “bad elements”) matter because they determine the right to political participation: the constantly shifting boundary between good, bad, and neutral groups determined who was allowed to speak. The rural/urban distinction, on the other hand, determined economic chances: urbanites, even members of the “five black categories,” tended to eat better and live longer than ideologically pure “poor peasants”.

It seems to me that Wemheuer’s account mostly gets it right. Narrative histories of China, including recent ones by Andrew Walder, Rana Mitter, and Frank Dikötter, put Mao Zedong front and center. The overall impression in these works is that of a torrent of campaigns, unleashed by the ageing chairman for no reason apart from his ambition and paranoia. This seems to me not only analytically unsatisfactory (why did the Party, why did millions of Chinese go along with Mao?) but also didactically unsound. In the US at least, students tend to assume that Mao was behind every minute policy decision, and we should not encourage them to further over-personalize matters. More importantly, the campaign version of history is experientially untrue. Campaigns were, of course, important, but after the early years, the experience of socialism was often one of stagnation – of walls going up, borders closing in, categories hardening, rather than of a restless tearing down of old structures. Injustice could indeed take the form of persecution in political campaigns, especially among the upper strata. For the majority of the population, however, injustice often took structural forms: it resulted from being tied to the land without any hope for mobility, from being sidelined in a career because of an unfavorable class label, or from being excluded from welfare benefits that were available to others.

Such structural injustices are not particularly “Maoist” and, as Wemheuer shows, they tended to become more pronounced in periods when Mao’s influence was waning – in particular in the period of economic recovery after the disastrous Great Leap Forward, when the Party permanently tied the rural population to the land, institutionalized the imbalance between urban and rural sectors, and introduced a two-tier labor market and dual education system that privileged full members of state institutions and discriminated against everyone else. Specifically “Maoist” innovations, Wemheuer argues, were usually short-lived. The defining institutions of the Great Leap Forward – mega-sized People’s Communes, collective mess halls, a militarized workforce, etc. – were abolished by the end of 1961, with the consent of a temporarily chastened Mao (p. 158). Similarly, the innovations of the early Cultural Revolution – mass mobilization from below, opening of the political process to people of “bad” or middling class background, attacks on cadre privilege – were rolled back during the 1969 restoration of top-down Party rule (pp. 203, 232–274). Wemheuer’s concluding chapter finds strong continuities between the pre- and post-Mao periods, but it is the institutions built by Mao’s peers – Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai, and others – that left the deepest and most lasting imprint.

The book comes with a few tables and illustrations, selected documents, a short index and an extremely short reading list. All these should be expanded in future editions. It contains a few typos (“stuffing” for “staffing” in Table 1.1, “rival” for “revival” on p. 197) and quotations are not always traced back to the original source (p. 57, fn. 17). In discussions of the

literature, Wemheuer sometimes leaves the targets of his criticism unnamed (p. 58). He also sometimes relies on German-language sources when good English alternatives (or, in one case, the original French source) are available. The book is wonderfully balanced, but sometimes (e.g. p. 20) the search for nuance blunts the force of the argument. Yet, on the whole, the book is a remarkable achievement.

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VARELA, RAQUEL. *A People's History of the Portuguese Revolution*. Ed. by Peter Robinson. Transl. [from Portuguese] by Sean Purdy. [People's History.] Pluto Press, London 2019. 334 pp. Ill. £75.00. (Paper; E-book: £19.99).

The social revolution that took place in Portugal in 1974 is a fascinating case study of a somewhat rare type of revolutionary outcome: liberal democracy. Over the course of approximately two years, various sectors of the Portuguese population – including women, students, peasants, urban squatters, factory workers, neighborhood commissions, and many others – agitated for more rights and better living conditions. The revolutionary process upended the political institutions of the Salazar-Caetano regime; six successive provisional governments were established in the two years following the 25 April 1974 events. The transitions between governments were punctuated by ideological divisions between factions of the Armed Forces Movement (the group of junior officers who had initiated and carried out the *coup d'état* that ended the *Estado Novo*); social and political tensions came to a boil in the summer of 1975, culminating in the coup of 25 November 1975, in which pro-liberal democracy factions of the MFA ousted members sympathetic to the far left, taking effective control over the provisional government, and ending a period of dual power.

For Raquel Varela, this is the moment that the revolution died and the counter-revolution took hold (p. 248). Deliberately positioning her work in the tradition of activist historian Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, Varela proposes an interesting task: that she will narrate the history of the Portuguese Revolution from the point of view of the people, whom she sees as the true leaders of the revolutionary process. Varela's book tells a story of a revolution in which "the people" are members of the working class creating and participating in grassroots organizations such as *plenários* (plenary sessions), worker's commissions, and other similar bottom-up organizations that came to be known as *poder popular* (popular power). In Varela's view, "the people" are in conflict with the elites, understood as those who control state institutions (individuals and parties), the means of production (such as factory owners and managers), and sectors of the military and the population whose interests are aligned with the bourgeoisie (which includes the Armed Forces Movement, known popularly as the MFA). On the whole, the author views the Revolution through a lens that depicts a romanticized image of workers, especially