

Much of what happened in the realm of politics resulted from the potent political forces at work in the capital beyond the emperor's control: the puissant individuals, such as Gu Yong, and the still stronger family lineages, which accrued power over the course of generations. The best example of the latter, of course, is the Wang clan, whose scion Wang Mang would eventually set himself up as emperor.

The reforms of 8 BCE, at the end of Emperor Cheng's reign, sought to restructure the upper echelons of the bureaucracy. The emperor sought thereby to improve government function and "assert his own status as the presiding executive at the apex of the entire bureaucratic structure" (240). The princedoms that had acted as mini-courts at the local levels similarly saw their powers drained away in the same round of changes, which for them "were the culmination of a long process in which administrative responsibility... was transferred... to the central court at Chang'an" (361). These changes were not the only ones in Emperor Cheng's reign; the time also saw shifts in imperial and other sacrificial practices.

Intellectual life is one respect in which Emperor Cheng's time has always been conspicuous. The father and son Liu Xiang 劉向 (c. 77–c. 6 BCE) and Liu Xin 劉歆 (d. 23 CE) are famous for their bibliographic work, and yet *Chang'an 26 BCE* shows there is still more to say about how extensive their intellectual influence was. The notion of a distinct medical tradition, for instance, seems not to have existed before their work gathering and organizing the relevant texts. This was also a period of high literature, and this volume discusses a rhapsody by Liu Xin as well as other poetry. History and classical learning also saw significant developments around the same time.

This brief summary gives only an approximation of the range of topics and approaches that *Chang'an 26 BCE* covers. What it cannot convey is the depth of the sources that the component chapters gather, which include the full range of received texts, archaeological results, and much recent secondary scholarship in Chinese, Japanese, and Western languages. The result is an evocative picture of a time, a place, and an emperor near the end of the Western Han period.

Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life. By ALEXANDER V. PANTSOV and STEVEN LEVINE New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 610 pages. \$34.95/£22.99 (cloth), \$23.99/£14.94 (ebook).

REVIEWED BY DAVID BACHMAN, University of Washington (dbachman@uw.edu)
doi:10.1017/jch.2016.18

Alexander Pantsov and Steven Levine have written what is likely to be the definitive biography of Deng Xiaoping until Chinese Communist Party [CCP] archives become available. Theirs is an attempt to create a balanced view of Deng, in some detail. Balanced is meant here in several senses, giving roughly equal weight to the entire course of Deng's life (the pre-1949 years, the Mao years, and Deng's post-Mao career) and evaluating Deng's attributes, achievements, failures, and abominations and crimes.

I will not extensively summarize Deng's life as told by Pantsov and Levine, but note some of the significant insights they provide about his career. Arguably, the most original contributions of this biography concern Deng's pre-1949 career. Pantsov, in particular, has culled Soviet-era archives and files concerning Deng and those with whom he interacted. Through these materials and other unearthed sources we learn a great deal about Deng's years in France and in the Soviet Union. Deng was at best a mediocre student of French, and lacking financial support, he often tried to work in French factories, where his proletarian (and alien) status was brought home viscerally to him—it was these experiences that converted him to communism. In the Soviet Union, Deng became an ardent student of Marxism-Leninism, and perhaps of the New Economic Policy, most

closely associated with Nikolai Bukharin. Deng returned to Shanghai where he did underground work for the Party, disguised as a merchant. His role as merchant is noteworthy. Certainly CCP activists were agitating in Shanghai factories, but Deng as merchant speaks to a relatively prosperous Party that could provide Deng the wherewithal to make good his disguise. After the effective collapse of the CCP in Shanghai, Deng was assigned to Guangxi, where he had his first experiences with military work and minorities, with some success and ultimate failure. He retreated to Jiangxi, but just before arriving at the Jiangxi Soviet, he (his enemies would say) fled to Shanghai.

One hallmark of Deng's career, at least through 1977, was Deng's willingness to make abject self-criticisms, to humiliate himself (lose face) to retain his role in the revolution. Arguably, he learned how to do this better than anyone else in CCP history. His initial self-criticism brought him into a kind of purgatory which he shared with Mao, to whom Deng was to pledge his loyalty for roughly the next 30 years. Deng rose with Mao on the Long March, and became the Anti-Japanese War partner of Liu Bocheng, and what ultimately became the Second Field Army. The authors state that Deng became a driving force for this unit, but the role of Liu, often portrayed as the greatest strategist among the ten People's Liberation Army marshals appointed in 1955, is skipped over, as are the specifics of what Deng did as army commissar to justify such an appraisal. Indeed, Pantsov and Levine spend more time (or so it appears) on Deng's actual military activities in Guangxi than in the Anti-Japanese War and the 1946–49 Civil War.

After 1949, Deng became head of the Southwest Regional Government where he bloodily carried out land reform and helped prepare the invasion of Tibet. But Mao called him to Beijing, and he rose rapidly to the near-pinnacle of the leadership (there was only one pinnacle—Mao), and became Mao's most ardent supporter until the Great Leap Forward, brutally running the Anti-Rightist campaign of 1957. For Pantsov and Levine (and most other non-Chinese biographers of Deng), the Great Leap Famine is the turning point in Deng's relationship with Mao. He became more independent on domestic issues, but still Mao's reliable henchman when it came to the Sino-Soviet dispute. The authors repeat the story that Deng missed the Lushan Plenum of 1959 because he had broken his leg (it actually sounds like his hip) playing billiards (instead of the more commonly reported ping-pong). I have always found this story more than a little suspicious. Really, breaking one's leg playing billiards or ping-pong? Couldn't one of the top 7 CCP leaders have been moved around in a wheel chair? Is a broken leg as debilitating as both pro- and anti-Deng views report?

Deng emerged from his injury increasingly inclined to accept and press forward with the economic policies associated with economic recovery led by Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Chen Yun, and Mao increasingly begins to question Deng's loyalty. This led to the Cultural Revolution, Deng's purge and exile to Jiangxi, and his rehabilitation in 1973. Deng's role in the 1973–76 period has been extremely well told by Frederick Teiwes and Warren Sun.¹ Little is added here, and some of Deng's significant actions that contribute to his purge, as detailed in Teiwes and Sun, are ignored. Deng was of course purged again in 1976, rehabilitated in 1977, and took over in 1978.

Pantsov and Levine are critical of Ezra Vogel's biography of Deng,² but say little that goes beyond him, except to attribute, a, if not the, major impetus to the post-1978 reforms to Nikolai Bukharin. They take a more critical approach to Deng, but there is a fair degree of agreement about basic developments. They say very little about post-1989 developments other than Deng's Southern Tour.

¹ Frederick C. Teiwes and Warren Sun, *The End of the Maoist Era* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2007).

² Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

EVALUATION

Pantsov and Levine wrote both to a scholarly and informed public audience, and as stated above, have probably written the definitive overall biography for the time being. Others examine Deng's role in Chinese elite politics in more detail for specific periods, such as Teiwes and Sun, Vogel, and Roderick MacFarquhar,³ among others, but none provides the breadth of coverage in a readable, but also in a scholarly way (90 pages of backnotes, 42 pages of bibliography). However, unless scholars have been working in-depth on Deng, they might not pick up on what is truly original in this research. Unfortunately, and reflecting considerable modesty, the authors don't call attention to their signal contributions from these new sources, or how their account differs from earlier treatments of Deng (except to a limited extent with Vogel).

Significant sources of Deng's biography come from materials in Soviet-era archives, and they add a depth of material to our understanding of Deng, particularly prior to 1949, that is unsurpassed. But there is no interrogation of the possible biases of these sources, their strengths and weaknesses. They may be all that is available for understanding certain aspects of Deng's life, but are we replacing vague and in some cases hagiographic accounts (especially in some of the Chinese accounts) with other materials that have their own limitations?

Pantsov originally wrote a Russian version of this biography, which Levine largely translated and added to. But many of the notes are to Russian sources, or Russian translations of Chinese sources, so some of Mao's remarks during the 1960s are taken from a Soviet collection of Mao's non-formally published remarks. Presumably, these are some of the speeches in the various volumes of *Mao Zedong sixiang wansui* 毛沢東思想萬歲 and other Cultural Revolution collections, but it is impossible to say, and simply citing the page number is not helpful in trying to track this down or trying to figure out what particular text they are drawing from. Jiang Zemin's writings are also cited from the Russian version of his selected works.

In a similar vein, the authors seem to approach the works on Deng by his daughter Maomao (Rong) uncritically. These works are in strict keeping with Party historiography, and they paint a picture of a devoted, loving family (in contrast to a portrait of a Deng who could make friends quickly and easily, but could also jettison them just as fast). It may be true, but again some critical evaluation of these memoirs and some of the other recollections of Deng by personal servants and others after his death are unlikely to be all that objective. More generally, the authors, I think, dwell too heavily on Deng's marriages and family, to the extent that more of the chapter on the 1946–49 Civil War is on family life than the Civil War. They note (122) that in the fall of 1945, the Liu Bocheng–Deng Xiaoping army entered a North China military region, and conducted a successful military operation against Kuomintang forces in the region, which they say touched off the Civil War. Surely if this is the case, doesn't this deserve more attention? Similarly, the critical role the Liu Deng army played in turning the tide against the Kuomintang in mid-summer 1947 receives less attention than Deng's family in the 1945–49 period.

This claim of objectivity might not matter so much if the authors hadn't claimed in the introduction that their biography was the first *objective* biography of Deng based on all available sources in Russian, Chinese, and English. But what constitutes objective? If some of your major sources share particular kinds of Party and political biases, national traditions of telling history, etc., is objectivity really possible? Very good biographies can balance the various sources, consider their limitations and come to as judicious an assessment as possible. But for someone who unleashed the entrepreneurial and other economic energies of the Chinese in ways that, in that old saw, shook the world,

³ Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974, 1983), and Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

but also authorized ruthless, bloody, violent attacks on millions, what is objectivity? Juxtaposition of the positive and the negative is not necessarily objectivity.

This question of objectivity is compounded by the way that the authors project what they think Deng is thinking at critical junctures. The most significant version of this is Deng's turning away from Mao. In the fall of 1959 Deng gradually returned to work from his broken leg. He spent a great deal of time walking quietly in the courtyard of his house, pondering the Great Leap Forward, Peng Dehuai's purge, and the emerging famine (if he knew about it). Pantsov and Levine ask what was Deng thinking, and respond appropriately "we can only guess" (p. 202), but they then go on to argue that Deng was thinking about Marx's view that "being determined consciousness," versus Mao's politics in command (p. 203). There was no way for Deng to reconcile these two points (and the CCP's victory in coming to power seems to support the latter more than the former), and they suggest that Deng took the Marxian view and began to break with Mao. Indeed, the whole chapter is entitled Being and Consciousness. Of course Deng was a whole-hearted supporter of the Great Leap in 1958. This is perhaps the most critical choice point for Deng in his career. But what was he really thinking? He clearly didn't apply this principle, or so it would appear, when he led Chinese delegations to argue with the Soviets about Sino-Soviet relations.

Pantsov and Levine argue that Deng was both a great theorist (or imply it anyway) (382) and charismatic. Yet, they offer no real proof of Deng's theoretical acumen, and much of the rest of the biography emphasizes his practicality and seeming lack of interest in theory. It was, after all, Deng who concluded the 11th Party Congress in 1977 with the words, "less empty talk, more hard work" (*xiao shuo konghua, duo zuo gongzuo* 小说空话, 多做工作). Deng did have popular support, especially compared to almost anyone else in leadership circles in 1976–78, but does this make him charismatic? His colleagues didn't defer to him in the way they did to Mao, and Deng certainly didn't revel in being one with the masses. They certainly did not see him having superhuman abilities.

There is still an unanswered question for me in my reading of this book. Why Deng? Why did Deng rise and others not? He worked hard, but so did many other members of the CCP elite. He was shrewdly intelligent and tough, but again so were others. He was close to Mao, but he was not alone. What drove him to power in ways that didn't seem to drive Zhou Enlai or Chen Yun? In a biography like this, we in some ways only have the victor's history, and yet I come away from this book, looking for something definitive to this question of why Deng.

Specialists will dispute some of the authors' assessments—few would accept the view of Yu Qiuli as a talented economist (289), for example—but the specifics are really matters for specialists and could take a considerable amount of time. One can also wonder why there isn't some discussion of how Deng, in his last major political acts, forced Yang Shangkun and Yang Baibing to retire, removing them, especially the latter, as threats to Jiang Zemin. Similarly, Deng's role in seeing to it that Hu Jintao be named vice president and presumptive successor to Jiang Zemin is unmentioned. Rather than dwell on some other specific differences, let me turn to some commentary.

COMMENTARY

Pantsov and Levine close the book by showing how Deng was not a Gorbachev-type figure, despite the way he fundamentally contributed to the transformation of China. While this is fine, it seems to me that two other possible closing set of remarks could be made. Deng, particularly in his post-1979 career, might have been more poignantly compared to Mao, or Deng might have been portrayed as the last perfect Leninist.⁴ Both themes appear throughout the book, but perhaps not as strongly as they could.

⁴ Gao Wenqin, *Zhou Enlai: The Last Perfect Revolutionary* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007).

The parallel to Mao is inexact, but nevertheless, Deng is portrayed as an able political manipulator in the context of the struggles for power and policy in the 1979–92 period. But he increasingly cut himself off from his colleagues—he rarely met with Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang, especially after 1984. He broke connections with long-time colleagues, and while he may have had a regular bridge playing cohort, even that group appears to have been not all that close to him. He stayed at home, reading documents, issuing occasional pronouncements, and exercising the levers of power generally indirectly or through behind-the-scenes interventions. In this sense, his career and ways of operating in the 1980s and into the 1990s have strong parallels to Mao's *modus operandi* in the 1961–65 and 1969–76 periods. And like Mao, when violence was necessary to do what Mao or Deng thought was essential, both employed violence ruthlessly. Both were masters of court politics, especially when it revolved around them.

Also like Mao, Deng seems hardly more capable in choosing his potential successors. Just as Liu Shaoyang and Lin Biao failed Mao, Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang failed Deng. Deng may have backed Jiang Zemin, but there is no real evidence to suggest Deng had a strong opinion about Jiang, and after all, after June 4, he needed someone to run the country while he and other elders managed the situation. Deng's selection of Hu Jintao as vice president and putative successor to Jiang might also be compared to Mao's last-gasp anointing of Hua Guofeng. To be sure the careers of Hua and Hu Jintao had quite different arcs, but both were politically weak and outmaneuvered, Hua of course by Deng, Hu by Jiang and vested interests.

The authors do see Deng as similar to Mao in many ways throughout the book—particularly with regard to willingness to use violence extensively, to sever all human feelings for the cause of the Chinese revolution, and to follow where their vision called them (but of course they had very different visions). But while this theme is present throughout, an even stronger one is Deng as the last perfect Leninist. The core paradox of Deng to western readers is how he could unfetter the shackles of the entrepreneurial and economic energies of the Chinese people, decollectivize the countryside, restore markets, and open up to the outside world, and not enable a democratic transition in China, and indeed, actively and bloodily resist it. The answer of course was that while Deng was pragmatic when it came to economic policy, he was a Leninist to his dying day. Everything, his whole life was for the mission of the Party. His self-criticisms and confessions, even if understood by Deng as self-serving, if not essential for survival, mark (repeatedly) his willingness to subordinate himself to Party discipline, at least until he became the preeminent leader. Then he expected everyone else to be ardent Leninists, which he summarized as the Four Cardinal Principles, the most important of which was Party dictatorship. And it was of course Hu Yaobang's and Zhao Ziyang's failures to be sufficiently Leninist (and brutal) in defending this principle that caused their falls. He severed ties with his parents (for the most part) while using his father's wealth to his own advantage (and indirectly the Party's). His ease of forming ties with colleagues and then breaking with them when necessary is a perfect manifestation of Vogel's famous article "From Friendship to Comradeship."⁵ Xi Jinping may be trying to revive some of the (idealized) memories that Vogel analyzed and Deng exemplified, but this seems a pale imitation of a much less than realized ideal. It is highly unlikely that anyone in China (or anywhere else in the remaining few communist countries) will ever match Deng's long career, his ardent Leninism, manifested from his earliest years in the Party (at a very young age) until his death at age 92. He was a great Leninist, but a lesser communist, especially in the last 15 or so years of his life.

One final comment, which I raise with some trepidation. Mao and Deng sought to bring about social revolution in China. Social revolutions are inherently violent, and Deng and very occasionally Mao sometimes acknowledged that some violence had been excessive. Mao and Deng would and did fundamentally reject what they would call bourgeois liberalism, morality, and humanism.

⁵ In *China Quarterly* 21 (January 1965), 45–60.

Much of western writings on Chinese political history today chronicle the horrors of Mao and Deng's China, as well they should. Yet, doing so only confirms western beliefs that the People's Republic of China is an illegitimate regime, with a variety of policy implications. But many if not most Chinese apparently don't feel that way. Despite the violence and horrors, they are proud of the state that Mao and Deng built. They may know of the critical accounts by westerners dwelling on them, but they only confirm the belief that the west is out to destroy China, to humiliate China again and make it weak. Clearly, there is little potential to reach a meeting of the minds here.

As noted, violence is endemic to social revolutions, and there is structural violence of various sorts in all status quos. Is there a standard of acceptable levels of violence, or is all violence unacceptable, and by extension, is social revolution as well? But moral condemnation of violence isn't going to stop social revolutions from happening, especially when large numbers of people feel oppressed. Can we demarcate the demonic violence of Mao and Deng from "normal" levels of violence that ought not to be exceeded in social revolutions? Some of my Chinese students today dismiss the revelations of the Mao period, and defend June 4: they reject them, qualify them, refute them, and/or ignore them. The nationalist slogan, of "No CCP, No New China" is persuasive to them. My point is not to be an apologist for the regime, but to seek a way to move to more productive examinations of violence in revolutionary China and the personal culpabilities of Mao and Deng, and of the Chinese Communist Party, but also the Kuomintang, the warlords, and all the other purveyors of violence in nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century China, above and beyond the "normal" levels of violence in that time period. Pantsov and Levine opt for achievements and violence by juxtaposition in the cases of Mao and Deng. This is better than some recent historiography. But is there an even better way to address this central question? One possibility that may advance this agenda, if anyone were interested, might be to draw on both traditional and contemporary Chinese standards and expectations concerning humanism, morality, and duties humans owe to other humans. CCP loyalists and ardent nationalists might still reject these as the basis for standards for judgment and assessment, but they will at least make it somewhat harder to dismiss them, and might begin to move scholars and others on both sides of the Pacific to think in ways that advance cross-cultural understandings.

The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century. By RICHARD VON GLAHN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. xiv + 461 pp. \$99, £64.99 (cloth), \$39, £24.99 (paper), \$32, £24.99 (ebook).

REVIEWED BY CHRISTIAN LAMOUROUX, EHESS-CNRS-PSL lamourou@ehess.fr
doi:10.1017/jch.2016.29

Richard von Glahn has accomplished an academic tour de force by daring to leave "his" Song-Ming period for the full sweep of Chinese history. His new book affords scholars, students, and curious readers up-to-date information regarding forms of land ownership and labor, the production and circulation of goods, various fiscal environments and monetary developments, commercial and financial networks, and also the everlasting debates on resources and social stratification across three millennia, from the Bronze Age (11th century BCE) to 1900. The reader gains a new vista on the long-term transformation of livelihood in China, and a comprehensive understanding of the rules and regulations bureaucrats and merchants established to marshal resources from all the regions across time, and hence to create an empire-wide economy. As this economy made state power visible, *The Economic History of China* also offers a very informative text on state