

Kong in the wider context of democratization? An anti-corruption agency, as an important public administration or governance institution, is surely not immune from the wider political regime. From this perspective, how have Hong Kong's democratization trajectories (for which, see my 2017 article "In-between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism: Hong Kong's democratization under Chinese sovereignty, 1997–2016" *Democratization*, 24(4), 724–750) structured the evolution of the ICAC? Did the democratizing environment of Hong Kong from the 1970s to 1997, including the expansion of constitutional liberalization and electoral popularization, contribute to the various so-called "success factors" of the ICAC? Does the growing trend of electoral authoritarian-style manipulations in post-1997 Hong Kong undermine the "success factors" of the ICAC and contribute to its various controversies in recent years (such as the cases of Timothy Tong and Leung Chun-ying)? More broadly speaking, how should we compare the experience of Hong Kong's anti-corruption agency with those of other East Asian hybrid regimes (such as Singapore) and new democracies (such as Taiwan and Korea)? These questions are certainly beyond the scope of Ian Scott and Ting Gong's book, but they are the essential questions that future scholars should address in the upcoming studies on Hong Kong's ICAC.

All in all, Ian Scott and Ting Gong have done a valuable job in highlighting the theoretical importance of researching Hong Kong's ICAC in the context of anti-corruption literature. It provides a concise account of ICAC's evolution from British colonial times to the Chinese SAR period. It is an essential reading for all scholars and researchers with an interest in China studies, Hong Kong studies and anti-corruption studies.

BRIAN C.H. FONG  
[chfong@eduhk.hk](mailto:chfong@eduhk.hk)

*Popular Memories of the Mao Era: From Critical Debate to Reassessing History*

Edited by SEBASTIAN VEG

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vii + 244 pp. \$52.00

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Introducing and analysing a wide range of popular media, Sebastian Veg's edited volume *Popular Memories of the Mao Era* makes the argument that recent, *minjian* (among the people) historical texts have moved beyond the limits of the 1980s and the nostalgia of the 1990s to provide a critical reassessment of the Mao years (1949–1976). This collection of essays thus follows and expands upon other volumes such as Ching Kwan Lee and Guobin Yang's *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution* (Woodrow Wilson Press, 2007), Marc Matten's *Places of Memory in Modern China* (Brill, 2011), and Jie Li and Enhua Zhang's *Red Legacies in China* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2016). In addition to tracing the phenomenon of popular memory into our present moment, the book's strengths include its variety of media – divided into three main frames of written and material texts, visual texts, and unofficial sources – and its inclusion of both the Chinese authors of such texts and their international observers.

Following Veg's introduction, the book is arranged according to sources: Chinese journals, online sources, private museums; literary, filmic and artistic responses; and

archival records, case files and memoirs in both English and Chinese. Another way to conceptualize the collection as a whole would be to divide it according to the main work that each essay accomplishes. Two of the chapters are by the makers of memory themselves: one by the editor Wu Si, who traces the origins and development of the journal *Yanhuang Chunqiu* (*Annals of the Yellow Emperor*) from its role as the generator of major debates to a shrinking of “the boundaries of freedom” after the 18th Party Congress in 2012; another by the artist Aihe Wang reflects on the *Wuming* painting group from the point of view of one of its artists, arguing that excavating the “archaeology of the image” reveals the private subjectivity of the Mao era.

Two other kinds of work in *Popular Memories of the Mao Era* are the introduction of important sources and their analysis. Though all of the contributions achieve both aims, three in particular sketch out the landscape of a genre. For example, Jean-Philippe Béjas provides an overview of independent periodicals including *Yanhuang Chunqiu*, *Women de lishi* (*Our History*) and *Jiyi* (*Remembrance*), among others. Kirk Denton, focusing on Sichuan’s Jianchuan Museum Cluster, situates the private collection in the wider context of state museums. In an analysis of independent documentaries, Judith Pernin traces their role in making the history of the Mao era. Finally, the remaining chapters provide analysis of how different sources can challenge the received narrative: Jun Liu explains how social media can produce, collect, and store historical knowledge; Sebastian Veg reveals how recent journalistic and fictional texts complicate the victimization of “scar” narratives to question the intellectual’s own complicity; Daniel Leese and Frank Dikötter demonstrate how archival materials such as case files and local reports illustrate everyday experience and strategies; and Michel Bonnin shows that memoirs of sent-down youth can correct large gaps in official narratives. Throughout *Popular Memories of the Mao Era*, cross-references between chapters and among genres under examination reinforce the argument of the whole.

This innovative collection will be of interest to graduate students and specialists across the fields of anthropology, cultural studies, literary and film studies, and history. Read with each other, the essays address the meaning of history and memory in recent times. In addition, certain essays include the process and problems of censorship and publication, as well as the role of intellectuals in modern Chinese history. As a volume for teaching, some selections will be more accessible for undergraduates than others. Graduate students will benefit from those pieces that introduce new or underutilized sources, such as Bonnin’s demonstration of what memoirs can add to history. Jun Liu’s essay on social media would be especially useful for undergraduates to discuss the opportunities – and limits – of the internet. Veg’s, Pernin’s and Wang’s chapters could all be productively paired with the primary sources they analyse.

*Popular Memories of the Mao Era* stands to make a theoretical contribution to the field of China studies. Though Sebastian Veg’s introduction sketches out the classic tension between history and memory, one senses that each contributor uses these terms and others – official and unofficial, public and private, individual and collective – in slightly different ways. It remains for readers to map their commonalities, debate how the idea of a public space applies to each genre, and make the case for how the Chinese example might reflect on – or depart from – Western texts on history and memory like those by Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora. Another question that a reader will have: does the volume describe a linear progression of historical reassessment, or does it capture a snapshot of an opening that has since closed? As several contributors make clear (sometimes with updated essays), the critical debate and historical reassessment of the 2000s has given way to increased censorship and constriction of public space. A conclusion to the volume would have been an opportunity to consider the

conditions that allow for popular memories to flourish, and to address how we might grapple with their recent decline.

DENISE Y. HO

[denise.ho@yale.edu](mailto:denise.ho@yale.edu)

*Stalin and Mao: A Comparison of the Russian and Chinese Revolutions*

LUCIEN BIANCO

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This rich and welcome book is less a dual biography as the title announces (*Stalin and Mao*) than a study of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, following its subtitle (*A Comparison of the Russian and Chinese Revolutions*). A painstaking study, by a veteran Sinologist who recently devoured (non-Russian language) material on the Soviet Union, it is well translated from the French. Here is a sad and gripping story of strong-man leadership, failed hopes, national triumph, destruction, needless famine, retribution and exaggerations of what politics can deliver.

After a rewarding Foreword by another French scholar, Marie-Claire Bergère, there are two comparative Russia–China chapters, “Laggards” and “Catching up,” to set the scene of pre-revolutionary conditions. The next seven chapter titles have a textbook feel that betrays a limitation within them: on few of these topics (baldly named Politics, Peasants, Famines, Bureaucracy, Culture, Camps, Dictators) is Bianco able to stick to comparative argument.

The author states his key theme: “To get the measure of Mao’s thoughts” we go to the “Stalinist model,” codified in the Russian’s *Short Course* of CPSU history (p. 70). Some may doubt whether Stalinism is the full measure of Maoism, since Mao was the Marx–Lenin–Stalin of the Chinese revolution.

Bianco revels in the startling nugget, quick opinion, detour to European literature, and (once) a regrettable insult that a certain Mao biography (not mine) “contains only lies” (p. 406). But much of the book is a casserole of learning, experience and anecdote that is a pleasure to read. Bianco acquaints Sinologists with *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin, who wrote to Stalin: “I have a bad habit of not saying what is my interest to say, but what seems to me to be the truth” (p. 240).

It’s priceless that “mass movements” so beloved of Mao, were labelled “organized deception” by Bukharin not long before his execution (p. 73). An entire volume could be written on “Mao’s organized deceptions.”

One of the author’s frequent moral balance sheets salutes Mao for sparing Deng, a “confirmed sinner,” for a second innings. A “Russian Deng” would not have outlived Stalin, as Deng, to China’s good fortune, outlived Mao by 21 years. A Chinese Bukharin could have lived, thrived post-Mao, and told his grandchild, hunched over her smart phone, of nasty deaths in the Cultural Revolution (p. 314). Of course, being reversed later seems a perverse way of exonerating Mao for letting Deng survive.

Disappointing that Bianco lacks space to fully analyse the two lives. Did Stalin’s theology education – barely mentioned – mean nothing for his mind? How can Mao come alive without his sons, daughters, four marriages and staff who saw realities about the boss that colleagues didn’t? Li Min’s *Wo de fuqin Mao Zedong* (*My*