

subjected to the broader control over Chinese society that has been a hallmark of the Xi Jinping years. “It fits in with this broader trend of China turning inwards, becoming more insular,” as Alice Su of the *Los Angeles Times* puts it (p. 446). Or, in the judgment of the long-time *New York Times* correspondent, Ian Johnson, “They used to accept foreign journalists as part of the cost of doing business in the modern world. You’ve got to take your lumps. You have to allow those pesky foreign journalists in. You’ve got to let them write what they want. That’s all begun to end. They just began to not accept critical reporting” (p. 448). The result is a reversion to old-style China-watching from outside the PRC. Whatever the skills journalists exercise from Hong Kong, Taiwan or back home in the USA, that can only have a negative effect on the understanding of China in its most important global partner and competitor.

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Unsettling Exiles: Chinese Migrants in Hong Kong and the Southern Periphery During the Cold War

Angelina Y. Chin. New York: Columbia University Press, 2023. 320 pp., \$35.00; £30.00, ISBN 9780231209991

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Angelina Chin’s study of migrants from mainland China who entered Hong Kong during the Cold War seeks to go beyond what she considers the conventional “Lion Rock” narrative of impoverished lower-class incomers who came to the territory and settled there, surviving hardships and ultimately attaining prosperity. Instead, Chin focuses primarily upon individuals and groups whose identification with the territory was more problematic and who often viewed themselves as transients: Third Force intellectual and military representatives; Nationalists whose first loyalty was to the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan; and those who wished not to stay but to move onwards, sometimes to Taiwan, often to the United States. Chin makes extensive use of the concept of the “Southern periphery” of China, the three territories (Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau) that had been under separate, outside rule for varying but lengthy periods of time, and continued to enjoy special relations with each other throughout the Cold War.

Chin’s well-researched study relies heavily upon records from multiple archives in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Great Britain, supplemented by wide-ranging primary and secondary printed sources. Chin describes in detail how, from 1950 onward, Cold War rivalries and apprehensions imposed increasingly stringent constraints upon the ability of Chinese of all classes both to enter Hong Kong and to move onward. The British colonial government sought to exclude radical Leftists from the territory, but equally had no intention of providing a base where hardline Chinese Nationalists could harass local communist supporters or attempt to retake the mainland. Nationalist sympathizers were largely segregated at what became the Rennie’s Mill camp, a refugee camp where the daily administration was largely run by pro-Taiwan elements. Taiwan normally maintained tight control of its own borders, giving preference to migrants whose pro-Kuomintang (KMT) political loyalties appeared impeccable. During the 1950s, the US government, largely under the auspices of the quasi-non-governmental organization Aid to Refugee



Chinese Intellectuals (ARCI) and successive Refugee Acts, cherrypicked over 30,000 well-qualified Chinese professionals for admission as immigrants.

The majority of migrants to Hong Kong, however, failed to meet the necessary criteria for onward transit. Nor were they formally classified as “refugees,” a designation the Hong Kong government avoided since using it might antagonize the mainland government. Chin describes the gradual evolution of the policies of the British government toward migrants from China, and its ultimate acceptance by the mid-1950s that for the indefinite future, most of those already in place were there to stay. While border controls grew increasingly tighter, and would-be “illegal immigrants” were usually returned to China if caught, those already within Hong Kong’s boundaries benefited from rehousing and assorted social welfare provisions.

Chin describes in detail how, even as the colonial government sought to remain neutral, reports reaching Hong Kong of the harsh treatment of dissenters in the mainland left many new settlers apprehensive of the looming power of China to the north. The routine discovery in Hong Kong waters of numerous corpses that floated down from China, some would-be escapees, others political victims, with numbers peaking in the late 1960s during the Cultural Revolution, likewise heightened fears of the mainland government. Within Hong Kong (though not, it seems, in nearby Macau), Nationalist-run publications carried lengthy reports of the discovery of these bodies for propaganda purposes. Clashes between mainland and Hong Kong fishermen, some involving deaths and kidnappings, likewise inflamed antagonisms, especially when the Hong Kong government took little concrete action in response.

Chin’s primary focus, however, is less the broad mass of migrants than those who were in some sense problematic. She provides a perceptive account of the activities of “Third Force” representatives in Hong Kong during the 1950s and early 1960s, a period when intellectuals who rejected both the Communists and Nationalists published prolifically on the need to introduce democratic reforms within China. Ultimately, some – not least those with a strong military background – decided that working with Chiang Kai-shek’s Taiwan-based regime in the hope of reforming it from within was the most practical strategy, while others lost hope.

Having set the framework, Chin discusses in detail several case studies of groups and individuals in willing or forcible transit – not always successfully – from one Chinese jurisdiction to another via Hong Kong. These include: a former Kuomintang soldier and fraudster deported from Hong Kong in 1963 following several years of lucrative operations in the territory; two Leftist entertainers who successfully resisted deportation to China after supporting the 1967 riots in Hong Kong; ageing ROC prisoners from the Korean War who left China in 1975, hoping to return to Taiwan; and three young men who escaped from China in 1962, with one remaining and prospering in Hong Kong and two moving on to Taiwan and becoming staunch KMT supporters. While illustrating the complexities of border crossing, and the role that timing and specific circumstances played in the outcome of any given situation, the selected examples are so diverse as to make generalization almost meaningless.

Chin’s final chapter deals with developments in Hong Kong since 1997, including mainland efforts to subsume the individual identities of both Hong Kong and Macau in a Greater Bay Area megacity embracing much of South China; the development of localist and separatist sentiment in Hong Kong; and the 2014 and 2019 protests in Hong Kong and their suppression. She argues “that the political identity of people in Hong Kong today was partly constructed on the collective trauma of fleeing mainland China and being on the margin of both Chinese regimes, the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China (ROC). This collective trauma continued in 1997 with the handover, and since the 2019 protests it has been further aggravated by the political crackdown” (pp. 255–256). With activists and others in jail or choosing exile, and political and civil society organizations forced to close down, dissenters in Hong Kong face a situation comparable to that of the generation left “in limbo in the Southern Periphery in the 1950s–1970s, ... not know [ing] if there is a home for them and, even if there is, when they can return to it” (p. 256).

Stimulating and provocative, Chin's study is in some respects a collection of separate chapters rather than a fully developed and fully focused study of the issues she raises. Even so, it is a valuable contribution to existing work on modern Hong Kong, placing the current situation in a much broader long-term perspective dating back to the establishment of the PRC.

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Civil War in Guangxi: The Cultural Revolution on China's Southern Periphery

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This work is yet another vital contribution to the study of the Cultural Revolution by the sociologist Andrew Walder. Examining a provincial unit that saw extraordinary violence, he makes exhaustive use of a comprehensive investigation in 18 volumes conducted by the Chinese Communist Party in the 1980s. The book starts by setting out key hypotheses as puzzles, then presents five chronological chapters, followed by narrative vignettes, statistical analyses to resolve the puzzles, and an appendix to explain the coding. This arrangement, uncluttered with sociological theory, conveys rich detail on Guangxi's counties and the flow of local events without losing the line of argument. No fewer than 35 informative maps, figures and tables support the text.

The term "civil war," not usually applied to the Cultural Revolution, can be readily justified in the case of the Guangxi autonomous region. By the time factional conflict ended, almost 90,000 people had been killed, with about 10,000 missing and presumed dead. Four violent deaths per thousand was twice the national average and the highest in the nation. The killings were public, often involving gruesome violence, and for the first time in Maoist campaigns even the children of victim categories were killed. What made Guangxi prone to such intense violence?

Two of Walder's earlier works on the Cultural Revolution, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* (Harvard University Press, 2009) and *Agents of Disorder: Inside China's Cultural Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 2019), used close chronological reconstruction to show that pre-existing political or social alignments explained little: factions emerged contingently in response to fluid political situations; party collapse was brought about by middle-level Party members, not external attacks by Red Guards; and the greatest violence occurred at the hands of the state during and after the restoration of order. This book convincingly makes a similar case at provincial level. As in many provinces, two main factions, Allied Command and April 22, eventually emerged in Guangxi. Their pitched battles in the cities did lead to deaths, but far more deadly was a veritable pogrom in the countryside in the summer of 1968.

Geopolitics played a big part in this outcome – namely, Guangxi's proximity to North Vietnam during the American bombing. Almost uniquely among provincial leaders in the Cultural Revolution, the Guangxi Party chief Wei Guoqing kept his position: his long-standing ties with Vietnamese leaders seemed to make him indispensable. But the Central Cultural Revolution Group in Beijing favoured the more revolutionary April 22 faction over the pro-Wei Allied