

Progressivism's liberal successors in America. Second, notwithstanding the considerable presence of mainly middle-class women in its ranks, Progressivism's definition of "the people" largely excluded the vast majority of the women and men who made up the "new" immigrants and increasingly the majority of workers in corporate America. Despite considerable support within its ranks for the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, Progressivism also "consigned to the margins" of citizenship, African Americans (considered to be "ill prepared for full citizenship") and reacted with a mixture of "unease" and "outright hostility" to W.E. Dubois's insistence upon the priority of black rights. In sum, the Progressives' version of the "people" and the very success of their movement fell upon the boundaries and exclusions of class, race, and ethnicity.

Stromquist performs most of his second task admirably. The "class thesis" is presented clearly and convincingly. It both informs the text throughout and acts as a timely reminder that, notwithstanding its unfashionable standing in academia and mainstream politics, class constituted a significant presence in the American Progressive past. However, the author's cursory treatment of class and the American liberal tradition from the end of World War I to the present day means that his ambitious claims about class and the failure of American liberalism in general, must await further detailed investigation and evaluation.

In conclusion, this is an interesting, ambitious, and challenging study. It should help to reawaken much needed interest in the roles of political economy and class in American history and history more generally. It should also stimulate research into the cross-national comparative ways in which reformers and revolutionaries in many countries sought either to "civilize" and regulate or transform crisis-torn capitalism between the 1880s and 1914. It is comforting to know that the leading authority into this exciting new area of comparative research is Shelton Stromquist himself.

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HUNG-YOK IP. *Intellectuals in Revolutionary China, 1921–1949. Leaders, heroes and sophisticates.* [Chinese worlds.] RoutledgeCurzon, London [etc.] 2005. xii, 328 pp. £65.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859008043368

In this study of revolutionaries' self-construction as leaders, heroes and sophisticates and the way their self-construction helped shape the culture and politics of the pre- and post-1949 periods Hung-yok Ip makes a very important contribution to our understanding of China's twentieth-century revolutionary experience. This is a subtle study of revolutionary intellectuals' elitism, a subject that Ip approaches by viewing such people as "individuals whose lives were marked by various positions". As she states, these people were at once: "radical agents for change, people who had their own longings and preferences, and educated members of their own society" (p. 217).

The central historical dynamic that Ip explores in attempt to understand how such intellectuals constructed their identities is the tension that always existed between the revolutionary milieu in which these people existed, one that celebrated anti-elitism and excoriated elitism, and the deep-seated elitism that intellectuals nevertheless continued to feel vis-à-vis other social classes, especially the peasantry. In that tension Ip uncovers many clues that help us better understand the role of intellectuals in China's Communist Revolution and the hierarchical nature of twentieth-century Chinese society.

To a certain extent, this book's title is misleading. Rather than focusing on intellectuals as a whole, Ip offers a prosopographic textual analysis of writings by people she refers to as "revolutionary intellectuals", those who supported and were directly involved in the Communist Revolution. Other types of intellectuals who also lived in revolutionary China are not treated in this book. Perhaps because she believes the term "intellectual" speaks for itself, Ip never discusses at length what she means by it. This is somewhat problematic because she quotes a great many different people, revolutionary intellectuals all, whose social backgrounds as well as levels and types of education are actually quite varied. Nor does Ip provide social historical data to help readers understand how many people her analysis is intended to cover. The bold nature of her conclusions makes clear that Ip believes her subjects were large enough in number to have a profound shaping effect on Chinese culture and society.

While captivated by Ip's subtle analysis of the ways that revolutionary intellectuals constructed identities for themselves, I found myself wondering throughout just how representative these people and their writings were, and what criteria Ip used to select them for study. Ip is reasonably self-reflective on the question of her criteria, but I still could not entirely escape the nagging question of whether she sifted through writings by intellectuals and "cherry-picked" those, or even those passages, that fit her thesis, thereby giving us a distorted feel for the ground that she purports to cover.

These concerns notwithstanding, the large number of primary sources from across several decades that Ip consults is impressive, and I am in fact largely persuaded by her analysis, which to my mind offers a welcome corrective to the rather tired, dominant view of intellectuals as a group that was forced wholly to give up its rich and nuanced culture in the face of the uncompromising and extreme political demands of the Communist Revolution. China's revolutionary intellectual culture as Ip describes it was more complex; it was one in which identities and status were constantly being negotiated during a revolutionary process in motion, and one in which the Party both disciplined and privileged intellectuals, depending on its needs and abilities at particular times. Ip shows us that revolutionary intellectuals found ways to maintain their elite position and high standards in Chinese society even at a time when anti-elitism was the dominant ideology.

Generally coming of age during the May 4th era, when aestheticism and cosmopolitanism were prized, "Communist intellectuals were committed to beauty and the arts. Their upbringing and education always instilled in them love for cultural refinement" (p. 148). We have perhaps known this intuitively, and others who have undertaken biographical studies of key intellectuals, such as Timothy Cheek in *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China: Deng Tuo and the Intelligentsia* (Oxford, 1997) and Geremie Barmé in *An Artistic Exile: A Life of Feng Zikai (1898–1975)* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), have previously explored the complex relationship between highly cultivated intellectuals and revolutionary culture, but Ip shows us how and why elitism was able to persist in a broader social context, and this is no small accomplishment.

As mentioned, she does this by concentrating on the dialectical relationship between intellectuals' elitism and the Communist Party's fundamentally anti-elitist ideological stance. What she argues, to my mind persuasively, is that when the leadership of the Communist Party and revolutionary intellectuals originally embraced anti-elitism in the 1920s they did so in a way that forecast the eventual withering away of their own unique social status. As the revolutionary process wore on, however, party leaders and intellectuals became dismayed by what they generally perceived as the backwardness of

the peasantry, and so began to work hand-in-glove, both consciously and unconsciously, to maintain hegemonically their own leadership role in society. This role was conceived in terms both of political power and cultural standards.

Fascinatingly, Ip argues that revolutionary intellectuals were able to co-opt the ideological imperative of anti-elitism by casting themselves as being in need of ideological sharpening, advice, and information from the masses, and great humility. But, ironically and ingeniously, once they successfully wrote those ideas into their construction of themselves, intellectuals benefited because they were able to present themselves as people who had made great efforts and sacrifices for the revolution. They added to their already great value, in other words, by working for the masses and on themselves. For the Communist Party, this addition of value was good enough – in most cases it did not force them also to subtract value they already possessed, and that gave them a natural social advantage: sophistication, skills, taste, cosmopolitanism, and so forth. In fact, as Ip explains, the party itself was to make use of revolutionary intellectuals' self-construction as heroic and sophisticated figures to bolster its legitimacy. In one of her most memorable statements to this effect, Ip writes: "The image of Chairman Mao would have looked much less omnipotent had he been painted as a revolutionary leader whose comrades all looked mediocre and uninspiring" (p. 192).

Speaking of the Chairman, in this book he comes across as refreshingly human. Mao is revealed as a man who changed his ideas over time, faced inner conflict over the contradiction between the anti-elitism that he preached (and enforced) as a political leader and his sophisticated taste in the arts, and, above all, as a poet. Ip's treatment of Mao follows her general approach to revolutionary intellectuals, mentioned above: namely, he is viewed both as an individual with his own private tastes and as a political actor who had to navigate a complex socio-political environment in order to accomplish real revolutionary goals.

It is in this space between the private and public lives of revolutionary intellectuals where Ip is at her best. One feels that she understands her subjects as real people, meaning people caught between competing desires and beliefs. It is difficult to tell to what degree intellectuals who worked actively to construct themselves and their type as heroes did so for instrumental reasons, and Ip carefully avoids assigning motives to their delicate dance where they cannot be clearly discerned. In those instances where she does venture an opinion on this matter, she generally falls on the side of mixed motives, which to me rings true.

In any case, that is not Hung-yok Ip's chief concern. Instead, she seeks to show how standards of respectability were built into China's communist revolutionary culture and society over the long course of the revolution, and that intellectuals were the ones who set those standards, with the party's backing. The result was a hierarchical society, at the bottom of which were the "unsophisticated peasants", the very ones in whose name the intellectuals who came out on top claimed to have worked so hard and sacrificed so much. It is difficult to cheer on elitists, and were Ip's account less sophisticated, all of this might be terribly dismaying. Because she is so empathetic to the very real desires and conflicts in the minds and hearts of her subjects, however, we can cheer these people on for not losing their humanity at a time of great violence and uncertainty. Many of them, after all, did in fact sacrifice a great deal for a noble cause.

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