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develop an emancipatory political programme for black Detroiters, and one that was increasingly open to interracial collaboration. However, this was never realized, both because of the shifting economic fortunes of the city, which made the working class more vulnerable, and because of the radicals' own penchant for centralized leadership and dogmatic ideologies, which meant that they did not have organizational resilience in the long term.

Jay and Conklin embed the study of the past in the political reality of the present moment. In this they echo the approach of Grace Lee Boggs, whose political activism in the city encompassed two generations of Detroiters. Towards the end of her life, she declared, "when you look out and all you see is vacant lots, when all you see is devastation […] do you look at it as a curse, or do you look at it as a possibility, as having potential?" (p. 227). Ravaged by austerity measures post-2008, by cycles of dispossession and investment, by gentrification as well as by grassroots movement of solidarity, this book puts forward a history of Detroit that does not fit in any familiar media narrative but that, in its complexity, is shown as a microcosm for processes of transformation that have hit a vast segment of urban America. In the past few decades, Detroit has been the playground for experiments in neoliberal development, but, precisely for this reason, the book subtly suggests that it also contains, as Boggs declared, an untapped, revolutionary potential.

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Cliver, Robert. Red Silk. Class, Gender, and Revolution in China's Yangzi Delta Silk Industry. Harvard University Asia Center, Cambridge (MA) 2020. xv, 436 pp. $75.00; £60.95.

Robert Cliver's *Red Silk* offers a meticulous exploration of labor relations in a major Chinese industry during the early years of the People's Republic. Cliver's subject is the mechanized silk industry (manual silk weaving, still common in the mid-twentieth century, is excluded) in the Yangzi Delta, i.e. Shanghai and its hinterland, in the first eight years of the PRC. The narrative is structured around a comparison of the two constituent parts of the industry: steam filatures, where raw silk is reeled off cocoons and twisted into threads, and weaving shops producing textiles from silk or rayon threads. Filatures were concentrated in and around the town of Wuxi, were relatively large (with a typical workforce of 500 to 1,000 workers), and employed almost exclusively women. Weaving shops came in a variety of sizes but were mostly small, concentrated in Shanghai, and mostly staffed by male workers. Different production structures came with different management styles and workplace cultures. In Shanghai, owners and workers shared a common artisanal culture, workers tended to be unionized, and communist unions maintained a foothold even during Nationalist rule and the Japanese occupation. Labor relations in the Wuxi filatures were much harsher: managers controlled their workforce through fines and arbitrary rules, and male supervisors had almost unlimited power to humiliate and abuse women workers. Left-leaning unions never managed to penetrate the "feudal" relations of the filatures, which were dominated by sworn

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sisterhood and patron-client ties. However, filature workers were not docile: while unorganized, they were likely to engage in spontaneous strikes, often prompted by specific insults.

Cliver engages with a longstanding debate in the field of Chinese labor history: was the post-1949 Chinese proletariat the dependent creation of the CCP, as Andrew Walder argued, or did the hierarchies and inequalities introduced by the socialist state make a traditionally militant working class even more combative?[1] Cliver's answer is that both views are true but apply to different segments of the workforce: "If the silk weavers after 1949 more closely resemble Walder's co-opted, privileged, and passive workers, the filature workers are more like the disenfranchised but outspoken workers that Sheehan identifies" (p. 16). Cliver's general point is that the CCP did not implement uniform blueprints but responded flexibly to the demands of social groups; scholars of PRC history therefore need to "bring society back in" (p. 7). More specifically, he argues that most work on labor issues in the early PRC has focused on the politics of class (and, to a lesser degree, ethnicity and local origin), to the exclusion of gender. To better understand the party's labor policies and workers' responses to these policies, scholars need to "view the Chinese revolution through the combined lenses of class and gender" (p. 19), giving equal weight to both. His general point is, I think, uncontroversial; few scholars nowadays dispute that the CCP in its early years solicited input from diverse interest groups and shaped its policies to meet their demands. His gender argument, in contrast, is new and important. Party and union leaders, Cliver shows, were unwilling or unable to listen to women's voices, even if they spoke loud and clear, and sided with male managers and supervisors against female workers. Male solidarity with other men overruled class solidarity with women workers, despite all ideological commitment to gender equality.

The book was researched at a time when Chinese archives offered generous access to sources and participants in the events were still alive and could be interviewed. Cliver makes excellent use of his rich and varied sources, which include internal reports, petitions, and meeting minutes from company and municipal archives. The narrative is roughly chronological, structured around a series of campaigns that wrested workshops and factories from private control and turned them into state-managed enterprises. The first two chapters provide the necessary historical background, covering the nascent silk industry (Chapter One) and labor movement (Chapter Two) under Nationalist rule and Japanese occupation. Chapter Three charts the Communist takeover and early measures to stabilize a market disrupted by hoarding and speculation, restore production, stop capital flight, and reign in a radicalized labor movement. Chapter Four, with a focus on the Shanghai weaving industry, shows how a shared masculine culture enabled small capitalists, union leaders, and state officials to work harmoniously in "Labor-Capital Consultative Conferences", and how tripartite consultation ensured employment for weavers at a time when the US embargo caused a massive slump in silk production. Chapter Five documents the making of a "campaign society" during the Korean War, characterized by Stakhanovite labor competitions and political campaigns targeting a wide range of opponents. Chapter Six recaps these changes for the Wuxi silk-reeling industry, dealing with gender issues in a more concentrated fashion than the previous chapters. It shows that while party leaders were quick to impose their will on management and did not hesitate to punish individual supervisors, they failed to reform a management system that gave supervisors despotic power over women workers.

1. Andrew Walder, "The Remaking of the Chinese Working Class, 1949–1981", *Modern China*, 10:1 (1984), pp. 3–48.

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Chapter Seven addresses the transition to public (or joint public-private) ownership in both industries, a move that not only removed former capitalists from positions of power but also weakened workers, who no longer faced "harrowed and humiliated capitalists" (p. 335) but powerful directors who prioritized productivity over workers' welfare. The final eight pages of Chapter Seven summarize the effects of the Great Leap Forward and its immediate aftermath, and, very briefly, the rise of China's silk industry to global dominance.

With more than 400 pages, this is a long book, and at times the amount of detail threatens to overwhelm the argument. Cliver's call to "bring society back in" does not always sit well with a narrative that shows state and party leaders being very much in control of events. Similarly, the argument that different cultures and traditions in the two parts of the industry solicited different policy responses and created different outcomes is not, I think, fully borne out by the evidence he presents. He argues convincingly that a "working-class culture of masculinity" in Shanghai factories enabled weavers to enter an "honest and productive dialogue between labor and management" (p. 319) and to build lasting relationships with party leaders. As a result, "Shanghai's unionized silk weavers were among the most active and successful of China's industrial workers" (p. 385). In contrast, party and union leaders "conceived of the young women in Jiangnan filatures as childlike people whose consciousness needed to be raised so that they could recognize where their interests really lay" (p. 319). It is evident that real or perceived cultural differences led to differences in union representation: party cadres and managers engaged with union representatives in the Shanghai weaving industry on a basis of equality, while they thought Wuxi women workers incapable of self-representation. What is less clear is that smooth representation in the Shanghai case translated into better outcomes for Shanghai workers. After all, the Shanghai Silk Workers Union, like its Wuxi counterpart, acceded to state demands for wage restraint, unpaid overtime, donations to support the war in Korea, and labor intensification without added compensation. Labor insurance, one of the few measurable gains for workers in those years, appears to have been implemented at the same pace in both industries, so that by 1953 most workers in weaving factories and filatures enjoyed some degree of coverage (p. 226). Measures to improve work safety and hygiene were undertaken a few months earlier in Shanghai than in Wuxi but were pursued with equal energy in Wuxi once they got underway (pp. 314–317).

Perhaps despite himself, Cliver has convinced this reviewer that the party state managed to reduce differences between industries in a remarkably short time, and to bring about a far-reaching convergence of workplaces toward a single model. This is not to say that workers' actions in those years did not shape outcomes, but that different outcomes are to be found not so much in the formal features of the workplace, which became standardized, but in what Michael Burawoy calls the micropolitics of work.[2] Cliver shows how heat, noise, and humidity in the Wuxi filatures combined with a despotic workplace regime to create a very harsh environment, but he does not provide comparable information for the weaving factories. It would have been helpful to learn more about changes at the point of production in both industries: how did labor conditions, work pace, production norms, and workplace safety change over time? Did machinery and spatial layouts change, and, if so, how did this affect relations on the shop floor? What concrete means – foot dragging, petty theft, slowdowns, etc. – were available to workers to express discontent, short of

2. Michael Burawoy, "Between the Labor Process and the State: The Changing Face of Factory Regimes Under Advanced Capitalism", *American Sociological Review*, 48:5 (983), pp. 587–605.

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seeking formal representation? Struggles over working conditions and the labor process are discussed but given less attention than the formal politics of production. Another subject that is not fully explored is workers' lives outside the workplace. Cliver mentions, but does not discuss, that women workers in the Wuxi filatures lived in dormitories – which is important because dormitory regimes (familiar to scholars of contemporary China) allow factories to suppress wages and give them far-reaching control over workers' time and labor power. If socialist filatures continued to employ young women housed in dormitories, this would go a long way to explain the greater despotism of the Wuxi factory regime. If, on the other hand, dormitory housing was phased out over the years as workers married, one would expect a gradual softening of the despotic factory regime and a convergence towards a standard form of "industrial citizenship", as described by Joel Andreas.[3] I mention this not as a criticism but as an indication of the new questions that future scholars might explore on the basis of Cliver's pioneering work. Overall, *Red Silk* offers perhaps the richest, most detailed account of labor politics in the early PRC available in any language, and moves the field forward by insisting that labor history, in China as elsewhere, needs to take gender as seriously as an analytical category as class.

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FANXI, WANG. Mao Zedong Thought. Ed., Transl. and with an introduction by Gregor Benton. [Historical Materialism Book Series, Vol. 210.] Brill, Leiden [etc.] 2020. ix, 326 pp. € 150.00; $180.00. (E-book: € 150.00; $180.00.)

Wang Fanxi (1907–2002) was a Chinese Trotskyist leader of the 1930s. He was imprisoned by the nationalists for several years for his revolutionary ideas. After the victory of Mao's revolution in 1949, he escaped to Hong Kong before going into exile in the Portuguese colony of Macao, where he continued his political activities. In the early 1960s, Wang wrote a manuscript "Mao Zedong Thought", which was finally published in 1973. In the face of pressure from the Chinese authorities, Wang lost his teaching job in 1975 and faced certain dangers. Gregor Benton, a well-known expert on Chinese Trotskyism, and Tariq Ali were instrumental in bringing Wang to Leeds, in the UK. There, over the course of the next two decades, Benton and Wang collaborated on several publications about the Chinese revolution. Now, as Emeritus Professor at Cardiff University, Benton has edited Wang's *Mao Zedong Thought* and translated it into English.

When *Mao Zedong Thought* was first published, little was known about Mao outside China beyond what could be gleaned from official Chinese publications and some writings

3. Joel Andreas, *Disenfranchised: The Rise and Fall of Industrial Citizenship in China* (Oxford, 2019).

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