

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).

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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

building based on the visions of officers and literati put in charge of the people's welfare and the consolidation of imperial authority. After reading this 400-page text, the careful reader may consider the fiscal system to be a process by which any society institutionalizes itself, in harmony and tension with other historical constructs like legal provisions or politics.

Before a brief comment on the Tang-Song transition, "my" period, it is important to focus on the book's structure. In a brilliant introduction, von Glahn traces the history of the economic history field by summarizing the contributions of the main authorities since Naitō Konan's pioneering studies in 1914 until the present book. There is no doubt that any PhD candidate should read these ten pages as a model for positioning a new study within the uninterrupted flow of knowledge. Arranged in chronological order, each of the nine chapters is a remarkable synthesis of the most recent debates amongst historians, introducing the reader to the main "scholarly controversies" about which von Glahn gives his "own interpretative choices." Each chapter offers a general introduction and a clear conclusion which reveals the author's mastery of the crucial factors commanding the continuum of historical change.

Every chapter's title and dates are creative and meaningful, since the timespan of each historical sequence never coincides with the division into dynasties. Antiquity is divided into two chapters—"Bronze Age" and "City-state"—until the emergence of the "Autocratic monarchy" in the state of Qin (250 BCE). The "Foundations of the universal empire" are shown to be completed long before the end of the Han dynasty. The collapse of the original Han fiscal system and land allotments occurred in the post-Emperor Wu era, around 81 BCE. Therefore the fourth chapter on the disunion of the "Magnate society," based on the "Estate economy," begins with that date. The domination of great landowners reached its peak when the Jin court fled to Jiangnan in 311 CE, an event which resulted in the injection of a commercial dynamism in the South, and lasted until the emergence of the new institutions of the Northern Wei state after 485. Wei, Sui and then Tang "Chinese-nomad synthesis" created the conditions of the "Reunification of the empire," which renewed the central state-building process and led to the international opening of the empire which lasted until the An Lushan rebellion in 755. The "Economic transformation in the Tang-Song transition," which lasted from 755 to the collapse of the Northern Song in 1127, sheds light on crucial changes I will come back to. In the seventh chapter, the author supports his previous stance on the Song-Yuan-Ming transition by elaborating on the "Heyday of the Jiangnan economy" with a focus on the "fiscal policies," the development of "trade, enterprise and finance," and the transformation of "the land market," before a conclusion on the two opposite choices made by the Mongols and the first Ming ruler, who harshly returned to a command economy, "subservient to imperial will." The last two chapters are devoted to late imperial China, which is divided in two chronological sequences, namely "The maturation of the market economy (1550 to 1800)," and the "Domestic crises and global challenges (1800 to 1900)." Von Glahn suggests that we consider the economic depression in the early nineteenth century as the main cause of China's chronic weakness, which prompted the Qing state to employ new "fiscal and economic strategies" and a "new institutional matrix in finance and commerce" until the end of the empire.

Each chapter in the *Economic History of China* systematizes valuable information through maps (33 in total) and figures (24 in total), while 53 tables provide useful quantitative data and document economic trends. It is worth mentioning that this concrete evidence has been assembled by the author on the basis of his huge and systematic reading of the Chinese, Japanese, and western literature. There is no doubt that his command of the Japanese scholarship on all periods is a key factor of his achievement. The 48 pages of the bibliography definitely will serve as a major tool for anybody working in the field of Chinese studies. Of course, von Glahn also pays great attention to the primary sources, which he frequently cites in reference to the scholarly controversies already mentioned. For instance, his detailed discussion of the studies devoted to ancient texts found by archeologists is amazing: this accomplished part of the book offers an introduction to

one of the most rapidly changing and difficult fields of sinological knowledge, and this is one reason that von Glahn's research surpasses any other synthesis on the ancient economy of China.

I will now turn to von Glahn's mention of his "allegiance" to the California school (5–7). In my view, this statement is the expression of a conviction: historians of China, especially economic historians, should start from the texts and their evolving concepts. This approach helps us to fathom the limits of the western categories we have to use in writing about the economy, and, as von Glahn himself emphasizes, it is the way to keep at a distance any linear perspective of economic growth and the neo-classical idea of the market as the single driving force behind economic development and wealth. This is a cautious opinion I would like to support by a very brief comment on the sixth and seventh chapters devoted to the crucial change between 755 and 1350, the "transition" which von Glahn labelled as Song-Yuan-Ming before and as Tang-Song in this book. In any case, I prefer this second stance, because a phase of this transition deserves to be singled out: the first half of the tenth century. Of course, our knowledge of this period is very limited because of the lack of sources but, rather than the "Economic consequences of the An Lushan rebellion," which above all were legal, fiscal, and financial as the relevant seven pages of the book show very clearly, it would be useful to stress the changes which occurred in the Southern Ten Kingdoms over the course of a century, between the end of the ninth century and 975, when these states preserved their autonomy precisely by economic means. I understand their policies both as the real economic consequences of the disintegration of the Tang empire and as the crucial foundation of Song economic development that von Glahn focuses on: "the rise of rice economy" was largely based on the experience of the Wu-Yue kingdom's reclamation of the Taihu region and the building of the maritime dyke; "the return to mercantilist fiscal policies" was inaugurated and developed by each Southern state, in hope of creating wealth through monetary competition which aimed at the reorientation of merchant networks, as well as maritime trade linking the coastal regions with overseas countries, especially Korea and Japan. Of course, this historical reality is introduced in the book, but the shock of "Wang Anshi's new policies" in the 1070s would deserve to be put more clearly in contrast with this long-term experience of the South. This perspective sheds light on two aspects closely linked to von Glahn's argument: first, the difficulty the Song state had in managing regional inequalities and hence the turn under Shenzong to more of a command economy, which is supposed to be the best way to make the regional disparity serve the reinforcement of the state; second, the growth of the market, especially during the Southern Song, when the court would once again reconstruct and protect imperial power in the wealthy South, in a dynamic that von Glahn calls "the great leap forward in economic productivity," which was the result of a clear reaction to the reforms and the rejection of the reformers.

In conclusion, this book is both a scholarly book worthy of a prize, and an easy reading textbook: the language is very clear and always accurate, even in the most technical passages. There is no doubt that it should be high on any list of recommended first readings on China. It is clearly the best global history of China available today, as Jacques Gernet's *Le monde chinois* was more than forty years ago.

The Rise of Political Intellectuals in Modern China: May Fourth Societies and the Roots of Mass-Party Politics. By SHAKHAR RAHAV. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 256 pp. \$74.00.

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For half a century since the publication of Tse-tsung Chow's path-breaking monograph, the May Fourth Movement has consistently been attracting scholars' attention. More than other events in