

convoluted processes of how squatter management policy evolved in Hong Kong – their portrayal has relevance beyond the immediate topic of this book.

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A Chinese Rebel Beyond the Great Wall: The Cultural Revolution and Ethnic Pogrom in Inner Mongolia

TJ Cheng, Uradyn E. Bulag and Mark Selden. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2023. 410 pp. \$99.00 (hbk). ISBN 9780226826844

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The authors' observation in this book that "The Inner Mongolian casualties and deaths were by far the largest number recorded in any province or autonomous region during the Cultural Revolution, and local accounts suggest that the official figures are gross underestimates" (p. 4) is well known, but the work's autobiographical report is new and riveting. Cheng Tiejun, a Han Chinese who moved from North China to Inner Mongolia as a teenager at the outset of the Great Leap Forward of 1958–1962, witnessed the destruction and murders during the Cultural Revolution. His first-hand account is invaluable. Most of this book consists of a chronological account of Cheng's involvement in and observations of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. In the last chapter, the three authors analyse Chinese Communist policies toward minorities in the past and at present.

It is painful and sobering to read about the violent struggles between so-called loyalists, often consisting of Communist cadres and their leaders, and the so-called rebels, frequently composed of students and Red Guards who challenged the hierarchy. Torture generated false confessions from innocents; harassment and beatings led others to commit suicide; and "ferreting out traitors" campaigns contributed to anarchy. Cheng watched a parade of trucks with ten men and women travelling through the city streets to the execution grounds. On another occasion, he saw a firing squad botch an execution, and their commander then ordered them to shoot the victims at point blank range. So-called poisonous books were burned, although brave librarians saved duplicates of some such works. A printer who erroneously placed a black mark, an indication of traitorous behaviour, on the wrong leader, was imprisoned for some time, even though the mistake was corrected before the work was published.

In the last chapter, the three authors take note of the circumstances that faced China on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. The USSR was no longer an ally; the US had half a million soldiers in Vietnam; and China was increasingly isolated. The authors do not excuse the violence, but they explain the international context for some Chinese Communist concerns or, some might argue, paranoia.

Cheng points out that, during the Cultural Revolution, leaders encouraged teachers and students to spy on their peers and to report on "capitalist roaders." They also demanded a torrent of self-criticism from individuals with "feudal" or "bourgeois" backgrounds. A teacher who wrote a Big Character poster antagonized a leader, who then had him beaten and jailed. Leaders frequently prevented the accused from defending themselves. Cheng's university was closed and instead he had to listen to interminable speeches about bourgeois traitors and splitters.



The most important purported traitor was Ulanhu, the head of the government and the Communist Party in the autonomous region from at least 1947, who was accused of splittism. The Communist leaders in Beijing criticized him for seeking to preserve traditional Mongolian culture, for defending Mongolian pastoralists against the incursions of Chinese peasants and for maintaining relations with Mongolia, which had sided with the USSR during Sino-Soviet disputes and conflicts. Inner Mongolia had, in theory, been granted an autonomous status, but the Cultural Revolution revealed considerable limits on the reputed local decision-making and control. The critiques spread from Ulanhu to Mongolians in general and led to brutal attacks on this minority. Many more Mongolians than Han were killed during this chaotic period. The authors label this policy a pogrom. They also emphasize Han migration into Inner Mongolia, which created a 4:1 ratio in favour of the Han and undermined the concept of a Mongolian autonomous region.

Perhaps as important, Cheng shows that personal animosities, on occasion, trumped ideology in the Cultural Revolution struggles. Individuals who believed that they had been wronged by a leader in pre-Cultural Revolution days capitalized on the chaos to attempt to even the score. Their differing views on Communism or splittism in Inner Mongolia were of no consequence. They had despised each other before the Cultural Revolution, and their previous hostilities rather than ideological disputes shaped their actions.

One caveat: the level of detail that Cheng provides about events or conditions that occurred decades ago may beget suspicions about accuracy. He recounts the exact time he awakes on a particular day or the exact moment an event takes place. Or he offers a list of gifts he bought for a trip many years earlier. More important, he cites verbatim dialogues from meetings that he participated in many years ago. The editor should have questioned such precision about such long-ago events.

After Cheng's autobiographical account, the three authors consider the present status of minorities in China. They reject the term "genocide," or total elimination of a people, as the basis for Chinese Communist policies and instead employ "politicide," meaning the erasure of political and cultural identities. They conclude with a sobering but perhaps realistic assessment of the current situation: "the U.S. and its allies fiercely condemning China's treatment of its borderland minorities as genocide, while China reminds the United States of its own history of genocide against Native Americans as well as slavery and racial discrimination targeting African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans, among other immigrants" (p. 347).

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Visions of Salvation: Chinese Christian Posters in an Age of Revolution

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Visions of Salvation presents a previously little-known body of visual materials designed and disseminated by foreign missionaries and Chinese Christians in the Republican Period, and it addresses a large gap in the contemporary understanding of modern Chinese visual culture.