

*Joseph? Clotilda* and *Wanderer*, by contrast, are well-known US slaving vessels that indeed warrant index entries under “C” and “W”, respectively.

*American Slavers* is in many ways an important book about US and African history rather than only the transatlantic slave trade. Readers now can find a mostly comprehensive history of the US slave trade in one readable monograph.

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WALDER, ANDREW G. *Civil War in Guangxi. The Cultural Revolution on China's Southern Periphery*. Stanford University Press, Stanford (CA) 2023. xvii, 276 pp. Maps. \$90.00. (Paper: \$30.00.)

In the past two decades, Stanford sociologist Andrew Walder has authored or co-authored close to two dozen peer-reviewed research articles and four monographs on various aspects of the Cultural Revolution and its afterlives. Key themes include the origins of factionalism at various stages of the movement, as well as detailed studies on the scope and nature of political violence. His research has also highlighted the situation in the Chinese countryside, which had rarely been covered in previous research. All of these works are based on the painstaking collection of empirical evidence, careful comparison, and an excellent eye for regional variance. The latest – and maybe final – volume of his research into the Cultural Revolution deals with the brutal factional warfare in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the late 1960s. No other region in the People's Republic of China (PRC) suffered a similar death toll in relation to population size. While particular gruesome incidents of cannibalism and mass murder have been analysed before, this is the first study to give a comprehensive and statistically reliable account of local factionalism, as well as the different forms and phases of political violence. It is a milestone in the field that clearly demonstrates the party-state's culpability for the killings.

The book extensively relies on a massive set of eighteen archival volumes that contain detailed statistics on crimes, perpetrators, and victims for every single county and city in Guangxi. In a bold move, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership under general secretary Hu Yaobang had ousted the local political leadership in the early 1980s, which, due to its own complicity in the atrocities, had tried to stall comprehensive investigations into the dark legacies of the Cultural Revolution. The information was compiled by two special teams mandated by the central party leadership, a fact rarely known by Western audiences. These teams relied on information supplied by close to 100,000 investigators, a staggering number that allowed previous crimes to be addressed in excruciating detail. In 1987, this unique set of materials was internally distributed in 1,000 classified copies by

the local archival administration and quickly hidden away. It was largely forgotten, until a set was leaked to Hong Kong in the 2010s and republished by Mirror Press in 2016 with only minor differences to the original set. The publication led to serious investigations by PRC security agencies into the leakage of state secrets.

*Civil War in Guangxi* is divided into eight chapters. The question of why the violence in Guangxi was so much more intense than in other regions of the PRC runs like a leitmotif through the whole book. It leads to many further inquiries – for example, why so many members of the historical “enemy classes” were murdered in rural regions of Guangxi. In the first chapter, Walder gives a succinct overview of previous explanatory models, including the classical “conservative-radical” scheme or intergroup violence, and reveals why none of them is able to explain the patterns emerging from the rich empirical data set. It is followed by three chapters that explain the formation of the two main competing factions, the Allied Command and the April 22 faction, first in Nanning and their later spread throughout the region.

What set Guangxi apart from most other regions during the Cultural Revolution was that the local strongman Wei Guoqing, an ethnic Zhuang and Long March veteran, was not toppled like most other provincial party leaders at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, but retained a powerful position. The decision had nothing to do with Wei’s political savvy or superior manoeuvring skills, quite the opposite. Wei Guoqing was strongly detested by many members of the Central Cultural Revolution Committee in Beijing, who instigated local opposition against him. Yet, the signals from the Party Centre remained mixed due to the escalation of the Vietnam War in the immediate vicinity of the Guangxi border. Since Wei Guoqing had been an effective advisor to the Vietnamese communist leadership during their previous decolonization struggles against the French, Mao Zedong was unwilling to have him purged in this situation. Instead, by March 1967, he selected him as head of the Guangxi Military Control Committee, which controlled the People’s Armed Departments (PAD) that trained the people’s militias.

The mixed signals from Beijing were crucial for the formation of the two competing factions. Tensions were further exacerbated during a half-year-long period of negotiations between representatives of the factions under the guardianship of Zhou Enlai in Beijing in 1967. Yet, instead of reaching an enforceable compromise, the preparatory revolutionary committee quickly disintegrated. Within this unclear political setting, factionalism grew ever more intense. The Allied Command largely consisted of those groups allied with local PADs, while the April 22 faction only occasionally received military support from units not under the command of the regional Guangxi Military District, for example in Guilin City. Overall, this gave the Allied Command a huge advantage, which would lead to horrid consequences by 1968.

In the most radical period of the Cultural Revolution, between July and August 1967, when even the possibility of attacking the military as a revisionist force appeared as an option, the Allied Command had briefly come under increasing pressure. To counter-attack, they employed a strategy that had spilled over from neighbouring Hunan Province: killing members of the “black classes” alongside their political April 22 faction rivals on grounds of “suppressing counterrevolution”. So-called “Supreme people’s courts of the poor and lower-middle peasants” were

the instruments of choice to suggest quasi-spontaneous instances of mass justice. While the Party Centre quickly intervened in Hunan, in Guangxi these killings would continue to escalate under the pretence of “restoring order”. The high tide of the killings was reached in the late summer of 1968, as the Party Centre mandated the formation of a Revolutionary Committee in Guangxi, and the Allied Faction managed to present themselves as agents of order in their communications with Beijing, while the former patrons of the April 22 faction were purged.

As Walder shows in Chapters Five to Seven, the vast majority of victims in the cities were members of the April 22 faction. In many rural counties, where the faction had little or no roots, the victims were mostly from stigmatized households. Using the unique data set, Walder is able to prove that neither spontaneous intergroup violence against neighbours nor ethnic conflicts accounted for the mass killings in rural areas. Instead, they were coordinated and enacted by military and civilian agents, mostly village militias, and thus have to count as state crimes. The horrible instances of cannibalism and sexual violence are characterized by Walder as “crimes of opportunity” without approval by higher authorities. The final chapter uses a vast amount of statistical data to show that ethnic conflicts were not a factor that led to mass killings at the county level, as had been previously surmised. Rather the number of local civilian and military cadres strongly correlates with higher death rates, reinforcing the dimension of top-down organized state crimes yet again.

The sheer amount of work that went into coding the tens of thousands of events that are mentioned in the eighteen volumes is enormous. The detached analysis does not shy away from presenting examples of the shocking brutality and horrors narrated in these volumes, yet they do not take the centre stage as in other works on Guangxi. Walder’s restrained approach allows common patterns to emerge, and proves the accountability of state actors beyond any doubt. The key takeaway of the book, that the “victims of Guangxi’s violence were collateral damage of the war in Vietnam” (p. 27), certainly holds true for the decision-makers at the central level. It also gives food for thought regarding other border regions with high killing rates, such as Inner Mongolia, where political violence diminished once the conflict with the Soviet Union intensified in the late 1960s. For the regional decision-making processes and especially the concrete planning of the killings, the data set, which Walder has made available for other researchers as well, contains a huge amount of additional information to be mined in the future. More scholarship is also needed on questions regarding the processes of how the investigations into past crimes were accompanied by attempts to ameliorate the situation of survivors, at least to a modest extent, and to graft a new narrative of looking toward the future onto individual experiences of violence, as recent research by Song Guoqing has demonstrated. Finally, the question of whether Mao Zedong knew about the background of the killings, or whether he was duped by reports from the Allied Command, requires further scrutiny.

Throughout the book, Walder convincingly demonstrates that it is of crucial importance to take the specific chains of events into account in order to understand both the rise of factionalism and the patterns of political violence in Guangxi. Based on this largely historical approach, in combination with state-of-the-art statistical analysis and painstaking empirical detail, Andrew Walder has been able to

significantly advance our understanding of why political violence in Guangxi came to be so much more intense than in most other Chinese regions. This is a must-read for anyone interested in modern Chinese history and the Cultural Revolution in particular.

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ANNA SAILER, *Workplace Relations in Colonial Bengal: The Jute Industry and Indian Labour 1870s–1930s* [Critical Perspectives in South Asian History.] Bloomsbury Academic, London 2022. xiv, 298 pp. £90.00. (Paper: £28.99; E-book: £26.09.)

Anna Sailer's monograph explores the shifts in workplace relations in the Bengal jute industry from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries and how they impacted worker relations and labor movements in colonial Bengal. Critically studying a versatile array of sources including government records, newspapers, interviews, gazetteers, and visual data illustrations, Sailer argues that workplace labor control policies steered the changes the Bengal jute industry underwent as it moved from uneven production in the 1860s to a global monopoly by the late 1930s. Labor control strategies – such as implementing managerial control processes in relation to employment; initiating alterations in shift systems to organize workflow on the factory floor; and expanding labor control across mill premises through regulating entry and exit to monitor employees' movements and productivity throughout the workday – all contributed to the evolution of workplace relations in colonial Bengal jute industry. Sailer complements these strategies by investigating workers' experiences, actions, and counter-strategies in response to the top-down transformations that ruptured the social fabric of labor relations, which embedded sharing work with family in workers' social network. Analyzing the workplace's importance in labor regulations, Sailer's work critiques the colonial capitalist regulation in Calcutta's industrial hinterlands.

In Chapter One, Sailer maps the spatial context of jute mills. The author shows how the affordable land prices, lower rural municipal tax rates and proximity to abundant labor supply incentivized factory owners to build mills along the river on the outskirts of Calcutta. The author outlines in detail the managerial creation of a pan-Indian workforce through schemes that offered healthcare to women and benefits to Madrassi families, encouraging labor to migrate to Calcutta's industrial belts for factory work. Workers from Madras became a majority in the jute workforce, with non-Bengali laborers also flowing in from Bihar, Orissa, and the United Provinces. The chapter also focuses on work regulation from the 1870s to the early 1920s in the context of the multiple-shift system. Sailer shows how commercial competition extended working hours necessitating the multiple-shift system for workers through deployment of work gangs from the 1890s. With the multiple-shift system in place,