history of Chinese and global Trotskyism in relation to the Maoist revolution. Benton provides footnotes and short introductions to each chapter, so that non-China experts can also follow the arguments of his hero.

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Gerth, Karl. Unending Capitalism. How Consumerism Negated China's Communist Revolution. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2020. xi, 384 pp. Ill. £59.99. (Paper: £18.99; E-book: $20.00.)

The world's Marxist-Leninist countries, including Mao's China, are generally known for their monopolistic exercise of political control, ideologization of virtually all aspects of life, nationalization of industry and commerce, collectivization of rural labor, and central planning of the economy. In short, such countries leave little room for market-driven consumerism. After all, the goal of socialism and communism is to end capitalism. Karl Gerth's book, *Unending Capitalism: How Consumerism Negated China's Communist Revolution*, reaches a different, if not entirely opposite, conclusion. Garth's portrait of Mao's China reveals a vibrant consumerism combined with state capitalism. Thus, in the most radical years of Chinese socialism, "capitalism" was "unending".

Gerth starts his book with what he calls the "self-expanding and compulsory consumerism" in Chinese society under Mao. He argues that there was a craving for material comfort despite decades of shortages of consumer goods and the call of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for a sedulous devotion to hard work and thrift. Gerth takes the production and consumption of the so-called Three Great Things (the wristwatch, bicycle, and sewing machine), which were coveted in the Mao era, as examples to illustrate how consumerism fed on itself and how the Communist Party's inability to constrain consumerism led to gray-market activities and growing social inequality. Both of these ran counter to the socialist values of central planning and social justice among working people. Gerth argues that instead of constraining consumerism, the Chinese state played a critically important role in promoting the continuity of consumerism. In the first decade of the People's Republic, instead of totally suppressing consumerism the CCP used state power to control industries and commerce and created "state consumerism" under the banner of "building socialism". While state consumerism was driven by state expenditure on heavy industry and the military, it also led to social inequality and a monumental gulf between rural and urban society.

Gerth highlights the influence of the Soviet endorsement of consumerism in the early years of the People's Republic, the most prominent case being the Chinese imitation of Soviet fashions or, more generally, lifestyle. This included the nationwide promotion of the *bulaji*, the Soviet one-piece dress worn by young women in the 1950s. And nearly half of all films shown in Mao's China before 1966 were from the Soviet Union (p. 84). However, with the emergence of the Sino-Soviet split, Chinese "from Chairman Mao to ordinary individuals on city streets" increasingly questioned the Soviet model (p. 92).

Although there are reasons to doubt that "ordinary individuals on city streets" had anything to say in swaying Mao's foreign policy, without question the Soviet influence on Chinese consumer behavior weakened after the Great Leap Forward and eventually disappeared, in large part because the Chinese economy could not sustain a lifestyle that imitated that of the Soviets.

Gerth devotes two chapters to the practice of state consumerism in advertising and in the service sector. Commercial advertisements are usually regarded as typical of capitalist economies and societies, yet Gerth presents ample evidence demonstrating that advertising continued to shape consumer desires in China after 1949. (A prominent case examined is advertisements for Heiren brand toothpaste, known by its English name "Darkie", pp. 103–112.) Moreover, state consumerism was propagandized through a proliferation of posters, most of which were political, and films with stories set in the post-Liberation era. While these mass media portrayed socialist China as a land of happy and prosperous people, they simultaneously presented the prospect of a comfortable life in socialist society that legitimized the pursuit of material well-being. The state therefore was caught in a dilemma between propagandizing economic development and propagating an ideology that condemned the pursuit of "bourgeois" desires. This dilemma was also seen in the service sector, where the state promoted the concept of serving shoppers, akin to the capitalist dictum that "the customer is always right" (p. 153), while at the same time struggling to cope with the constant shortage of everyday necessities. The most obvious and enduring sign of this problem was that, as in all Marxist-Leninist counties, "queues became an iconic image of shopping life" throughout the Mao era (p. 148). The principle of "building the nation through diligence and thrift", or its variant, "manag[ing] households with diligence and thrift" (p. 46), had to be emphasized, not just as an ideological matter, but more so as a pragmatic need.

The Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) was notorious for visiting disaster on almost all aspects of human life, and much research on the revolution has conveyed the image of it, in Gerth's words, as "totalitarian conformity in appearance, socialist zealotry in thought, and wanton destruction of 'feudal' and 'bourgeois' material culture in deed" (p. 171). Gerth argues that the Cultural Revolution, including the Red Guards' "Destroy the Four Olds" movement, which aimed to eliminate "old culture" both physically and mentally, did not uproot consumerism; rather, it introduced a new and expanded form of consumerism. To substantiate this point, Gerth trains his lens on somewhat overlooked areas where consumerism continued in unexpected ways. For instance, Gerth provides details on the Huaihai Road State Used Goods Market in Shanghai (known as Huaiguojiu), where not only old luxury goods brought back memories of the bourgeois lifestyles of the pre-1949 era and satisfied those who wanted and could afford them, but also gave people access to factory seconds of much desired products. Ironically, one result of the Destroy movement was a flood of goods that flowed into secondhand shops and, more generally, "reproduced the sorts of gray market activities and market capitalist activities [the Red Guards] supposedly deplored" (p. 193). Fashion was another case in point. After Mao wore an army uniform when receiving millions of Red Guards in Beijing in late 1966, wearing used or imitation People's Liberation Army uniforms (in either case, the uniforms had no military insignias on the collar) became a fashion statement for both men and women for a decade. This in a way "broadened the reach of consumerism to tens of millions of new participants across the country" (p. 199).

Gerth's last chapter is devoted to a topic that at first glance may seem only tenuously connected to consumerism: Mao badges. Gerth details how Mao badges – one of the most ubiquitous symbols of the Mao cult – were initiated, manufactured, and circulated – and became a consumer fad in the early years of the Cultural Revolution. It has been estimated that at

least 2.5 billion Mao badges were produced at the time when China's population was about 700 million. Gerth illustrates how Mao badges as political symbols in 1966 quickly became a fashion, gained market value, and ultimately became a commodity for speculation. This did not end until a state crackdown on speculation in 1970–1971, following a comment Mao allegedly made on the military industry's loss of aluminum to badge-making: "Give me back the planes!" Gerth concludes that the Mao badge phenomenon signaled that "the Cultural Revolution did not end capitalism, even momentarily, but rather served as the apotheosis of self-expanding and compulsory consumerism during the Mao era" (p. 228).

This is an unusually well-researched book. Gerth carefully and systematically delineates the multiple layers of consumer activities and state involvement in everyday transactions. He reveals the actual social life that lay beneath the political bombast and ideological rhetoric that so often diverts our attention from the everyday activities of real people.

The belief that consumerism undercuts Communist revolution is based on the notion that, as conventional wisdom has it, consumerism is an integral part of capitalism that is corrosive to revolution. This raises the broad question of the relationship between capitalism, including state capitalism, and consumerism. One may argue that it is debatable that consumerism exists only in capitalist societies or that traces of consumerism in a socialist country can be seen as "unending capitalism". Yet, Mao was obsessed with what he regarded as the imminent danger of "capitalist restoration" in the PRC and fought mightily to prevent it. Lenin's warning that small-scale production produces capitalism "daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale" was frequently quoted in the Mao years to back up both the claim that capitalist restoration lurked just around the corner and the often frenetic policies to thwart its comeback. In an interesting serendipity, what Gerth has found in Mao's China has echoes of what distressed – or, perhaps, terrified – Mao some fifty years ago.

Regardless, Gerth's arguments are supported by an impressive array of source materials (a third of the book consists of notes with source citations), ranging from published works to government documents, newspapers, personal memoirs, and archival materials. Source material on Gerth's subject – consumer culture, material culture, everyday life, etc. – are scattered and fragmentary, and require sharp eyes to identify them and painstaking efforts to gather them. Gerth has done a remarkable job in presenting a work that people interested in consumerism, social history, urban studies, Communist and post-Communist studies, and Mao's China should read.

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Dell, Simon. The Portrait and the Colonial Imaginary. Photography between France and Africa 1900–1939. Leuven University Press, Leuven 2020. 247 pp. Ill. € 55.00.

Simon Dell's monograph addresses the centrality of portraiture to modeling what he describes as the French colonial imaginary under the Third Republic (1870–1940).