

vast discretionary power of prosecutors and judges, Jiang may have inadvertently marginalized the harshness of the formal system, which criminal reconciliation aims to spare some juvenile offenders from. Occasionally, too, Jiang may overemphasize the importance of formal procedures and legal rights in dealing with juvenile offenders. Given the conditions of criminal justice in China, and elsewhere for that matter, any alternative to prosecution and prisons is a good thing. For young offenders who have committed minor offenses, informal practices and discretionary power are important to soften the harshness and rigidity of formal institutions.

One issue that requires further study is the relevance of the police. What are the positions of the police in relation to criminal reconciliation in China, and why, unlike police elsewhere, do they decide to opt out? Police are the first port of call in the criminal process and they have the best opportunities to intervene. They are also embedded in communities and are best placed to deal with matters like criminal reconciliation. It is ironic that prosecutors and judges have to manage matters that the police can often handle better and more cost-effectively. China has a lengthy and harsh system of police detention during investigations, and once these are finally done, the prosecutors and judges are able to conduct criminal reconciliation that undoes whatever the police may have prepared for the prosecutors.

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Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life, by Alexander V. Pantsov and Steven I. Levine. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. viii+610 pp. £22.99 (cloth).

After publishing *Mao: The Real Story*, Alexander V. Pantsov and Steven I. Levine wrote this book on the other most powerful politician in contemporary Chinese history, Deng Xiaoping. Since numerous studies had already been written about Deng, the two authors have sought to emphasize the importance and merits of their new work. They claim: “Our book is the only complete and objective biography of the most important political leader in the late twentieth-century history of China” (8). Though they critique Ezra F. Vogel’s book *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, they do not sufficiently review much of the other existing literature on Deng, so thoughtful readers will need to reach their own conclusions on whether the authors’ statement is true or exaggerated.

Four salient aspects are distinctive about this biography of Deng. First, through revisiting Deng’s political history, Pantsov and Levine meticulously disclose Deng’s political personality and personal character, especially the negative aspects. For instance, they note that Deng was a “prodigal and eternally ungrateful son” (54–55). Based on detailed descriptions, they repeatedly stress that Deng “always believed

that the end justified the means. . . . People were important to him only as instruments for achieving his goals. . . . Such fundamental virtues as human dignity, pride, and principle meant nothing to him” (6). They also claim that “A hypocritical shrewdness had become a part of his character during the long years of his political life” (267), and “concepts such as humanism and morality were not in his lexicon” (357). Second, the authors had the advantage of accessing unique Russian archival sources. This particularly facilitates our understanding of the very early years of Deng’s political life. These important firsthand materials, for example, enrich our understanding of Deng’s first two wives, Zhang Xiyuan and Jin Weiying, and other Chinese revolutionaries when they were young. Third, the authors made use of supplementary oral sources to strengthen their arguments and descriptions. The main author, Pantsov, interviewed Chinese dissident Wei Jingshen, official scholars, and citizens and incorporated the notes made during his field studies in China. Fourth, the authors explore the possible influences Deng may have gained from the time he spent in the Soviet Union, and how the thoughts of previous Soviet leaders inspired the Chinese reformists in the early stage of the Deng era.

The biography is not free from weaknesses. First and foremost, the book provides only partial and inadequate portraits of Deng’s prominent role in carrying out Mao’s controversial political campaigns and radical policies in the pre-Cultural Revolution period. For example, the authors write about the 1957 Rectification and Anti-Rightist Campaign simply by mentioning that “Mao entrusted Deng with leading a repressive campaign against the intelligentsia” and “Deng took on the job with relish” (184–85). However, they do not offer any details on how the Central Secretariat that Deng headed acted as a witch-hunting vanguard. As for the Great Leap Forward from early 1958 to the end of 1960, the authors do not take note of the vastly expanded power of the Central Secretariat under Deng, nor recognize Deng’s crucial role in charge of Mao’s utopian project. Moreover, they also fail to see that Deng was rarely pragmatic during the three-year campaign, and was sometimes more carried away than Mao himself.

On the critical issue of why Deng gradually lost the blessing of the Great Helmsman before the eruption of the Cultural Revolution, a few points should be rectified. The authors correctly point out that Mao was very unsatisfied with Deng’s supportive attitude toward the rural household contract system. In the early summer of 1962, Deng went even further than the book depicts: he seriously thought about directly dividing up and distributing the land to the peasants as a temporary and expedient measure. During the Socialist Education Movement, from late December 1964 to early January 1965, Mao directed his rage mainly against Liu Shaoqi instead of Deng even though Deng was mainly responsible for executing the campaign policy. The authors not only overlook the divergent views on the Socialist Education Movement between Deng and Liu but also fail to recognize that Deng quickly echoed Mao’s point of view when he witnessed Mao’s displeasure

toward Liu. He soon worked with Peng Zhen and Chen Boda to draft the Twenty-Three Articles under Mao's direction in January 1965.

Furthermore, the authors did not recognize how unhappy Mao was toward Deng over the third-front construction issue, in which factories were located far from the coast to protect them from potential military attack. Mao criticized Deng in December 1964 for passively implementing the program. Mao also accused Deng of turning the Central Secretariat into his own "independent kingdom," and Mao decided to set up a "small State Planning Commission" to remove Deng's power in drafting important national economic plans. Mao even proposed to establish a "small Secretariat" to further weaken Deng's political power as General Secretary.

Despite the hiccups mentioned above, this Deng biography with Russian characteristics (i.e., the unique sources are mainly Russian archival material, and the main author is from Russia) is suitable for scholars and students of Chinese Communist politics and history, and also for a broader readership due to its interesting storytelling.

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Prophets Unarmed: Chinese Trotskyists in Revolutionary War, Jail, and the Return from Limbo, edited by Gregor Benton. Leiden: Brill, 2015. xvii+1269 pp. US\$263.00/€207.00 (cloth); also available as an eBook.

The side currents of history are often more interesting than the mainstream, even if less consequential. This invaluable sourcebook on the history of the Chinese Trotskyist movement is a monumental work of scholarship and, very likely, a labor of love by Gregor Benton, who is the foremost Western scholar of Chinese Trotskyism. He is uniquely qualified to edit a work that constitutes a veritable library on Chinese Trotskyism and that illuminates a too-little-known dimension of Chinese revolutionary history. To this reviewer, initially drawn to the study of Chinese history by then-Trotskyist Harold Isaacs's classic *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, prolonged immersion in this book has been a kind of homecoming.

As an active political force in China, Trotskyism was short-lived. Conceived in the aftermath of the defeat of the Chinese Communist cause in 1927, it flourished briefly as a trenchant critique of the strategy, tactics, authoritarian organizational environment, and leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led by Moscow-trained returnees like Wang Ming and Qu Qiubai, as well as Li Lisan and Zhou Enlai, who followed the twists and turns of Stalin and the Comintern's China policy and were supported by Soviet funding. They took over after the res-