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Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, And the Making of Modern China

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regime obstructed traditional philosophical or religious inquiry and educational institutions were replaced by “Maoist-Marxist teaching units” (p. 117).

The collection is unified by a concern for the intersections of developments on several levels: politics and culture; foreign and domestic educational concepts; and traditional and modern world views of and attitudes toward learning. The quality of the essays is generally high and the research is thoroughly documented, in one instance (Pfizer) with highly informative commentary being added to the footnotes. Some of the essays cover topics that are already well-known components of the historical record, such as the historical evolution of higher educational models. Others, such as Eva Kit Way Man’s concluding piece, in which Man argues that contemporary higher education in China could well benefit from a revival of the Neo-Confucian humanistic tradition on the grounds that the ancient Confucian text the *Great Learning* is compatible with the post-modern insight that knowledge is constituted by processes that involve the individual’s interaction with social and political institutions, are original and interesting. Overall, one would have to say the collection is mixed; it covers some well-trodden terrain, yet it also introduces new data, and it is both interesting and informative.

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Thomas D. Curran

MacKinnon, Stephen R.: *Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, and the Making of Modern China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), xv + 182pp., \$39.95. ISBN 978-0-520-25445-9.

In 1924 Dr. Sun Yat-sen famously referred to the Chinese people as a “sheet of loose sand,” referring to their attachment to family and clan solidarities and lack of a national spirit. The 20th century accomplished a great deal to alter this impression by forging the Chinese into a nation, and in this short monograph Stephen R. MacKinnon argues that a huge step in that direction was taken by those who participated in the retreat to Wuhan in the face of the Japanese invasion in 1937–1938. As Wuhan became the staging ground and logistics base for the defense of the central Yangtze region, and as the region received a wave of migration that eventually included nearly 100 million refugees, the tricity experienced a political, social, and cultural transformation that paved the way for the far more unified and integrated society that emerged in the 1950s and beyond.

The generals who defended Wuhan were politically neutral with respect to the contest between the Nationalist and Communist parties. Reversing the common perception that China’s military leadership had no coherent strategy for the Anti-Japanese War, MacKinnon argues that these generals were non-partisan professionals who worked together to implement a strategy of *strategic withdrawal that forced the militarily superior Japanese imperial army into a costly war of attrition and shattered its morale*. Meanwhile, by prolonging the surrender of Wuhan they created a refuge for intellectuals, capitalists, and business managers from coastal areas who were inspired by a shared outrage at the Japanese invasion to mobilize the energies of millions of people. In the process these groups changed the social and psychological landscape of China. Not only did they help to facilitate a state intervention in community relief and health work that “laid the foundation for the comprehensive social-welfare and health programs later instituted in the PRC and the Republic of China” (p. 54) but they attracted volunteers and support across the political spectrum and cultivated within the population an “unprecedented level of community volunteerism” and an “integrated collective consciousness” (p. 61). Also, the intellectuals who descended on Wuhan played an especially important role by committing themselves to reshaping the arts so as to maximize their appeal to the masses. While mobilizing support for

the resistance they crafted a new “mass-directed culture” consisting largely of wartime propaganda and “massified” patriotic education. One result was the replacement of the May Fourth model of liberal culture by a wartime cultural mobilization that permanently altered Chinese culture.

Among the migrants to Wuhan there were some 100,000 students who passed through the area as secondary schools and universities in North China and Shanghai either closed their doors or relocated. These students produced a student movement that, though organizationally fragmented, projected a consistent vision of patriotic devotion to the anti-Japanese cause. Interestingly, neither the Communist Party nor the Nationalist Party managed to gain control of it, although the Communists were more successful at attracting young recruits. Rather, the movement’s leadership came from youth organizers who concentrated their effort on mobilizing students in mass campaigns aimed at recruiting rural and urban citizens into the war effort while reforming education so as to put it on a war footing and make it more relevant to the requirements of national defense.

MacKinnon argues that to accomplish the dramatic changes to which he believes the defense of Wuhan led the military context was essential. Wartime exigencies, including weak government control of the press, created an “atmosphere of tolerance” that gave activists in the world of culture the liberty to develop techniques for turning culture into a potent weapon against the Japanese. Their success at popularizing the message of patriotism and sacrifice played an important role in forging an integrated collective consciousness the absence of which Sun Yat-sen had lamented. This process, MacKinnon maintains, was “an impressive harbinger of the massive nationalization and economic reorganization that lay in the future” (p. 118).

Elsewhere, MacKinnon and Diana Lary have asserted that the wartime refugee experience left behind a legacy of brutalization that generated a survivor mentality and conditioned the Chinese to accept the horrors that were to come in the 1940s to 1960s. (See their essays in Lary and MacKinnon, eds., *The Scars of War: The Impact of Warfare on Modern China*, 2001.) Here, MacKinnon clarifies the point by adding the observation that aside from the destructive impact of the war on China’s national psychology there emerged a new level of community cooperation that prepared the way for a higher form of social integration and a stronger state.

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Goldstein, Melvyn C., Ben Jiao and Tanzen Lhundrup: *On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet: The Nyemo Incident of 1969*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), xix +236 pp., \$24.95. ISBN 978-0-520-25682-8.

In this contribution to the history of one of the least well known periods of twentieth century Tibet, the authors examine the famous, but poorly understood, Nyemo incident. Nyemo is a county in the vicinity of Lhasa, where, in 1969, insurgents rioted against the local government authorities. A core figure of the rebellion was Trinley Chödrön, a Buddhist nun rumored to receive instructions by a deity connected with Gesar, the mythic hero of Tibetan folklore. Through her trances, Trinley Chödrön identified the enemies of the rebellion, the auspicious times to attack them, and their punishment. As a result, several dozens of persons, including Chinese Communist Party cadres, People’s Liberation Army soldiers and regular villagers, were killed or severely maimed. The book’s aim is to demonstrate that the incident should not be interpreted as a sign of Tibetan discomfort or rebellion against Chinese imposed policies, but