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The Origins of the Great Leap Forward (Book review)

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in medical anthropology and gender studies. In addition, Morse's scholarship could have been critically compared with that produced in other colonial settings. As classic sources are re-read in new projects, more innovative attempts of this kind might encourage younger scholars to be as adventurous as Morse and Fairbank were in their youth.

North Carolina A & T Greensboro, NC

James L. Hevia

Domenach, Jean-Luc: *The Origins of the Great Leap Forward: The Case of One Chinese Province*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), xx + 212 pp., \$ 54.95. ISBN 0-8133-1710-X.

Mark Selden in his foreword to this piece points out that Domenach was the first to produce a major study of the Great Leap Forward, and that this book, now in English translation, remains the most probing work yet done on the subject. Since its original French publication in 1982 several others have profited from the release of new documents and the relative ease with which it is now possible to conduct interviews, but the book still stands as a pioneering effort, the first to trace the origins of the Great Leap Forward back to the leftist policies carried out in the countryside during the First Five Year Plan. The Plan was a program of rapid industrialization that produced spectacular results when measured in terms of industrial growth; but it failed in agricultural areas where the vast majority of the population lived, producing a state of malaise that set the stage for the Great Leap Forward.

The book is a study of the Great Leap as it unfolded in a single province, Henan, a critical one from the point of view of the movement's history because it was selected as a model province during the campaign. Domenach chose Henan not only because of its "model" status but because, taking historical and other factors into consideration, he considered it a representative province, a microcosm of China and an appropriate place to test Communist policies.

In Henan Domenach discovered that despite local disenchantment with the Party's policies during the Great Leap and before it, provincial leaders embraced them because they found that by aligning themselves with the center they could dislodge their opposition in a factional struggle at home. Having committed themselves to the policies, they then carried them out with reckless enthusiasm, mobilizing local resources and labor in what amounted to a full-scale war on nature that had disastrous consequences, reducing Henan's peasantry to a state equivalent to serfdom.

Ultimately, the blame lay with the Party itself which adopted a mobilizational approach rather than a coherent developmental policy. It launched the campaign in a state of "ideological infatuation" which, when combined with the Party's authoritarianism and a deepening concentration of authority that tied the future of provincial cadres directly to political events in Beijing, was a recipe for disaster.

As for the people, contrary to the standard Party line that they followed the Great Leap in a "harmonious amalgam of mass spontaneity," Domenach shows that they merely muddled through, cooperating only to the extent necessary to

stay out of trouble, following the lead of the Party's cadres because during the Anti-Rightist and Socialist Education campaigns they had learned all too well the price of resistance.

The Great Leap Forward was certainly a seminal event in the history of Communist China. It was the first serious setback to communism and the starting point for a series of political upheavals culminating in the Cultural Revolution and the ten years of troubles that followed in its wake. It has been left to others to address the policy objectives of the planners in Beijing and cover the evolution of the radical line among the top leaders there. Domenach's contribution is to illuminate the ways by which central policy directives intruded upon the political landscape at the provincial level. It is essential reading for those seeking to understand what went wrong and how policy implementation could wind up as divorced from reality as it eventually was.

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Gaubatz, Piper Rae: *Beyond the Great Wall: Urban Form and Transformation in the Chinese Frontiers*. (Stanford University Press, 1996), xx + 378 pp., \$ 49.50. ISBN 0-8047-2399-0.

Previous studies of the Chinese frontiers have focused on the conflict between settled farmers and nomadic herders and largely ignored the urban dimension. Piper Rae Gaubatz's focus on cities in *Beyond the Great Wall* therefore brings a valuable new perspective to the history of China's Inner Asian and Southeast Asian frontiers. Through a detailed examination of Hohhot, Lanzhou, Xining, Ürümqi, and Kunming, with occasional glances at Lhasa, Dali, and other sites, the author examines China's frontier cities as arenas of cultural interchange and instruments of Chinese frontier control.

As one might expect in such a ground-breaking study, Gaubatz emphasizes description and mid-level theory more than the formulation of any single overarching conclusion. After a comparative look at the Chinese frontier (chapter 1) and brief histories of the main sites (chapter 2) the author describes the economic functions of Chinese cities (chapter 3), their design in relation to traditional Chinese, Islamic, and Tibeto-Mongolian ideals of proper urban form (chapters 4, 5, and 6), and the mutual interrelations of Chinese, Islamic, and Tibeto-Mongolian forms and motifs in monumental and vernacular architecture (chapters 7 and 8). She concludes by examining how these cities have weathered the introduction of motorized traffic in the Republic, the socialist communalism of 1949 to 1979, and finally the government-sponsored ethnic and market revivals of the 1980s (chapters 9 and 10).

The most striking feature of this study is its sheer usefulness. Gaubatz has based her research on an exhaustive reading of the published Chinese sources, personal acquaintance with all the cities described, and a reasonable grasp of the history of both China's frontiers and the relevant urban forms. The maps in particular, both general and thematic, will be of invaluable assistance to any future study of the areas concerned. I found that her description of Hohhot,