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from the grass roots, coupled with Mao's continuing warning against party bureaucracy. Some dramas show Mao's own lapses into the prerogatives and inequality he condemned. In more recent dramas, Mao becomes humanized and individualized in his family and love relations.

Overall, *Staging Chinese Revolution* is a well-written and eloquent work. It has made an important contribution to our understanding of theatre and performance in socialist and post-socialist China.

Timothy Cheek, *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016; xxiv + 370 pp. with notes, bibliography, index, figures, and maps: 9781107643192, £31.99 (pbk)

Reviewed by: Ya-pei Kuo, *University of Groningen, The Netherlands*

Timothy Cheek's *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History* synthesizes research results of the past decades into a highly engaging, accessible, and rich historical narrative. As the title suggests, the book focuses on modern China's intellectual elites and their struggles. It covers the life stories of 60-odd intellectuals. The names include renowned figures, such as Liang Qichao, Lu Xun, Hu Shi, Wang Ruoshui, and Liu Xiaobo, as well as those who have fallen into oblivion – Ye Chongzhi, a businessman who shunned the opportunity of public service in the aftermath of the 1911 revolution; Chen Bulei, Chiang Kai-shek's ghostwriter in the 1930s and 1940s; Geng Xiufeng, a local cadre in Hebei Province in the 1950s and 1960s; and Chen Ziming, the founder of China's first non-official think tank in the 1980s. Cheek places each of these individuals in their respective context and gives detailed accounts of their background and career. He also discusses at some length their writings and thoughts. Using this large body of biographical and intellectual information, Cheek drives home one of his main points, that of considerable diversity among modern China's intellectuals. Active in different locales and various social strata, these intellectuals differ in where they came from, what they did, how they assessed the times they lived in, and what they saw as the top priorities for China's development.

To weave this array of life stories into a cohesive and compelling history is not an easy task. Cheek does this by laying out a methodical framework of structured periodization. The book divides 120 years of chronology (1895–2015) into six chapters, and each of them is centred on one 'ideological moment'. These ideological moments, according to Cheek, were each characterized by a collective mood, which went through the cycle of reform, revolution, and rejuvenation. Moreover, they 'were shaped by the dominant questions that engage a generation' (p. 7). By going through these 'questions of the day' (p. 16) in 1905, 1925, 1945, 1965, 1985, and 2005, the book narrates how China negotiated its path of modernization and struggled through the challenges of national salvation (Chapter 1), mass mobilization (Chapter 2), state formation (Chapter 3), socialist transformation (Chapter 4), reforming the revolution (Chapter 5), and globalization (Chapter 6). Through identifying and explaining how these issues arose to become the subject of debate at different moments, Cheek creates an anchor in each chapter for analysing the 'worlds of

intellectual life' (pp. 10–12): the dialogues and relationships among contemporaries, and their historical meanings. To offset the fragmenting effects of rigid periodization, Cheek skilfully deploys narrative devices that help strengthen the book's cohesiveness. Biographies are often stretched across two or three chapters, to highlight the trans-periodical continuum from the viewpoint of life experience. Equally noticeable is Cheek's attention to 'enduring ideas'. All chapters end with a note on how the meanings of three key concepts in modern China, 'people', 'Chinese', and 'democracy', evolved during a particular period. Altogether, these notes bespeak Cheek's homage to the method of *Begriffsgeschichte* (conceptual history, pp. 12–15), and gives a glimpse into how certain fundamental values continue to frame intellectual debates throughout history.

The book can also be read as a project that strives to give the intellectual in modern China a historical profile. In the Introduction, Cheek's explicit discussion on various ways to define 'intellectual' ends with an instruction of loose conception: that the term 'will have to serve as a general marker' for 'varied identities and roles' (p. 7). Turning to the actual writing, one finds Cheek's use of the term inclusive, yet, at the same time, selective. It covers a broad spectrum of people and even includes some controversial figures such as Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan (pp. 175–88). On the other hand, structured around evolving subjects of public debate, the book is overtly politically centred, because of which Cheek leaves out important domains of intellectual activity, such as arts, philosophy, and literature, where strident changes have occurred. Cheek opens and concludes his book with a characterization of modern Chinese intellectuals as being united in their devotion to serving the 'public good' (pp. 1 and 320). This characterization reveals how Cheek has selected his examples and what he has conceived as an intellectual. The multi-layered portrait, in this sense, offers an elaborate answer to the question: what is an intellectual? At the end of the day, even those who do not agree with his conception would be impressed by the forceful and informative case made in this book. It makes a rewarding read for specialists of the subject as well as general readers interested in China.

Julian Gewirtz, *Unlikely Partners: Chinese Reformers, Western Economists, and the Making of Global China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017; vii + 389 pp. with notes and index: 9780674971134, US\$39.95 (hbk).

Reviewed by: Dmitriy Plekhanov, *Institute for Complex Strategic Studies, Russia*

It is impossible to overestimate the role of ideas in the development of human society. In the realm of economics, this point was famously touched upon by John Maynard Keynes in his book *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965, p. 383): 'The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else'. Thus, according to Keynes, ideas determine policies, and through policies, events. The book under review, *Unlikely Partners* by Julian Gewirtz, represents a thorough illustration of this thesis in practice, as it looks at the history of China's economic transformation from economic poverty and traditional socialism to prosperity under the socialist market economy. The