Third, although the author envisages the book as a critique of liberalism and capitalism through rethinking Marxism, he is ambivalent about Marxism. In Chapter Two, he speaks of Chinese Marxism without giving it a clear definition. Is it Maoism, or the ideological apparatus that continues to serve the Chinese Communist Party, and how does it differ from Western Marxism? In Chapter Four, he asserts that Marxist revolution "forget[s] that to seize the means of production from the first world is premised upon the continual extraction of resources from the third" (p. 189). This assertion contradicts precisely the Marxist critique of colonialism and imperialism. Since the author often hesitates to define throughout the book, it is not always clear which "materialist concerns" are at stake and what "social structuration" means.

However, this book is also to be praised for other reasons. In Chapter Two, the author does present a close reading and stimulating discussion of Ai Weiwei's *Fairytale* (*Tonghua* 童話), questioning the racialised condition of Chinese being plural. The author's examination of women and queer artists is also a corrective to the dominant male perspective in art history. In addition to artistic practices, the author also brings in curatorial practices. The inclusion of Isaac Julien's work in a book on contemporary Chinese art is unconventional but well justified and turns out essential for discussing China in relation to the West.

In general, this book could benefit from a more accessible writing style. The abundance of references and quotations interrupts the flow. In fact, when the author does not cite extensively, as in the afterword, he writes beautifully. It is also in the afterword that the author reveals his ambivalent and personal relationship to the "major." He finds himself in an intellectual dilemma: "It is hard for me to pronounce a critique of China without it taking on an anti-Marxist bent that seemingly emerges from liberalism" (p. 211). This makes me question whether the author equates the Chinese state with Marxism and whether for him there is only one Marxist China. This is not to dismiss the author's comment on the limited and often binary worldviews at our disposal, but to hesitate and pause – as advocated by the author – before we critique: is it not the binary thinking that prevents us from fully understanding the complexity of multiple China?

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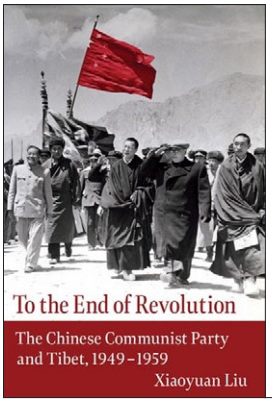

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FRANÇOISE ROBIN

Using Chinese sources, some of which have never been published before, Liu Xiaoyuan (University of Iowa) explores a decisive decade extending from the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the year in which the Dalai Lama (born in 1935) fled to India where he soon set up his Tibetan government in exile, which is still active today. Liu attempts to explain why the Chinese government, far from having settled the "Tibetan question," has created a "Tibetan problem" (p. 1).

The introduction delineates four "timescapes" taken from conclusions reached in previous works by the author that contribute to explaining the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) stance on the Tibetan question. The first is the "ethno-geo-security" aspect inherited from the Manchu Empire. According to the author, the CCP saw central Tibet as playing a pivotal geostrategic role, placed between the Chinese world and the world under Indo-British influence. The second timescape is that of the "transformation of Chinese territoriality," the concept of the frontier, vague under the Manchu Empire, becoming central in international relations. Post-imperial China had to create a legal position concerning its frontiers, laying itself open to dispute over territories where Manchu authority was precarious, Tibet included. The third timescape is the Chinese revolution: Manchu Imperial China was a centripetal cultural and political power. With the arrival of the PRC, it became a power forcibly exporting its new values in a centrifugal movement. The fourth timescape, the most original and least studied, is that of the Cold War.

The work is made up of six chapters of equal weight. The first, "A Protracted Agenda," summarises previous policies (Imperial Manchu, Republican, and Nationalist) towards the frontiers and shows the extent to which CCP policy towards Tibet was fluctuating and vague in the beginning, as was the perception of the geographical extension of Tibet, sometimes going as far as encompassing ethnic Tibet in its entirety.

The second chapter, "The 'Dalai' Line," retraces the negotiations that preceded the signature in May 1951 in Beijing of the 17-point Agreement that sealed the "return" of Tibet (understood in that case as the future Tibet Autonomous Region or TAR) to China at an undetermined date. Liu shows that this agreement was forced on the Tibetans, a fact that the CCP has always denied.

The chapter also describes the complex alliance strategies that the CCP and its different offices and authorities had to deploy with the Tibetan rulers and elites in 1950 and 1951 in the hope of quickly putting into place "democratic reforms."

The third chapter, "A Time to Change," is devoted to Chinese revolutionary impatience in Xikang[1] and the Tibetan zones of Sichuan in the mid-1950s. There, the road linking Sichuan to Lhasa, finished in 1954, favoured Tibetan private capitalist businesses and Indian imports. A response was needed: "democratic reforms" were initiated, guns "borrowed" (meaning seized), and monastery property confiscated. However, this provoked massive revolts. "Democratic reforms" became a "reform war" involving the bombing of monasteries with the approval of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, who was posted in Sichuan at the time (p. 140).

Chapter Four, "A New Phase," shows that the Central United Front department was probably behind the September 1956 directive that obliged the Tibet Work Committee to postpone once again the inevitable reforms in central Tibet.

"A Waiting Game," the fifth chapter, is devoted to this pause. In May 1957, Mao granted a six-year reprieve (until the next Five-year Plan) to the Tibetan government to undertake "democratic reforms." The chapter ends with the mention of a rarely cited economic problem, the lucrative cross-border trade between India and central Tibet (and its national consequences), tolerated until it was banned in December 1957.

The last chapter, "The Showdown," describes "the reform war of Sichuan (…) duplicated in Gansu" (p. 249). The situation was "even more violent" in Qinghai (*ibid.*) and the victims more numerous. Liu shows, moreover, that Mao Zedong had planned to send more than one million young colonists organised as "people's communes" into Tibetan territory (central Tibet, Sichuan, and Gansu) to settle on its outer fringes, but functioning as armed troops inside. This old tactic known as *tunken* (a military-agricultural camp implanted on a border to be conquered) is well known in China and its purpose is to take over new territories (p. 260-1), but Liu shows that Mao postponed its launch until January 1959.

In the epilogue, Liu returns to the international consequences of the absorption of central Tibet by the PRC, for example the rapprochement between the United States and India.

Not without provocation, Liu claims a "Sino-centric and historic approach" (p. 5) based on Chinese sources. Paradoxically, this is the great value of this study, carried out with remarkable rigour and critical distance. This fascinating account, punctuated by quotation marks that indicate both the ideological weight of the terms used and their reality, often very different and contradictory in the field, highlights the specific problems the rulers and cadres of the CCP at the central, provincial, and local levels had to face in order to extract themselves from what one might call, in more contemporary terms, the Tibetan quagmire, which they had contributed to creating through their lack of understanding of this society, its history, and its aspirations. Sixty years later, this lack of understanding is still relevant. Finally, the book is full of data and information that to my knowledge have not been published before – data to which the brief format of this review cannot do justice. However, one must point out that the author has had the good taste to render proper and common Tibetan nouns in a transcription that owes nothing to *pinyin*, a choice that demonstrates a respect for the conventions in force in Tibetan studies not that often found in the work of sinologist researchers.

Translated by Elizabeth Guill.

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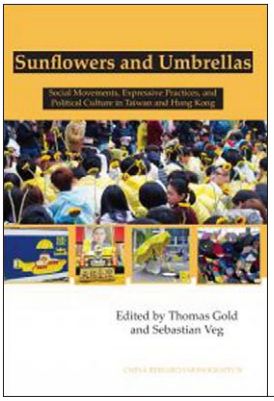

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Sunflowers and Umbrellas: Social Movements, Expressive Practices, and Political Culture in Taiwan and Hong Kong.
Berkeley: University of California Press.

MALTE PHILIPP KAEDING

Sunflowers and Umbrellas: Social Movements, Expressive Practices, and Political Culture in Taiwan and Hong Kong is a fascinating collection of essays edited by Thomas Gold and Sebastian Veg that provides a fresh view on the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan and the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. The significance and unexpectedness of the movements in spring and autumn 2014 renewed broader scholarly interest in Hong Kong's political developments and in comparative studies of Taiwan and Hong Kong. The genesis of the book reflects the dramatic changes in both places and the subsequent sharp diversion in the political agency of their populations. Several of the authors make crucial references to what at the time of writing were still ongoing protests in Hong Kong in 2019 and 2020. The decentralised and fluid protest

1. Xikang refers to an ephemeral Tibetan province created by the Chinese Republicans in 1928 and that encompassed Tibetan areas on the Sino-Tibetan frontier. It was dissolved in 1955 by the CCP and merged with Sichuan Province.