

Popular Memories of the Mao Era

From Critical Debate to Reassessing History

Edited by Sebastian Veg

Hong Kong University Press
The University of Hong Kong
Pokfulam Road
Hong Kong
www.hkupress.hku.hk

© 2019 Hong Kong University Press

ISBN 978-988-8390-76-2 (*Hardback*)

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed and bound by Paramount Printing Co. Ltd., Hong Kong, China

Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
1. Introduction: Trauma, Nostalgia, Public Debate <i>Sebastian Veg</i>	1
Part I. Unofficial Memories in the Public Sphere: Journals, Internet, Museums	
2. Writing about the Past, an Act of Resistance: An Overview of Independent Journals and Publications about the Mao Era <i>Jean-Philippe Béja</i>	21
3. <i>Annals of the Yellow Emperor</i> : Reconstructing Public Memory of the Mao Era <i>Wu Si</i>	43
4. Contested Past: Social Media and the Production of Historical Knowledge of the Mao Era <i>Jun Liu</i>	61
5. Can Private Museums Offer Space for Alternative History? The Red Era Series at the Jianchuan Museum Cluster <i>Kirk A. Denton</i>	80
Part II. Critical Memory and Cultural Practices: Reconfiguring Elite and Popular Discourse	
6. Literary and Documentary Accounts of the Great Famine: Challenging the Political System and the Social Hierarchies of Memory <i>Sebastian Veg</i>	115
7. Filmed Testimonies, Archives, and Memoirs of the Mao Era: Staging Unofficial History in Chinese Independent Documentaries <i>Judith Pernin</i>	137
8. Visual Memory, Personal Experience, and Public History: The Rediscovery of Cultural Revolution Underground Art <i>Aihe Wang</i>	161

Part III. Unofficial Sources and Popular Historiography: New Discourses of Knowledge on the Mao Era

9. The Second Society <i>Frank Dikötter</i>	183
10. Case Files as a Source of Alternative Memories from the Maoist Past <i>Daniel Leese</i>	199
11. Popular Memories and Popular History, Indispensable Tools for Understanding Contemporary Chinese History: The Case of the End of the Rustication Movement <i>Michel Bonnin</i>	220
List of Contributors	235
Index	238

Introduction

Trauma, Nostalgia, Public Debate

Sebastian Veg

On May 2, 2016, a few days before the fiftieth anniversary of the May 16 circular that signaled the launch of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, a lavish concert titled “In the Fields of Hope” (Zai xiwang de tianye shang 在希望的田野上) was organized in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing by a private promoter (Fifty-Six Flowers troupe); it was sponsored by several state- and party-affiliated units. Slogans like Mao’s Korean War-era call “People of the world unite to defeat the American invaders and their lackeys” and Cultural Revolution songs like “Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman” featured prominently.¹ However, news and photos of the concert, spreading through social media, provoked an unexpected outcry, and prominent members of the group of “red progeny” (*hong erdai* 紅二代) spoke out against the attempt—bolstered by the scale and venue of the event—to relegitimize the Cultural Revolution. In the absence of endorsement from higher up, the organizers scrambled to justify themselves, each attempting to shift the blame to others.² This incident, though anecdotal, points to the continued lack of consensus within Chinese society about how to remember the Mao era, the years from the foundation of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 to the Chairman’s death in 1976.

Although the official narrative of this period has not undergone any significant shift since 1981, and despite ongoing restrictions in the official media and academia, new and diverse expressions of unofficial memories of the Mao era have appeared over approximately the last decade, in print and internet publications, on film, and among amateur historians. They include unofficial testimonies, oral histories, and investigative studies, often focused on the everyday lives of ordinary people, which had not been adequately documented, as well as attempts to question some of the

1. *Ming Pao* Reporter, “Hongge yanchanghui beizhi fubi Wenge” [Red Song Gala accused of rehabilitating Cultural Revolution], *Ming Pao*, May 5, 2016, <http://news.mingpao.com/pns1605061462470682787>.

2. Wang Xiangwei, “Political Winds Raise Red Flags over Cultural Revolution-Style Gala,” *South China Morning Post*, May 8, 2016, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/1942545/political-winds-raise-red-flags-over-cultural>. By contrast, May 16 went by almost without mention in the Chinese press, apart from a *People’s Daily* article reaffirming the official verdict formulated in 1981.

larger narratives of the Mao era.³ The most well-known single publication is probably *Tombstone*, the study of the Great Famine of 1959–1961 by retired Xinhua journalist Yang Jisheng, published in 2008 in Hong Kong, but there are many other examples of reportage and autobiographical writing by first-hand witnesses about the Mao era. These accounts are often published as “self-printed books” (*ziyinshu* 自印書, a literal translation of *samizdat*) or simply posted to the internet. Informal memory groups began to appear in the 1990s, focused on specific historical episodes (in particular the Educated Youth movement during the Cultural Revolution, but also the Anti-Rightist Movement), as well as registered journals devoted to publishing testimony and recollections like *Annals of the Yellow Emperor* (Yanhuang chunqiu 炎黃春秋, Beijing, 1991–), *Old Photographs* (Lao Zhaopian 老照片, Jinan, 1996–), *Looking at History* (Kan Lishi 看歷史, Chengdu, 2010–2013).⁴ The last ten years have seen an outpour of unofficial, mainly unregistered, journals disseminated via the internet, like *Remembrance* (Jiyi 記憶, Beijing, 2008–), *Remembering Five Black Elements* (Hei Wu Lei Yijiu 黑五類憶舊, Beijing, 2010–2011), and *Yesterday* (Zuotian 昨天, Chongqing, 2012–).⁵ While there had been one or two isolated bottom-up (non-state-initiated) attempts to document the Mao era on film in the 1990s (in particular Wu Wenguang’s seminal 1966, *My Time in the Red Guards*, 1992), beginning roughly with Hu Jie’s *Looking for Lin Zhao’s Soul* in 2004, dozens of independent documentary films, made by ordinary individuals thanks to cheap equipment, began to document family histories and personal memories of the Mao era, from the Land Reform to the Cultural Revolution. Finally, in the field of historical inquiry, new archival documents and new studies by amateur historians—a term which can refer to journalists or other people without formal academic training in history or to historians whose field of study is not officially the Mao era—some of whom practice oral history (often among family or village members), have contributed to this new wave of memory. Most recently, over the last few years, a wave of spontaneous apologies by former Red Guards has sparked further debates.⁶

The question thus arises: how do these popular initiatives reconfigure our understanding of the Mao era? How do they differ from previous expressions? This

3. The first unofficial histories appeared as early as the late 1970s, but they were rare and their reliability varied widely. See Michael Schoenhals, “Unofficial and Official Histories of the Cultural Revolution: A Review Article,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 48, no. 3 (Aug. 1989): 563–72.

4. This journal began in 2007 as *Guojia Lishi* [National history], became *Kan Lishi* in 2010; after its ban in 2013 it became an online publication under the title *Women de lishi* [Our history], however no issues seem to have been published after late 2014. See the journal website: <http://ourhistory.blog.21ccom.net/>.

5. Several of these (and some others) are archived on the PRC History Group website; see <http://prchistory.org>. The issues of *Heiwulei yijiu* (bimonthly, 1–17) are available on the website *China in Perspective*: <http://www.chinainperspective.com/ArtShow.aspx?AID=13903>. On *Jiyi*, see also Ian Johnson, “China’s Brave Underground Journal II,” *The New York Review of Books*, December 18, 2014, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/12/18/chinas-brave-underground-journal-ii/>.

6. The trend of apologies by former Red Guards began around 2008 in *Annals of the Yellow Emperor*; two important public apologies were the ones by Chen Xiaolu (Chen Yi’s son) in August 2013 and Song Binbin in January 2014. See Zhao Jie, “Too Little? Too Late?” *News China*, November 2013, <http://www.newschinamag.com/magazine/too-little-too-late>.

volume will explore three main fields in which the new forms of memory have been expressed: journalism, including the print media and internet; cultural production, including literature, film, and visual art; and amateur history, including memoirs or autobiographical writings, archives, and oral history, and how they are used by historians to reassess the Mao era. These forms of memory can be characterized as both popular and critical. They are popular in the sense that they originate largely outside the scope of the state, in the realm of *minjian* 民間 (“unofficial” society or, more literally, “among the people”). They are also critical in that they question the accepted narrative of the Mao era in new ways. This in particular sets them aside from the popular memories of the 1990s, which were tinged with a strong feeling of nostalgia. It will be argued that popular memories of the Mao era have followed a classic three-tiered evolution: the first stage in the 1980s gave rise to the expression of mainly traumatic but closely controlled narratives, the second stage in the 1990s was dominated by nostalgia, while the third stage investigated below evinces a turn toward public debate and critical memory.

History and Memory

The distinction between history and memory is a classic one, and is often traced back to the work of Maurice Halbwachs and, more recently, Pierre Nora. Halbwachs defined collective memory as a social construction of the past according to the “beliefs and spiritual needs of the present” and carried by different groups.⁷ Pierre Nora, working from the French case, noted that memory sacralizes the past, whereas history tends to rationalize it: for him, memory is encapsulated in state rituals that seek to unify the national community, while critical history as social science is a product of society. As modern societies replace organic communities, memory slowly fades in the face of critical history, but the “places of memory” remain as rituals in a society without rituals.⁸ By contrast, in authoritarian and in particular socialist contexts, a distinction is often drawn between “official history” and “popular memory”: since history is monopolized by the state, memory is construed as the “authentic” expression of civil society, the “unorthodox transmission of unapproved pasts.”⁹ It has thus been noted that the “underground memories” of the socialist era have often formed the basis for the new national narratives in post-socialist states.¹⁰ It may therefore be useful to distinguish between the state’s

7. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 7, 84–85.

8. Pierre Nora, “Entre mémoire et histoire, la problématique des lieux” in *Les lieux de mémoire, I. La République* ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1984); “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7–24.

9. Rubie Watson, “Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism,” in *Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism*, ed. Rubie Watson (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1994), 8. See also Michael Schoenhals, “Unofficial and Official Histories of the Cultural Revolution: A Review Article,” 564.

10. Rubie Watson, “Memory, History and Opposition,” 4.

Table 1.1

Summary of types of relation to the past

Types of relation to past	Memory	History
State-led	State rituals	State historiography
Society-led	Popular commemorations Underground memories	Inquiry-based historiography

and society's uses of memory and history. This distinction can be summarized in the table above (Table 1.1). It should be noted that whereas, in democratic contexts, the opposition is often between state rituals and inquiry-based historiography (top left vs. bottom right), in authoritarian contexts, the main opposition seems to run between state historiography and popular commemoration (top right vs. bottom left). We may further note that, in recent years, the situation in China has become increasingly complex, with all four types of relation to the past appearing in the public sphere.

The 1980s saw a worldwide interest in the specific form of traumatic memory, which appeared in connection with the field of Holocaust Studies. In particular, the most "authentic" expression of "trauma" was now situated in the body, as the place of deeper memory, as opposed to its narrative rendering which already constitutes a rationalization.¹¹ Oral history, which allows for the reenactment of "mimetic trauma," became a new object of contention between those who believed that it encapsulated a deeper truth, and those who pointed to its factual errors and subjective biases.¹² More recently, studies of oral history have pointed to the fact that, while it cannot replace other methodologies, it plays an important role in establishing the multiplicity of viewpoints on any given historical event, and in highlighting that the narrator-historian cannot disappear behind an "objective" history that exists independently. Oral history therefore serves to qualify the position of the observing historian, who is always already part of the story.¹³ In relation to the Holocaust, Saul Friedländer, himself both a historian and a survivor, has called to reconcile the deep memory of the survivor and the dispassionate discourse of the historian, underscoring that discounting the factual errors of the witness leads to ignoring the contingency of events.¹⁴ Ultimately, as will be argued below, both history and memory rely to express themselves on a public sphere, in which society can contest state narratives, but also in which different social narratives can freely debate and contend among each other.¹⁵

11. Ana Douglass and Thomas Vogler, eds., *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 5–14.

12. Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis* (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 2001), 48–49.

13. Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 57.

14. Saül Friedländer, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); James Young, "Between History and Memory: The Voice of the Eyewitness," in *Witness and Memory*, ed. Ana Douglass and Thomas Vogler, 275–83.

15. Rubie Watson, "Memory, History and Opposition," 13.

The End of the Mao Era: Official History vs. Popular Memory

The expression of popular memory predated the official verdict on the Mao era, with the April 5 protest on Tiananmen Square in 1976 as well as the many spontaneous criticisms of the Cultural Revolution that appeared on the Democracy Wall in Xidan in 1978–1979. When coming to power in 1978, Deng Xiaoping originally encouraged the ongoing debates in Xidan to criticize Mao's rule. However, as part of his consolidation of power, and having been himself closely involved in episodes like the Anti-Rightist Movement, Deng prevented any further discussions through the "Resolution on certain questions in the history of our Party since the Foundation of the PRC," adopted at the 6th Plenum of the 11th Central Committee on June 27, 1981, and modeled on a similar text adopted in 1945.¹⁶ Its goal was as much to mark a break with Mao's regime as it was to put a stop to political criticisms that touched on the nature of Party rule. It thus salvaged the first seven years of "basic completion of the socialist transformation" as "entirely correct" (§11), while the ten following years (1956–1966) suffered from "serious faults and errors" (§17), and the Cultural Revolution decade, "initiated and led by Comrade Mao Zedong," is described as "responsible for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the Party, the state and the people since the founding of the People's Republic" (§19). It is attributed to an "entirely erroneous appraisal of the prevailing class relations and political situation in the Party and state" (§20), for which the chief responsibility lies with Mao. The resolution thus effectively closes off the "Mao era" by establishing a "new historical period" (§32). Nonetheless, despite Mao's "gross mistakes during the 'Cultural Revolution,'" the resolution maintains that "his contributions to the Chinese revolution far outweigh his mistakes" (§27).

The content of the resolution reflected a consensus between critical intellectuals and inner-Party reformers that held up throughout the 1980s, according to which the Cultural Revolution, designated as a "grave blunder" (§8), could be conveniently framed as "benighted" (*yumei* 愚昧) and "backward" (*luohou* 落後). Though carried out in the name of socialism, it was in fact the expression of peasant tradition and "feudalism" (*fengjian zhuyi* 封建主義) that gave rise to irrational economic policies, violent political persecutions, and a cult of Mao's personality. It could now be overcome by promoting "enlightenment," opening up to the world, and economic development, three tenets of Deng's new policy. This narrative also conveniently vilified popular democracy and people's political participation, which Deng wished to associate with the Cultural Revolution, an elitist discourse that found a sympathetic echo among intellectuals. On the other hand, while mistakes were recognized in persecuting intellectuals and other "black categories," Mao's contribution to improving

16. "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China," <http://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/cpc/history/01.htm>. For the Chinese original, see "Guanyu jianguo yilai dang de ruogan lishi wenti de jueyi," http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-03/04/content_2543544.htm.

the life of “ordinary people” was largely upheld in Party discourse, and connected to Deng’s “reform and opening up,” which could thus be presented as the continuation of the same goal through different means. The resolution also reaffirmed the Party’s monopoly on historiography, literary and artistic creation, and laid out the borders of acceptable critical discussion, which have remained broadly unchanged up to the present. In 1984, the authorities conducted a campaign to “thoroughly negate” the Cultural Revolution, aimed at “three types of people” (*san zhong ren* 三種人): followers of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, factionalists, and “smashers and grabbers.”¹⁷ By focusing the discussion around the question of “negating” (*fouding* 否定) the Cultural Revolution, the authorities were able to successfully preclude a deeper discussion of the questions it raised about the regime itself and to maintain the monopoly over history that characterizes communist states.¹⁸

In this context, society was mainly limited to voicing “underground memories” to express a counter-hegemonic narrative of the Mao era.¹⁹ While “silent disagreement” was common in a situation in which the public sphere belonged to the state, occasionally resistance would take the forms of commemoration, ritual mourning and other forms of performance (such as on April 5, 1976).²⁰ While the state tried to privatize such rituals, “evocative transcripts,”²¹ in which calculated ambiguity allowed participants to bring private memories into the public domain controlled by the state, sometimes made it possible for participants to create “shared meaning.” Literature and film were also a useful vector for such intricate allusions, which were by necessity quite elitist.²² Much of the intellectual critique of the Mao era in the 1980s took place through scar literature (*shanghen wenxue* 傷痕文學) and later forms that derived from it, in which intellectuals were depicted as the main victims of the Red Years. Trauma and suffering were the main modalities of the first wave of writing. Many of the narrative or performative expressions of counter-hegemonic memory in the 1980s were therefore expressions of membership in a group of victims of a shared trauma. Halbwachs had underscored precisely this role of collective memory in defining a community.

However, not all forms of underground memory are neatly counter-hegemonic, and compliance is not always coerced from above. As Ann Anagnost has noted, scar literature was heavily indebted to the Party’s own hegemonic discourse. The practice

17. Yang Guobin, “Days of Old Are Not Puffs of Smoke: Three Hypotheses on Collective Memories of the Cultural Revolution,” *The China Review* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 19.

18. Rubie Watson points out that the primary justification of communist rule is inevitability based on the Marxist claim to scientific knowledge of history. “Memory, History and Opposition,” 1.

19. Rubie Watson, “Memory, History and Opposition,” 4.

20. Rubie Watson discusses the significance of commemorative ceremonies for Zhou Enlai in 1976 and Hu Yaobang in 1989: “Making Secret Histories: Memory and Mourning in Post-Mao China,” in *Memory, History and Opposition*, 65–85.

21. Caroline Humphrey gives this name to expressions that are ambiguous by design, by contrast with James Scott’s “hidden transcripts,” which are produced by enduring groups within their own space. “Remembering an ‘Enemy’: The Bogd Khaan in Twentieth-Century Mongolia,” in *Memory, History and Opposition*, 21–44.

22. Jonathan Unger, “Introduction,” in *Using the Past to Serve the Present: Historiography and Politics in Contemporary China* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 1–8.

of “narrating bitterness” (*suku* 訴苦), designed by the Party during the Civil War and the early years of the PRC, in which peasants were encouraged to phrase their grievances within the theoretical framework of Marxist history, “was not simply an imposition of a narrative structure on the speaking subject. It represented for the party the process of merging the consciousness of the party with that of ‘the people,’ which legitimated its claim to represent the voice of the masses.”²³ Institutionalized and controlled critique of the past could take place under the premise of enthusiastic affirmation of the glorious present and future. However, as Anagnost further notes, “this use of the body did not end with the establishment of a new social order but was . . . again transcribed into literature in the literature of the wounded (*shanghen wenzue*) of the early post-Mao period, which displayed insults to the bodies of intellectuals, who then turned to writing as a means to redress the injuries of the past.”²⁴ In this sense, scar literature in some ways replicated the Party’s early exploitation of *suku*, in that it allowed the traumatic narrative of victimhood to be rephrased and rationalized within the hegemonic narrative of Marxist progress.

Nostalgic and Contentious Uses of Memory in the 1990s

The economic reforms of the 1990s coincided with an unexpected turn from a traumatic and repressed toward a nostalgic and contentious form of memory. In connection with Mao’s centenary in 1993, Mao’s persona underwent commodification and trivialization, partly engineered, but also partly as the object of an authentic popular cult “never entirely harnessed by Party propagandists, despite various efforts to ‘channel’ it in the Party’s favor.”²⁵ Expressed in talismans, objects, and “red” songs sung in karaoke bars, the cult was reminiscent of folk religion but was also marketed as part of a new consumer culture that the Party wished to encourage. Barmé views it as both an expression of nostalgia for a “beguiling era, appearing in retrospect as a time of greater simplicity, purity, and idealism” and no less an “ironic inversion” indicating “a further rejection or devaluing of ideology.”²⁶ “Red culture” entered the mainstream of commercial entertainment, notably through remakes of “red classics,” which became a useful tool for the propaganda authorities, though it is not always easy to handle to the satisfaction of all audiences.²⁷ This turn coincided with a more precise form of nostalgia among former “educated youth” (*zhiqing* 知

23. Ann Anagnost, “Making History Speak,” in *National Past-Times: Narrative, Representation and Power in Modern China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 32. Brian DeMare also points out how propaganda novels eulogizing the Land Reform reproduced the narrative of *suku*. See Brian DeMare, “The Romance and Tragedy of Rural Revolution: Narratives and Novels of Land Reform in Mao’s China,” *Clio* 43, no. 3 (2014): 341–65.

24. Ann Anagnost, “Making History Speak,” 19.

25. Geremie Barmé, *Shades of Mao: The Posthumous Cult of the Great Leader* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 13.

26. Geremie Barmé, *Shades of Mao*, 52, 49.

27. See Rong Cai, “Restaging the Revolution in Contemporary China: Memory of Politics and Politics of Memory,” *The China Quarterly* 215 (Sept. 2013): 663–81.

青), which Yang Guobin dates back to a 1990 exhibition on the Great Northern Wilderness (Beidahuang), held in Beijing. In contrast with previous elite-inflected narratives, it marked the rise of ordinary voices, expressing nostalgia for heroism and an ambivalent attitude toward modernity defined by economic development.²⁸ As former *zhiqing* fell victims to the layoffs of the 1990s, they expressed resistance to marketization and reforms, and nostalgia for a more “authentic” or “meaningful” form of life. Like in the Mao cult, it was particularly ironic, as Yang points out, that market-based culture (nostalgic restaurants, memorabilia, cultural events) was massively used to challenge the advent of the market.²⁹

The popular memories that emerged in the wake of Mao fever and of popular discontent with the economic reforms of the 1990s, defined new political communities engaged in new forms of struggles.³⁰ As society diversified, different communities articulated different versions of popular memories that were distinct from the “official” narrative. These narratives had a cognitive, but also a political dimension: as previously noted by Tilly, collective memories are always appropriated and reinterpreted for present action, defining groups that rely on frames of shared memory to formulate their claims.³¹ Many contentious worker movements of the 1990s successfully mobilized such memories of socialism, against the rise of state-led capitalism. In the context of marketization and factory closures, the mobilization of references to the Revolution in order to fight against layoffs further stimulated a poetics of socialist nostalgia in literature and film. With the rise of the New Left on the intellectual scene, in the late 1990s, popular voices appeared calling for a positive reassessment of the Mao era.³²

Nonetheless, the popular memories of the Mao era that appeared in the 1990s were not more welcomed by the state than the previous ones, as they directly challenged the state’s economic policy. Nor were they necessarily uncritical of the Mao era, since the nostalgia for lost ideals or a more meaningful life was also contrasted with the failure of Mao’s state to live up to the ideals of socialism and the expectations of the masses.³³ However, the popular memory of workers, especially in large state-owned factories, remained deeply embedded in the language of state

28. Yang Guobin, “China’s Zhiqing Generation: Nostalgia, Identity, and Cultural Resistance in the 1990s,” *Modern China* 29, no. 3 (July 2003): 267–96.

29. Yang Guobin, “Days of Old Are Not Puffs of Smoke: Three Hypotheses on Collective Memories of the Cultural Revolution,” *The China Review* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 19.

30. Ching Kwan Lee and Guobin Yang, “Introduction: Memory, Power, Culture,” in *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memory in Reform China*, ed. Ching Kwan Lee and Guobin Yang (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2007), 7.

31. Charles Tilly, “Afterword: Political Memories in Space and Time,” in *Remapping Memory: The Politics of TimeSpace*, ed. Jonathan Boyarim (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 249.

32. An early example is Cui Zhiyuan’s article “Mao Zedong ‘wen ge’ lilun de deshi yu xiandaixing de chongjian” [An assessment of Mao Zedong’s Theory of Cultural Revolution and the reconstruction of Chinese modernity], *Hong Kong Journal of Social Sciences* 7 (1996): 60–74.

33. Kimberly Ens Manning, “Communes, Canteens and Crêches: The Gendered Politics of Remembering the Great Leap Forward,” and Jonathan Unger and Anita Chan, “Memories and the Political Economy of a State-Owned Enterprise,” in *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution*, 93–118, 119–40.

socialism, which the state has for a long time successfully mobilized to articulate subaltern interests.³⁴ In many cases, subalterns already speak in the language of the state, especially when moving away from the personal, everyday experience toward larger historical narratives.³⁵ It is therefore unsurprising that even critical memory narratives still rely on the language of the state to criticize the state. Overall, the nostalgic and contentious popular memories of the 1990s formed a contested field within both rural and urban society, with little consensus on whether the Chinese revolution had ultimately empowered workers and peasants or simply provided now opportunities for oppression.³⁶

From Contentious to Critical Memory

Over the last decade, contentious social movements have shifted in emphasis and more rarely mobilize popular representations of socialism or of the “revolution,” but increasingly reference the language of “rights.” The intellectual scene has become more complex and many of its members have called for a more differentiated approach to the Mao era, one that is neither reduced to the trauma discourse of the 1980s, nor to the nostalgic discourse of the 1990s.³⁷

More detailed forms of critical memory have appeared that precisely document key episodes of the Mao era like the Great Famine of 1959–1961. At the same time, new public spheres have formed and accommodated these memories. While the qualified nostalgia of the 1990s can be seen as a form of backlash against the crony capitalism of the post-Tiananmen decade, the new phenomena reflect both growing dissatisfaction with the authoritarian control over history exercised by the Chinese state, and the rise of new spaces for counter-hegemonic narratives provided by social media and the growing private economy in the 2000s. Private companies took important stakes in the publishing, media, and especially the internet sector, and even some individual private museums appeared. Furthermore, books could be either self-printed or printed outside mainland China and brought back in, respectively like *samizdat* and *tamizdat* in Soviet times.³⁸ Alternative memories are increasingly discussed publicly in a critical, historiographical manner, raising the question of how popular memories can translate into a new understanding of history. The mass of unofficial material being generated and increasingly discussed

34. Ching Kwan Lee, “What Was Socialism to Chinese Workers?” in *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution*, 141–65.

35. Gail Hershatter, “The Subaltern Talks Back: Reflections on Subaltern Theory and Chinese History,” *positions* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 108.

36. Lee and Yang, “Introduction: Memory, Power, Culture,” 10–11.

37. For example, Han Shaogong, in “Why Did the Cultural Revolution End?” (*boundary* 2, vol. 35.2 [2008]: 93–106) proposes to tease out the democratic or egalitarian legacies of the Cultural Revolution rather than “negating” it.

38. See Peter Steiner, “Samizdat, Tamizdat, Magnitizdat and Other Strange Words That Are Difficult to Pronounce,” *Poetics Today*, special issue on *samizdat*, 29, no. 4 (2008): 613–28.

has begun to inflect the popular understanding of Mao-era politics towards a reconfiguration of the relation between elite and subaltern narratives.³⁹

In this perspective, popular memory is not only an alternative to official history, or a tool for political mobilization, but also a mechanism for the social construction of knowledge. Memory encompasses a broad set of narratives dealing with the past, mainly produced by individuals, which overlap to constitute communities of shared memories that are often contentious rather than consensual. By contrast, history can be defined more narrowly as a body of socially and politically sanctioned knowledge about the past, underpinned by a measure of professional or social consensus. In examining the critical popular memories of the 2000s, the present collection therefore focuses more precisely on the processes of private production, public dissemination, and social sanctioning of narratives of the past, whereby memory is transformed into history. It is not sufficient to label a statement as “true” to make it into the accepted version of history. The social and institutional negotiations inherent in “sharing” private narratives in a tightly controlled but nonetheless expanding public sphere, the definition of criteria of (popular) “authenticity” and (elite) “scientificity” are at the heart of the mechanisms by which individual narratives come to enter the public sphere. Without denying the contentious nature of the competition between narratives, it is also important to understand how some of these come to be more widely “shared” than others. Three main aspects of popular memory will be successively examined.

Firstly, there has been a clear shift in the boundaries between private and public spheres: counter-hegemonic memories that used to be confined to hidden transcripts are increasingly becoming part of a growing public debate on history, fuelled by the technological advances of the internet and the sinophone publishing industry outside mainland China.⁴⁰ The most obvious example is the Great Famine of 1959–1961, not previously a suitable subject for academic or media inquiry, which has been publicly debated several times on the mainland in the last decade.⁴¹ Unofficial journals, the internet, private museums are all venues in which the borders have

39. Felix Wemheuer contrasts the situation in China, where social groups like peasants and local cadres have “filled the gaps” in the official narrative with their own memories, with Ukraine, where the counter-hegemonic memory of the famine became the new national narrative after 1991. Felix Wemheuer, “Regime Changes of Memory: Creating the Official History of the Ukrainian and Chinese Famine under State Socialism and after the Cold War,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10, no. 1 (2009): 31–59. Contrary to Hershatter, he also finds that peasant memories are formulated in words not strongly influenced by Party discourse. Felix Wemheuer, “Dealing with Responsibility for the Great Leap Famine in the People’s Republic of China,” *The China Quarterly* 201 (2010): 176–95.

40. For an early discussion of the role of the public sphere, see Mary Mazur’s description of a public debate on Cultural Revolution history in 1996, in connection with the journal *Annals of the Yellow Emperor*. Mary Mazur, “Public Space for Memory in Contemporary Civil Society: Freedom to Learn from the Mirror of the Past?” *The China Quarterly* 160 (Dec. 1999): 1019–35.

41. An obvious example of such social validation of non-mainstream narratives is the May 2012 issue of *Nanfang Renwu Zhoukan*, with the title “Da Jihuang” (the Great Famine) and a graph of production statistics for 1959–1961 on the cover, which evinces the influence of Yang Jisheng’s book without quoting it. There are other examples, like interviews with former rightists or survivors of Jiabiangou Reeducation Through Labor Camp.

been expanded. This shift, though still often challenged by censorship or even state violence, qualifies the nature of the control that the socialist state can exercise over history.

The chapters in Part I, dedicated to the print media (Jean-Philippe Béja, Wu Si), the internet (Jun Liu), and museums (Kirk Denton) analyze the process of negotiation that take place between private production and public dissemination of alternative narratives. Jean-Philippe Béja studies three types of independent historical material—official journals, unofficial journals, and self-printed books (*ziyishu*)—arguing that the acts of private citizens who make public their interpretations of the past attest the pluralization of society. Wu Si, the former editor of one of these journals, *Annals of the Yellow Emperor*, describes the journal as a kind of nexus between state and society, both privately supported and state-owned, which through careful negotiation with the authorities was for a time able to construct what he terms a “public memory” of the Mao era. Jun Liu explores the structural change brought about by social media in the formation of social memory. Because it enables the accumulation and wide dissemination of alternative historical material (often from private sources), it contains a mechanism for production of knowledge through crowdsourcing of historical materials, and favors the aggregation of individual testimony into counter-narratives. Private museums, discussed in a case study by Kirk Denton, yield ambiguous conclusions, as the absence of a master narrative allows relative interpretive freedom, but produces a polyphonic juxtaposition that can appear to be more oriented toward consumption than critical reflection. This is a typical dilemma of an embryonic public sphere, subject to the controls of both politics and the market.

Secondly, intellectual and cultural productions dealing with the Mao era suggest that the relationship between elite and popular memory has been reconfigured. While intellectuals have long been spokespersons and proxies for the state throughout traditional and revolutionary China, this close connection has been eroded in the decades since the repression of the Tiananmen democracy movement. The “scar literature” of the 1980s was to a large extent the product of intellectuals’ internalized acceptance of the official narrative and was read through the lens of trauma suffered by loyal and innocent intellectuals, sometimes at the hands of violent and hostile peasants. By contrast, more recent textual and visual productions have challenged this disconnect between elite and popular memory, either by highlighting the guilt of intellectuals who were closely involved in carrying out revolutionary violence (for example in Yan Lianke’s novel, *Four Books*) or by bringing subaltern discourse or memory into the public sphere. Previous critical narratives of the Mao era focused on elite suffering during the Cultural Revolution, while peasant suffering in the famine of the Great Leap Forward had long remained mute, a contrast that has been ascribed to a difference in social class.⁴² Cultural texts of the 2000s, though still

42. Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, “Trauma and Memory: The Case of the Great Famine in the People’s Republic of China (1959–1961),” *Historiography East and West* 1, no. 1 (2003): 52. Commenting on interviews

produced by an elite, now often focus on the famine and on the persecution of the peasants. The ostensible claim by some documentary filmmakers to “reestablish the truth” in fact often translates into subtle struggles to redraw social hierarchies and responsibility. For example, the films dedicated to the survivors of Jiabiangou labor camp focus on the price paid by ordinary people in remote areas with little connection to national politics.⁴³ The Folk Memory Project at Caochangdi Documentary Film Workstation, conceived and coordinated by Wu Wenguang since 2010, has given a group of young film directors the initiative to return to their villages and gather firsthand testimony about the Great Famine from ordinary villagers, as part of a series of projects addressing the rural-urban divide in today’s China. Many of these testimonies were transcribed and made available on the Caochangdi website, while films and theatre productions are used to “perform” and disseminate the main insights of these investigations.

The chapters in Part II examine the reconfiguration of elite and popular memory in the social discourses encapsulated in literature (Sebastian Veg), documentary film (Judith Pernin), and visual art (Aihe Wang). Using the examples of Yang Xianhui, Yang Jisheng, and Yan Lianke, Sebastian Veg shows how writers in the last decade have broken with earlier writing about the Mao era by turning to the 1950s and critically confronting both the PRC state in its foundations and their own role in sustaining its legitimacy. Rather than a self-vindication in the form of a personal memoir of persecuted intellectuals, they construct self-reflexive discussions encompassing a plurality of viewpoints. Judith Pernin, analyzing several independent documentary films that grapple with memories of the Mao era, highlights the authenticating strategies used by directors to validate unofficial and counter-hegemonic narratives. Their rejection of mainstream documentary techniques that use archival footage and voice-over to construct master narratives compels them to find other techniques for authenticating subaltern discourses, in particular by resorting to objects or by establishing connections with a textual source. Aihe Wang, excavating and rereading visual art produced by ordinary workers—including herself—during the Cultural Revolution, shows how a form of painting, understood as purely private at the time, can now enter the public sphere as testimony of the everyday life of ordinary people erased by the pervasive narratives of elite politics. This ordinary experience, because it is private and apolitical, can be reread as a form of quotidian resistance in an era saturated with politics.

Thirdly, popular and elite memories have also interacted to produce new discourses of knowledge. While early historiography of the Mao era was pioneered by scholars based outside of China, the last decade has seen new research on the early

conducted in 2005 with former students of Agricultural University who had first-hand experience of the famine in the countryside, Felix Wemheuer notes that “intellectuals” like his interviewees tend to see the famine as a mistake rather than a crime and show little moral introspection. However, they do acknowledge political manipulation and coercion. See F. Wemheuer, “Der Weg in die Hungersnot,” *Asien* 25 (2005): 25–41.

43. Following Wang Bing’s two films (documentary *Fengming, a Chinese Woman* and feature film *The Ditch*), Ai Xiaoming dedicated a five-part documentary to the survivors, titled *Jiabiangou Elegy* in 2017.

years of the PRC from both abroad and within China, where a small group of historians have investigated everyday life far from the leadership struggles in Beijing.⁴⁴ Works of popular historiography and “unofficial sources” like legal proceedings or archival material obtained by independent investigators have contributed to changing popular perceptions of the history of the Mao era. Memoirs and other autobiographical documents have become increasingly available, bringing intimate experiences into the public realm.⁴⁵

Chapters in Part III demonstrate how the historiography of the Mao era has been transformed as changes appeared in the memory culture. Personal memoirs can be used together with archival sources to document the existence of an underground network of social practices in the late stages of the Cultural Revolution. Frank Dikötter uses both literary/autobiographical sources and declassified investigation reports or other archives to document the duality of outward compliance and inner dissent during the late Cultural Revolution. Memoirs by both participants and former officials are also used by Michel Bonnin to question the government’s motivation in bringing the Rustication (Educated Youth) movement to an end in 1980, while official sources still celebrated it as a great success. Unofficial material from petition files by Shanghai *zhiqing* who were stranded in Xinjiang can in this way become a socially sanctioned source of historical knowledge. Finally, historical archives themselves can be depositories that bear the mark of contested memories, when documents (fake or “black” materials used to frame certain individuals) have been removed or changed during the revision of “unjust, false and mistaken cases” that took place after the Cultural Revolution. The judicial records studied by Daniel Leese contain snippets of personal narrative statements—confessions, self-criticisms, self-explanations—that show how victims of persecution strategically reframed their discourse according to the political circumstances. Here too, the construction of historical knowledge relies on sifting through different layers of discourse (confessions extracted under duress, petitions requesting rehabilitation during the reassessment of verdicts) to understand the experience of victims of persecution. This part shows that alternative everyday history is not only preserved in oral memories but can also be reconstructed through documents. This process leads to the social validation by elite knowledge discourses of alternative narratives that originate from the popular realm.

All these memoirs, archival materials, citizen investigations, testimonies, literary, or filmic works made by ordinary citizens, and published or disseminated

44. See, for example, work by Dong Guoqiang, Feng Xiaocai, Jin Dalu, Yang Kuisong, and, in English, Zhou Xun’s oral history investigations.

45. A similar tendency has been noted in the Soviet and post-Soviet context. See Benjamin Nathans, “Talking Fish: On Soviet Dissident Memoirs,” *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 3, *Literary and Visual Arts in the European Public Sphere* (September 2015): 579–614; Jochen Hellbeck, “Working, Struggling, Becoming: Stalin-Era Autobiographical Texts,” *The Russian Review* 60 (July 2001): 340–59. See also the discussion of a memoir by a “rural intellectual” who supported the CCP and felt betrayed in Paul Pickowicz, “Memories of Revolution and Collectivization in China: The Unauthorized Reminiscences of a Rural Intellectual,” in *Memory, History, and Opposition*, 127–48.

through various channels including the internet, contribute to challenging the existing historiography of the first thirty years of the People's Republic, with deep-reaching consequences. Indeed, the challenge has not gone unnoticed by the regime. In the interval since most of the chapters in the present volume were originally written, a backlash has taken place explicitly targeting "historical nihilism." The alleged "Central document no. 9" leaked in early 2013 singles out Party history as one of the "unmentionable topics" in the mainland media.⁴⁶ It was followed by a series of concrete measures targeting historical narratives critical of the Party, culminating during the fiftieth anniversary of the Cultural Revolution in 2016, which saw the shutdown of the social media (Weibo and public Weixin) accounts of the Folk Memory Project in June 2016 (Caochangdi station B accounts were reopened in September), the state takeover of *Annals of the Yellow Emperor* in July,⁴⁷ the closure of the privately run Cultural Revolution Museum in Shantou,⁴⁸ and finally the shutdown of the influential website *Consensus* (Gongshiwang) in September after its associated journal *Leader* published a special commemorative issue on the Cultural Revolution in July.⁴⁹ Yang Jisheng's new book on the Cultural Revolution was published in Hong Kong in December 2016, but any reference was actively removed from the Chinese internet, and the author was reportedly under significant pressure to halt the publication.⁵⁰

While unofficial memories call into question some of the basic tenets that justify the Party's claim to power since 1949, the CCP sticks to its narrative of "liberation" of the oppressed classes, such as workers and peasants, and of empowering subaltern groups in the new political order. Violence against "class enemies," while its degree may be retrospectively recognized as excessive, remains justified, in the Party's view, as a necessary means to the goal of advantaging the victims of previous political regimes. Unofficial memories however, give credence to a rival narrative, highlighting widespread violence, including against many poor members of the rural population, and the establishment of a new class hierarchy in post-1949 China, in which a small new elite was able to exercise power without restraints, and enjoyed unprecedented privilege.⁵¹ As Qin Hui wrote in 2004: "Compared to the short-lived (though of course cruel) attacks endured by the 'faction in power,' the

46. See "Document no. 9: A Chinafile translation," November 8, 2013, <http://www.chinafile.com/document-9-chinafile-translation>.

47. See Sebastian Veg, "Debating the Memory of the Cultural Revolution in China Today," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, August 8, 2016, <http://u.osu.edu/mclc/online-series/veg2/>.

48. Didi Kirsten Tatlow, "Fate Catches up to a Cultural Revolution Museum in China," *New York Times*, October 2, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/03/world/asia/china-cultural-revolution-shantou-museum.html>.

49. Oiwan Lam, "Chinese Authorities Shutter 'Gongshi' Intellectual Website, Leading Netizens to Ask: Is This 'The End of Consensus?'," *Global Voices*, October 5, 2016, <https://advox.globalvoices.org/2016/10/05/as-authorities-shutter-gongshi-intellectual-website-netizens-ask-has-china-reached-the-end-of-consensus/>.

50. See Chris Buckley, "Historian's Latest Book on Mao Turns Acclaim in China to Censure," *New York Times*, January 21, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/21/world/asia/china-historian-yang-jisheng-book-mao.html>.

51. For a characterization of the post-1949 regime as a new status system, see Jean-François Billeter, "The System of 'Class Status,'" in *The Scope of State Power in China*, ed. Stuart Schram (London: SOAS, 1985), 127–69.

suffering of those ten years [1966–1976] was mainly sustained by the lower rungs of society, in particular the outcasts [*jian min* 贱民] (five black elements, rightists) who had continually been persecuted before the Cultural Revolution.”⁵² Such a counter-narrative obviously challenges the very foundations of the CCP’s historical legitimacy.

Bringing together material from a great variety of sources, this volume probes how new forms of popular memory are transforming our understanding of recent Chinese history. After a period of post-traumatic outpour, followed by commodified nostalgia, popular memory in recent years has shown signs of moving towards more critical discussions, which have begun, despite the recent backlash, to transform the mainstream narrative of the Mao era in China.

Bibliography

- “Document no. 9: A Chinafile Translation.” November 8, 2013. <http://www.chinafile.com/document-9-chinafile-translation>.
- “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China.” <http://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/cpc/history/01.htm>. [Chinese original: “Guanyu jianguo yilai dang de ruogan lishi wenti de jueyi.” http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-03/04/content_2543544.htm.]
- Anagnost, Ann. “Making History Speak.” In *National Past-Times: Narrative, Representation and Power in Modern China*, 17–44. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Barmé, Geremie. *Shades of Mao: The Posthumous Cult of the Great Leader*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996.
- Billeter, Jean-François. “The System of ‘Class Status.’” In *The Scope of State Power in China*, edited by Stuart Schram, 127–69. London: SOAS, 1985.
- Buckley, Chris. “Historian’s Latest Book on Mao Turns Acclaim in China to Censure.” *New York Times*, January 21 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/21/world/asia/china-historian-yang-jisheng-book-mao.html>.
- Cai, Rong. “Restaging the Revolution in Contemporary China: Memory of Politics and Politics of Memory.” *The China Quarterly* 215 (Sept. 2013): 663–81.
- Cui Zhiyuan. “Mao Zedong ‘wen ge’ lilun de deshi yu xiandaixing de chongjian” [An assessment of Mao Zedong’s Theory of Cultural Revolution and the reconstruction of Chinese modernity]. *Hong Kong Journal of Social Sciences* 7 (1996): 60–74.
- DeMare, Brian. “The Romance and Tragedy of Rural Revolution: Narratives and Novels of Land Reform in Mao’s China.” *Clio* 43, no. 3 (2014): 341–65.
- Douglass, Ana, and Thomas Vogler, eds. *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Friedländer, Saül. *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

52. Qin Hui, “Women gai zenyang fansi wenge” [How we should reflect on the Cultural Revolution], *Wenti yu zhuyi: Qin Hui wenxuan* (Changchun: Changchun Press, 1999), 10–11. See also Yang Jisheng’s description of how luxury villas were built for visiting leaders all around the country at the worst of the famine in *Tombstone*, 460.

- Halbwachs, Maurice. *The Collective Memory*. New York: Harper and Row, 1980.
- Han, Shaogong. "Why Did the Cultural Revolution End?" *boundary 2*, vol. 35.2 (2008): 93–106.
- Hellbeck, Jochen. "Working, Struggling, Becoming: Stalin-Era Autobiographical Texts." *The Russian Review* 60 (July 2001): 340–59.
- Hershatter, Gail. "The Subaltern Talks Back: Reflections on Subaltern Theory and Chinese History." *positions* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 103–30.
- Hilberg, Raul. *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis*. Chicago: Ivan Dee, 2001.
- Humphrey, Caroline. "Remembering an 'Enemy': The Bogd Khaan in Twentieth-Century Mongolia." In *Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism*, edited by Rubie Watson, 21–44. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1994.
- Johnson, Ian. "China's Brave Underground Journal II." *The New York Review of Books*, December 18, 2014. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/12/18/chinas-brave-underground-journal-ii/>.
- Lam, Oiwan. "Chinese Authorities Shutter 'Gongshi' Intellectual Website, Leading Netizens to Ask: Is This 'The End of Consensus?'" *Global Voices*, October 5, 2016. <https://advox.globalvoices.org/2016/10/05/as-authorities-shutter-gongshi-intellectual-website-netizens-ask-has-china-reached-the-end-of-consensus/>.
- Lee, Ching Kwan. "What Was Socialism to Chinese Workers?" In *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memory in Reform China*, edited by Ching Kwan Lee and Guobin Yang, 141–65. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2007.
- Lee, Ching Kwan, and Guobin Yang, eds. *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memory in Reform China*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2007.
- Manning, Kimberly Ens. "Communes, Canteens and Crèches: The Gendered Politics of Remembering the Great Leap Forward." In *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memory in Reform China*, edited by Ching Kwan Lee and Guobin Yang, 93–118. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2007.
- Mazur, Mary. "Public Space for Memory in Contemporary Civil Society: Freedom to Learn from the Mirror of the Past?" *China Quarterly* 160 (Dec. 1999): 1019–35.
- Ming Pao Reporter. "Hongge yanchanghui beizhi fubi Wenge" [Red Song Gala accused of rehabilitating Cultural Revolution]. *Ming Pao*, May 5, 2016. <http://news.mingpao.com/pns1605061462470682787>.
- Nathans, Benjamin. "Talking Fish: On Soviet Dissident Memoirs." *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 3, *Literary and Visual Arts in the European Public Sphere* (September 2015): 579–614.
- Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations*, no. 26, *Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory* (Spring, 1989): 7–24. [French original: "Entre mémoire et histoire, la problématique des lieux." In *Les lieux de mémoire, I. La République*, edited by Pierre Nora, xvi–xlii. Paris: Gallimard, 1984.]
- Pickowicz, Paul. "Memories of Revolution and Collectivization in China: The Unauthorized Reminiscences of a Rural Intellectual." In *Memory, History, and Opposition: Under State Socialism*, edited by Rubie Watson, 127–48. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1994.

- Portelli, Alessandro. *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1991.
- Qin Hui. "Women gai zenyang fansi wenge" [How we should reflect on the Cultural Revolution]. *Wenti yu zhuyi: Qin Hui wenxuan*, 10–11. Changchun: Changchun Press, 1999.
- Schoenhals, Michael. "Unofficial and Official Histories of the Cultural Revolution: A Review Article." *Journal of Asian Studies* 48, no. 3 (Aug. 1989): 563–72.
- Steiner, Peter. "Samizdat, Tamizdat, Magnitizdat and Other Strange Words That Are Difficult to Pronounce." *Poetics Today*, special issue on *samizdat*, 29, no. 4 (2008): 613–28.
- Tatlow, Didi Kirsten. "Fate Catches up to a Cultural Revolution Museum in China." *New York Times*, October 2, 2016. <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/03/world/asia/china-cultural-revolution-shantou-museum.html>.
- Tilly, Charles. "Afterword: Political Memories in Space and Time." In *Remapping Memory: the Politics of TimeSpace*, edited by Jonathan Boyarim, 249. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
- Unger, Jonathan. "Introduction." In *Using the Past to Serve the Present: Historiography and Politics in Contemporary China*, edited by Jonathan Unger, 1–8. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1993.
- Unger, Jonathan, and Anita Chan. "Memories and the Political Economy of a State-Owned Enterprise." In *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memory in Reform China*, edited by Ching Kwan Lee and Guobin Yang, 119–40. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2007.
- Veg, Sebastian. "Debating the Memory of the Cultural Revolution in China Today." *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, August 8, 2016. <http://u.osu.edu/mclc/online-series/veg2/>.
- Wang, Xiangwei. "Political Winds Raise Red Flags over Cultural Revolution-Style Gala." *South China Morning Post*. May 8, 2016. <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/1942545/political-winds-raise-red-flags-over-cultural>.
- Watson, Rubie. "Making Secret Histories: Memory and Mourning in Post-Mao China." In *Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism*, edited by Rubie Watson, 65–85. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1994.
- Watson, Rubie. "Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism." In *Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism*, edited by Rubie Watson, 1–20. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1994.
- Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, Susanne. "Trauma and Memory: The Case of the Great Famine in the People's Republic of China (1959–1961)." *Historiography East and West* 1, no. 1 (2003): 41–67.
- Wemheuer, Felix. "Dealing with Responsibility for the Great Leap Famine in the People's Republic of China." *The China Quarterly* 201 (2010): 176–95.
- Wemheuer, Felix. "Der Weg in die Hungersnot: Erinnerungen chinesischer Intellektueller an den ländlichen 'Großen Sprung nach vorne' (1958–1961)." *Asien* 25 (2005): 25–41.
- Wemheuer, Felix. "Regime Changes of Memory: Creating the Official History of the Ukrainian and Chinese Famine under State Socialism and after the Cold War." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10, no. 1 (2009): 31–59.
- Yang, Guobin. "China's Zhiqing Generation: Nostalgia, Identity, and Cultural Resistance in the 1990s." *Modern China* 29, no. 3 (July 2003): 267–96.

- Yang, Guobin. "Days of Old Are Not Puffs of Smoke: Three Hypotheses on Collective Memories of the Cultural Revolution." *The China Review* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2003):13–41.
- Young, James. "Between History and Memory: The Voice of the Eyewitness." In *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma*, edited by Ana Douglass and Thomas Vogler, 275–83. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Zhao Jie, "Too little? Too Late?" *News China*, November 2013. <http://www.newschinamag.com/magazine/too-little-too-late>.

Popular Memories and Popular History, Indispensable Tools for Understanding Contemporary Chinese History

The Case of the End of the Rustication Movement

Michel Bonnin

The writing of the history of the People's Republic of China poses specific problems due to the opacity of the actions of its government and of the control it imposes on the media. As this control does not concern only the present but also the past, historians find it difficult to get access to sources outside the limited official ones. This is particularly true for the Maoist period, when control of the media and opacity were the most severe. Fortunately, since the 1990s, unofficial memoirs and historical studies have provided very useful elements to correct and complete what could be known through official channels.

This chapter will show on a specific topic (the abrupt end of the rustication movement) that unofficial sources can provide a solid foundation to write a history of the 1978–1980 period radically different from the official one. Without these materials, we would miss the important change that took place at this time in the relationship between state and society. This chapter argues that the rebellion of the rusticated youth was decisive in the brutal ending of the rustication policy and the massive return of these youths to the cities. By their actions, they broke the monopoly of the Party on political initiative. Use of unofficial sources is thus essential to fully understanding this turning point in the history of the People's Republic. They are not only the only reliable source on the concerns and feelings of the people (in this case the rusticated youth and their parents), but also an indispensable tool to complete and rectify an official history, which is often sketchy and distorted due to propaganda considerations both at the time and nowadays.

To give an example of the importance, even the absolute necessity, of using popular memory and popular historical publications to understand Chinese contemporary history, I shall take in this chapter the example of the history of the rusticated youth (*zhiqing* 知青, abbreviation of *zhishi qingnian* 知識青年) movement or the rustication (*xiaxiang* 下鄉) movement (*zhishi qingnian shangshan xiaxiang yundong* 知識青年上山下鄉運動, in full). This topic is considered by the authorities

as “sensitive” (as is the case for many episodes of the history of China under Mao), but it is not considered to be one of the most sensitive. It can therefore be considered fairly representative of a general situation and similar demonstrations could certainly be made for most aspects of the history of the PRC. I shall specifically examine in this chapter the sudden end of the *xiexiang* movement (including the massive return of urban youths sent to the countryside who were still there at the end of the 1970s) and its only exception: that of the Shanghai rusticated youth sent to Xinjiang.

In my book, *The Lost Generation*, I incorporate a wide array of materials, official and unofficial, to present and interpret the history of the *xiexiang* movement. I study it from the double point of view of the authorities and of the population concerned. It is in my view the only way to understand what really happened at the time, since the interaction between state and society was particularly at stake in this movement, which purported to transform into peasants, potentially for the rest of their life, millions of urban-educated youth arriving at the end of their secondary schooling.¹

The Official Version of History: Eulogy to Deng Xiaoping

The rustication movement appeared on a small scale in the 1950s, began to be institutionalized in the early 1960s, and became almost universal and acquired a new political meaning at the end of 1968. It lasted with ups and downs until 1980. If you look only at official materials of the time, it would be simply impossible to understand why it came abruptly to a halt between the end of 1978 and 1980 (about seven million *zhiqing* came back to the urban areas during this period). A few problems were sometimes acknowledged officially but, basically, this policy was presented as successful and as stirring great enthusiasm among the population, especially among the rusticated youth. The official press was full of articles about *zhiqing* models expressing their determination to stay in the countryside and work hard for the development of China’s socialist agriculture. If we look at later official accounts of the movement, even when they acknowledge more fully the problems it caused, they give the impression that the authorities, having “liberated their thinking” after the arrest of the Gang of Four and the reemergence of Deng Xiaoping, simply ordered the immediate end of the movement.

In the official narrative of the reform era, Deng Xiaoping gets full credit for the rapid solution of this long-standing problem. Having understood that the crux of the question was youth employment, he ordered officials to enlarge employment

1. Michel Bonnin, *The Lost Generation: The Rustication of China’s Educated Youth (1968–1980)* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2013). On this topic, see also Thomas Bernstein, *Up to the Mountains, Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977) and Pan Yihong, *Tempered in the Revolutionary Furnace: China’s Youth in the Rustication Movement* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009).

capacities. This was done seriously and in a few years almost all youth, including former rusticated youth and newcomers to the labor force, found jobs in the cities.² In a historical TV drama about Deng Xiaoping, forty-eight episodes broadcast at prime time in 2014 and now accessible on the internet,³ the grandfatherly figure is even portrayed as saying with benevolence “Rang wawamen huilai ba” 讓娃娃們回來吧 (“Let the kids come back”).⁴ There is no record that Deng ever said those words. Although the series is presented as historical, and the main characters are supposed to be based on real historical figures using real names, there are many distortions of facts and clearly invented characters replace real ones. For example, the name of the official sent by the central authorities to inspect the situation in Yunnan where rusticated youth had begun a protest movement is not the real one,⁵ and the rusticated youth who makes an appeal to Deng is not the person who really sent the first collective letter to him, but the son of one of Deng’s close subordinates. There is no mention of the large protest movement launched by the Yunnan *zhiqing*. The reason for these distortions certainly lies in the desire to sing the praise of Deng Xiaoping and to show that thanks to the wisdom of the Party and of its new great leader, everything was always under control even in this troubled period when China embarked in a new direction (the series covers the important transition period from October 1976 to October 1984). At the decisive moment, a simple sentence pronounced by the wise leader, alerted by a close person about the difficulties of the masses, could solve all the problems of the populace. This narrative is in line with the traditional image of the benevolent and honest official, the model being the famous Bao Qingtian, who was revered by the Chinese people as a kind of savior. Deng Xiaoping was indeed called Deng Qingtian by numerous petitioners who came to Beijing in 1978–1979 in order to seek redress of their grievances from the Maoist period.

But thanks to other information, coming from both official sources of the time and from popular memory, we can obtain a much more authentic and complex

2. See, for example, Luo Junsheng, “Deng Xiaoping zhongjie zhishi qingnian shangshan xiexiang yundong” [Deng Xiaoping puts an end to the Rustication Movement of Educated Youth], *Dangshi zonglan* [“The scan of the CCP history”], no. 12 (2004): 4–10, and Wan Qiang and Lin Rong, “Deng Xiaoping yu zhishi qingnian shangshan xiexiang yundong” [Deng Xiaoping and the rustication movement], *Dangshi Wenxuan* [Texts on the party history], no. 11 (2004): 34–37.
3. *Lishi zhuanzhe zhong de Deng Xiaoping* [Deng Xiaoping at a turning point of history], 48 episodes TV drama, 2014 (director: Wu Ziniu). See detailed presentation in Chinese at: <http://www.tvmao.com/drama/L2MvKiU/>.
4. This sentence has been quoted in many articles about this series. See, for example, Xu Diye, “Rang Deng Xiaoping tongzhi he women yidao shenghuo zai naduan lishi zhong” [Let Comrade Deng Xiaoping live together with us in that historical episode], <http://news.163.com/14/0808/09/A346HH8300014AED.html>.
5. This is probably because this cadre, named Zhao Fan (at the time, head of the Land Reclamation Bureau), and not Deng Xiaoping, was considered by many Yunnan *zhiqing* as their savior. They later invited him to Chengdu, and even wanted to erect an arch to his glory but he declined. When he died in Beijing in 2010, they took part in great numbers in his funeral. (Many websites of former *zhiqing* show pictures of Zhao’s funeral and of his visit to Chengdu.) In his memoirs published in 2003, he clearly expressed the shock he felt when seeing hundreds of *zhiqing* kneeling and weeping in front of him, and resorting to hunger and thirst strike to show their determination (see note 13).

picture of this period, a dramatic one, full of uncertainties, which saw not only a radical change in the economic orientation of the regime, but also the first important emergence since 1949 of an outburst in social protest which was largely successful.

The Tug-of-War between the Authorities and the Zhiqing

If we look at the official materials of the time, we can clearly see that there was some hesitation on the part of the authorities in 1978, since the *People's Daily* published only eleven articles on the *xiexiang* topic that year, whereas it had published dozens or even hundreds in the preceding years. 1978 was the year that many Maoist policies were beginning to be challenged and when new radically different policies were prepared. It is true that speeches made by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 reducing the rustication movement to a problem of employment, destroyed its Maoist rationale (the necessity of reeducating the urban educated youth and of preventing them from becoming revisionist intellectuals or bureaucrats), and then opened the road for an end to the movement.⁶ But, it did not mean that this policy would be rapidly interrupted, since the employment situation was acknowledged to be difficult. Moreover, it did not mean that all rusticated youth in the countryside would be allowed to come home, especially to come home quickly.⁷ In fact, the exceptional length (forty-one days) of the national Working Conference on the rustication policy, which finally opened on October 31 after having been postponed since Mao's death in 1976, and which lasted until December 10, shows that it was difficult for leaders and cadres in charge to reach a consensus.

According to the conclusions of that conference published on December 15, *xiexiang* was considered only a means to solve the employment problem, and as a consequence it would come to an end in the future when the employment situation in the urban areas was improved, but for the time being smaller numbers of young people would still be sent to the countryside with better conditions. Those still in the villages would be authorized to come back little by little, according to employment opportunities and the duration of their stay, with priority given to those who had been rusticated before 1972. As for those who were sent to state farms (two million altogether, of which 1.6 million were still there), they were not considered *zhiqing* any longer, but state employees, and so could not go back to the cities.⁸

6. The first attack by Deng on the Maoist conception of youth training had been the restoration of exams for university entrance at the end of 1977. According to Mao's "Revolution in education," after secondary school, all students had to be either peasants, or workers, or soldiers for at least two years, before being able to eventually enter university on mainly political (and not academic) criteria.

7. I have shown that the end of the 1970s was the period in the whole history of China when the largest number of young urban people were attaining the age of employment. To my knowledge, this was never publicly acknowledged by Chinese officials nor by Chinese scholars. It seems, however, important to show that a policy which was supposed to be directed mainly at alleviating the problem of urban employment stopped suddenly, exactly at the most difficult period in history for employing all urban youth. See Bonnin, *The Lost Generation*, 401–2, especially Figure 4.

8. See Bonnin, *The Lost Generation*, 137–39. The rusticated youth were either sent to villages, where they had no

All official materials published from the end of 1978 to the end of 1979 show that the authorities exerted many efforts to implement the decisions of the conference. Local conferences were organized to discuss them and an important propaganda effort in favor of *xiaxiang* filled the media. But these efforts did not bear much fruit, since in 1979 only one-third of *zhiqing* who were supposed to go to the countryside were actually sent, while most of the rusticated youth already in the countryside went back to the cities en masse during that year, in a kind of irresistible movement later called unofficially the “wind of return” (*huicheng feng* 回城風 or *fancheng feng* 返城風). Then, after the usual articles on the organization of the annual *zhiqing* departures at the beginning of 1980, this topic disappeared from the press and in fact the movement died altogether, without any official obituary.⁹

The reason for this sudden end and for the return of the *zhiqing* to the cities (including those from the state farms who were not supposed to do so at any time) cannot be found in official materials but can be pieced together using unofficial sources.

What happened was the conjunction of a new political situation, in which ordinary people discovered that some well-established policies could suddenly be challenged, and a very deep and long suppressed discontent bordering on despair among the so-called “educated youth,” who had been in fact deprived of education and who were less and less youthful as time passed. Almost all of them were dissatisfied with their fate. Although every rusticated youth was forced to sign up as “volunteer,” many of them had only gone to the countryside because they had seen no alternative, no way to resist in Mao’s time. Even those who had initially been real volunteers felt that they had been cheated by romantic and rosy pictures of their future life. As soon as they arrived in their new surroundings (or after a few months there), they had been disappointed by the realities of the “socialist countryside” and by the not so altruistic and revolutionary mentality of the “poor and lower-middle peasants.” They had lost their urban residence permit, equivalent to a guarantee for basic necessities, and had to face endless difficulties for food and housing while working very hard without leisure or cultural activities. In the Yunnan farms, those conditions had not significantly improved along the years. After some time, the youth had seen other *zhiqing* going back home or to other urban areas, to be workers or students, very often because they had “a good daddy” or the means to corrupt a cadre. As they did not want to stay in the countryside, they could not marry there, which jeopardized their sentimental and sexual life. When going back for rare holiday visits to their families, they had to spend many days in transportation and, when they finally arrived in their home cities, they were treated as bumpkins by their former friends or relatives, whereas they never were really accepted as country people by the peasants. They were often victims of arbitrariness or violent

fixed salary but shared the harvest according to work-points earned, or to state or military farms where they were given a monthly salary.

9. Bonnin, *The Lost Generation*, 170–76.

treatment by local cadres, especially the girls who were easy preys for male bullies. A substantial number of rapes occurred on the military farms of Yunnan, and in 1973 the central authorities executed officers responsible for the record numbers of rapes. Healthcare was also very bad in the countryside, especially in the border regions, where illness or work accidents led to the death or crippling of a substantial number of *zhiqing*. All these pent-up frustrations led to the feeling that if any opportunity arose to go back home, it should be grasped at all costs.

From Passive to Active Resistance: Sources at Our Disposal

Passive resistance to the movement had indeed existed from the beginning, and became more obvious with time passing. *Zhiqing* tried very hard to find ways to be recruited as workers, students, or soldiers. Very often, this could only be obtained through string-pulling or outright corruption of cadres in charge. Others pretended to be ill and showed doctor's certificates obtained by money to go back home. Some even injured themselves, in order to be declared inapt for agricultural work. There was an upsurge of these methods in 1978. We know from interviews and written memoirs that throughout that year, many *zhiqing* succeeded in arranging their return to the city through corruption (of doctors or cadres; this was later confirmed when official numbers were published in different publications such as collections of statistics and provincial annals (*shengzhi*)).¹⁰ The rustication policy was a decisive factor in the worsening of social mores, in the spreading of official corruption, and in the emergence of an underground culture among China's youth during the 1970s.¹¹ But what precipitated the end of the movement was the open resistance of the *zhiqing*. This was made possible by the new political atmosphere of 1978–1979 and by the hesitations of the authorities, which even *zhiqing* living in remote areas were able to feel, albeit after some delay.

The first and the most influent example of active resistance was that of the Xishuangbanna educated youth. However, another spontaneous and unrelated movement in Mengding, in another part of Yunnan, was also instrumental, as we shall see.

At the time, the only official mention of the Xishuangbanna movement was an article on the front page of the *People's Daily* of February 10, 1979. Ten representatives of the Xishuangbanna *zhiqing* were received on January 4 in Beijing by Wang Zhen, who was in charge of this domain in the Politburo. The *People's Daily* published the scolding of the representatives by Wang Zhen and the repenting telegram

10. In 1978, return to the cities for health and family difficulty reasons more than trebled over 1977 (*Zhongguo laodong gongzi tongji ziliao, 1949–1985* [Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1987], 111). Many provincial annals published from the end of the 1980s until now provide similar statistics at the provincial level and note the sudden easing of this kind of returns. A partial list of these annals can be found in Bonnin, *The Lost Generation*, 467–69.

11. See Bonnin, *The Lost Generation*, chap. 11, 337–85.

that three of them had sent to him on January 23 saying that they were back to Xishuangbanna and that the strike was over.

But thanks to other, unofficial materials, we know that at the very time when the *People's Daily* published this article, on the ground all *zhiqing* were leaving Yunnan en masse to go back to their cities. This irony has to be explained, and can only be understood through two unofficial sources.

One is the historical testimony of officials who were at the time in charge of this question, and who later wrote unofficially. The most important is Gu Hongzhang (he published in 1996 with other people, including other former cadres, two books on the *xiaxiang* policy that give a rather detailed account of the main events of this movement seen from the point of view of the government),¹² but Zhao Fan's more personal testimony also provides interesting complements.¹³ Although former officials wrote these books, they are not themselves official and could at best be considered semi-official. They were based on official materials, but their authors decided by themselves to publish them and encountered some difficulties in doing so. In one of the two books published by Gu Hongzhang et al., a leaflet was inserted reporting these difficulties and expressing the authors' gratefulness for the help of a member of the Research Centre on the Party History of the Central Committee (which has advisory power concerning the censorship of books on contemporary China). Those books were in the end approved by the Ministry of Labor and published by an official publisher. Another high-level cadre who was linked to the Rustication policy, Xu Fa also published two books on the topic.¹⁴ Their unofficial character is shown by the fact that they have no publisher name and no book number. This is the case for many interesting recollections and memoirs, which are thus published as *samizdat* (in Chinese: *ziyin*, or self-published). Those books are sold or given away directly by the authors but in some cases they can be bought on the internet, except when they are particularly disliked by the censorship organs. Sometimes, the authors buy a book number in Hong Kong and pretend that their book was published there, even as it is, in fact, printed secretly in China. The reason that Xu Fa's books are unofficial is probably because they are critical of some of the historical assessments concerning *xiaxiang* expressed in the two Gu Hongzhang books. The first of Xu Fa's books (published in 1998, soon after the publication of the two books by Gu) is a direct critical commentary on the two Gu books. Xu himself took part in the planning of the books, but later disagreed with Gu on the general orientation

12. Gu Hongzhang and Hu Mengzhou, eds., *Zhongguo zhishi qingnian shangshan xiaxiang shimo* [History of the rustication of Chinese educated youth] (Beijing: Zhongguo jiancha chubanshe, 1996); Gu Hongzhang and Ma Kesen, eds., *Zhongguo zhishi qingnian shangshan xiaxiang dashiji* [Chronicle of the rustication of Chinese educated youth] (Beijing: Zhongguo jiancha chubanshe, 1996). Gu Hongzhang was a high level leader of the Central Educated Youth Bureau.

13. Zhao Fan, *Yi zhengcheng* [Remembering the journey of my mission] (Beijing: Zhongguo nongye chubanshe, 2003). Zhao Fan was vice-minister of agriculture and head of the Agricultural Reclamation Bureau.

14. Xu Fa, *Wo suo zhidao de zhiqing gongzuo* [What I know about the work concerning the educated youth] (no publisher, 1998); Xu Fa, *Yi bo san zhe—Xu Fa jingli jishi* [Twists and turns: Recording of Xu Fa's experience] (Beijing: no publisher, 2008).

and quit. It is interesting because it provides additional information on historical facts that were not recorded in the other books.

The other source for our knowledge concerning the rustication movement consists of the testimonies and historical publications of the *zhiqing* themselves, either in books or articles published by them or through interviews with historians working in an unofficial function. One of them, Liu Xiaomeng, who is a researcher on the Manchu dynasty at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, has made the most important contribution.¹⁵ Concerning more precisely the end of the movement, his book of oral histories gives invaluable information through the interviews of some leaders of the *zhiqing* protest movements of that period.¹⁶ Of course, directly interviewing the leaders and participants in these movements is an excellent source of information, which can be compared to printed sources. That is what I have done with Ding Huimin, leader of the Xishuangbanna movement, and Ye Feng, leader of the Mengding movement, as well as with some other participants, in September 2008 and December 2009.

Other books written by former *zhiqing* who were active in the Yunnan movement are also very useful,¹⁷ as are books about the Xinjiang movement, which I shall present later. Apart from printed materials, a lot of memoirs are published electronically on a large number of websites managed by former *zhiqing*. There are also unofficial historical debates on these websites or in blogs about the interpretation of the rustication movement. A few electronic magazines publish academic papers on contemporary history and evade censorship, since they are only distributed to limited lists of specialists.¹⁸ Documentary films constitute another important source for the history of the movement and of its turbulent ending. In this domain, Phoenix TV, based in Hong Kong but mainly run by mainlanders, has done a lot of work. Different films have been made on the rustication movement, each one covering one region or one topic. Even if the films have been shot in China, the fact that the producer is a Hong Kong company provides a much wider space to speak about “sensitive” topics like the Yunnan protest movement. Most of these are accessible on the internet. Apart from that, a mainland film company linked to the *People’s Daily* has also made a very interesting series of twenty documentary films. Because of censorship, they were ultimately not able to show this series on Central Television,

15. Liu Xiaomeng, *Zhongguo zhiqing shi: Dachao (1968–1980)* [History of the Chinese educated youth: The great tide, 1968–1980] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998). Liu Xiaomeng, *Zhongguo zhiqing koushushi* [Oral history of the Chinese educated youth] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2004).

16. This source and some other unofficial sources are quoted in Bin Yang, “‘We Want to Go Home!’ The Great Petition of the *Zhiqing*, Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, 1978–1979,” *The China Quarterly* 198 (June 2009): 401–21.

17. Qu Bo and Luo Xiaowen, eds., *Jufeng guaguo yaredai yulin* [A hurricane passed over the subtropical forest] (Beijing: Zhongguo guoji shiyejia chubanshe, 2006). Zou Shengyong, ed., *Jianzheng lishi* [Witness to history] (Hong Kong: Zhongguo wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2008).

18. To this author’s knowledge, the two most important ones concerning the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement are *Jiyi* (Remembrance) produced in Beijing by Qi Zhi (penname of Wu Di) and *Zuotian* (Yesterday) produced in Chongqing by He Shu. Their archives until December 2016 can be accessed on the site of the PRC History Group: prchistory.org. See Jean-Philippe Béja’s chapter in this volume.

but they have made it available to the public as a box of ten VCDs including the printed script.¹⁹

The Real Petitioning Movement “to Go Back Home”

Thanks to semi-official and unofficial sources, we can form a rather detailed and vivid picture of the interaction of officials and petitioners during this protest movement. We learn that on October 18, 1978, a Shanghai *zhiqing*, Ding Huimin, after some discussions with other *zhiqing*, publicized an open letter addressed to Deng Xiaoping asking for the right for *zhiqing* to go back to their cities. He knew that a national conference on the rustication policy would be held soon and, like many other *zhiqing*, he felt that the political situation was favorable. The letter was quickly signed by one thousand *zhiqing*, but did not produce the result they were hoping for. Then, a strike was organized in which 50,000 *zhiqing* took part and a delegation was sent to Beijing, while another was blocked in Kunming by local authorities. The successful delegation arrived at the time of the Democracy Wall movement. They began petitioning in front of the railway station and then on Tiananmen Square as soon as they arrived, asking to be received by the two highest leaders, Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping. They clearly stated their main demand as: “We want to go back home” (*Women yao hui laojia qu* 我們要回老家去). They went to the Democracy Wall at the Xidan crossroads and posted *dazibaos* there.²⁰ Then, as mentioned earlier, some of them were received on January 4 by Wang Zhen, who scolded them and asked them to go back and stop the strike. The reason why the reality on the ground was the reverse of the impression given by the *People’s Daily* article published later is that, on December 25, two days before their arrival to Beijing and about ten days before Wang Zhen’s meeting with the representatives, a high-ranking cadre, Zhao Fan, had already been sent to Yunnan to investigate and calm down the *zhiqing*. And Zhao was moved by what he learned of the real situation of the *zhiqing* in the Yunnan farms and also by their despair and their determination. He was then able to convince the leaders that it was better to let the *zhiqing* go back to their cities. He was helped by the fact that leaders at the places of origin of the *zhiqing* (Sichuan, Shanghai, Beijing, and Kunming) accepted the idea of taking back their own *zhiqing* in different batches. Sichuan, then headed by reformist leader Zhao Ziyang, took the lead, which put pressure on the others. The details of this trip became known later through the testimonies both of officials and of the *zhiqing* rebels. Visiting different farms in Xishuangbanna, Zhao was confronted by hundreds of kneeling and weeping *zhiqing*, showing their determination by shouting slogans and giving

19. The series was sold under the title *Laosanjie—Yu gongheguo tong xing* [The three graduation years—Walking together with the Republic] (Nanjing: Nanjing yinxiang chubanshe, 2001). It seems to be now out of stock.

20. This author was able at the time to take photos of these posters. Some of the photos were published in Victor Sidane (collective penname), *Le Printemps de Pékin* (The Peking spring) (Paris: Gallimard [coll. Archives], 1980).

him banners like the one presented to him in a farm in Mengla which was covered with the bloody fingerprints of the local *zhiqing*, saying: “If we cannot go back to our birthplace, we shall die with a remaining grievance” (*Bu hui guxiang, si bu ming mu* 不回故鄉，死不瞑目).²¹ And it appeared that Xishuangbanna was not the only place where there was a petitioning movement. One movement, which also had an influence on Zhao Fan, took place in Mengding, about one thousand kilometers away from Xishuangbanna. It was unrelated to the first movement, but the petitioners were able to reach indirectly Zhao Fan while he was in Xishuangbanna after a telephone conversation with authorities in Beijing. Zhao Fan then rushed to the place by car. One unofficial book gives many details on the hunger (and even thirst) strike in Mengding, as well as on Xishuangbanna and other places. It also presents many little-known aspects of the life of the rusticated youth working in the Yunnan farms.²²

If we relied only on the article on the front page of the *People's Daily* of February 10, we would then obtain a completely erroneous image of the Yunnan movement and its consequences. By publishing the article more than one month after the meeting between Wang Zhen and the delegates actually took place, the authorities were probably trying to “save face”²³ and to discourage other *zhiqing* from organized protest action to get back home during the very sensitive period of the Chinese New Year, when many *zhiqing* were allowed to visit their family. But, this was not successful, because protest movements burst out in twenty-one of the twenty-nine provinces at that time. Although the official press never mentioned the success of the Yunnan *zhiqing* protest movement and the actual discarding of the decisions of the National conference concerning the exclusion of the *zhiqing* working on farms from the *zhiqing* category, it was largely known by word of mouth, since the desperate desire of the *zhiqing* to come home was then the hottest topic of discussion in Chinese cities and towns. In fact, even this propaganda trick backfired in the case of the Shanghai *zhiqing* living in Xinjiang, since it alerted those very isolated *zhiqing* about the efforts of their Yunnan counterparts and triggered among them the desire to launch a similar movement.²⁴

A New State-Society Relationship and Its Limits: The Fate of the Shanghai *Zhiqing* in Xinjiang

In studying the last period of the rustication movement, we can observe a turning point in the state-society relationship in China. Under Mao, the rule was that

21. Zou Shengyong, *Jianzheng lishi*, 51.

22. Qu Bo and Luo Xiaowen, eds., *Jufeng guaguo*.

23. During the January 4 meeting with Wang Zhen, the Minister of Civil Affairs, Cheng Zihua, who was also taking part, said to the representatives: “When you get back there, do not say that your strike was victorious.” Precisely because it was . . . (Zou Shengyong, *Jianzheng lishi*, 140).

24. Interview with Ouyang Lian.

initiative was the monopoly of the official side, society being only able to react to official decisions, by obeying (sometimes with excessive enthusiasm to show loyalty) or, on the contrary, by using passive resistance. Both unofficial materials written by former high-ranking cadres and those written by former *zhiqing* show that at the end of the 1970s, both sides were able to take initiatives and that, very often, it was the authorities who reacted to the spontaneous actions of the *zhiqing*. And in many cases, they were not able to impose their decisions on the *zhiqing*. This is similar to what happened with the collapse of collective agriculture in the countryside, which went faster and further than the authorities had first planned. It can be said, then, that the sudden interruption of the long-standing rustication movement resulted from the conjunction of a weakening of the authorities' determination and of the strengthening of the determination of the *zhiqing* to go back to their cities after having spent a large part of their youth in places where they did not feel at home and where they saw no future.

It is in this context that the "wind of return," took place everywhere in China, not only in Yunnan.²⁵ But, through unofficial materials we also know that this success story of the popular resistance of the rusticated youth suffered an exception. The Shanghai *zhiqing* who were sent to Xinjiang before the Cultural Revolution tried to imitate the Yunnan *zhiqing* through a similar petitioning movement, which went on for a very long time. It began in February 1979 in Xinjiang, then a delegation was sent to Beijing in mid-April, and after many ups and downs, including a large hunger strike in the streets of Aksu in temperatures reaching negative 23 degrees, it was severely suppressed in December 1980, although the local authorities had already accepted to let the *zhiqing* go back to Shanghai with their residence certificate. Some leaders of the movement were imprisoned for a few years and the large majority of the remaining 30,000 Shanghai *zhiqing* were forced to stay in Xinjiang. Most of them went back illegally from the mid-1980s on, but had to live for many years in miserable conditions, without residency permits and without jobs.²⁶

25. Bonnin, *The Lost Generation*, 148–54. The fact that, at the end of 1978, the authorities had already decided to launch a limited war against Vietnam (close to Yunnan) probably played a role in the decision to solve quickly the problem of the Yunnan *zhiqing* movement, but in different political circumstances, it could have on the contrary led the authorities to strike rapidly and decisively against it. We shall probably have to wait until the Central archives are open to know for sure the relative weight of this concern in the happy ending of the Yunnan protest movement. Zhao Fan should have known something about this concern, but does not say a word about it in his memoir. This could mean either that it was not important, or that it was important, but considered as a State secret.

26. See details of this movement in Liu Xiaomeng's books, especially *Zhongguo zhiqing koushu shi*, and in Xie Mingan, *Xinjiang Shanghai zhishi qingnian shangshan xiexiang sishinian dashiji* [Forty years' chronicle of the rustication of Shanghai educated youth to Xinjiang] (Zhuhai: Zhuhai chubanshe, 2008), as well as Wang Liangde et al., *Gebi shen chu de nahan* [Cries coming from the heart of the Gobi Desert] (Hong Kong: Zhongguo wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2008). See also (in French) Michel Bonnin, "Shanghai et l'héritage douloureux du maoïsme: le destin de la 'génération perdue'" [Shanghai and the painful legacy of Maoism: The fate of the "Lost Generation"], in *Shanghai*, ed. N. Idier (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2010, 931–72).

Relying on different materials, mostly unofficial but also official, we can try and answer the question: why this exception?²⁷ My conclusion is that it was a central decision, mainly motivated by the desire to keep on the ground as many Hans as possible in this region of restive “national minorities.” Wang Zhen, who had a personal interest in the military farms of this region, which were his main political capital, played a decisive role in convincing Deng Xiaoping of the necessity to keep the *zhiqing* there, and of restoring the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, which he had founded and which had been dismantled like all other Production and Construction Corps in the 1970s.²⁸ It should be noted that one reason for their failure is also the fact that the Xinjiang *zhiqing* began their movement a bit late and very mildly at the beginning, which made them miss the best political opportunity of the end of 1978 through the beginning of 1979. Since February and more clearly since March 1979, Deng Xiaoping, who had already won the battle against Hua Guofeng and the conservative leaders, became less tolerant toward the expression of the demands of the masses. On March 30, he imposed respect for the Four Cardinal Principles, among which was the (absolute) leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Strict political limits were thus imposed on reforms, and some leaders of the democratic movement were arrested. But this did not prevent the massive return of *zhiqing* from taking place during 1979–1980, nor did it stop the sporadic reemergence of the Democracy Wall movement, at least until October 1979.

The question of the Xinjiang *zhiqing* is then a specific one, and requires specific explanations. Of course, the failure of their movement of petitioning to go back home shows the limits of the political change that took place at the end of the 1970s. Although, since 1978, the Party has been able to take into account the desires of specific groups of the population, it has retained the right to impose its views by force for some reasons it considers superior. The Xinjiang *zhiqing* were then deprived officially by Central Document 91 of 1981 of their status of *zhiqing*, which posed a lot of problems to them. Even until now, their difficulties are not yet totally solved, although they are all over the age of seventy. Over the last ten years, some of them have continued petitioning the authorities, demanding different kinds of compensation, some demanding also the abrogation of Document 91.²⁹ Others, or the same ones, have made a contribution to the saving of their memory and the recording of the history of their movement, through books or through articles published on websites³⁰ although for those who are still fighting to obtain an improvement of their fate, this period is not yet closed, not yet history.

27. Yang Bin also raises this question in his paper (“We Want to Go Home!” 414). He is right to say that the success of the Yunnan movement was something new, but he insists on the specificity of the Yunnan situation and treats Yunnan as the exception, whereas the exception was in fact the failure of the Xinjiang *zhiqing*. In all other places the *zhiqing* were allowed to go back home.

28. Michel Bonnin, “Shanghai ou l’héritage douloureux du maoïsme.”

29. The different petitioning leaflets and court documents which they have produced are also an interesting source of unofficial material, which I have used in my research.

30. See, for example, the books by Xie Mingan and Wang Liangde et al. quoted in note 26.

Cautiously Optimistic Conclusion

It is then mainly thanks to the different unofficial materials quoted above that we can understand why the authorities had to solve the problem of the Rustication policy (because of the huge discontent it caused in the population and the trouble it had become even for the cadres in charge) and why they could not implement their plan of a gradual halt of the rustication policy and of a gradual return of the *zhiqing* excluding those who had been sent to state and military farms.

The real experience and the real feelings of the millions of rusticated youth were clearly exposed only after the end of the movement, but even before that, in fact even before Mao's death, some knowledge of this reality and some expressions of the rusticated youth's discontent were known outside China, especially thanks to the existence of Hong Kong, where the press published articles written and sent by people inside the mainland or who had arrived in Hong Kong legally or illegally.³¹ Interviews of *zhiqing* having escaped to the then British Colony were also a good source for getting information unavailable in the official Chinese publications.³² These articles sent to the Hong Kong press and the "little narratives"³³ of the interviewees were the first expressions of the aspiration to a popular memory which is now flourishing on the mainland. In the 1970s, when some scholars, including this author, were doing this kind of interviewing, they were often criticized for using "biased" sources by those who preferred to rely only on official sources. But, it was later proved that many official sources were in fact much more "biased" than the unofficial ones. To give an example concerning the *zhiqing*, there were official "*zhiqing* songs" expressing the determination of the youth to overcome all hardships and work for socialism in the countryside. But, thanks to popular memory, it was later discovered that the *zhiqing* in the countryside never sang those songs. They sang songs written by them, which were full of nostalgia for their places of origin and much less positive concerning the meaning of their stay in the countryside. The first place where those real "*zhiqing* songs" became known was in Hong Kong.³⁴

Since the 1990s, the aspiration of the generation of the Cultural Revolution to an authentic memory and an honest history of the period of their youth has become more and more obvious. There are now many outstanding contributions

31. It is in a Hong Kong magazine (*Nanbeiji*, no. 70, March 1976) that the first open rebellion of a large group of *zhiqing* was first reported. It happened on Mount Baiyun, near Guangzhou, in 1974. See Bonnin, *The Lost Generation*, 389–91.

32. Many scholars used this kind of interviews in their studies on Maoist China to obtain authentic information, completing and correcting the materials provided by official media. A partial list of works largely based on interviews of refugees in Hong Kong can be found in Michael Frolic, *Mao's People* (New Haven, CT: Harvard University Press, 1980), 257.

33. In a book published in French in 1979, Jean-François Lyotard contrasted the "grand narratives," designed to give a unified meaning and legitimation to everything from politics to science, with the "little narratives" or "private narratives" which do not pretend to explain everything but are full of authenticity and rich of inventiveness. See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984).

34. On these songs, see Bonnin, *The Lost Generation*, 349–54, 383–84.

made through different channels. On the other side, the ambition of the authorities of controlling the writing of history and the recording of memory is unabated, but even if the social impact on the new generations of the distorted history presented in a TV drama series like “Deng Xiaoping” is much greater in quantitative terms, the existence of pieces of real history contained in different forms of popular memory and historical recording seems to guarantee that those in the future who will want to know will be able to know. This is comforting for historians and a great satisfaction for those who lived through that period.

Bibliography

- Bernstein, Thomas. *Up to the Mountains, Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Bonnin, Michel. *The Lost Generation: The Rustication of China's Educated Youth (1968–1980)*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2013.
- Bonnin, Michel. “Shanghai et l’héritage douloureux du maoïsme: le destin de la ‘génération perdue’” [Shanghai and the painful legacy of Maoism: The Fate of the “Lost Generation”]. In *Shanghai*, edited by N. Idier, 931–72. Paris: Robert Laffont, 2010.
- Gu Hongzhang, and Hu Mengzhou, eds. *Zhongguo zhishi qingnian shangshan xiexiang shimo* [History of the rustication of Chinese educated youth]. Beijing: Zhongguo jiancha chubanshe, 1996.
- Gu Hongzhang, and Ma Kesen, eds. *Zhongguo zhishi qingnian shangshan xiexiang dashiji* [Chronicle of the rustication of Chinese educated youth]. Beijing: Zhongguo jiancha chubanshe, 1996.
- Laosanjie—Yu gongheguo tong xing* [The three graduation years—Walking together with the Republic]. Nanjing: Nanjing yinxiang chubanshe, 2001 (a series of 10 VCD with a booklet).
- Lishi zhuanzhe zhong de Deng Xiaoping* [Deng Xiaoping at a turning point of history], 48 episodes TV drama, 2014 (director: Wu Ziniu). Detailed presentation in Chinese at: http://www.tvmao.com/drama/L2MvKiU=.
- Liu Xiaomeng. *Zhongguo zhiqing koushushi* [Oral history of the Chinese educated youth]. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2004.
- Liu Xiaomeng. *Zhongguo zhiqing shi: Dachao (1968–1980)* [History of the Chinese educated youth: The great tide, 1968–1980]. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998.
- Luo Junsheng. “Deng Xiaoping zhongjie zhishi qingnian shangshan xiexiang yundong” [Deng Xiaoping puts an end to the Rustication Movement of Educated Youth]. *Dangshi zonglan* (“The scan of the CCP history”), no. 12 (2004): 4–10.
- Liotard, Jean-François. *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984.
- Pan Yihong. *Tempered in the Revolutionary Furnace: China's Youth in the Rustication Movement*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009.
- Qu Bo, and Luo Xiaowen, eds. *Jufeng guaguo yaredai yulin* [A hurricane passed over the subtropical forest]. Beijing: Zhongguo guoji shiyejia chubanshe, 2006.

- Sidane, Victor (collective penname). *Le Printemps de Pékin* [The Peking spring]. Paris: Gallimard (coll. Archives), 1980.
- Wan Qiang, and Lin Rong. “Deng Xiaoping yu zhishi qingnian shangshan xiexiang yundong” [Deng Xiaoping and the rustication movement]. *Dangshi Wenyuan* [Texts on the Party history], no. 11 (2004): 34–37.
- Wang Liangde et al. *Gebi shen chu de nahan* [Cries coming from the heart of the Gobi Desert]. Hong Kong: Zhongguo wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2008.
- Xie Mingan. *Xinjiang Shanghai zhishi qingnian shangshan xiexiang sishinian dashiji* [Forty years’ chronicle of the rustication of Shanghai educated youth to Xinjiang]. Zhuhai: Zhuhai chubanshe, 2008.
- Xu Diye. “Rang Deng Xiaoping tongzhi he women yidao shenghuo zai naduan lishi zhong” [Let Comrade Deng Xiaoping live together with us in that historical episode]. <http://news.163.com/14/0808/09/A346HH8300014AED.html>.
- Xu Fa. *Wo suo zhidao de zhiqing gongzuo* [What I know about the work concerning the educated youth]. No publisher, 1998.
- Xu Fa. *Yi bo san zhe—Xu Fa jingli jishi* [Twists and turns: Recording of Xu Fa’s experience]. Beijing: no publisher, 2008.
- Yang, Bin. “‘We Want to Go Home!’ The Great Petition of the Zhiqing, Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, 1978–1979.” *The China Quarterly* 198 (June 2009): 401–21.
- Zhao Fan. *Yi zhengcheng* [Remembering the journey of my mission]. Beijing: Zhongguo nongye chubanshe, 2003.
- Zhongguo laodong gongzi tongji ziliao, 1949–1985* [Statistical materials about labor and salary in China, 1949–1985]. Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1987.
- Zou Shengyong, ed. *Jianzheng lishi* [Witness to history]. Hong Kong: Zhongguo wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2008.

Contributors

(By order of chapter)

Jean-Philippe Béja is a senior research fellow emeritus at CNRS, Centre d'études et de recherches internationales (CERI-Sciences-Po) in Paris. He has been the scientific director of the CEFC in Hong Kong, and a visiting scholar at CASS institute of sociology. A political scientist, he specializes on relations between society and the Chinese Communist Party, and has extensively published on China's pro-democracy movement, as well as on Hong Kong politics. Among his major works is *A la recherche d'une ombre chinoise: le mouvement pour la démocratie en Chine (1919–2004)* (2010). He has edited *The Impact of China's 1989 Tiananmen Massacre* (2011) and co-edited with Fu Hualing and Eva Pils, *Liu Xiaobo, Charter 08 and the Challenges of Political Reform in China* (2012). He edited and partly translated an anthology of Liu Xiaobo's works, *La philosophie du porc et autres essais* (2011).

Wu Si, born in 1957, is currently the chair of the Unirule Institute of Economics. After graduating in 1982 from the Chinese Department of People's University, he worked as an editor for ten years at *Farmer's Daily* (Nongmin Ribao). He worked for seventeen years at *Yanhuang Chunqiu*, where he held the positions of chief editor and acting publisher. His main works include *Chen Yonggui: Mao's Peasant, Implicit Rules: The True Game in China's History*, and *The Law of Blood Feud: The Game of Survival in China's History*.

Jun Liu is an associate professor in the Department of Media, Cognition, and Communication and the Centre for Communication and Computing at University of Copenhagen, Denmark. His research areas cover political communication, information and communication technologies, and political sociology. He has articles published in *Mass Communication & Society*, *Television & New Media*, *Social Movement Studies*, and *China Perspectives*, among others. His research has won several awards, including the Best Dissertation Award, the Information Technology and Politics Section of American Political Science Association (2014), and the Best Paper Award, the 2014 International Communication Association Mobile Preconference.

Kirk A. Denton is professor of Chinese literature at The Ohio State University. He specializes in the fiction and literary criticism of the Republican period (1911–1949)

and in Chinese museums and issues of historical memory. Denton's works include *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893–1945* (edited collection, 1996) and *The Problematic of Self in Modern Chinese Literature: Hu Feng and Lu Ling* (1998). He is co-editor, with Michel Hockx, of *Literary Societies in Republican China* (2008) and editor of *The Columbia Companion to Modern Chinese Literature* (2016). He has published several articles and a book—*Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China* (2014)—on Chinese museums. Denton is editor of the journal *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* and manager of its sister MCLC Resource Center (<http://u.osu.edu/mclc/>).

Sebastian Veg is a professor (directeur d'études) of intellectual history and literature of twentieth-century China at the School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS), Paris and an honorary professor at the University of Hong Kong. He was director of the French Centre for Research on Contemporary China (CEFC) in Hong Kong and publisher of *China Perspectives* from 2011 to 2015. His interests are in twentieth-century Chinese intellectual history, literature, and political debates.

Judith Pernin is a visiting scholar at the Center for Chinese Studies (Taiwan National Central Library). Her PhD from the School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS, France) is entitled *Moving Images, Independent Practices of Documentary in China (1990–2010)* (Rennes University Press, 2015). She is also the co-editor of *Post-1990 Documentary, Reconfiguring Independence* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

A factory worker and member of the *Wuming (No Name)* underground art group during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, **Aihe Wang** received her PhD in history and anthropology from Harvard University in 1995. Since then, she has taught at Purdue University (USA) and the University of Hong Kong. Her research spans the fields of Chinese history and anthropology, with topics ranging from ancient cosmology to modern totalitarianism, and to art, subjectivity, and community in Mao's China. Representative publications include *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (second edition, 2006) and the *Wuming (No Name) Painting Catalogue*, thirteen volumes (2010). Her single-authored research articles are published in *Society*, *China Perspectives*, *Twenty-First Century*, *The Journal of Chinese Philosophy and Culture*, *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, *Asia Major*, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, *The Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, and *Journal of East Asian Archaeology*. She was a residential member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (2013), working on a book project on underground art during the Cultural Revolution.

Frank Dikötter is chair professor of humanities at the University of Hong Kong and Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. Before moving to Asia in 2006, he was professor of the modern history of China at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He has published a dozen books that have changed

the way we look at the history of China, most recently a “People’s Trilogy” that documented the impact of communism on the lives of ordinary people during the Mao era. The first volume, *Mao’s Great Famine*, won the BBC Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction in 2011 and was translated into thirteen languages. *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution 1945–1957* was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize in 2014. *The Cultural Revolution: A People’s History, 1962–1976* concludes the trilogy and was published in May 2016.

Daniel Leese is professor of modern Chinese history and politics at the University of Freiburg. He is the author of *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual during China’s Cultural Revolution* (2011) and *Die Chinesische Kulturrevolution, 1966–1976* (2016).

Michel Bonnin is a professor at the School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS), Paris. From 2011 to 2014, he was director of the Sino-French Studies Centre at Tsinghua University (Beijing). Since 2015, he has been teaching Chinese contemporary history at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In the 1970s in Hong Kong, he met a group of former rusticated youth from Guangdong Province and published in French a book of interviews concerning their experience. During the 1990s, he was the director of the French Research Centre on Contemporary China and of the journal *China Perspectives*, which he both founded in Hong Kong. In 2004, he published in French a book giving a global presentation of the rustication movement of China’s educated youth. It had two Chinese editions published in Hong Kong and Beijing and an English edition entitled *The Lost Generation: The Rustication of China’s Educated Youth (1968–1980)* (“Choice Outstanding Academic Title, 2014”).

Index

- agency (concept): 119, 162, 179.
- Ai Weiwei: 95, 155.
- Ai Xiaoming: 12, 143, 157–58.
- Annals of the Yellow Emperor* (Yanhuang chunqiu): 2, 10, 11, 14, 26–30, 32, 40, 43–60, 132.
- Anren: 80, 87–88, 90–91, 93, 96, 104–10.
- Anti-Rightist Campaign (Anti-Rightist Movement): 2, 5, 23, 25, 28, 29, 32–35, 37, 41, 46, 50, 96, 118, 121–24, 126, 134–36, 140, 144, 146, 149.
- April 5 (1976): 5, 6, 51.
- archives (archival): 2–3, 12–13, 35–36, 63, 66, 69, 71, 72, 75, 98, 101, 121, 124, 131–32, 142, 144–45, 147–57, 169, 184–85, 188–89, 191–92, 194, 200–203, 205, 218, 219, 227–28, 230.
- Arendt, Hannah: 123, 134.
- art: 3, 12, 24, 50, 80, 82, 87, 88, 107, 109–10, 137, 155, 158, 161–80, 190, 192, 198, 199, 236.
- authenticity: 10, 65, 67–69, 74–75, 77, 119, 136, 144, 147, 150–51, 154, 170, 175–77, 232.
- autobiography: 2–3, 13, 16, 26, 37–38, 86, 139, 144, 151, 153.
- Ba Jin: 81, 82, 105, 107, 116–17, 134–35.
- bad element: 27, 32, 37, 46, 208–9, 219.
- Beckett, Samuel: 187.
- Beihai Park: 164, 172.
- Beijing: 1, 2, 8, 25, 30, 31, 34, 35, 41, 51, 56–57, 68, 82, 84, 90, 92, 111, 125, 133–34, 138, 151, 162, 164–65, 169, 171–73, 175, 187, 189–90, 195, 198, 200–201, 212–16, 218–19, 222, 225, 227–30.
- Bian Zhongyun: 148–49.
- black market: 183–84, 186–88, 194, 205.
- body (human): 4, 7, 40, 69, 73, 148–49, 166, 168, 174, 177–79.
- Camus, Albert: 187.
- cannibalism: 44, 71, 128–30.
- Caocao (painting group): 169.
- Caochangdi (Documentary Film Workstation): 12, 14, 139, 157, 159.
- case files: 199–218.
- CCP (Chinese Communist Party): 13–15, 21–22, 24, 26–28, 30, 35, 38, 44–45, 47, 49–50, 52, 54–55, 57–58, 66–67, 71–73, 79, 81, 93–94, 96, 102, 105, 110, 125–26, 161, 174, 184, 196, 199, 202, 208, 210, 213, 214, 216, 219, 231.
- CCP Central Document Research Office: 44
- CCP Central Party History Research Office: 26–27, 45, 72, 79, 226.
- Chang, Jung: 186–87, 194–95, 197.
- chanhui* (confession, repentance): 53, 117, 128–29, 132, 135.
- Chen Duxiu: 27, 47.
- Chen Xiaolu: 2, 83.
- Chiang Ching-kuo: 30.
- China Central Television (CCTV): 93, 227.
- Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS): 32, 43–44, 59, 70, 170, 227.
- Chinese Communist Party: *see* CCP.
- civil society: 3, 10, 16, 33, 47.

- class background: 162, 193, 204, 206, 208, 212.
- class struggle: 23, 68, 212.
- cleansing the class ranks (*qingli jieji duiwu*) campaign: 51, 195, 206, 210.
- Clinton, Bill: 25.
- collective memory: 3, 6, 8, 16–18, 24, 62–64, 77–79, 88, 109–10, 115, 119, 155, 162, 163, 166, 170–74, 179.
- commemoration: 4, 6, 14, 21, 35, 62–63, 67, 68–69, 71, 75–77, 82, 100–101, 116, 118, 149, 155, 173.
- communicative memory: 117
- community: 3, 6, 8, 10, 62, 119, 162, 164, 169–70, 179, 184, 190–93.
- counter-memory: 16, 63, 77.
- counterrevolutionaries (including Campaign against): 26, 46, 50–51, 121, 123, 164, 187–88, 193, 195, 205–6, 207, 210, 213, 215–16.
- Cultural Revolution: 1–3, 5–6, 8–18, 21–23, 26, 29, 32–35, 38, 41, 46, 50–51, 53–55, 64, 68, 79–89, 92–110, 115–17, 119–23, 128, 135, 138–40, 142, 144, 146, 148–49, 156, 158, 161–80, 181–98, 200–219, 227, 230, 232.
- Dalian: 203–5, 207.
- dazibao*: 23, 228.
- Democracy Wall (1979): 5, 228, 231.
- Democratic Progressive Party (DPP): 92.
- democratization: 30, 33, 40.
- Deng Xiaoping: 5, 23, 41, 51, 55, 82, 93, 115, 118, 161, 196, 221–23, 228, 231, 233–34.
- Ding Dong: 30.
- Ding Huimin: 227–28.
- diorama: 101–2.
- dissident art: 165, 168.
- Djilas, Milovan: 187.
- documentary film: 2, 12, 21, 38, 66, 71, 81, 90, 93, 103, 106, 108, 137–60, 227.
- dossier (*dang'an*): 141, 159, 202, 204, 207.
- Du Daozheng: 26–27, 29–30, 47, 49.
- Du Xia: 173.
- Educated Youth (*zhiqing*, sent-down youth, Rusticated Youth): 2, 7–8, 13, 17, 17, 24, 34, 84, 86, 96, 100–101, 116–17, 120, 135, 141, 157, 162, 174, 175, 187, 198, 210, 220–34; employment problem: 221, 223; passive resistance (*zhiqing*): 225, 230; songs: 232; “wind of return”: 224, 230.
- ego-document: 199.
- evidence: 124–25, 143, 148, 150, 154–55, 200, 203, 205–6, 208–11, 213, 215–17.
- exhibition: 8, 81–82, 85, 89, 90, 92, 94–96, 98, 99–108, 162–66, 169, 170–74, 190.
- Fan Jianchuan: 80–81, 86–91, 93, 95, 98, 101, 103–5, 107–10.
- Feng Jicai: 98.
- Feng Zhe: 104–5, 107.
- Fengming: A Chinese memoir*: 12, 144, 149–52, 154, 156, 158.
- filmed testimony: 145–47, 150–52.
- Five-Anti Campaign: 23, 50, 205.
- Five Black Categories: 2, 15, 46, 126, 153.
- Folk Memory Project: 12, 14, 139–46, 150–56, 159–60.
- folk religion: 191.
- forbidden literature: 186–87.
- Four Cleanups: 50, 205.
- Four Types of People: 207–8.
- Gang of Four: 6, 22, 23, 51, 161, 202, 210–11, 213, 216, 221.
- Gao Yuan: 188, 197.
- General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP), State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT): 29, 47, 54–57.
- Gorbachev, Mikhail: 22.
- Great Famine: 2, 9, 10–12, 17, 28, 38–39, 43–46, 50, 59, 62, 64, 65–67, 70–79, 115–36, 145–46, 159.
- Great Leap Forward: 8, 11, 16, 21, 25, 28, 38–39, 46, 50, 84, 96, 105, 117–18, 122, 126, 135–36, 138–40, 203, 207–8.

- Grossman, Gregory: 183.
 Gu Hongzhang: 226, 233.
- Halberstam, David: 187
 Hankiss, Elemér: 183, 197–98.
 He Duoling: 100.
 He Fengming: see *Fengming*.
 He Shu: 34, 41, 227.
 hidden transcripts: 6, 10, 115, 119.
 historical knowledge: 13, 61–64, 69, 74–76, 142, 179.
 historical memory: 49, 81, 201, 108.
 historical nihilism: 14, 25, 41, 44, 57, 59, 134.
 Holocaust: 4, 16, 146, 156.
 Hong Kong: 169, 171, 176, 188–89, 214, 226–27, 232.
 Hong Zhenkuai: 43–44, 59.
 Hou Jun: 101.
 Hu Feng: 25, 32, 50.
 Hu Huishan: 94–95.
 Hu Jie: 2, 38, 138, 140, 143–44, 146–49, 151, 153–58.
 Hu Yaobang: 6, 23, 41.
 Hua Guofeng: 213, 228, 231.
- independent documentaries: 2, 12, 137–60.
 individual: 2, 9–11, 13, 31, 40, 46, 51, 62, 66, 69–71, 74–76, 100, 116–18, 120, 126–27, 130, 142–43, 145–46, 148, 154–55, 165–68, 170–75, 177, 179, 183, 185, 193, 197, 199–204, 206–8, 213, 215, 217.
 intellectuals: 5–9, 11–14, 16, 23–26, 30, 36, 39, 42, 46, 48, 50, 82, 115–20, 122, 126, 127–30, 133, 137, 150, 163, 177, 211–12, 223.
 internet: 1–3, 9–11, 14, 19, 24, 26, 29, 31, 34, 41, 43, 45, 47, 61–79, 110, 120–21, 134, 143, 151, 157, 222, 226–27.
 Isozaki Arata: 90
- Jia Zhangke: 138.
 Jiabiangou (Reeducation through Labor Camp): 10, 12, 118, 120–24, 126–27, 129–31, 133, 136, 138–50, 157.
- Jianchuan Museum Cluster (Jianchuan Museum): 80–111; Anren Bridge Museum: 105–7, 109; China Heroes Statues Square: 93–94; Daily Life Hall: 101–2; Badges, Clocks, and Seals Hall: 98–99, 102–4; Educated Youth Hall: 100; Flying Tigers Hall: 92, 95; Mirror Museum: 99.
- Jiang Qing: 23, 64, 79, 110, 172, 192.
 Jiang Wen: 117.
 June Fourth (1989): 24, 27, 55, 119, 135.
 justice (injustice): 81, 89, 105–6, 123, 135, 142, 155, 158, 211, 212.
- Kerouac, Jack: 187.
 Kunming (Yunnan): 86, 228.
 Kuomintang, KMT, Nationalist Party: 21–22, 27–28, 38, 50, 54, 92–93, 95, 151, 205.
- label (political): 26–27, 32, 37–38, 44, 50, 121, 123–24, 126, 138, 140, 149, 151, 205–9, 211, 215.
 Land Reform: 2, 7, 15, 21, 23, 34, 41, 50, 117, 134, 145, 204.
 Lei Feng: 62, 64, 67–68, 72, 74, 77–78, 178.
 Lenin: 22, 23, 32, 52–53, 152, 186, 196–97.
 Li Shan: 166.
 Liao Bokang: 83.
 Liao Gailong: 45, 59.
 Liaoning: 203, 208–9.
 Lien Chan: 92.
 Lin Biao: 6, 23, 51, 161, 174, 186, 189, 196.
 Lin Zhao: 2, 38, 138, 140, 146–47, 157.
 Lin Zhibo: 66, 73, 75.
 literacy: 185–86.
 Liu Jiakun: 90–91, 109.
 Liu Shahe: 98.
 Liu Shaoqi: 51, 209–10, 213, 215.
 Liu Shi: 173.
 Liu Wencai: 87–88, 110.
 Liu Xiaobo: 40–41, 56, 117, 135, 235.
 Liu Xiaomeng: 227, 230, 233.
 Liu Zaifu: 117, 135.
 Long March: 50.

- Looking at History* (*Kan lishi*, also *National History*): 2, 26, 30.
- Looking for Lin Zhao's Soul*: 2, 138, 140, 146–47, 157.
- Lu Xinhua: 115.
- Lu Xun: 128.
- Lytard, Jean-François: 232–33.
- Ma Kelu: 172–74.
- main melody film: 94.
- Mao badges: 86, 98, 99, 106.
- Mao Zedong (person): 5, 8, 15, 22–23, 29, 32–33, 39, 41, 45, 50–51, 53, 59, 62, 66–68, 82–83, 86, 101, 125, 128, 147, 152–53, 161, 164, 166, 180, 183, 185–86, 189, 191, 194, 197, 210, 215, 221, 229.
- martyr: 83–84, 95, 105, 149.
- May 16 circular: 1, 51.
- May 16 conspiracy: 213–15.
- May Seventh Cadre Schools: 185, 194.
- Medvedev, Roy: 22.
- memoirs: 3, 12–13, 16, 26, 35–36, 66, 70, 73, 82, 119, 121, 130–34, 138, 144–45, 149–54, 158, 184, 187–88, 195–96, 198, 212, 220, 222, 225–27, 230.
- Memorial (association): 22, 31, 33.
- memory: *see* collective memory, communicative memory, counter-memory, historical memory, popular memory, public memory, social memory.
- Mengding (Yunnan): 225, 227, 229.
- Mengla (Yunnan): 229.
- minjian* (*see also* unofficial): 3, 30, 31, 36, 108, 122, 137, 139, 157.
- mnemonic (practices): 62–63, 65–66, 69–71, 75–76, 78.
- modernism: 119, 163, 166, 168–69.
- modernity: 8, 15, 116, 165–71, 178.
- monopoly: 6, 24, 34–35, 40, 71, 75, 119, 154, 220, 230.
- Morozov, Pavlik: 194.
- Mr. Zhang Believes*: 140, 144, 151, 153, 157.
- Museum of Modern Chinese Literature: 82.
- Museum of the Cultural Revolution: 81–82, 85.
- museum supermarket: 81, 91.
- museum: 9–11, 14, 17, 64, 69, 80–111, 116, 144, 156.
- music (*see also* opera): 71, 93, 162–63, 189, 192, 198.
- Nanfang Media Group (Southern Media Group): 10, 56, 129, 132, 134.
- National Museum of China: 82, 86.
- neoliberalism: 81, 83, 89, 97, 107.
- New Left: 8, 50, 59.
- New Man: 166, 177.
- 1966, My Time as a Red Guard*: 2, 138, 140, 142, 147, 158.
- official art: 162–64, 168.
- official history (official narrative): 1–3, 5, 8, 10–11, 13, 17, 21–23, 26–27, 29–31, 40, 43, 46, 48, 59, 62–64, 66–75, 81–82, 87, 89, 92–92, 95, 102–3, 105–6, 115, 118–20, 122–23, 132, 139, 142–45, 147–48, 154–55, 161, 177, 179, 184, 194, 197, 199, 200, 203, 218, 220–26, 228–32.
- one-party rule: 24–28, 37, 196–97.
- One Strike, Three Anti Campaign: 29, 188, 209.
- opera: 152, 163, 192–93, 198.
- oral history: 1–4, 13, 31, 139, 143, 146, 227, 233.
- Orwell, George: 24.
- painting: 12, 80, 100, 157, 161–80, 190, 198.
- Pan Yihong: 221, 233.
- Peng Dehuai: 28, 39, 42.
- Peng Qi'an: 85.
- Peng Zhen: 212.
- People's Commune: 8, 16, 39, 73, 89, 103, 105, 118, 124, 127, 185, 189, 192, 211.
- People's Daily*: 1, 48, 61, 66, 76, 78, 103–4, 117, 130, 135, 185, 189, 223, 225, 225, 226–29.
- People's Liberation Army (PLA): 50–51, 58, 65, 78, 92–93, 122, 140, 152, 165–66, 188–89, 192, 196.

- perpetrator: 106, 116, 118, 125, 212–13, 216–17.
- personal archives: 144, 147, 149, 151.
- petitioning: 228–31.
- Phoenix TV: 48, 93, 103, 103, 227.
- popular memory: 3, 5, 8–12, 15, 46, 61, 77, 143, 220, 222, 232–33.
- private art: 162, 164–71, 174, 179.
- private museum: 80–81, 89, 107, 111.
- propaganda: 7, 21, 28, 56, 61, 67–69, 74, 87, 94, 96, 104, 106, 142–43, 147–48, 166, 185, 187, 189, 190, 192–94, 210, 220, 224, 229.
- protest: 5, 61, 127, 141, 191, 222–23, 227–30.
- provincial annals (*shengzhi*): 225.
- public history: 162, 169–70, 173–75, 178.
- public memory: 11, 43, 46, 49, 53–54, 57, 63, 64, 77–78.
- public sphere: 4, 6, 9–13, 16, 31, 46, 119–20, 130, 132–34, 136, 143, 162, 179.
- Qi Benyu: 214–15.
- Qi Zhi: *see* Wu Di.
- Qiu Jiongiong: 151–53, 158.
- Qu Qiubai: 27.
- radio: 29, 56, 61, 188–89, 205.
- rebels (Cultural Revolution): 102, 191, 200, 212–17, 228.
- Red Guards: 2, 24, 34–35, 40, 51, 83–84, 101, 109–10, 138, 140, 142, 144, 147, 158, 184, 186, 189, 195, 210, 213, 219.
- reeducation through labor (*laojiao*): 10, 21, 26, 37, 117, 121–23, 128–29, 134, 158, 184–85, 191, 194, 207.
- reenactment: 4, 142, 154.
- Reform and Opening: 6, 52–53, 55, 197, 208, 211, 219, 221.
- reform through labor (*laogai*): 32, 123.
- rehabilitation (*pingfan*): 1, 13, 16, 22–23, 26–27, 41, 51, 83, 116, 118, 141, 211, 216.
- religion: 7, 51, 103, 122, 125, 128, 149, 166, 184, 191–93, 198.
- Remembrance (Jiyi)*: 2, 26, 34–35, 41, 83, 227.
- remolding: 207.
- Rent Collection Courtyard: 87–88.
- resistance (under Mao era): 6, 12, 21–22, 38–40, 42, 51, 128, 146, 207, 225, 230.
- “Resolution on certain questions in the history of our Party since the Foundation of the PRC” (1981 resolution): 5, 6, 15, 23, 34, 43, 52, 55, 102, 111, 115–18, 161, 180, 199, 200.
- revolutionary subject: 166–67.
- rightist: 2, 5, 10, 15, 21, 23–26, 28–29, 32–41, 46, 50, 52, 96, 118, 121–26, 131, 134–36, 138, 140, 144, 146, 149, 151–52, 156, 158, 177, 200, 208–9.
- Roginsky, Arseny: 22, 33.
- Rustication Movement (*shangshan xiexiang yundong*): 220–23, 227, 229, 230, 233–34 (*see also* Educated Youth).
- Salinger, J. D.: 187.
- samizdat* (*ziyinshu*, self-printed books): 2, 9, 11, 17, 26, 36, 38, 120, 226.
- scar literature (*shanghen wenxue*): 6–7, 11, 100, 115–17, 119, 128, 133, 140.
- schooling system (home schooling): 193, 222.
- sex: 195–96, 198.
- Shamiakin, Ivan: 187.
- Shandong: 185, 188, 192, 204, 206.
- Shanghai: 13, 86, 102, 121, 141, 156–57, 169, 171–72, 185, 188–89, 193, 195, 198, 221, 228–31, 233–34.
- Shanghai Youth*: 141, 156–57.
- Shao Yanxiang: 98.
- Shapingba Park: 83–84.
- Shenyang: 208–10.
- Shirer, William: 187.
- Sichuan: 31–32, 37, 43, 59, 80, 87, 90, 98, 152, 155, 186, 188, 194, 228.
- social media: 1, 9, 11, 14, 61–79, 132, 138, 140.
- social memory, social remembering: 11, 62–66, 69, 75–79.

- socialist realism: 164, 166, 190.
 Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr: 151, 187.
 Song Binbin: 2, 83.
 Southern Media Group: see *Nanfang*.
 speculation and profiteering: 29, 204–5.
 speech crimes: 208–9.
 staging: 7, 15, 137, 144, 149, 150, 154, 212.
 Stalin: 13, 16, 22, 32–33, 52–53, 152,
 186–87, 194, 210.
 Stars (Painting Group): 164–65, 169.
 state (or military) farms: 196, 223–25,
 228–32.
 subjectivity: 53, 141, 157, 162, 165–66, 168,
 170, 175–76.
suku (narrating bitterness): 7, 120, 127–28,
 133.
 Sun Jingxian: 43–45, 59, 132.

 Taiwan: 30, 56, 70, 92, 122, 151, 180.
 Tan Chanxue: 24, 38–41.
 Tang Jianguang: 30–31.
Though I am Gone: 140, 144, 148, 151.
 Three-Anti Campaign: 50.
 Tiananmen democracy movement (1989):
 9, 11, 25, 33, 109 (see also June Fourth).
 Tie Liu: 24, 31–34, 40–41.
Tiny Scars of the Past (Wangshi weihen): 26,
 31–33.
 trauma: 1, 3–4, 6–7, 9, 11, 15, 17–18, 21,
 81–82, 89, 105, 107, 118–20, 128,
 134–37, 155, 170, 180.
 Trotsky: 27, 50, 187.
 Truman, Harry: 187.
 TV drama (about Deng Xiaoping): 222,
 233.

 underground: 2–4, 6, 13, 16, 26, 50, 161–65,
 168–70, 173–74, 179–80, 183–84, 186,
 188–91, 193, 198, 204, 225.
 underground art, artists: 161–80, 190, 193,
 198.
 underground clubs: 193
 underground reading: 186, 190.
 unjust, false, and mistaken verdicts: 13, 200,
 202, 219.

 unofficial: 1–3, 9–14, 17, 23, 25–27, 29,
 30–33, 35–37, 40, 46, 64, 121–22, 132,
 137–39, 144–45, 148–49, 153–55,
 162, 169, 173, 179, 181, 220–21, 224,
 226–32.
 USSR: 22, 49, 54, 67, 72, 187–88, 194–95.

 victim: 6–8, 13–14, 22–24, 26, 28–29,
 31–33, 36–37, 40, 46, 58, 94–95, 104,
 107, 116–20, 122, 125, 127–28, 134–35,
 144, 148–49, 155, 162, 175, 179, 191,
 195, 202, 216–17, 224.

 Wang Aihe (paintings): 178, 190, 198.
 Wang Bing: 12, 137–38, 141, 144, 149–51,
 156–58.
 Wang Keping: 165.
 Wang Qishan: 33.
 Wang Shiwei: 27.
 Wang Shuo: 117.
 Wang Xiaobo: 117.
 Wang Zhen: 225, 228–29, 231.
 War of Resistance against Japan (War of
 Resistance): 21, 27, 50, 87, 89–90,
 92–95, 108.
 War of Resistance Memorial Hall: 92.
 Watchman Nee: 191, 198.
 Weibo: 14, 44, 61–79.
 Wen Jize: 27, 29, 42.
 Wenchuan Earthquake: 89, 94–95, 155.
 Wu De: 213, 219.
 Wu Di: 34–35, 41, 227.
 Wu Wenguang: 2, 12, 137–38, 140–42,
 145–47, 157–58, 160.
 Wuming (No Name): 161–62, 164–72, 176,
 178–80, 190, 198.

 Xi Jinping: 33, 35.
 Xiao Ke: 27, 47.
 Xie Tao: 28, 32, 42, 52, 59.
 Xing Tonghe: 90.
 Xinjiang: 13, 56, 141, 221, 227, 229, 230–31,
 234.
 Xinyang incident (Anhui): 124–25, 127.
 Xishuangbanna (Yunnan): 225–29, 234.

- Xu Fa: 226, 234.
- Yan Lianke: 11–12, 24, 42, 118, 120, 122, 125, 128–29, 132, 134, 136.
- Yan'an: 27, 35, 50, 192.
- Yang Jisheng: 2, 10, 12, 14–15, 28, 30, 42–43, 48, 59, 60, 72, 79, 118, 120, 121–27, 130–31, 133, 135–36.
- Yang, Rae: 195–96, 198.
- Yang Xianhui: 12, 118, 120–21, 123–24, 126, 128–31, 135–36, 150, 157.
- Yang Yushu: 167, 173.
- Yanhuang Chunqiu*: see *Annals*.
- Yao Dengshan: 214.
- Ye Feng: 227.
- Yue Minjun: 83.
- Yunnan: 51, 100, 150, 156, 222, 224–31.
- Yuyuantan Park: 165.
- Zhai Zhenhua: 186, 192, 198.
- Zhang Hongbing: 195.
- Zhang Lei: 97–98.
- Zhang Side: 178.
- Zhang Wei: 163, 165, 173–74, 239.
- Zhang Xianliang: 98, 128.
- Zhang Yimou: 21, 83.
- Zhang Yonghe: 90, 105.
- Zhang Zhaoqing: 213–14.
- Zhang Zhixin: 23.
- Zhao Fan: 222, 226, 228–30, 234.
- Zhao Wenliang: 167, 173.
- Zhao Ziyang: 27, 29, 228.
- Zheng Zigang: 174–75.
- Zhi Liang: 117.
- Zhou Enlai: 6, 51, 213–15.
- Zhou Gucheng: 27.
- Zhu Rongji: 25.
- Zhuo Fei: 195, 198.