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Frederick C. Teiwes and Warren Sun. *The End of the Maoist Era: Chinese Politics during the Twilight of the Cultural Revolution, 1972-1976*. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2007. xxii + 705 pp. \$98.95 (hardcover), ISBN-13: 978-0-7656-1096-6.

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Reviewed for H-Diplo by **Yafeng Xia**, Long Island University

The study of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in the West started in the early years of the Cultural Revolution (CR). Starting in the 1970s, Roderick MacFarquhar and Stuart Schram produced the earliest works.¹ MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals' co-authored book, *Mao's Last Revolution*, published in 2006 has been hailed as the first grand synthesis of the history of the CR. The book offers a full-length narrative of the Cultural Revolution from the eve of the CR to the arrest of the Gang of Four (including Mao Zedong's wife Jiang Qing and her close radical Shanghai allies Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan) in October 1976, a month after Mao's death, the official end-date of the CR.²

The book under review covers the last four years of the CR, 1972-1976. Significant events include the aftermath of the Lin Biao Affairs, the re-emergence of Deng Xiaoping, the rise of Wang Hongwen, the Zhou Enlai's political setbacks in 1973-1974, the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, Deng Xiaoping's Comprehensive Consolidation program in 1975, the deaths of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong in 1976 and succession struggles, and the purge of the Gang of Four. Making use of a wide array of Chinese language sources, including biographies of Mao and Zhou, chronologies of Zhou and Deng, memoirs and reminiscences (*huiyilu*) by high-ranking leaders, documentary sources published within and outside China, publications by Chinese Communist Party historians who have access to classified sources, reportage literature (*jishi wenxue*), and authors' interviews with

¹ Stuart Schram, *Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1973; Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*. 3 vols. (published serially in 1974, 1983 and 1997 by Columbia University Press).

² For more on this, See Yafeng Xia's review of Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2006), *The Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 10, No. 2, Spring 2008, pp. 108-116.

people who were involved in the historical process and party historians, the authors set forth “to distinguish ‘fact’ from ‘fiction’ ... noting alternative views, gaps in the record, and uncertainties and conflicting claims concerning specific developments.” (p. xix) The authors adopt “an elite-centered approach”, examining “how Mao’s conflicted view of the Cultural Revolution played out in the political development of 1972-1976, and in the process it reveals a dynamics of leadership politics during this period of great conflict ...” (p. 5) In the end, the authors believe that they “have corrected many misleading perceptions of elite politics at the end of the Mao era, have significantly advanced an accurate reconstruction of that politics, and have identified the basic dynamics of leadership interaction during these dramatic years.” (p. xix)

While *Mao’s Last Revolution* is aimed at college students and the lay public, this 700-plus-page book is obviously for specialists. Individual chapters could serve as reference works for graduate students and scholars on specific topic. What does the book add to what we have already known about the CR?

The authors introduce new interpretations of several important events of the period. According to the authors, 1) Deng and Jiang Qing got along well for most of 1974 (pp. 14, 72, 180, 186); 2) Deng Xiaoping played no role in the transfers of eight powerful military commanders in December 1973 (pp. 143-44); 3) Post-Mao CCP historiography emphasizing the role of senior revolutionaries, such as Ye Jianying in purging the “Gang of Four” is a distortion. They argue that Mao’s appointed successor Hua Guofeng played the leading role. They write, “Hua was not the weak leader depicted by Deng-era orthodoxy, whose backbone had to be stiffened by Ye Jianying” (pp. 619-20); 4) The authors question whether there actually was a “Gang of Four” in the sense of a coherent political force. They argue that there was no integrated nature of radical forces at the end of the Maoist era. These interpretations are interesting and revealing, but not conclusive. (p. 619)

While the book provides important insights on major foreign policy events, notably Zhou Enlai’s political setbacks at the Politburo meetings in 1973, and the Politburo debate regarding dispatching Deng Xiaoping to the UN in April 1974, it does not offer a coherent explanation of the drastic shift in Chinese foreign policy stances and Mao’s changing psyche in the 1970s. The authors write, “By early 1969 ... Mao introduced a new foreign policy framework of rallying a broad coalition of international forces – especially nation-states of any stripe from European democracies to the Greek military junta to third dictatorships – against the two superpowers”. (pp. 54-55) This is the essence of Mao’s theory of “three worlds”, which didn’t come to prominence until early 1974. There were major variations in Mao’s policy pronouncement between 1969 and 1974. For example, future scholarship needs to explain how Mao shifted his stance from “alliance with the United States to deter the Soviet Union (*lianMei kangSu*),” to “the theory of ‘three worlds’ (*sange shijie lilun*)” which held high the banner of “opposition to both of the two superpowers (*fandui liangge chaoji daguo*).” During the period, Mao was still vacillating between détente and revolution – between seeking a policy of rapprochement with the

United States and fomenting world revolution. When Mao proposed his “horizontal line” proposal, a geo-political complex of countries he termed a ‘strategic line’, which extended from Europe, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, to China, Japan and the United States against the Soviet Union, to Henry Kissinger, the U.S. National Security Advisor during a meeting on 17 February 1973, the United States did not play along. Mao soon found that his “a horizontal line” proposal was not a realistic goal. Mao was disheartened to see the frequency of U.S.-Soviet summits resulting in positive outcome as evidenced by the signing of treaties. The authors’ claim, “This horizontal line” rationale remained the basis of PRC foreign policy until the mid-1980s” (p. 87) is not true.

By early 1974, Mao needed a new framework as China’s standing in the Soviet-American Cold War structure was changing. Failed efforts to ignite world revolution let Mao to question his grouping of all “imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries” as enemies. This change in Mao’s attitude resulted in the slogan of “anti-two superpowers.” The slogan of “down with imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries of all countries,” was modified. Now, from the angle of the international united front, it was necessary to separate social relations from international relations. The criterion was anti-U.S. and anti-Soviet Union—the two superpowers. Thus, the reactionaries of all countries became the natural objects to win over.

Mao first proposed his theory of “three worlds” with Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda on 22 February 1974. As the theory of “three worlds” was closely related to China’s foreign policy and China’s effort to establish an international united front, Mao was eager to have his new concept presented to the world at an important international meeting. Thus Mao decided to send an experienced and trusted high-level official for this mission. Mao’s decision to appoint Deng Xiaoping to head the Chinese delegation was primarily because of his trust in Deng’s ability and his belief that Deng was the best person for the mission. Thus, the reviewer cannot agree with the authors that this was not “a big issue” for Mao. (p. 182)

Notwithstanding some minor quibbles, this is a major contribution to the study of the history of the Cultural Revolution. It deserves the attention of all who are interested in this important subject.

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