

the Armed Forces and secured the passage of permanent fair employment practice legislation. "The most unexpected and cruelest wound has come from the dagger blow of a trusted friend," one segregationist howled.

But the Dixiecrats could not deny Truman the nomination in 1948, nor could the creation of the States Rights Party and Strom Thurmond's candidacy prevent "Give 'Em Hell" Harry's election. While Truman himself remained highly conservative and resistant to "social equality" for blacks, his actions, Leuchtenburg notes, launched "a chain of events that made the greater achievements of the 1960s possible."

THOSE ACHIEVEMENTS were shepherded to fruition by Lyndon Johnson, who reassured Southern audiences of his soundness on Southern rights in a down-home accent that grew thicker the farther South he traveled during the 1960 campaign, and who had a record of watering down civil rights legislation in the Senate. But when this flawed giant became President, the first from the South since Woodrow Wilson and only the second since 1865, something shifted.

Attuned to the direction of national opinion—and probably possessed of a genuine belief that the time for justice had arrived—Johnson pushed through Congress both the Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts of 1964 and 1965, respectively, that ended—legally, at least—a century of disfranchisement and segregation. Some of us who are old enough may remember shedding happy tears when, facing Congress and a national TV audience, he boldly quoted the unofficial anthem of the civil rights movement—"and we shall overcome."

Alas, even before sinking into the quagmire of Vietnam and enduring the urban riots of the '60s, Johnson sensed that his own career

would not survive the head-on confrontation with racism. On the night of his landslide 1964 election victory over Senator Barry M. Goldwater of Arizona, he told his young press secretary, Bill Moyers, "I think we just delivered the South to the Republican Party for a long time to come."

Indeed, the Second Reconstruction created a new South, for better or for worse. Certainly for better in embracing modern mores that ruled out the segregation of the past—though to be sure, racism, poverty and economic injustice are far from dead there or elsewhere in America. The new order, as one historian quoted by Leuchtenburg observes, was not a result of "unguided market forces alone. . . . It required national political leadership, working in tandem with the civil rights movement, to bring about the demise of the old order."

Breaking the grip of the past is not always universally popular. Some, like myself, lament the loss in our homogenized 21st century of distinctive patterns of Southern language and culture that, unlike segregation, deserve respect and preservation. A native New Yorker who taught at Columbia University before moving 25 years ago to the Uni-

versity of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Leuchtenburg believes, contrary to popular opinion, that the pleasanter aspects of Southern folkways still exist.

Nevertheless, I finished *The White House Looks South* with a feeling of sadness. FDR's accomplishments were made possible in part by the firm base of the old solid Democratic South, which allowed relatively risk-free political cultivation of Left-leaning constituencies. Now it is Re-

publican Social Darwinists who enter each election cycle with a guaranteed vote from the old Confederacy, and that

phenomenon has nudged the general political discourse Rightward. As they say, no good deed goes unpunished.

Inside the Great Shipwreck

Mao: The Unknown Story

By Jung Chang and Jon Halliday
Knopf.

832 pp. \$35.00.

Reviewed by

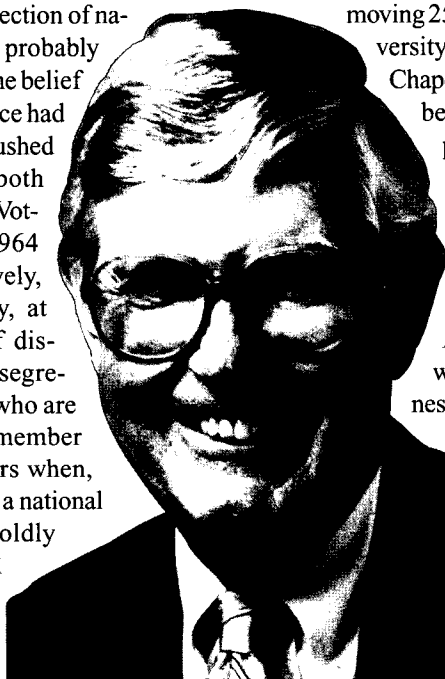
Thomas P. Bernstein

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GETTING MAO ZEDONG right has been a formidable challenge. Not so long ago he was hailed as a philosopher-king, the creator of an egalitarian, nonbureaucratic state, and a poet who disarmingly described himself as a "monk under a leaky umbrella." Now he is widely seen as a member of the monstrous trinity that includes Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin, and as responsible for more deaths than either of them. But does recognizing Mao as a bloody tyrant capture the range of his leadership during China's long-drawn-out Communist revolution (1928-49), or provide a full understanding of the 27 years (1949-76) he ruled the People's Republic of China (PRC)?

The question is raised by the publication of Jung Chang and Jon Halliday's *Mao: The Unknown Story*. Chang is the author of the acclaimed family memoir *Wild Swans* (1991), and Jon Halliday is a Russian-speaking British scholar. Their book, complete with a 14-page list of interviews conducted in China and 37 other countries, is the product of a heroic decade of research. They combed through Soviet archives and had unspecified access to Chinese archives. A 44-page Bibliography of primary and secondary sources suggests that they read almost every word ever written by or about their subject.

These prodigious labors yield a dis-



WILLIAM E. LEUCHTENBURG

mal picture of the Communist Party Chairman. Mao, the authors claim, was motivated entirely by a lust for power. He schemed, betrayed, tortured, killed, and drove presumed rivals to suicide. His chief weapon, whether dealing with his entourage or society, was terror. Early on he began to take pleasure in the torture killings of his enemies.

After his second-in-command, Liu Shaoqi, offered a blistering critique of the Great Leap Forward in 1962, Mao nurtured a "volcanic hatred" of him. It erupted four years later, during the Cultural Revolution. He delighted in learning about the cruel public humiliation of his erstwhile lieutenants as they had their arms bent backward in the painful "jet plane" position. In the early 1970s, fearing that Prime Minister Zhou Enlai—his most "loyal slave"—might outlive him, Mao denied Zhou treatment for bladder cancer until it was too late.

As a military leader, Mao comes across as a serial bungler who repeatedly led the Communists to defeat. He did not himself devise the famous strategy of surrounding the cities and taking them only at the last stage of the struggle for power. Eager to seize cities at any cost, he brought huge losses to his forces, as he had before on the Long March. In the pivotal conflict over Manchuria (the Northeast), he laid siege to the city of Changchun, starving the population and causing more deaths than the Japanese had during the 1937 Rape of Nanking. In the Korean War, he ordered the "Chinese People's Volunteers" to advance southward far beyond their supply lines, again incurring large unnecessary losses.

Mao's megalomania resulted in an overriding preoccupation with his "superpower program" and its objective—"to rule the world." His relations with the Soviet Union in the 1950s revolved around his quest to obtain modern military technology. When in 1955 the Soviets agreed to provide nuclear technology, "Mao was ecstatic." But subsequently the Russians concluded he was too dangerous to be trusted and stopped their assistance.

THE AUTHORS reject the widely accepted thesis that Mao came to power with at least some genuine peasant sup-

port. Instead, they contend that Mao oppressed, dragooned and exploited the peasants, forcing them to support the Communists. Early in the PRC's history, they add, Mao foisted a ruthless grain requisitioning program on peasants to finance military construction, and plunged them into "utter misery."

At the same time, it is noted, Mao insisted on special privileges for himself. Even during the revolution, far from living the austere life of a guerrilla fighter, he occupied the most luxurious dwellings available. Over much of the Long March he was carried by his servants, who suffered atrociously. Throughout his rule, he had villas built all over the country at great cost that he rarely occupied. In addition, we are told he was a thoroughly disgusting person who never bathed, maltreated his wives, and led a grotesque imperial-style sex life.

Confronted by Chang and Halliday's portrait, one must at least ask whether it is the whole story. That is, if Mao was motivated solely by a lust for power, if he could not do anything right, and if the only bond between him and his followers was fear, how could he have inspired the commitment from his lieutenants essential to revolutionary triumph and the pursuit of his massive social projects?

The overwhelming authority Mao possessed in 1949 was rooted in his achieving victory over Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists against all odds. The authors neglect to examine Mao's status as founder of the People's Republic and leader of the nation. A year later, the Chinese people proudly watched their troops expel the United Nations expeditionary force from North Korea. That was the first time a Chinese army had beaten a Western army, and many Chinese saw it as a historic watershed, signifying the end to "100 years of humiliation" at the hands of imperialist powers. The authors do grant that China's test of

its first atom bomb in 1964 elicited "genuine exultation" from the Chinese, but give short shrift to the import of that sentiment.

Chang and Halliday barely mention that in the 1950s the U.S. threatened to use nuclear weapons against the PRC, as did the Soviet Union in the late 1960s. The Chinese had real enemies, and from their perspective it was not unreasonable to view atomic weapons as an essential deterrent. Mao once said, "without the bomb people just won't listen to you." Whatever nostalgia for him persists in China today partly stems from his record of standing up to foreign powers.

The authors further obscure an accurate understanding of Mao by quoting selectively. Consider the case of the peasants. Yes, Mao did harness them to his construction projects and he willingly sub-



JON HALLIDAY AND JUNG CHANG

jected them to harsh exploitation. Yes, he was responsible for the Great Leap Forward famine, an unspeakable catastrophe that left 30 to 40 million people dead. Was the latter comparable to Stalin's deliberate use of mass famine in 1933 to crush peasant resistance? The authors harbor no doubts. "Mao knowingly starved and worked these millions of people to death." The title of their chapter on the Great Leap is a Mao quotation, "Half of China May Well Have to Die." But in context that remark sounds less bloodthirsty.

At the end of 1958, the first year of the Great Leap, Mao tried to moderate excesses that had led to epidemics and to deaths from overwork and inadequate

food. While talking with provincial Party chiefs about the massive irrigation and industrial construction projects that were a hallmark of the Leap, he said if all the projects were tackled simultaneously, "half of China's population unquestionably will die; and if it is not half, it will be a third or 10 per cent, a death toll of 50 million people." Mao then pointed to the example of a provincial Party secretary who had been dismissed for failing to prevent famine, adding: "If with a death toll of 50 million you didn't lose your jobs, I at least should lose mine; whether I should lose my head would also be in question. . . . It's quite all right to do a lot, but make it a principle to have no deaths."

That is not, of course, to suggest the idea of working peasants to a point short of death is not shocking in itself, or that it is forgivable in the eyes of history. Moreover, the authors are correct to point out that in the fall of 1959 Mao abandoned any concern for the peasants when he revived Great Leap extremism and caused the single largest death toll of his reign.

THE EVIDENCE suggests that Mao was cruel, deranged by ideology and tragically delusional in his ambitions for China—not that he purposely condemned tens of millions of peasants to death from starvation. There were good reasons why he would not do so. The promise that Communist rule had ended China's long history of famines was a core part of its claim to legitimacy. On the practical side, Mao frequently dwelt on the need to maintain peasants' capacity to work, labeled "their enthusiasm for production." Starvation was hardly the way to accomplish this.

When Mao learned the dimensions of the Great Leap catastrophe in the fall of 1960, he was deeply shaken. He supported major remedial measures, including long-term, large-scale imports of grain from Australia and Canada that began in 1961. The authors make much of food exports as a cause of famine, but merely hint at the imports—at one point charging that the regime sent the Canadian grain to its then ally Albania rather than feed its own people.

Mao: The Unknown Story, it should be

noted, unfairly derides both the Kuomintang and the Americans. Chiang Kai-Shek is said to have allowed the Communists to survive their Long March because he wanted to protect his son, then a hostage in the Soviet Union. Chiang later lost the civil war because of "moles, betrayals and poor leadership." As for the U.S., General George C. Marshall, President Harry S. Truman's emissary to the peace talks between the two sides, contributed "significantly to Mao's conquest of China," say Chang and Halliday, thereby providing fresh grist to the "Who lost China?" school of yore. And, in the 1970s, President Richard M. Nixon was taken in by Mao and his wily premier, Zhou Enlai.

Getting Mao Zedong right clearly remains a formidable challenge. It is truly a pity that this immense research effort did not yield a more balanced and insightful picture.

How Prosperity Can Promote Virtue

The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth

By Benjamin M. Friedman
Knopf.

570 pp. \$35.00.

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THE IDEA of a natural harmony governing the world, whereby material benefits are also morally good and vice versa, has long exerted a powerful attraction. It is easy to understand why. Life's decisions and judgments would be much simpler if actions that were good in one respect were good in all respects, and those that were detrimental in one significant dimension had no offsetting advantages in other arenas. This perspective became popular during the 18th-century

Enlightenment, when evidence that laws hold sway over the physical realm led many to embrace the view that there is a natural self-regulating order to the universe conducive to progress.

Hence those like Montesquieu, who were impressed with the enormous wealth being generated in the New World by the large slave plantations producing sugar, offered a rationale—racist in character—for why slavery might be considered moral. Another believer in a natural harmony, Adam Smith, who was disturbed by the cruelty of a system he judged to be fundamentally immoral, struggled to explain how slavery could be inefficient yet still flourish in competition with free labor.

Benjamin M. Friedman's new book continues the Enlightenment tradition. It presents a subtle, wide-ranging argument that economic growth not only boosts material living standards but promotes moral improvement. Recognizing that notions of what constitutes a moral society vary widely, the author is explicit about what he regards as its central elements: "openness of opportunity, tolerance, economic and social mobility, fairness, and democracy."

Friedman's treatment is grounded in the theories of Smith, Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot and other observers of early industrialization in Western Europe. Those astute witnesses to the initial stirrings of sustained economic growth proposed that societies adapted their political and legal institutions in response to changes wrought by independent economic forces, such as population increase, expanding markets and advances in technology. Moreover, they noted a correspondence between the spread of commerce and of civility toward strangers—a connection that has received strong support from recent cross-cultural behavioral experiments conducted by the anthropologists Joseph Henrich, Jean Ensminger and their colleagues.

In elaborating a logic for his argument, Friedman makes creative use of work by economists, psychologists and sociologists who compile studies of individual self-assessments. These show people tend to be happier when they have

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