

are doing well today have a good memory of the sent-down years, and vice versa for those at the bottom.

Today, these disparate groups of *zhiqing*, now retired, often organize outings and activities to commemorate their once collective life at the locale where they had been settled. On such occasions these various elderly individuals have a chance to recall the past and to interact with each other. This is when the ‘fault lines along class and ideology’ (p. 209) among them become visible. The high social and/or political groups with pleasant memories of the sent-down days, armed with their social and political capital, do not hide their supercilious contempt for the ordinary *zhiqing*. These hierarchical social interactions are vividly documented in entertaining detail in Chapter 6, in which a large contingent of former *zhiqing* who had been settled in the Heilongjiang countryside take a token “‘New Long March’ along the One Belt and One Road’ (p. 212), attempting to relive their Red Guard linking-up movement.

These disparate groups of *zhiqing* do share one commonality – one aspect of their memories aligns with the official portrayal of the *zhiqing*’s experience, highlighting their youth, contributions, and positive personal qualities of perseverance and determination in the countryside. They have adopted what Xu repeatedly emphasizes is the official pattern of focusing on ‘people but not the event’, similar to museum displays, *zhiqing* literature, and their autobiographies. However, Xu has not probed for a deeper explanation. My own observations when I interviewed former Red Guards in the 1970s who had been sent down is that introspection would have led them to confront periods and episodes in which they had personally contravened ethical behaviour. Consciously or subconsciously *zhiqing* writings therefore lack self-reflection. Former good-class Red Guards prefer to remember their heroic self-reliance in the countryside, while some of the middling-class Red Guards and those who were not allowed to join the Red Guards remember themselves as victims for the entire course of their life history.

Steven P. Feldman, *Dictatorship by Degrees: Xi Jinping in China*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021; xv + 310 pp. with notes, bibliography, and index: 9781793616678, US\$120.00 (hbk)

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Steven Feldman, an expert in business ethics, has written an insightful ethnography of how China is rolling back to totalitarianism under Xi Jinping’s rule. Based on his everyday participant observation and interviews with business and professional classes during his fieldwork in mainland China between 2015 and 2016, he develops a concept of ‘pre-totalitarianism’, indicating that the dictatorial rule in China today shares several totalitarian elements and draws the regime towards totalitarianism.

Feldman’s assumption is that totalitarianism is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon and that there are different stages of developing totalitarianism as found in different historical records. By adapting Raymond Aron’s definition of totalitarianism, Feldman conceptualizes pre-totalitarianism as a ‘dictatorial political organisation that uses terror to control its population’, but which ‘has not extended terror to being an end in itself’. Thus this concept is distinctive from that of totalitarianism which creates an atmosphere of total

fear, silence and a single belief ultimately (p. 4). According to Feldman, pre-totalitarianism is characterized by limited autonomy of private lives and private relationships among citizens, the existence of economic efficiency in the economic sphere, a tightly controlled media and education system, strong law enforcement with extensive surveillance measures, and the absence of the rule of law. His theory suggests that a regime may move from pre-totalitarianism to totalitarianism, depending on three factors: the increasing, systemic use of terror by political authorities, the unification of society with a single ideology, and the presence of a dominant political leader with omnipotent thinking.

Following his theoretical framework and a historical review of the Chinese political system, the book's core chapters examine different aspects of China's pre-totalitarianism. Feldman discusses how traditional Chinese Confucian culture is harmonized with the pre-totalitarian political culture that supports the leadership of a single dominant like Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping; the mechanisms of the double structure and recruitment strategy of the Chinese Communist Party to uphold the monopoly of political control against the influences of economic and cultural modernization; the role of censorship in enhancing political control by spreading fear, indoctrination, and the repression of traumatic memories about the Cultural Revolution; the significance of Confucian values of the family in China's political capitalism; the counter-productive roles of the middle class and the younger generation in supporting the pre-totalitarian regime; how Xi has benefited from the fractional family-based system of Chinese society to be a single, dominant figure; and the role of anti-corruption campaigns and other extra-legal measures in consolidating Xi's pre-totalitarian rule. Feldman's latest observations about the anti-government protests in Hong Kong and the state's systemic repression in Xinjiang further confirm his pessimistic conclusion that China is on the highway of totalitarianism.

Feldman's thick description of the political, economic, and cultural lives of the Chinese residents today contributes to two strands of scholarship. First, he engages with the study of totalitarianism and dictatorship by challenging the scholarly notion of China as a post-totalitarian state. His observations help us to understand how ideology, indoctrination, censorship, and the repression of resistance as well as memory, which are conventional tools of totalitarian rule, continue to be enforced in China today. His innovation of the concept of pre-totalitarianism is useful to address the potentials of authoritarian regimes and dictatorships to reverse to totalitarian rule even though leaders worldwide should have learned the lessons of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The second contribution refers to his insights about the important roles of the middle class and the younger generation that embrace Western values in sustaining pre-totalitarianism of China. His analysis echoes the criticisms that widespread economic modernization and post-materialist values, which are prominent in the West, are not necessarily bringing democratic change in a non-democratic regime.

Feldman repeatedly stresses that the central theme of his book concerns memory and trauma in China after the collective experiences of political violence and conflicts in the early Mao era until the Cultural Revolution. However, he does not offer a well-structured, systematic theory of the relationship between political violence, collective trauma, and political memory in post-conflict societies, which has been well studied by political sociologists and social psychologists. Neither does he offer a precise discussion on

how the nature, functions, and impacts of memory and trauma connect with his proposed theory of totalitarianism. Feldman deserves huge appreciation for his efforts to comprehend the first-hand traumatic experiences of the interviewed businessmen and professionals in Mao's China. A lack of theorization and dialogue with the relevant literature has limited the potential of his findings to generalize the idea of pre-totalitarianism, which could enhance our understanding of the global resurgence of autocratization today.

This book appeals to political scientists, journalists, as well as scholars and novices specializing in contemporary China studies. Political sociologists, social psychologists, and anthropologists will appreciate the book for its thick description of the everyday life of the business and professional classes in today's China, despite its limited theorization of collective memory and trauma under Felman's conceptualization of pre-totalitarianism.

Cangbai Wang, *Museum Representations of Chinese Diasporas: Migration Histories and the Cultural Heritage of the Homeland*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2021; xi + 178 pp. with figures, abbreviations, notes, appendix, glossary, references, and index: 9780367466299, £120.00 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Sofia Bollo, *University of Zurich*

'The exhibition shows what the Overseas Chinese have gone through' (p. 102, quote attributed to Mr Li). The display of the movement of people and objects, the transformation of their personal histories into collective memories, and the integration of their identities within the expanding museum landscape in China in a globalized world undeniably deserve scholarly attention. Cangbai Wang's interest was sparked by a new composite term *huaqiao wenwu* (华侨文物), translated as 'cultural relics of the Overseas Chinese'. Referring to a category of objects that are not so easily defined, the term is a cultural invention of early 21st-century China. According to Wang, *huaqiao wenwu* carries unusual empirical novelty and a solid theoretical potential (p. 2), a neologism which allows for the confluence of two previously distant realities into one concept and two seemingly separate fields into one study.

In his work on overseas Chinese museums in the People's Republic of China, Wang attempts to combine migration studies with heritage studies and to examine heritage-making phenomena of the Chinese diaspora in museums in China. The primary question that he poses is: how do histories of the Chinese diaspora become part of the cultural heritage of China, their ancestral homeland, through the medium of museums? (pp. 4, 20, and 143). To answer this question, Wang uses an extensive original and composite body of data collected over 10 years in various contexts with various stakeholders (p. 15) and he creates an analytical typology of museumification practices of the overseas Chinese. The book's analytical framework emphasizes the *process* of making and the *uses* of heritage (pp. 14 and 142). Furthermore, the methodological approach focuses on the *macro-museum* understood as a dynamic, open museum embedded in social processes and networks and with a transnational view of heritage (pp. 13 and 145).

The book has four parts, each corresponding to a category of museum representations of the Chinese diaspora. The practices inherent in the making of diasporic Chinese