

BULLETIN OF CONCERNED ASIAN SCHOLARS

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CCAS Statement of Purpose

Critical Asian Studies continues to be inspired by the statement of purpose formulated in 1969 by its parent organization, the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS). CCAS ceased to exist as an organization in 1979, but the BCAS board decided in 1993 that the CCAS Statement of Purpose should be published in our journal at least once a year.

We first came together in opposition to the brutal aggression of the United States in Vietnam and to the complicity or silence of our profession with regard to that policy. Those in the field of Asian studies bear responsibility for the consequences of their research and the political posture of their profession. We are concerned about the present unwillingness of specialists to speak out against the implications of an Asian policy committed to ensuring American domination of much of Asia. We reject the legitimacy of this aim, and attempt to change this policy. We recognize that the present structure of the profession has often perverted scholarship and alienated many people in the field.

The Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars seeks to develop a humane and knowledgeable understanding of Asian societies and their efforts to maintain cultural integrity and to confront such problems as poverty, oppression, and imperialism. We realize that to be students of other peoples, we must first understand our relations to them.

CCAS wishes to create alternatives to the prevailing trends in scholarship on Asia, which too often spring from a parochial cultural perspective and serve selfish interests and expansionism. Our organization is designed to function as a catalyst, a communications network for both Asian and Western scholars, a provider of central resources for local chapters, and a community for the development of anti-imperialist research.

*Passed, 28–30 March 1969
Boston, Massachusetts*

BULLETIN

OF CONCERNED ASIAN SCHOLARS



Eucalyptus in Thailand 1960 Coal Mine Dispute in Japan

Hot Peppers and Water Crisis in India Art in China

The South Korean "Miracle" Chinese Silk and Imperialism

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The photo on the front cover is of Thai university students performing a protest skit at Government House in Bangkok on Environment Day in June 1990. The skit was satirizing the destruction of natural forests by eucalyptus plantations, and the sign on the far left says “Forestry policy must be amended for Thai forests to be fertile.” For more on the ecological and social effects of growing cash crops for export rather than maintaining the environment and doing traditional small-scale farming to feed local people, see the lead articles of this issue of BCAS, Larry Lohmann’s “Peasants, Plantations, and Pulp: The Politics of Eucalyptus in Thailand” and Michael Goldman’s “Cultivating Hot Peppers and Water Crisis in India’s Desert: Toward a Theory of Understanding Ecological Crisis.” This photograph is by Pisanu Buawangpong, and it is reproduced here courtesy of Pisanu Buawangpong, the Nation of Bangkok, and Larry Lohmann.

With the exception of the names of authors in the list of books to review at the end of the issue, BCAS follows the East Asian practice of placing surnames first in all East Asian names.

The *Bulletin* is indexed or abstracted in the *Alternative Press Index*, *Left Index*, *International Development Index*, *International Development Abstracts*, *Sage Abstracts*, *Social Science Citation Index*, *Bibliography of Asian Studies*, *IBZ (International Bibliographie der Zeitschriften Literatur)*, *IBR (International Bibliography of Book Reviews)*, *Political Science Abstracts*, *Historical Abstracts*, and *America: History and Life*. Back issues and photocopies of out-of-print back issues are available from BCAS. Microfilms of all back issues are available from University Microfilms International (300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, U.S.A., phone: U.S., 800-521-0600; Canada, 800-343-5299).

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A New Book from BCAS!

Coming to Terms: Indochina, the United States, and the War, edited by Douglas Allen and Ngo Vinh Long in collaboration with BCAS, October 1991. 350 pp., illus.; paper, \$16.95, and cloth, \$46.95.

This book originated with the *BCAS* anniversary issue on Indochina and the War, volume 21, numbers 2–4 (combined) from April–December 1989. The book is designed as a text, and most of the original articles have been revised and entirely new articles on postwar Vietnam and U.S. veterans, a selected bibliography, and chronologies have been added. Not included are the anniversary issue's material about CCAS and BCAS, interview with Daniel Ellsberg, articles about the U.S.-Indochina friendship movement and how to teach about the war, and course syllabi.

Contents: Introduction—**Douglas Allen and Ngo Vinh Long**. INDOCHINA AND ITS STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE. Vietnam—**Ngo Vinh Long**. Postwar Vietnam: A Political Economy—**Ngo Vinh Hai**. Cambodia—**Michael Vickery**. Laos—**W. Randall Ireson and Carol J. Ireson**. THE UNITED STATES AND THE WAR. The United States and Indochina: Far from an Aberration—**Noam Chomsky**. The Vietnam Antiwar Movement—**George R. Vickers**. Scholars of Asia and the War—**Douglas Allen**. U.S. Veterans: A Long Road Home—**Kevin Bowen**. FILMS AND SCHOLARLY LITERATURE ON VIETNAM. Framing Vietnam—**Jenefer Shute**. Rambo's Rewriting of the Vietnam War—**Gaylyn Studlar and David Desser**. Against Cartesianism: Three Generations of Vietnam Scholarship—**Marvin E. Gittleman**. APPENDIX. Selected Bibliography and Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos chronologies—**Ngo Vinh Long and Douglas Allen**.

Coming to Terms is available at bookstores and from Westview Press, 5500 Central Ave., Boulder, CO 80301, U.S.A., tel. (toll-free) 1-800-456-1995. Please add \$2.50 for postage and handling.

Peasants, Plantations, and Pulp: The Politics of Eucalyptus in Thailand

by Larry Lohmann*

In Thailand, as in many other tropical countries, a substantial part of the population lives on recently deforested land. Between 1961 and 1985, at least a quarter of the country's land area of half a million square kilometers was deforested and put under cultivation. Approximately one-third of all Thai farmland, and as much as 15 percent of the Thai population, are found within what are technically classified as forest reserves.¹

The extremely rapid rate of colonization reflected in these figures has had a number of interlinked causes centering on the fast economic growth the country has experienced in the last three decades. The expansion of infrastructure and commercial logging promoted by the World Bank since the mid-1950s has helped open up many remote forest areas, allowing indebted, landless, or profit-seeking settlers to move in to plant new government-promoted upland export crops such as corn, cassava, sugar cane, or kenaf.[†] Officials, aware of the land pressures brought about by rising inequalities, consumerism, indebtedness, and landlessness in the expanding "developed" areas, have often tacitly accepted the resulting "unprogrammed" colonization.²

With the recent expansion of the wood-chips and paper-pulp industry, however, these formerly marginal areas are

increasingly marked for takeover by commercial eucalyptus plantations. As swaths of the fast-growing Australian tree invade farmlands, common pastures, and community forests, affected farmers without formal title to their land frequently face a difficult choice: move out and clear new land in what few areas of unoccupied forest remain elsewhere, or stand and fight.

In northeastern Thailand in the last five years, more and more villagers have been opting for the latter. For small-scale farmers, working out a *modus vivendi* with eucalyptus has proved nearly impossible, as they can reap few benefits from plantation land even when they are not formally evicted from it. *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, the dominant variety, allows little intercropping—villagers say it is *hen gae tua* (selfish) in that it hogs nutrients. It is useless for fodder, damages local soil and water regimes in ways villagers are sensitive to, and supplies little firewood to the community. It provides none of the varied natural forest products that rural dwellers on the edge of the market economy need to eke out a subsistence, while usurping the community woodlands that do have these products. Every five or six years eucalyptus is harvested just like any other export crop, leaving the ground temporarily exposed. The demand for plantation labor, moreover, is neither

*Many thanks for information, analysis, and criticism to Orawan Koohacharoen, Witoon Permpongsacharoen, and an anonymous BCAS referee. For an article of mine on the same subject, see "Commercial Tree Plantations in Thailand: Deforestation by Any Other Name," *Ecologist*, vol. 20, no. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1990).

1. Philip Hirsch, "Forests, Forest Reserve, and Forest Land in Thailand," *Geographical Journal*, vol. 156, no. 2 (July 1990), p. 168. In 1985 National Reserve Forests covered 42 percent of Thailand's land area; additional forest land is contained in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

†Cassava is a tropical plant with starchy roots that are used to make bread

or tapioca; kenaf is a tropical plant that is grown for its fiber, which is similar to jute. —ED.

2. Harald Uhlig, "Spontaneous and Planned Settlement in South-East Asia" in *Agricultural Expansion and Pioneer Settlements in the Humid Tropics*, ed. Walther Manshard and William B. Morgan (Tokyo: United Nations University, 1988), pp. 9–16; Philip Hirsch, "Deforestation and Development in Thailand," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1987), pp. 130–38. For the role of the World Bank, see Grit Permtanjit, *The Political Economy of Dependent Capitalist Development: A Study on the Limits of the Capacity of the State to Rationalize in Thailand* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1982).

substantial nor steady, and plantation work is unattractive to most peasants.

Migrating out of plantation areas, on the other hand, solves few problems. In Thailand the frontier is vanishing rapidly—forest cover has declined from perhaps 70 percent of the country's land area earlier in the century to about 15 percent today³—and villagers are well aware that to colonize what little forest does remain is to cut the ecological ground from under their own feet by destroying fragile watersheds and sources of food and soil fertility. They are conscious, too, that government bureaucracies are less likely now to acquiesce to illegal forest colonization than they were in the 1970s, when the country's then seemingly limitless unsettled upland areas served as welcome safety valves relieving potentially explosive land conflicts elsewhere.⁴ At the same time, joining official programs resettling villagers out of plantation areas is risky, since these programs often try to relocate villagers on land already unofficially settled, touching off bitter land disputes. On the other hand, permanent migration to the cities is not, for most villagers, a viable or alluring option, and casual agricultural laborers' jobs are notoriously insecure and ill-paid. Northeastern villagers' traditional defensiveness about the land they occupy is thus being reinforced by a sharp awareness that whatever path Thai development follows, older patterns of landholding, gathering, and common use of grazing lands and woodlands, reinforced by local control, are likely to have to be maintained to a certain degree, and that this is inconsistent with the spread of eucalyptus plantations.

Modes of Resistance

The result has been perhaps the biggest surge of rural activism in the northeast since the mid-1970s.⁵ Small-scale farmers are weathering the contempt of bureaucrats and

petitioning district officials and cabinet members, standing up to assassination threats and arranging strategy meetings with villagers from other areas. They are holding rallies, speaking out at seminars, blocking roads, and marching on government offices, singing songs composed for the occasion. Where other means fail and they are well enough organized, they are ripping out eucalyptus seedlings, either surreptitiously or openly in large mobs, chopping down eucalyptus trees, stopping bulldozers, and burning nurseries and equipment. At the same time, well aware of the need to seize the environmentalist high ground, many villagers are planting fruit, rubber, and native forest trees to preempt or replace eucalyptus and are explaining to sympathetic journalists the methods they have used to preserve diverse local forest patches for generations. They have also enlisted the help of students and other intellectuals and are increasingly taking their case directly to the national government.⁶

In all this the villagers are making active use of a wide variety of rhetorical and cultural tools. In Pa Kham District of Buriram, for example, the army is participating in eucalyptus-plantation schemes that displace the very villagers it encouraged to colonize the area in the 1970s to fight communist forces. Here villagers' rhetoric is heavy with accusations of government betrayal and warnings that official plans to "green" the northeast with the Australian tree will end up turning the region "red." "*Han lang ting paa han naa soo yookaa*" (Behind us the forest we depend on, in front of us, the struggle with eucalyptus) is one local slogan, signaling villagers' intentions to defend remaining natural forest against intrusions of the plantations.

In other areas, villagers are promoting the anti-eucalyptus movement by adapting the *pha pa ba* ceremony traditionally

3. Official Royal Forestry Department figures indicate that forest cover stood at about 28 percent of Thailand's land area in 1988, down from 53 percent in 1961. Such figures are highly unreliable, however, in that they include rubber plantations, secondary scrub growth, open sea in protected areas, and so on. Several independent observers put the figure closer to the 15 percent assumed here; see, for example, Norman Myers, *Deforestation Rates in Tropical Forests and Their Climatic Implications* (London: Friends of the Earth, 1989). Assuming 9 percent of this is protected, then perhaps 6 percent of the nonprotected area is forested. Even if we assume that all of this nonprotected forested area is in National Reserve Forests (NRFs), that would suggest that well over a quarter of the country's land area is degraded or unforested NRFs.

4. Robert Riethmuller, "Differentiation and Dynamics of Land-Use Systems in a Mountain-Valley Environment" in Manshard and Morgan, *Agricultural Expansion*, p. 89. In late 1989 Pairote Suwannakorn, the director general of the Royal Forestry Department, stated in public that 6 million people would have to be evicted from National Reserve Forests. The Land Distribution Project for the Poor in Degraded Forests under the military's Internal Security Operations Command envisages the resettlement of some 970,000 families from the reserves.

5. For the mid-1970s movements, see Chai-anan Samutwanit and David Morell, *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction and Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Gunn and Hill, 1981). Struggles between peasants and eucalyptus planters are also well known in India and Portugal. See Vandana Shiva, H.C. Sharatchandra, and J. Bandyopadhyay, "Social Forestry—No Solution Within the Market," *Ecologist*,

vol. 12, no. 4 (1982); H. Lamb and S. Percy, "Indians Fight Eucalyptus Plantations on Commons," *New Scientist*, 16 July 1987; Jill Joliffe, "Greens and Farmers Fight the Eucalyptus Tree," *Guardian* (UK), 22 June 1989; Christopher Joyce, "The Tree That Started a Riot," *New Scientist*, 18 Feb. 1988, pp. 51–61; Lars Kardell, Eliel Steen, and Antonio Fabiao, "Eucalyptus in Portugal—a Threat or a Promise?," *Ambio*, vol. 15, no. 1 (1986), pp. 6–13.

6. "Tham boon lawm pa thii don Na Nong Chuek . . . choom chon phitak pa" (Making merit encircling the forest at Na Nong Chuek: a community protects a forest), *Poo Jatgarn*, 29 Jan.–4 Feb. 1990; "Villagers Destroy 100 Rai of Trees," *Bangkok Post*, Mar. 1990; "Villagers Seek To Halt Forestry Scheme," *Bangkok Post*, 13 Mar. 1990; "Activist in Fight To Save Dong Yai Threatened," *Bangkok Post*, 19 Feb. 1990; Tunya Sukpanich, "NE Leaders Seek Say in Reforestation Effort," *Bangkok Post*, 9 Nov. 1987; "Fiery Protest Greets Green Esarn Project," *Nation* (Bangkok), 17 Mar. 1988; "Eucalyptus Bonfire To Protest Against Arrests," *Bangkok Post*, 4 June 1988; "Eucalyptus Planting Sparks Fiery Protest," *Nation*, 14 June 1988; Suda Kanjanawanawan, "Eucalyptus Protests Going Straight to the Top" and "Villagers To Demand Land Rights at Cabinet Meet," *ibid.*, 30 Mar. 1989; "Private Sector 'To Blame' for Ruined Forests," *Bangkok Post*, 3 May 1989; "Govt Urged To Give Villagers a Role in Conserving Forests," *ibid.*, 29 July 1989; "Villagers Unite To Defend Forest and Own Livelihood," *ibid.*, 1 Aug. 1989; Rapee Sakrik, "Khwaam sap son kiaw kap kam plook yookalipat" (Confusion about eucalyptus planting), *Siam Rath*, 11 Apr. 1990; "Prawes Slams Govt Eucalyptus Policy," *Bangkok Post*, 27 Feb. 1990; "Mob tam yooka khluen phol aang het tham laai paa tua yong" (Eucalyptus opponents agitate, refer to forest destruction), *Tharn Set-takit*, 29 Jan.–4 Feb. 1990.



Angry villagers cutting down eucalyptus trees in Pakham District of Buriram Province in Thailand in March 1988. Farmers in this area, who moved there within the last two decades and collaborated with the army in anticommunist military campaigns, regard eucalyptus plantations as a threat both to their land security and to the remnants of national forests that feed local streams. This is a Project of Ecological Recovery photo, and it is reproduced here courtesy of the Daily News of Bangkok. All the pictures accompanying this article and their captions were provided by Larry Lohmann.



Villagers in Ubon Ratchathanee Province with stumps of native trees that were cleared to make way for the young eucalyptus trees now several meters high. After five to six years of growth, the eucalyptus trees are cut and allowed to coppice for a comparable period before being harvested again. On the right is a lone fruit tree allowed to stand in the middle of a eucalyptus plantation. The fruit, insects, wood, and fodder such trees provide cannot be derived from eucalyptus—one reason why farmers are opposing the advance of the Australian tree. Both these photos are by and courtesy of Sanitsuda Ekachai.

used to mobilize assistance for constructing and improving Buddhist temples. On Environment Day, 5 June 1990, for example, 5,000 villagers from several provinces traveled to a village in Yasothorn Province, and instead of raising money for a local temple, planted seedlings of fruit and other trees while avowing their determination to prevent the further encroachment of eucalyptus.

The moral outrage fueling the antiplantation movement is rooted largely in the farmers' sense that they have a right to enough land to secure a stable subsistence; hence the often-repeated rhetorical question, "*Ja hai phuak phom pai yoo thee nai?*" (Where would you have us live?). Villagers' positive demands, correspondingly, tend to stress individual land rights, community rights to local forests that they will conserve themselves, the right to veto any commercial plantation scheme slated for their localities, and a blanket reconsideration of all existing eucalyptus projects.⁷

The attempt of Northern governments to absorb "the environment" into their strategies for continued economic and political domination is bound to create new challenges for activists concerned about the spread of plantations in Thailand and elsewhere.

One key to villagers' credibility with the authorities in the current situation, in which eucalyptus plantations are being billed as a way of "reforesting" the country, is to present traditions of preserving small community forests, which contain most of the limited tree cover remaining in nonborder areas of the northeast, as environmentalist alternatives. Here northeastern farmers can point to the well-established and widespread village practice of preserving or regrowing local patches of secondary forest as sustainable sources of water, mushrooms, vegetables, small game, honey, resins, fruit, firewood, fodder, herbal medicines, frogs, edible insects, and insect eggs. Also relevant is the tradition of conserving local sacred ancestral forests (*pa poo taa* or *don poo taa*) and funeral grounds. In Nam Kham Village in Ubon Ratchathane, local Buddhist monks are building on this tradition by tying yellow robes around large trees to "ordain" and thus protect them from the eucalyptus projects of the state Forestry Industry Organization.⁸ Where such traditions do not exist, villagers are often creating organizations to promote the conservation of community forest and planting orchards to counter the spread of eucalyptus.⁹

Northeasterners experienced in fighting eucalyptus

7. This set of demands was agreed on by a group of villagers from across the country participating in a government seminar, "Solving the Problem of Agricultural Land in Forests," held in Bangkok at Government House on 25–26 Aug. 1989.

plantations are not likely to back off from their demands easily. One Pa Kham leader, Kham Butrsri, went into hiding for a time in 1989 as a result of death threats from local officials. He pithily expresses the determination of many farmers: "*Hai gaw ao mai hai gaw ao*" (Give in, and we'll take what we demand; don't give in, and we'll take it anyway). In Toey Village in Roi Et in the Pa Kham District in Buriram, and in Siew Village in Sri Sa Ket, among others, farmers have already made good on this promise by fighting plantation companies or the government to a standoff.¹⁰

The mere threat of local resistance, meanwhile, has apparently been enough to cause Southeast Pulp and Paper, a firm affiliated with the Indian giant Birla, to abandon plans to set up a large pulp and rayon mill near the provincial capital of Ubon Ratchathani. The company now plans to move the project to Indonesia, although conflict over plantations is developing there as well.¹¹

Eucalyptus and Displacement

A little arithmetic confirms that even from a crude economic point of view and using assumptions favorable to the eucalyptus industry, villagers have good reason to fear loss of land. In the last five years the areas under eucalyptus have shot up approximately fivefold to tenfold to 600–1,200 square kilometers, and the Master Plan for Reforestation in Thailand calls for private plantation firms to plant eucalyptus and other trees on 43,000 square kilometers of National Reserve Forests (NRFs) (or over eight percent of the country's land area), with communities and the government planting an additional 18,500 square kilometers.¹² Seven to ten million people are generally estimated to be living in cleared areas of National Reserve

8. NGO Coordinating Committee on Rural Development, *Panhaa paa maai thii tham kin lae thaang awk* (The problem of forests and agricultural land and the way out) (Bangkok: Thai Volunteer Service, 1989); Sanitsuda Ekachai, "Ordaining trees to save the woods," *Bangkok Post*, 21 Mar. 1990; Union for Civil Liberty, Alternative Technology Association, and Project for Ecological Recovery, *Paa choomchon* (Community forest), proceedings of a seminar on villagers' organizations and commercial tree plantations in six northeastern provinces (Bangkok: Project for Ecological Recovery, 1987).

9. "NE Villagers Plan Own 'Green project'," *Bangkok Post*, 31 May 1988; Mangkom Tengpravat, "Villagers in Northeast Launch Green Campaigns"; *ibid.*, 4 June 1988.

10. Sanitsuda Ekachai, *Behind the Smile* (Bangkok: Thai Development Support Committee, 1990), pp. 52–61.

11. "The IIU Case: Pulp and Paper Versus the People," *Environesia*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Apr.–Aug. 1990), pp. 3–7.

12. The National Forestry Policy Committee has set a target of 61,600 square kilometers to be planted with eucalyptus by the year 2020, of which 43,100 square kilometers are to be planted by commercial firms. See Caroline Sargent, *The Khun Song Plantation Project* (London: International Institute for Environment and Development, 1990), pp. 16–17. Figures cited for current eucalyptus cultivation come from Rerngchai Paosajja of the Royal Forestry Department and "Pert pho big turakit soo kam plook pa cherng panit," *Prachachart turakit*, 4–6 Jan. 1989. Over 50 percent of eucalyptus planting so far has been on state land. See "Kaan perm mool khaa maai khong suan paa maai tow rayo" (mimeo, Bangkok: Royal Forestry Department, 1988).



Digging for edible insects in a community forest threatened by eucalyptus. Such items of everyday subsistence cannot be found in eucalyptus plantations even when villagers are allowed access to them. The plantations thus threaten the security of local livelihoods. All the photos on this page show northeastern villagers and are by and courtesy of Sanitsuda Ekachai.



A native medicinal herb from a local forest. Among villagers' objections to eucalyptus plantations is that they reduce the availability of such herbs, which the cash economy cannot provide any free replacement for.



Separating red ants from their eggs in a bucket of water. The eggs are a protein source and ingredient in spicy local laab salads. One of the most scathing comments by villagers on eucalyptus plantations is that "not even red ants can live there"—reflecting not only the plantations' ecological harshness but also the way they threaten food subsistence.



Returning from a collecting trip to a local woodland with a bounty of edible leaves and other products. Such woodlands are often classified as "degraded" by the government as a prelude to being razed to make way for eucalyptus plantations. Villagers partially dependent on the woodlands for subsistence often respond by burning down eucalyptus nurseries or cutting down saplings.

Forests,¹³ a sizable proportion of whom inhabit zones designated for commercial plantations.

Assuming that these people were willing to accept the roles of rural laborers, how many of them could support themselves on eucalyptus plantations and how many would be displaced? Here several estimates are available as guides. One Swedish study gives a figure of only 2–3 employees, or perhaps up to 20 people, per square kilometer.¹⁴ A study done by the International Institute for Environment and Development for Shell (Thailand) is more optimistic, suggesting that if villagers are allowed to intercrop as well as work as wage laborers to insure they do not encroach on forest elsewhere (as would in fact be unlikely to be allowed on most plantations due to its unprofitability), it should be possible to support about 5,000 local people on a projected 110-square-kilometer plantation project.¹⁵ That would yield a stable population-absorption capacity of 45 people per square kilometer. Average population density in cleared areas of NRFs, however, is double this figure or higher.¹⁶ Thus even if the favorable assumptions made by Shell about its own area applied elsewhere, millions of people would be likely to be displaced.

Assuming they could not be absorbed by the cities, where could these villagers be resettled? Not in forests, presumably; all sides agree these must be preserved. Yet, as the Thai Development Research Institute puts it, “land suitable for agricultural use has now almost completely been utilized.”¹⁷ That suggests that displaced farming families would on the whole need to find plots of land larger than current average farm size. Taking all such factors into consideration, it is obvious that several tens of thousands of square kilometers of unforested, unsettled land would have to be found.

Leaving aside questions of appropriate land use, it is difficult to see where this land might be found. In recent years the government has found it extremely difficult to find unoccupied nonforest land for settling villagers displaced by dams, floods, and other causes.¹⁸ Locating tens of thousands of square

kilometers would seem virtually out of the question, barring widespread land redistribution, which is an untouchable topic under current political circumstances.¹⁹ As a result, it seems inevitable that the spread of eucalyptus will result in more spontaneous encroachment on unoccupied forests.

Eastern and Central Thailand

In the hinterlands of eastern and central Thailand, where agriculture is more highly commercialized and peasants' attachment to local land and forests is often of shorter standing, conflicts with commercial eucalyptus interests are less clear-cut than in the northeast. In this part of the country, eucalyptus-export interests keen on taking advantage of the proximity of major seaports and roads are helping to fuel a spectacular boom in land speculation. Businessmen anticipating the interest of plantation companies are sending representatives into local areas to organize land transfers so that they can later resell at profits of up to several hundred percent. Local villagers, who are often recent migrants indebted as a result of consumerism and increased dependence on commercial agriculture, generally end up accepting payments for land they are occupying. Their capitulation is a result of a variety of pressures. The land around them may be bought up, cutting off their access. Forestry officials may attempt to clear out “illegal squatters” on charges of “forest encroachment.” Various schemes may be employed to get villagers further into debt or to play on their jealousy of neighbors who are temporarily flush with cash following recent sales. Violence and murder and threats thereof are also frequently used. Local officials, meanwhile, collect bribes for issuing land documents that will make it easier for the buyers to ask high prices of their customers. Once off the land, their cash running out, villagers often wind up encroaching on fast-dwindling forests in outlying areas in, for example, Kabin Buri and Sanam Chai Khet districts in Prachinburi and Chachoengsao provinces, many simply to await the next wave of land speculation.²⁰

13. “Plook sang suan paa jaak brazil theung thai,” in *Prachachart turakit*, 24–27 Sept. 1989, gives the figure of 2 million families in National Reserve Forests, although a more commonly cited figure is 1.2 million.

14. Doug Fuller, “Eucalypts Fuel the Furnace of Brazil’s Steelworks,” *New Scientist*, 18 Feb. 1988, p. 56.

15. Sargent, *Khun Song Plantation*, p. 26. See the similar estimate by another leading eucalyptus planter, Kitti Damnoenchamwanit, in “Irate Kitti Denies He’s the Nation’s Enemy,” *Nation*, 4 Mar. 1990.

16. S. Chirapandea and W. Tamrongtanyalak estimated in *Resettlement in Thailand* (Bangkok: Agricultural Land Reform Office, 1980) that in the 1970s, 5–6 million people were squatting on 40,000–50,000 square kilometers of land, suggesting a density of 100–150 persons per square kilometer. Current government estimates of “degraded” land in National Reserve Forests that needs to be replanted with trees range between 48,000 and 71,840 square kilometers. See “Ministry Announces Reforestation Target,” *Nation*, 29 Jan. 1990; “Sanan: Govt’s Policy of Promoting Reforestation Scheme To Continue,” *Nation*, 28 Apr. 1990). Assuming that this is coextensive with the land occupied by the 7 to 10 million estimated occupants of National Reserve Forests, the population density would be in the same range or higher.

17. Thai Development Research Institute, *Thailand Natural Resources Profile* (Bangkok: Thai Development Research Institute, 1987), p. 19.

18. Even the relatively few villagers whose land was destroyed in the catastrophic floods in southern Thailand in November 1988 had yet to be resettled a year later (*Bangkok Post*, 6 Nov. 1989), and some villagers displaced by hydroelectric dams as long as twenty-five years ago complain that they still have not been allocated replacement land. See the seminar on “Dams and energy solutions,” Chulalongkorn University, 10 June 1990. Resettlement land, in addition, is generally infertile or insufficiently watered. See Saowarop Panyacheewin, “Hilltribes People Find Life in Lowland Villages Hard,” *Bangkok Post*, 11 June 1990.

19. “Land reform” is currently officially construed mainly as a way of distributing unused public land and denuded forest; the government’s Agricultural Land Reform Office has no power to force landowners to sell unused land. See Nantiya Tangwisutthijit, “Forest Conservation Versus Land Reform,” *Nation*, 22 Mar. 1990.

20. “Leh’ nak lowng toon kwaan sue thii pan rakhaa chaaw naa lom lalaa” (Investors speculate in land, farmers go bankrupt), *Krungthep Thurakit Sapdaa*, Mar. 1990; Sargent, *Khun Song Plantation*, pp. 23, 53–54, 87; “The Forest for the Trees,” “The Quiet Gang Rape,” pp. 11–13, *Manager*, 26 Feb.–11 Mar. 1990; Veera Prateepchaikul and Surapol Tourn-ngern, “Degrading by Degrees,” *Bangkok Post*, 11 Mar. 1990; Jeerawat Krongkaew, “How Suan Kitti Cornered the Land Market,” *Nation*, 6 Feb. 1990. In 1989 3.6 million land transfers were recorded in Thailand—an increase of 56 percent in a single year. Eastern Thailand was one of the biggest boom areas.

Some speculators are encouraging villagers to clear forest so that it can be categorized as “degraded land” suitable for planting with eucalyptus and can then be sold at a high price.²¹ In its use of villagers to do the hard and sometimes risky work of forest clearing, this practice takes a leaf from the *pa boei* system long used in the hinterlands of eastern Thailand, according to which peasants are given the right to work land for a few years in exchange for having cleared it before influential local businessmen with informal control over the land move in with long-term schemes.²² Other techniques of securing the needed area of “degraded forest” include the statistical scam of grouping areas of dense forest together with denuded areas to get an average tree-per-hectare figure that represents the whole area as degraded.²³ Some businessmen, however, do not bother with such subtleties, illegally felling forest themselves to make way for the plantations even before they are given official permission to lease land.

The latter practice finally led to a political scandal in early 1990 when 156 employees of the Suan Kittu Reforestation Company, a subsidiary of the Soon Hua Seng conglomerate and the largest eucalyptus planter in the country, were arrested for forest encroachment, several bulldozers seized, and the company president himself, Kittu Damnoencharnwanit—a major funder of the Democrat Party and adviser to former prime minister Chatichai Choonhavan—was pilloried in the mass media. Suan Kittu’s activities became public only because the Democrats’ rivals in the government coalition had conspired to give a green light to the arrests; observers agree that more such cases of corporate deforestation probably go unreported.

Resource Conflict as a Check to Spread of Eucalyptus

Even in eastern and central Thailand, however, the conflicts over resources provoked by the eucalyptus boom constitute a serious obstacle to the spread of the tree. At the site of a proposed plantation project of Shell (Thailand), for example, Forestry Department officials have warned locals of forcible eviction, houses have been put to the torch, and villagers have been arrested on charges of forest encroachment. This has resulted in a large local demonstration and difficulties for the company.²⁴ Villagers in nearby areas have meanwhile responded by surreptitiously burning the trees of experimental eucalyptus plantings that do not allow intercropping.²⁵ The house of Chanthaburi’s governor, who had sided with fruit growers opposing Shell’s takeover of the forested watersheds feeding their orchards, was fired upon by unknown gunmen in February 1988 in what was apparently a heavy-handed hint to him to drop his opposition to the scheme.²⁶

21. Edward Milner, “Lessons from a Peasant Revolt,” *Telegraph* (London), 21 Apr. 1990.

22. Ulrich Scholz, “Spontaneous Pioneer Settlement in Thailand,” in Manshard and Morgan, *Agricultural Expression*, pp. 54–55.

23. Niyom Tiwootanon, “Withi tham laai paa duai karn chao” (Destroying the forest by renting it), *Siam Rath*, 7 Feb. 1990.

24. *Thai Rath*, 10 and 13 Apr. 1988; *Matichon*, 22 May 1988.

25. Sargent, *Khun Song Plantation*, pp. 21, 41, 54, 64.

Such conflicts and scandals, together with fallout from the Suan Kittu affair and worries about forest conservation, have been significant factors in cabinet delays in granting permission to Shell to lease parts of Khun Song National Reserve Forest in Chanthaburi for eucalyptus plantings.²⁷ Another is probably officials’ awareness that granting Shell permission to lease degraded areas of the Reserve Forest amounts to an incentive to land speculators and illegal occupants to clear their forest holdings so that they can be resold to the company as “degraded” land.²⁸

Partly because of its biological properties and partly because it favors large-scale landholders, the tree is an exceptionally efficient device allowing interests responsive to the world economy to annex supposedly “marginal” areas, smash the remaining local-oriented noneconomic or semi-economic patterns of livelihood and nature conservation there, and convert the fragments into “resources” for global exchange.

The threat of peasant resistance has also played a part in bringing about the generally accepted but legally dubious corporate practice of “purchasing” villagers’ land “rights” in NRFs—rights that are not officially recognized—as a way of inducing farmers not to burn down the new tree farms. In addition, fears of resistance have prompted the decision of some companies to attempt to secure a supply of eucalyptus wood by persuading farmers to plant the trees on their own land through cooperative or contract schemes rather than by renting occupied state land. Thus residents of the central region are being encouraged to become contract farmers under agribusiness schemes that would make them dependent on parent companies (often Japanese) for seedlings, materials, and cash for the harvested crop.²⁹ This approach, also planned for areas of the northeast where farmers have full land title, is bound to squeeze poorer members of the community through debt and dependence and may also encourage farmers to clear still more areas for eucalyptus in forested uplands.

Although the contract approach is attractive to plantation

26. *Matichon*, 20 Dec. 1987, 6 Feb. 1988, and 9 Feb. 1988; *Krungthep Thurakit*, 15 Dec. 1987; *Settakit*, 11 Feb. 1988.

27. “Pert pho: suan paa yookhaalipat phaen din nii khrai jawng?” (Who has reserved this land?), *Matichon*, Mar. 1990; Sargent, *Khun Song Plantation*, pp. 1, 7; interview with Philip Maxwell, Shell International Petroleum Company, London, 14 Aug. 1990.

28. *Krungthep Thurakit Sapdaa*, Mar. 1990; Niyom Tiwootanon, “Destroying the Forest.”

29. Witon Permpongsacharoen, Project for Ecological Recovery, personal communication.

businesses in that it is unlikely to provoke the organized resistance to eucalyptus seen elsewhere, it is still likely to fail, because, despite early hype, eucalyptus appears economically unviable for the small-scale farmer.³⁰ The conflict of interest between influential eucalyptus backers and small-scale farmers is thus likely to remain difficult to mediate.

Farmer resistance to eucalyptus has been strongly supported by nongovernmental organizations, academics, and students. In the last two years, NGOs have called for radical changes in land tenure policies, a sharp separation of plantation and forest conservation policies, and a cancellation of privileges for industrial plantations. On the basis of such concerns, in April 1990 twenty-one environmental and development groups issued a "no-confidence motion" in the 1985 National Forestry Policy.³¹ So far, however, such proposals for change have been ignored.

Behind the Eucalyptus Boom

Assessing the eucalyptus-planting drive that has provoked such conflicts and resistance requires taking into account at least six factors: the changing world paper-pulp economy and its relationship to Thai commercial and political interests, the evolution of the dominant export-oriented development policies of the country, the background of Thai forestry and land policy, the background of deforestation and agricultural expansion of the past several decades in the areas affected, the imperatives of bilateral and multilateral funding agencies, and the new atmosphere of "environmentalist" concern for tropical forests.

Growth in Taiwanese, South Korean, and particularly Japanese demand for wood chips and paper pulp is one of the most important incentives for the eucalyptus boom. Corporations such as Oji, Jujo, Mitsubishi, Marubeni, Nissho-Awai, Mitsui, and Sumitomo are seeking new sources of raw materials for new paper factories being built at home and abroad.³² Environmental awareness and legal constraints, however, threaten to limit the import of raw material from Australia and North America, and exploitable supplies from natural forests in Brazil, Southeast Asia, Australia, and North America are also limited.³³

Thailand is geographically well placed to fill the gap. In addition, its infrastructure is superior to those of other eligible plantation areas such as Sabah in Malaysia and Irian Jaya in Indonesia, and the country is politically more stable than the

Philippines. As a result, it has been targeted for plantations for years by Japanese corporations and government, the Asian Development Bank, and forestry consulting firms such as Finland's Jaakko Poyry Oy.

Adopting a strategy of promoting competition among as wide a field of suppliers of raw materials as possible to insure a buyer's market, Japanese companies have taken pains to forge alliances with local figures in both business and government. For example, Oji has linked up with the important local firm Sahawiriya and is in addition leading a consortium of fifteen Japanese paper makers, including Mitsubishi, in a Japanese-Thai joint venture called Thai Eucalyptus Resources, which will promote the planting of 2,000 square kilometers of eucalyptus to produce chips for export.³⁴ At the same time, Shigoku has joined the Thai Witawat Corporation in plans to plant 160 square kilometers of eucalyptus in the northeast under a contract-farming scheme to feed a wood-chip processing plant exporting to Taiwan and Japan. The state Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) would provide loans.³⁵ Sumitomo and Nissho-Awai, meanwhile, maintain ties with beleaguered Suan Kitti, the largest domestic eucalyptus firm. The latter, with the help of its Japanese partners, has acquired perhaps a quarter of the 640 square kilometers of land it hopes to annex for eucalyptus plantations. This would be a source of raw material for a projected thousand-ton-a-day pulp mill in Chachoengsao, one of the largest factories of its kind in the world.³⁶ Shell's eucalyptus plantation in Chanthaburi Province would also produce largely for the Japanese market. Meanwhile, Japanese interests are pursuing the option of encouraging contract eucalyptus farming and cooperatives through coordination with the Thai Royal Forestry Department and officials at the provincial and national level, as well as the BAAC and the private Tree Planters Association of Thailand.³⁷

Thailand's booming private sector, while quick to see the possibilities for making huge profits from the fast-growing tree, is also intrigued by the opportunity the eucalyptus boom offers for amassing land. Much land in the central region in particular is acquired under the pretext that it will be used to plant eucalyptus, allowing businessmen to take advantage of privileges offered by the government, and some businessmen have been led to hope that after their lease period of fifteen to thirty years expires the land they plant to eucalyptus will become theirs absolutely.³⁸

Before the 23 February 1991 military coup put an end to political party activity, both foreign and domestic eucalyptus firms were strongly linked to the parties, which tended to

30. Dhira Phantumvanit, Theodore Panyoutou, and Songpol Jetanavanich, "Eucalyptus: for Whom and for What?" *Thai Development Research Institute Quarterly Review*, 1990; Ann Danaiya Usher, "Eucalyptus—Widening the Gap," *Nation*, 15 June 1990.

31. "Thalaengkarn kloom yeesip ongkorn phattana ekachon thueng prachachon khon thai thee rak khwaam thook tong lae pen tham rueng mai wai wang jai nayobaai paa mai haeng chart" (Statement of twenty-one nongovernmental development organizations to Thai people who love truth and justice concerning lack of confidence in the National Forestry Policy), *Siam Rath Sapdaa Wijarn*, 22–28 Apr. 1990, pp. 17–20.

32. "Yiipoon lae mafia thurakit phanuek phaen luek thalome suan kitti" (Japan and the business mafia schemed to destroy Suan Kitti), *Poo Jatgarn*, 12–18 Feb. 1990; "Shell nai songkhraam see khio" (Shell in the Green War), *Poo Jatgarn*, Nov. 1988, pp. 50–84.

33. *Manager*, 26 Feb.–11 Mar. 1990; Ann Danaiya Usher, "After the Forest . . ." *Nation*, 7 June 1990.

34. C. Goldstein, "Not Just Paper Profits," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 15 Sept. 1988, pp. 95–97; "Squatters' Rights," *Manager*, 26 Feb.–11 Mar. 1990, p. 14.

35. Apisak Dhanasettakorn, "Eucalyptus Processor To Start Despite Uncertainty," *Nation*, 14 Apr. 1990.

36. *Manager*, 26 Feb.–11 Mar. 1990; Ann Danaiya Usher, "What Price the Eucalyptus Tree?" *Nation*, 22 Feb. 1990.

37. Tunya Sukpanich, "Killing the Land for Money," *Bangkok Post*, 22 Feb. 1990.

38. Dhira, Panyoutou, and Songpol, "Eucalyptus"; interview with Wiboon Khemchalerm, Sanam Chai Khet District, Chachoengsao, Dec. 1988.

represent various commercial factions. As mentioned above, Suan Kittti helped finance the Democrat Party, whose secretary general, former agriculture minister Sanan Kachornprasart, had been responsible for approving leases of National Reserve Forest land. Other examples included the Buriram Tham Mai Company, which rents land in National Reserve Forests in Buriram and planned to supply Kittti's Chachoengsao mill. Buriram Tham Mai is run by the timber-trading Tancharoen family, one of whom was a member of parliament and deputy spokesman for the Chart Thai Party of former prime minister Chatichai. Dej Boonlong, Chatichai's deputy secretary, was meanwhile involved in planting eucalyptus in Saraburi, and the landowning family Narong Wongwan, head of the dissolved Solidarity Party, was planning to lease state land in the north for plantation schemes.³⁹

Thailand's booming private sector, while quick to see the possibilities for making huge profits from the fast-growing tree, is also intrigued by the opportunity the eucalyptus boom offers for amassing land.

Many plantation companies also boasted connections with the army-dominated Isaan Khio (Green Northeast) scheme to improve the semiarid northeastern environment through irrigation, water, and plantation projects. These included Rom Klao Oil, Philpittiwat, Treethip, Phoenix Pulp and Paper, and the state Forestry Industry Organization, which has been implicated in incidents forcing villagers off their land in the northeast. Taken together, this group of companies has designs on between 880 and 2,320 square kilometers of land; scores of smaller firms are also moving in.⁴⁰

Suppliers meeting the demand for domestic pulp and paper, which is increasing at roughly 10 percent yearly, also play important roles in land-acquisition schemes. Phoenix Pulp and Paper, for example, has negotiated with the Royal Forestry Department (RFD) to rent about 160 square kilometers of National Reserve Forest land in the northeast to plant eucalyptus and bamboo to supply its mills.⁴¹ The Forestry Industry Organization is also heavily involved in the same region, having already planted over 180 square kilometers of eucalyptus, and is

39. Suphakit Jongsawat, "Khrai chao phuen thii paa sangan haeng chaat" (Who rents National Reserve Forest land?), *Siam Rath*, 7 Feb. 1990; Adisak Limprungpattanakit, "Kitti Vows To Pursue Plantation Dream," *Nation*, 27 Feb. 1990.

40. Apisak Dhanasettakorn, "Forest Policy Revision Clouds ADB Plan," *Nation*, 15 Feb. 1990.

41. "Ootasahakam yuea lae kradaat" (The pulp and paper industry), *Wasarn settakit grungthep*, 6 June 1989, pp. 328-33.

contemplating joint investments with Phoenix, Suan Kittti, Southeast, Siam Cement, and Shell.⁴² Only one large domestic paper-producing firm, Siam Cement, is planning to plant substantial acreage on land it already owns.⁴³

Eucalyptus and Development Policy

Thailand's export-oriented development policies have supported the eucalyptus boom and have given actors linked with the world economy increasingly direct control over rural areas in recent years. Under the rhetoric of "correcting the sectoral imbalances between urban and rural areas" that have resulted from earlier phases of Bangkok-centered modernization, technocrats influenced by the World Bank are shifting their attention increasingly to "developing" the countryside. In practice, this means that many of the countryside's natural and social features that in the past were more or less left alone as long as they provided some surplus to the bureaucracy and commercial sectors are being retooled for more direct use by the world market. In particular, there are a growing number of outright transfers of actively used local natural resources to players in urban and international economics.

Government promotion of nontraditional export crops such as corn, cassava, sugar cane, kenaf, and pineapple during the 1960s and 1970s was an early step in this direction, together with the building up of rural infrastructure. The combination of these activities led to dispossession and forest colonization on the part of a significant group of small rice farmers after they joined the cash market for agricultural inputs and consumer goods and their debts increased.

Subsequently, schemes supported by the World Bank (to take one example) intensified the southern rubber-export industry at the expense of villagers who used to be able to keep animals or harvest subsistence food plants among the rubber trees.⁴⁴ Logging by mainly provincially based timber companies, especially in the hills of the north, began to undermine the environmental basis of local peoples' subsistence more and more through the 1970s and 1980s, as the flow in streams feeding rice agriculture in the valleys below became irregular and traditional *muang faai* irrigation systems were silted up beyond the capacity of local people to correct. Thanks partly to special tax incentives provided by the government, shrimp farms producing for luxury markets abroad meanwhile contributed to the catastrophic reduction in mangrove forest cover along the country's coastlines from 3,127 square kilometers in 1975 to 1,920 square kilometers in 1985 to between 320

42. "Aw aw paw bae tha ruam toon kap baw kaset roong rueng plook pa—tang rongngan yuea kradaat" (Forest Industry Organization move to invest in plantations, pulp factory with Kaset Roong Rueng Company), *Siam Rath*, 25 Mar. 1990; "Phaen ekkachon plook paa 33 larn rai" (Plan for the private sector to plant 52,800 square kilometers), *Matichon*, 3 Feb. 1990.

43. Chamaiporn Pholcheewin, "Karn plook paa phuea ootasahagam taw nueang: yyuea kradaat," contribution to seminar "People and Forests: the Current Situation, Problems and the Future," Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, Bangkok, 8-9 Sept. 1988.

44. World Bank support for rubber replanting has included loans of U.S. \$50 million and \$142 million in 1976 and 1982.

and 1,280 square kilometers in 1988 (one group of five provinces has reportedly seen a reduction of 90 percent, to 121 square kilometers, in six years). The effects have been disastrous on fish populations, wood gathering, coastal ecosystems, and small-scale fishing livelihoods.⁴⁵ Increasingly intensive illegal salt mining to feed urban export industries in soda and glass has meanwhile salinized northeastern rivers and rice land and damaged village livelihoods, resulting in protests and violent police repression.⁴⁶ The spread of resorts and the resulting land speculation in rural areas, especially in the north and east, is undercutting the ability of local residents to support themselves on the land. Hydroelectric dams intended primarily to provide peaking power for the modern urban sector have also weighed heavily on people in the hinterlands where they are often constructed, as local villages and farmlands have been flooded, forests damaged, clean water fouled, and climatic and geological stability undermined. And modern irrigation and other water development schemes have led to local water resources being increasingly transferred to large-scale landowners and commercial interests to the detriment of local communities.⁴⁷

Plantations of eucalyptus fall into place as one part of this general trend. Partly because of its biological properties and partly because it favors large-scale landholders, the tree is an exceptionally efficient device allowing interests responsive to the world economy to annex supposedly "marginal" areas, smash the remaining local-oriented noneconomic or semi-economic patterns of livelihood and nature conservation there, and convert the fragments into "resources" for global exchange. As land is concentrated and transformed into a substrate for eucalyptus, local villagers are cut loose to seek niches as producers, consumers, recyclers, or (in the case of prostitutes) commodities in the world economy. Where such niches are not available and their bargaining power is limited, local people tend to become expendable in the eyes of both business and government.⁴⁸

The resistance provoked by eucalyptus, in addition, is only one part of a more general response to the damage to the environmental basis of village livelihoods caused by economic expansion. In the past five years, this response has become increasingly national in scope, as village-based groups fighting on particular issues link up with similar groups elsewhere and with supporters in Bangkok and other cities. The movement against commercial logging, for

example, mushroomed in the late 1980s, especially in northern rice-growing regions, adding to pressures on the government to institute the nationwide logging ban that was finally enacted in January 1989.⁴⁹ Campaigns against particular hydroelectric dams are also aggregating into a nationwide movement. In the late 1980s, village-based movements prevented or delayed the construction of dams along the Kwaie Yai, Mool, Yom, and Yan rivers, and in June 1990 villagers from existing and proposed dam sites across the country met in Bangkok to demand a moratorium on further hydroelectric projects.

One key to villagers' credibility with the authorities in the current situation, in which eucalyptus plantations are being billed as a way of "reforesting" the country, is to present traditions of preserving small community forests, which contain most of the limited tree cover remaining in nonborder areas of the northeast, as environmentalist alternatives.

Local people have also risen up recently to oppose industrial plants, salt mining, and large-scale fisheries and resort projects promoted by outside investors and the government, on the grounds that they damage local income from tourism, soil fertility, or agricultural water sources.⁵⁰ At the same time, local farmers are becoming increasingly frustrated with the long-term degrading effects of modern commercial agriculture on health, forests, soil fertility, fisheries, water availability, and spiritual and community life.⁵¹

Support from the Bureaucracy

To a technocracy trained to concentrate on growth in export income and coordinate closely with big business, eucalyptus seems an excellent way of cashing in on the "economically underutilized resource" of "degraded"

45. Official estimates put the extent of mangroves in 1988 at 1280 square kilometers, but this is disputed by scientists at Chulalongkorn University.

46. Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism, *Death of the Siew River: Chronology of a Protest* (Bangkok, 1990); "Salt in the Wound," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 June 1990, pp. 28–29.

47. Prakorb Wirotmakoot, "Khuen kap kam cholprathaan" (Dams and irrigation), contribution to a seminar on dams, their effects, and energy solutions, Chulalongkorn University, 10 June 1990; Philip Hirsch and Larry Lohmann, "The Contemporary Politics of Environment in Thailand," *Asian Survey*, vol. 29, no. 4 (Apr. 1989), pp. 439–51.

48. Despite the recent concentration on eucalyptus species, it is important to note that other trees as well could theoretically play this economic role. An Australian firm is now working on selecting and cloning native Thai fast-growing trees for future industrial monocrops, and Australian

research is also going forward on *Acacia*, *Grevillia*, and *Casuarina* species. This parallels developments in Costa Rica, where native trees screened for plantation use and slope stabilization are proving to be more productive than introduced exotics. Plantations of native and exotic pines, meanwhile, are increasingly visible in northern Thailand in watershed areas occupied by hill tribes, as a source of paper pulp and raw materials for Japanese chopsticks. From the point of view of many villagers, the effects on environment and livelihood of such biological variations are similar.

49. Larry Lohmann, "Forestry in Thailand: The Logging Ban and Its Consequences," *Ecologist*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Mar.–Apr. 1989), pp. 76–77.

50. Hirsch and Lohmann, "Contemporary Politics."

51. See Wiboon Khemchalem, *Sai phan cheewit* (Bangkok: Komon Keemthong Foundation, 1986).



A scene from the catastrophic flooding in Southern Thailand in late November 1988 that took hundreds of lives and buried whole villages under meters of mud, sand, and logs. The severity of the floods was due partly to the fact that mountain slopes such as those in the background had been logged of their natural forest, as can be seen by the pale streaks where vegetation and topsoil have been stripped away. Popular reaction to the disaster helped force the government to ban logging nationwide in January 1988. Now under pressure to reforest the country, the government can claim to be doing that when it supports commercial eucalyptus plantations—which are likely only to exacerbate environmental degradation. This photo is by the late Seub Nakasathien, and the others on this page are by Larry Lohmann.



Boonmee Sopawet, a cassava-planting villager in Dong Yai National Reserve Forest in Pa Kham District in Buriram Province. Despite having been urged to stay to help government anticommunist guerrillas in the 1970s and early 1980s, Boonmee's family was ordered out of the National Reserve Forest in 1984 to make room for eucalyptus. Among the villagers who did not receive any land compensation, Boonmee stayed on with permission to continue planting cassava between the eucalyptus rows, although his fruit trees were destroyed. But because the eucalyptus roots choke off and stunt the cassava tubers, his family's cassava income has dropped from U.S. \$320 to \$80 per year. The family has joined the ranks of agricultural laborers and faces an uncertain future.



Siri Jamhinkong, a seventy-five-year-old retired teacher, stands on land in Nam Kham Village in Roi Et Province where part of a one-and-a-half-square-kilometer secondary forest was recently bulldozed to make way for eucalyptus plantings. The forest had been used for decades as a de facto common grazing and gathering area for the surrounding villages, and community rules to regulate its use had been carefully formulated. When the forest was fenced off and bulldozers moved in, villagers protested en masse, forcing their provincial governor to step in and suspend the tree felling. Nam Kham villagers have planted native vegetable and fruit trees in the cleared space and are watching local officials' moves to prevent further invasions.



Kham Butrsi, a village leader of the antiplantation movement from Pa Kham District in Buriram Province, looks over a nursery for young rubber trees he established to provide villagers with saplings they can use to replace government-promoted eucalyptus plantings. Local cassava-planting villagers agree with policies that call for reforestation of the country, but say that the trees used should not be eucalyptus, but rather fruit, rubber, and native trees that are of immediate use to local livelihoods. Kham, who cooperated closely with the military in local "anti-insurgency" operations in the 1970s and early 1980s, was forced to go into hiding in late 1989 due to threats against his life by local officials attempting to blunt village resistance to the usurpation of local farmland and forest to plant the profit-making tree.

National Reserve Forest land. Direct and indirect subsidies for eucalyptus growers are accordingly generous. Land rent for eucalyptus planters comes to a mere U.S. \$1 per acre per year. Special privileges have been granted to many plantation operations by the Board of Investment, including exemptions on duty on imported machinery and raw materials and various tax holidays. A waiver of the 40 percent export tax for plantation products is being considered, together with a law encouraging tree plantations; no other agricultural crops receive such promotion.⁵² The Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives, meanwhile, has been ordered to provide U.S. \$80 million in soft loans for cooperative members planting eucalyptus for the Thai-Japan Reforestation and Wood Industry Company.⁵³ The state Forestry Industry Organization has requested an official U.S. \$280 million budget to plant eucalyptus in degraded former logging concessions, and the Agriculture Ministry has asked for nearly \$100 million to promote the planting of 3,200 square kilometers of the tree in the northeast.⁵⁴ The Royal Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture has set up a separate office devoted specifically to promoting commercial tree farms, complete with a “public relations” budget of over \$24 million to encourage villagers to accept eucalyptus.⁵⁵ In Surin Province and elsewhere, government officials are trying to convince villagers that eucalyptus will benefit them.⁵⁶

In a parallel with the English enclosures, the market forces behind the eucalyptus boom find a willing ally in comparatively feudalistic elements—in this case the RFD, which regards itself as the “owner” or “steward” of nearly half the country’s land. Ammar Siamwalla of the Thai Development Research Institute, one of the country’s top technocrats, has suggested, in fact, that the RFD is using private eucalyptus companies’ activities as an indirect way of regaining control over National Reserve Forest land now de facto in the possession of “encroachers.”⁵⁷ This suggests that just as the RFD once granted timber companies thirty-year logging concessions, it is now granting concessions to eucalyptus firms for comparable periods of time, at even cheaper rates, in the hope that they will drive out the settlers whom the logging concessions helped attract.

Thailand’s land tenure system is structured in a way that smooths the way considerably for the eucalyptus invasion. Despite the fact that NRFs are inhabited by millions of people, land there is legally held by the Royal Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. Under current regulations, the RFD has full power to lease separate areas of up to 3.4 square kilometers of “degraded forests” in these NRFs to private-sector interests regardless of who is already living there. (The

leasing of larger areas, as in the Shell case, requires cabinet approval.) Given the flows of money between businessmen and officials as well as various bureaucracies’ own close involvement in the plantation business, the relative ease with which leases are granted to corporations is unsurprising.

The millions of peasant residents in NRFs thus have little legal recourse against the corporate leases, and charges of “forest encroachment” are a convenient weapon by which inconveniently settled villagers are moved off land required by others. Many farmers have no land documents at all and, unlike plantation companies, find their path blocked when they try to rent NRF land—in spite of the fact that many have paid agricultural land taxes to the Department of Lands of the Ministry of Interior for years. Other farmers hold usufructuary *saw tau kaw* licenses issued under a special program by the Royal Forestry Department to people who have cleared land in NRFs. These licenses entitle them and their heirs to farm their land and may not legally be transferred. In fact, however, *saw tau kaw* are often sold illegally to plantation businesses by indebted peasants pressed by land speculators, and it is questionable whether the government “land reform” program that issues *saw tau kaw* in NRFs to the landless benefits large plantation owners or small-scale farmers more in the long term. The issuance of higher-grade land title papers requires that the forest reserve status of the land be canceled—in spite of the fact that in some areas villagers were occupying land before it was listed as National Reserve Forest. This state of affairs has led observers such as Thammasat University economist Jernsak Pinthong to ask to what extent farmers have encroached on National Reserve Forests and to what extent National Reserve Forests have encroached on the farmers.

The upshot is that current government land policies are unlikely to check the land pressures, exacerbated by the eucalyptus boom, which lead to the cycle of colonization of new forests. The more commercial trees are planted, the more deforestation is likely to occur. In an era when forest depletion has become a topic of everyday concern in Thailand, and when illegal colonization has replaced logging as the most visible immediate cause of forest destruction, the government is thus still indirectly encouraging spontaneous settlement.

Eucalyptus and “Reforestation”

One attraction of eucalyptus for the Thai government is that by opening the way to tree plantation companies, it can be seen to be discharging its responsibility to “reforest the country.” As mentioned above, logging was banned nationwide in January 1989, following disastrous deforestation-related floods in the south, a popular movement against timber companies’ destruction of catchment areas feeding agricultural areas, and the clinching of timber import deals with the Saw Maung military dictatorship in Burma. The government then came under pressure to take steps to restore forest on denuded land in more than 200 canceled logging concessions, most of which were in NRFs, in order to help reach the official goal of 40 percent forest cover (25 percent commercial forest, 15 percent conservation forest), which has been an element of national forestry policy for years. Granting concessions to private firms to grow eucalyptus there was presented as a fast and cheap way of reforesting the country, since private companies would pick up most of the expenses involved. Officials pointed out that the government, acting alone, would need 200

52. Usher, “Eucalyptus—Widening the Gap,” *Nation*, 14 June 1990; Sargent, *Khun Song Plantation*, pp. 16–17; Dhira, Panyoutou, and Songpol, “Eucalyptus”; *Matchon*, 3 Mar. 1990; “Boil Will Seek Help for Paper Industry,” *Nation*, 30 Mar. 1990.

53. Tunya, “Killing the Land.”

54. *Siam Rath*, 9 Apr. 1990; *Nation*, 11 Apr. 1990.

55. *Nation*, 9 Apr. 1990.

56. Tunya, “Killing the Land.”

57. Ann Danaiya Usher, “A Forest Policy Sadly Gone Awry,” *Nation*, 10 May 1990.

years to plant enough trees to fulfill its forest cover targets, given the very low rate of official reforestation to date.⁵⁸ The “environmentalist” rationale was given added credibility by a peculiarity of the Thai language, in which eucalyptus farms are referred to as *paa yookaa* (eucalyptus forests) or *paa plook* (planted forests): both the bureaucracy and plantation firms are making the most of the implication that by planting the trees they are engaged in a conservationist activity.⁵⁹

This rationale has been continually attacked by farmers and environmentalists who point out that expansive eucalyptus plantations have few of the characteristics of natural forests and can reduce the water table and damage neighboring crops and village agro-ecosystems.⁶⁰ In 1990 it received an additional blow from the Suan Kittii affair, which critics said confirmed the claim that logging concessions and plantation concessions are merely successive stages of the same process of economization of land and forests that has been deforesting the country for more than three decades. But the rationale is still widely used.

International Backing

Backing the eucalyptus boom is an impressive international network of multinationals, UN organizations, and bilateral agencies working in roughly similar directions. As long ago as 1981 the Japan International Cooperation Agency set up a trial eucalyptus plantation in northeastern Thailand to support research and training in the field, and has also funded surveys and

aerial photography for National Reserve Forest management plans.⁶¹ Japanese Official Development Assistance, meanwhile, is considering making a grant of U.S. \$500 million over the next five years to the Isaan Khio project; some of this will be bound to go to eucalyptus farms.⁶² The Japanese Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, meanwhile, is slated to chip in another \$40 million in support of the Thai-Japan Reforestation and Wood Industry Company venture.⁶³ CIDA, the Canadian aid agency, is likely to partly finance the Canadian consultant H.A. Simons’s work with Suan Kittii, and the Canadian government has pledged to lend C \$78 million to the Panjapol pulp and paper group on favorable terms, with the U.S. Export-Import Bank lending another U.S. \$24 million to the firm.⁶⁴ The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research has meanwhile contributed eucalyptus research support.⁶⁵ Also significant has been the strong support of the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme, and World Resources Institute, whose Tropical Forest Action Plan (TFAP) has attempted to marshal bilateral and multilateral agency support for the development of industrial wood supplies for the world market.⁶⁶ Thailand’s own TFAP exercise, to be laid out over the next three years with support from the Finnish bilateral agency FINNIDA, will be undertaken by the giant Finnish consulting engineering firm Jaakko Poyry Oy, which has been lobbying to have Thailand formulate such a plan for some time, and whose record in both tropical and temperate forest areas is largely one of commercial exploitation and plantation promotion.⁶⁷ The Thai plan’s Terms of Reference, co-drafted by Markku Simula, who also helped

58. “Sanan: Govt’s Policy of Promoting Reforestation Scheme To Continue,” *Nation*, 28 Apr. 1990.

59. The title of a two-volume set of reprints of pro-eucalyptus articles by Rerngchai Dausajja of the Royal Forestry Department for the daily newspaper *Naew Naa*, is *Raw rak paa maai: roo rak roo raksaa paa maai khoo thai wai chua niran* (We love the forest: we know to love it, we know to preserve it; forest together with Thailand for all time) (mimeo, Bangkok, 1989).

60. During seminars, meetings, and interviews since November 1987, villagers from Roi Et, Sri Sa Ket, Kalasin, Surin, Buriram, Yasothorn, and Ubon Ratchathane provinces have repeatedly complained about the environmental effects of growing eucalyptus. See Hirsch and Lohmann, “Contemporary Politics.” The literature on the ecological effects of eucalyptus planted as an exotic is large and growing. For the Thai case, see *Teknoyee thee maw som* (Appropriate technology), vol. 7, no. 2 (1988). For data confirming village reports of scant insect and other wildlife in eucalyptus plantations, see M.E.D. Poore and C. Fries, *The Ecological Effects of Eucalyptus* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization, 1985), pp. 48–49. Confirmation that even paddy-bund planting “is detrimental to the current agricultural production systems of some Northeastern agroecosystems” can be found in Iain A. Craig, Sasithorn Wasunan, and Manit Saenlao, “Effects of Paddy-Bund-Planted Eucalyptus Trees on the Performance of Field Crops,” paper presented at the Fifth Annual Farming Systems Conference, 4–7 Apr. 1988, Kamphaengsaen. The general Thai village picture of eucalyptus corresponds quite closely to that outlined in Vandana Shiva and J. Bandyopadhyay, *Ecological Audit of Eucalyptus Cultivation* (Dehra Dun, Thailand: Research Foundation for Science and Ecology, 1987), esp. p. 39.

61. Francois Nectoux and Yoichi Kuroda, *Timber from the South Seas* (Gland: World Wide Fund for Nature, 1989), p. 123; Japan

International Cooperation Agency, *Annual Reports*: 1985, p. 45; 1986, p. 56; 1987, p. 57.

62. “Aid Sought from Japan for Green Northeast Plan,” *Bangkok Post*, 2 Sept. 1989.

63. Tunya, “Killing the Land.”

64. *Globe and Mail* (Canada), 2 Apr. 1990; *Nation* (Bangkok), 14 Oct. 1989.

65. *Nation*, 5 June 1990.

66. Food and Agriculture Organization, World Bank, World Resource Institute, and United Nations Development Programme, *The Tropical Forestry Action Plan* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization, 1987); Marcus Colchester and Larry Lohmann, *The Tropical Forestry Action Plan: What Progress?* (Penang: World Rainforest Movement, 1990).

67. Jaakko Poyry has served commercial logging, pulp-mill, and refinery and gasifier projects in Brazil and is a consultant to the Aracruz eucalyptus plantation currently being held up as a model for Thailand. In addition to logging, plantation, and pulp industries in dozens of other countries, it has also worked with PT Indorayon and *transmigrasi* operations in Indonesia, both of which have aroused opposition from environmentalist and human rights groups. The Jaakko Poyry-written Tropical Forest Action Plan exercise for Sri Lanka, meanwhile, drew such vociferous criticism from conservationists that it had to be withdrawn. See “Sia Kittii (Soon Hua Seng) sang lui” (Kitti [Soon Hua Seng] orders the move ahead), *Prachachart thurakit*, 31 Aug.–2 Sept. 1989; *Jaakko Poyry Projects* (Helsinki: Jaakko Poyry, Nov. 1988); *Know-How Wire* (Jaakko Poyry client magazine), Jan. 1989; Ann Danaiya Usher, “The Shaping of a Master Plan,” *Nation*, 25 June 1990; and Ranjen Fernando and S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe, eds., *Forest Conservation and the Forestry Master Plan for Sri Lanka—a Review* (Colombo: Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka, 1987).



During Environment Day on 6 June 1990 a number of university students performed a satirical skit outside Government House in Bangkok to protest the government's failure to protect the country's remaining forests. The activists called on the government to minimize private investors' use of forests for commercial purposes. Here students dressed as eucalyptus trees celebrate their "triumph" over the "stumps" of the natural forest in the foreground. The rearmost sign behind the skit reads: "Molested by policy, the forest is crying, in terrible shape, and is being turned into plantations." This photo is by Pisanu Buawangpong, and it is reproduced here courtesy of Pisanu Buawangpong and the Nation of Bangkok.

formulate the TFAP and has served both FAO and the World Bank, sets aside the bulk of the planning budget for matters related to the forest industry. Little consideration is given to local, nonmarket use of forests, and not much more to conservation. The main thrust is to "maximize the economic benefits obtainable through forestry development" through "increased forest production" and the "development of other sectors."⁶⁸

Such official international initiatives go a long way toward insuring that, in the language of Jaakko Poyry, "investments in forestry programs and industrial projects will prove viable."⁶⁹ First, they take on a lot of the planning, coordinating, and technical costs that companies would otherwise have to shoulder themselves. Second, they strengthen official institutions that can lend a hand to the wood and paper industries. Third, they provide political support and moral authority for the plantation boom.⁷⁰

Campaigns focused directly against this sort of top-level initiative, however, have so far been confined to the intelligentsia. In August 1990 representatives of more than 200 Thai nongovernmental organizations announced their refusal to participate in the Thai TFAP exercise until it is delinked from current government forestry policy, and asked Finland to suspend its aid for the plan.

Efforts by Northern countries in support of the expansion of industrial wood plantations in the South have recently received considerable reinforcement from new initiatives toward top-down global "management" of environmental and resource problems. One such initiative is the promotion of large tree plantations in the tropics as a palatable solution to the greenhouse effect—one that does not require improvements in energy efficiency or a restructuring of the industrial economics and politics of the north.⁷¹ Another

68. Government of Finland, United Nations Development Programme, and Royal Thai Government, *Master Plan for Forestry Development in Thailand: Terms of Reference* (Bangkok: FINNIDA, 1989). Representatives of 214 nongovernmental organizations notified the Thai government on 1 August 1990 that they would refuse to participate in the plan, citing its bias toward commercial forestry and lack of recognition of the inequalities that have led to forest colonization ("NGOs Pull Out of Forestry Project," *Nation*, 2 Aug. 1990).

69. Jaakko Poyry in *Brief* (Helsinki: Jaakko Poyry, n.d.).

70. The Food and Agriculture Organization and the Tropical Forest Action Plan are mentioned frequently by Thai bureaucrats and

businessmen in their newspaper articles and public relations documents justifying eucalyptus plantations. See, for example, the newspaper articles (see note 59 above) by Rerngchai Paosajja or the statements of a Shell spokesperson in "Eucalyptus Project Faces Stiff Opposition," *Bangkok Post*, 28 Dec. 1987.

71. Various recent statements of this general concept can be found in, for example, Richard A. Houghton, "The Future Role of Tropical Forests in Affecting the Carbon Dioxide Concentration of the Atmosphere," *Ambio*, vol. 19, no. 4 (1990), pp. 204–9; the documents circulated at the G-7 summit in Houston, 22 June 1990; and "Brazilians launch plan to bring back the trees," *New Scientist*, 8 Sept. 1990, p. 32.

is the long-range move toward powering industrial economies with wood-derived rather than fossil fuels. A third is the turn toward tropical zones as a storehouse of industrial wood to replace Northern stands damaged by acid rain.⁷² The attempt of Northern governments to absorb "the environment" into their strategies for continued economic and political domination is thus bound to create new challenges for activists concerned about the spread of plantations in Thailand and elsewhere.

Postscript

The politics of eucalyptus in Thailand has taken an even more brutal turn following the coup of 23 February 1991. The military's Internal Security Operations Command has taken control of a massive so-called Land Redistribution Project for the Poor in Degraded Forest Areas, focusing initially on areas in the northeast. This billion-dollar project is to evict most residents on state forest land, with each family that possesses land or household registration resettled on 2.4 hectares of degraded land in one of three types of preplanned villages. No title will be provided, and many resettlement areas are already occupied. The military estimates that this relocation will free approximately 14,700 square kilometers for conversion to private-sector plantations. Exploitation of other areas of state land will be prohibited. For this project to succeed, it will first be necessary to break village resistance to dispossession in the areas where it is strongest. Over the past year Pa Kham District of Buriram Province in the northeast has been a special target of repression. Villages have been surrounded with troops, houses dismantled, leaders detained in night raids, and a prominent conservationist monk and others have been attacked and arrested.

72. John Spears, "A Reappraisal of Past and Future TFAP Objectives" (draft, Washington, DC: World Bank, 1989), p. 31. ★

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Laxmi Chand Tyagi, a local social worker, in a conversation on the role of resistance in the lives of the Jodhpuri peasants: "Actually the first Chipko movement started in Jodhpur 300 years ago when the king of Jodhpur asked his guards to go into the villages and cut down the trees for the construction of his new fort. The villagers protested, putting themselves between the guards and the precious trees. The first to die was a woman; 360 peasants died in total, tied to the trees. Not one was felled. Word got back to the king and the mission was halted."¹

by Michael Goldman*

Introduction

In the Indian desert many jokes are told about the rain. One afternoon, trapped in a Jodhpur City teahouse by a monsoon downpour, our Enfield motorcycle waterlogged along the road by a menacing rush of water, I hear my first rain joke. My Indian cycling partner, a social worker, bets me that it is not raining ten miles down the road. After we shake on it, he laughs and says, "Rain is strange here in India: If the bullock has two horns, one gets wet and one stays dry." Everyone in the teahouse, dripping wet, laughs. Later, as the rains subside, we venture onto the road. After fifteen minutes of splashing and sliding through the city and into its outskirts, we pull over and stop. Not a trace of rain. Had a bullock been standing at this spot, indeed, one horn would have been soaked and the other remarkably dry.

Similarly, water coming from under the ground—groundwater—has been playing a "here today gone tomorrow" act with many of the poorer peasants in the Jodhpur area of the Thar Desert of Rajasthan. People's wells have been drying up. Why? The area under study is situated on the eastern fringe of the Thar Desert—an arid terrain that comprises three-fifths of the state of Rajasthan and 62 percent (and growing) of the total arid area of India. This paper focuses on the Rampura-Mathania area, a 780-square-kilometer area of Jodhpur District, where many of Rajasthan's chili peppers are grown.²

Annual rainfall is extremely low (five to twenty inches) and erratic; soils are sandy with low fertility and high soluble salt content; groundwater is brackish or saline and located at depths

1. Laxmi Chand and Shashi Tyagi, cofounders of Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti—a rural people's science institute based in Jelu-Gagadi in Jodhpur District in Rajasthan—work primarily with the lowest caste/class people of more than one hundred villages on issues of water accessibility, untouchability, and socioeconomic justice. Special thanks to them and their hardworking colleagues for their help, hospitality, and lessons on the nature of local struggle.

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2. Chili production in Jodhpur District in 1975 was approximately 5,700 (metric) tons on 5,830 hectares, the highest in Rajasthan. Following Jodhpur, Udaipur District was at 1,420 tons on 3,190 hectares; Chittorgarh District was at 1,890 tons on 2,025 hectares. In 1986, Jodhpur's chili production rose to 14,600 tons on 10,860 hectares. In 1979, average yields were .95 tons per hectare, rising to 1.37 tons in 1986 according to a 1986 government report, .98 and 1.13 tons per hectare according to a 1990 government report. Chili pepper production as a cash crop started in 1973, though peasants have been producing it for local consumption for generations. *Statistical Abstract Rajasthan, 1982* (Jaipur: Directorate of Economic and Statistics [DES], 1986); *Statistical Abstract Rajasthan, 1986* (Jaipur: DES, 1990).



A man standing by a house in a semidesert area of Rajasthan in 1987. Two-thirds of the state of Rajasthan has an arid terrain, and life is becoming increasingly difficult for poor peasants there due to a shortage of water caused by a number of factors: drought, contamination of water supplies, less water being available from outside the area, water tables not being allowed to regenerate, conservation systems being destroyed, and the cultivation of chili peppers by rich farmers as a cash crop for external markets even though chili peppers require many times more water than all the locally consumed food crops combined. This picture and the next one are by and courtesy of Mark Selden.

as low as 600 meters in some parts; the vegetative cover is low, sparse, and consists of drought-hardy shrubs and perennial grasses that historically have sustained the livestock economy. The most common agricultural crops produced in the Rampura-Mathania area are locally consumed food grains, cereals, pulses, and oil seeds. The local cash crop, chili peppers, however, is the newly emergent product; it is produced primarily by rich farmers for external markets. Like sugar cane in Maharashtra, it consumes many times more water than all the locally consumed food crops combined.³

My argument is that the greater access to and appropriation of natural resources (in this case, water) by small groups of rich farmers (as facilitated by the state) results in the production of cash crops, on the one hand, and transforms the social relations of production and the conditions of external nature (the environment) and internal nature (the individual, the community, human nature), on the other. The questions I explore are: To what extent is groundwater depletion affected by struggles of caste, class,

and access to political power? What roles do local political organizations and the state have in constructing the problem of water shortage? What has been the historical role of poor peasants in this process of desertification?

The general picture is one of poverty and exploitation. The poor peasants' resources dwindle, as does their ability to produce independently. The desert is full of uncertainty ("crisis") as life is put out of balance. This virtual breakdown of holistic relations between people and nature manifests itself in the degradation of most forms of life in the desert—a process of severe desertification—from loss of forests, vegetation cover, soil fertility, and water reserves to the breakdown of sustainable animal husbandry and small-scale food production, and the large-scale impact on the health and livelihood of the majority of the people (malnutrition, opium addiction, tuberculosis, vitamin A-deficiency diseases, premature death). This article is an attempt to integrate an understanding of these processes from a Marxist perspective into a coherent framework for analysis and action.

Literature Review

Much of the writing on the Third World deals with environmental questions only indirectly and does not inquire into the ecological degradation intrinsic to many forms of development. By contrast, research on environmental issues tends to ignore the links between ecological degradation and the process and relations of production. As Piers Blaikie discovers, these works rely on three fundamental assumptions: (a) causes of the particular or general forms of ecological degradation are "location-specific," lying in the geographical confines of the area where the physical symptoms are being felt/studied; (b) the state is neutral and "able to mediate between competing interests, and to intervene among them to apply rational policies for the maximum aggregate benefit." The issue, then, for these policy analysts becomes one of "better" planning; (c) conservation policies can be planned and implemented without any discernible effect upon political-economic relations around daily land-use practices.⁴

Analyses of the distributive effects of development on rural regions of India tend to ignore: (a) Rajasthan, perceiving it as an exception, particularly since two-thirds is desert and semiarid; (b) urban-rural relations, focusing on rural production in isolation; and (c) the role of the resource base and the ecological "conditions of production." This section will look at some of the literature that suggests a theoretical and historical foundation where these empirical themes could be applied.

Much of the world-systems and Marxist development literature insists that no stone has been left unturned by capitalism and its laws of constant expansion, with the result that even the quiet, desolate deserts of the world are being

3. An acre of sugar cane takes at least eight times as much irrigated water as seasonal crops such as *jowar* and *bajra* (cereals), according to Nilakantha Rath and A.K. Mitra in "Economics of Utilization of Canal Water in Dry Agricultural Regions," *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, vol. 41, no. 2 (April–July 1986). My research shows a similar water-consumption ratio between chili pepper and locally consumed cereals and pulses such as *jowar*, *moong*, and *bajra*.

4. Piers Blaikie, *The Political Economy of Soil Erosion in Developing Countries* (Essex: Longman Development Series, 1985).

transformed (or mined), one way or another, into commodity and surplus-value production. This happens, according to theorists of “uneven and combined development,” first, because of the uneven exploitative relations between the industrialists and capitalist farmers from the cities and the raw materials and peasants in the country.⁵ Secondly, these relations are buttressed by techniques combining, for example, nineteenth-century labor practices with twenty-first-century technologies; in other words, combined development. These forces and relations together tend to overwhelm peasant communities.

The vast majority of the rural population is losing access to public groundwater and sustainable food production due to a lack of access to the money needed to construct a tube well and buy a pump (up to Rs. 100,000). The capitalist farmers continue to dig tube wells and take advantage of the fact that their neighbors cannot do so. Market control and concentration increase.

The final neglected topic, ecology, is becoming a popular and urgent analytical theme for development writers; the major problem with the writing on ecology thus far is that it tends to explain how environmental degradation is occurring, but rarely why.

The seeds of theoretical change were planted by Karl Polanyi in his classic text, *The Great Transformation*, where he discusses how people and nature are organized (and the necessity of them being organized) for capitalist production. “Production is interaction of man and nature; if this process is to be organized through a self-regulating mechanism of barter and exchange, then man and nature must be brought into its orbit; they must be subject to supply and demand, that is, dealt with as commodities, as goods produced for sale.”⁶

Polanyi argues that both people and nature must be turned into objects by capitalist production, freely available and plentiful. Both must take on the appearance, and play the role, of commodities of capitalist production—the “commodification” of labor and nature. Accordingly, Polanyi understands this transformation of the social character of people and their environment (work, public, and natural) into (what appear as) commodities as a process of reification: transforming people and nature into

things. Hence, under capitalism, society and nature *appear* in their commodity forms and not their social and ecological forms. Capitalism involves a struggle of “appearance over reality.” For Polanyi, this process would lead to destructive economic and political institutions, such as the corporatist Fascist state of his day.

Relevant to our study, Polanyi observes three stages in “modern development” critical to the needs of developing capitalism. The first stage begins with the appropriation of nature in the rural sector (the *real* “tragedy of the commons”), “the commercialization of the soil” through the political “liquidation of feudalism.” The second stage unfolds as urban-industrial production seeks out a steady supply of raw materials for maximizing profits. Polanyi’s third historical stage reveals an extension of these exploitative relations (between urban/rural sectors, owners/workers, and capitalism/nature), beyond Europe’s shores to the Third World—“the extension of such a system of surplus production to overseas and colonial territories.”

In his work on the history of India’s deforestation, Madhav Gadgil, a leading Indian ecologist, presents a similar argument with respect to India’s transformation.⁸ Uncultivated lands, or refugia, were appropriated by the British in the early nineteenth century and renamed “reserved” forest areas by the Forestry Department, thereby stripping away the rights to the land from the rural majority and replacing these historical rights with privileges. Local people could request access to these commons from the British, but they had lost their rights to them. Consequently, locals lost not only the right to use the natural resource base, but also the right (and the incentive) to manage it. They also lost the right to keep away noncomplying outsiders.

The intent behind this redesignation of public lands was to shift the resource flow coming from refugia away from local cultivation communities and to the resource-starved metropolis. A heterogeneous resource base, Gadgil reflects, quickly becomes utilized in an exhaustive fashion, feeding urban-industrial kilns and separating rural communities from the management and use-value of nature. It is at this point that the peasant economy and the natural ecology begin to deteriorate.

Finally, James O’Connor writes on the nexus of uneven and combined development and ecological crisis in an effort to explain why nature is being transformed. He argues that ecological degradation can best be understood within the larger context of the contradiction between capitalist production relations (and forces) and production conditions.⁹ “Marx defined three kinds of production conditions,” O’Connor writes. “The first is ‘external physical conditions’ or the *natural elements* entering into

5. See, for example: Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984); Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Hogarth, 1985); Samir Amin, *Unequal Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976); and James O’Connor, “Uneven and Combined Development and Ecological Crisis,” *Race and Class*, vol. 30, no. 3 (1989).

6. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944), p. 130; emphasis added.

7. For a short summary of Polanyi’s work as it pertains to sociological inquiry, see Fred Block and Margaret Somers, “Beyond the Economistic Fallacy: The Holistic Social Science of Karl Polanyi,” in *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, ed. Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

8. Based on Gadgil’s presentation, “India’s Deforestation: Patterns and Processes,” at the University of California, Berkeley, 31 January 1989.

9. This section (and the theoretical premise of this article) is informed by discussions with and the writings of James O’Connor and the Capitalism, Nature, Socialism study group in Santa Cruz, California. See James O’Connor, “A Theoretical Introduction,” in *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, no. 1 (Fall 1988).

constant and variable capital. Second, the 'labor power' of workers was defined as the 'personal conditions of production.' Third, Marx referred to 'the communal, general conditions of social production,' e.g., means of communication—in other words, *public space*.¹⁰

Simply put, conditions of production are nature, people, and the space in which they interact. None of the three are commodities and never can be, for they can never be produced nor reproduced capitalistically. But they are bought, sold, and used as if they were commodities; capital treats them thus. The contradiction is that capital will always consume the three exhaustively, a fact empirically demonstrated by atmospheric ozone destruction, hazardous workplace conditions, rain forest destruction, fodder depletion, and so on. In almost every case, social movements tend to mobilize and resist the depredations, with the state ending up mediating between such movements and capital. Therefore, the conditions of production eventually become politicized.

My study in Jodhpur District in Rajasthan shows that groundwater is produced through a complex system of condensation in forested and hilly areas, rain-harvesting on watersheds, and percolation through stable and absorbing soils. The healthy condition of the environment is critical for the sustainability of the greater water system. Whoever controls the use or abuse of these ecosystems *also* controls the water supply. These rights, as Gadgil and N.S. Jodha argue, have been usurped from traditional land managers.¹¹ Therefore, understanding the historical transformation of control over common property resources is central to understanding the ideological debates over the limits of nature.¹²

Historical Background

The recent history of the Thar Desert of Rajasthan (also called the Great Indian Desert or Rajasthan Desert) has been one of increasing exploitation: Of its 78.3 million acres, nearly 5 million have become categorized as unusable—most seriously affected by the process of desertification. The bulk of the desert, 56.8 million acres, has been classified as highly vulnerable, in danger of becoming unlivable. Nonetheless, land use has increased from 28 percent in 1951 to 54 percent in 1971 to much more today. In the process, one-quarter of the area covered with vegetation has been lost. One should note

here the politics of defining, of fragmenting and naming ecological places into categories useful to the colonization/appropriation process (by the British, the Indian state, and the propertied class). Land and resources that are not productive for capitalist expansion are labeled unproductive or unusable, even though, or because, that same land is being utilized (and managed) by pastoralists and others. The state, encouraged by preservationists and capitalists alike, will encroach on these commons and utilize them for "more productive" (read "commodity production") purposes, often at a great loss to the majority, peasants who depend on them for their livelihood.

The control of groundwater is fast becoming the means of controlling and exploiting labor, just as the exploitation of labor is fast becoming the means of gaining more control over, and exhausting, the common resource, water.

Rajasthan accounts for the second largest geographical area of all the Indian states (10.4 percent of the total), although it contains less than 5 percent of the human population.¹³ The two principal occupations are agriculture and animal husbandry, with many families working at both. Rajasthan contributes 11.8 percent of the nation's livestock population and historically has bred some of the finest camels and cattle for export. In 1985–86 Rajasthan farmers produced 4.6 percent of India's grains and 13.5 of its pulses, accounting for 10.5 percent of India's total cropped area.

Rajasthan's per capita state domestic product (SDP) is one of India's lowest, though it also has a relatively low poverty rate, with 34 percent of its population living under the poverty line (1983–84) as compared to the national average of 37 percent. But Rajasthan's poverty is worsening: From 1977–78 to 1983–84, the poverty rate increased from 33.6 to 34.3 percent, while India's overall poverty rate decreased from 48.3 to 37.4 percent, according to government statistics. Literacy rates vary from 9 percent in rural Barmer to 35 percent in urban Ajmer, with an average of 24 percent; but Rajasthan's rural female literacy rate as of 1981 was 5.5 percent, as compared to an equally deplorable all-India rate of 18 percent, whereas the all-India rate for women and men is 36.2 percent.

According to 1984–85 government statistics, agriculture and allied activities account for approximately 50 percent of the state income, having risen to as high as 64 percent during the 1970s; mining and manufacturing, 18.2 percent; transport, commerce, and communication, 9 percent; trade, hotel, and restaurants, 11.5 percent; public administration, 4.5 percent; and other services, 5.6 percent.

A major ecosystemic configuration in western India is the mighty Aravali Mountains, reputed to be the oldest range on earth. This range ripples from north to south and forms the nation's principal western watershed, draining its waters into the Bay of Bengal in the east and the Arabian Sea in the south. Historically, it has supplied surface and groundwater reserves

10. *Ibid.*, p. 16, emphasis added.

11. For more on the Indian commons, see N.S. Jodha, "Market Forces and Erosion of Common Property Resources," conference paper, ICRISAT, Patancheru, October 1983; Jodha, "Common Property Resources and Rural Poor in Dry Regions of India," *Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)*, vol. 21, no. 27 (5 July 1986), p. 27; and Madhav Gadgil, "Towards an Ecological History of India," *EPW*, vol. 20, nos. 46–47 (November 1985).

12. Known as "limits to growth," this position is argued by the famous Western writers on ecology (the Ehrlichs, Hardin, Ophuls, Shumacher, Meadows, and the Club of Rome) and has become the linchpin of the dominant ideological framework for Western bourgeois environmentalism.

13. These statistics come from Kanta Ahuja and Vidya Sagar, *Rural Transformation in a Developing Economy* (Jaipur: Kumar and Company, 1987); and DES, *Statistical Abstract Rajasthan, 1986*.



A hobbled camel in Rajasthan in 1987. Some of India's finest camels and cattle have been bred in Rajasthan for export. Agriculture and animal husbandry are the main occupations in Rajasthan, which has 11.8 percent of India's livestock population. However, due to recent ecological degradation and lack of rainfall, pastures and common grazing areas have been reduced to sand, making animal husbandry extremely difficult. Many sources say that half the poor peasants' cattle died during the 1984–88 drought, affecting the people's nutrition and access to fuel (manure) as well as their livelihood. There isn't even enough drinking water for the relatively few people in Rajasthan, and many are now forced to buy it.

to millions of people and acres of land in Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Aravalis have also drawn a firm line between the desert and the verdant valleys and plains; until the 1950s, amply greened with forest cover, the mountains were the home of a thriving tribal forest people and of forest riches such as teak, bamboo, and *kathar*.

In the 1950s, however, much of the mountain range and its natural resources was placed under the control ("protection") of the forest department—wrenched away from the time-tested land-managing tribal people. Within two decades, the Aravalis were almost completely clear-cut and contracted out for speedy exploitation, filling the industrial kilns and paneling the walls of urban homes. The effects upon Rajasthan's ecology have been devastating: The water system has been transformed as river basins and lakes have dried up. Due to state control of the mountains and the consequent capitalist denuding of the forests,

the western watershed no longer offers adequate surface and groundwater supplies to Rajasthan.¹⁴

Contextualizing the Water Crisis in Jodhpur

Jodhpur District, situated just west of the Aravalis, is a semiarid central district, with the second largest city (Jodhpur) in Rajasthan. Largely desert, the terrain shifts from one botanical-geological pastiche to another, in sections from as short as a stone's throw or as far as a hilly range.¹⁵ In the villages families own cows, bullocks, sheep, goats, or camels; they may farm a local millet (*bajra*), oil seed (*til*) and/or pulse (*moat*), particularly during the rainy season; and they may be artisans cobbling *jodhpuri* slippers, spinning India's finest wool, or weaving blankets. Ownership of the means of production, access to inputs, land quality, and capital, however, are all very much in flux.

14. As Paul Singh Dhillon has explained, "All underground waters not only have their source in surface waters, there being no innate or primeval waters as such, but are in many cases a physical continuation of the latter through a changed medium and to some extent even reappear as such in the form of seepage and springs, to again merge with them in a common medium of flow." From Paul Singh Dhillon, *Water Resources Development and Management in North-West India* (Chandigarh: Center for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, 1987), p. 31.

15. For example, in July 1988 I toured the desert with a film crew documenting for national television the effects of drought following the 1984–88 rainless period. The crew's objective was to film all the different types of desert scenes and life; I assumed a few hours of circling a few villages would well represent the desert diversity. Four months later they were still filming. On one four-day excursion, we stopped our four-wheel-drive jeep fifteen times in one afternoon, sometimes as frequently as every few minutes, or whenever the keen-eyed zoologist and botanist noticed a change in the landscape.



A village elder from Bomnun Village in Rajasthan speaking at a panchayat (village council) meeting in 1989 about his opium addiction. This eccentric elder is explaining his gripe—"the opium is worse." Social workers estimate that nearly 60 percent of low-caste village elders in western Rajasthan are addicted to opium, and most of the men who work in the lime quarries are addicted as well. As a young quarry worker tells it, "Long ago the king of Jodhpur would feed his horses with opium to keep them going in spite of their fatigue and hunger; in this way, the mine owners feed us opium." The mining industry has also dug up Jodhpur's well-designed earthen system for catching and conserving rainwater. Instead of the water reaching the cities' large holding tanks, it collects at the bottom of quarries and is wasted. This photo and the next one are by and courtesy of Michael Goldman.

One example of ecological degradation in Jodhpur comes from its mining industry.¹⁶ Until the 1950s, Jodhpur City was surrounded by manmade contours, lakes, streams, wells, tanks, and embankments worked into the sides of hills and valleys to catch and conserve most rainwater. One scientist called it a veritable "marvel of high-class engineering and architecture," a "well-knit" water system dating back 200 to 500 years. The city is also surrounded by more than 7,000 privately managed stone mines, which practice "ruthless and unscientific stone mining" and have "mutilated" the water

system, according to a 1988 report. Many of the constructed streams and canals have been blocked up and their walls overrun, destroyed, and left in disrepair. The mines have themselves become water catchments, but they flood and waste most of the precipitation that should have been tracked into the city's water system.

The mines generate Rs. 20 million in revenues for the city, only one-tenth of the direct cost Jodhpur incurs annually from its rural groundwater pumping system (water pumped from the outlying rural areas, including Rampura-Mathania) to compensate for this water loss. The mining industry has degraded the area. Equally significant is the degradation of workers' health: studies in one area show almost 100 percent rate of tuberculosis and other respiratory illnesses among career mine workers. Though officially these lung diseases are said to be tuberculous, according to Delhi-based health advocates they are not just tuberculosis but silicosis and other work-related respiratory diseases. For work-related diseases, a worker can demand some form of workers' compensation under law. Hence, mine doctors, the nearest officials, label the illness as tuberculosis, a disease not necessarily work-related; that is, not just miners contract tuberculosis, a typical poor-person's disease in India. Also, many miners become seriously ill from repeatedly contracting malaria due to unsanitary work sites. The claims process itself could wear down a worker and certainly get him fired. These workers are in debt and addicted to the productive relations at the mines. Local social workers point out that those who are most susceptible to tuberculosis are those who are malnourished and/or addicted to opium. The miners, many of whom work twenty-five days in the month and live at the work site within the mines, are fed (for an unreasonable fee deducted from their pay) by their employers. Testimony suggests the food is inadequate but the opium and liquor are plentiful, and these are what keep the miners alive and working under such inhumane working conditions. These conditions also keep their families poor and in debt.

This mining picture reveals a few of the water-related pressures poor peasants in Jodhpur confront: diminishing water supplies and diminishing access to existing water supplies. Water as a condition of production is regulated by the state—a mediator between capitalist enterprises (timber and mining industries) and nature. Another aspect of the local water crisis is linked to the mysterious phenomenon of drought.

The Discourse on Drought

From 1984 to 1988, India suffered a severe drought. In Jodhpur District, poor peasants were hit hardest, though not exclusively: Wells dried up, crops failed, indebtedness intensified, and daily living became extremely harsh; the poor peasants' cattle population diminished by 50 percent; infant

16. Quotations from "Restoration of Jodhpur's Traditional Water System and Catchment," 1988, by S.M. Mohnot of Jodhpur University and the Prime Minister's Commission on Forests. See also S.K. Saxena and P.C. Chatterji, "Ecological Imbalances Caused by Mining in Rajasthan and Their Restoration," from an edited 1988 book on India's mining industry, published by Scientific Publishers, Jodhpur.

mortality rates doubled; and more than half the children developed night blindness, a vitamin A-deficiency disease, or in some cases permanent blindness or beratomalacia, a condition in which the eyeball liquefies and drains from the socket. It was often difficult to know the precise medical cause of death, especially for a poor and "invisible" villager; usually it was the sympathetic (or angry) nongovernmental health agency that labeled the cause of death as starvation, and the indifferent official who labeled it as tuberculosis, jaundice, or "other unspecified diseases." In fact, the government statisticians only publish data on "registered deaths by causes in urban areas," not rural, and there is no category for starvation.¹⁷

These conditions of water shortage pose a conceptual problem, for overall rainfall patterns since 1959 have not changed substantially. Data from two rain-gauge stations (Mandore and Osian) show that from 1959 to 1987 fluctuations in rainfall have existed over the years, but in no distinct pattern of decrease or increase.¹⁸ Reports from 1975 show the highest rainfall in that year, although recorded lows fall in both the decade preceding and succeeding it. The year 1988 seems to mark the end of a four-year meteorological drought, although the area has remained consistently arid throughout recent history. Yet everyone, from cobbler to hydrologist, agrees that a water crisis exists.¹⁹

If there is a water shortage, it is not necessarily because of a developing pattern of less rain. A lack of consistent rainfall is only one facet of water scarcity. Hydrologists and water experts further delineate three other forms of drought besides *meteorological* drought, all consequences of socioeconomic relations: *surface-water* drought, from deforestation and destruction of mountain catchments supplying rivers and streams; *soil-water* drought, from the loss of effective moisture-conserving capacities of soil; and *groundwater* drought, from excessive groundwater pumping. These forms of drought, symptoms of ecological degradation, pave the way for flooding when the rains do fall, and aridity when the rains do not come.²⁰

"Drinking Water Crisis Worsens in Rajasthan" exclaimed one of many newspaper headlines during the drought.²¹ "All the major surface-water sources [are] drying up and [the] underground water level [is] going down by over 25 metres," the article reported. Most of the 34,960 villages were facing acute shortages, and 7,942 villages had no water-supply schemes at all.²² These water shortages included water-supply contaminations due to high fluoride deposits produced

geophysically, which can be (but are not) filtered out. Instead, by drinking from their wells poor villagers contract crippling diseases such as osteosclerosis, thyroid problems, and kidney and heart diseases. Also preventable are the industry-produced toxins that lead to poisoning. M.C. Mehta has a case in the Indian Supreme Court against the Union of India, for denying the people their constitutional right to access to drinking water ("right to life" under article 21 of the Indian Constitution), allowing a number of chemical companies in Udaipur District to contaminate the groundwater supply of a cluster of Rajasthan villages. On his top bookshelf in his Delhi law office Mehta has a bottle of what looks like Cabernet red wine; in fact, it is water from these wells.

A lack of consistent rainfall is only one facet of water scarcity. Hydrologists and water experts further delineate three other forms of drought besides meteorological drought, all consequences of socioeconomic relations.

A 1988 Jodhpur Ground Water Department report stresses that at a ratio of approximately 8:1, eight parts of the water extracted from the ground in the Rampura-Mathania area goes directly for local irrigation purposes and one part goes for Jodhpur City's water needs. As groundwater levels drop, poor people's hand-dug wells dry up, and since they cannot afford to construct the deeper tube wells, their households no longer have water. Most can then farm only with the rains.

The lion's share of the local groundwater in the Rampura-Mathania area of Jodhpur District is extracted by a capitalist class of farmers. Because the majority of peasants are losing access to this common resource of ground water, as well as most other common natural resources, many of the poor peasants are forced to purchase drinking water from the local water-merchants (also the chili pepper producers). So water is being treated as if it were a commodity, and class relations are solidifying around the extraction and utilization of groundwater.

17. For a great resource and file of newsclippings, see the *Green Files*, a monthly compilation produced and sold by The Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi. Much of this drought information comes from a variety of sources, including the *Green Files*, a 1988 Jodhpur-based report of the Desert Medical Research Institute, and local informants from the government, academia, social agencies, and the villages.

18. Data are absolute quantities in a given year and not distributions over time or distributions through planting seasons, which would possibly be more important for farmers.

19. Olsen finds similar results in Rayalseema, as described in her short but highly suggestive article "Manmade 'Drought' in Rayalseema," *EPW*, 14 March 1987. See also D.A. Mooley and B. Parihasarhi, "Fluctuations in All-India Summer Monsoon During 1871-1978," *Climatic Change*, vol. 6 (1984), pp. 287-301, on the steadiness of rainfall over time.

20. For more discussion, see J. Bandyopadhyay, *Ecology of Drought and Water Scarcity* (Dehradun: Research Foundation for Science and Ecology, 1987) and the sources cited there.

21. Headline from the *Indian Express*, 18 Mar. 1988.

22. As Bandyopadhyay revealed in 1987, Rajasthan is not alone: "State after state is trapped in an irreversible and worsening crisis of drought, desertification and consequent water scarcity. The magnitude of the scarcity is disproportionately higher than the variation in rainfall from normal. Uttar Pradesh had 17,000 villages without water in the 1960s; this figure had doubled to 35,000 in 1972, and by 1985 the crisis had extended to 70,000 villages. In Madhya Pradesh, 36,420 villages had no water in 1980; this number had risen to 50,000 in two years, and to 64,565 in 1985. The number of villages without water in Gujarat shot up from 3,844 in 1979 to 12,250 in 1986; and in Maharashtra from 17,112 in 1979 to 23,000 in 1984." Bandyopadhyay, *Ecology of Drought*, pp. 1-2.

At the same time, as poor peasant families are losing their access to this necessary input for independent production (in food-crop production and animal husbandry) and reproduction (the household), they must, as individual wage-laborers, seek out wage work. Options include migration to the city, work on state-run famine relief projects such as road repair, work in the local stone mines, or work on the local chili-producing farms. Most find combinations of these options as temporary solutions to compensate for their loss of access to water. Thus this rural community is being transformed through processes similar to those that have inflicted rural societies globally: their “proletarianization.”

The more proletarianized the poor peasants become, the further they move from their traditional forms of production and water management, and the more alienated they become from this essential productive input and life- and community-sustaining resource. They also become more dependent upon both capitalist relations (wage-labor) and depletive/exhaustive forms of water use and management.

Hence, the control of groundwater is fast becoming the means of controlling and exploiting labor, just as the exploitation of labor is fast becoming the means of gaining more control over, and exhausting, the common resource, water.

Chili Peppers and the Making of a Modern Capitalist Class

A Manaklau social worker tells a story about the problem of water shortage for the poor peasants:

In this area access to drinking water is a problem: It is becoming more and more scarce. In many villages it is acute; women are now walking five to 20 kilometers a day just to fetch drinking water. When walking this far becomes impossible, they fall prey to the rich farmers and their evil business of selling water to the poor peasants.

See, the rich farmers bring drinking water from their pumps in tractor tanks and sell it at the criminal rate of Rs. 150 per tank. Water, once public property, now falls into the hands of only those economically able to extract it from the ground. This water is now being sold to the poor, who are unable to afford to build ground wells to reach the fresh water at its current depth.

You can calculate that one family, a poor family, with a few goats, a few sheep, and five members, needs at least three tanks of water a month. Because the family is so poor and unable to spend so much money on drinking water, they purchase the water on credit, at very high interest rates. Consequently, they pay off the loan with extreme difficulty, long after the water has been consumed. But where do they get this money from? Well, if they have an able-bodied boy, they will send him to the Punjab or some other prosperous area as casual labor, working for a low wage, so he can send his earnings back home. Just so they can pay the rich man for the drinking water which they cannot afford.²³

Some of the old-time chili-growing families of the Rampura-Mathania area have been producing chili peppers and

selling them either fresh and green or dry in powder for more than fifty years. This elite group call themselves businessmen, not farmers, and rightly so. They have formed a *kisan sangharsh samiti*, a local rich farmers’ lobby that fights (*sangharsh*) for better and cheaper access to inputs such as electricity. They run for local political positions, own businesses in rural towns, villages, and in the city. They have domiciles in Jodhpur, in their rural town (Mathania for example), and on their farmland. Although no individual owns more than seventy-five acres for chili production, fathers have sons and brothers, and if you include cousins and uncles who are market merchants, transporters, middlemen, and traders, plus a bribable friend on the electricity board, local politicians, and business people, this business becomes a small empire, propelling many of these rural chili farmers/businesspeople into their self-proclaimed “Millionaire’s Club.”

The most affluent Mathania chili producers claim they maintain a steady 50 percent profit rate.²⁴ This is in spite of increasing costs for productive inputs, some related directly to local and regional ecological degradation. For example, one important input is organic manure as fertilizer—a requisite for intensive chili production on the sandy soils of the desert. Because of the drastic depletion of ground vegetation, grasses, shrubbery, trees, pastures as commons, water ponds, lakes, rivers, and tanks, in the late 1980s half the poor peasants’ cattle died. The recent lack of rainfall has exacerbated an already serious problem. Manure production has therefore diminished drastically.

Poor peasants say that some indigenous species of grasses and shrubs have completely disappeared. Pastures and common areas for grazing have been reduced to sand, which makes animal husbandry extremely difficult and has led to accusations from urban critics (and international agencies) that the rural poor are overgrazing their land. Another consequence of the degradation of the cattle population is the effect on the health of the poor peasants, as has been described earlier, with the vitamin-deficiency diseases that come when poor peasants lose access to ghee (a refined form of butter), milk, and curd. When wood was eliminated as a locally consumed fuel, manure replaced it. Now, with the scarcity of manure comes the scarcity of cooking fuel.

Manure serves as an excellent and common fertilizer for pastures and agricultural fields. It serves as fuel for poor peasants’ kitchens. When the local production of manure draws to a halt, common pastures are degraded and fields erode; kitchens lose not only the manure but also the field waste that comes with a good harvest. Ultimately, they go without, as their testimony reveals. The rich chili producers, on the other hand, truck in their manure from neighboring districts and states. This input becomes extremely expensive for them, costing up to

23. Excerpt from Michael Goldman, “Untouchables Reclaim the Indian Desert,” in *Development that Works: Grassroots Solutions to Hunger and Poverty*, ed. Medea Benjamin and Rebecca Buell (Washington, DC: Seven Locks Press, 1991).

24. These percentages are only claims of a handful of the richest producers; though local informants do not dispute them, when we break down the costs into categories, discrepancies surface. Nonetheless, in these few cases, calculations always led us back to 30–50 percent profit rates, and state agricultural officials estimate 30 percent profit rates. Calculations ignore taxes and depreciation costs of machinery. The high profits in this type of business are possible only if the work is managed by the family rather than being contracted out. Along with water access/control, storage facilities and market control are two variables that assist these businesses in their accumulation.

Rs. 4,000 per hectare of chili production.²⁵ However, it helps their harvests and adds to the process of concentration of production and the gradual elimination of competition from middle peasants. As one rich chili producer boasts, "That is why we call ourselves 'businessmen,' not 'farmers.' You need a lot of money to invest in chilies. That's why our profit rates are so high. Only a few can afford the risk."

Another input is pesticides. More are needed every year to combat the increasing diversity of diseases, fungi, and pests that attack the chili plants, thus driving up the cost. Middle peasants say that they have been forced out of chili production by rising manure and chemical costs coupled with uncertain water supplies.

Labor costs fluctuate based on the supply of labor and the season. These days unemployment is very high. Workers, therefore, are forced to compete against one another. During the labor-demanding planting season (July-August) in Rampura, men are typically paid Rs. 8-9 per day, women a few rupees less (sex discrimination in employment is standard).²⁶ In one case, researchers found that women from a northwest district were being carted many miles by tractor to work twelve-hour days during the chili-picking season. Poor peasant women, desperate for cash to purchase food for their families, were being paid in *bidis* instead of cash. *Bidis* are small hand-rolled cigarettes, the cheapest on the market, which are largely smoked by poor peasant men. (The levels of gender subjugation and exploitation in these stories are manifold.) During the rest of the nine-month season, wages are usually at Rs. 5-6, although the exact figure is often negotiated in the village square, where two competing chili farmers come in by tractor and seek out the lowest bidders for the day's employment. The more depressed the economic climate, the lower the bids.

Sharecropping is also a prevalent system, though as it is practiced it is illegal. Sharecropping requires families to take responsibility for crops day and night (electricity for irrigation is only available at night). They must also borrow money at the beginning of the season and pay it back after the harvest when crop prices are at rock bottom. Consequently, there is no money or time for sharecroppers to work their own fields and little hope of their becoming independent again.

Water has become the crucial agricultural input for capital chili production. Farmers are using every minute they get of state-provided electricity to pump water. The stronger their pumps and the more electricity they can tap, the more water can be extracted. Some pump as much as 70,000 gallons per day and irrigate their fields 40-60 times in a nine-month season. This rate of extraction (and consequent depletion, as extraction rates far outpace regeneration rates) is far greater than the four to ten irrigations per season for *bajra* (the local cereal) and most other locally consumed foods.

25. To do a comprehensive analysis of economic/ecological conditions, one also needs to study the impact of this chili production on manure-export communities. Shortages exist there too, as regional studies indicate. But peasants from those areas have decided, under assumedly extreme pressures and limited choice, to risk further soil erosion and fuel shortages to export their manure out of their community.

26. These are sample 1988 wages.

Privatizing the Commons

Access becomes more restrictive as the tendency increases for the capitalization of nature in the form of resources such as water, manure, and wood. Common resources are becoming privatized; access is no longer based on traditional community rules of preservation, conservation, and accommodation for both nature and society. Until recently local customs maintained and protected community woodlots and pastures (*orans* and *gouchars*), but now access is based on access to capital. Resource shortages are being created by capitalist forms of production, as these common resources must become privatized and ready inputs for intensive agricultural production. As one rich Mathania peasant summarized, "In the future, when water prices increase, it will be survival of the fittest. The weaker farmers will go. Poorer farmers will not be able to hold on to the costs of water, and will be forced to leave. Then we will have greater control of the market. We are strong."

This process can only occur with the cooperation of the state and its institutions, which decide to regulate access to some resources and not to others. State priority is to deliver electricity, for example, to the wealthy sector of the rural community. A conversation with a rich peasant, one of the most powerful in the area, suggests how decisions of allocation of common/public resources are made: "Ninety farmers of 300 [in his community] have electrical connections. They are the wealthy, of course, and they have to pay 'the man.' I helped my neighbor get his electrical connection. With the connection, and only then, did the bank give him the loans he needed to start [intensive chili production]. See, it's all in who you know."

Take as another example the local ordinance prohibiting state banks from lending money for the construction of tube wells. The objective was to stop the proliferation of tube-well construction so as to stop the "excessive" outflow of groundwater. The state mediates to contain a social/ecological problem—a water shortage. The effect, however, is exactly the opposite: The vast majority of the rural population is losing access to public groundwater and sustainable food production, due to the lack of access to the money needed to construct a tube well and buy a pump (up to Rs. 100,000). The capitalist farmers continue to dig tube wells and take advantage of the fact that their neighbors cannot do so. Market control and concentration increase.

Because water, as a condition of production, is not (and cannot be) produced capitalistically, the state regulates access. The provision of electricity becomes a means for exploiting water supplies. Hence, state regulation also becomes a means (albeit indirectly) of controlling labor through the selective distribution of electricity. Electric power becomes more than electrical current for tube wells: It becomes transformed into social, economic, and political power.

State power-relations also manifest adverse community-gender relations: The state administers and regulates access to water primarily for irrigation, particularly for cash crops, so that water distribution for household use and its economy (reproduction, subsistence, sanitation, and cottage-industry income generation) is affected. Women tend to have responsibility for this complex domain. Households and/or villages receiving water for irrigation may not be receiving it for these other essential uses. In many cases, the water is too fluoridic, saline, or contaminated for home consumption (home as broadly defined). Political power for access to water tends to



Poor shepherd children of Jelu-Gagadi in Rajasthan tending their herd in a sparse pasture in 1989. In the low-caste families in Jelu-Gagadi Village, children tend sheep and goats in fields far from home; men work on the chili pepper enterprises or in the lime quarries, where they live twenty-five days out of thirty; and women struggle to gather firewood and water, maintain the animals, and clean the dung, seeds, and food. The government offers virtually no electricity, farming support, credit, or schools (unless children can endure apartheidlike, high-caste abuse)—only “famine-relief” work, which keeps women on road crews. Efforts to “reconstitute” a sustainable community from a disarticulated, fragmented one become strained. This caption and the previous one were provided by Michael Goldman.

be flexed at the expense of women. Compare how many state agencies are involved and how much money is allocated for water-related programs for, on the one hand, cash-crop development and, on the other, household economic needs. So when the local governing body legislates a credit ban for the digging of tube wells, it affects the poor greatly, and women even more so. These inequalities, however, have resulted in emancipatory struggles by women reclaiming access to and control over this resource that was once common property—water.²⁷

As water tables drop below well levels, wells need to be dug deeper or new ones constructed. Without access to the capital to dig a deep tube well, peasants lose access to the water and to their means of production. Since they rarely cross the threshold of a bank, poor low-caste peasants turn to moneylenders. Often, however, the chili-farm employers are also the moneylenders. Interest rates are always extremely high, more than double bank rates. But in this case, it is not in the

interest of the chili producers to lend money for the construction of tube wells and risk losing their surplus pool of laborers. When banks were still lending, employers were persuading their day laborers not to take bank loans: “[The large landowners] told us that we would dig for water, not find any, and the bank would take everything we had [for defaulting on the loan],” one laborer said.

Most importantly, capitalist production in this community demands sure-and-ready access to water, among other inputs, to attempt to insure steady surplus-value extraction. Therefore, as superprofits continue in the short term for a handful of capitalist producers, ordinary profits diminish for the majority of poor- and middle-peasant producers who are unable to obtain the basic inputs for production.

Conclusion: Capital, Nature, and Society

To detach man (sic) from the soil meant the dissolution of the body economic into its elements so that each element could fit into that part of the system where it was most useful.²⁸

What emerges are processes of degradation caused by

27. This is wonderfully documented in Brinda Rao’s “Struggling for Production Conditions and Producing Conditions for Emancipation: Women and Water in Rural Maharashtra,” *Capitalism, Nature, and Socialism*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1989).

28. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 178.

the development and intensification of capitalist relations of production:

1. Ecological degradation occurs when a community resource, water, historically managed by local customs designed to conserve and distribute it based on the community's needs and nature's availability, becomes depleted by its privatization and concentration.
2. Through this ecological degradation, the community loses its self-sufficient power, its peasant economy and forms of production. Social labor, or cooperation within the community, often becomes scarce during a crisis. Water-conservation embankments and tanks, as well as community woodlots and pastures, are left unmaintained as the division of social labor is compromised.
3. Individual welfare becomes degraded, as seen in the deterioration of human health and family life—manifest in increases in malnutrition, disease, opium addiction, alienation, indebtedness, and the breakup of the family as some members die prematurely and some go off to other areas to find wage labor.

The trend in the desert is to put more and more ecologically fragile land under the plow to accumulate capital rather than to develop watersheds, pastures, or woodlots or to produce local foods that don't require much water to grow. The two most important uses for water in the desert, at present, are to produce food for the local poor majority and fodder for their animals. Neither is being promoted by the state in a program or policy that takes to heart the conflicts and contradictions around productive forces, relations, and conditions. A Jodhpur agricultural extension officer comments:

Unfortunately, stopping desertification through equitable land management is not of great interest to either the rich farmers or the government. We have to persuade these farmers that it is to their benefit to stop overexploiting the land and water. But is it? After all, they're only concerned with profits. See, it can all be exhausted and they can just move on. Capital can always find new land, new water, new labor. That's never a problem.

The situation in Rampura-Mathania and Jodhpur is both different from and similar to situations throughout the world: For a more complete analysis, the particular cultural, social, and ecological qualities of a location require their own approach and questions. For example, one might ask such things as how problems associated with chili production in Rajasthan differ from those associated with sugar cane in Maharashtra.²⁹ How does untouchability add to the complex defining of local struggles? What is the role of pastoralism and the roots of nomadism that may distinguish these cultivator-pastoralists from other peasants in India?

To summarize, we have found a number of phenomena occurring simultaneously in Jodhpur that directly relate to water as a condition of production:

1. There is a water shortage for the poor peasants, as water is being redistributed to capitalist farmers due to local relations of production (power) valorizing water as capital and leaving people thirsty and in misery.

2. Water supplies are being overexploited, with water tables not being allowed to regenerate and water conservation systems being destroyed, with particularly severe consequences during meteorological droughts.
3. Ecological and political relations of production outside the local rural area (the Aravali Mountains, the dried-up Luni River Basin, Jodhpur City's water conservation system) are making less total water available, as well as degrading the ecosystem and the human community that manages and delivers the water.
4. The ecological crisis has profound effects on gender and family relations. Because of their loss of access to water, women must walk farther for it, families must purchase it, and family members must emigrate to earn wages to pay for it; poor families must revert to wage-labor work (partially or fully), particularly on the capitalist chili-farms, instead of producing on their own land. In the meantime, capitalist farmers are gaining greater control of common groundwater supplies and local labor, they are accumulating capital, and they are creating greater ecological and human degradation.

A paramount issue is that of "reconstituting" or "restructuring" the conditions of production and of nature. Jodhpur District and most of the Rajasthan Desert is battling desertification. The cost of reforestation, stabilizing shifting sands, rebuilding traditional water-conservation tanks and earthen embankments, and the costs of drought and famine relief for cattle, humans, and external nature are high. What might be the total revenues needed to compensate and rebuild these damaged production conditions?

"It is conceivable that total revenues allocated to protecting or restoring production conditions may amount to one-half or more of the total social product—all unproductive expenses from the standpoint of self-expanding capital," O'Connor argues. "Is it possible to link these unproductive expenditures (and those anticipated in the future) to the vast credit and debt system in the world today? To the growth of fictitious capital? To the fiscal crisis of the state? To the internationalization of production?"³⁰

Since the state regulates the local resources, such as water, electricity, and credit, it becomes the main mediator between capital and nature. Therefore, we need a political and a political-economic analysis of this present crisis. What is the role, for example, of local state-run research institutes and agricultural extension offices, local planning boards and utilities, in the distribution of resources? This water story is less about the absolute loss of water in the Indian desert than about the distribution of water between different uses and users. Poverty and water scarcity, hence, are more about state-mediated political and economic power and their distribution between classes than about nature and its limits.

Finally, we must ask whether or not capitalism is completely destroying the local conditions for its own production; this needs to be further researched by social and natural scientists. That the human and natural environment is being degraded, however, is a fact that the poor Indian peasants themselves confront in their struggles and work every day.

29. See articles in *EPW* and the *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics* on the sugar-producing region of Maharashtra and the degradative and exploitative nature of its production. The laboring

peasants in this region are also the most politically active, protesting regularly over relations-of-production issues.

30. O'Connor, "Uneven and Combined Development," p. 27.



The 1960 Miike Coal Mine Dispute: Turning Point for Adversarial Unionism in Japan?

by John Price*

Thirty years ago, workers and employers in Japan confronted each other in the most intense labor-management conflict in postwar Japan—the 1960 Miike coal mine dispute. This bitter struggle began ostensibly as a conflict over layoffs. The coal miners' union, representing 15,000 miners at Mitsui Mining's Miike collieries in Kyushu, refused to go along with a company proposal to reduce the work force. As the conflict escalated, however, it soon became apparent that Mitsui Mining and Nikkeiren (Nihon Keieisha Dantai Renmei or Japan Federation of Employers' Organizations) had conspired to crush the Miike union because it had become too powerful. Not only was the union's independent, adversarial stance setting a militant example for other unions, but its opposition to rationalization of the coal mines also threatened to upset Japanese employers' plans to replace coal with imported oil—the energy revolution that would power Japan's industrial revolution up to the 1973–74 oil crisis. Thus, much more was at stake in the 1960 confrontation than simply miners' jobs at Miike, and the intensity and scope of the struggle reflected serious class antagonism.

One miner was killed and hundreds seriously injured in bloody clashes that erupted when the company attempted to reopen the collieries two months into the strike. The labor movement mobilized thousands of supporters who traveled the length of the country to bolster Miike picket lines. Traveling to Miike became both a pilgrimage and an adventure in combat. At one point over 10,000 police stood cheek-by-jowl with 20,000 picketers. As commentators and participants repeatedly remarked at the time, the Miike dispute became an all-out struggle between labor and capital.

It is little wonder, then, that the Miike struggle occupies a prominent spot in Japanese historical accounts of the evolution of

postwar labor-management relations. In its official history, even Nikkeiren concluded that: "1960 was an epoch-making time for the postwar labour movement with the 1960 anti-security treaty battle and the Miike struggle at the center."¹ More than thirty years have since elapsed, and yet outside of Japan almost nothing has been written about Miike. Instances of class aggression, it seems, are not easily reconciled with the contemporary image of Japanese-style management as being "human-oriented." In this context, the telling of the Miike story is indeed long overdue.

The Background

The Mitsui name has been synonymous with coal mining in Japan since 1888, when the Mitsui trading company bought Japan's largest mining deposit, Miike, in western Kyushu. Ever since that time Miike has remained Japan's single largest coal producer. Mitsui first used convict labor to dig Miike coal, later supplementing the work force with impoverished farmers, *burakumin* (outcasts), indentured laborers from Korea, and, during World War II, prisoners of war. Until the 1920s, women constituted nearly 25 percent of the work force, but mechanization, mining legislation, and male prejudice conspired to reduce their numbers to less than 5 percent by 1930.

Immediately after World War II, many miners quit, abandoning the mines that had become virtual prisons of slave labor. Occupation officials immediately helped repatriate Caucasian prisoners of war from the mines but attempted to force Korean and Chinese miners to dig coal for the Occupation. This led to riots and rebellion at Miike and other mines, and the Occupation forces were obliged to repatriate most indentured laborers and prisoners by the end of 1945. But because coal was Japan's major energy source, the

*I would like to thank Donald Burton, Joe Moore, E. Patricia Tsurumi, and William D. Wray for their help and encouragement in writing this article.

1. Nikkeiren Sanjunenshi Kankokai, *Nikkeiren sanjunenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Keieisha Dantai Renmei, 1981), p. 348.

Occupation and the Japanese government subsidized coal production, and the Miike work force quickly grew to 28,960 by 1948, surpassing the wartime high of 23,700 miners.²

Miike miners unionized in 1946, and in May of that year they joined miners from other Mitsui mines in Kyushu to form a regional federation. Through this federation, Miike miners affiliated with the national coal miners' federation, Tanro (Nihon Tanko Rodo Kumiai Rengokai), itself established in 1947. In 1949 a national federation of Mitsui coal miners brought locals in Kyushu and Hokkaido under one umbrella federation, Sankoren (Zen Mitsui Tanko Rodo Kumiai Rengokai).

It was from about this period that many miners in the Miike local became politically active in the left wing of the Socialist Party. At the same time, labor-management confrontation increased in the coal mines as operators attempted to reduce the work force and impose a limit on wage increases. These events culminated in a sixty-three-day general strike by 282,000 coal miners in 1952. Although the strike was broken by government legislation, coal miners came out of the strike united and with a heightened consciousness of their strength as a union.

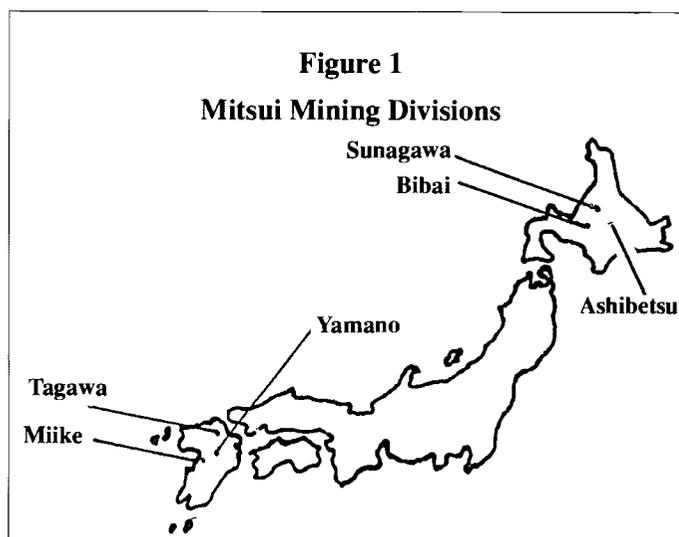
Miike miners faced a new challenge in 1953—a Mitsui Mining proposal to lay off 5,738 workers, including 1,722 at Miike. When Mitsui officially announced the layoffs, Miike miners began a forty-eight-hour sit-in. Huge demonstrations in front of company offices followed, and on 9 August 25,000 miners and their supporters held rallies at thirty-one sites outside company-owned housing for workers.³ These actions were followed by work-to-rule campaigns, rotating work stoppages, and other demonstrations. Production stalled. In the end, the company was forced to give in, and 1,815 miners designated for layoff followed by dismissal were reinstated. The 1953 landmark victory brought the Miike miners and Sankoren nationwide attention and this “113-day battle without heroes,” as the union called it, made Sankoren a pillar of militant trade unionism within Tanro and Sohyo (Nihon Rodo Kumiai Sohyogikai, the national labor federation Tanro was affiliated with).

After the 1953 victory, the Miike local gained further strength and won other battles. In 1954 it managed to abolish the *sewagata seido*, a system of company control in the housing for workers. With the cooperation of labor credit unions it was able to renegotiate miners' debts amounting to over 200 million yen and thereby reduce heavy interest payments. Throughout the 1955–58 period the Miike local continued to do battle with Mitsui Mining. It introduced shop-floor struggle tactics whereby worker grievances were no longer sent up through the labor-relations bureaucracy but were resolved in the mines on a daily basis through negotiations with foremen and, when necessary, through local work stoppages. Independent, adversarial unionism had become a fact of life for Miike miners. The shop-floor struggle tactics were also being taken up at other work sites and were being integrated into a new organizational strategy being debated within Sohyo.⁴

2. Mitsui Tanko Kabushiki Kaisha, ed., *Shiryō: Miike sōgi* (Tokyo: Nihon Keieisha Dantai Renmei Kohobu, 1963), p. 22.

3. Miike Tanko Rodo Kumiai, *Miike 20-nenshi* (Tokyo: Rodo Junposha, 1961), p. 85.

4. For the debate on strategy, see Rodo Kyoiku Senta, ed., *Sohyo soshiki koryō to gendai rodo undo* (Tokyo, 1979).



Mitsui mining divisions. In 1888 Mitsui bought Japan's largest mining deposit, Miike, in western Kyushu. Ever since that time Miike has remained Japan's single largest coal producer. In 1946 Miike miners unionized and later joined miners from other Mitsui mines to form a regional federation, which in turn affiliated with the national coal miners' federation, Tanro, when it was formed in 1947. This map and the table, figures and photo accompanying this article are courtesy of John Price.

Table 1
Mitsui Mining Production, Employees, and Assets
(By Division)

Division	Production*	Employees	Assets
Miike	1,644.4	15,140	4,428.3
Tagawa	1,019.9	9,791	1,918.2
Yamano	571.2	4,895	1,193.5
Sunagawa	704.2	5,468	2,288.3
Ashibetsu	773.0	4,714	2,727.5
Bibai	587.1	4,205	1,070.2
Miike Machine Works	—	1,823	603.8
Miike Harbor Works	—	1,480	365.6
Others	—	1,083	695.6
TOTALS	5,299.8	48,599	15,291.1

*Production figures are for fiscal 1953. Others are as of March 1954.

This table is from the Mitsubishi Economic Research Institute, *Mitsui-Mitsubishi-Sumitomo* (Tokyo, 1955), p. 37.

This resurgence of adversarial unionism within the labor movement in the late 1950s constituted a new challenge for Japan's major employers. Immediately after the war, employers had been put on the defensive by liberal Occupation labor policy and a powerful union movement. Indeed, for a brief period, employers' control of the means of production slipped and the specter of revolution sent shudders through executives everywhere.⁵ But as Occupation policy shifted from liberalism and economic aid immediately after the war to anticommunism and restraint after 1947, employers began to reorganize. The formation of Nikkeiren in 1948 marks the beginning of an employer offensive to reestablish their hegemony in the factories. Nikkeiren was obliged to acknowledge the fact that contrary to the situation in prewar Japan, unions were legal and would remain so. But employers hoped to limit their influence to bargaining over wages and to reduce them, essentially, to consultative bodies not unlike the company unions that existed prior to the war. Employers would not brook an active union presence on the shop floor, militant shop steward structures, or a confrontational grievance procedure. This hybrid corporatist-business-unionist vision of labor-management relations was to guide Nikkeiren's activities over the next decade. It was a vision, however, not accepted by most unions immediately after the war. Thus, to achieve the labor-management "harmony" of the corporatist model, employers resorted to coercion. From 1948 on, Nikkeiren was intimately, if at times surreptitiously, involved in a systematic campaign to break independent unions. Nikkeiren intervened in the 1949 Toshiba dispute, in the 1953 lockout/strike at Nissan, and in the Nihon Steel conflict at Muroran in 1954.⁶ In each case, Nikkeiren encouraged the respective employers to attempt to break the militant union and establish a procompany union in its place. Often these disputes had broad repercussions. The defeat of the Nissan union, for example, led to the eventual dissolution of the national automobile workers' federation. In this context, the resurgence of adversarial unionism that Miike so powerfully symbolized in the late 1950s flew in the face of Nikkeiren's decade-long campaign to housebreak labor. A new showdown was in the works.

Prelude to Confrontation

An economic recession and a decline in the price of imported crude oil in 1958 were two important factors that precipitated the events leading up to the 1960 Miike lockout. The coal industry had been protected from competing oil imports since 1955 when the government imposed oil tariffs and

restricted construction of oil converters. Through these measures, and rationalization measures (that is, modern methods of efficiency) also enacted in 1955, the government hoped to give the coal industry a period to modernize, to concentrate production in large, efficient mines, and become competitive with oil. The opposite occurred, however, as mines proliferated, prices increased, and coal companies pocketed substantial profits. Between 1955 and 1957 the price of regular thermal coal (Tokyo, CIF) jumped from 5,537 to 6,436 yen per ton, nearly a 20 percent increase. Profits for eighteen major coal companies climbed from an aggregate 4.5 billion in 1955 to 12.4 billion yen in 1957.⁷ When the Japanese economy went into a short recession in late 1957, coal stockpiles began to rise but coal companies attempted to keep prices high, sparking an outcry from major coal consumers. The consumers, including representatives from the steel, electric power, shipping, and rail industries, gathered in August 1958 to form the Federation to Oppose Crude and Heavy Oil Tariffs (Genjyū Kanzei Hantai Domei) in a bid to obtain cheap imported oil. This action put them on a collision course with the coal industry, which wanted continued protection against oil imports. Keidanren (Keizai Dantai Rengokai or Federation of Economic Organizations) then intervened to mediate this clash between industrial sectors, forming a *kondankai* (discussion group) that fall. Industrial consumers eventually won this battle in 1959, forcing the government to reverse its energy policy and make oil Japan's principal industrial fuel. Even by the fall of 1958, however, the coal companies had begun to come under heavy pressure for price reductions, provoking them to consider serious rationalization measures, including large-scale layoffs.

Coal operators, particularly Mitsui and Mitsubishi, also came under intense pressure from other quarters just as the economic squeeze intensified. Nikkeiren had been displeased with concessions that the two coal giants had been making with their respective unions since 1953, and in late 1958 it began to openly criticize them through the *Nikkeiren Times*.⁸ Sakisaka Itsuro, a noted Kyushu scholar and radical socialist who advised the Miike union, dates the initiation of management's offensive against the Miike union from the publication of an unprecedented full-page feature article in the *Japan Times* by Benjamin Martin, a U.S. union representative on leave to study in Japan. Published on 1 September 1958, the article accuses the local union at Miike of ultraleftism and using the negotiating process for political gain.⁹ Similar criticisms were voiced at Nikkeiren's

5. For a solid account of the early postwar upheaval, see Joe Moore, *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power, 1945-47* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

6. No systematic account has been done of Nikkeiren's involvement in these and other labor disputes. One primary source is a two-part autobiographical series by Maeda Hajime, a managing director of Nikkeiren during the turbulent 1950s. See Maeda Hajime, "Tosho ichidai" (A fighting life); and "Nikkeiren ni ikita nijunen" (Twenty years with Nikkeiren) in *Bessatsu chuo koron, keiei mondai*, vol. 8, nos. 2 and 3, p. 364. The Mitsui role is outlined in Hoshino Yasunosuke, *Mitsui hyakunen* (Tokyo: Kagoshima Kenkyūjo Kenkyukai, 1978). For an English-language account of the struggle at Nissan, see chapter 3, "The Human Drama: Management and Labour," in Michael Cusumano's *The Japanese Automobile Industry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 137-85.

7. Figures for prices and profits are from Mitsui Tanko Kaisha, ed., *Shiryō: Miike sogi*, pp. 434, 436.

8. Cited in Sakisaka Itsuro, *Miike nikki* (Tokyo: Shiseido, 1961), p. 83.

9. Martin's article is an open attack on the union. Interestingly enough, articles by Martin similar to this one were reproduced in *Far Eastern Survey* and in *Postwar Japan* (New York: Random House, 1973). Martin's role in this whole affair and his own status are somewhat suspect, to say the least. It appears that Martin joined the United States Information Agency in 1961 as a field officer in Chile and then went on to become senior State Department labor analyst. Moreover, Sakisaka indicates that Martin met with Mitsui officials but not with any Miike union representatives—somewhat strange given that Martin was supposedly a union man himself. Sato Kiichiro, a prominent anti-union executive with Mitsui Bank, was also Nikkeiren liaison for international affairs at this time, and although the evidence is circumstantial, it is possible Martin was in contact with Sato and Nikkeiren.

October semiannual convention by Maeda Hajime, a Nikkeiren executive director, in his report on the labor situation.

After two profitable years in 1956–57, Mitsui Mining announced losses of nearly 2 billion yen for the first half of 1958, and in September took the extraordinary measures of cutting executive and staff salaries and then refused to pay its workers full year-end bonuses that had been negotiated as part of the master agreement with Tanro that fall (the bonus had been cut from 22,000 to 14,000 yen). By this time reporters had caught the scent of the coal crisis, and in early October 1958 the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper published a major article outlining Mitsui's plans to meet the crisis. This in turn provoked the Miike local union to assess the situation, and on 17 October it published a report warning its members: "The company, from its experiences in previous struggles, will no doubt come up with new tactics. Recent labour battles have been plagued by organizational splits due to the formation of second unions so we believe the company's main strategy will be to split our organization and split the fight."¹⁰ Mitsui Mining officially proposed its "first company reconstruction proposal" (*daiichiji kigyo saikenan*) on 19 January 1959. The Mitsui proposal called for:

- increasing productivity by strengthening managerial controls and discipline at the worksites;
- halting the recruitment of miners stipulated by previous collective agreements;
- reducing expenditures by postponing or canceling construction projects for housing, a hospital, baths, daycare centers, sewers, and roads;
- implementing reductions in labor-related expenses by cutting overtime; and,
- if necessary, reducing the work force by 6,000 through "voluntary retirement" (*kibo taishokusha boshu*).¹¹

These proposals were made to the two Mitsui union federations, Sankoren (mine workers) and Sansharen (staff union), but both unions rejected the proposals (See figure 2 for union structures). They resolved instead to struggle together against any deterioration in working conditions, defend democratization of the workplace and company housing sites, maintain full employment, and resist any firings. A "joint struggle committee" was set up by the two unions in mid-February with the express purpose of avoiding any splits in the face of the Mitsui proposals. The response of the national mine workers' federation, Tanro, which the two unions were affiliated with, was to draw a direct link between Mitsui's proposed rationalization measures and that spring's wage negotiations: "The 1959 spring wage offensive is integrally related with resolving the fight against Mitsui's rationalization measures. These are not separate struggles and must be fought as one."¹²

After a series of short work stoppages during March, Tanro launched an all-out strike over the two issues on 23 March. At this time, the Central Labor Relations Board (CLRB) intervened with a proposal to mediate in the wage negotiations. Tanro accepted mediation under the stipulation that no agreement would be reached until the Mitsui negotiations were completed.

10. Mitsui Tanko Kaisha, ed., *Shiryō: Miike sōgi*, p. 439.

11. For the complete proposal, see *ibid.*, pp. 442–48.

12. Tanro Directive no. 44, 21 Feb. 1959, cited in Miike Tanko Rodo Kumiai, *Miike 20-Nen*, p. 252.

Figure 2
Union Structures



The CLRB brought forward its mediation proposal on 31 March, and negotiations then moved to high-level talks between Mitsui representatives on the one hand and Sankoren, San-sharen, and Tanro on the other. On 4 April, an agreement was worked out whereby the union would go along with “voluntary retirement” and reductions in welfare expenditures. In exchange, the company withdrew its proposals to tighten workplace control and to cut back overtime. This compromise in fact constituted an important concession on Tanro’s part, one that would reverberate throughout the coal fields. By accepting the “voluntary retirement” at Mitsui, Tanro had opened the floodgates through which other major companies soon poured. One month after the 6 April agreement, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Furukawa, and Yubetsu submitted layoff proposals to their respective unions. Mitsui had been a testing ground for gaining concessions, and Tanro leaders had indeed backed down on their own policy, which since its adoption at Tanro’s Twenty-first Annual Convention in 1958 had been to refuse to bargain any layoffs including “voluntary retirements.”

Almost all agreed that the proposal was unjust and antilabor, but the view that the union movement was unable to continue the struggle given the forces against it eventually won out.

Mitsui recruited voluntary retirees at its six mines through May and June, but the 1,324 miners who stepped forward fell far short of the company’s stated goal of 6,000. Staff, however, came forward in droves with 586 ready to retire, 26 more than the original objective. As a result, the company estimated that its savings from lower personnel costs and cutbacks in welfare would only reach 862 million yen over a six-month period, substantially lower than the 2.3 billion it had projected.

Tensions mounted in the summer of 1959. On the one hand, Mitsui had been unable to implement its layoff proposals and it claimed its deficit continued to mount. Furthermore, as stockpiles of coal increased in late 1958, the government moved to cut back production, imposing a 20 percent reduction with specific quotas for the major mining companies beginning 1 May and continuing for six months. At the same time, oil prices continued to drop, putting further pressure on the industry. In early April, Keidanren’s Discussion Group on General Energy Policy met and announced that while a thorough review of energy policy was necessary, it expected the coal industry to begin to rationalize immediately. The mounting pressure led to dissension within both the company and the union.

In Mitsui Mining, for example, contradictions emerged between the then president Kuriki Kan and head of personnel Yamamoto Sengo. As previously mentioned, Nikkeiren had, as early as 1958, singled out the Miike miners’ local as a hot spot that had to be dealt with. This position was reiterated at Nikkeiren’s two regular conventions in April and October 1959, with Maeda Hajime sounding a strong warning in his

speech on the labor situation at the October meeting: “There are some mines where women and youth groups are extremely strong and in these places we can’t guarantee major incidents will not occur which could quickly escalate into social unrest if things are not handled properly.”¹³ Working closely with Maeda was Sato Kiichiro, president of Mitsui Bank and Nikkeiren’s chief of international liaison. Both Maeda and Sato held Yamamoto responsible for letting the Miike union gain unwarranted strength. They wanted to resolve the problem quickly by firing a large number of union activists as part of the Mitsui rationalization plan.¹⁴ Mitsui’s financial position deteriorated during the summer of 1959, and in July Sato had Mitsui Bank cut off further loans to the mining corporation. Summer bonuses went unpaid, and Mitsui attempted to convince its unions to accept an installment plan on unpaid wages. This was refused, but Mitsui implemented the plan anyway.¹⁵

Mitsui mine managers were not the only ones under increased pressure. The coal unions at the local, company, and national levels were confronted with both an immediate attack at Mitsui, impending cutbacks at other mines, and an uncertain future as the industry faced the oil challenge. At Tanro’s Twenty-second Annual Convention in June, the cutbacks facing Sankoren were characterized as a special attack against Tanro’s most militant component. This characterization contained, according to later accounts, the implicit issue of whether or not Sankoren had “gone too far” and thus invited the retaliation. This same debate carried over into Sankoren’s convention in late July when the Sankoren executive submitted a two-stage battle plan. Basically, the executive did not think Mitsui would resort to designated layoffs or firings and based its first plan on this assumption. This plan was to draw the line at designated layoffs (*shime kaiko*) and to compromise on “voluntary retirements” while cooperating in production. The Miike local of Sankoren disputed this approach, regarded layoffs as imminent, and interpreted the rationalization as largely a political struggle, with itself and Tanro as the targets. These divisions in the union would prove decisive later. The final compromise was to fight the company and if the central struggle committee judged it feasible, to defeat the layoffs.

Mitsui proposed its second reconstruction proposal in late August. Essentially, the proposal was tougher than the first and called for 4,580 layoffs with set criteria for deciding who should be laid off. The criteria, particularly article 3, clearly put union activists at risk:

1. those whose job was not essential to support the family
2. those unsuitable for work
3. those unable to adapt to collective life
4. those in extremely poor health
5. those over fifty-two
6. those under twenty-five
7. those with less than five years continuous service¹⁶

13. Nikkeiren, *Nikkeiren jigyo hokoku, 1959* (Tokyo), p. 61.

14. For Yamamoto’s perceptions of the situation, see *Nikkeiren san-junenshi*, pp. 744–45.

15. Mitsui Tanko Kaisha, ed., *Shiryō: Miike sogi*, p. 482.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 484.

Each mine was assigned a quota (Miike, for example, was expected to lay off 2,210), and those who fit the criteria would be "advised to retire" (*taishoku kankoku*). Although such "advice" did not constitute a formal layoff or discharge, it amounted to basically the same thing. The proposal also contained further provisions to cut back social benefits, overtime, and safety expenditures, as well as containing provisions to regulate all outstanding local issues for each mine. Furthermore, the proposal called for separating the machine shop from the rest of the Miike operations and taking the skilled tradesmen out of the Miike union.

Collective bargaining over the second proposal broke down on 10 September, and the various union levels prepared for battle. Tanro's central struggle committee called for rotating strikes beginning 16 September at Miike and at two other mines where layoffs were also expected, and for escalating limited strikes at fourteen major coal companies beginning 1 October. Sankoren, in the face of anticipated "designated discharges," took the position that its members would refuse to recognize any discharges, that Sankoren would guarantee the livelihood of those who refused, and that the union had to get prepared for a company-inspired attempt to create a second union.

By this time it became increasingly evident that coal-consuming industries, demanding a complete overhaul of the coal industry and drastic price reductions to bring coal prices in line with those of oil, had gained the upper hand. Coal operators met with labor representatives on 7 and 18 September and announced that they expected to lay off up to 100,000 out of 180,000 miners then employed by the eighteen largest coal companies. The bottom line for industrial coal consumers at this point was that their energy sources be cost competitive and that coal be forced to compete with oil. While Keidanren had always maintained the position that coal should not be protected, policy direction at this stage was not to lift oil tariffs or controls on oil converters but rather to force coal operators to reduce their prices through massive layoffs. Nikkeiren endorsed this policy, convinced that as a labor-relations organ it could obtain its own objective of cutting out what it considered a cancerous threat—the Miike union—in the process of the layoffs. Thus employers displayed a high degree of unity in their support for Mitsui in its attempt to rationalize and to take on Sankoren and, in particular, the Miike local.

Economic motives on the part of coal consumers and producers converged with political motives on the part of Nikkeiren to create a united capitalist class aimed at reducing the influence of Miike miners, Sankoren, and ultimately, Tanro and Sohyo. This was much in evidence at Nikkeiren's semi-annual convention in October 1959 when the chairman of the Federation of Automobile Employers rose to present an emergency resolution on the crisis in coal to the convention that concluded: "To us this [the coal crisis] is not an issue which can be resolved by the coal industry alone. It will have important repercussions on every industrial sector, and we believe Nikkeiren must go all out and extend a helping hand and through concrete measures work to bring about a fundamental resolution."¹⁷

The presidents of seventeen major coal companies met on 17 September to work out policies to support Mitsui's reconstruction proposals. As early as 4 February that year, the other coal operators had resolved to cover any shortfall in Mitsui coal shipments that might arise from a strike and, furthermore, to cover the costs of such shipments.¹⁸ At their September meeting the presidents resolved not to take advantage of a probable Miike lockout to steal Mitsui customers and reaffirmed their earlier decision to supply the coal necessary to cover Mitsui shortfalls.

Employers displayed a high degree of unity in their support for Mitsui in its attempt to rationalize and to take on Sankoren and, in particular, the Miike local. A convergence of economic motives on the part of coal consumers and producers, and political motives on the part of Nikkeiren aimed at reducing the influence of Miike miners, Sankoren, and ultimately, Tanro and Sohyo, created a united capitalist class.

On 5 October Tanro held its twenty-third special convention, where the coal crisis and impending layoffs at Miike were the main topic. It had become apparent to delegates that 100,000 jobs were on the line in the industry, and this resulted in a direct link being established between the escalating Miike confrontation and coal miners everywhere. Tanro resolved at least on paper to reinforce shop-floor actions, establish self-reliant organizations, prepare for a general strike, reinforce unity with Sohyo and workers in other industries, and strengthen regional and district joint struggles.

Discussions between Mitsui and Sankoren over the second reconstruction proposal broke off on 7 October. Mitsui then began the process of garnering its "voluntary retirees" at all of its mines, but the methods differed at the various locations. At Miike the strength of the union made it difficult for the company to recruit potential retirees directly, and it therefore resorted to using airplanes to distribute leaflets calling on miners who met the retirement criteria to come forward. In the other mines the company was able to "shoulder tap" (*kata-tataki*) those who fit the criteria. Sankoren, however, had issued directives on 10 October advising its members to refuse to comply with retirement advice, and it backed up the directive with notice that those who accepted would be internally disciplined for disobeying union policy. Thus, Mitsui reached its layoff objectives at only two of its mines (Tagawa and Yamano) while at the others it fell far short, recruiting less than one-third of its target.¹⁹ At Miike it

17. Nikkeiren, *Nikkeiren jigyo hokoku*, 1959, p. 100.

18. Mitsui Tanko Kaisha, ed., *Shiryō: Miike sogi*, p. 552.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 518.



*Seventy thousand unionists from across the country gathered at a Sohyo rally in Omuta in November 1959 to lend support to Miike miners in their fight against layoffs. This was followed the next month by contributions and pledges of financial support from 32 leaders of Japan's largest unions. All three photos accompanying this article are from a Miike union publication, *Miike Tanko Rodo Kumiai, Miike togo no kiroku (Omuta, 1985)*, courtesy of John Price.*

recruited only 142 of the 2,210 volunteer retirees it had hoped for.

In the meantime, Mitsui successfully pushed forward with its plan to separate the Miike machine shop, and the workers there agreed, breaking away from the Miike local. The staff union, Sansharen, also applied to Tanro to conclude an agreement with Mitsui. On 28 October, collective bargaining resumed, at which time Mitsui Coal president Kuriki asserted that Mitsui would not rest until it had reached the 2,210 layoffs necessary at Miike, including 300 "production obstructionists." The obstructionists were, from the union's point of view, its shop-floor organizers and stewards who constituted the very heart of the union. Union representatives from Miike, Sankoren, and Tanro rushed to Tokyo on 7 October to work out, if possible, a joint response to Kuriki's latest pitch. The three union levels agreed to oppose Kuriki's plan, but after top-level negotiations a compromise was agreed upon: (1) absolute opposition to designated discharges; (2) the union would cooperate in production; and (3) if the first two items were agreed to then the union would not try to discipline members who decided to retire of their own free will."²⁰

This position is basically similar to the 6 April agreement worked out with the Central Labor Relations Board. The Miike local had previously rejected the proposal of layoffs through

early retirement, but probably agreed to this new compromise because it realized that its life as a union was now at stake and that Tanro was not able or willing to take a firm stand against layoffs in the industry. Kuriki, however, was no longer willing to take such a proposal at its face value and had by this time resolved to purge the Miike union of its militant members.

Negotiations resumed briefly on 10 November but broke off again on 12 November, at which point the CLRB again attempted to mediate. CLRB chairman Nakayama Ichiro made a seven-point proposal on 21 November that called for labor-management cooperation in raising production, "voluntary retirements" without company pressure or union interference, and further discussions if the retirement quotas were not met. These proposals provoked an intense debate among Mitsui managers (one presumes principally between Kuriki and Yamamoto), but the mediation proposal was rejected because, the company said, it would not resolve its problem with the Miike union.²¹ Sankoren was willing to discuss the mediation proposal with Mitsui, but Mitsui refused, insisting that it had to discipline the Miike union. Sohyo held its thirteenth special convention during the mediation period, and the coal miners' struggle and opposition to the proposed renewal of the Japan-U.S. Mutual Security Treaty (Ampo) were the issues of the day. The convention resolved to back Tanro financially to the tune of 300 yen per

20. Miike Tanko Rodo Kumiai, *Miike 20-nenshi*, p. 301.

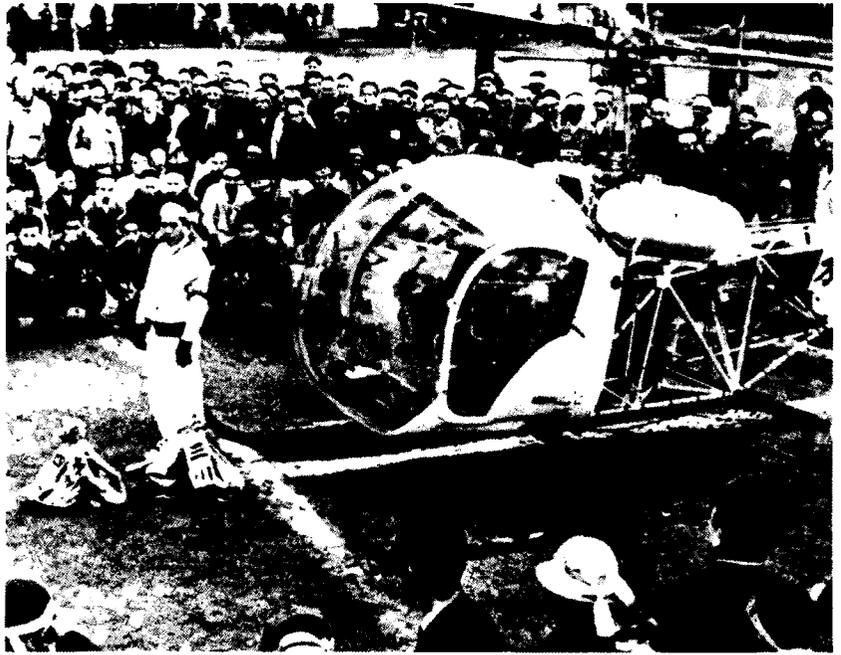
21. Mitsui Tanko Kaisha, ed., *Shiryō: Miike sogi*, p. 529.

member up to April 1960. On 2 December, Sohyo leaders including Ota Kaoru and Iwai Akira visited Miike to meet with local members and pledged 1 billion yen to support the local. This was followed by a visit by 32 leaders of Japan's largest unions who carried with them 75 million yen in contributions and assurance of a further 1.8 billion in loans. The same day, Mitsui mailed redundancy notices to 1,492 workers at its Miike operations.

Over the next few days, the Miike union responded with general meetings in the regional assemblies (*chiiki bunkai*) and at the workplace (*shokuba bunkai*), culminating in a twenty-four-hour general strike (the seventeenth since the start of the rotating strikes) and a huge demonstration in which, even according to company documents, 30,000 miners and their families and supporters participated. Of the 1,492 workers given notice, 214 decided to accept the notices, while the remaining 1,278 declined and were subsequently mailed registered letters on 10 December informing them that if they did not accept the layoffs by 15 December they would be fired. On 15 December, 1,202 workers were fired. These included over 600 union activists as well as 120 Socialist Party members and 31 members of the Japan Communist Party.²² The Miike union continued its tactics of rotating strikes, and on 7 January 1960 the union ordered its members to begin a disobedience campaign that led the company to retaliate with a full-scale lockout at all its Miike facilities except the port on 25 January. The union retaliated the same day with an all-out strike, shutting down the port as well.

Three Hundred Twelve Days

The Mitsui lockout was not a spontaneous decision but a carefully planned strategy that had been worked out, in a general sense, after Mitsui lost a 1953 dispute where union-organized slowdowns and partial strikes had paralyzed production and forced Mitsui to withdraw a layoff proposal. At that time Mitsui had been unable to retaliate with a general lockout for a variety of reasons.²³ Since then the company had taken measures to insure it was in a position to implement a general lockout. As mentioned earlier, Mitsui had come to an agreement with the other major coal companies that Mitsui's market share would be preserved in the event of a strike and the other operators would cover any shortages in Mitsui coal shipments due to the strike and absorb any extra costs. Furthermore, Mitsui had the full support, and even exhortation, of Nikkeiren to purge the Miike local. Finally, Mitsui had lined up financing to undertake the lockout. The Mitsui Bank, under Sato Kiichiro, had cut off further financing to Mitsui Mining in July 1959 both for economic reasons and, one might reasonably suppose, to pressure Mitsui Mining into disciplining the Miike local union. Once the battle was joined Sato was more than happy to turn on the



The same day that the large unions were showing their support for the Miike miners, Mitsui mailed discharge notices to 1,492 workers at its Miike operations. Most Miike miners refused to accept the notices so the union collected them and then hired a helicopter to drop them into the heavily guarded company headquarters on 5 January 1960.

financial tap once again. Under his leadership, a cartel of eight banks including Mitsui Bank and Mitsui Trust was established to finance the fight. Over the course of the dispute these eight banks provided Mitsui Mining with 6.9 billion yen in loans, with the first installment of 3.3 billion handed over at the end of 1959.²⁴

Mitsui also adopted a strategy of intervening in the Miike union directly in an attempt to split it. Internal union opposition to the militant tactics of the local had existed ever since the 1953 strike, and the company now counted on that opposition to form the nucleus of a "second union." To avoid the appearance of direct involvement that might result in legal action against itself, Mitsui called on the services of professional union-busters such as Mitamura Shiro. According to union documents, on at least three separate occasions dissident elements in the Miike local attended "lectures" and "schools" sponsored by Mitamura and his cohorts, with 280 attending a "Labor University Short Course" in Fukuoka on 12–13 March.²⁵ Union claims that such activities were sponsored by Mitsui seem reasonable since Mitsui itself admits organizing similar "lectures" in the early 1950s.²⁶

22. Sakisaka, *Miike nikki*, p. 117.

23. Mitsui Tanko Kaisha, ed., *Shiryō: Miike sogi*, p. 175.

24. Nikkeiren, *Nikkeiren sanjunenshi*, p. 357.

25. Miike Tanko Rodo Kumiai, *Miike 20-nenshi*, p. 330.

26. Mitsui admits organizing a series of lectures at Enoshima by the same right-wing leaders in 1952 as part of a special anticommunist "factory defense movement" initiated by Nikkeiren. It was found guilty of unfair labor practices by the Central Labor Relations Board at the time. For details of Mitsui's previous involvement with the Mitamura school, see Mitsui Tanko Kaisha, ed., *Shiryō: Miike sogi*, pp. 113–18.

In the initial phases of the lockout and strike, Mitsui was clearly on the offensive, while the unions, including the Miike local, Sankoren, and Tanro, were forced on the defensive as splits occurred. Tanro apparently was not fully aware of its precarious position. At its convention on 14 February, delegates resolved to provide further financial backing of 600 yen per affiliated member (1,000 for workers in the Mitsui union federation). On 26 February Tanro's Central Struggle Committee even came to the conclusion that the situation was increasingly favorable for the miners due to a decrease in coal stockpiles, a growing anti-Kishi sentiment related to the Security Treaty dispute, and increasing momentum in Shunto (Spring Wage Struggle) activities. It decided to call an all-out coal miners' strike for 5 April with Sankoren going out some days earlier.²⁷ In the meantime the staff union, Sansharen, having made its peace with Mitsui, communicated its refusal to pay the 600-yen-per-member Miike support assessment to the Tanro Central Struggle Committee on 3 March.

Breakaway Union Splits Miners

This fissure in union solidarity cracked wide open a week later when the opposition in the Miike local presented the union's executive committee with a petition signed by 96 out of 254 members of the central committee calling for a special general meeting of the entire central committee to consider ways of ending the dispute quickly. The executive of the union acceded to the request, and a special meeting was held on 15 March with thousands of workers and supporters from both sides demonstrating outside the meeting hall. The dissident faction submitted a four-point proposal calling for (1) an end to the strike and reopening negotiations; (2) acceptance of "voluntary retirement" for those dismissed, with the company to help find new jobs and cover interim living expenses; (3) legal redress for those who refused to be dismissed; and (4) their proposal to be put before the general membership in a secret ballot. The central committee rejected the proposal and the opposition then left the hall.

On 17 March the opposition held a special meeting that became the founding convention of the New Miike Mine Workers Union (Miike Tanko Shin Rodo Kumiai, or Shinro for short), and in their report to the company they cited an initial membership of 3,076 members or about 20 percent of the work force. Mitsui immediately recognized the new union, and negotiations between the two parties led to a 24 March agreement to start up production with the new union. All of the issues in dispute were left to future deliberations, the old contract was resumed, and the lockout was lifted.

During this period Tanro and Sohyo responded to the situation first by sending in 2,000 reinforcements (*orugu dan*) with, in the case of Sohyo, union activists spending five nights and six days in each shift backing up the picket lines at the mine. On 18 March Tanro implemented Directive 203 calling for a general strike in coal on 5 April and an earlier walkout by Sankoren. A week later, however, it became evident that the other Mitsui local unions were unwilling to strike, and union leaders in the other mines warned of further splits within the union if

Tanro pressed ahead with their strike strategy. On 27 March the Tanro Central Struggle Committee admitted defeat, called off the planned strike, and initiated a mediation application to the CLRB to resolve both the Miike dispute and that year's wage increase. But having successfully isolated the Miike local and with the momentum in its favor, Mitsui *declined* to enter into the union-initiated mediation process, informing the CLRB chairman of its decision on 28 March. Despite Mitsui intransigence, the new CLRB chairman, Kobayashi, decided to proceed with mediation, announcing his intentions that evening. The wage issue, however, would be dealt with separately, a process that the other major coal companies agreed to.

Immediately after the war, employers had been put on the defensive by liberal Occupation labor policy and a powerful union movement. Indeed, for a brief period, employers' control of the means of production slipped and the specter of revolution sent shudders through executives everywhere.

Mitsui had made important progress in its attempt to purge the Miike union by skillfully utilizing divide-and-rule tactics. For example, at Mitsui's Bibai colliery in Hokkaido miners had not come forward to "voluntarily retire" in the numbers desired, but Mitsui did not attempt to lock out the workers. Instead it proceeded with an ongoing campaign to find voluntary retirees, but this strategy was expressly dismissed for the Miike union. As Mitsui president Kuriki expressed it, it was not just a question of quantity but also one of quality; in other words, Mitsui was determined to fire 300 union activists at Miike, come what may. Mitsui Mining's labor-relations director, Yamamoto Sengo, recounted in his recollections of the strike how he had opposed the Nikkeiren-Kuriki view that it was necessary to openly purge the Miike local.²⁸ By soft-pedaling the layoffs in the initial stages, Mitsui had been able to cajole Sankoren and Tanro into accepting voluntary layoffs, thereby eliminating the issue as the basis for a common struggle by the Miike local, Sankoren, or Tanro as a whole. Once Sankoren, the most militant component in Tanro, accepted the 6 April agreement, layoffs (in the form of "voluntary retirement") were inevitable in the other coal mines given the economic rationale of the industry and government at the time. A second factor that allowed the company to divide Sankoren and Tanro was its campaign to malign the Miike local, which, as Sakisaka Itsuro pointed out, began in 1958. This campaign became crucial when Mitsui let it be known in late 1959 that it was determined to purge the local union. By branding the Miike local as troublemakers, Mitsui had been able to sow certain seeds of doubt about the Miike union—perhaps they had indeed gone too far in their militant tactics.

27. Miike Tanko Rodo Kumiai, *Miike 20-nenshi*, p. 327.

28. Nikkeiren, *Nikkeiren sanjunenshi*, pp. 744–47.

Picketer Killed

While Tanro was reeling from the divisions within, the Miike local continued to stand firm despite the formation of the breakaway union. Mitsui's determination to break the Miike local and restart production using the new union as strikebreakers led to vicious clashes on the picket lines. In the early morning of 28 March 1,500 members of the breakaway union charged the picket lines at the Mikawa colliery and the clash turned bloody, with over 100 workers injured. The evening headlines of the *Asahi Shimbun* screamed "Unions Clash at Mitsui Miike."²⁹ That evening Mitsui applied for, and received, a restraining order from the Fukuoka District Court, prohibiting the first union from entering the mine and barring them from preventing breakaway union members from entering. The Miike local took the position that the formation of the breakaway union itself, not to mention the negotiations with the company and the lifting of the lockout, all constituted unfair labor practices. The picket lines remained, and in the late afternoon of 29 March, Kubo Kiyoshi, a picketer from the original union, was stabbed during a clash with one of the procompany goon squads and died soon after.

While it would be gross oversimplification to attribute these later developments to the Miike struggle, the defeat in 1960 was in many respects a watershed in that it marked the beginning of decline for adversarial unionism within Sohyo, particularly among private-sector affiliates.

Miike once again received national headlines, and the picketer's tragic death both engendered widespread sympathy for the Miike original union and raised the battle at Miike to a new plane—that of national politics. As the *Asahi Shimbun's* 31 March editorial pointed out, the incident had endangered the company's position, and it was inevitable that criticism of the company for provoking things to the point of murder should surface: "Even in the Diet criticism is being raised and the question asked why the company insisted on restarting production when blood was surely going to be spilled. Even the bloody incident between the two unions on March 28 could have been avoided if the company had not attempted to start up again."³⁰ Thousands of mourners gathered in memorial services for the murdered striker in the following days, but despite the adverse publicity, Mitsui refused to enter into mediation.

Nevertheless, CLRB chairman Kobayashi released his mediation proposals in early April. His first proposal, made on 5 April, called for a 395-yen-per-month wage increase for miners, a proposal that both the coal operators (except Mitsui) and Tanro agreed to. The second proposal, made the following

day, dealt with the Miike situation and called for (1) Mitsui to rescind the 10 December designated dismissals; (2) those named by the above to voluntarily retire; (3) an additional 10,000 yen severance allowance to be paid; and (4) the company to help find them new jobs to the extent possible and consider rehiring them once the company was back on its feet.³¹ The proposal was a clear-cut endorsement of Mitsui's position and a blow not only to the Miike union but to Tanro and Sohyo in particular. Sohyo general secretary Ota Kaoru, realizing the serious implications of the Miike striker's death, clearly stated his position to CLRB chairman Kobayashi in a 30 March interview:

1. By setting up a second union and employing goon squads the company is trying to destroy the first union. We won't yield and will fight to the end. The death of Kubo has reinforced the unity of workers there. Sohyo also intends to step up the fight at Miike and will send in further reinforcements.
2. The company shows no remorse regarding the recent incidents. If it insists on reopening the mine, bloodletting can't be avoided. In order to avoid this worst-case scenario we expect a mediation proposal based on an impartial CLRB analysis.
3. To condone the firing of the 1,200 workers is to legitimize future firings due to technological change. Moreover, it is a complete denial of workers' rights and tantamount to submission to the current policy of making the union movement a hand-maiden to capitalists.³²

Taking such a position with Kobayashi was one thing, but to convince Sankoren and Tanro to reject the mediation proposal was another—a lot of water had gone under the bridge before Ota decided to get his feet wet. Tanro's Twenty-fifth Convention was slated to begin on 8 April, but because the Central Struggle Committee was deadlocked over whether or not to accept the Kobayashi proposal, the convention opening was delayed a day. Even when it did open on the ninth, it almost immediately went into recess. Sankoren threatened to walk out if the mediation proposal were not accepted, despite Ota's pleas to reject the proposal in his speech opening the Tanro convention. Two emergency meetings of Sohyo's general council were called just prior to and during the Tanro convention where new support policies were adopted, including a further 150 million yen in financial aid.³³ The Miike local also sent delegates who pleaded for Tanro to continue the fight. The Miike local's central committee had unanimously rejected the Kobayashi report. On 17 April, the Tanro convention voted to reject the Kobayashi report. Sankoren, having walked out of the convention a number of times, washed its hands of the struggle, and on 18 March the Miike local left Sankoren. Tanro was in tatters, but the fight continued. As the Miike local's own history summarized: "The period from the formation of the breakaway union and the failure of Tanro Directive 203 to the rejection of the Kobayashi report caused qualitative changes in the nature of the Miike fight. It transformed a Tanro dispute into a Sohyo battle and brought about a new phase in the struggle."³⁴

31. Cited in Mitsui Tanko Kaisha, ed., *Shiryō: Miike sōgi*, p. 613.

32. Miike Tanko Rodo Kumiai, *Miike 20-nenshi*, pp. 368–69.

33. Nihon Rodo Kumiai Sohyogikai, ed., *Sohyo junenshi* (Tokyo: Rodo Junposha, 1964), p. 719.

34. Miike Tanko Rodo Kumiai, *Miike 20-nenshi*, p. 345.

29. *Asahi Shimbun*, 28 March 1960.

30. *Asahi Shimbun*, 31 March 1960, p. 2 editorial.

Sohyo had committed itself to a nationwide campaign of support for the Miike miners. Its strategy was to try and link the Miike struggle with the anti-Security Treaty struggle. At the Miike mine itself the confrontation centered on control of the Mikawa colliery hopper, which was a bottleneck in the production process. The Miike union, backed by thousands of Sohyo activists, concentrated its picketing at the Mikawa hopper. Clashes erupted between the Miike strikers and breakaway union members who, with police support, were trying to get into the hopper. In a 20 April incident, a number of people were injured, and on 12 May violence flared up again as police charged 2,000 picketers at the hopper, injuring 180. The town of Omuta was in a state of siege. In an extraordinary measure, Sohyo decided to hold its Fourteenth Convention in Omuta from 8 to 9 June, the first time it had been held outside of Tokyo. This was followed by Tanro's Twenty-sixth Convention held in Fukuoka on 13-14 June. While somewhat symbolic, the convening of the general assemblies near the scene of the Miike confrontation served notice that Miike was not simply a regional struggle but was intimately linked to the national political situation, in particular to the anti-Security Treaty struggle.

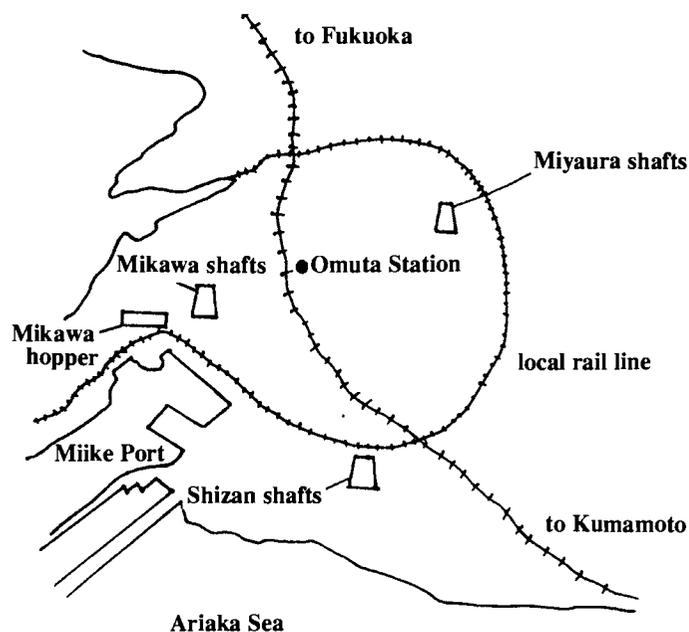
The Miike battle escalated to a fever pitch during July as heated battles were fought at sea when Mitsui tried to bring in replacement miners and supplies to its island collieries. On 5 July the Fukuoka District Court, responding to a Mitsui appeal, placed the area around the Mikawa hopper under the direct legal control of a court officer. With this extraordinary writ, Mitsui prepared to completely eject the Miike strikers and their supporters with the backing of the courts and the direct intervention of the police. A bloody showdown was in the offing. Sohyo in the meantime prepared for battle, dispatching 10,000 union activists to defend the Mikawa hopper picket line while it also called for a mass demonstration on 17 July. Tensions reached boiling point on that day as 20,000 unionists picketing the Mikawa hopper stood face to face with 10,000 police in full riot gear. Nearby, 100,000 Miike union supporters gathered in a huge rally. The mobilization of union support led to a standoff, but Mitsui was determined to have the Mikawa hopper cleared of picketers before its interim injunction expired on 21 July. Tensions increased.

Ikeda Intervenes

The fall of the Kishi cabinet on 15 July and the ascent to power of Ikeda Hayato as leader of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) represented, if not a fundamental break with the conservatism and anticommunism of Kishi Nobusuke, at least a determination to defuse the explosive situation at Miike. Ikeda formed his cabinet on 19 July and appointed Ishida Hirohide as labor minister with the mandate to intervene immediately in the Miike confrontation. Ishida called on the CLRB to mediate, and the CLRB initiated discussions with the two sides. The CLRB, with the government's backing, demanded that the two sides commit themselves to accept the CLRB's final recommendation, with the two previous mediation proposals serving as a basis for the final decision. On this basis, the imminent clash at the Mikawa hopper would be averted, with pickets remaining at the Mikawa hopper.

This proposal was accepted by the Miike local, Tanro, and Sohyo, and indeed the picketeers at the Mikawa hopper were exuberant about the government intervention, feeling

Figure 3
Mitsui Mining's Miike Facilities



This map is from Miike Tanko Rodo Kumiai, *Miike 20-nenshi*, p. 248.

that their perseverance had brought the fight to a standstill and that the government could not use force to rout the workers, given their numbers and determination. The government's decision to avert a showdown also caused consternation among certain sectors of the ruling class. Mitsui was unhappy with the proposal and wanted the government to first give a lesson in law and order by enforcing the court order to clear the hopper of pickets. In what must have been an extraordinary session, Ishida personally went to Mitsui headquarters on 20 July to meet the top leaders of the business world, including Sato Kiichiro, president of Mitsui Bank, Uemura Kogoro, vice president of Keidanren, the chairman of the Japan Chamber of Commerce, four top Nikkeiren officials, as well as Kuriki, to persuade them to go along with mediation.³⁵ In the end Ishida and the government won out, Mitsui's court order expired without being enforced, and both parties acceded to the mediation process. Calm gradually returned to Omuta.

On 10 August the CLRB came down with its ruling that included the following points:

- the designated layoffs appeared unavoidable, and it was impossible at that stage to deal with each individual case to establish whether the layoff was justifiable;
- workshop struggles had been excessive, and blame was attached to both the company and the union;

35. Miike Tanko Kaisha, ed., *Shiryō: Miike sōgi*, p. 696.



During the Miike coal mine dispute the Miike union and Sohyo activists concentrated their picketing at the Mikawa colliery hopper since it was a bottleneck in the production process. In a showdown at the hopper on 20 July 1960, 20,000 picketers confronted 12,000 police.

- violence had gotten out of hand, and was unacceptable;
- the company should rescind its designated layoffs, but those named should voluntarily retire;
- those retiring and those named would receive 20 and 50 thousand yen respectively;
- those laid off could appeal their cases to the labor board or the courts;
- the government and company would work to find new jobs for those laid off;
- the company and unions would form a committee to work out details to restart production, and the company would not discriminate between the new and old unions.

The company immediately accepted the mediation proposal, but the Miike local rejected it. Once again Tanro faced an impossible decision. The issues were thrashed out at Tanro's Twenty-seventh Convention in Tokyo beginning on 18 August, but again the delegates found themselves deadlocked and the convention was adjourned for further reflection. Finally, after nearly twenty agonizing days, the convention ratified the proposal despite the objections of the Miike local. Almost all agreed that the proposal was unjust and antilabor, but the view that the union movement was unable to continue the struggle given the forces against it eventually won out. The emotional moment was recorded by an *Asahi* journalist:

When the CLRB mediation proposal was adopted, the 60 people from the Miike local who were crammed into the back of the Tanro Convention remained silent, neither clapping nor speaking. They appeared stupefied. Among the miners' wives with their white headbands, a few women cried. A number of motorcycle riders who had come up to the convention in khaki suits and

white helmets struggled to take off white jerseys encribed in bold letters "Reject the Mediation Proposal." Most of the Miike wives were in tears or were wiping their faces with handkerchiefs. It wasn't unexpected, but as one terminus in a long, bitter struggle—and having to swallow 1,200 dismissals—the disappointment went deep. Looking at those faces even I felt tears on the way. Later in the hallway wives hugged each other, crying. "Stop crying now, it's not a time for tears," Sakisaka Itsuro softly chided them, his own eyes red with emotion. At that the wives burst out, tears rolling down their cheeks. The CLRB proposal was adopted amid Miike's tears of grief.³⁶

Following the Tanro decision, the Miike local had no choice but to follow, and on 1 December 1960, 312 days after the lockout began at the mine, the Miike miners returned to work. The original union survived, scarred but resolute, and continued the struggle to preserve its autonomy. More than thirty years later, it remains active and defiant but no longer represents the majority of Miike miners.

Repercussions

The Miike confrontation and eventual defeat of the independent, militant miners' union has significant implications for our understanding of industrial relations in Japan.

36. *Asahi Shimbun*, 6 Sept. 1960, p. 3.

First, from a historical perspective, Miike obliges us to reappraise our understanding of the stages and dynamics in the postwar evolution of industrial relations in Japan. For example, some historians have stated that by the mid-1950s labor-management relations had stabilized and were marked by close cooperation between unions and managers.³⁷ If this is true, how can we explain the intensity and class-against-class nature of the Miike dispute in 1960, five years after the system was supposedly stable?

The fact is that sharp class struggle continued in Japan right into the 1960s. To be sure, major employers, abetted by the right wing of the labor movement, had made significant inroads against adversarial unionism in strategic industrial sectors by 1955. But it is a mistake to conclude that employers had gained overall hegemony in labor-management relations at this time. In fact, labor relations remained volatile for a number of reasons. Some workers, such as the Miike miners, did not succumb to employers' attempts to regain hegemony in the workplace. As well, other workers in hitherto unorganized sectors became more active. Maeda Hajime recalled how, just when managers thought they had things under control, disputes in new sectors broke out: "Around 1955 labour battles had changed quite a bit. In places where you wouldn't think struggles would occur, such as in banks, investment dealers, hospitals, and schools, struggles began to break out."³⁸ Class conflict actually became more generalized as indicated by a steady increase between 1946–65 in the number of labor disputes and the number of workers involved.³⁹ At the same time, public-sector workers continued to fight for the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike, teachers fought against an efficiency rating system, and many industrial workers continued to defend their unions against management encroachment as during the Oji Paper Mill strike in 1958. These struggles were not isolated events but often involved support activities by Sohyo, regional labor councils, and community groups. The ongoing employers' offensive had provoked Sohyo, in fact, to transform itself from a U.S.-sponsored, anticommunist, collaborationist union central in 1950 into a relatively militant, anti-U.S. imperialist labor federation by 1955. In that year, Sohyo affiliates initiated the Shunto, the coordinated spring wage offensive, to counteract the growing influence of enterprise unionism.

The continuous turmoil throughout the decade and resultant class polarization were requisite conditions for the confrontation that erupted at Miike in 1960. Even Japan's managers cite the Miike struggle as the apex in an epoch of industrial relations strife: "At the same time, this [the Miike battle] was the climax in a lineage of long struggles beginning with the Tanro and Densan unlimited general strikes right after the peace treaty, continuing through the Nissan and Nihon Steel/Muroran disputes and up to the Oji Paper battle."⁴⁰

37. This view is commonplace. Even one of the best books on Japan's labor history takes this position. See Andrew Gordon, *The Evolution of Labor Relations in Japan: Heavy Industry, 1853–1955* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 367.

38. Maeda, "Nikkeiren ni ikita nijunen," p. 363.

39. See statistical analysis in Okochi et al., eds., *Workers and Employers in Japan* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1973), pp. 309–26.

The fact that the Miike union and Sohyo lost the 1960 battle, however, did represent a severe setback for adversarial unionism in Japan. This is the second significant aspect of the Miike experience. Prior to the Miike defeat, Tanro and other militant unions were pressing for Sohyo to adopt a plan for affiliated unions to strengthen their roots in the factories through a plan of workshop struggle whereby workers in each plant would exercise direct control over bargaining and strike action. The Miike local's success in implementing this type of action in the late 1950s caused more than a little consternation on the part of Nikkeiren. In fact, it was one of the primary factors leading to Nikkeiren's direct involvement in the strike. As Maeda Hajime recalled:

There were two kinds of poisons that were eating at the roots of Mitsui Mining. One was the power of the union in the mines—they were so strong they could defy foremen's orders. The other was the influence the union had in the company residences—they were strong enough to eliminate company influence. Labor relations at Miike generally were unstable due to syndicalist ideas and action, and it was hopeless to expect a return to sound management without resolving this problem.⁴¹

Independent, adversarial unionism had become a fact of life for Miike miners. The shop-floor struggle tactics were also being taken up at other work sites and were being integrated into a new organizational strategy being debated within Sohyo.

Defeat at Miike in 1960 undermined the campaign for workshop struggle within Sohyo and also weakened Sohyo's organizational base in the private sector. As a result, those few major private-sector unions that remained within Sohyo (such as the Federation of Iron and Steel Workers' Unions) increasingly abandoned local dispute tactics and began to restrict their activities to joint consultation and collective bargaining over wages. In many ways these limited activities were not dissimilar to those of private-sector unions affiliated with the right wing of the labor movement represented by Zenro Kaigi (which later became Domei Kaigi in 1962 and Domei in 1964). This similarity in function among private-sector unions—regardless of central affiliation—created the requisite conditions for bringing private-sector unions together. The most important initiatives in this direction were the creation of the International Metalworkers Federation–Japan Committee, established in 1962, and Zenmin Rokyo (National Council of Private Enterprise Workers' Unions), established in 1982. Both of these organizations were sponsored by the right wing of the labor movement and brought together private-sector unions with different central affiliations

40. Nikkeiren, *Nikkeiren sanjunenshi*, p. 355.

41. Maeda, "Nikkeiren ni ikita nijunen," p. 364.

for the express purpose of developing a unified labor front around issues of mutual concern. This consolidation of enterprise unionism in the private sector began to eat away at Sohyo's base in the private sector.

Although numerically the largest nationally centralized labor organization, Sohyo's main basis of support became public-sector unions, which were more political and militant as they strived to regain the right to strike lost in 1948 under the Occupation. Despite valiant efforts, including an eight-day work stoppage in 1975, Sohyo has been unable to regain the right to strike in the public sector. In the meantime, Sohyo's two largest public-sector affiliates, the railway union and the teachers' federation, have basically fallen apart—the former because of privatization moves on the part of the government, and the latter because of internal dissension. These trends in the private and public sector are the historical background that led Sohyo to decide to dissolve in 1989 and join the private-sector-sponsored labor federation Rengo. While it would be gross oversimplification to attribute these later developments to the Miike struggle, the defeat in 1960 was in many respects a watershed in that it marked the beginning of decline for adversarial unionism within Sohyo, particularly among private-sector affiliates.

The third arena where Miike had a dramatic impact was in the conflict that accompanied Japan's conversion from coal to oil as the country's major fuel source. The defeat of the Miike union and the subsequent layoffs at Mitsui and at other coal companies marked the opening salvo in the "energy revolution."⁴² I have attempted to show that the Miike conflict was largely political in nature, that is, Mitsui was determined to break the militant, independent Miike local by firing union activists. Having said this, however, economic factors should not be underestimated. Under pressure from industrial consumers (the steel industry, among others) for lower coal prices, coal companies hoped to rationalize their operations by laying off thousands of workers and by closing less efficient mines. Mitsui's successful attempt to disembowel the Miike union was a signal that full-scale rationalization could be carried out. Thus, in the 1960–70 period alone, the number of operating mines dropped from 682 to 102. In this same period, mine employment declined precipitously from 244 to 52 thousand as miners were thrown out of work on a scale as large as autoworker layoffs in the United States in the 1980s. Tanro continued to oppose the rationalization program and layoffs after 1960, but the defeat of the Miike union robbed the federation of its strongest component, and the attempt to halt the layoffs was largely ineffective.

In an ironic twist of fate, the mining industry faced a labor shortage in the 1963–65 period. Miners began to abandon the coal shafts as working conditions and wages deteriorated. Life in the mines became precarious. While the accident rate was declining in every other industry in Japan during the 1959–69 period, in the coal industry the accident rate actually increased by 50 percent. Mine disasters became endemic. Tragically, Miike miners, who had suffered so much during the 1960 conflict, were not spared this new affliction. On 13 November 1963, barely

three years after miners had returned to work, a huge explosion ripped through the Mikawa colliery at Miike, killing 458 miners and injuring 800 others in one of the worst mining disasters in world history. Mitsui cutbacks in the mine were cited as a contributing factor in the disaster. Even mainstream sources were obliged to recognize the link between the rationalization program and the numerous mine disasters. As one Labor Ministry official obliquely put it: "One can hardly say that the rapid increase in productivity had nothing to do with the mine disasters."⁴³ Faced with thousands of unemployed miners in the streets and recurring mine disasters, the government had little choice but to begin relief efforts. It spent about 59 billion yen during a twelve-year period for unemployment insurance and job retraining schemes. Over the same period, the government put 260 billion yen directly into the pockets of coal operators as subsidies during the phasing out of coal production. The economics of accelerated growth that characterized the 1960s were thus inextricably bound to the politics of breaking independent adversarial unionism.

43. Rodosho Shokugyo Antei Kyoku Shitsugyu Taisakubu, ed., *Tanko rishokusha taisaku junenshi* (Tokyo: Nikkan Rodo Tsushinsha, 1971), p. 338.



42. Unless otherwise stated, information on the decline of the coal industry and the impact on miners is taken from my M.A. thesis, "Labour Relations in Japan's Postwar Coal Industry: The 1960 Miike Lockout," University of British Columbia, 1986.

COOPERATION AND CONFLICT

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Review Essay: Words About Pictures

THE ARTS OF CHINA, 3d ed., by Michael Sullivan. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, xxiii + 278 pp., illus. Hardcover, \$40; paper \$17.95.

THE PATH OF BEAUTY: A STUDY OF CHINESE AESTHETICS, by Li Zehou, trans. Gong Lizeng. Beijing: Morning Glory Publishers, 1988, 271 pp., illus. Hardcover, \$90.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHINESE PAINTING, edited by Kao Mayching. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, xxxii + 258 pp., illus. Hardcover, \$60.

ART AND REVOLUTION IN MODERN CHINA: THE LINGNAN (CANTONESE) SCHOOL OF PAINTING, 1906–1951, by Ralph Crozier. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, xxiv + 224 pp., illus. Hardcover, \$35.

THE WINKING OWL: ART IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, by Ellen Johnston Laing. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, x + 194 pp., illus. Hardcover, \$45.

THE NEW CHINESE PAINTING, 1949–1986, by Joan Lebold Cohen. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1987, 168 pp., illus. Hardcover, \$35; paper, \$19.95.

by Ronald R. Janssen

The value of the six books reviewed here is twofold, at least. First, what they represent in terms of conservatorship alone is one mark of their combined importance. The ravages of modern Chinese history and the downright meanness and stupidity of individuals both within and outside the Chinese government have been so intense that we ought to be grateful to have so many artworks to study as are illustrated in these books (more than twelve hundred, about half of them created since 1949, and half of that number created in the post-Maoist period). It is not unusual to find statements such as Michael Sullivan's about the works of the Storm Society that all are "either lost or so badly reproduced that I cannot illustrate them," or to learn that half of a work like Jiang Zhaohe's *Scroll of Refugees*, his "finest work," "was destroyed in the Cultural Revolution."¹

The second value of these books derives from the insights they offer into the ways a field of study—in this case, the field of twentieth-century Chinese art—is created, or to use the postmodernist term, constituted. As Sullivan, again, remarks about the scholarly study of Chinese modernism, "Ten years ago it would have been impossible to have put together a panel of speakers on the subject," and "as recently as three or four years ago the idea of holding a seminar on twentieth-century Chinese art would have been greeted with derision."² In this light, readers can applaud these writers, whose persistence has clearly overcome the impossible and established their work far beyond the reach of derision.

To focus this differently, these books bear on politics and art in two important ways that correspond to the value I have already ascribed to them. First, as one would expect, they give us information about the shifting influences that political authority has exercised over art in China, especially since 1949. Second, and more interestingly, they reveal something about the rhetoric and politics of writing about art. The first point has to do with the content of the books, while the second has to do with the discursive practices of the writers themselves.

In the latter regard, a broad statement would say that moving through the list from Sullivan's book to Cohen's also amounts to moving through different conceptions of the writer/text/reader relationship. At one end of the list, Sullivan's discourse posits its audience as the passive receiver of a view of Chinese art conveyed by an authority in the field. By contrast, Cohen's discourse conceives of its audience as an active participant in the making of meaningful structures out of the information supplied by the author. These differences are not new ones in other fields of study—in the Western social sciences, in literature, in Western art history, and even in the Western study of Chinese literature and history.³

Because the study of recent Chinese art is in its formative

1. Kao, *Twentieth-Century*, pp. 7–8.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 3 and 2, respectively.

3. Interested readers will find supplementary perspectives in Paul A. Cohen's *Discovering History in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), and in Donald Preziosi's *Rethinking Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), published just as this essay was completed.

stages, it seems worth suggesting at the outset of this essay what more might have been done in these books without in any way diminishing what they have in fact accomplished. The bases for doing more are at hand, or almost so. Shortly after the brutal suppression of the 1989 bid for democracy in China, Michel Oksenberg was reported as saying that the United States was developing its best generation of sinologists so far.⁴ This assessment is borne out by recent scholarship on Chinese literature that is indeed building new methods of raising our understanding of its subject. For example, in as unlikely a source as the “Talk of the Town” section of the *New Yorker*, we can read about “a think tank called the Center for Psychosocial Studies,” the members of which spent the 1989 summer session discussing official Chinese news reports about the Tiananmen tragedy in terms of “dialogic theories about authoritative discourse and underground discourse and double voices and autonomous voices and the play of voices in a ‘text.’”⁵ In addition, over the past fifteen years James J.Y. Liu, John J. Deeney, Karl S.Y. Kao, and other scholars have produced books and articles that probe, question, or practice structuralist and poststructuralist theories of literary and cultural analysis and interpretation.⁶

These resources could be useful in prompting the authors under review to develop a self-consciousness about the theoretical dimensions of their discourse in much the way that James Peck’s 1969 *BCAS* article, “The Roots of Rhetoric: The Professional Ideology of America’s China Watchers” (*BCAS*, vol. 2, no. 2 [Oct. 1969]), prompted self-consciousness in its special field. If there is a common theme in these volumes, it is the “dialogue” between politics and art, traditional and modern, Eastern and Western, regional and national, that marks most of the history of Chinese art. And it is a theme eminently susceptible to new modes of exploration. Sullivan’s book rehearses the whole drama of Chinese art from prehistory to our own post-Maoist era, adequate material with which to explore, for example, questions posed by Roland Barthes some twenty years ago as to whether one might establish a semiology of painting.⁷ Croizier’s subject, the Cantonese School, is positioned in an ideal way for him to explore the “carnival” of voices emanating from Song China, Meiji Japan, and post-Civil War United States, to name only the obvious. By the time of the work included in Cohen’s book, the dialogue of Chinese painting with its own history and with the West (to say nothing of its failed dialogue with the political authorities) is even more extensive and suggestive for the

critic who can find uses for recent investigations of representation, ideology, intertextuality, dialogics, and a host of other theoretical issues that beg consideration but are nowhere addressed in these books.

In a section headed “Chou Cities” in *The Arts of China*, Michael Sullivan notes that for a knowledge of early Zhou architecture “we have to rely largely upon the evidence of the written word” (p. 32). The unintended irony here is that in reading Sullivan’s book we are subject to the same kind of dependence for the whole of Chinese art. Furthermore, our politicized postmodern consciousness has sensitized us to some of the implications of this dependence.

The immediate pleasures of Cohen’s volume are the pleasures of chaos itself—that is, the experience of transforming our initial disgruntlement, fear, or insecurity at being lost in a swirl of sensory data into the sheer delight of just looking around us. And the immediate strength and chief value of this book is the wealth of material we are given to look at.

Among other things, we have learned to see how language is constitutive rather than merely imitative of its subject. “There is,” as Barthes remarks, “no longer a critic, nor even a writer talking painting, there is the *grammatographer*, someone who writes the picture’s writing.”⁸ In the case of a historical narrative like Sullivan’s, the accumulation of physical art objects from prehistory to the present does not inevitably tell any particular story. Agreement about the story told is founded not so much in the objects themselves as in what Hayden White has called the prefigurative tropes and subsequent modes of emplotment, argument, and ideology used by the writer and consented to by the reader.⁹ Thus, the very writing of art history casts both author and reader in roles that might be called political. The audience is subjected not *to* but *by* the author’s discourse.

Sullivan’s discourse, one suspects, will gain easy consent from most readers, in part at least because it provides the “comfortable” experience of familiarity characteristic of realistic fiction. Never will the narrative be troubled by consideration of the theoretical structures or ideological determinants that prefigure either the works discussed, the discussion itself, or the relationship between the two. This, presumably, is what is meant by an “introduction” to Chinese art.¹⁰

9. See White’s “Introduction: The Poetics of History” in his *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 1–42.

10. In fact, the original version of this book was called just that, *An Introduction to Chinese Art* (1961). A later version was retitled *A Short History of Chinese Art* (1967). The most recent three editions bear the title *The Arts of China* (1973, 1977, 1984), suggesting an effort to present “the thing itself.”

4. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 28 June 1989.

5. *Ibid.*, 19 June 1989, p. 26.

6. Liu’s *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975) applies to its subject the schema of such theorists as Northrop Frye and M.H. Abrams. Deeney’s *Chinese-Western Comparative Literature: Theory and Strategy* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1980) contains articles by a number of scholars working in recent critical modes. Kao’s introductory essay in his *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic: Selections from the Third to the Tenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) draws on Tzvetan Todorov and other structuralist theorists.

7. One thinks particularly of essays like “Rhetoric of the Image” (1964), “Is Painting a Language?” (1969), or “Masson’s Semiography” (1973), all available in *The Responsibility of Forms* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985).

8. “Is Painting a Language?” in *The Responsibility of Forms*, p. 151.

Sullivan's narrative, like that of any good novel, is held together by a theme: "As in the following pages the history of Chinese art unfolds, we will find that its characteristic and unique beauty lies in the fact that it is an expression of this very sense of attunement" (p. 2). Few readers will even pause over the remark that the history of Chinese art here "unfolds" rather than "is unfolded" or that "attunement" is said to be a "fact" rather than a reading, and that the scholarly "we" is not merely conventional but also coercive. Thus does discourse, especially narrative discourse, do its work, erasing the signs of the constructed and the constitutive by lulling the reader into the sense that all this is just "the way things are." Some readers may draw back at times, half aware of a kind of manipulation ("Over the scene hangs a peace so profound that we can almost hear their voices as they call to each other across the water" [p. 160, my emphasis]), but the trouble, if it arises at all, will soon pass as readers somewhat narcissistically accept the implied image of themselves, and the narrative continues on its easy way through the centuries.

One continues to wish that Sullivan would press harder against his chosen topic, "art and reality," in order to explore whether his realism, "in which no kind of ideological or academic filter hangs between the artist and what he sees" has ever existed anywhere.

Within its chronological framework, Sullivan's book is in places a showcase for the connoisseur: "From the technical point of view, the eighteenth-century white glaze is perhaps more perfect, but it lacks the luminous warmth of the Ming surface" (p. 219). An audience is rightfully awed before the masterly tones that can weigh "glaze" against "surface" and perfection against "warmth," a mastery that surmounts its own disciplined acquisition of the principles of mere technique to ascend into the refined ethers of the "luminous." This is, almost wholly, performance, transferred—remarkably well, I think—to the printed page from the lecture hall or the inner sanctum of Sotheby's (bastions, one could say, of certain kinds of social and economic authority).

But performance tends toward virtuosity, and virtuosity falters when it is forced to extend itself into exposition, which has its own rules of documentation, explanation, analysis, and substantiation. For example, Sullivan's account of *Living in the Fu-ch'un Mountains* by Huang Kung-wang (1269–1350) treats us to a bit of biography (most of it cribbed without acknowledgment from the artist's inscriptions on the scroll itself) and a bit of description, and then enjoins us to share an impression: "We feel that this is the painter himself speaking from the depths of his heart." But if "we" are unable to see any qualities that Sullivan describes as "magnificently broad, relaxed, and unaffected," will we be forgiven for thinking the impression inadequately prepared? The awe that attends the description of Ming ceramic ware is deferred as we impatiently await more information. Instead, we get one more sentence that includes a brief

reference to Ming painters and Sullivan's final judgment that "the spontaneity of his touch shows clearly that he caught the spirit of antiquity without becoming its slave" (pp. 189–90).

A similarly sketchy discussion of the other Yuan masters closes with two maddeningly provocative paragraphs, which if explored rather than "entertained" might turn the generally smooth connoisseurship of this book into bristling argument. I refer to Sullivan's observations that in the Yuan the artist began "to find his inspiration not in nature so much as in art itself"; that "artists began to range back over the whole tradition, reviving, playing variations upon, painting"; that if art "was to be nurtured and enriched by the great tradition, it was also imprisoned within it" (p. 193).

The narrative tries both to float such particles and to submerge them in the interest of some larger story. And yet certain kinds of readers will think these particles themselves to be the story that needs telling. Writing of Northern Song realism, Sullivan notes that its later manifestations were "a mere convention: the artist was no longer looking at nature with fresh eyes, he was simply concocting pictures out of his head" (p. 160). It might be objected that the contrast between "looking" and "concocting" (whose etymology, by the way, has to do with "cooking," and it would seem that the author may have stumbled unawares into the territory of Levi-Strauss) ought not go by unexamined. It allows nothing for the force of artistic codes and conventions and even seems to suggest that some painters do without them while others do with them entirely. I would like to hear more about this, not only for what it would tell us about Chinese art but also for what it might force the author to reveal about his own strategies of presentation.

Sullivan has been writing this book or variations of it for a long time, some thirty years. His task has been to extend his study chiefly by incorporating new archeological findings, replacing some of the illustrations, and revising introductory and concluding paragraphs to keep up with historical events. But his terms are themselves rather too easy, and what the author has to say often leaves much to be desired. Readers who immerse themselves in such a book for the purpose of learning will too frequently come up with little more than a few appreciative remarks to parrot, a mounting impatience over the lack of expository development and theoretical exploration, and a deepening suspicion about the role they have been asked to assume vis-à-vis the authority of the text.

Within the book's own terms, one could hardly expect a better job than Sullivan has done. William Watson's *Art of Dynastic China* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1981) is twice the length; seven times the weight (seven pounds!); in its main text, fully illustrated in color; and, in its chapter titles, more promising: "Theory and Practice of Verisimilitude" and "Landscape as a Private Code," for example; but its prose style is ponderous, its discussions more conventional than the section headings suggest, and it stops at the end of the Qing dynasty. Between Sullivan's book and Mary Tregear's *Chinese Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) it is difficult to find a basis of preference except that Sullivan's is better illustrated.

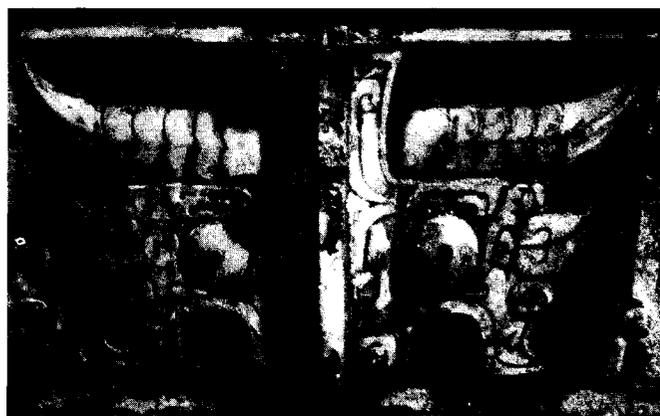
Li Zehou's *The Path of Beauty: A Study of Chinese Aesthetics* is structured by a set of preconceptions more openly articulated than Sullivan's. Tailored not merely to the chronological but also to the logical order, the latter serving to explain the former, Li's account is not so much narrative as argumentative—argument, some would say, masquerading as narrative.

To clarify the difference in approach between Sullivan and Li, we might consider their treatments of any particular motif in Chinese art, say the *taotie*, a mythical creature that is, as Sullivan puts it, “the dominating element in the decoration of Shang bronzes” (p. 25). Sullivan summarizes rather cursorily the scholarly interpretations of the motif and describes various examples of its appearance, always coming back to his point that “what Shang people called this creature, and what it meant to them, may never be known” (p. 26).

Li, by contrast, works from a structure of ideas based on his belief that form in art “has acquired socially-defined content” (p. 36; he alludes to Clive Bell’s concept of “significant form” here). This, combined with his Marxist faith that art and politics serve each other, prompts Li to explain the *taotie* in terms of the forces it embodies and what varying human responses to it over time tell us about beauty itself. For example, drawing on ancient historical records, Li tells us that the *taotie* figures “were images that symbolized ‘auspiciousness’ or other things that served the needs and interests of the ruling clique” (p. 46). The *taotie*, he continues, “asserted itself to protect society, to coordinate the upper and lower classes, and to inherit the fortunes of heaven. In other words, it was a defender of the status quo” (p. 46). Li insists that if one takes a regretful view of these historical circumstances, then one cannot appreciate the beauty of Shang bronzes at all, because in embodying the meaning of social subjugation they also embody the inevitability of the march of history as people passed through this stage of social development. Similar images created in later times merely to terrify people are not equally beautiful because they “reveal themselves as things void of substance,” that is, “they possessed neither the force of destiny, the historic inevitability that is expressed in bronze art, nor the childlike naiveté of primitive men” (p. 52).

For the most part, Li’s history of Chinese aesthetics is cast in the mold of this historical morality tale. At the same time, *The Path of Beauty* makes it clear that Li’s view of art is in some ways broader than it is sometimes presented as being. For example, Deng Xiaomang, a professor of aesthetics and philosophy at Wuhan University, once described Li as belonging with those thinkers who believe that “art is the reflection, imitation, and reproduction of objective attributes.”¹¹ And yet Li’s account of Yuan landscape painting would suggest a more expansive conception of art:

Dreariness, indifference, leisure, harmony, solemnity, tranquility, barrenness, cold—all of these are primarily states of mind or ways of thinking or feeling; they have no objective existence in the world of nature, not in the hills and streams themselves. This is why it took so long for artists to learn how to express such subjective states by means of landscapes. This difficulty was creatively resolved in Yuan painting, which consequently established a third model of artistic



This picture from p. 42 of Li Zehou's The Path of Beauty is not identified in that book, but it is unquestionably a bronze taotie, probably from the Shang dynasty. Li discusses this dominating element in the decoration of Shang bronzes in terms of its probable origins and the different responses to it through the ages. He feels the taotie originated as the head of the sacred ox associated with “the magic and religious rites of remote antiquity.” The taotie was believed to have extraordinary power to protect against evil, and it “became a symbol of mystery, terror, and awe,” “aply reflecting the savage epoch of blood and fire that preceded the era of civilization.”

conception in landscape painting. These three different artistic conceptions, of the Northern Song, Southern Song, and Yuan, stand each in its own right and excel each in its own way. (p. 229)

To Li, beauty is a function of vantage point, both historical and personal. In Shang times, for instance, the bronzes were not articles of beauty but “articles used with fear and apprehension . . . Only in a civilized society where material culture is highly developed and religious thinking on the wane, where cruelty and barbarism are of the past, can art that represented forces of progress and human destiny in ancient history be understood and enjoyed, and its aesthetic value appreciated” (p. 52). Furthermore, as Li has said elsewhere, “there’s no beauty or ugliness observable in objects. Beauty and ugliness are decided by the way of looking and speaking that a person subjectively selects.”¹²

The relativism of such passages seems to be the only channel by which Li can escape, if only temporarily, the Marxist dogma about the march of history that structures most of this book. One can say, at least, that the Marxism in *The Path of Beauty* is of the reconstructed variety described by Wang Fengzhen, in which art “has a variety of functions and can serve people of different societies and meet different political contingencies” and “can serve politics in certain social conditions . . . [but] cannot be limited or reduced to this role.”¹³ It is to Li’s credit that he attempts to embrace what he sees as the scope of Chinese achievement, both “the spirit of practical rationality that characterizes the Chinese nation” (p. 82) and the romanticism that he calls “China’s second great artistic tradition,” which “both paralleled and complemented” the rational, practical spirit (p. 95). Similarly, he tries throughout the book to make clear aesthetic distinctions without elevating one or another to a position of “correctness” as so many of the cruder Chinese critics do. Discussing three concepts of poetry, for example, Li writes that “each is beautiful in its own way and cannot be replaced by the others . . . Moreover, since art is in the eyes of the beholder, people will have different preferences according to their tastes” (p. 231).

11. Letter to the present reviewer, 1 Nov. 1987.

12. *Essays on Aesthetic Theory* (Shanghai: Shanghai Art Publications, 1980), p. 127. Cited in Deng Xiaomang and Yi Zhongtian, *Getting Out of the Maze of Aesthetics: The Evolution of Oriental and Western Aesthetic Theory and the Revolution in Aesthetic Methodology* (Huashan Literary Publishers, 1989), p. 383.

13. “Marxist Literary Criticism” in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 716–17.

Readers will easily perceive that Li has his own tastes and preferences, “subjectively selected.” The force of his narrative is always on the positive, the upbeat, to display Chinese art and the Chinese people in the best light. Of the Great Wall, for example, Li says that “its continuity in space is an expression of continuity in time, and a symbol of the vitality of the Chinese nation” (p. 83). To remind ourselves that meaning is more a function of interpretation than of “truth,” we might simply recall that Kafka was interested at least as much in the wall’s gaps as in its continuities, and that Su Xiaokang and Wang Luxiang, who produced the 1987 Chinese television series *He shang*, found the wall to be “a gigantic monument of tragedy,” an image of imprisonment and futility rather than of greatness and beauty.¹⁴

Overall, Li’s *The Path of Beauty* is a vigorous and stimulating account of its subject, with an emphasis on imagination and creativity as “processes of activity full of zeal and passion” (p. 27), and it is excellently illustrated to reinforce this sense of vigor in Chinese art. From the opening photograph of a “clay forest” in Yunnan to the closing image of a Qing vase, the emphasis is on the vitality of line and power of mass in Chinese art, an emphasis that reaches its peak midway in the book with a set of photographs of Han clay, bronze, and painted figures. Indeed, this is the most *visual* of the books under review here, a circumstance made more interesting by the fact that according to a publisher’s note, its original Chinese presentation (1981 or 1983; the note is unclear on this point) included “only a limited number of photographs to illustrate certain details” (p. 271). The reproductions in the English edition are so impressively orchestrated that one is well advised to leaf through the book first to experience the historical panorama set forth in the illustrations.

This is not to suggest that the text itself is negligible, for it most decidedly is not, though, again, its Marxist understructure may cause difficulties for certain kinds of Western readers. On the one hand, this Marxist base renders Li’s narrative altogether too predictable, both in its “plot”—the progressive emancipation of both people and art from the shackles of superstition and servitude—and in its biases. In his chapter on Buddhist art, for example, some form of the word “fanaticism” appears five times in as many pages, drawing us towards Li’s rather patronizing summation: “We can well appreciate the aesthetic, emotional power that attracted and deceived people into believing in Buddhism and heaven” (p. 148). On the other hand, that same Marxism, with its integration of socioeconomic history and artistic development, is a useful counter to the preciousness that too often emerges as the dominant tone of Sullivan’s book, in which history—frequently relegated to the status of “background” in a few paragraphs at the beginning of a chapter—largely gives way to the frisson of the connoisseur.

14. Kafka in his story “The Great Wall of China.” Su Xiaokang and Wang Luxiang, *He shang*, 2d ed. (Hong Kong: China Books Press, 1988), p. 35. [For an in-depth discussion of the fact that the Great Wall was probably never continuous and the significance of this and many other aspects of the wall, see Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall: From History to Myth* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990). —Ed.]

Kao Mayching’s *Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting* collects papers presented at the “Symposium on Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting,” convened from 15 to 18 February 1984 as part of the Hong Kong Arts Festival. The volume has a foreword by the editor (who also contributes a paper to the collection) and an introduction (“Art and Reality in Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting”) by Michael Sullivan. The ten papers are arranged under four headings: Tradition and Continuity; A Search for Modernity; Developments in the People’s Republic of China (PRC); Other Developments since 1949 (on work in Chinese cultures outside the People’s Republic). Michael Sullivan is a pioneer in the field covered by this book, so it is fitting that he should lead off the volume. However, one continues to wish that he would press harder against his chosen topic, “art and reality,” in order to explore whether his realism, “in which no kind of ideological or academic filter hangs between the artist and what he sees” (p. 18) has ever existed anywhere.

The very writing of art history casts both author and reader in roles that might be called political. The audience is subjected not to but by the author’s discourse.

The tendency in most of these essays is to lock Chinese art between dualities—traditional/modern, conventional/realistic, Chinese/Western. Most often the artists emerge in these discussions as rational decision-makers, choosing this or that but always falling short of some desirable reconciliation. At best, they learn when to be traditional, when to be modern, thus arriving at what Kao calls “a dual artistic personality that is one of the most unusual features of twentieth-century art” (p. 131). The general effect of such discussion is that everything except the artist’s will is rendered inert. Tradition, reality, even painting itself, are dead things. And yet one need not dwell long on the illustrations in the book to know that the energies at work in this modernist struggle are more various and interesting than the written accounts allow. The paintings themselves have an inner impulse that makes the scene of Chinese modernism more exciting than the struggle between reasoned dualities. It may be, as Kao suggests, that these perceptions are a function of our own distance from the struggle: “While we are able to discern today the creative spirit and innovations of many modern masters of the traditional school, the critical eye of the time saw only its imaginary subject matter totally divorced from real life, the repetitive ‘type-forms’ derived from such books as the *Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual*” (p. 130).

The most interesting piece in this book is Arnold Chang’s, largely because he sees the relationship between art and tradition not as an argument but as a dialogue, and he understands that “tradition is in a constant state of flux, always absorbing new stylistic influences and evolving to accommodate shifts in taste. At times new uses of art encouraged the development of new formats, which in turn prescribed new techniques and styles; at other times revised



Fang Zhaolin's The Soundness of Stonehenge, 1981, is figure 2.2 in Kao's Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting. Arnold Chang maintains that traditional themes, use of ink, and symbols and associated meanings persist in twentieth-century Chinese art, and attempts to update or modernize Chinese painting will be reflected in the individual artist's alteration of one or more of these three basic areas (p. 23). Chang then points out that in this picture Fang Zhaolin of Hong Kong and London has found a new subject that was particularly suited to her dramatic brushwork. This picture is reprinted here courtesy of the Oxford University Press.

visions of the world hastened the development of new styles and formats that embodied more accurately the new ideas" (p. 33).

Tradition emerges here as a living thing to interact with, not as a dead weight to be dragged along. The best artists always recognize this, though it must be easier to do so in a culture with far less tradition than China has. Consistent with this sense of heritage, Chang sets as his main purpose the identification of "some of the broad strategies that modern Chinese artists have followed in relating to their tradition" (p. 22). This he does by comparing the strategies of specific modern painters with those of earlier artists who had to confront similar problems. Thus, to give only one example, Chang brings together Ding Yanyong (1902–1978) and Bada Shanren (1626–1705) to show ways in which "the Chinese tradition can absorb even the most enigmatic of styles and make it part of the 'source pool' of Chinese painting from which later artists may draw their inspiration" (p. 35).

The book is illustrated with 20 color plates and some 225 black-and-white reproductions. Since the pictures were chosen to support various points raised in the symposium papers, there is little to say about the selection except to note that some contributors are able to get far more use out of a picture than do others. Chuang Shen, for instance, really helps you look at the paintings. On the other hand, Chu-Tsing Li (Li Chutsing) tends to list painters without much commentary so that a representative sentence looks like this: "Most prominent among the painters of this group were XUGU (cf. figs. 3.10, 3.11A, 3.11B), REN BONIAN (REN YI) (cf. figs. 3.8, 3.9,

3.17, 3.18) and WU CHANGSHI (pl. 5, cf. figs. 3.12, 3.13)" (p. 89).

On the whole, the scholarship represented by this book was more important at the time of the symposium, when it pulled together the first vital studies of Chinese modernism, than it was four years later at the time of publication. Laurence Tam's article on the Lingnan School has since been superseded by Ralph Croizier's book. Edmund Capon's article on painting in the PRC looks ill-informed now that we have Joan Lebold Cohen's *The New Chinese Painting* by which to judge such remarks as Capon's "the kind of Westernization that we are seeing in Chinese painting today is a pale reflection of figurative styles that were current in the West many decades ago" (p. 167).

The main title of Ralph Croizier's book—*Art and Revolution in Modern China*—is some what misleading, both in scope and substance. The three key terms—art, revolution, and modern—all prove to be narrower in application than one might hope. Art here means painting. Revolution, on the political front, refers mostly to the struggles of the Guomindang from 1911 to 1948. On the artistic front it refers to subtle modulations of technique ("light, color, atmosphere, perspective" is the list on p. 54) rather than the fundamental departures of vision that we find, for example, in Chinese art after 1978. And modern is an unexamined chronological term more than the thorny stylistic and intellectual label that one might interestingly make of it.

The central figures of the study are Chen Shuren and the three Gaos—Jianfu, Qifeng, and Jianzeng. All four studied art in Japan early in the century and absorbed many of the political ideas circulating at that time. Croizier sets the background for this period with a brief presentation of the general importance of Japan as a model and resource for Chinese intellectuals at the turn of the century. He notes that between 1900 and 1908 the number of Chinese students in Japan multiplied more than tenfold, from 700 to 8,000. The general aim was to absorb Western ideas useful for modernizing China. The attraction of late Meiji Japan was that it had “absorbed Western knowledge without losing its distinctive national identity” (p. 25). This effort to make China modern while still retaining ties with its own traditional character is, of course, one of the main themes of Chinese history in the twentieth century, an effort that has been repeatedly frustrated and increasingly painful to observe from the West. The prodemocracy students of the 1970s and 1980s will have no trouble recognizing something like their own situation in Croizier’s remark that “the Qing government found it much easier to encourage students to study in Japan than to control what they learned and how they applied it” (p. 25).

In the absence of detailed biographical information, Croizier is forced to look for signs of influence just where we would want him to anyway—in the actual paintings produced by

the figures under study. In China the four had specialized in bird and flower painting, but in their studies abroad “they took up with enthusiasm the Japanese manner of depicting bold, fierce, predatory animals—lions, bears, and, most importantly, tigers” (pp. 37–38). In addition to analyzing the stylistic qualities of the new paintings, Croizier highlights the significance of these animals as “symbols of resurgent Chinese nationalism” (p. 41). He sees their use as an “allegorical message about China’s need for boldness and bravery” (p. 40), giving “dramatic expression to the artists’ heroic aspirations and political ideals” (p. 41). In sum, there are four categories of influence the Lingnan painters brought back from Japan: nationalistic ideas, subject matter, techniques, and a blending of realism and romanticism.

They continued to paint symbolic pictures, notably for the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall built in Canton in 1926. Also in the 1920s Jianfu introduced into his paintings such modern elements as automobiles, airplanes, and World War I-style tanks. These latter explorations were short-lived—a fact that Croizier ascribes largely to economics, specifically the lack of markets for their work. The sometimes negative public reception of the work was also influential: “At least some Canton art and cultural circles showed themselves very hostile toward the Lingnan School’s syncretic innovations: for several years art critics in Canton newspapers ridiculed the



Gao Jianfu of the Lingnan (Cantonese) School painted this small picture, Skulls Crying over the Nation's Fate, in 1938, probably at the time of the fall of Canton to the Japanese. The long inscription accompanying the picture states, in part: "In the wilderness there are cold dead bones . . . Alas, the rich become richer, the poor become poorer. People of every sort would be better equal, I and the skeletons cry together." This picture is figure 64 in Ralph Croizier's Art and Revolution in Modern China, and Croizier comments that although not one of Gao Jianfu's major works, it is a strong statement of those times, one that was later taken up with increasing frequency and vehemence by left-wing social protest artists. Skulls Crying over the Nation's Fate is reprinted here courtesy of Ralph Croizier.

exhibitions of works by the Gaos and their students, and old-fashioned art lovers even defaced some works at these new-fangled public exhibitions” (p. 100).

Despite Gao Jianfu’s frequent theorizing about the need to modernize art, these artists seldom if ever included contemporary figures in their work. The discrepancies between theory and practice are nowhere more conspicuous, as Croizier notes, than at the time of Gao Jianfu’s lectures on contemporary painting delivered at National Central University in 1936. His criticisms of the stagnation of literati painting and his urging that art reflect “contemporary new life” should have yielded a different kind of art than the Lingnan painters were producing. At the same time, one must say that Croizier’s discussion is not particularly helpful in drawing together its materials at this point. The text tells us that Gao Jianfu’s Nanjing show in 1935 “drew a shower of praise for his revolutionary spirit and technical mastery” and that one observer called his work “the hot blood of the revolution” (p. 114), but we are not told what works were included in this show to elicit such comments.

We have to do some searching in the book itself to note that Gao Jianfu’s painting *Automobile* is given the tentative date of 1935, suggesting that it could have been included in the show. The one airplane picture included in the book couldn’t be dated, but the text tells us that Gao Jianfu had exhibited a whole roomful of them in a 1927 show in Canton. Looking ahead in the book we find the 1937 painting of bombed-out ruins, *A Disaster for Civilization*, and the 1938 *Skulls Crying over the Nation’s Fate*. Though these last two works are too late to have been in the 1935 show, their existence suggests the possibility that Gao Jianfu had been engaged in a decade-long preoccupation with subject matter of the sort hinted at in his lectures of 1936, but Croizier’s text neither supports nor prevents such a guess. Later discussion in the book does mention similar works, no longer extant, to buttress such speculations. It is one of the difficulties that Croizier has had to struggle with that so much of the relevant work for his book is no longer extant, and so much more is difficult to date. The book downplays the works of this period, though it coincides with the peak of Lingnan success in terms of public recognition and acceptance.

Croizier does most of what one would expect: he shows us the background training of the artists; connects their development to the ideas circulating in late Meiji Japan, where so much of Chinese modernism found stimulus and direction; provides examples and discussion of a wide selection of the group’s paintings; and relates the course of the group’s development to social and political contexts. Throughout the book he more or less systematically considers the work of each of the four main figures at each phase of the group’s development, which he makes correspond neatly with the course and fate of the Guomindang on the mainland. The book incorporates the main questions the author must have held in mind as he did his own research: What were the main influences on these artists at each stage of their growth, and what was the effect on their art?

The yield of such reasoned single-mindedness is a reasonable and convincing, if modest, contextualist narrative that combines history, biography, description, and judgment to show the birth, growth, and decline of the Lingnan School of Painting.¹⁵ The book belongs to what Roland Barthes once called, too harshly, “that famous ‘interdisciplinary’ program cooked up by our new academic culture.”¹⁶ Croizier shares with other writers reviewed here an unwillingness to examine some of the

key terms of his project. Not only does he take lightly the terms in his title, as mentioned earlier; but also some of his critical terms are used too casually, leaving judgments made on their basis somewhat questionable. For example, he mentions that “there is no doubt that the rearing horses, roaring tigers, and soaring birds carried a general allegorical message, but to suggest [as one Chinese critic did] that poetically sad subjects, such as withered lotuses, dead willows, small birds in snow, autumn crickets, and falling leaves, were a comment on the sad state of the nation’s politics after 1913 *is going too far*” (p. 83, my emphasis). Why this goes too far and what reliably defines the distance that the reading of symbols and allegories may go are not adequately explained by referring the images, as Croizier does, to “the prerevolutionary Japanese period.” Lacking some more systematic explanation of symbol and allegory, Croizier’s text cannot make itself persuasive on this point. As we will see below, the same lack of system would, during the Cultural Revolution, render Chinese art criticism ludicrous.

Ellen Johnston Laing’s *The Winking Owl: Art in the People’s Republic of China* is based on a series of lectures she delivered at the University of California at Berkeley in 1983, and its chapters retain some traces of the original mode of presentation. They cluster into self-contained units of one to three chapters each, and they tend to repeat some of their background details without cross-reference, as a speaker might do over the course of such a series. Whatever minor disturbance this might make for a reader is more than compensated for by the logic of organization, the careful articulation of principles, and the clarity of supporting analyses in every chapter. There is only one other book Laing’s can be fairly compared with—Arnold Chang’s *Painting in the People’s Republic of China: The Politics of Style* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980). However, Chang is almost exclusively interested in the influence of Mao Zedong’s *Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Art and Literature* on subsequent artistic practices in the PRC. Laing includes this influence in her own discussions, but her book is a more expansive analytical history of Chinese art from 1949 to 1976. Her chapters take us carefully through the alternations in the Chinese art establishment’s policies as they lean now toward politics, now toward aesthetics, and back again. At each stage we are supplied with statements of theory, examples of practice, and citations from critical reviews. These help us understand, whether or not we can accept, the shifting attitudes of the politicians toward China’s artists—even the most talented of whom have had to tolerate humiliation from fools in high places.

The main body of Laing’s book begins and ends with chapters on, respectively, twentieth-century Chinese woodcuts and the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall in Tiananmen Square. These essays stand apart from the discussion of PRC art, chiefly painting, that occupies the seven chapters in between. The central chapters include one on art in the 1950s and three on the period from 1960 to 1965. Thus we progress, in increments,

15. There exists to this day in New York City a Lingnan Art Association, according to Diana Kao (Gao Lihua), who spoke on the work of her father Gao Jianfu, at the 1989 meeting of the American Association for Chinese Studies at the University of Wyoming.

16. Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms*, p. 152.

toward the Cultural Revolution, which itself gets three chapters—one on the early years and two on Jiang Qing's influence over the arts. The book, as the author herself says, is "not meant to provide an exhaustive account" of its subject (p. ix) but rather to "treat selected topics" with the overriding purpose of enhancing "our understanding of culture in contemporary China." This aim she realizes as fully as one could hope to in ninety-six pages.

Laing's success can be attributed to the fidelity with which she adheres to her central assumption that "the art of the PRC has its own functions, aspirations, and criteria" and only by these, rather than by Western expectations, can it be understood. It must be said, in this regard, that Laing's restraint is sometimes admirable, sometimes not. She must have walked away from her typewriter more than once to be able to quote some of the Chinese critics without accompanying the citations with whatever is the professorial equivalent of hoots and catcalls. In fact, she doesn't always succeed. Reporting, for example, on the peasant leaders who pronounced upon the exhibit "Art from the Northeast and Northwest" at the National Exhibition in 1964, Laing cannot hold back entirely: "One of these representatives was Li Molin, presumably eminently qualified to judge the effectiveness of art by virtue of his positions and honors: representative to the National People's Congress, National Labor Model, deputy director of Sijiqing Commune, party branch secretary of the Greenhouse Team, and Cucumber Raising Expert" (p. 51). The sarcasm here is more successful than Laing's effort at understatement later in the book, when she remarks on Jiang Qing's denigration of artists: "It is generally agreed that her insistent requirement that art meet the demands of the heroic and that it be aligned with preestablished forms and patterns served only to limit subjects and inhibit artistic growth in China. The constant political campaigns and the continued demeaning of artists and their art also served to create a stultifying atmosphere" (p. 89). Remembering accounts of life in the cowsheds and reeducation camps, reports of torture, murder, and suicide during the reign of the Gang of Four, one can only think that in Laing's reticence scholarly objectivity has passed beyond reasonable limits. All of this is to suggest that the historical context that Laing provides for each chapter comes to seem morally bland as the book proceeds, largely because of the author's interpretation of academic standards of objectivity, the effect of which, here, at least, is to purge history of its most extreme consequences.

As in Sullivan's book, one can hear in Laing's the tones of the lecturer, but here we have a different kind of competence on display. If Sullivan's tones tend toward the mystifications of connoisseurship, Laing's convey an assurance that complexities can be made to yield to systematic analysis. Laing is very good at assembling just the evidence she needs to clarify a point. She knows that having two of something for comparison and contrast is often more effective, more clarifying, than having only one. Juxtaposition and commentary are the staples of the slide shows we all remember from our art history courses, and Laing transfers them usefully to her text. For example, near the end of her chapter subtitled "Art and the Appreciation of Beauty, 1960–1965," which she wants to conclude by preparing us for the coming of the Cultural Revolution, Laing juxtaposes two reviews—one by quotation, one by paraphrase—of an exhibition by Qian Songyan in 1964. The first reviewer, Zhang Anzhi, concentrates on the aesthetic effects of Qian's work—description of subject matter, discussion of technique and feeling. The second critic, Wang Jingxian, also addresses these matters, but only after lengthy

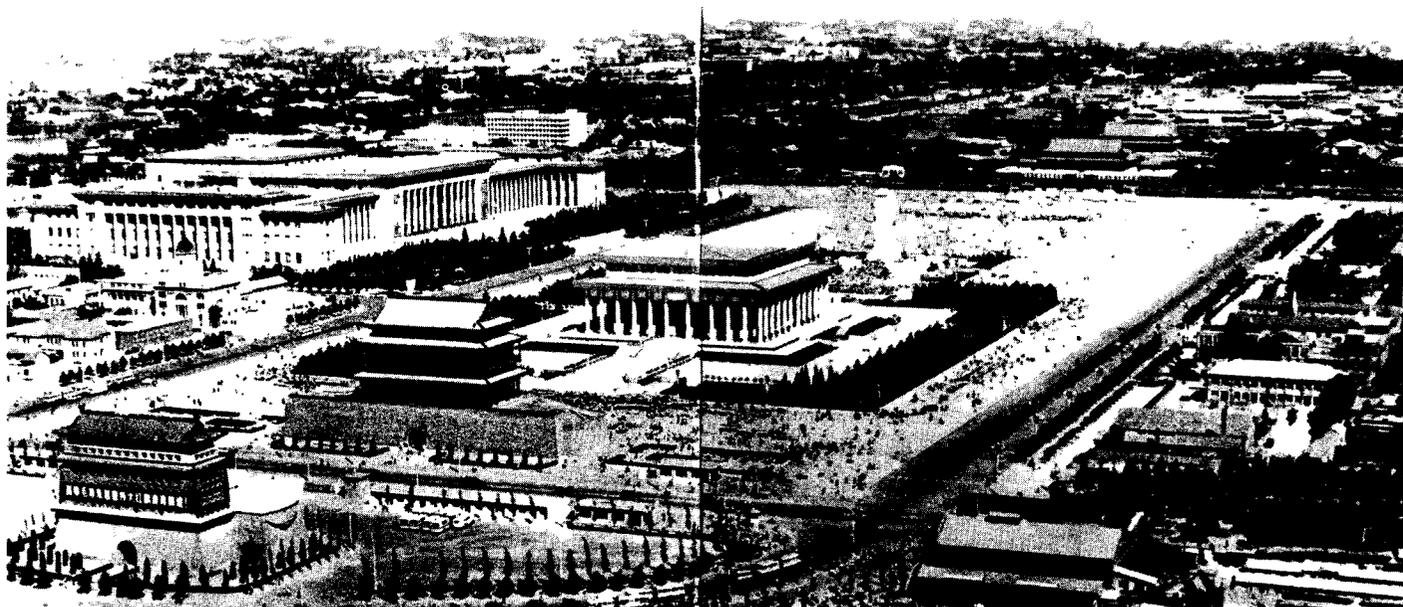
political explanations for the quality of Qian's work. In this contrast, Laing finds a concrete and economical way to make her point about the changing standards of artistic evaluation as Mao began to tighten control over the party and the country.

In her next chapter, "From Poetry to Politics, 1963–1965," Laing works a variation on this method by contrasting Qi Deyan's painting *Harvest of 1964* with Wei Zixi's *Harvest of 1962*. "Response," as Guy Davenport has said, "is a classical tactic of all art" (p. 69). In her juxtaposition, Laing has effected what one would like to see more of in these books on Chinese art—clearer exposition of ways in which later work "answers" earlier work. Such an approach, I think, would lend a dynamics to the often too rigidly compartmentalized chronologies of Chinese art history. It is a distinction of Laing's book that she enlivens her analyses with this sense of cultural dialogue. The method also has the effect of revealing in concrete examples the force of force itself. That is to say, it is not so much the content of one's talk—its logic and sanity—that carries the day as it is the position in the establishment from which one speaks. The lesson has its point in Laing's subsequent chapters on Jiang Qing, whose rigid "translation of Mao's ideas into actuality" (p. 61) led to the "stultifying atmosphere" Laing refers to in the passage cited earlier.

Concealed in apartments and studios, and who knows where else all over China, is a body of work as sealed off from the world as the art of Lascaux—a body of work that, collectively, constitutes the seed of a China whose true power and wealth no one among the authorities seems capable of imagining.

The unwritten message of Laing's chapters on Jiang is that the narrowing of art production during the Cultural Revolution was a necessary consequence not only of ideology but also of an interpretative method that put so much stock in the "correct" reading of symbols. At one point Laing engages in an extended reading of possible meanings of the pine tree in Chinese art, and concludes by noting that "undoubtedly the symbolic ramifications could be multiplied through additional interpretations" (p. 79). The point she hints at is that such interpretation is endless, and the official effort to manipulate interpretation of symbols is part of her subject. Control over meaning can only be accomplished through severe narrowing and exclusion of material, accompanied by intense theorizing and propaganda. No "empirical" or "phenomenological" reading of art is allowed for in such situations. The so-called "Hotel School" of 1973 became the "black" painting of 1974 not only because the works were created without the authorization of Jiang Qing but also because their "symbols" could be (without *having* to be) so easily interpreted as critical of the authorities:

Chen Dayu's . . . *Welcome Spring* . . . depicting a rooster and forsythia was criticized because too much of the whites of the rooster's eyes showed. In traditional China, showing the whites of the eyes



*Tiananmen Square from the south, showing the central location of the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall. This picture is figure 104 of Ellen Johnston Laing's *The Winking Owl*. Laing maintains that the memorial hall closes off the square visually and makes its political significance complete, just as there isn't any room for "more history" in Chinese politics. This photo is reproduced here courtesy of the University of California Press.*

was a way of indicating scorn. Chen's picture "showed hostility toward newborn socialist matters." He Zi depicted the heroine of the novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* in the famous episode where she buries dead flowers . . . This painting, mailed to He's daughter in Hong Kong, was confiscated at the post office. A special-case committee and 'battle squad' were organized to investigate the situation. It was decided that the painting expressed, through the burial of the fading flowers, the artist's wish for the destruction of the Cultural Revolution. (p. 86)

As mentioned earlier, Laing's central chapters are framed by an essay on Chinese woodcuts and another on the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall. Neither of these chapters fits smoothly into the flow of Laing's book, but the difference between them is revelatory of the range of methods the author is capable of. The first is largely a chronological survey of woodcuts from 1900 to 1960, showing the progression from foreign influences—first European, then Russian—to indigenous ones, chiefly New Year's paintings from Chinese folk traditions. The concluding chapter is more aggressively and stimulatingly argumentative, based on the author's contention that public structures in China "possess a logical organization designed to convey very specific political and historical messages" (p. 90). One might contrast her claim to Sullivan's rather obvious remark that "the Great Hall of the People . . . is less remarkable for its style . . . than for its vast size, the classical dignity of its proportions, and its success as a symbol of the enduring strength of the new China" (p. 250).

Laing's chapter draws its energy not only from her perceptive analysis of the Tiananmen complex but also from the way she sets her discussion in dialogue and debate with other writers. She points out that there exist numerous publications on the Chairman Mao Memorial, "yet none deals with the several programs of political iconography which tie the Memorial Hall to other buildings at the periphery of Tiananmen Square" (p. 92), and she proceeds to fill the gap. She argues that in the

arrangement of buildings around the square, "the placement of Mao's mausoleum . . . serves visually to close off the square and to make its political significance complete. Tiananmen now represents a unified repository of political symbolism signifying a closed chapter in the history of the Chinese Communist Party and the People's Republic of China" (p. 93). Symbolically, that is, there simply isn't room at the center of Chinese politics for any more history, a point that gives us another way of talking about what happened in Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989. Laing follows this discussion with a similar analysis of the artworks included within the Memorial itself to show that "the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall was not a carelessly designed building to house and display the leader's remains, but one in which every detail was carefully thought out to provide a comprehensive program of political meaning and artistic significance" (p. 95). It is among the chief credits of Laing's book that her own work, too, is carefully thought out to convey not only information but also meaning and significance and the means by which these are constituted.

In her preface Laing says that "to discuss art in the PRC after 1976 would require a fundamental reorientation and necessitate starting all over again defining a new political atmosphere to explain new art policies" (p. ix). One wonders if Laing would have imagined such a volume as Joan Lebold Cohen's *The New Chinese Painting, 1949–1986*, a book many critics will find it easy to be dissatisfied with. But one must proceed with circumspection.

The immediate pleasures of Cohen's volume are the pleasures of chaos itself—that is, the experience of transforming our initial disgruntlement, fear, or insecurity at being lost in a swirl of sensory data into the sheer delight of just looking around us. And the immediate strength and chief value of this book is the wealth of material we are given to look at. Since the latest round of repression in China, we must be indebted to Cohen for the pictures alone, especially because many of these works

remain in China and thus under threat of the will of the CCP to destroy everything that it considers “no-thing.”

Even the design of Cohen’s book is stimulating. A typical page provides at least four sources of information. The first is, again, the illustrations themselves. One finds only a half dozen or so places where the book opens to two facing pages with no pictures at all. The pictures are supplemented by three kinds of printed matter, each in its own typeface, adding to the visual experience of the book. First is the “main” text, the author’s discussion of schools, painters, movements, or chronological periods; second are the captions, containing the usual kinds of information about the pictures (except for size, which would be useful); and finally there is brief commentary on each picture—set in italic type—giving additional information varying in substance from the biographical to the descriptive, analytical, or anecdotal.

This whole arrangement will be unsatisfactory to those whose demands on styles of exposition are too rigidly conventional. Readers who are open to what we might call the “exploratory mode” of exposition, who are willing to suspend their usual conventions and surrender themselves to another kind of reading experience, will find Cohen’s book, in form at least, a stimulating experience.

It is worth trying to reproduce something of this experience.



According to Joan Lebold Cohen, Yuan Yunsheng’s Black Figure shows the bitterness of enslavement, the humiliation that Chinese artists, intellectuals, and officials have suffered, especially during the Cultural Revolution. This 1981 ink drawing is figure 41 in Cohen’s *The New Chinese Painting, 1949–1986*, and she explains in detail how the artist was himself sent to a labor camp for two years and a year later was exiled to the northeast for sixteen years, had his work destroyed, and lost commissions because of his controversial statements and style of painting. Now an artist in residence in the United States, Yuan believes that the new direction of art in this century is toward expression of individual feelings, and that tradition should be turned to only to help in that expression. This picture and the next two are reprinted here courtesy of Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

On page 44 (a random example) one sees at bottom right the concluding two paragraphs of Cohen’s text on Yuan Yunsheng. The second paragraph tells of his credits, including tenures as artist-in-residence at several U.S. colleges and universities and work he created for those institutions. It is preceded by a paragraph about his having lost a hotel commission in China after the authorities saw his work *Spring Festival along the Suzhou Canals*, which the artist had already painted on a large canvas. No further description of the work is given, and it is not reproduced in the book, so we have no way of knowing why it was found to be so offensive.

However, we gain a clue from the illustration diagonally across the page, in the topmost left corner, showing Yuan’s *Black Figure* (1981), described in the italic commentary as follows:

This kneeling, chained figure is both symbolic and literal, showing the humiliation that Chinese artists, intellectuals, and officials have suffered, especially during the Cultural Revolution. Being forced to assume such a position for hours on end, in front of hostile crowds struggling against them, was a devastating experience for China’s elite. In a black-ink composition, the artist powerfully expresses the bitterness of enslavement.

In the lower left corner of the page is Yuan’s *Bull* (1981), compared in the italicized commentary to the bulls of Picasso and Northern Wei flying demons.

Diagonally across from the bull, above the paragraphs of main text, are two more illustrations, described in the upper right corner of the facing page (p. 45). The topmost is of a “lightning demon,” a “detail from [an] epitaph tablet of Lady Yuan” in a Northern Wei dynasty relief carving. The commentary refers to the “linear freedom and rhythm” that Yuan has studied and admired and adds that his “bulls gain energy from the inspiration of the demon.” The second illustration above the text on page 44 is a detail from Yuan’s painting *Two Ancient Chinese Tales: Red + Blue + Yellow = White?* (1983). The commentary summarizes the myth of Nu Wa, compares Yuan’s effects to those of Michelangelo and Gaston Lachaise, and describes parts of the mural not shown in the illustration.

In some such fashion, readers will construct for themselves, page by page, a text that exists “in potential” in Cohen’s book. Different readers, or a single reader in subsequent readings, will scrutinize the material in different sequences. Thereby the reader will actualize the belief of such theorists as Wolfgang Iser or Georges Poulet that reading is a dynamic and interactive process between reader and text, rarely if ever the same experience twice. We have come a great distance indeed from the politics of Sullivan’s controlled reading of Chinese art history.

The main limitations of the book derive from the conditions under which one does research in China, even in the best of times: the difficulties of transportation and communication; the unpredictable recalcitrance of officials and bureaucrats in sanctioning interviews; and the natural reservations that an outsider has about causing trouble for people who have already suffered so much, sometimes merely for associating with foreigners. As Cohen says in her prologue, “I often had to photograph under unfavorable conditions, and because of limited access, I was unable to have works rephotographed by a specialist with large-format equipment. Nor was I able to get the same amount of information about everyone. This fact, plus the narrative rather than encyclopedic nature of the book, accounts for the variations in the artists’ entries, which cannot always reflect the significance of their work” (p. 7).

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The photo on the front cover is of Thai university students performing a protest skit at Government House in Bangkok on Environment Day in June 1990. The skit was satirizing the destruction of natural forests by eucalyptus plantations, and the sign on the far left says “Forestry policy must be amended for Thai forests to be fertile.” For more on the ecological and social effects of growing cash crops for export rather than maintaining the environment and doing traditional small-scale farming to feed local people, see the lead articles of this issue of BCAS, Larry Lohmann’s “Peasants, Plantations, and Pulp: The Politics of Eucalyptus in Thailand” and Michael Goldman’s “Cultivating Hot Peppers and Water Crisis in India’s Desert: Toward a Theory of Understanding Ecological Crisis.” This photograph is by Pisanu Buawangpong, and it is reproduced here courtesy of Pisanu Buawangpong, the Nation of Bangkok, and Larry Lohmann.

With the exception of the names of authors in the list of books to review at the end of the issue, BCAS follows the East Asian practice of placing surnames first in all East Asian names.

The *Bulletin* is indexed or abstracted in the *Alternative Press Index*, *Left Index*, *International Development Index*, *International Development Abstracts*, *Sage Abstracts*, *Social Science Citation Index*, *Bibliography of Asian Studies*, *IBZ (International Bibliographie der Zeitschriften Literatur)*, *IBR (International Bibliography of Book Reviews)*, *Political Science Abstracts*, *Historical Abstracts*, and *America: History and Life*. Back issues and photocopies of out-of-print back issues are available from BCAS. Microfilms of all back issues are available from University Microfilms International (300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, U.S.A., phone: U.S., 800-521-0600; Canada, 800-343-5299).

Contributors

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Larry Lohmann has taught at universities in the United States and Thailand and worked in Bangkok for several years with the Thai Volunteer Service and the Project for Ecological Recovery. An

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A New Book from BCAS!

Coming to Terms: Indochina, the United States, and the War, edited by Douglas Allen and Ngo Vinh Long in collaboration with BCAS, October 1991. 350 pp., illus.; paper, \$16.95, and cloth, \$46.95.

This book originated with the *BCAS* anniversary issue on Indochina and the War, volume 21, numbers 2–4 (combined) from April–December 1989. The book is designed as a text, and most of the original articles have been revised and entirely new articles on postwar Vietnam and U.S. veterans, a selected bibliography, and chronologies have been added. Not included are the anniversary issue's material about CCAS and BCAS, interview with Daniel Ellsberg, articles about the U.S.-Indochina friendship movement and how to teach about the war, and course syllabi.

Contents: Introduction—**Douglas Allen and Ngo Vinh Long**. INDOCHINA AND ITS STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE. Vietnam—**Ngo Vinh Long**. Postwar Vietnam: A Political Economy—**Ngo Vinh Hai**. Cambodia—**Michael Vickery**. Laos—**W. Randall Ireson and Carol J. Ireson**. THE UNITED STATES AND THE WAR. The United States and Indochina: Far from an Aberration—**Noam Chomsky**. The Vietnam Antiwar Movement—**George R. Vickers**. Scholars of Asia and the War—**Douglas Allen**. U.S. Veterans: A Long Road Home—**Kevin Bowen**. FILMS AND SCHOLARLY LITERATURE ON VIETNAM. Framing Vietnam—**Jenefer Shute**. Rambo's Rewriting of the Vietnam War—**Gaylyn Studlar and David Desser**. Against Cartesianism: Three Generations of Vietnam Scholarship—**Marvin E. Gettleman**. APPENDIX. Selected Bibliography and Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos chronologies—**Ngo Vinh Long and Douglas Allen**.

Coming to Terms is available at bookstores and from Westview Press, 5500 Central Ave., Boulder, CO 80301, U.S.A., tel. (toll-free) 1-800-456-1995. Please add \$2.50 for postage and handling.



When Yuan Yunsheng returned from exile in 1979, he worked with other artists on an extensive mural project at the nearly completed Beijing Airport. Unlike all of China's other airports at the time, this one would have no paintings or sculptures of Chairman Mao or other political leaders. These pictures are figures 35 and 36 in Joan Lebold Cohen's *The New Chinese Paintings, 1949–1986*, and they show part of Yuan Yunshang's contribution, his *Water Festival, Song of Life* mural painted in acrylic on canvas plaster, as it looked originally and how it looked after this section had been walled over in March 1986. Cohen describes how Yuan's mural had been found unsuitable for a variety of reasons—the two nude figures, the elongation of their bodies, its featuring Dai minority people rather than Han majority people, and possibly offending the Dai people. At first curtains were placed over this section of the mural, and for eleven months the curtains were open or closed according to the political tides.

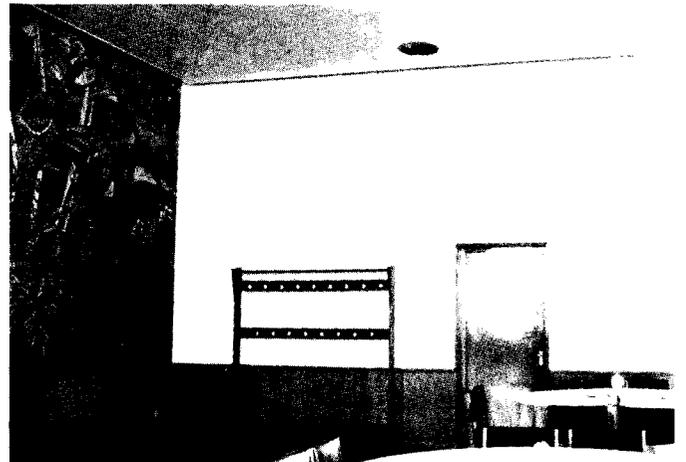
The New Chinese Painting begins with the most innovative work and proceeds toward the most traditional: from “New Waves” to ink painting to peasant and New Year’s painting. In spite of the difficulties of getting around in China, Cohen has valiantly pursued her subject wherever it led her, and thus can give us reports not only from the obvious places—Beijing and Shanghai—but also from Xiamen, Kunming, Xi’an, Zhejiang, Chongqing, Chengdu, and other cities and towns around the country.

One theme of Cohen’s account is the continuing effort of Chinese artists to create “an art that is modern and international but nevertheless uniquely Chinese” (p. 153). The author returns throughout to artists who have found their inspiration both in foreign sources and indigenous ones. Qiu Deshu, for example, is said to combine in his work an admiration for Jackson Pollock’s painting and an interest in ancient Chinese calligraphy, carved seals, and philosophy.

The counterpoint to this theme is the repeated evidence that these painters have not been protected by their deep absorption in Chinese culture. Qiu himself, whom Cohen refers to as “the outstanding painter and theoretician of his generation” (he was born in 1948), “was singled out and ordered to stop painting during the 1983 Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign” (pp. 67, 68). The story of Yuan Yunsheng’s run-in with the authorities over his enormous mural *Water Festival, Song of Life* (1979) that covered two walls at the Beijing airport is too involved to repeat here, but its culmination is worth recording if only for the way it underscores the uncertainty and waffling of the Chinese authorities about their own proscriptions:

In April, 1980 . . . the central authorities had curtains hung over the section depicting the nudes. But depending on the political tides, the curtains were alternately opened and closed for the next eleven months. During that period, crowds of Chinese and foreigners enthusiastically viewed the notorious painting by simply parting the veil, if necessary. However, in March, 1981, as part of the Socialist Morality campaign, the offending section of the painting was walled over. (p. 40)

The frequent reference in these books to works of art that



have been destroyed or made otherwise inaccessible emphasizes the tenuous existence of creative endeavor in the People’s Republic of China and the obstacles to any spontaneous development based on the explorations of creative people. In resisting what they see as bourgeois individualism, the authorities themselves create the very thing they fear. In nearly every decade, beginning even at Yan’an in the 1940s, the CCP has had to relearn that the urge of the human spirit for exploration and discovery has not been extinguished. In their fear of the social and political consequences of such activities, they turn potentially public movements into private cults. Concealed in apartments and studios, and who knows where else all over China, is a body of work as sealed off from the world as the art of Lascaux—a body of work that, collectively, constitutes the seed of a China whose true power and wealth no one among the authorities seems capable of imagining. And in “the Age of Mechanical [and now Electronic] Reproduction,” as Walter Benjamin called it, the survival and regeneration of the seed would appear to be forever beyond the control of the authorities. If, for reasons already alluded to, the prose of Cohen’s book often lacks depth, scope, or coherence, *The New Chinese Painting* in its thousands of

copies remains invaluable, for it is impossible to guess what ravages of stupidity the originals of work reproduced here have yet to suffer, and what witness equal to Cohen in tenacity, skill, and opportunity might emerge to record them.

The appearance of this small group of books on recent Chinese art suggests that we may be at a watershed, a shift from one generation of art historians to another. Perhaps this will also mean a shift in theoretical paradigms, with the newer scholars moving their discipline in directions overlooked by their predecessors. Certainly we can see that recent writers like Arnold Chang, Ellen Johnston Laing, and Susan Lebold Cohen are skilled at actively involving the reader and setting Chinese artworks in dialogue with one another. They have been able to see that certain modes of discourse enable one to be authoritative without also being authoritarian. In doing so, they have shifted

the politics of the writer/reader relationship in ways the Chinese authorities, for example, could not in the spring of 1989.

One need not press for any particular stance in order to urge that scholarship seems incomplete, at times even naive, without some consciousness of theory, especially in its assumptions about representation and about the relationship between art and writing. One still looks forward to the work that will address such a question as Barthes raises in "Is Painting a Language?": "What is the connection between the picture and the language inevitably used in order to read it—i.e., in order (implicitly) to write it? *Is not this connection the picture itself?*"¹⁷

17. Ibid., p. 150.



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Review Essay: Imperialism and Incorporation— the Case of Chinese Silk

CHINA'S SILK TRADE: TRADITIONAL INDUSTRY IN THE MODERN WORLD, 1842–1937, by Lillian M. Li. Cambridge, MA; and London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1981, 255 pp. \$21.00.

ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM IN CHINA: SILK PRODUCTION AND EXPORTS, 1861–1932, by Robert Y. Eng. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986, 256 pp. Paper, \$15.00.

THE SOUTH CHINA SILK DISTRICT: LOCAL HISTORICAL TRANSFORMATION AND WORLD-SYSTEM THEORY, by Alvin Y. So. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986, 256 pp. Paper, \$14.95; hardcover, \$39.50.

by Zhu Qingpu

In the last decade, studies of the silk industry and trade have been at the center of the continuing debate over China's development in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although silk, like the other case studies, has limitations for unveiling the overall picture of China's "underdevelopment," the silk industry, as Lillian Li and other writers point out, provides a particularly valuable vantage point for exploring the debate because: (1) silk was China's most important export, accounting for one-third of total export value in the mid-nineteenth century and one-fifth in the early twentieth century; (2) China's silk industry was centered in the two regions around Canton and Shanghai that were the most important centers of imperialist penetration; (3) silk exports provide a case for comparison with Japan, since Japan and China were the two leading exporters of raw silk in the world market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The most critical point, I sense, is the fact that Japan's silk industry was the major, indeed the only, competitor for China's silk industry. And Japan also happened to be the most important imperialist power that Chinese scholars have pointed to in explaining the failure of China's silk industry. Therefore I

would stress their relations as well as comparisons of their performance.

In fact, historically, the success of Japan's silk industry was crucial to Japan's successful modernization as a whole; and the failure of China's silk industry epitomizes China's failure in its pursuit of modernization. Hence it is a very useful case for exploring the real reasons for China's decline during modern times.

How Did the Silk Industry Become the Center of the Debate?

In Stephen Thomas's terminology, there are two major approaches to China's failure to modernize: the domestic-limitation school and the foreign-intervention school. Prior to the death of Mao, the mainstream in Chinese scholarship and politics, both Chinese Marxists and Nationalists, adhered to the foreign-intervention approach that pinpointed imperialist intervention, commencing with the Opium War of 1838–42, as the main obstacle to China's development. Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen), Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), Mao Zedong, Fei Xiaotong (Fei Hsiao-tung), and Chen Han-sheng were

among those who shared the view that however they defined imperialism,¹ it was the overriding factor retarding and distorting China's twentieth-century development. In U.S. scholarship, proponents of this approach have included Joseph Esherick,² Paul Baran,³ Stephen Thomas,⁴ and others. Dependency theorists also fit into this group.

The U.S. and Western mainstream, however, has long hewed to the domestic-limitation approach.⁵ This school holds that China's development has been inhibited primarily by limitations derived from or associated with its traditional institutions and values. Most of these writers hold that foreign intervention, however painful or humiliating, is either a benign or a necessary challenge to traditional values and systems, and a way to open a path toward industrialization. Marx's Eurocentric linear-developmental approaches to imperialism should also be placed in this school.

For both schools, comparative studies of China and Japan are important. Writers in the domestic-limitation school operate on the premise that the Western impacts on China and Japan were basically similar. Both were victims of the treaty-port system and faced similar economic, military, and cultural challenges. Hence the different outcomes in their developments are best explained by reference to internal factors. As Reischauer and Fairbank put it in their influential text, "these variations in response must be attributed mainly to the differences in the traditional societies of the countries of East Asia. Only such differences can explain why a basically similar impact could have brought such varied initial results"⁶

Moulder's "Breathing Space" Approach

Frances Moulder,⁷ the first author to systematically apply a world-system perspective to East Asia, challenges the domestic-limitation approach and supports the foreign-intervention approach, arguing that similarities in the traditions and social formations of China and Japan far outweigh their differences. Consequently, differences in "external" impact decisively shaped their respective developmental outcomes.

Moulder notes that the initial Western interests in East Asia lay in the China trade. As a result of Western desire to capture the apparently lucrative China market, China became the

primary target for incorporation into the capitalist world-economy. In the eighteenth century Britain had a consistent outflow of silver to pay for Chinese silk and tea, which were luxury goods in Europe at that time. As tea became a mass consumption item in mid-nineteenth century Britain, this silver outflow posed critical problems for Britain's mercantilist policy of seeking to monopolize the market in precious metals. Britain reversed its trade balance with China by smuggling Indian opium into China and bribing local Chinese officials. The United States and various European countries followed suit.

The development of these interests in creating and controlling the Chinese opium market led to ever-greater encroachment on China's political autonomy, culminating in the Opium War. When China was defeated, the imperialist powers imposed a series of unequal treaties, a treaty-port system, and other measures circumscribing Chinese sovereignty. China was thus incorporated into the capitalist world-system in the course of the century in ways that wounded and bled the nation.

Moulder argues that China came under Western influence and control earlier than Japan because Japan was of marginal interest to the Western powers and more distant from Europe by sea, with Canton more easily reached by ships coming from the Atlantic. Significant Western economic interests in Japan did not develop until twenty to thirty years after the Opium War. In short, Japan enjoyed a "breathing space" during which it could absorb some of the lessons of China's subjugation and incorporation and could initiate self-strengthening changes that enabled Japan to emerge as a strong and independent power, one that was soon able to compete with the West.

Lillian Li's pioneering scholarly analysis, *China's Silk Trade: Traditional Industry in the Modern World, 1847–1937*, reopened the controversy in a way that made silk central to the debate between the two schools. The debate heated up when her work was followed by Robert Eng's *Economic Imperialism in China: Silk Production and Exports, 1861–1932* and Alvin So's *The South China Silk District: Local Historical Transformation and World-System Theory*. I will introduce these works below. Some scholars in China around the same time also did important research on China's silk industry. This research includes a book and an article by Xu Xinwu, Shen Jianhua, and Tang Kentang, and articles by Duan Benluo and Yan Xuexi, among others.⁸

1. Mao saw imperialism as the combination of foreign power and the domestic comprador class. Mao argued that without foreign intervention, capitalism would sooner or later develop in China, though slowly. See Mao, "The Chinese revolution and the Chinese communist party," in *Mao Zedong xuanji* (The selected works of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1975), in Chinese. Jiange attributed imperialism to unequal treaties between China and foreign powers. "The weakening of China's international position and the deterioration of the people's morale during the last hundred years have been due chiefly to the unequal treaties." Chiang (Jiang), *China's Destiny* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1947), p. 17. Unfortunately Elizabeth Lasek did not point out this difference in Mao's and Lasek's analyses in her article "Imperialism in China: A Methodological Critique," in the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Jan.–Mar. 1983), pp. 50–64.

2. Joseph Esherick, *Reform and Revolution: The 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hubei* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

3. Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967).

4. Stephen Thomas, *Foreign Intervention and China's Industrial Development, 1870–1911* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984).

5. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

6. Edwin O. Reischauer and John K. Fairbank, *East Asia: The Great Tradition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958), p. 670.

7. Frances V. Moulder, *Japan, China, and the Modern World Economy: Toward a Reinterpretation of East Asian Development, ca. 1600 to ca. 1918* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

8. Xu Xinwu, Shen Jianhua, and Tang Kentang, "Zhongguo jindai saosi ye de youxian fazhan yu quanmian pochan" (The limited development and total bankruptcy of China's modern silk reeling industry), in *Shanghai Shehui Kexueyuan Xueshu Jikan*, no. 1 (1986), pp. 76–85; Duan Benluo, "Ouzhan hou Suzhou sizhi shougong ye sanshi nian jian de tuibian" (The degeneration of the Suzhou silk weaving manufacture in the thirty years following World War I), in *Jindai shi yanjiu*, no. 34 (1986), pp. 259–76; Yan Xuexi, "Cansang shengchan yu Wuxi jindai nongcun jingji" (The production of silkworms and mulberry in the relation to modern rural economy of Wuxi), in *Jindai shi yanjiu*, no. 34 (1986), pp. 240–58. However, these authors have not participated directly in the current debate in U.S. scholarship.

Li's Internal-Limitation Approach

Li argues that

the concept of imperialism or incorporation is not very useful for an analysis of the silk trade and cannot explain the difference between the Chinese and Japanese performances. Although the world economy or imperialist perspective has concentrated on trade in those commodities where a dependent relationship was established and which one might argue had unfavorable effects on the Chinese economy, such as opium or cotton, it has failed to take into account those commodities which might have, or actually did have a favorable impact. The Chinese and Japanese experiences with silk both suggest that trade could have extremely beneficial consequences, both in concrete economic terms and in long-run developmental terms. (pp. 205–6)

In her book and in a subsequent article,⁹ Li finds that the changing character of international trade had a dual impact on China's silk industry: First, it ended China's monopoly in the world silk trade: "Trade took on an even more competitive character as Japan entered the international silk market in the late nineteenth century. Gone were the days when Chinese silks were rare, exotic, and worth their weight in gold."¹⁰ Second, between 1879 and 1937, rapid growth in the Chinese silk industry, especially in the newly developed silk-producing regions, was mainly due to the expansion of the European silk market in the mid-nineteenth century and the opening of the U.S. market in the late nineteenth century. Li stresses that the expansion of silk production and exports stimulated China's modern economy, and especially in new silk regions such as Jiangsu, Guangdong, and Shandong brought higher incomes to peasant households.

Li also argues that it was because of internal limitations that China lost the opportunity to expand silk exports. Despite dramatically expanded opportunities for trade in a growing world market for silk, China's silk exports increased from 4,092 bales per year in 1871–75 to just 5,052 bales per year in 1931–35. By contrast, during the same period, Japan's annual silk exports rose from 672 bales to 31,872 bales. Li observed that China's slow rate of increase was mainly caused by the loss of the U.S. market, by the twentieth century the most important market for raw silk in the world. Japan captured 50 percent of U.S. silk imports as early as 1892–95, and increased its market share to about 93 percent during 1931–35. Japan became a formidable competitor for that foreign market while China did not.

These phenomena, also noted by Eng, are presented as indicative of the failure of China's silk industry to respond to export opportunities. Li rejects cultural and ideological differences between Japan and China as a basis for explaining the short-term differences in ability to compete. Li holds that while in the long term "the similarities between Chinese and Japanese institutions and practices may indeed come to appear more striking than their differences . . . Shorter-term historical and economic factors, however, will play a larger role in explaining



*This seventeenth-century drawing shows how silk was reeled off cocoons at that time. According to Lillian M. Li, the cocoons were placed in a basin of water that was usually heated over a small fire. The hot water would loosen the ends of the silk, and these would be threaded over the various rolls and finally over the reel itself. This was usually turned by means of a treadle, although hand reels like the one in this drawing were also used. This drawing is figure 3 in Lillian M. Li's *China's Silk Trade*, p. 28, and it was originally from Yu-zhi geng-zhi tu (*Imperially commissioned illustrations of farming and weaving*), 1696 edition, compiled by Jiao Pingzhen.*

short-term phenomena."¹¹ These include Japan's ability to out-compete China.

Large-scale silk production involved great commercial and natural risks (silk worm diseases and weather). Modernization of the silk industry meant the introduction of far-reaching technological and institutional changes that could substantially reduce these risks. Japan did well in all these aspects. Li emphasizes the inability of China's internal institutions, including the Qing government, research institutions, the banking system, quality-control organizations, and so on, to facilitate the modernization of China's silk industry. She finds that the existence of a substantial domestic silk market in China seemed to preclude a need for making the structural changes required for China to compete for export markets. China's orientation to the domestic market muted an effective response to the opportunity for expanded trade, although the trade could have been extremely beneficial, both for short-term economic gain and long-term development.

Li goes on to show that from the 1880s on, foreign trade played a more important and positive role in Japan than in China.

9. Lillian M. Li, "The Silk Export Trade and Economic Modernization in China and Japan," in *America's China Trade in Historical Perspective*, ed. Ernest R. May and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge and London: the Committee on American–East Asian Relations of the Department of History in collaboration with the Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1981).

10. Li, *China's Silk Trade*, p. 62.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

Japan's silk industry was far more export-oriented than China's. "From 1883 to 1937, between 58 and 78 percent of Japan's output of raw silk was exported."¹² But China's failure to improve its organization and technology of production was not the whole story. Li stresses that the continued strength of Japan's rural sector and its integration with industry, notably missing in China, provided an opening for a successful export-oriented modernization of the Japanese silk industry.

In short, Lillian Li looks at internal differences between China and Japan, while Frances Moulder, employing a world-economy perspective, locates the principal forces blocking or distorting China's development in a process of incorporation into the capitalist world-economy.

The Complex Relationship between Internal and External Factors

While Li and Moulder take opposite sides on the issue of the primacy of internal or external factors in explaining the failure of China's silk industry, Robert Eng and Alvin So probe the complex interrelationship between internal and external factors.

Eng's Economic-Imperialist Approach

Eng defines imperialism "as the domination of a strong political community over a weaker one to ensure the extraction of economic rewards and material advantages" (p. 4). He calls this kind of imperialism economic imperialism. Eng adapts five measurements from Sherman Cochran for gauging the economic consequences of this economic imperialism.¹³ These are: (1) the drainage of wealth from the economies of poor countries by foreigners; (2) foreign employment of labor at wages lower than those that would be obtained in a free bargaining situation, or foreign appropriation of goods at prices lower than those that would prevail in a free market; (3) the transformation of complex agrarian economies into monocultures dependent on the vicissitudes of foreign markets; (4) foreign firms' use of their governments' support against weaker local governments to protect and further their material interests; and (5) foreign monopolies exploiting customers as well as competitors (p. 11).

In the case of China's silk, Eng finds that all these factors played a role. Foreign firms controlled banking, shipping, trading abroad, and other services through the treaty ports. Whereas Li focuses on an absence of direct foreign investment as evidence for dismissing the importance of imperialism as a factor in the stagnation of China's silk trade, Eng concludes that "the silk industry strongly exhibited all the consequences of economic imperialism" (p. 188). After 1900, the Chinese share of shipping in all treaty ports stayed at only 20 percent (pp. 91-92). Foreign firms profited from their monopoly on services to dominate import and export, shipping, and insurance.

Nevertheless Eng finds that neo-Marxists, including Frances Moulder, have exaggerated the immiseration of the peasants who participated in silk growing. Eng shows that with the expansion of the silk industry and trade opportunities in the

nineteenth century, Chinese peasants switched actively and rationally from rice planting to sericulture and from silk reeling to cocoon production. Eng concludes that in the short run, peasants benefited from the export expansion of raw silk in the form of higher incomes; in the long run, however, exports exposed the peasantry to severe market fluctuations while strengthening the hand of the landlords. World market and foreign competition on the one hand stimulated better-quality silk and larger quantities of it, thus giving China a chance to develop the silk industry; on the other hand, it destroyed the industry when it failed to respond effectively to the challenge, particularly the competition from Japan. Therefore, Eng argues, imperialism was neither a purely constructive nor a purely destructive force.

From our investigation of the silk industry we have also seen that China's social structure was not ready; although there were opportunities for its development, it simply could not grasp them effectively. Without basic social changes, the prospects for failure were great.

Eng challenges Li's explanation of China's loss of the U.S. market. He contends that before 1900 Japan's success was due less to qualitative technological superiority than to quantitative availability and locational advantages in trading with the fast-growing U.S. market.¹⁴ Eng finds that "while in 1898 a Shanghai reeler reportedly produced as much as 100 *momme* (13 ounces) per day, a Japanese reeler typically produced around 45 *momme* (6 ounces). This lower productivity was offset (relative to France and Italy at least) by lower wages" (p. 170), lower cocoon cost, including better and stabler cocoon quality, better government aid, and its own control over shipping, direct export, and wholesale. Eng particularly highlights the relationship between Japan's locational advantages over China in shipping to the U.S. market and the completion of the Great Northern Railway linking San Francisco and New York in 1884. Japan's silk exports to the U.S. market in the years between 1883 and 1888 doubled over those between 1878 and 1883.

Eng also contends that more exploitative Japanese labor

12. Ibid., p. 200.

13. Sherman Cochran, *Big Business in China: Sino-Foreign Rivalry in the Cigarette Industry, 1890-1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 202-7.

14. Drawing on and extending a theory of Moulder's, Eng wrote: "Although it lay on the periphery of the continent . . . Japan did serve as a logical stopover for the replenishment of fuel and supplies for American ships crossing the Pacific . . . Thus, it was not accidental that the Americans were the ones who took the initiative in the opening of Japan . . . Japan initially suffered a disadvantage in the American silk market vis-à-vis China, for East Asiatic silk had to be shipped into the marketing and weaving center of the east coast of the United States via Europe . . . In the late 1920s transport cost of 100 pounds of silk from Japan was \$4.50 to the West Coast of the United States and \$9.75 directly to New York via the Panama Canal, whereas for Chinese silk the cost was \$6.75 and \$12.00." See *Economic Imperialism*, p. 164.

recruitment and disciplinary methods, such as the system of payment under which girl workers were paid once a year at rates determined by their productivity classification grades, were also important. This system spurred intense competition among workers and was both more exploitative and more efficient than the daily wage system used in Canton and Shanghai before 1930. Therefore the misery of Japanese workers was a major factor for the competitiveness of Japanese silk in the world market. Both Li and Eng agree on the importance of the supply of quality cocoons for competitiveness of raw silk in the world market. In this respect, China and Japan exhibited significant differences both in the relations between filature and sericulture and the support from their respective governments. On both points, factors associated with imperialism fail to explain the differences.

Eng agrees with Moulder on the importance of the differential foreign impacts on China and Japan. He notes:

Without denying the energetic reform efforts of the Japanese government, it may be observed that it operated under a much lower intensity of foreign pressure: the Westerners in the second half of the nineteenth century looked to China rather than to Japan as the market with rich potentialities. The misgivings of the Westerners about the viability of Japan as a market . . . permitted Japan to escape from foreign domination. (p. 182)

In the case of China, Eng points out, foreigners introduced new technologies and institutions; but they also penetrated the traditional Chinese system to their own advantage. The unequal relationship between Chinese entrepreneurs and foreign firms, and the antagonisms between the Chinese state and the mercantile elite, and between brokers and peasants, limited the commercial opportunities created by the silk trade. Weighing internal and external factors, Eng concludes that “the economic growth that ensued from the expansion of silk exports was delimited and circumscribed because of China’s internal structure and external connections and their interactions” (p. 189).

So’s Incorporation Approach

Alvin So’s *The South China Silk District* directly responds to Li’s challenge concerning the absence of examination of the silk industry in Moulder’s approach and criticizes earlier studies of China’s silk industry and trade for two major shortcomings—lack of a historical dimension and overspecialization. Noting that the holistic study of local development, both temporally and spatially, has been rare in the field of Chinese studies, So examines the local silk industries from a world-system perspective combined with a class-struggle perspective (p. 21).

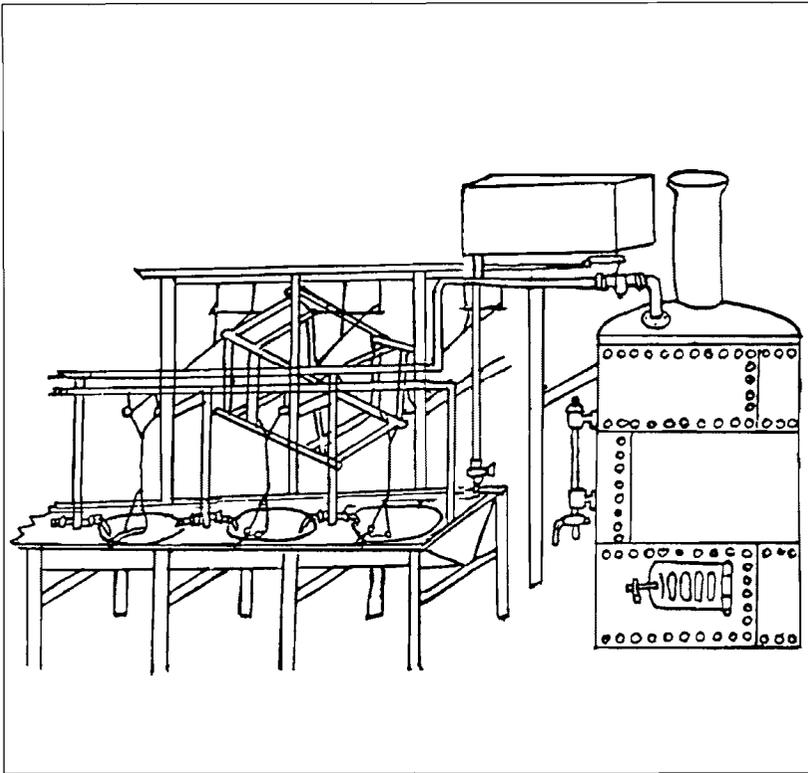
So poses six areas of investigation for charting world-system dynamics as they work themselves out in local regions: (1) the nature of the precapitalist social formation; (2) incorporation of the local economy and society into the capitalist world-system; (3) commercialization of agriculture; (4) industrialization; (5) proletarianization; and (6) cyclical patterns of development. Following Wallerstein, So views incorporation of different precapitalist social formations into the capitalist world-system, commercialization of agriculture, and industrialization as three successive steps in the expansion and intensification of the capitalist world-system, steps following a cyclical pattern of expansion and stagnation. In these cyclical movements, classes, ethnic/national groups, households, and states constantly interact with one another. They are formed, consolidated, disaggregated, and re-formed.

Within the six-part model of regional incorporation in the world-system perspective, So concludes that studies of class relations in pre-Qing China suffered from one-sided analysis. Where Marxists focused on landlord-tenant relations, non-Marxists emphasized the predominance of owner cultivators. So suggests a long-term analysis emphasizing a cyclical rhythm, with the small peasantry generally expanding at the upswing of the cycle and landlord-tenant relations dominating in the downward phase (p. 31). After the nationwide peasant rebellion in the early seventeenth century, landlord-tenant relations in North China disintegrated, while the South China gentry with its strong lineage organizations grew in strength. So further observes that the gentry, together with the Chinese government, controlled the South China silk industry and trade in the eighteenth century. Under these circumstances, the tightly restricted silk trade generated a net flow of silver from the West to China. It was the rapid increase in the opium trade in the nineteenth century through smuggling activities beyond gentry control that initiated the incorporation of the Chinese economy into the world economy, which means becoming a functionally peripheral part of the capitalist world-economy.¹⁵ This was followed by political incorporation, which refers to the fact that China, no longer an empire outside the capitalist world, became a peripheral state following its defeat in the Opium Wars.

Although Chinese entrepreneurs demonstrated their ability to engage in the silk business, they had little chance of success. The risks were too large for those businesses to carry, and the Chinese government did not have reasonable resources to back the industry even if it had the intention of doing so.

So explains that China’s economic incorporation, initially through smuggling and subsequently through “legitimate” trade, inevitably led to political incorporation. The Opium War was fought on the British side to legalize the opium trade and to crack other trade barriers. So also shows that although Chinese nationalists strongly rejected both economic and political incorporation, their opposition did not change the ultimate trend of incorporation. After China’s defeat in the war and the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking), people in South China continued various forms of national struggle against foreigners. These gentry-led struggles strengthened gentry power and threatened the foreigners’ position in Guangzhou (Canton). As a

15. According to Wallerstein, the capitalist world-economy is made up of three organic parts: the core, the semiperiphery, and periphery. The periphery consists of most of the so-called less-developed countries or populations. The mechanism of worldwide distribution of wealth in the capitalist world-system favors core capitalist countries. See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I, II, and III* (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1974, 1980, and 1989).



*In the 1870s steam-reeling machines such as this one came to be used throughout China. Steam technology was profitable only if spread over at least two hundred or so basins, each of which required an attendant. A fairly large building and a factory production-system were consequently needed. Steam-filatured silk was superior to hand-reeled silk, and its production led to increased exports, which in turn expanded the silk industry. This drawing and the above information are from Alvin Y. So's *The South China Silk District*, pp. 105-6.*

result of the British victory in the Opium War and the subsequent unequal treaties, foreigners were no longer restricted exclusively to Guangzhou. As other treaty ports opened for trade, the central China coastal city of Shanghai became the center of foreign trade. British import and export trade to and from Guangzhou dropped from 15.5 million dollars and 18 million dollars in 1844 to 6.5 million dollars and 8.6 million dollars in 1848, respectively (p. 64). This resulted in the decline of the regional economy of South China, putting as many as 100,000 porters and 10,000 boatmen out of work (p. 64). In the subsequent recession, badly hurt peasants and unemployed porters responded by rising in the Red Turban Rebellion, which overthrew several local governments in South China. The gentry then reorganized the militia in the villages and drove out the Red Turbans.

In the mid-1850s British and French forces attacked and easily captured Guangzhou as the troops of the Qing state were busy suppressing the Taiping Rebellion and restoring social order in rural South China. The gentry organized the Guangdong Province Central Militia Bureau in the name of national struggle against foreign intrusion. This provided regional forces an opportunity to establish their own tax base to finance the regional militia. In short, the combination of peasant rebellion, foreign intrusion, and the crippled state that lay behind the incorporation of South China strengthened the gentry class. This situation, accompanied by the famine caused by the decline of the economy, the rising prices of silk in the world market as a result

of the silkworm disease in France and Italy, and the destruction of mulberry trees by the Taiping rebels in their last days in Central China, provided South China with a chance to develop sericulture. The South China gentry seized the opportunity and encouraged the peasantry to switch to production of mulberry leaves, cocoons, and silkworm eggs by providing free credit, employing silkworm rearing teachers and advisors, opening mulberry leaf markets, and petitioning for tax exemption on raw silk transactions. The gentry did not itself directly engage in sericulture. Rather, it controlled the trade and financial sectors. In this case, a small-scale peasant production system and a petty-producer path of commercialization of agriculture were created. This was the first major socioeconomic transformation prompted by China's incorporation in the world system.

So agrees with Amin and Komarov that the commercialization of sericulture in the 1870s gave rise to a peripheral industrialization in rural South China. He points out that throughout the nineteenth century the mechanization of the manufacture of silk cloth in the United States required raw silk of a uniform quality suitable for the machines. However, the Americans failed both to improve the technology of China's scattered peasant production and to establish their own filatures in China. The Americans were also unable to shift raw silk production to new areas or to Europe due to silkworm disease. This situation allowed South China to embark on moderate industrialization centered on silk. Unlike in Shanghai, the steam filatures in South China were Chinese-owned and located in rural areas.

So describes the emerging pattern of China's peripheral industrialization as having four characteristics: (1) it was manipulated by the core countries in the capitalist world-system; (2) it tended to skip over certain intermediate phases of industrialization in the core countries, such as the putting-out system* and the small workshop, and to proceed with greater speed; (3) the gentry class, which was stronger than the industrialist class, became involved in sericulture-related trade and financing and both promoted and benefited from industrialization; and (4) the effects of industrialization were more complex than either simply "destructive" or "beneficial." For example, by raising the price of labor the export-oriented silk-reeling industry dealt a blow to traditional weavers producing for the domestic market. The development of steam filatures on the one hand contributed to the destruction of the traditional Chinese silk-weaving industry, and on the other hand resulted in technological innovation and modern factory production.

In the late nineteenth century the silk region was considered

*This was a system in which merchant enterprises "distributed raw materials and sometimes looms to weaving households, which wove the silk fabric and returned it in exchange for piece-rate wages, usually coupled with some kind of living allowance or stipend." Li, *China's Silk Trade*, p. 51.—ED.

the richest in South China. However, fluctuations in the world economy changed the situation that had taken shape during the period of rising silk prices. In the 1920s silk prices began to drop. The high risk in failure stopped Chinese industrialists from making any long-term investment aimed at upgrading the technology of the industry. In this situation Japanese competition, the backwardness of the technology, the weakness of silk industrialists in the face of the gentry, the absence of effective state intervention, and the spread of class struggles combined to bring about the complete collapse of the Chinese silk industry in the 1930s.

So finds the case of the South China silk industry to be consistent with world-system analysis because the adoption of sericulture, industrialization, and finally the world depression, imperialist intrusion, and stagnation of the silk trade were all basically determined by imperatives of the world economy; on the other hand, he shows that incorporation was also jointly determined by the local class structure and the character of class (and gender) struggles. As early as the 1840s the South China gentry sought to stop incorporation by mounting strong anti-foreign struggles. The historical conjuncture of the social pressure in the recession of the 1850s, on both the gentry side and the British side, and rising silk prices in the world market, led the gentry to promote sericulture in this region. The gentry, which was more powerful than the nascent Chinese capitalist class, and the Japanese competition and world recession all contributed to the stagnation of the silk industry.

Critiques and Conclusions

In response to Frances Moulder's challenge, Lillian Li takes the silk case to argue that unlike the opium and tea trade, the development of which in the long term might be unfavorable to China, silk was the industry in which China had great advantages over other nations, especially Japan, and which also brought industrialization and foreign exchange to China. China's incapacity to compete with Japan in this industry, she explains, mainly resulted from a combination of internal factors. Robert Eng and Alvin So, on the other hand, point out that China's silk industry exemplifies the results of economic imperialism and China's incorporation into the capitalist world-economy, while exploring the complex interaction of internal and external factors that caused the failure of China's silk industry.

The debate over the failure of China's silk industry in the period from the 1850s to the 1930s has aimed at providing concrete explanations of China's failure in its development in that period. Therefore I would like to draw conclusions at this level, rather than restraining myself to the silk industry alone.

Among the explanations historians have given for China's subjugation, division, humiliation, underdevelopment, and peripheralization, Moulder's thesis seems to overemphasize the importance of the "breathing space" that Japan enjoyed in the years 1840 to 1868 as imperialist expansion in East Asia focused on China. In my view, this breathing space was crucial in enabling Japan to initiate development, but given China's domestic situation it is not easy to argue that with the same opportunity China would have followed a comparable course.

Stephen Thomas argues that Chinese industrialization efforts were reasonably successful between 1870 and 1897. China did find certain ways to deal with the West, preserving

its sovereignty and making significant progress in modernization. But the major military defeat in 1895 by Japan further undermined China's sovereignty. After this, intense foreign intrusion became unmanageable. The Chinese government grew weaker; Chinese enterprises failed, stagnated, or were taken over by foreigners; and China as a whole "de-developed."¹⁶ Though Japan is also an external factor, the weakness as well as the simplicity of the "breathing space"¹⁷ model is obvious. Of course breathing space might have been a necessary condition for China's development too, but it does not mean that it was paramount.

Li, on the other side, seems to overemphasize internal factors. The Qing government surely had no intention of entering the capitalist world-economy, let alone being ready to do so successfully. China was forced at gunpoint to open its doors to the capitalist world. Later China obtained some more sophisticated technology from the West and adopted some Western practices in its management and trade. But the Qing government failed to strongly support Chinese industry. Do all these show that the failure of China's development is mainly due to internal factors, meaning China's response was inadequate? My answer is no. Although Chinese entrepreneurs demonstrated their ability to engage in the silk business, they had little chance of success. The risks were too large for those businesses to carry, and the Chinese government did not have reasonable resources to back the industry even if it had the intention of doing so. The second wave of foreign intrusion, whether from the West (mainly Europe and the United States) or the East (Japan), was detrimental to China's modernization. Thus we cannot simply say that internal factors were paramount in China's failure. From our investigation of the silk industry we have also seen that China's social structure was not ready; although there were opportunities for its development, it simply could not grasp them effectively. Without basic social changes, the prospects for failure were great. The fact was that foreign powers were not in China to create such social changes. They prepared certain conditions for them, but also created some real obstacles to their success. In the late nineteenth century the Chinese government was gravely weakened both by internal and external forces. Therefore the incapacity of the government to support the silk industry should not be ascribed to internal factors alone.

However, I detect a certain lack of Chinese response to the Western challenge. If we take the expansion of the capitalist world for granted, or using Marxist terminology, if we take expansion as the inevitable trend of social history, China's major mistake was to be less expansionist both socially and economically. Here it is not just the problem of power, but also intention: the intention and power to be an expansionist country, to defeat Japan militarily, and to dominate the silk industry. As in the famous controversial film *He shang* (River elegy), commenting on "the new great wall" built in the late nineteenth century on the coast in Shandong Province, the narrator raises the ugly question: Why did the Chinese always think of building walls to prevent intrusion, and never consider going to Japan to see what

16. Stephen Thomas, *Foreign Intervention*, p. 49.

17. See also Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

was going on over there? I do not intend here to give my critique on the insights and implications of *He shang*, but posing the question this way does not solve the problem. In the case of silk, if China won, Japan would lose, given that there were no other countries significantly involved in the industry. If China was an imperialist state and ready to fight for expansion, Japan would probably be the victim. From the world perspective, hardly anything would have changed. It is a kind of zero-sum game, and we still have one winner and one loser. Therefore I would say that an approach like the one in *He shang* would not have been very successful from the world perspective.

Eng and So were trying to overcome the extremism of Moulder's and Li's analyses, arguing that the combination of internal and external factors caused some progressive development of China's silk industry as well as its ultimate decline. In Eng's terminology, the combination was economic imperialism plus domestic factors, whereas in So's version it was the forces of the world-system and domestic class struggles. Eng suggests going beyond citing internal or external factors that might have facilitated or retarded modernization and even beyond weighing the relative importance of internal versus external factors to try to understand the organic links and dynamic interaction between domestic and foreign forces. This kind of more complex analysis is the right path.

All the literature in this debate examines Japan and China as separate entities in the global situation. This method does not work at all when we take an overall look at the Japan-China comparison. Since the failure of China's silk industry and the success of Japan's silk industry were very closely and directly related, China's internal factors became external factors for Japan. Obviously, if Chinese silk had competed successfully, Japanese silk would not have been successful. Hence the failure of China's silk industry and the success of Japan's could result from some common factors. Therefore, just comparing these two experiences is not enough; we have to look at the relationship between them. Japan became a major silk exporter when it became an imperialist power. In recent studies on China's silk industry, almost all Chinese scholars stress the Japanese role in the degeneration of China's silk industry. I think this is correct. Chinese scholars as well as Li, Eng, and So all noticed that China's silk exports were controlled by foreign companies, including their competitors, Japanese exporters. Their control of China's silk trade was detrimental and destructive to the Chinese silk industry. Huge profits were made by the commercial and financial services provided by the Japanese as well as other foreign companies. These left China's silk industry in intense competition, with a very small margin of profit and high risk both from the fluctuating world market and from the foreign commercial and financial control of the silk industry. The Chinese silk industry, which in the early twentieth century did not have much interest in long-term investment and in which many entrepreneurs rented out their filature facilities, clearly shows this. Many Chinese scholars also emphasize the Japanese conquest of China during World War II as the last blow to the Chinese silk industry.¹⁸ In short, China's failure was a cause of Japan's success; and Japan's success hinged on its relationship with China, as exemplified by the substantial amount of commercial and financial control it had over China's silk industry.

Overall it is clear that China's defeat in the Opium War was a necessary condition for Japan's reformation. The war woke up many Japanese because such a powerful empire as China had

been defeated by the British. In the aftermath, the sense of crisis was said to be a requirement for Japan's later reform. Japan's victories over China in 1874¹⁹ and 1895 were crucial in shaping Japan's modern history. Iriye Akira has pointed out that "As a result of the Sino-Japanese War Japan emerged as an imperialist, in terms not only of power but of national self-image. . . . The Sino-Japanese War also brought in an indemnity payment from China that not only paid for the cost of the war but enabled Japan to start heavy industrialization and adopt a gold standard."²⁰ It is necessary not to just compare the two experiences as separate entities in the global situations, but also to examine their inter-relationship. On the one hand, the comparison between developed and less-developed becomes meaningful only when they are in the same system; on the other hand, just because of their interrelationship, comparison is insufficient.

Unfortunately, almost all the participants in the debate over China's failure to develop have discussed one country's failure or another's success, searching for solutions to the problem of development for one or several nations. However, people seldom ask whether Japan's and China's silk industries could have both succeeded together. In the capitalist world-system, internal and external factors all function as organic parts of the same system. The tragedy is that the underdevelopment problem is inherent in the system, as in the case of silk, and nationalist economic development does not result in dynamic and balanced development on a world scale.

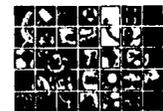
18. See note 8.

19. In 1874, Japan sent eight gunships to invade Taiwan. The Qing government settled the event peacefully with Japan without a fight by giving Japan 500,000 *liang* (the *liang* equals approximately one troy ounce) of silver. See *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), 23 Jan. 1989.

20. Iriye Akira, "Imperialism in East Asia," in *Modern East Asia: Essays in Interpretation* (San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Atlanta: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970), p. 138. ★

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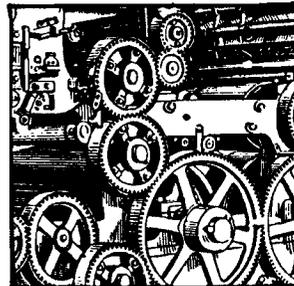
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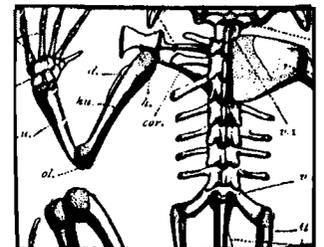
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Review: Rethinking the “Miracle”—Economic Growth and Political Struggles in South Korea

ASIA’S NEXT GIANT: SOUTH KOREA AND LATE INDUSTRIALIZATION, by Alice Amsden. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, xvi + 379 pp. \$32.50.

by John Lie*

Modernization theory, long vilified as reactionary and wrong, regained respectability in the 1980s. The social and political causes of its resurgence are plain: the ascendance of the radical Right and the coeval retrenchment of the Left. Its intellectual merit, however, remains as suspect as when dependency and neo-Marxist theorists seemingly buried it in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Indeed, the Third World remains racked by poverty and pestilence, exploited by domestic and transnational corporations, and convulsed by coups and imperialist interventions.

Nonetheless, modernization theorists can point to a few cases of success—the Asian quartet of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong.¹ The case is strongest for Korea,² which has been one of the world’s fastest growing economies while managing to dismantle its military rule in the 1980s. Predictably, then, we should be deluged by books on the secrets of the Korean “miracle” as well as as confident prognostications about its future.³

Thinking about whether Korea might be Asia’s next giant forces us to ask whether Korea is a desirable or appropriate model for other Third World countries. These concerns point toward the crucial task of explaining and understanding the central dynamics of Korean development as well as assessing the benefits and costs.

South Korea and Late Industrialization

Alice Amsden’s *Asia’s Next Giant* is an ambitious book. She places Korean industrialization squarely among late industrializers, which include Brazil, Turkey, India, Mexico, and Taiwan. Inspired by Alexander Gerschenkron’s landmark 1952 essay, she argues that Korea followed a development pattern radically different from both the early laissez-faire industrialization of Britain and the nineteenth-century pattern shared by the United States and Germany.⁴ Although she has little to say about other developing countries, Amsden presents Korean industrialization as an instance of a more general phenomenon: “South

*Thanks to P.G. Mehrling, M.S. Yim, the anonymous BCAS reviewers, and especially J.-I. You for their constructive comments.

1. See, however, Walden Bello and Stephanie Rosenfeld, *Dragons in Distress: Asia’s Miracle Economies in Crisis* (San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1990).

2. All references to Korea are to South Korea, the Republic of Korea.

3. Business-oriented writers are, as usual, first in line. See, for example, T.W. Kang’s *Is Korea Another Japan?* (New York: Free Press, 1988). The Japanese are ahead of the United States on analyzing Korean economy and business: the Japanese equivalent of Kang’s book was Toyota Aritsune’s *Kankoku no Chosen* (Tokyo: Kappa Bukkusyu, 1977). Among the vast and burgeoning literature, contrast the positive evaluation by Watanabe Toshio and Fukagawa Yukiko, *Gonengo no Kankoku* (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyusho, 1988), with the negative assessment by Murotani Katsumi, “*Kankokujin*” *no keizaigaku* (Tokyo: Daiyamondosha, 1988), which, incidentally, verges on being a “racist” account.

The Harvard Institute of International Development’s eight-volume *Studies in the Modernization of the Republic of Korea: 1945–1975*, undertaken in conjunction with the Korea Development Institute, offered the conventional account of Korea’s developmental “success.” Ironically, they were published just as Korea was facing a major economic slump and political turmoil. See, for example, the summary volume by Edward S. Mason et al., *The Economic and Social Modernization of the Republic of Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980). The temptation to trumpet the “miracle” is evident in Amsden’s title, *Asia’s Next Giant*, which recalls an earlier study on Japan; see Hugh Patrick and Henry Rosovsky, eds., *Asia’s New Giant* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1976).

4. See Gerschenkron, “Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective,” in his *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

Korea's growth is a classic example of late industrialization, and embodies all of the elements common to these countries" (p. v).

Amsden's book is a direct challenge to the economic orthodoxy that postulates a unilinear vision of development and prescribes the free market as the key to growth. She argues that "Korea is an example of a country that grew very fast and yet violated the canons of conventional economic wisdom" (p. 139). Thus she forces us to rethink the conventional wisdom of development economics in particular and economic theory in general. At her most ambitious, she urges a new paradigm:

In broad respects the institutions of late industrializers have exhibited the same central tendencies, to the extent that an economic paradigm can be identified that is institutional in character and categorically distinct from the market model. It is suggested here, therefore, that the economies of these late-industrializing countries behave according to economic laws that constitute a new paradigm. (p. 140)

In Amsden's account, four essential elements of late development are "an interventionist state, large diversified business groups, an abundant supply of competent salaried managers, and an abundant supply of low-cost, well-educated labor" (p. 8). She elaborates each of them as being critical to Korean industrialization.

The most important factor is the state. Among early industrializers like Britain, the state played a minimal role, while its importance became magnified for late industrializers.⁵ According to Mason, late industrializers borrow technology from abroad, rather than inventing new products or processes. Since the state has been the only organization capable of raising the necessary capital to initiate industrialization based on borrowed technology, late industrialization precludes the possibility of laissez-faire development.

Throughout her book, Amsden repeatedly stresses the point that South Korea must be seen as a late industrializer and that, with all due respect to mainstream economists, state intervention has been critical. The absence of a strong state in the 1950s accounts for Korea's lack of development. The presence of a strong state, which began in the 1960s, explains Korea's dynamic growth. In short, the state has been the key to late industrialization.

In Amsden's view, the Korean state is interventionist and accumulationist: it encourages economic growth by controlling financial institutions and capital mobility, meddles in industrial structures and prices, and oversees the interface with the international economy. The state is important in all facets of growth—diversification, stabilization, and growth momentum. In the first phase, the state acts as an entrepreneur by planning and investing in new industries and sectors. It then deploys short-run stabilization policies to overcome external shocks and facilitate growth. Finally, government intervention insures the economy's continued growth. Thus the state has played a preponderant role in virtually all spheres and periods of Korean economic growth since the 1960s. She writes: "In Korea, instead of the market mechanism allocating resources and guiding private entrepreneurship, the government made most of the pivotal investment decisions" (p. 139).

In addition to the state, large diversified business groups are imperative for late industrialization. While small, single-product enterprises led early industrialization, large, multi-product firms fueled late industrialization. Even among late industrializers, Korea has an especially high level of concentration. For example, the average three-firm concentration ratio in the early 1980s was 62.0 percent in Korea, compared to 56.3 percent for Japan and 49.2 percent for Taiwan (p. 122). Moreover, the top ten *chaebol* (large conglomerates) accounted for about 70 percent of the GNP by the mid-1980s (p. 136). Instead of starting from scratch, diversification allows corporations to take advantage of accrued capital, as well as managerial and technical skills, in embarking on new ventures. Again, the state played an important role in the enlargement and diversification of the *chaebol*: "The state supported such diversification because it promised to provide the clout necessary for Korea to penetrate deep into world markets and to compete against the big business groups of Japan . . ." (p. 136).

In Amsden's narrative, the consolidation of state power in the 1960s created an autonomous state, which then proceeded to singlehandedly pursue its agenda. She thereby ignores domestic and external constraints facing the state and its formulation and execution of economic policy.

Korea's distinguishing feature from other late industrializers is the power that the state wields over large business groups. In all major economic decisions, the state dictates economic policies, while the large conglomerates execute them. The state-*chaebol* relationship reveals an informal division of labor. The state provides favorable credits and tax breaks, as well as offering import controls and barriers to entry. In return, the *chaebol* undertake the state's plan by promoting exports and rapid industrialization. The peculiarity of the Korean case is the extent to which the state holds corporations accountable: it penalizes poor performers while rewarding successful enterprises. In short, the state plans and the *chaebol* execute an institutional arrangement that allows centralized planning and decentralized execution.

The growth and expansion of Hyundai illustrates the intersection between the state and the *chaebol*. Hyundai began in construction and soon moved to cement. Then, with the government decision to pursue heavy industrialization, Hyundai quickly entered shipbuilding and automobile industries. In all these diversified ventures, the state's financial support and incentives were crucial. Moreover, the experience from one industry provided the lessons for new ventures, while the profits from one enterprise subsidized the other lines of business. The spiral of growth, inextricably intertwined with the state economic strategy, characterized not only Hyundai's phenomenal growth, but those of other leading *chaebol* groups as well.

5. Karl Polanyi, however, argues for the importance of state intervention in the commercial development of England. See his *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), part 2.



In Asia's Next Giant, Alice Amsden downplays both the crucial importance of cheap labor in enabling South Korea to compete on world markets and the state's highly repressive policy toward labor. "Chicken coop" sweatshops are pervasive, and it is not unusual for workers to put in sixteen-hour days. Although the per capita GNP of South Korea has increased incredibly since the early fifties, wages haven't kept up with living costs, especially for textile workers, who may earn as little as \$4.00 a day. This photo is a cropped version of a photo by and courtesy of Nathan Benn, and it and the above information about sweatshops and wages are from an article by Boyd Gibbons, "The South Koreans," in the National Geographic, vol. 124, no. 2 (August 1988), pp. 232-57.

Amsden's third ingredient is the existence of professional managers and salaried engineers. Both state and corporate bureaucracies require personnel to exploit the borrowed technology and make appropriate decisions. Amsden writes: "The hypothesis is that leading firms in late industrializing countries, if they are to penetrate world markets, must adopt unusually pro-active production and operations management policies" (p. 160). One notable fact of Korean industrialization is the massive increase in the number of engineers and technicians; in fact, between 1960 and 1980, "The number of engineers increased tenfold, that of managers by a factor of only 2.2" (p. 172; emphasis in the original). This requires a revamping of the higher educational system to teach basic science and technology and channel students into bureaucratic posts. Furthermore: "Of equal importance with formal education was foreign technological assistance. Formal education builds the human capital of the individual. Foreign technical

assistance builds the technological capability of the firm" (p. 239). Education and foreign assistance, both mediated by the state, have contributed to the development of the professional-managerial class. This, in turn, was a crucial element of the "miracle."

Amsden is less sure about the salience of her fourth and final factor, "low-cost, well-educated labor." She observes that a literate labor force is necessary but downplays the significance of cheap labor costs and the attendant labor repression. She is careful to note that "what awaits systematic analysis is how much labor repression is critical for rapid growth . . ." (p. 148). Nonetheless, she discounts the importance of labor repression because it is a common denominator to all late industrializers; hence, labor repression is not enough to explain the Korean exception. In addition, she argues that the state did not pursue a coherent policy toward labor: "The Korean government has a policy with respect to every conceivable aspect of economic development except labor relations. Responsibility for labor relations within the government bureaucracy has largely been left to the Korean Central Intelligence Agency or to the police" (p. 324). Moreover, "Korea's real-wage growth rate may exceed that of any previous industrial revolution (with Japan's a close second) and that of any contemporary one" (p. 10, emphasis in the original). In sum, the author deemphasizes the role of cheap labor while observing the rapid rise in the pay workers get.

Thus, the author's model stresses a dynamic and interventionist state as a wielder of tremendous economic control. It provides the blueprint and controls the main levers of the economy through finance and investment. It encourages large corporations to be competitive and export oriented. The *chaebol*, in return for privileged protection and favored access to credits and markets, comply with the state plan and execute the government directives. This process is achieved by coordinating educated, professional managers and engineers, along with a literate work force.

Amsden closes the book by surveying three important industries: textile, shipbuilding, and steel. Her carefully crafted industry and firm studies buttress her theoretical claims about the importance of the four elements and illustrate their dynamic operation.

The State, Labor, and the Political Economy of Growth

Amsden's powerful refutation of the free market thesis offers an antidote to the laissez-faire mythology trumpeted by mainstream economists and the popular business press. As incredulous as it may seem to anyone remotely familiar with the Korean scene, some economists have championed the example of South Korea as a triumph of the laissez-faire approach. Whatever the virtues of Korean economic growth, the unfettered operations of the free market is certainly not one of them.

In offering a cogent and compelling criticism of the free market thesis, *Asia's Next Giant* is now required reading for scholars and policy makers involved in Third World development. Nonetheless, I wish to raise some questions about Amsden's important, and what will undoubtedly be influential, contribution. In spite of her success in demolishing the market myth, she ends up buttressing another: the self-congratulatory self-image propagated by the architects of Korean economic

strategy.⁶ I will discuss in turn Amsden's treatment of the state, the *chaebol*, and labor.

The state is crucial because it constitutes the core of Amsden's analysis. She illustrates its centrality by noting Korea's stagnant economy in the 1950s and the booming economy that followed the emergence of the strong state in the 1960s. Amsden's explanation of the weakness of the state in the 1950s or its strength in the 1960s is curiously underdeveloped. She writes: "The Korean state was able to consolidate its power in the 1960s because of the weakness of the social classes" (p. 52). Although she is correct to point out the weakness of social classes that facilitated the consolidation of state power, the same condition existed in the immediate post-Korean War period under Rhee Syngman as well.⁷

Moreover, the state was not so weak under Rhee or so strong under Park. Rhee exerted greater control over the bureaucracy and possessed legitimacy as a result of his part in the independence movement against Japan. In contrast, Park only gradually moved his power base to the state from his original base in the military, while lacking legitimacy from the larger public. Here it would be useful to analyze the concept of state power. As Michael Mann suggests, a sovereign may possess "despotic" power to exercise arbitrary will, but may lack the means to achieve it ("infrastructural" power). In modern polity, a ruling group may have low "despotic" power, but it may possess considerable "infrastructural" power.⁸ Rhee possessed tremendous "despotic" power—his "dictatorship" controlled the major decisions in state bureaucracies and the economy. The infrastructures, however, were underdeveloped. In the case of Park, he gradually accumulated "despotic" power, but in so doing, the "infrastructural" power grew rapidly as well.

Amsden resorts to historical factors in explaining the origins of export-oriented industrialization: "Just as a strong state in Korea was the outcome not of policy choice but of a long process of social change, so too were the particular policies that the military regime pasted together in the early 1960s to form a model of accumulation that was rooted in the past" (p. 63). Yet in fact, her analysis stresses state autonomy under Park. His ascent to power marks the transforming moment in Korea: the consolidation of state power and the formulation of export-oriented industrialization policy arose in tandem. She thereby delineates a triumphalist view of history, in accord with the view propagated by Park and the later architects of economic development plans.

In the early 1960s Park espoused economic nationalism

and continued Rhee's import-substitution industrialization.⁹ Moreover, it is misleading to attribute Park's growth strategy to his autonomy and control over a strong state. Park's insistence on economic growth derived at least in part from his political weakness. He sought to achieve legitimacy and his continued rule by encouraging export and economic growth. By stressing state autonomy, Amsden slights internal and external factors that shaped economic policy making. Park's lack of legitimacy was crucial in turning his attention to economic growth. Moreover, widespread popular resistance against the normalization treaty with Japan lay behind curbing Japanese foreign capital inflow. Declining U.S. aid in the late 1960s and the threatened withdrawal of U.S. troops in the late 1970s also affected the direction of state economic plans.¹⁰ In short, although Amsden resorts to historical factors, she never specifies *historically* what shaped state economic plans and policies. In her narrative, the consolidation of state power in the 1960s created an autonomous state, which then proceeded to single-handedly pursue its agenda. She thereby ignores domestic and external constraints facing the state and its formulation and execution of economic policy.

The author delineates a cleansed picture of the political economy and remains oblivious to the drama of primitive accumulation: agrarian surplus extraction, massive rural exodus, and the development and exploitation of industrial wage-workers.

Amsden's positive portrayal of the state carries over to her treatment of the *chaebol*. Indeed, she waxes ecstatic over their superb performance, while remaining, despite occasional admissions, remarkably oblivious to the corruption and scandal that underlay their growth. Moreover, the *chaebol* in the 1950s constituted a major obstacle to export-oriented industrialization. In this regard, Park's major contribution to economic growth was to destroy the tight web that united Rhee with state bureaucracy and large capital; the collapse of monopolistic privileges introduced competition and space for growth for smaller enterprises.

Amsden overemphasizes the importance of large, diversified conglomerates in the process of industrialization. Especially in its early phase, many major export items were not produced by large conglomerates, but rather by smaller

6. Here there is a striking parallel to Chalmers Johnson's book, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982). Just as he rejected the conventional economic explanation and propounded a state-centric perspective on Japanese economic growth, Amsden performs the same feat for Korea. Strikingly, while they both succeed in debunking the conventional economic "wisdom," they both fall prey to another myth that touts the centrality and autonomy of the state. On Johnson, see my "MITI as Number One," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, vol. 17, no. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1985).

7. See Gregory Henderson, *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), chap. 6.

8. See Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chap. 1.

9. See, for example, Youngil Lim, *Government Policy and Private Enterprise: Korean Experience in Industrialization* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1981), chap. 1.

10. See, for example, Nakagawa Nobuo, *Nihon gunkokushugi to Chosen* (Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1973). See also Dal-Joong Chang, *Economic Control and Political Authoritarianism* (Seoul: Sogang University Press, 1985).



In this typical publicity picture, women in traditional Korean dress inspect fabric in a store in South Korea. Amsden emphasizes the importance of large, diversified conglomerates in South Korea's industrialization, analyzing the textile, shipbuilding, and steel industries to show how the state plans and controls the economy through finance and investment, with the large conglomerates in turn using educated professional managers and engineers and a literate work force to execute state directives. However, small, single-product enterprises have also had a major role, and the success of the large conglomerates has been at a cost to the environment and human rights and well-being.

entrepreneurs. For example, the four largest export items as late as 1970 were textiles, plywood, wigs, and minerals. Moreover, fruits and vegetables and tobacco were also important export items.¹¹ Except for textiles, few major *chaebol* were involved in the production of these goods. In short, the products and produce that led Korea's early exports did not significantly involve the *chaebol*. Here Amsden's obsession with the theory of late industrialization blinds her to the importance of small, single-product enterprises that proliferated in the late 1950s, and which were crucial in the initial stage of export-oriented industrialization.¹² Only with Park's drive for heavy industrialization did the *chaebol* become dominant.¹³

The celebration of the *chaebol* constitutes the flip side of the neglect of labor exploitation and repression. Amsden argues

that labor repression is common to all late-industrializing economies; hence it cannot be singled out as a crucial factor for Korean economic growth. Moreover, she notes that Korean workers experienced perhaps the fastest real-wage growth in world history. This is, however, a result of Korea's extremely rapid economic expansion. One reality check is to note what the wages bought for and meant to ordinary workers. According to the Korea Development Institute, a family of five required 270,000 *won* per month (about U.S. \$335) to sustain a minimum necessary livelihood in 1980. Yet according to the government think tank, 31 percent of the workers earned less than 70,000 *won*, 56 percent made less than 100,000 *won*, and 86 percent received less than 200,000 *won*.¹⁴ This is not to deny the real improvements in material conditions, but one cannot sever the discussion of "trickle down" from that of exploitation and oppression.

Certainly labor repression doesn't explain everything. Yet the state, with its highly repressive policy toward labor, was aware of the crucial importance of low-wage labor. Although

11. See Ji Hong Kim, "Korea's Industrial Policies for Declining Industries," Korea Development Institute Working Paper no. 8910 (1989).

12. See Youngil Lim, *Government Policy*, esp. p. 49.

13. For an overview of the evolving state-*chaebol* relationship, see Eun Mee Kim, "From Dominance to Symbiosis: State and *Chaebol* in Korea," *Pacific Focus*, vol. 3 (1988). For an excellent case study of the semiconductor industry, see Jeong-Ro Yoon, "State and Private Capital in South Korea" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1989).

14. These figures are taken from the Asia Labour Monitor Centre, *Min-Ju No-Jo* (Hong Kong: Asia Labour Monitor Centre, 1988), pp. 6-7.

Amsden downplays this factor, she acknowledges that the Korean Central Intelligence Agency and the police, aided by goon squads hired by management, intimidated and harassed union organizers and labor leaders. Perhaps they do not constitute a coherent state policy; nevertheless, their messages and actions were clear to most workers and intellectuals.¹⁵ Moreover, although she acknowledges sexism and the superexploitation of female workers, she does not attribute any macroeconomic significance to them.¹⁶

Amsden neglects another factor of utmost importance: the international political economy. Amsden underplays the phenomenal importance of U.S. aid.¹⁷ She has very little to say about Japanese investment or the massive infusion of capital and the demands generated by the U.S. intervention in Vietnam, which accounted for as much as 4 percent of total Korean GNP and 58.2 percent of total exports in 1967.¹⁸ She also underplays the importance of the product life cycle and the ways in which Korea filled the niche vacated by Japan in the international division of labor.¹⁹

Rethinking the "Miracle"

Amsden's ambitious undertaking falters on several grounds. The state was indeed accumulationist from the mid-1960s, yet she fails to make sense of why the state took the path of export-oriented industrialization. The author delineates a cleansed picture of the political economy and remains oblivious to the drama of primitive accumulation: agrarian surplus extraction, massive rural exodus, and the development and exploitation of industrial wage-workers.²⁰ Moreover, she passes over in silence the economic dysfunctions of heavy industrialization, including the exploitation of the rural sector and the underdevelopment of small firms. She bypasses the problem in the financial system as well as overlooking the ill effects of capital concentration and economic authoritarianism. It is hard to argue

against success, but she slights the dangers of indebted industrialization and unbalanced growth. She also fails to analyze the major social struggles and political conflicts, as well as the critical importance of the international environment.

Is Korea a viable model of Third World development? I remain skeptical about Amsden's theoretical endeavor to place South Korea among the late industrializers. Her category includes disparate and heterogeneous societies: the Brazilian economic "miracle" or India's imminent transformation into "Asia's next giant" rings hollow. Perhaps the author wishes to state that late industrialization in these countries will require the full development of the factors she discusses. Yet, in my view, the absence of land reform remains the single most important obstacle to industrialization in Brazil or India. The landed oligarchies and the peasants trapped in the countryside function as potent brakes on economic growth. Moreover, it is unclear whether there could be many more Koreas. Here Amsden's neglect of the international division of labor is critical.²¹ Perhaps we need a new category of "late, late industrialization."

Thus Amsden's work is (unintentionally) an exemplary instance of modernization analysis. It presents a remarkably conflict-free and consensual Korea—everyone, except for radical students, seems to have followed Park's wise leadership. This view ignores ideological conflicts as well as political struggles in South Korea throughout the period of rapid economic growth. *Asia's Next Giant* is also remarkably sanguine in counting the costs of development, ranging from ecological devastation to political authoritarianism.²²

In sum, Amsden offers the Korean elites' vision of Korean development, a rags-to-riches tale of competent leaders and managers leading Korea to its "miracle" growth. In the process, the exploited and oppressed workers and farmers are pushed to the margins, just as, I suppose, they were in real life. Their masters and slavedrivers, on the other hand, receive the imprimatur of success and credit from the pundits. The world is not very fair.

15. A close examination reveals, I think, a consistent if not coherent effort to disorganize workers and to keep their demands in check. In this regard, see the generally disapproving remarks on labor policy written by two economists attached to the semipublic Korea Development Institute: Eberhard Liebau, "Labor-Management Relations in the Republic of Korea," in *Human Resources and Social Development Issues*, ed. Il SaKong (Seoul: KDI Press, 1987); and Mario F. Bognanno, "Korea's Industrial Relations at the Turning Point," Korea Development Institute Working Paper no. 8816 (1988). For recent developments, see Asia Watch, *Retreat from Reform: Labor Rights and Freedom of Expression in South Korea* (Washington, DC: Asia Watch, 1990). See in general Jang Jip Choi, *Labor and the Authoritarian State* (Seoul: Korea University Press, 1989) and Kim Hyong Ki, *Hanguk ui tokjom chabon kwa imnodong* (Seoul: Kkach'i, 1988).

16. In addition, the author does not mention various shady ways in which the government accumulated foreign exchange reserves, including the promotion of the sex industry. This is a curiously under-researched area, and one in danger of being buried from historical memory. See Kankoku Kyokai Josei Rengokai, *Kisen kanko jittai hokokusho* (Tokyo: NCC Kiritokyo Ajia Shiryo Senta, 1984).

17. Chong Chang Yon and Mun Kyong Su note that between 1953 and 1961 U.S. aid to South Korea constituted roughly 9 percent of the Korean GNP. See their *Gendai Kankoku e no shiten* (Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 1990), p. 34.)

18. See, for example, Hattori Tamio, ed., *Kankoku no kogyoka: hatten no kozo* (Tokyo: Ajia Keizai Kenkyusho, 1987), pp. 92–94. Japanese investment, often by Korean-Japanese businessmen, increased after the normalization treaty between Korea and Japan in 1965, which was encouraged by Park partially in order to boost the economy. See, for example, Joungwon A. Kim, *Divided Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 261–65.

19. See, for example, Bruce Cumings, "The Origins and Development of the Northeast Asian Political Economy: Industrial Sectors, Product Cycles, and Political Consequences," *International Organization*, vol. 38 (1984).

20. See, for example, Yi Tae Kun and Chong Un Yong, eds., *Hanguk chabonjuuinon* (Seoul: Kkach'i, 1984), part 2.

21. In order to substantiate her thesis on late industrialization, Amsden needs to offer comparative case studies. She merely asserts the essential similarity among late industrializers. In this regard, note the unity of labor repression among the Asian "tigers." See Frederic C. Deyo, *Beneath the Miracle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

22. See, respectively, Nishina Kenichi and Noda Kiyomi, *Kankoku kogai repoto* (Tokyo: Shinkansha, 1989); and Hak-Kyu Sohn, *Authoritarianism and Opposition in South Korea* (London: Routledge, 1989).



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The pictures on the back cover were taken in Rajasthan in 1991 and show women carrying containers of water on their heads (upper photo) and these containers and a camel-drawn water tank getting filled at a pipeline (lower photo). This water will be carried to neighboring villages that have no water source. Though water is scarce in India's desert for the poor peasants who walk for miles to buy it from "water-lords," water is abundant for capitalists producing cash crops such as chili peppers. The desert as a contested terrain for social and ecological crisis is the theme of Michael Goldman's article in this issue of BCAS, "Cultivating Hot Peppers and Water Crisis in India's Desert: Toward a Theory of Understanding Ecological Crisis." These photos are by and courtesy of Michael Goldman.

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