

*The Emergence of Global Maoism: China's Red Evangelism and the Cambodian Movement, 1949-1979.* By MATTHEW GALWAY. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2022. 324 pp. ISBN: 9781501761829 (hardback).

Matthew Galway explores the mechanisms by which Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism first became a dominant ideology in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and was then adapted and implemented by individuals outside of the PRC for their own transformative political ambitions. At its heart, this book is an intellectual history of "how local ideas become global ideological phenomena with varied forms of indigenization" (p.2). For Galway, the production, transmission, and reception of Maoism—an expansion of Edward Said's Traveling Theory model—provides a framework for how ideas travel unevenly across groups and geographies, and are then adapted to disparate situations in different localities. The ideological flexibility of Maoism as a lexicon for pragmatic action "born from the Chinese revolutionary experience" (p.103), in addition to its vocabulary for waging revolution and practical strategies for fighting protracted war, Galway argues, is what imbued Maoism, rather than Marxism-Leninism, with the necessary appeal to be received among intellectual and political elites both within the PRC and in Kampuchea (Cambodia) at the height of the Cold War.

The first section of the book asks how Marxism became "Sinicized," that is, how Maoism emerged in China among competing ideological visions to become a state-sanctioned ideology with global appeal. The second section furthers Galway's dialectical approach to Maoist praxis by asking how Maoism became "Kampucheanized" by Cambodian communists. As Marxism "spoke" to Mao (p.3), Mao "spoke back" to Marxism by adapting it to China's own circumstances; so too did Cambodian elites "speak back" to Maoism by morphing its components to better fit their own situation. In both cases, the book details how practical and normative adaptation were an active process of dialectics and praxis that included competing ideas and interpretations of Marxism and Maoism occurring within the same political movements.

This book shines in its close reading of Chinese and Cambodian-language texts, particularly in the tracing of how ideas circulated between Chinese and Cambodian leftists prior to and after the establishment of their respective socialist states. For scholars in China Studies, the close reading of Khmer texts by Cambodian leaders like Pol Pot, Hou Yuon, and Hu Nim provides a particular

contribution by demonstrating how Maoist ideas fused with their own positions on national transformation and global revolution. This adaptation subsequently yielded to a favoring of Cambodian revolutionary theory—a theory that spoke directly to the Cambodian historical and cultural experience—over Maoist texts. As Mao had indigenized Marxism and Stalinism, so too Polpotism evolved to replace Maoism in Cambodia with violent and disastrous consequences.

By centering relations between the PRC and Kampuchea, and the intellectual connections between Chinese and Cambodian communist leaders, Galway provides a major contribution to studies of the global spread of Maoism, Cold War revolutions, and intellectual history. Galway's prioritization of individuals who found inspiration in Maoist texts takes seriously calls to consider these individuals' agency. Contrary to observations by Bourseiller (quoted in Galway's epigraph) that Maoism's flexibility and broad appeal meant that it was incoherent and "does not exist," or that those who embraced Maoism were somehow hoodwinked into doing so, Maoism fundamentally reshaped states and societies in ways that were (and continue to be) extremely real for millions of people. Galway's capacity to empathize with those who engaged with Maoism is evident in how he treats his source materials as legitimate political discourses rather than dismissing them *prima facie* as the unhinged ruminations of extremists. Rather than dismissing their ideology interpretations, Galway presents a compelling account of not only the mechanisms by which Maoism spread around the world, but also of how radical ideas propagate and take on alternate significance beyond their source(s). The book therefore presents a convincing argument that Maoism and Polpotism, radical as they may be, are deserving of being taken seriously by intellectual historians. The book's focus on the formation and interpretation of ideology and policy is an important addition to transnational studies of China and Southeast Asia and to global histories of the circulation of ideas.

While the book's focus is primarily on the transfer of ideas between political elites, it leaves open the question of how these same ideas filtered down to non-elite actors. Where Galway argues that Said's model "provides the best working approach to intellectuals" (p.10), it is less clear how non-elites understood or experienced Maoism aside from interpretations provided by party and state leaders. This is not to detract from the book's clear contributions, but rather to identify how non-elite individuals might shift our

understanding of Maoism away from dyadic relationships between elites and towards a broader approach that considers the plethora of alternative grassroots perspectives of Maoism beyond the political centers. How might our understanding of Maoism therefore change when we consider how it pervaded the everyday lives of Cambodians, a fact that Galway alludes to without making explicit. These points, however, are minor questions for what is otherwise a solid addition to a growing literature on Maoism's global reach.

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