

Across the Great Divide

The sent-down youth movement, a Maoist project that relocated urban youth to remote rural areas for “re-education,” is often viewed as a defining feature of China’s Cultural Revolution and emblematic of the intense suffering and hardship of the period. Drawing on rich archival research focused on Shanghai’s youth in village settlements in remote regions, this history of the movement pays particular attention to how it was informed by and affected the critical issue of urban–rural relations in the PRC. It highlights divisions, as well as connections, created by the movement, particularly the conflicts and collaborations between urban and rural officials. Instead of chronicling a story of victims of a monolithic state, Honig and Zhao show how participants in the movement—the sent-down youth, their parents, and local government officials—disregarded, circumvented, and manipulated state policy, ultimately undermining a decade-long Maoist project.

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Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-49873-9 — Across the Great Divide
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*The Sent-Down Youth Movement in Mao's
China, 1968–1980*

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108498739

DOI: 10.1017/9781108595728

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First published 2019

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-49873-9 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-71249-1 Paperback

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Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page vi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vii
<i>Stylistic Note</i>	x
Introduction	1
1 Farewell to the Huangpu River	18
2 Not All Quiet on the Rural Front	40
3 The Unplanned Economy	65
4 Inappropriate Intimacies	87
5 Urban Outposts in Rural China	117
6 Things Fall Apart	137
7 Epilogue	170
<i>Bibliography</i>	185
<i>Glossary</i>	203
<i>Index</i>	208

Illustrations

1.1 Bidding farewell to the Huangpu river	<i>page 25</i>
1.2 Media image of a happy departure of sent-down youth at the Shanghai train station	26
2.1 Shanghai youth Yang Shiguang with villagers in Yanbian, Jilin	41
2.2 Going to work in the fields	42
3.1 Shanghai youth He Xinhua anchors at the broadcast station at Huxi commune in Le'an, Jiangxi	79
5.1 Zhu Kejia with Ai'ni villagers in Xishuangbanna	123
5.2 Zhu Kejia during an interview with the authors	124
7.1 Former sent-down youth Yang Xiaohu at Heihe, Heilongjiang, helping villagers organize a co-op	171
7.2 Reunited with old friends in the village	173
7.3 Aihui Sent-Down Youth Museum	181
7.4 Sent-down youth remembrance wall in Huma, Heilongjiang	181

Acknowledgments

This book is the product of multiple collaborations, not only because it is coauthored, but also due to the numerous colleagues in both China and the US who contributed to the research and thinking. Jin Dalu, Zhou Gongzheng, Liu Qi, and Hu Xiaolan traveled with us from Shanghai to some of the remote counties in Heilongjiang and Yunnan to conduct research. We are grateful for their guidance in navigating access to local archives, their insights, and the conversations we had while traveling. This book would not be possible without the assistance of many other individuals. We want to thank all those who shared with us their personal experiences as well as letters, diaries, and artifacts from their private collections, especially Cao Jianhua, Xue Weimin, Chen Jiang, Wang Pei, He Xinhua, Hu Xiaolan, Zhu Kejia, Yang Xiaohu, Qinshu Qian, Peisheng Hu, Zhiqing Shi, Hengyuan Wang, Weilong Xu, Jianhua Wang, Jian Ye, Xiaoxia Wang, Jianmin Zhao, Sam Shixiong Yang, and Zhou Gongzheng, as well as villagers and locals at Le'an (Jiangxi), Xunke, Aihui, Heihe (Heilongjiang), and Jinghong (Yunnan). Special thanks to He Xinhua, Feng Xiaocai, Chen Baoping, Sun Jianzhong, Zhao Jianchang, Yan Jing, Xie Chunhe, Zhang Gang, Ruan Xianzhong, Fang He, and Yanjun Liu for their assistance in archival research. We are very grateful to many county and regional archivists in Yunnan, Jiangxi, and Heilongjiang, and in district and municipal archives in Beijing and Shanghai. Their enthusiasm about sent-down youth research encouraged and inspired us.

Over the years of conducting research, we were fortunate to be included in conferences hosted by Fudan University and East Normal University in Shanghai, and the Sent-Down Youth Research Institute in Heihe, Heilongjiang. We also had many opportunities to participate in gatherings of former sent-down youth associations and groups. A number of participants provided us with ongoing engagement, particularly Jin Guangyao, Xie Chunhe, Zhang Gang, and Ruan Xianzhong. In addition, a number of scholars in China contributed to our project, and we are

viii Acknowledgments

grateful to Feng Xiaocai, Jiang Jin, Ruan Qingquan, Gao Xiaoxian, Tan Shen, Ding Yizhuang, and Wang Yan.

Graduate students at both UCSB and UCSC assisted our research. At UCSB, we would like to thank Yanjun Liu for conducting research through Chinese-language newspaper databases and translating archival documents from Chinese to English and conference papers from English to Chinese. He also assisted with the bibliography, editing, indexing, and technical issues. Fang He conducted archival research in China and assisted with conference paper translation. Tian Wu was the first to join the research team, and we appreciate Angela He's assistance in the final phase of the project. At UCSC, we would like to thank Xiaofei Gao for identifying materials available on Chinese sent-down youth websites, and also for translation work. Xiaoping Sun, Sarah Chang, Jinghong Zhang, Wilson Miu, and Jeremy Tai also provided valuable research assistance.

We would like to thank several funding agencies for their support of this project. A system-wide University of California Pacific Rim Research Program Faculty collaborative grant provided funding for our trips to Yunnan and Heilongjiang; a UC–Fudan faculty collaborative grant enabled us to organize an international conference at UCSC in 2014. The UCSC Committee on Research of the Academic Senate Special Research Grant and Faculty Research grants provided funding for Emily Honig to conduct research in China and also for research assistance throughout the project. Xiaojian's early research trips to Jiangxi were supported by a Fulbright Senior Scholar Fellowship. Grants from UCSB's Academic Senate and Institute for Social Behavioral and Economic Research from 2013 to 2017 provided additional funding for research trips, graduate student research assistance, indexing, and other publishing expenses.

From the time we submitted the manuscript, the senior China editor at Cambridge University Press, Lucy Rhymer, has been its guardian angel, deftly guiding us through revision of the manuscript. We are indebted to Lisa Carter and Natasha Whelan for overseeing the production process. We are also the grateful beneficiaries of John Gaunt's long experience as an editor. We also want to thank the two readers who offered insightful comments and suggestions. The order of the authors' names was determined by a coin toss.

In addition, Emily Honig would like to thank the crew of colleagues and friends who contributed in myriad ways to this book. Members of the UCSC History Faculty East Asia reading group commented on several chapters of the book, and thanks are due to Noriko Aso, Alan Christy, Jennifer Derr, Gail Hershatter, Minghui Hu, and Juned Shaikh. Over the years of working on this project, conversations with Elizabeth Perry have

called attention to the broader context of PRC politics that informed the sent-down youth movement. China scholars Marilyn Young and Susan Mann also provided insights and encouragement. More ongoing and casual conversations with many friends provided sustenance throughout the years working on this book: Susan Basow, Wendy Brown, Laurie Coyle, Cheryl Jacques, B. Ruby Rich, and Susan Salisbury. No words are adequate to express gratitude to Gail Hershatter for the hundreds of runs spent discussing this project, for seriously long-term friendship, and for being the best intellectual interlocutor one could have. Finally, Emily wants to express the deepest gratitude to her mother, who unfortunately died before she could see the book in print, but who expressed continual curiosity about almost every point and did not hesitate to convey her disagreements and opinions. Emily's son, Jesse, provided wise counsel and great humor throughout the years spent growing up alongside the evolution of this project.

Xiaojian Zhao would like to thank colleagues and friends who have read parts, or the entirety, of the manuscript and who offered critical suggestions and encouragement at various stages of book: Gail Hershatter, Bryna Goodman, Paul Harvey, John Park, Yanjun Liu, Weijing Lu, Angela He, and Jian Zhao. She wants to express her gratitude to family members, colleagues, and friends who encouraged and advised her through the process. She appreciates the generous assistance and support from Arlene Phillips.

The word “across” in the book's title emphasizes the boundary between urban and rural China. The process of writing the book enabled us to see far more clearly the layers of multiple social boundaries that are not always easy to cross. Recognizing these boundaries will most surely inform our future research and writing on issues of race, gender, class, and power relations.

A version of Chapter 3 appeared in “Sent-down Youth and Rural Economic Development in Maoist China,” *The China Quarterly*, 222 (June 2015), 499–521.

Stylistic Note

Most sources cited in the footnotes are listed in the bibliography with the Chinese characters for the authors and titles. However, all the references to archival documents include the Chinese characters in the footnotes the first time the item is cited; the archival documents are not listed in the bibliography. Chinese terms in the text are in Pinyin. The glossary lists the terms with the Chinese characters as well as the definition (except for names of individuals or places).