
Review Essay

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION WARFARE AT BEIJING'S UNIVERSITIES

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Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement, by Andrew G. Walder. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2009. xvi + 400 pp. US\$39.95/£29.95/€36.00 (hardcover).

Too little research has been conducted about the fascinating, confusing upheavals that shook China during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966–68. Now, four decades after the mass fighting was suppressed, Andrew Walder helps to fill important gaps in our knowledge, in a 400-page book that examines the origins and chronicles the factional fighting at Beijing's universities.

In researching the book, Walder conducted a modest amount of interviewing, but his footnotes make clear that he has relied primarily upon documentation from the 1966–68 period. As he notes in the Introduction, "Several decades ago, when documentary sources were largely unavailable, researchers relied primarily on the oral reminiscences of former red guards ... [but] by the late 1990s a remarkable array of new sources was at hand" (p. 8). These include archived factional newspapers from dozens of universities, wall posters and the transcripts of speeches. By far the richest collections of these materials are from Beijing, and Walder therefore chose the capital for his study. He does not mention how many Beijing universities he was able to cover through these voluminous materials, but I have counted at least 27 tertiary institutions. The book derives from meticulous trolling through a vast array of original materials.

In ten chapters, Walder moves chronologically from early June 1966, when university leaders came under fire and were quickly removed from their posts by "work teams" (*gongzuo dui* 工作队) of officials sent onto Beijing's university campuses by the national Party leadership (Chapter 2), through the tumultuous events of the latter half of 1966 (Chapters 3 to 7), and on into the student factional fighting of 1967–68 (Chapters 8 and 9). Chapter 10 presents Walder's reflections on Beijing's university Red Guards, on the unusual organizational and political context in which they emerged and then split into factions, and on the reasons that factional fighting persisted for more than a year and a half.

By coincidence, 2009 witnessed the publication not only of Walder's study but also of two other books that explore this period of civil war among students—Joel Andreas' *Rise of the Red Engineers: The Cultural Revolution and the Origin of China's New Class*¹ and Yin Hongbiao's 560-page Chinese-language opus *Footprints of the Missing: Trends of Thought of Young People during the Cultural Revolution*.² I will discuss Walder's findings in relation to these works, focusing on his analysis of the reasons for the divisions among university students, his explanation of why an increasingly violent factionalism persisted for so long and his discussion of whether ideological differences played any role during the student upheaval. I will also attempt to weigh which of Walder's conclusions are relevant to China in general or alternatively apply only to Beijing's universities.

Divisions, 1966

Walder takes issue with some of the previous Western-language writings about Red Guard factionalism at the universities, which tried to analyze the conflicts in terms of tensions that predated the Cultural Revolution. Walder argues, contrarily, that the formation and actions of the university Red Guard factions in Beijing had almost nothing to do with pre-Cultural Revolution issues or antagonisms. He endeavors to show that the initial rise of student factions was shaped purely by the events of the first two months of the Cultural Revolution in the late spring and summer of 1966, when the work teams of Communist Party officials entered the universities and mobilized students to purge selected administrators and teachers. Work teams were a time-tested instrument of the Party when conducting political campaigns, penetrating grass-roots levels in order to guide and control a campaign. Whereas some Western writings have assumed that these work teams and the students who were Party loyalists often defended the leading Party figures at the schools, Walder challenges this presumption (at least for Beijing's universities). He argues that the cadre work teams in Beijing very rapidly toppled all of the university leaderships and shattered the hierarchical Party networks through which student Party members had previously been mobilized to serve the university Party organization's purposes. In this circumstance, even those who had been loyal Party followers "concluded that they might be found guilty by association, and they hastened to repudiate rather than defend their erstwhile leaders" (p. 11).

If not over whether to defend or repudiate the universities' power structure, on what grounds did a split first emerge at Beijing's universities? During this early period, as Walder shows, a small minority of the students clashed with the cadre work teams and accused them of erroneously curtailing student initiative in the campaign.

¹ Joel Andreas, *Rise of the Red Engineers: The Cultural Revolution and the Origins of China's New Class* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009). The book was reviewed by Jeremy Brown in the January 2010 issue of *The China Journal*.

² Yin Hongbiao, *Shizongzhe de zuji: wenhua da geming qijian de qingnian sichao* (Footprints of the Missing: Trends of Thought of Young People during the Cultural Revolution) (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2009).

Was this small minority of students drawn from among the students who had previously been marginal to the Party networks at the universities, had felt disfavored and now felt rebellious? To his surprise, Walder discovered that “[t]he very same party members and political activists whom I expected to defend party hierarchies and obey the work teams in fact led the militant minority” (p. 11). Walder explains that the dissidents acted in circumstances where work teams were abruptly shifting their own stances, which created ambiguities and complicated a student’s choice of how to react. From Walder’s portrayal, it seems as though the decision sometimes came down simply to a student’s personality. This seems to have been the case with Qinghua University’s Kuai Dafu, one of the most famous of China’s Red Guard leaders, a student of good-class peasant origins who had held a crucial post in the university’s Communist Youth League.

Walder discusses how, when the cadre work teams were discredited by Mao for having controlled his mass campaign too tightly and were ordered to withdraw immediately from the universities at the end of July 1966, some students and staff members rallied to the support of those who had risked all to oppose a work team. This enlarged minority among the students demanded that the work team return to the university to confess its errors, and then marched to the government offices from which the work team had come, to demand the work team’s surrender and the removal of incriminating materials from the student dissidents’ political files. Walder notes that, extraordinarily, during the assaults on national ministries and commissions in late 1966, “Rebels only assaulted the ministries from which their work teams came” (p. 251). For instance, if the work team of officials that had taken over a campus derived largely from the Foreign Ministry, the student militants from that campus became embroiled with the Foreign Ministry. At a later period at the various government offices, the students subsequently became “inadvertently drawn into factional conflicts among government personnel” (p. 261), complicating and exacerbating the Cultural Revolution conflict.

In the late summer of 1966, the majority of students and university staff remained detached from this minority’s efforts, and at most of the campuses the two groupings gravitated into opposing factions, with the anti-work team group emerging as the so-called Rebel faction. Walder concludes that “the social profiles of both factions were initially very similar, whether in terms of positions in school political networks or of social categories like household labels” (p. 11). The split on campuses did not last long, since the majority faction folded when it became evident that Mao and the committee that he had established to implement the Cultural Revolution—the Central Cultural Revolution Group (CCRG) (*zhongyang wenge xiaozu* 中央文革小组)—looked favorably upon those who had led resistance to the work teams.

An essential element of Walder’s scenario is that during that first half-year of Cultural Revolution turmoil, CCRG members including Jiang Qing and Kang Sheng developed ongoing contacts with the leaders of university Red Guard groups and throughout the two years of Cultural Revolution upheaval the CCRG manipulated these groups from above. The university Red Guard alliances in Beijing were not

autonomous actors—instead, they became essentially the instruments of various members of the CCRG, who engaged in Machiavellian games and often operated at cross-purposes with one another.³ We know less about what occurred at universities outside Beijing, since almost all previous authors have focused on Beijing campuses.⁴ Enough is known, though, to be able to state with confidence that the frequent communications between Red Guard groups and the CCRG were not usually replicated outside Beijing, and thus provincial campus groups were able to remain far more independent in their activities.

The book jacket prepared by the Press's publicists claims that "Walder's nuanced account challenges the main themes of an entire generation of scholarship about the social conflicts of the Cultural Revolution". The reality, however, is that the book only challenges previous chronicles of Beijing university factionalism: the bulk of Walder's findings apply only to this small slice of Cultural Revolution activity. It was there that the fighting was shaped by the repeated interventions of CCRG leaders. Walder himself notes this anomaly and points to additional ways in which the scenario in Beijing

³ Walder provides examples of despicable, manipulative behavior by CCRG's leaders, but none is more surprising than the stories of two Red Guard groups, Liandong and the Western District Picket Corps. Among observers of the Cultural Revolution upheaval, both Liandong and Western Picket are remembered as secondary-school Red Guard groups in Beijing composed of children of high-level officials who carried out gruesome atrocities against victims. Walder shows that the truth was quite the opposite. These two student groups were appalled by the violence around them, and sought to reduce the brutality. They threw up picket lines to rein it in, and were perturbed by the CCRG's indifference to the acts of escalating cruelty. After their activities brought them into cooperation with Zhou Enlai and into conflict with militant students backed by the CCRG, the CCRG moved quickly to destroy Liandong and Western Picket. The two groups' teenage leaders were imprisoned and, with a cynicism that is breathtaking, the CCRG whipped up a media campaign accusing the two groups of the very kind of atrocities that the groups had courageously condemned. A "Big Lie" is often effective and, until Walder's exposé of what actually occurred, Liandong and Western Picket were usually regarded by writers as having been viciously brutal.

⁴ English-language publications include Victor Nee, *The Cultural Revolution at Peking University* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969); William Hinton, *Hundred Day War: The Cultural Revolution at Tsinghua University* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972); David and Nancy Milton, *The Wind Will Not Subside: Years in Revolutionary China 1964–1969* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976); Joel Andreas, "Battling over Political and Cultural Power in the Cultural Revolution" [focusing on Qinghua University], *Theory and Society*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (August 2002); and Xiaowei Zhang, "Passion, Reflection, and Survival: Political Choices of Red Guards at Qinghua University, June 1966–July 1968", in Joseph Esherick, Paul G. Pickowicz and Andrew G. Walder (eds), *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 29–63. For his Doctoral dissertation, Stanley Rosen conducted interviews in the 1970s with former students from the élite Beijing colleges, with similar findings (Stanley Rosen, "The Origins and Development of the Red Guard Movement in China, 1960–1968", PhD dissertation, UCLA, 1979).

was unique. For instance, he emphasizes that in Beijing the universities' leaderships were purged and so collapsed at the very start; thus, no defensive efforts were ever mounted in their support by either work teams or campus Party loyalists. However, this was often not the case at universities outside the capital, where events unfolded at a different pace and with lower-level local work teams. Where defending or opposing the university's Party administration became an issue on provincial campuses in those initial months, there was a distinct potential for a subsequent eruption of factional divisions between the Party loyalists and other students.⁵

Nor did the scenario at Beijing's universities necessarily apply to spheres outside education. Walder himself is quite aware of this. In 1979–80, he carried out research on pre-Cultural Revolution Chinese factories which revealed how in the 1950s–60s favoritism toward politically activist employees had built hierarchic networks of loyalty that reinforced the factories' authority structures.⁶ Walder described how, during the Cultural Revolution, factional conflicts often broke out between the politically favored employees, who defended the factory's Party leadership (often at the latter's behest), and the many co-workers who resented the factory's political pressures and favoritism and formed a rebel faction.

Nor is Walder's depiction of the Beijing university scene transferable to secondary schools, even in Beijing. The book includes a chapter on high schools (Chapter 5), focusing on four elite schools. Walder finds that support for or resistance to work teams had a distinctly different tenor there. A far higher percentage of students at the elite secondary schools came from families of the national political leadership. Many of them showed disdain for the low-ranking work teams that entered their high schools, and they were able to resist these with impunity. More important, strong differences of opinion arose at the elite secondary schools over the class origins of students and over Red Guard violence. This issue of class origins was also contested at other high schools across China, and made the conflict in these schools quite different from what occurred at China's universities.

Most of the previous Western-language writings about the Red Guards focused on the urban secondary schools and described how, on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, students from "red-class" (Party cadre and pre-Liberation working class)

⁵ Two provincial universities in Yunnan and Guangdong where this schism occurred are noted in Jonathan Unger, "The Cultural Revolution at the Grass Roots", *The China Journal*, No. 57 (January 2007), pp. 124-25.

⁶ Walder published this research more than a decade later in Andrew Walder, "The Chinese Cultural Revolution in the Factories: Party-State Structures and Patterns of Conflict", in Elizabeth J. Perry (ed.), *Putting Class in its Place: Worker Identities in East Asia* (Berkeley: China Research Monograph 48, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1996); also Andrew Walder, "When States Unravel: How China's Cadres Shaped Cultural Revolution Politics", in Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard and Susan Young (eds), *State Capacity in East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), especially pp. 178-83.

family origins and students from educated middle-class family origins had been engaged in an increasingly difficult and tense competition to get admitted to university. Whereas the middle-class children wanted admissions policies to stress academic achievement, the red-class students favored admissions policies that stressed family origins. When Mao Zedong opened the floodgates to the Cultural Revolution in mid-1966, only the red-class high school students were initially allowed to participate, which intensified the antagonisms between them and the middle-class students and gave rise by year's end to two rival Red Guard camps.⁷

At the four truly elite Beijing secondary schools studied by Walder, a milder split emerged very early on between the children of high-level Party officials and students of working-class family background, some of whom resented the officials' children's presumption that they were superior and should lead all activities. During July–August 1966, this mild split among the two types of red-class children also occurred at many of the elite provincial high schools across China. The rise of two antagonistic Red Guard camps—one dominated by the officials' children and the other dominated by middle-class children—was a separate phenomenon and did not emerge at any high school in China until the late autumn of 1966. Since the secondary schools are peripheral to the topic of Walder's book, he does not pursue what occurred at his four elite schools after August 1966. Had he extended his research into later months, he would very likely have found the same division into rival Red Guard camps that occurred at provincial high schools. In point of fact, a paper has been published about one of the four Beijing high schools covered by Walder and found precisely this—the Red Guard factional conflict there that lasted from late 1966 through mid-1968 occurred between students from middle-class intellectual families and the political officials' children.⁸

The Violent Factionalism of 1967–68

Events after the end of 1966 have always seemed confusing, as university student groups split and re-split and entered opposing alliances. Walder helps us make sense

⁷ The literature on the origins of high-school Red Guard factionalism includes Hong Yung Lee's pioneering studies based on Red Guard broadsheets, "The Radical Students in Kwangtung during the Cultural Revolution", *The China Quarterly*, No. 64 (December 1975), pp. 645-83, and Lee's *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). Also see Stanley Rosen, *Red Guard Factionalism and the Cultural Revolution in Guangzhou* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982); Anita Chan, *Children of Mao: Personality Development and Political Activism in the Red Guard Generation* (London; Seattle: The MacMillan Press; University of Washington Press, 1985); Jonathan Unger, *Education Under Mao: Class and Competition in Canton Schools, 1960–1980* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), Chapters 5 and 6; Anita Chan, Stanley Rosen and Jonathan Unger, "Students and Class Warfare: The Social Roots of the Red Guard Conflict in Canton", *The China Quarterly*, No. 83 (Autumn 1980), pp. 397-446; and Joel Andreas, "Battling over Political and Cultural Power".

⁸ Joel Andreas, "Battling over Political and Cultural Power".

of this long one-and-a-half year stretch of violent activity through August 1968, when the Cultural Revolution factions were finally forcibly suppressed.

This one-and-a-half-year civil war at the universities was entirely unforeseen by the university students. It had seemed in the autumn of 1966 that unity had been restored to Beijing campuses. The CCRG's support for the so-called Minority or Rebel faction had caused other groups to dissolve, but some of the campus militants who had been anointed as leaders by the CCRG, in particular Nie Yuanzi at Beijing University and Kuai Dafu at Qinghua University, soon antagonized many of their own followers through autocratic, intimidating behavior, and drove them into opposition. The opposition forces within the two universities joined with Red Guard groups from other universities, and eventually two evenly balanced, mutually antagonistic, city-wide coalitions emerged—one titled Heaven (*tian pai* 天派) since one of its member Red Guard groups was based at the Beijing Aeronautics Institute (a specialized tertiary institution) and the other titled Earth (*di pai* 地派) since one of its member Red Guard organizations was centered at the Geology Institute (also an educational institution). Each claimed to be the true Rebel faction, and each side had the ear of CCRG members. Violence mounted as each side suffered increasing casualties and vowed vengeance, and as each side increasingly feared harsh penalties if it lost. Walder claims that there were no other reasons for the prolonged internecine warfare. He notes that, with the exception of one university, there were no ideological differences between the two factions and no discernible difference in their social composition. They did not cease fighting, he observes, because there was no neutral third party to mediate or arbitrate an end to the conflict. While there was no benefit to the Maoist leadership in the continued fighting, the CCRG appears to have been too hamstrung by internal bickering to bring the Red Guard factional hostilities to an end.

Contrasting Interpretations of the Divisions among Students

The new book by Joel Andreas focuses entirely on China's elite science university, Qinghua. He covers a far longer time period than does Walder, so Andreas' discussion of the tumultuous events of 1966–68 is confined to two chapters (Chapters 4 and 5). It is interesting to compare the two authors' findings for this period about the same university. Andreas parts with Walder in analyzing the earliest months when Kuai Dafu (whom both Walder and Andreas have interviewed) and a small group of fellow Qinghua students rebelled against the work team. In Andreas' telling,

... nearly 40 percent of the students at the university were from working-class or peasant families. They had the class qualifications to participate, and while many followed the lead of the revolutionary cadres' children in the Red Guards, others formed their own fighting groups. The campus split into two factions, defined by their stand toward the work team—the Red Guards, led by the cadres' children, defended the work team and their opponents [whose leadership came from peasant and working-class families] attacked it.⁹

⁹ Joel Andreas, *Rise of the Red Engineers*, p. 108.

It becomes all but impossible to determine whether Walder or Andreas is correct in interpreting this early period. On the one side, Walder, whose overall thesis is that class background and pre-Cultural Revolution loyalties counted for almost nothing at the universities during the Cultural Revolution, emphasizes that the great majority of the worker-peasant children (like the great majority of the student body as a whole) defended the work team. On the other side, Andreas prefers to focus on the fact that Qinghua students of worker-peasant background were prominent among the small minority of the student body who stood up in opposition to the work team. The overall evidence that both scholars present is similar—but what they consider to be the most salient portion of the evidence differs.

Walder singles out Qinghua as the only Beijing university where there was a noticeable ideological difference between the two factions that developed later in the Cultural Revolution. He sees this ideological divide as resulting from a tactical maneuver. In March 1967 the CCRG was calling for “revolutionary cadres” to be included in new Revolutionary Committees that were supposed to be set up as new governing bodies at each work unit and campus. Kuai Dafu resisted the call at Qinghua, on the pretext that Qinghua’s officials were more infected by the revisionist line than elsewhere. This provided an opening for his opponents at the campus to position themselves as not just more in step with CCRG policy but also as the campus faction behind which Party members, former student cadres and others should throw their weight. The faction’s support swelled as a result. Walder observes that, in keeping with the sources of its new support, this Qinghua faction eventually developed a more positive assessment of the pre-Cultural Revolution *status quo*, but he argues that this turn of events resulted entirely from the initial strategic decision made to outflank Kuai Dafu’s faction, not from any underlying ideological cause.

Walder and Andreas largely agree on the facts regarding the development at Qinghua University of a moderate faction starting in March 1967. Again, however, their analysis of what is most salient about the evidence differs. Walder’s main point is that Qinghua, as the only campus in Beijing where the two factions developed different ideological thrusts, is an outlier, and that, overall, ideological differences played a scant role in campus conflicts. In contrast, Andreas sees the emergence of the moderate faction at Qinghua as intrinsically important, in that it created “an alliance between political and cultural capital” that attracted many “children of both the political and the intellectual élites”.¹⁰ He sees this Qinghua faction’s stand as a harbinger of the prevailing ideology of the post-Mao era, in which the gradual convergence of the political and educated élites has led to the “rapid consolidation of a technocratic class” and the transformation of “the CCP into a party of technocrats”.¹¹

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 129.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 173. Andreas examines the postponement of this thrust during Mao’s lifetime, and shows the ways in which Mao’s policies in the 1970s played off the academic experts against political radicals at Qinghua, in “Institutionalized Rebellion: Governing Tsinghua

As noted earlier, Walder's and Andreas' books were joined in 2009 by a third major work, by Yin Hongbiao. Yin, a Beijing-based academic who is now 60, has devoted his entire career to researching what occurred at the grass roots in the Cultural Revolution. Sections of his new book examine the post-1966 factionalism that erupted among students across China, including at provincial universities. Yin uncovers a scenario in the provinces similar to what Walder and Andreas found at Qinghua—a more moderate faction that held to a generally positive appraisal of the pre-Cultural Revolution *status quo* versus a more condemnatory faction. The factionalism at most of Beijing's universities indeed seems to have been an anomaly.

The Role of Dissident Ideology

Yin's main interest, however, centers not on this but on the strands of thought that developed in various parts of China among the Red Guard generation. Yin finds that, where new ideas developed that deviated both from the Party *status quo* and from Mao's line, the authors were largely young people of middle- and bad-class family origins. His book is divided into two parts: the first depicts the 1966–68 period, and the second portrays the period after 1968, when most of the Red Guard generation was consigned to the countryside. There, some of them organized reading groups (often studying European Marxist classics, as other works were not available) and developed new perspectives through animated discussion. Notably, both Yin Hongbiao and Joel Andreas are interested in focusing on the influence of Cultural Revolution-era thought on the post-Mao worldview but, whereas Andreas focuses on how the Qinghua University moderate faction developed a view amenable to the creation of a post-Mao technocratic political élite, Yin traces an evolutionary line from the dissident “ultra-left” writers of the Cultural Revolution to the reading groups in the countryside, and then to the liberal and social democratic dissident thinkers of the Deng era.

At first blush, Yin's thesis seems antithetical to Walder's. Whereas Walder, looking at the broad-based factional divisions, avers that there was no ideological basis to the Beijing university student conflict, Yin's book devotes considerable space to student groups across China holding provocative ideological positions during 1967–68. But notably, the dissident schools of thought that Yin examines comprised individual authors and small marginal groups. Yin's approach does not actually contradict Walder's, inasmuch as Yin does not claim that the dissident individuals and groups had any meaningful following in the universities or affected the factional fighting there.

An exception was the capital city of Hunan province, Changsha, where one of the two major factions after the summer of 1967 through mid-1968 was Shengwulian, a coalition of militant Rebel groups holding grievances regarding discriminatory pre-Cultural Revolution class-line, political and wage policies. The 20-plus mass organizations that came together in Shengwulian included groupings

University during the Late Years of the Chinese Cultural Revolution”, *The China Journal*, No. 55 (January 2006), pp. 1-28, and at greater length in his 2009 book.

representing the poorly paid trades, apprentices, temporary workers, non-red-class high-school students, university students who had held grievances before the Cultural Revolution either because of unfavorable family backgrounds or because of personal political black marks,¹² teachers who had been attacked early in the Cultural Revolution, disgruntled army veterans and former Communist guerrillas who felt that their contributions had been ignored, and so forth. Shengwulian became well known across China—and of interest to Yin Hongbiao—because of the “ultra-leftist” writings that bore the group’s name. Famous among these was an essay titled “Whither China?” by a student named Yang Xiguang, which proclaimed that the major genuine division in China was not between Mao’s supporters and enemies, nor between China’s proletariat and the former wealthy, but rather between a “red capitalist class” composed of the families of high Party officials (akin in many respects to Djilas’ “new class”) and the masses of the Chinese people.¹³

Shengwulian has been portrayed both in China and abroad as the prime example of a Cultural Revolution mass grouping sustained by strong political and economic complaints and by an ideological thrust. Yet the reality is complicated, and in fact the case of Shengwulian helps confirm one of Walder’s main themes. Walder’s premise is that the violent struggle between mass factions which escalated over one-and-a-half years in 1967–68 was very largely based on fears of losing:

They were, quite simply, fighting not to lose. In the context of Chinese politics of that era, to end up on the losing side of a political struggle would lead at best to drastically reduced career prospects and at worst to imprisonment or physical harm. (p. 260)

Was this true only of Beijing university factions, or was it more widely applicable?

During July 1989 I had an opportunity to spend many hours with Yang Xiguang discussing Shengwulian and the genesis of “Whither China?”. If any Cultural Revolution organization belies Walder’s premise, it ought to be Shengwulian. After finishing Walder’s new book, I went back through the transcripts of my interviews with Yang, and to my surprise discovered comments by Yang that I had never previously paid attention to—comments that parallel Walder’s. To place Yang’s observations into context, it should be noted the Rebel organization that was Shengwulian’s predecessor

¹² Political black marks had been pinned on students for various sorts of indiscretions. For instance, some of the leaders of University Storm, the main city-wide university student group in Shengwulian, had been declared Rightists in their dossiers during the Socialist Education Campaign of 1964–66 for having been overheard speaking disparagingly about the Great Leap Forward, or as Mid-Rightist Sentimentalists for having shown too romantic an appreciation of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*.

¹³ Yin Hongbiao focuses on Shengwulian and Yang Xiguang on pp. 105-12. Yang Xiguang’s essay “Whither China?” is translated into English in a monograph about Shengwulian: Klaus Mehnert, *Peking and the New Left at Home and Abroad* (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, China Research Monograph No. 4, 1969). Also see Jonathan Unger, “Whither China?: Yang Xiguang, Red Capitalists, and the Social Turmoil of the Cultural Revolution”, *Modern China*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (January 1991), pp. 3-37.

was titled Xiang River Storm (*Xiang Jiang Fenglei* 香江风雷). Across China during February 1967, the Rebel faction was suppressed by the army, and in Changsha some 10,000 members of Xiang River Storm were thrown into prison, Yang among them. Mao reversed himself in March 1967 and ordered the Rebels' release. Yang Xiguang commented:

Before February 1967 the factional alliances at the university level were based on opposition to the work teams and to the leaderships within each university. This differed between politically activist and non-activist students ... But after February, the two issues they clashed over involved 1) support for the military and 2) persecution of those arrested by the military ... At that time we generally supported Jiang Qing. Our political interests coincided: for if we were persecuted she'd lose face. The same with Chen Boda [one of the top leaders of the CCRG] and perhaps Mao too. It was not so much that we shared Chen Boda's beliefs. After February 1967 people were more pragmatic, and thought more of their own political interests than of idealism. After being in jail, students began to consider their political interests, which centered on not being labeled counter-revolutionary; and related to this, the rehabilitation of Xiang River Storm.

After July–August 1967, Mao officially rehabilitated Xiang River Storm, and all of the Conservative [loyalist] faction organizations were dissolved. Zhou Enlai, with the aid of Qi Benyu [a leader in the CCRG] and others, worked out a name list of organizations whose leaders were to be invited to a meeting in Beijing to prepare a Revolutionary Committee [to govern Changsha]. Those selected [from Xiang River Storm] were the groups whose members had better class origins and were considered “more reliable”. None of the organizations that later formed Shengwulian were put on this name list. So of course they were angry. They felt they had to join in if they were to be influential, recognized and legitimate. Thus, after August 1967 the Rebels divided into two factions: those that had been invited to the meeting and those that hadn't. This split was deliberately fomented by Zhou Enlai and others in the government. Some of the former members of the Conservative [loyalist] mass organizations joined the alliance that had been invited, and the two Rebel factions became pitched into conflict with each other.

Notably, even among the militants in Changsha, a fear of the consequences of defeat spurred continued resistance and factional upheaval in 1967, much as in Beijing. Walder's theme that factions were “fighting not to lose” rings true here. Notably, too, even in Hunan province, Zhou Enlai, Jiang Qing and the CCRG played roles in the shaping of factional conflict (albeit less frequently and at a later date than in Beijing). It was the central leadership's manipulations in mid-1967 that instigated a realignment of factions in Changsha which placed disfavored groups—those with worse class labels or poor work conditions or who had had run-ins with political activists and authorities—on one side of a factional divide, with those whom the Party regime had previously favored on the other. Again, the theme in Walder of the pernicious role played by a Machiavellian political élite rings true. So while some important aspects of Walder's discussions apply only to Beijing-based universities,

Walder also sheds new light and offers insights on generalizable aspects of the urban Cultural Revolution mass movements.

A question that remains is whether Walder is correct that ideological differences never emerged among the mass of students who battled it out at Beijing's campuses. It is, after all, possible that the universities' Red Guard factional newspapers may not have portrayed student feelings that lay outside the parameters of what was acceptable to the CCRG. While it was acceptable for the Red Guard newspapers to use extreme, hyperbolic language to attack their factional opponents, university students presumably realized that it was politically suicidal to express deviant political thinking publicly.

In the mid-1970s I had an opportunity to interview former high school Rebel Red Guards from Guangzhou, and they discussed a strong undercurrent of not-entirely-heretical thought that had influenced them in 1967–68. It was a belief in “big democracy” (*da minzhu* 大民主). It had been quite legitimate to use the phrase—Lin Biao himself declared approvingly at Tiananmen Square in November 1966 that:

.... big democracy is when the Party fearlessly and without reservations allows the broad masses a free airing of views (*da ming da fang* 大鸣大放),¹⁴ big character posters, big debates and big link-ups to criticize and monitor the different levels of leadership organs and leaders of the Party and state. At the same time, the democratic rights of the people are being fulfilled in keeping with the principles set forth by the Paris Commune.¹⁵

As used among Guangzhou high-school students in 1967–68, the “big democracy” catch-phrase did not imply that it was proper to criticize Chairman Mao or to doubt the legitimacy of Communist Party rule under Mao's leadership (no one dared to contemplate such ideas publicly). Rather, the phrase “big democracy” meant the right of grass-roots groups to criticize local Party committees freely and to help decide local policy through the discussion of ideas. Rebel faction high school students saw this belief in big democracy as marking them off from their enemies, the high school students in the city's loyalist faction, who reportedly believed more in rule by a top-down political hierarchy. With different interpretations of how “redness” and devotion to the revolution should be evaluated, with different opinions about how loose or tight Party control should be and whether “big democracy” should be part of the fabric of Chinese life, the high-school students could feel that they were battling for a set of beliefs that transcended themselves. As such, the students' ardor was greater and their resistance stronger against ending the Cultural Revolution civil war without a victory for their cause.

¹⁴ Notably, *da ming da fang* (often translated as Big Blooming and Contending) was the slogan of the Hundred Flowers period of 1956.

¹⁵ This verbatim quotation from a Lin Biao speech is in Yin Hongbiao, *Shizongzhe de zuji*, p. 126.

Some of the students from Guangzhou carried a belief in big democracy with them into the countryside when they were dispersed there in 1968–69, and it played a part in some of the discussion groups on which Yin focuses. This belief in big democracy helped to fuel the writings of a group of former high-school Rebel Red Guards from Guangzhou who in 1974, under the pen-name Li Yizhe, composed a famous long essay, “On Socialist Democracy and the Legal System”.¹⁶ Yin Hongbiao’s book contains more than two dozen separate references to big democracy, and the book makes it obvious that it had adherents across China.

What is not clear is whether a belief in big democracy not only developed among Rebel secondary school students during 1967–68 but also influenced university students in Beijing. Possibly not. After all, most of the politically active Beijing university students were caught up in an unusual competition which necessitated staying on-side with members of the CCRG. Yet it is also possible that big democracy did have adherents at Beijing campuses but that they did not normally proclaim their beliefs in faction newsletters and thus did not draw Walder’s attention. After such a long passage of time, as Walder notes, oral reminiscences can be untrustworthy, but this creates a dilemma, since a reliance on documentation can also result in holes in the available evidence.

Nonetheless, in most respects Walder’s documentation has served him well. It has enabled him to lay out a coherent chronology of a truly confusing period. It has also enabled him to develop new lines of approach to a number of issues that had not previously been adequately examined. His new book has been researched in admirable depth and at a level of analysis that we have come to expect from him. Overall, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* makes an important contribution to our knowledge of an extraordinary, tumultuous period in recent Chinese history.

¹⁶ On the Li Yizhe group, see Yin Hongbiao, *Shizongzhe de zuji*, pp. 374-97. Also Anita Chan, Stanley Rosen and Jonathan Unger (eds), *On Socialist Democracy and the Chinese Legal System: The Li Yizhe Debates* (White Plains: M. E. Sharpe, 1985).