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China

China's Rise – Strength and Fragility

- Reviews section -

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This book is a collection of essays which look at the inherent contradiction in the rise of China from a class perspective. It argues that China is a bureaucratic capitalist state which is a special kind of state capitalism. Only with bureaucratic capitalism does the merging of the bureaucracy and the state reach a point where the bureaucracy privatizes the state in its entirety and makes the latter a vehicle for underpinning the accumulation of bureaucratic capital. Combining the coercive power of the state and the power of money, the bureaucracy enjoys all the advantages of state capitalism in promoting both neck-breaking industrialization and taking anti-cyclical measures in the midst of the current Great Recession. Its strength, however, is only the result of a special alignment of class relations conditioned by the 1949 revolution and its later development, combined with China's particular characteristics and its backwardness. The combined results of all these factors keep the working class docile. Paradoxically, the rise of capitalist China has also fundamentally changed the conditions which have led to the rise of the absolutist state. It has modernized China to the point that the working class now accounts for nearly 40 per cent of the labour force and half of the Chinese population now lives in urban areas. It has led to new perspectives, raised self-esteem and created higher expectations among the new generation of the working class, as is shown in recent struggles. Meanwhile the deep demoralization among the people since the defeat of the 1989 democratic movement is beginning to recede. On top of this, Chinese state capitalism is beginning to exhaust its strength as it increasingly relies on rapidly expanding public debt. A new page for China may begin to turn.

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What they say about the book:

Au Loong Yu offers a profound analysis of the rise of China in the manner it should be done: through placing front and centre a meticulous examination of its capitalist ruling class and of the variegated ways in which it appropriates a surplus. By starting from the multiple forms of property through which the country's dominant bureaucratic state capitalists sustain themselves, Au is able at one and the same time to lay bare the roots of the Chinese economic miracle and the foundations of its durable authoritarian political order, to expose the politico-economic contradictions that are likely to limit growth and bring crisis to the system, and to illuminate the sources of the fierce class struggles that continue to wrack town and country and threaten, over time, to open the way to political alternatives. Truly a tour de force. – **Robert Brenner, Professor of history and director of the Center for Social Theory and Comparative History at UCLA, editor of the socialist journal *Against the Current*, and editorial committee member of *New Left Review*.**

Au Loong Yu provides the most thorough account of the extent and nature of the transformation of the Chinese state into authoritarian capitalism. This book is essential reading for all those who seek to understand and grasp the dynamics of Chinese-style capitalism and working class resistance to the despotic system. – **Immanuel Ness, Brooklyn College; editor, *International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest, 1500 to the Present*.**

This collection of essays on China brings a rare and much needed perspective to the literature on the rising star of

the global economy. Most are authored by Chinese Marxist critics of the regime. This “insider” Marxist perspective translates into a discussion of issues rarely covered in the existing literature, including a special focus on the workers movement. Very useful. – **Gilbert Achcar, Professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.**

A collection of lucid and enlightening essays. Au Loong Yu leaves no doubt that China has become capitalist to the fullest extent – with the party bureaucracy as the new bourgeoisie. This leads to old and new contradictions, not to the end of history. – **Bodo Zeuner, Professor in political science, Berlin.**

A fascinating analysis of contemporary struggles in China situated in a rich theoretical overview of Maoism and class relations, as well as the country's position in the international system. A powerful and provocative challenge to many misconceptions on the Left that deserves to be widely read and debated. – **Adam Hanieh, School of Oriental and African Studies; member of the editorial board of the journal *Historical Materialism*.**

Contents

Part 1 – Analysis

On the rise of China and its inherent contradictions: Au Loong Yu

China going global: Au Loong Yu

China – unavoidable rise or possible decline: Bruno Jetin

China – globalization and nationalist responses: Au Loong Yu

Part 2 – Resistance

Labour resistance in China – 1989-2009: Au Loong Yu and Bai Ruixue

From ‘master’ to ‘menial’ – state workers in China today: Au Loong Yu

Disposable labour under social apartheid: Au Loong Yu

The role of the All China Federation of Trade Unions – implications for workers today: Bai Ruixue

New signs of hope – resistance in China today: Au Loong Yu and Bai Ruixue

Part 3 – Discussion

Maoism: contributions and limitations: Pierre Rousset

How socialist is the Chinese party-state? Au Loong Yu reviews Wang Hui's *The End of Revolution: China and the*

Limits of Modernity

Liu Xiaobo and the Chinese liberals: Au Loong Yu

Voluntary union or forced assimilation – the CCP's policy on Tibet: Au Loong Yu

Alter-Globo in Hong Kong – Interview with Au Loong Yu by New Left Review

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