

be most instructive for East-West interactions in the twenty-first century, it seems crucially important to see Ricci's version of events in the context of other perspectives.

Well informed by Ricci's own account of his experiences in China and excellently translated into English, this important new biography of Matteo Ricci is in many ways interesting and accessible to both the specialist and the general public.

—Yu Liu

Niagara County Community College

THE ESTABLISHMENT VERSION

Ezra F. Vogel: *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011. Pp. xxiv, 876.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670512000654

Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997) had an extraordinarily interesting life. He was a member of the founding generation of the Communist Party of China (although he later considered himself head of the “third generation” of leadership). He joined the Party very young, when participating in a work-study program in France; and he later had a brief spell of training as a revolutionary in Moscow. Back in China he helped organize a guerilla uprising and worked in Party organization and as a political officer in the Communist armies. He was purged three times—the first time, in the 1920s, for supporting Mao Zedong against Party rivals, the next two times, late in life, for opposition to Mao or at least to the line identified with Mao. At the age of seventy-three he was brought back from his third disgrace and in short order rose to leadership of the Party and regime, where he sponsored a set of bold liberalizing reforms. Deng, economically broad-minded but intolerant of indiscipline, was the driving force behind the brutal suppression of the student democracy movement in 1989. But he disagreed with colleagues who attributed the unrest to the reforms themselves, and in 1992, in his last hurrah, he forced an even more radical economic liberalization, while keeping under strict control any threat to the ruling position of the party. Since then China has grown spectacularly year by year, and now ranks in gross terms as the world's second-largest economy.

In recent years there have been several massive biographies of twentieth-century leaders—notably Jung Chang and Jon Halliday's not unpersuasive hatchet job on Chairman Mao and Jay Taylor's convincing revisionist study of Chiang Kai-shek. I had expected that Ezra Vogel's weighty tome would

make for a similarly pleasurable—edifying and entertaining—wallow. Instead, the book leaves an aftertaste of disappointment.

The first disappointment is the relative neglect of the first six decades of Deng's life—significant both for understanding him and his position and China's situation when he finally did assume power. These are passed over in fewer than fifty pages: so the book cannot seriously claim to be a biography. One realizes with a sigh that the focus is really on the small print of the title: "the transformation of China." But this has been done before and will be done again, and it's uncertain what this book adds.

Professor Vogel has written important works on both Chinese and Japanese society and politics. His best-known previous work is probably *Japan as Number One* (1979), which drew attention to and explained Japan's unobtrusive emergence as a global economic power (although some of the factors explaining Japan's rise may also explain as well its subsequent decline). Now, perhaps, it is China's turn to move into the slot vacated by Japan, and this perspective may account for Vogel's almost exclusive fixation on the reform era. Some critics have asserted that this is the definitive study of Deng. Vogel himself makes no such claim, but he does say "there will never be a better time than now for a scholarly study of Deng" (xiii). Probably he should have said instead that now's as good a time as any—the real work of biography remains to be done and time is bound to bring both new information and new perspectives on Deng's life and the "transformations" he has wrought.

Vogel is well connected in both China and the United States, but his connections and sources, at least as reflected in this work, are overwhelmingly confined to the political and social establishments in both countries. What we get is the establishment, authorized version, down even to the list of possible shortcomings and defects in China's ways of doing things. The book recounts political maneuverings and policy disagreements among the post-Mao elite, with due attention of the role of persons other than Deng—notably Chen Yun. Much of the story rings true—but the sources are treated uncritically, taken at face value, with little attempt to balance competing interpretations against each other. Although this is in no way a "psychobiography" there are also copious confident assertions about Deng's inner life—what he meant, intended, or thought during the various turns of events.

The initial reviews directed most of their criticism at Vogel's treatment of the suppression of the 1989 democracy movement (although as an atrocity this ranks behind the single-child policy, ignored by commentators and given about a paragraph's attention by Vogel). Vogel explains that sensitive scholars such as himself obviously deplore the brutality, but Deng Xiaoping had other priorities. Deng was not a "capitalist," much less a democrat, but a dedicated communist (dedicated, that is, to the unquestioned supremacy of the Communist Party, not to any particular communist goals or ideals). And, as Vogel points out, over the longer time frame China has not done all that badly since 1989. Indeed, the experience of the former Communist

powers in Europe, from the Soviet Union down, weakens the case of those who would be too hard on China. One continues to believe that the authorities mishandled the protests—here Vogel would certainly agree—and to regret the missed opportunities. But things are what they are, and there is little point for continuing to scold a ruling clique for behaving in character. Granting all this, Vogel still seems to be making excuses. The problem, I think, is the establishment definition of the issue in American discussions as whether to “contain” China or to “engage” it, and, since we (America) are not really going to risk doing anything really damaging to China, there is no alternative to “engagement.” And by now the notion that “engagement” in itself will bring about liberalizing political reforms is generally recognized as fatuous. Even so, engagement is not inconsistent with a clear recognition of just what the nature of that regime is, and even less does it require gratuitous apologetics.

A standard foreign criticism of Deng is that he handled economics well enough but failed at political reform (although Deng himself would probably think his political reforms were just fine). Some of Deng’s legacy may pose problems for legitimacy. Since 1989 the regime’s legitimacy has rested upon patriotism and upon economic prosperity. Patriotism, however, may also work against rulers if they come to be perceived as making too many concessions, however necessary or expedient, to foreigners. And, as the erstwhile Number One Japan shows, prosperity is iffy, and Deng’s path to prosperity has had many potentially destabilizing social consequences. Vogel has a chapter on “Deng’s art of governing,” a lengthy list of Deng’s various methods of operation, but he may not sufficiently appreciate the key point. Elsewhere (587) Vogel writes: “Aware that Mao, like many emperors, had caused great damage by remaining in office until his death, Deng was determined to establish a new pattern in which top leaders served with term limits and then retired.” Actually it was the norm for emperors, like monarchs elsewhere, to rule until their deaths; and at least as much damage was done by emperors who, like Deng, yielded up the throne but remained to kibitz from behind the scenes. Vogel stresses Deng’s closeness to Mao, and he makes a convincing case that Deng’s return from disgrace in the early 1970s was the work of Mao rather than Zhou Enlai. But the Deng-Mao relationship was an ambivalent one. If I may appropriate Vogel’s freedom to read minds, Deng seems to have had an appreciation of the need for institutionalized power, particularly that of the Party institution. In the 1950s he was prominent in dismantling (temporarily) the outward signs of adulation for Mao, asserting, perhaps with a straight face, that unlike the Soviet Union China had never been afflicted with any cult of the individual. When he became caporegime he declined to assume the top position in either Party or government, perhaps figuring that the institution he headed would overwhelm the other. But he still retained to himself the power to make the final decision, even after he had formally retired from those positions he did hold. There was a disjunction between formal authority and actual power (seen most glaringly in 1989,

when the calls were made by a clique of Deng and seven aged cronies). The effects of this personalized leadership style, by now unleavened by any hint of charisma, may become manifest again in times of trouble.

In the early 1980s there were moves by Party liberals in the propaganda system to assert that “alienation” could exist under socialism as well as under capitalism, and that Party ideology should take a more “humanistic” tack. Deng treated this as a threat to Party supremacy. Vogel comments: “Western notions of a transcendental God that could criticize the earthly rulers were not part of the Chinese tradition” (564). In the course of cranking out 800-some pages an author’s attention will wander and the exposition may even stray into incoherence (see, for example, 588). But gee... The slip here epitomizes much that is annoying about the book. The issue in question is humanism, not God—regardless of whether God is given to saying mean things about “earthly rulers.” Humanism may be theistic or atheistic, and the humanism most directly at issue is that of the Young Marx, already a smug atheist. And, as Vogel knows, China does have its own deep and lengthy humanistic tradition that allows ample scope for criticism of those in positions of authority, including the highest “earthly” authority. While the book, written in a felicitous style, should be a pleasure to read, after a time the moral tone-deafness and lack of scholarly fiber make it a chore.

All of this is pretty negative—so much so that I worry that my disappointment has led to neglect the book’s possible strengths. One must certainly admire the industry that has gone into its making; and it does contain useful pieces of information—some persuasive, more at least thought-provoking. There is a lengthy and useful appendix on many of the major personalities of the Deng era. Deng Xiaoping is a major historical figure, and as such deserves to be taken seriously—and critically. Deng’s rule accomplished much, but in many respects fell short, and it should have gone better than it did. And so should this attempt at biography.

—Peter R. Moody
University of Notre Dame

ANTI-SEMITISM AND RESISTANCE TO HITLER

Peter Hoffmann: *Carl Goerdeler and the Jewish Question, 1933–1942*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xix, 193.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670512000721

There has been an ongoing debate among the historians of the German anti-Hitler resistance about the correct interpretation of this history.