How should we think about EU–China human rights exchange then? Kinzelbach hints at, but does not fully develop, a broader analytical framework that would treat this bilateral official exchange as a multilevel, multidimensional game. The EU has to do something about human rights in China due to its genuinely held political convictions and standing among democracies in the world as well as societal pressure. But it faces strong limitation on how much it can do, due to its still fragmented organizational features, China's rising power status and the EU's seemingly counterproductive confrontation with Beijing in the past. In particular, the EU has strategic and economic interest in maintaining a stable relationship with China. In an ideal world, the Chinese government would prefer to have zero external criticism or action related to its domestic politics. But the Chinese government has reluctantly accepted the political reality that democratic countries will be concerned about human rights and it is thus better to manage the human rights issue by creating a "safe" bureaucratic process behind doors. Besides, the China-EU model is clearly better for the Chinese government than its periodic contentious human rights exchange with the United States. The early years of the global financial crisis seemed to give the Chinese government some hope that it could end what it viewed as a necessary evil in the meaningless exchange. But Beijing's more assertive stance has invited a strong backlash, which ironically makes people more aware of its human rights and more willing to explain tension with China by referring to its non-democratic political system. In short, one could think about the EU–China human rights dialogue as an equilibrium between the two sides, which also has a society–state dynamic.

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The Compelling Ideal: Thought Reform and the Prison in China, 1904–1956
JAN KIELY
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In his exceedingly well-researched new volume, *The Compelling Ideal: Thought Reform and the Prison in China, 1901–1956*, Jan Kiely makes an important contribution to the literature on prisons, social control and the rehabilitative ethos in 20th-century China. Kiely frames the book within a discussion of Chinese Communist thought-reform projects, but the core of the book focuses on the last years of the Qing dynasty and the first decades of the Republic to trace China's engagement with "the compelling ideal" that animated the work of modernizing nationalists around the world in the 20th century – namely, the belief that with the right methods, states could transform diverse and even deviant populations into communities of ideal citizens. The book affirms the existence of powerful continuities across the 1911 and 1949 divides, highlighting that the concept of *ganhua* – reform motivated by "an emotionally inspired moral conversion" – informed theories and concrete practices in late Qing, Republican, wartime and finally Communist prisons. What sets Kiely's work apart from much of the other scholarship on prison rehabilitation is the fact that his story is told through the richly evocative voices of the individual prisoners, wardens and prison instructors who fashioned and refashioned 20th-century Chinese penology.

The book's first five chapters demonstrate Kiely's mastery over a dizzying array of published and archival sources. He explores the way various state agents,

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intellectuals, prison employees and prisoners imagined and experienced China's penal systems from 1900 to 1937, and he includes an especially interesting chapter on rehabilitative Buddhist movements in 1920s institutions. These chapters trace the way that Chinese reformers drew on the language, categories and values of neo-Confucian and Buddhist traditions, to foment a transition from public displays of ritualized and symbolic punishment to individualized disciplinary regimes, which used surveillance, labour and education to remake bodies and minds. Kiely contextualizes this shift within larger, global trends connected to the rise of modernizing nationalist movements. He shows that, as was the case elsewhere, the problem of the criminal came to be envisioned as one instantiation of a sick and/or morally corrupt social body, and prison reform came to be seen as one aspect of the drive to police and discipline the entire Chinese nation.

Thus, as Kiely shows in chapter six, when the Kuomintang and Communist parties attempted to reform the inhabitants of their wartime prisons, they were drawing on several decades of theory and practice. And as chapter seven argues, when, in 1960, Mao proudly told Edgar Snow that Chinese Communist prisons were "not like the prisons of the past" but were instead "schools and also factories or farms," the chairman's claims about the singularity of the Chinese Communists were false (p. 297). Idealistic officials and intellectuals had long insisted that China's prisons should and did strive to rehabilitate criminals. While, as Kiely notes, the Communists replaced the word *ganhua* with their preferred term, *gaizao*, the ideas and methods associated with Communist thought reform shared key features with those of their predecessors as "state-directed reform" was "a core means of twentieth-century Chinese governance" (p. 37).

Although his account of Communist thought reform is based primarily on published sources, which are not as rich as his material on late Qing and Republican-era prisons, Kiely gives a persuasive account of the continuities he sees. In addition to a general dedication to reforming prisoners, he points to more specific and important similarities, such as the fact that the success or failure of a prisoner's reform continued to be "judged less with reference to any law than to a universal morality known and supervised by supposedly all-knowing supreme authorities and interpreted by an instructor" (p. 57) and that thought reform work continued to be envisioned as one aspect of a holistic transformation project, in which prisoners represented extreme cases of a society-wide need for spiritual renewal. However, the claim that practices and ideologies never emerge ex nihilo is a truism, and Kiely tends to understate the significance of discontinuity. The CCP's assertions of difference were more than descriptive statements; they were the very foundation of thought reform praxis itself, which involved bringing individuals not just to repudiate their past actions but to radically re-order the way they understood the past, the future, and the distinct disjuncture between the two. Kiely is certainly right that we can partially falsify claims of Communist exceptionalism by revealing commonalities across the 20th century. But in my opinion, it is equally significant that those commonalities were not meaningful to Communist thought reformers, whose understanding of their own work was anchored in their belief that thought reform was itself a process of making radical breaks with the past. Ultimately, however, whether or not one agrees with Kiely's position in the old continuity/rupture debate, one cannot fail to be impressed by the beautifully crafted deep history his book provides. Readers wishing to understand the historical context within which Maoist thought reform later evolved will find this book to be indispensable.

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