

China and Global Capitalism

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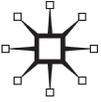
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China and Global Capitalism

Reflections on Marxism, History, and
Contemporary Politics

Lin Chun

palgrave
macmillan



CHINA AND GLOBAL CAPITALISM

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2013 978-1-137-30125-3

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First published in 2013 by

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®

in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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ISBN 978-1-349-45345-0

ISBN 978-1-137-30126-0 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9781137301260

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the Library of Congress.

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Knowledge Works (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: December 2013

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Preface

This small book addresses the question of China in the modern world and its evolving relationship with global capitalism, past and present. It also considers future possibilities for China in redefining that relationship, given that history does not have an end state. Only by situating the country in the historical and international context of its revolutionary, socialist, and post-socialist transformations can a national political economy increasingly embedded in the global market (and hence the Chinese [self-]positioning in that integration) be properly understood. The purpose is to look into whether a renewed Chinese social model, as an alternative to the eco-social impasse of standard modernization and with potential universal implications, is still possible. Critical of either economically or culturally deterministic approaches, the argument focuses on the power of transformative politics.

Part I explains the general framework of the book, revisits Marx's conception of history and "Oriental society," and reviews relevant issues in more recent historical and comparative economic history debates. Part II presents a critical assessment of the lessons from both eras of Chinese socialism and reform as resources for a reorientation. Part III returns to Marxism and its contemporary self-reflexive moves in rethinking world history.

Parts of chapters 1, 2, and 8 are reworked versions of an article written in 2009 and published in *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (13(3), 2012). I thank Taylor & Francis for their permission. I remain most grateful to the conference participants for their valuable discussions of different forms of that article

in the University of Wisconsin, Madison, June 2009, Zhejiang University, July 2009, and Stanford University, May 2011, in particular Catherine Lynch, Tom Lutze, Sooyoung Kim, Lisa Rofel, Wang Ban, Chen Kuan-Hsing, Viren Murthy, Lv Xinyu, and Zhong Xueping. Chapter 6 is an extension of a paper I presented at a Makerere Institute of Social Research workshop in August 2012, where I benefited greatly from a lively debate.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my editors, critics, and friends, especially Farideh Koochi-Kamali and Sara Doskow, at Palgrave, as well as Newgen Knowledge Works for their unfailing support, patience, and careful work, Katherine Livingston for saving me from the embarrassment of too many errors in English, and Cao Nanwei for taking on the job of compiling the index; Perry Anderson, Henry Bernstein, and Mahmood Mamdani for critical comments on various parts of various earlier drafts; Rebecca Karl for pressing on clarity, Abha Sur for introducing works and ideas from our part of the world, Lin Shan and Paul Forman for generous logistic help, and Rosa and Cao Tianyu for continuous intellectual stimulation. I also thank Cui Zhiyuan and Wang Shaoguang for their sharing of information over years in the spirit of knowledge commons and dot communism.

Maurice Meisner, who in a book review points to an air of utopianism in my discussion of a “democratic socialist market,” remarks that such a project is nevertheless “historically plausible,” and, “without utopian hopes, people would not only lose their will to make history, but also cripple their ability to judge the history that is being made for them.” I was enormously moved by his generosity and vision. This book is dedicated to his memory.