

but admire the author's familiarity not only with Li Zehou's extensive writings in all fields, but also with the entire Western and Chinese philosophical traditions. It is indispensable for any further engagement with Li's thought.

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*Tea War: A History of Capitalism in China and India.* By Andrew B. Liu. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020. Pp. xi + 344. \$50.00.

On page 1, Andrew Liu writes that Wu Juenong 吳覺農 (1897–1989) who had a reputation “as the foremost authority on tea in China” in the twentieth century had learned about tea cultivation in Shizuoka from 1918 to 1921. About ten years later, my uncle Clement Hakim had departed from his homeland in Egypt to study tea cultivation in Shizuoka. I doubt that Wu knew my uncle who was perhaps the only Westerner in the area, but they shared a period of living in Shizuoka. After six years in Japan, Clement moved to New York City, and, after World War II, founded the Hakim Tea Corporation, one of the US's largest tea importing companies. The business's success prompted Clement to invite his brother-in-law (and my father) to manage the office in New York while he travelled to Asia and, increasingly, to Africa and Latin America to purchase tea. Tea changed my life, and now that I think about it, was it an accident that my first published article concerned the tea and horse trade between Ming China and Inner Asia?

Liu has a greater interest than Shizuoka or the history of tea. He focuses on the tea wars of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—that is, the competition between China and Assam as suppliers for the tea market. His greatest concern goes beyond the actual competition into a consideration of the development of capitalism in the two countries. Asserting that capitalism existed before industrialization, he bases his views on the tea-growers'

dependence on a market. He writes that “It was the constant necessity to produce goods for sale in order to survive” that resulted in “capitalist labor” (p. 19). A pre-industrial economy, without a traditional class of proletarians, could have capitalist features, especially to its market dependence. Peasants or slaves, often associated with a pre-industrial economy, actually shared the status of workers because they produced commodities for a global market and not simply for subsistence.

Within this framework, Liu lays out the foundation for the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century tea wars between China and India. He argues that the successes of export tea based in Huizhou in Anhui province and the Wuyi 武夷 mountains in the province of Fujian centred on merchants who created the conditions for and demanded greater labour productivity. A popular folk song showed how “the factory managers worked the men and women to the point of exhaustion.” It describes “the most pitiable tea roaster, sweat stains his shirt, now half red. . . . The roaster works night after night, three shifts and he still hasn’t gone home. He agrees to come in early tomorrow morning, wages to chase away the sleep demons” (pp. 72–73). Such demands on labour enabled merchants and eventually factory owners to secure substantial profits and to accumulate capital at a rapid clip and allowed these regions to dominate the global tea market in the early nineteenth century.

British policies in India challenged the Chinese monopoly from the middle of the nineteenth century. Liu maintains that British government regulations ensured a steady supply of cheap industrial labour for tea production in India that enabled Assam to cultivate tea at a lower cost and to compete successfully with Chinese tea. The government, he writes, sought a “secure workforce by passing a series of labor indenture laws, . . . Under these laws, a breach of contract by a tea plantation employee would be treated and punished as a criminal act, liable to imprisonment or enforced specific performance” (p. 122). Owners of tea plantations, thus, increased labour productivity and reduced wages paid to workers. By the 1880s, sales of Indian tea had begun to dominate the global tea market, presenting a crisis for Chinese tea producers. Liu explains that the exploitation of labour rather than machinery resulted in increased production at lower costs and ultimate victory over Chinese tea production. Supplementing his explanation of Chinese and India tea cultivation, he describes the employment of women in the tea plantations as a means of reducing costs.

Liu then demonstrates that the freeing of Indian indentured servants and the gradual changes in the exploitation of Chinese labour were prompted by economic motives. Strikes and the resulting decline in labour productivity in the Indian tea industry persuaded the British colonialists to free labour because workers would be “happier” with greater freedom and would not demand a dramatic increase in wages. Indian plantation owners came to the same conclusion after Indian independence in the 1940s. In China, reformers sought to rein in merchants and compradors and to liberate the peasants from their indebtedness to tea warehouses and factories, which provided high interest loans to initiate production and to purchase machinery. Cooperatives began to challenge the domination of merchants and warehouses and introduced innovative machines, but the peasants’ lack of power meant that “Only with the Communist Revolution in China and land reform in Taiwan, then, was industrial development finally achieved” (p. 269).

Liu’s analysis is thoughtful and based upon a careful study of a specific industry in specific localities. Theory sometimes intrudes, but not often enough to confuse the reader. Liu’s views offer a clear and well-structured discussion of the tea industry in both countries, as well as the larger issues of global capitalism and colonialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A good selection of images of tea cultivation, equipment, workers, and compradors complements the work.

My uncle would have become aware of the larger implications of his role in the tea industry.

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