Chinese Spies: From Chairman Mao to Xi Jinping. Roger Faligot, London: Hurst, 2019. Pp.568. £30.00 (hardback). ISBN-13: 978-1787380967

The British government's decision to give the go-ahead for Chinese telecommunications company Huawei to participate in Britain's 5G network in February 2020 provoked considerable debate over the threat posed by China's burgeoning security and intelligence apparatus. Roger Faligot's *Chinese Spies: From Chairman Mao to Xi Jinping*, first published in French in 2008, and now significantly updated and translated into English by Natasha Lehrer, serves as a timely, if a little weighty, exploration of China's increasing intelligence power. Boris Johnson's Chief Special Adviser Dominic Cummings has even been recently been pictured with the book. An investigative journalist who has extensively researched modern China, Faligot relies on a network of confidential contacts and reports to tell the history of murder, kidnappings, economic spying, propaganda and cyber operations at the behest of China's Communist leadership.

The study of Chinese intelligence is important. For Faligot, the 'Guoanbu' – China's Ministry of State Security, the largest of the non-military agencies, should be as famous amongst twenty-first century readers, as the CIA, KGB and MI6 is today (p. 402). The book is now part of a wider trend to understand intelligence beyond the traditional 'Anglosphere' – the 'Five Eyes' of the UKUSA community (Britain, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand), or the major European intelligence powers – Germany, France and, of course, Russia, suggested by Philip H.J. Davies and Kristian Gustafson's edited collection *Intelligence Elsewhere* (2016). Such a contribution to the literature is welcome, and Faligot's encyclopaedic history adds to the small number of books, chapters and articles on this subject of increasing importance. Although the reader can easily get lost in the long cast of officials and spies, Faligot and Lehrer have made this book a fascinating read.

The essential argument of Faligot's study is that China's intelligence services are central to the very survival of the Communist state – a method of population control by the Chinese leadership, and an arm of Chinese state power that reflects the country's dramatic political, economic and military ascendancy in the second half of the twentieth century, and now an integral part of the new 'Chinese

Dream' of the twenty-first century. Intelligence was core to the very survival of the Communist movement in its early struggle with the nationalist *Kuomintang*, with today's community enjoying an unbroken 'Marxist intelligence tradition' (p. 2), only rivalled by Russia's military intelligence, the GRU, whose origins date back to November 1918. Today, the 'Guoanbu' is a 'global intelligence player' rivalling the long-established agencies of the US, Britain and Russia, supplementing China's 'soft power' around the world.

For those interested in drawing comparisons between intelligence in Western democracies and totalitarian states, the book is essential reading. While Faligot's book lauds the work of China's spies, it shows that members of the intelligence community have sometimes suffered from telling 'truth to power' – the main responsibility of intelligence, as a former Chief of Britain's MI6 has gone on record as saying. Mao's 'Cultural Revolution' decimated Chinese intelligence, only to be rebuilt and 'revolutionised' by Deng Xiaoping (p. 117). Equally, intelligence and security have been integral to population control and state repression. In the 1940s, intelligence officials waged a 'diverse range of techniques of repression ... still employed by the political police in 2019' (p. 45). Following the Tiananmen massacre, Chinese spies launched a domestic programme of suppression and sent teams of 'cleaners' worldwide to hunt down dissidents who had fled abroad thinking they were safe.

But beyond being just a tool of repression, China's agencies have been important in the country's dramatic modernisation, with a 1999 US report identifying 'shopping lists' (p. 251) of information on the aerospace industry, robotics and smart weapons, information technology, and other vital information from American firms. Chinese officials, front organisations, business interests and the Chinese expat community have all been involved, writes Faligot. Beyond traditional 'economic espionage', the Chinese intelligence community has also embraced new technology to engage in a worldwide 'battle of intrusion, hacking, spam bombing, and virus infection of foreign websites and databanks' (p. 334), achieving a technological competence on par with the US and Russia, as evidenced by the large scale cyber-attacks often attributed to cyber-warriors in the People's Liberation Army. This book also looks at the love-hate relationship between Russia and China. While often competitors, Faligot also reveals how both countries now cooperate on a range of intelligence and security issues – a rival power bloc to the western 'Five Eyes' community.

This is a detailed history of China's relationship with espionage, but, as also picked up by other reviewers, there are misspelled names. Certainly, such a comprehensive overview can never be totally error free, and the nature of the subject – and China's secrecy on intelligence matters – admittedly makes this a difficult subject to research for anyone. Equally, historians might decry the lack of archival material, and Faligot's reliance on off the record exchanges with French intelligence officials and others, can be hard to verify. Also, anyone expecting a detailed study of pre-revolutionary and wartime intelligence against Japan will be disappointed – the Second World War is hardly mentioned, though the detail devoted to post-1949 intelligence makes up for this.

Nonetheless, despite some of the issues raised above, this is a detailed overview of a difficult topic and certainly an important source for those wanting to study China's agencies in more detail. While it may not be a final say on the subject – and certainly more will come out in future – Faligot and Lehrer have done an important job in producing an English-language edition of the earlier book, which will act as a starting point for historians and anyone interested in China's 'secret state' in future. Moreover, the addition of another volume that moves the study of intelligence away from the 'Anglosphere' is equally welcome and should be lauded.

Dan Lomas

University of Salford