

## **Abstract**

### **The Resilience of Chinese Communism: Mining the Anyuan Revolutionary Tradition**

How do we explain the surprising trajectory of the Chinese Communist revolution? Why has it taken such a different route from its Russian prototype? An answer, Elizabeth Perry suggests, lies in the Chinese Communists' creative development and deployment of cultural resources – during their revolutionary rise to power and afterwards. Skillful “cultural positioning” and “cultural patronage”, on the part of Mao Zedong, his comrades and successors, helped to construct a polity in which a once alien Communist system came to be accepted as familiarly “Chinese”. Perry traces this process through a case study of the Anyuan coal mine, a place where Mao and other early leaders of the Chinese Communist Party mobilized an influential labor movement at the beginning of their revolution, and whose history later became a touchstone of “political correctness” in the People’s Republic of China. Situated amidst the mountainous terrain of western Jiangxi province, the town of Anyuan [安源] was the site of the first Chinese Communist party cell dominated by industrial workers. Many of these workers, after being educated and inspired by the cultural products of the Anyuan workers’ club, went on to play major roles in the revolution as peasant organizers and political commissars. Once known as “China’s Little Moscow”, Anyuan came over time to symbolize a distinctively Chinese revolutionary tradition. Yet the meanings of that tradition remain highly contested, as contemporary Chinese debate their revolutionary past in search of a new political future.