

the people, i. e. in this case the improvement of already existing means of transport. This is the reason why the Kuomintang failed in this case, and the history of civil air transport in China is a history of a failure. What failed in principal, though, was an idea of modernization still very much alive in the Third World today.

Klaus Seeland

ERIC BASCHET (Hrsg.): China 1890-1938. Eine historische Foto-Reportage. Introduction by Han Suyin. (Historische Foto-Reportagen, Band 3). Kehl am Rhein: Swan Verlag, 1979, 264 pages, DM 69. -

The book has a map of China which is partially inaccurate. Throughout the volume the transcription of Chinese names is an odd *mixtum compositum*, and is quite often wrong. In five pages Han Suyin rushes through forty years of turbulent history. Her text is extremely condensed, is full of problematic generalizations, sometimes gets delicately close to manipulation, has the breath of deep commitment, but does not avoid errors. (Han Suyin tells us for example that Mao Tse-tung for two years was director of the Peasant Movement Training Institute (p. 10). He was not. This is not to discount his leading role in the peasant movement, but he was director only from May 3rd. to October 5th. 1926, a fact well proved by Snow, Schram, Rue, Kuo and others. See also Thomas Scharping (ed.), *Mao Chronik*, München: Hanser Verlag, 1976, p. 27.) The words accompanying the illustrations are often misleading and awkward. All this is not necessarily China, but China as seen by Han Suyin. However, this is all minor because: What a gripping book! What marvellous photographs!

We see China in all her fascinating historical, cultural, intimate, brutal aspects. The selection of these black and white photos is excellent. They are arranged in eight chapters: everlasting China; the decline of the empire; Europeans in China; the Republic of 1911; the warlords; international concessions and the struggle against colonial powers; the government of Chiang Kai-shek; the beginning of the Second World War. A timetable at the end of the book is helpful for orientation.

The photos touch on almost every aspect of Chinese life. They show arrogance, bigotry, and brutality of the established as well as plight, suffering, and humiliation of the masses. On these photos the mighty appear ridiculous when posing for the camera. To the Chinese they represented a system. The

peasant, the worker, they could toil as hard and as long as possible but would almost never bring about positive changes. Han Suyin knew this system, and - in her own way - rebelled against it. To do this, as a Chinese woman, was even more difficult. This one should perhaps bear in mind while criticizing her political writings.

The photos show the cosy atmosphere of private homes and the destruction of war and civil war. Prominent figures appear on the pages, as well as anonymous misery. These are no "silent pictures". They impressively tell and clearly demonstrate what happened. Thus helping us to understand the consequences that led to the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, when - in the words of Mao - the Chinese people stood up.

The photos are simultaneously depressing and brilliant making the book an extremely informative volume.

Werner Pfennig

KLAUS FLEISCHMANN: Die neue Verfassung der Union von Birma. Vorgeschichte, Inhalte, Wirklichkeit. (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde Hamburg, No. 82). Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1976. 538 pp., 1 pl., DM 29.-

The volume combines the official English translation of the Burmese text of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma as promulgated in 1974 (pp. 366-422) with a comprehensive analysis of Burma's political development since General Ne Win's take-over on March 2, 1962, when the Constitution of 1947 was abrogated. The modern history of Burma before 1962 is dealt with in works by, among others, John F. Cady, Maung Maung, and Hugh Tinker, and the aspect of the political relevance of religion in modern Burma before 1962 has been described by Donald E. Smith, Fred R. von der Mehden and the reviewer (in: "Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft", vol. 2 (Wiesbaden 1967)). Since the "revolution" of 1962 Burma has been a more or less "closed country", and it is difficult to obtain information on the internal policies of Ne Win's government. Dr. Fleischmann had the advantage of living in Burma for two years, and he has succeeded in gathering an enormous amount of knowledge on various aspects of Burma's development in 1962-1976. He presents the results of these studies in the first two parts of the present work: "Pre-history" of the constitution (pp. 15-157) and "Constitution and Political Reality" (pp. 159-362). The historical material is systematically arranged in chapters on the coup d'état of 1962, the emergence of the Burma Socialist Programme