

Juergen Domes, China nach der Kulturrevolution. München, Wilhelm Fink, 1975, 347 pp., DM 19.80 (english translation to be published by C.Hurst, Febr.1977, £ 6.50)

Even the informed student of current affairs thinks of China as an almost unknown territory, where most of the facts needed to transform a myth into reality have been bleached of their true colours. It is thus not surprising that even well-qualified scientists do not always agree on the meaning of Chinese actions at home and abroad. In the circumstances, Professor Juergen Domes deserves to be complimented on having gathered in the greatest detail the historical data covering the period from the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in April 1969, at which the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was officially terminated, to the Tenth Congress held in August 1973. The most dramatic events which occurred during these four-and-a-half years were the fall from power of Lin Piao, Chairman Mao's closest comrade-in-arms and heir apparent, and China's transformation from a state of almost total international isolation to one of acceptability and respectability in the eyes of the "Western" world.

Among China's leading politicians, the main losers during these years of change were Lin Piao and Ch'en Po-ta, another of Mao's closest associates. The main victors were Chou En-lai, the chief architect of the transformation, and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, who, from being the most abused of "capitalist-readers", moved to the position of first Vice-Premier. Neither of them succeeded in steering the state much beyond the Tenth Congress. Chou died of cancer early in January 1976, and Teng, having been groomed with care to become Chou's successor, was swept from office three months later in the political turmoil which, in the Square of Heavenly Peace, shattered the fiction of unity of purpose created for all to see at the Fourth National People's Congress in January 1975.

The rule of the rebellious Red Guards and their radical leaders was broken in 1968 by massive deployment of the armed forces. Thus, at the Ninth Congress almost three out of every four of its delegates attended in the uniform of the People's Liberation Army. At the Tenth Congress many a military man of Lin Piao's Fourth Field Army found himself replaced by a rehabilitated Party cadre or a regional commander detached from the Second or Third Field Armies. To interpret the schism of those years as a conflict between the armed forces and the civilian cadres would be misleading, though, since the army is a highly politicised body of men. Loyalties to political leaders and ideological concepts are never anything but complex. A clear line-up of forces is defied by the many cross-currents as loyalties shift. While some old comrades from the days of the Long March have been denounced as traitors, newcomers have taken their place. The author has painstakingly examined the changes

which the leading élite went through during the years which followed the Cultural Revolution. In spite of the appearance of new faces, in the final analysis the most marked characteristic of China's leadership is that it is Asia's oldest gerontocracy. Its present problems are the same as they have always been: the controversies between those in favour of mass mobilization and a state of permanent revolution, and those aiming at stability and continuity at home and abroad, have not been resolved.

Whether Professor Domes and his associate, Marie-Luise Naeth, chose wisely in applying to their subject such terms as "Bonapartism", "Directorium" and "Talleyrand Redivivus" might be questioned. As the author himself observes in a rather inconclusive final chapter, the comparison between revolutionary communist movements and the French Revolution does not get us very far (p.339). Similarly, doubts arise when the author ventures into forecasting the future on the basis of a typology which, in the light of the most recent changes in China, seems somewhat off the mark. Only now - after Mao's death - will it become possible to judge whether the final stage of development from charismatic leadership to an institutionalised bureaucratic regime is in fact in the making. As Lucian Pye has persuasively argued, political scientists are ill equipped to deal with any of the problems arising in a "non-electoral context" (Lucian Pye, *Generational Politics in a Gerontocracy: The Chinese Succession Problem. Current Scene, Vol.XIV, No.7. Hong Kong, July 1976*). We may yet see a return to mass mobilization, with all that this entails regarding modes of production, work patterns and foreign relations.

In spite of certain misgivings about some of the analytical tools used in this useful volume, it may be hoped that it will soon be available in a good English edition, preferably updated and with a simplified version of the rather ponderous section on foreign policy. China's political kaleidoscope moves so fast that the student of current affairs must look afresh, at frequent intervals, at its changing reflections. Now that Mao is dead, the need to review Chinese affairs - as a continuing process - has become even more urgent than ever before.

W. Klatt

Hans-Hermann Höhmann, Jiri Kosta, Jan Meyer, China 1974.  
Reiseprotokolle zu Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft der Volks-  
republik. Frankfurt/M. - Köln, Europäische Verlagsanstalt,  
1974, 179 pages, Paperback, DM 15.-

A limited but increasing number of foreigners have the chance to visit China. Their stay, mostly two or three weeks, is arranged by China's Travel Agency "Luexingshe".

"China 74", written by three economists who travelled with a group through China, demonstrates the value of such a visit. A short preface describes the group, the route taken