

system einen entscheidenden Antrieb für die kapitalistische Entwicklung des pazifischen Asiens sieht.

Zwar können Antworten auf die unter anderem von Herr aufgeworfene Frage, ob und inwiefern steigende Arbeitslosigkeit und zunehmende soziale Ungleichheit eine Gefahr für die politische Stabilität und besonders für den Machtanspruch der kommunistischen Partei darstellen, im Rahmen eines solchen Themenheftes lediglich in Ansätzen gegeben werden. Gleichwohl verweisen die einzelnen Beiträge auf die Vielschichtigkeit des chinesischen Reformprozesses und damit auch auf eine ganze Reihe von Widersprüchlichkeiten, die den Transformationsprozess kennzeichnen und für den weiteren Entwicklungsverlauf von zentraler Bedeutung sein werden. Insgesamt handelt es sich um eine sehr informative Sammlung von Analysen, die vor allem deswegen empfehlenswert ist, weil sie alternative Positionen zur vorherrschenden, eher neoliberal argumentierenden Literatur zum Thema bietet.

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WERNER DRAGUHN, ROBERT ASH (eds.), *China's Economic Security*. Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999. VI, 233 pages, £ 45.00. ISBN 0-7007-1167-8

As relations between China and EU member states expand, European governments, industries, and service sectors are increasingly confronted with various issues related to China. Against this background, a EU-China Academic Network (ECAN), an institution consisting of a group of European specialists responsible for the organizing of Private Policy Workshops, was established in 1997. The ECAN is managed by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, and is designed to bring together a small number of academics and senior policy advisors from EU countries.

The present volume makes the proceedings of a Private Policy Workshop focused on problems of economic security in contemporary China available to the public. It gives a survey of politico-economic questions, issues and tendencies in China which are of interest to EU governments and European Commission politicians, also of developments which may pre-occupy EU politicians in the near future. It doubtless presents the current state of discussion among specialists on modern China. Katja Afheldt (European Commission), for example, gives a comprehensive survey of the EU's stake in a sustainable development in China (pp. 163–232). Her article is of great interest for all who wish to learn more about current EU interests and plans concerning China. Some authors formulate their conclusions in the form of advice as to what China could and should do better or what kind of policy the Chinese government should adopt in the face of all the social and

economic problems. Whether some proposals are intended as honest advice or not, it remains a rhetorical question if the Chinese government is at all interested in such advice and if they really constitute an alternative for China. In other contributions the reader is confronted with conclusions or projections which seem to lack a solid consideration of the harsh politico-economic realities or which are driven by the pipe-dream illusion, often formulated as a claim, that China should simply liberalize its market and open it to foreign, particularly EU, enterprises without any consideration of its own national purposes and advantages, even though national success in international competition is the professed aim of the Chinese leadership and even though almost all Western countries unquestionably claim national success as something like a natural right for themselves. Consequently, the advice presented and the demand that the Chinese government would do best not to interfere in its economy but leave everything to private enterprise shows no concern for the reasons why certain matters are still organized and planned by the state. Such an attitude upholds a very abstract idea of government non-interference and market self-regulation which, however, only reveals the unexpressed wish of the author that it would be better for EU enterprise, if the Chinese government gave them more freedom to make profits instead of caring for its own advantage. This standpoint is a very biased one and, therefore, not very scientific. Furthermore, the fact that a government plans certain sections of its national economy is by no means just a characteristic of evil Communist party leaders, but as the examples of Japan or Germany after the Second World War show, a policy also adopted by Western market economy countries – not to mention the fact that without a solid plan no modern enterprise would and could survive on the global markets. And here and there the question arises if some authors have really seriously considered what would happen if China simply met all their claims and demands for more liberalization, less government initiative, and more market in general. One need not take Russia in order to conclude that consequent developments would mostly not be very desirable – neither for China nor for the EU, even though the EU would certainly profit more from a sudden liberalization than would China.

In this context, discussing the energy problem in China, Mehmet Ögütçü (International Energy Agency, Paris) states (pp. 84–141) that end-users are not encouraged to conserve energy because energy prices are artificially low. Raising prices, it is reasoned, will induce greater energy awareness (p. 106). The author goes on to expound what China's best policy would be. Here one must ask how China would be able to manage and realize all these energy political measures without ruining its economic basis. After all, the central government, at least so far, intentionally maintained energy prices at a low level in order not to ruin its state enterprises which would not be able

to pay for high energy prices. The solution proposed for the problems, namely the liberalization of the energy sector and a greater market orientation, including the liberalization of foreign trade (esp. pp. 104–126), poses the question as to how China would be able to pursue such a policy without counteracting its professed aim of getting its economy up to scratch in order to survive in the face of international competition. At any rate, China's own intentions and its respective political and politico-economic measures are not explained. The call for more liberalization and private initiative and less government interference is also evident in the following contribution on environmental problems in China by Dai Qing (free-lance journalist) and Eduard B. Vermeer, Leiden, (pp. 142–162). After presenting various non-government environmental initiatives, the authors conclude that less state intervention is necessary and, if opponents of the state policy are not powerful enough to achieve their goals, foreign interference is required. The idea that the central government unjustly plans and organizes environmental policies is also suggested by the title "Do good work, but do not offend the old Communists", but is not explained. Apparently, the authors simply imply that every reader is automatically convinced that Communists are always evil and want to monopolize everything and undermine every private initiative. That it was in fact these very Communists who initiated market economy reforms and liberalization does not matter in this context – as long as they still have their own plans, they have to be regarded as harmful. Consequently, the reason why the Chinese government often does not much care about environmental policies and initiatives or even seeks to abolish certain ecological measures is not explained but transformed into a moral complaint.

In all, the volume provides a good survey of policy-related economic and social issues of current developments in China. It is to be hoped that the publications of the ECAN will meet an interested, critical audience so as to promote further discussion and collaboration between experts of different fields and countries.

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YA PING WANG, ALAN MURIE, *Housing Policy and Practice in China*. London: Macmillan Press, 1999. XII, 274 pages, £ 55.00. ISBN 0-333-68253-X

The ongoing reforms of the real estate and housing sectors in the People's Republic of China (PRC) still have top priority in the financial news coverage of Western newspapers and magazines, and in recent market reports of international consulting agencies as well. After the rapid and widespread