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Books

The Succession Drama in China

By Lowell Dittmer

MICHAEL LINDSAY, Ed. *The New Constitution of Communist China: Comparative Analysis*. Taipei, Institute of International Relations, 1976.

J. P. JAIN. *After Mao What? Army, Party, and Group Rivalries in China*. New Delhi, Radiant Publishers, 1975.

A. DOAK BARNETT. *Uncertain Passage: China's Transition into the Post-Mao Era*. Washington, DC, Brookings Institution, 1974.

KENNETH LIEBERTHAL. *Research Guide to Central Party and Government Meetings in China, 1949-1975*. White Plains, NY, International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976.

CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG is dead, and with him a legendary generation of leadership is rapidly passing from the scene. What lies ahead? This is the question to which the books under review are addressed, though each of them deals with a different aspect of the general *Problematik*. Michael Lindsay and his collaborators focus on constitutional engineering in the People's Republic and on its potential contribution to the institutionalization of succession; J. P. Jain examines "army, party, and group rivalries," dealing with the question "After Mao What?" in an interest-group context; A. Doak Barnett approaches the prob-

lem from a more comprehensive sociological perspective, looking at China in terms of its potential evolution along the lines of the general historical pattern called "modernization"; and Kenneth Lieberthal provides a valuable research tool for those interested in succession or in any other issues involving the central policy process in postrevolutionary China. Inasmuch as these books are all relevant in one way or another to the succession, they can now be evaluated in terms of the validity of their predictions—at least so far as that can be determined, for the succession drama has only begun.

The Lindsay volume, published by the Institute of International Relations in Taipei, deserves credit (with qualifications) for focusing attention on an area of Chinese politics that has long been neglected by its students: the formal, constitutional aspect. Its central theme, to which each article in the anthology repeatedly adverts, is that formal theory and informal practice are worlds apart in Chinese politics. The authors could have utilized this unsurprising discrepancy as an opening wedge for a discussion of the tacit rules of informal politics and how these relate to the formal structure, attempting a serious discussion of how theory and practice came to

diverge.¹ Instead, they use theory as a platform to launch a polemical assault upon practice, indignantly decrying Communist hypocrisy. Rather than resort to naked tyranny, the Communist regime seeks to masquerade in the legalistic cant of democratic civil rights, a multiparty National People's Congress, the secret ballot, and so forth—all of which, the authors keep saying, means very little.

"And so what?" one finds one's self responding upon the ninth or tenth repetition of the point. It is probably true that the Communist Party adopted its constitutional machinery for the purpose of appealing to the middle classes at home and the liberal democracies abroad, whose support was deemed useful and attainable, and that the decision to integrate these forms permanently into the government is theoretically inconsistent with the conception of a dictatorship of the proletariat. But every state seeks to legitimize its rule in formulas that strike an expedient compromise between the state's own conception of its mission and its need to attract public

¹ This has been done admirably for an earlier period by Andrew J. Nathan in his *Peking Politics, 1918-1923: Factionalism and the Failure of Constitutionalism*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1976.

support.² It is hardly surprising to observe the successive attrition of these empty forms, which might better be regarded as an accommodation of formal institutions to existing power realities than as a trend toward despotism.³ If the sole purpose of the constitution is to bamboozle the bourgeoisie, why does the Communist Party also seek to shape its own destiny through constitutional engineering?⁴ Why bother to discuss at such length a document without binding power, for that matter?

Its own arguments to the contrary notwithstanding, this book does have a contribution to make to our understanding of the contingencies of succession. By analyzing the historical evolution of constitutionalism in the People's Republic—*i.e.*, by comparing the 1975 Constitution with its preliminary drafts (in 1970 and 1973) and with its antecedents (the Common Program of 1949 and the 1954 Constitution)—we can identify certain trends which serve as indicators of the shifting locus of

political power and its future disposition. For example, there has been a discernible decline in the prerogatives of the state and a parallel increase in the dominance of the party,⁵ a trend that is characteristic of Communist systems and yet noteworthy in the Chinese case in view of the near eclipse of the party during the Cultural Revolution. There has also been a tendency toward concentration of power in the position of the Chairman of the CCP: in the 1975 Constitution, the Party Chairman is designated "leader of the people," "chief of state" (a title formerly conferred on the incumbent of the now defunct office of State Chairman), and "supreme commander" (of the PLA). The "triple crown" thus bestowed leads one to expect that Hua Kuo-feng's accession to the party chairmanship will give him an advantage over any challenger. The situation contrasts with that in the Soviet Union following the deaths of Lenin and Stalin, when the formal equality among Politburo members made it more difficult to ascertain which office was the locus of prevailing power. On the other hand, the apparent trend toward the "personalization" of power before Mao's death might tend to exacerbate Hua's succession problems by implying that power was unique to Mao's person and thus inhibiting the routinization of the charisma of the party chairmanship *per se*. But while this implication might be drawn

from the first (1970) draft of the constitution, the tribute paid to "Mao Tse-tung" has since been transferred to the "Thought of Mao Tse-tung," something that might be expected to survive and legitimate any successor who pays token obeisance to it.

In the context of this review, we can conclude that although the Lindsay volume undermines its own purpose by scoffing at the documents that it seeks to construe, although it is marred by needless repetition and numerous typographical errors, it does, in fact, make a useful contribution to the shape of our expectations regarding succession.

JAIN APPROACHES the succession issue more directly, eschewing constitutional or polemical concerns and dealing with political arrangements as they exist. Although he fails to make his framework of analysis explicit, he seems to adopt a modified interest-group approach similar to that introduced by H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths in Soviet studies and adapted by Michel Oksenberg to the China field.⁶ This is a potentially powerful tool of analysis, enabling its user to determine not only the relative strength of the various contenders for power but the positions each is likely to take on a spectrum of issues, simply by ascertaining his group affiliation. The problem has always been to determine on what basis these groups are constituted and

² See Chalmers Johnson, "The Two Chinese Revolutions," *China Quarterly* (London), July-September 1969, pp. 12-30.

³ True, freedom of residence was rescinded, along with the freedom of artistic, cultural, and research endeavor. The secret ballot was replaced by "democratic consultation." But none of these rights had ever been accorded meaningful recognition in the first place. On the other hand, the 1975 Constitution asserted significant new rights, among them the right to speak out and criticize authority without fear of political reprisal, the right to strike, and the right to display big-character posters. Economic rights include the right of artisans and craftsmen to engage in private labor so long as it involves "no exploitation of others," and the right of peasants to cultivate private plots, to pursue limited sideline production, and to keep a small number of livestock for personal needs.

⁴ One of the principal grievances against Chiang Ch'ing and the radicals concerned their disregard of constitutional procedure in the Cultural Revolution purges, and again in the recent ouster of Teng Hsiao-p'ing.

⁵ In the 1975 Constitution, the functions and powers of the State Council (the cabinet) were reduced from 17 items to four, the National People's Congress (NPC)—nominally the highest state organ—was relieved of the power to declare war, and the functions of the NPC and its Standing Committee were now described as being decided and bestowed by the CCP.

⁶ See H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths, Eds., *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1973; and Michel C. Oksenberg, "Occupational Groups in Chinese Society and the Cultural Revolution," in Chang Chun-shu et al., Eds., *The Cultural Revolution: 1967 in Review*, Ann Arbor, MI, Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1968, pp. 1-45.

what limits govern their operational latitude. Here Jain adopts the common-sense assumptions that a combination of organizational affiliation and ideological opinion (and not patron-client ties or other informal connections) provides the dominant criterion for recruitment, and that constraints on factional activities were formerly quite stringent but were relaxed during the Cultural Revolution and will probably be further loosened if there is a protracted succession crisis.⁷ What he sees emerging in the wake of this relaxation is not an unruly free-for-all but rather a "system of checks and balances," which is likely to "strengthen the base of collective leadership, facilitate the adoption of decisions by consensus, and restrain tendencies toward one-man rule" (see pp. 127-33). This new relationship among groups Jain characterizes as "coalition politics," a "curious blend of collusion and competition" in which all participants seek to avoid serious conflicts and adopt decisions by consensus and compromise, at the same time continuing to strengthen their respective power positions.

Much of this carefully documented and cogently argued little book consists of a demonstration

⁷ The six major groups in the post-Cultural Revolution arena that he considers are: 1) the leaders of the state administrative and diplomatic machine not purged during the Cultural Revolution; 2) party and administrative cadres who were purged and then rehabilitated; 3) the Cultural Revolution "Left"; 4) the emerging public security "Left" (whose members have gained considerable influence since the 10th Party Congress); 5) the regional military leaders, who despite the late 1973 transfers still pose a threat; and 6) the central military leadership, represented in the Politburo by Yeh Chien-ying and Su Chen-hua, and further strengthened by the rehabilitation of Yang Ch'eng-wu.

of how such a system of checks and balances arose following the Cultural Revolution, as succeeding group coalitions sought to break the deadlock and obtain positions of secure dominance, only to find themselves checked by a stronger coalition. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao formed common cause with the political commissars in the PLA under the General Political Department to encourage the mobilization of student-worker masses; but as the need to restore order became imperative, the commissars fell into disfavor, the GPD was purged, and control of the PLA's political work shifted to the direct control of the Military Affairs Commission and to the professional commanders subordinate to it.

The purges of the bureaucratic Right during the Cultural Revolution, followed within four years by

the purge of the military Left in the Lin Piao affair,⁸ resulted in an attenuation of central control and in the rise of the regional military commanders, whose support had been courted in order to isolate Lin Piao. This devolution of power was successfully countered by the drastic reduction of military representation at the 10th CCP Congress in August 1973; by the transfer of China's eight most powerful commanders from their regional power bases the following December; and by the anti-Lin, anti-Confucius (*p'i Lin, p'i K'ung*) campaign of 1973-74 (which included lengthy articles praising

⁸ Although Lin Piao died in an airplane crash in the summer of 1971 (allegedly in an escape attempt), not until after the enlarged Politburo meeting in June 1972, when five Politburo members were purged, did the Maoists feel confident enough to denounce Lin Piao publicly, still gingerly exempting the PLA as a whole.

Reviewers in This Issue

LOWELL DITTMER—Assistant Professor of Political Science, State University of New York (Buffalo); author of *Liu Shao-Ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Mass Criticism*, 1975; contributor of articles on Chinese politics to various journals.

ANDRZEJ BRZESKI—Professor of Economics, University of California (Davis); member of the staff of the State Planning Commission of Poland until 1958; author of a number of articles and reviews on the political economy of communism.

ROGER E. KANET—Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Illinois (Urbana); author of many articles on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; editor of *The Behavioral Revolution and Communist Studies*, 1971, and *The Soviet Union and Developing Nations*, 1975; coeditor of *On the Road to*

Communism: Fifty Years of Soviet Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1975.

ROBERT GERALD LIVINGSTON—Vice-President of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (Washington, DC); writer on European political and economic problems in such publications as *Foreign Policy*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Sun* (Baltimore).

HARRIET FAST SCOTT—Adjunct Professor, Center for Advanced International Studies, University of Miami (Florida); coauthor of *The Nuclear Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs*, 1968; translator and editor of V. D. Sokolovskiy, *Soviet Military Strategy*, 1975.

HENRY W. MORTON—Professor of Political Science, Queens College (New York); author of *Soviet Sport: Mirror of Soviet Society*, 1963; coeditor of and contributor to *Soviet Policy-Making: Studies of Communism in Transition*, 1967, and *Soviet Politics and Society in the 1970's*, 1974.

Ch'in Emperor Shih Huang-ti for unifying China and vilifying the neo-Confucianists for their attempts to carve China into principalities). Civilian control over the military was consolidated by appointing Yeh Chien-ying, a Chou En-lai protégé, as Defense Minister and two civilians, Teng Hsiao-p'ing and Chang Ch'un-ch'iao as Chief of Staff and Director of the GPD, respectively.

Then, as leaders of the party-state bureaucracy took advantage of the anti-Lin, anti-Confucius campaign to impugn leftist policies and reassert "pragmatic" policies (and also to "reverse verdicts" on a host of purged rightists, first among them Teng Hsiao-p'ing), a rift developed between the bureaucratic Right led by Chou En-lai and the Left which had backed the Cultural Revolution.⁹ This rift was created by the ultimately incompatible attempts of China's two dying demigods, Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, to set the stage for their successions. The conflict became dramatically public upon Chou's death in January 1976, which occasioned a precipitous attack by the Maoists on his designated successor, Teng Hsiao-p'ing.

The latter development, however, transcended the time frame of Jain's study, which was completed in 1975. The author closed with a picture of balanced powers

tilted slightly to the right: Teng Hsiao-p'ing was entrenched as Mao's heir apparent, occupying strong concurrent positions in the party, state, and army apparatuses; moderates held five of the nine seats on the Politburo Standing Committee, and radicals were excluded from the State Council (with the sole exception of Chang Ch'un-chiao). While obviously superceded by political vicissitudes in its specifics,¹⁰ Jain's general picture of competing and coalescing bureaucratic interest groups continues to apply to the current situation.

JAIN'S "check-and-balance" model coincides neatly with A. Doak Barnett's more ambitious and sweeping macrosociological analysis, which also forecasts a moderating trend. *Uncertain Passage* is the second book in the last decade by this distinguished American scholar to anticipate China's succession, and he has altered his 1967 prognosis only in unessential detail.¹¹ As in 1967, he perceives a decisive cleavage between Mao and the "non-Maoists." The latter

... have tended to stress economics over politics, the growth of production over the transformation of values, professional technocratic competence over egalitarian goals, material rather than ideological incentives, institutional rather than mass mobilizational approaches, and orderly incremental change in preference to dramatic

sudden leaps. They have usually been more willing than the Maoists to compromise when the regime has encountered serious obstacles and more predisposed to adjust their goals to intractable social realities. In this sense, they have been generally less visionary and more empirical, pragmatic, and "realistic" than Mao.

It will surprise few who read this depiction of the available alternatives to learn that "China's transition to the post-Mao era" will probably lead in a "non-Maoist" direction. The future will hold few "dramatic swings" comparable to the Great Leap Forward or the Cultural Revolution—these revolutionary upsurges originated for the most part with Mao and "reflected his very personal revolutionary vision and style." It is also "almost certain" that there will be a decline in the force of ideology in China. And along with this decline there will be an attenuation of internal conflict, for it is ideology that provides the most intractable basis for social cleavage:

Under a collective leadership, . . . the viability of the coalition would depend on its ability to make compromises preserving minimal consensus. . . . The built-in pressures would be toward "centrism," with the bias probably favoring relatively cautious policies. . . . In order to survive, a collective leadership would be impelled to balance and accommodate diverse interests, and to evolve relatively pragmatic, "realistic," and instrumental approaches to policymaking. (pp. 201-02)

Prospects for foreign policy developments seem equally felicitous, in part because the Chinese

⁹ The rift was augured by Mao's well-publicized absence from the Fourth NPC and from the Second Session of the 10th Central Committee that immediately preceded it; by the campaign to criticize the novel *Water Margin* in the summer of 1975; and by the pattern of central appointments over the last several years, as each side attempted to stack the deck (a disproportionate number of previously ousted bureaucrats on the one hand and mass representatives on the other acquired positions in the wake of the purge of Lin Piao and his associates in 1971).

¹⁰ Tung Pi-wu, Chu Teh, and Chou En-lai have all died, and Teng Hsiao-p'ing has been purged (though there is now talk of his rehabilitation), leaving only one of Jain's group of five moderates, the aged Yeh Chien-ying, still in the Politburo Standing Committee.

¹¹ Barnett first dealt with the succession question in *China after Mao: With Selected Documents*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1967.

picture of the world is becoming more cognitively complex. It seems probable that Sino-Soviet rivalry will persist, that Sino-American relations will continue to improve, and that Peking will refrain from a direct assault on Taiwan.

Barnett's research is so thorough, his reasoning so lucid and carefully qualified, that his conclusion seems inescapable: In all but perhaps the cultural and educational policy-areas (controlled by the radicals at the time he wrote), China in the "post-Mao era" will probably pursue policies similar to those associated with Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing.

LIEBERTHAL'S *Research Guide to Central Party and Government Meetings in China* contains a comprehensive, annotated list of all the important central meetings held from 1949 to 1975, as well as an introductory essay by Michel Oksenberg that provides useful tips for the interpretation of the *Guide*. Had it been available, both Jain and Barnett would undoubtedly have used it in preparing their studies, and those wishing to dissect China's succession crisis will find it most helpful as a source of background information. The meetings described reveal much about how China's leaders interact and about the range of issues that is on their minds at any one time—none of which is apparent in formal organization tables. Lieberthal demonstrates that the power to convene meetings is the power to mobilize support—by manipulating the roster of participants, by setting the agenda, and by selecting the speakers—leading one to infer that whoever convenes the meeting is responsible for its decisions. He also offers some interesting clues to the nature of the

decisions reached at particular meetings, based in part on the type or format of the meeting; here, however, a caveat seems in order, inasmuch as the character of meetings may change over time (e.g., the Supreme State Conference under Mao and then Liu). Perhaps, as Oksenberg suggests in his introduction, China's mode of leadership may best be seen as a system of meetings:

The image that emerges . . . is one of a secretive system, not closely constrained by organizational boundaries and formal rules, but nevertheless one that places high value on consultation and that retains for the most part a profound awareness of its own limitations of information and resources. It is a system whose major characteristic is flexibility in format of meetings as much as in the substantive debates about policy. (p. 13)

THE GENERAL consensus of these studies appears to be that the dominant trend is toward a future of what Peter Ludz calls "institutional revisionism," characterized by "fundamentally pragmatic, non-ideological approaches" to politics (Barnett, p. 321). In our final assessment of this prognosis, it may be of interest to compare the Chinese case to some previous succession crises in the Communist-ruled states.

Succession is both important and problematic in all Communist regimes. It is important because power is concentrated at the top and politics is highly variable; and it is problematic because no reliable means for the transfer of power has yet been devised in any Communist system.¹² Premortem succession offers the best way of reducing uncertainty, for it allows the successor to consolidate his

power with the aid of the retiring dictator. The problem is that the latter may harbor ambivalence about his selection, and that his successor may justify his suspicions by precipitating his premature retirement or tarnishing his reputation once he is dead. Thus, most dictators with intimations of their mortality prefer to arrange a postmortem succession. Here they are apt to fail even more miserably, no matter how elaborate their preparations, for once death claims the leader, the entire political scene changes.¹³ The dictator's death suddenly frees the surviving members of the Politburo from the power he has wielded over them for so long, and they are not eager to throw themselves into a position of dependency and abject vulnerability again. As a result, the leadership finds itself torn between fear of renewed tyranny and the need for leadership,¹⁴ a dilemma Myron Rush calls a "succession crisis." It is a crisis not because the system threatens to fall apart but because for the time being no significant decisions (i.e., decisions of "policy line") can be

¹² See Myron Rush, *How Communist States Change Their Rulers*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1974.

¹³ V. I. Lenin wrote a famous last testament expressing his grave misgivings about Josef Stalin and left explicit instructions that it be read to the party congress, but both will and instructions were ignored. Stalin's heir apparent, Georgi Malenkov, was outmaneuvered by Nikita Khrushchev. And most recently, of course, Chou En-lai's carefully choreographed arrangements were upset by the Maoists within days of his funeral.

¹⁴ See Robbins Burling, *The Passage of Power: Studies in Political Succession*, New York, NY, Academic Press, 1974, pp. 223 ff. See also Jack Gordy, Ed., *Succession to High Office*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1966; Frederick Mundell Watkins, "Political Succession," in Edwin R. A. Seligman, Ed., *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, New York, NY, Macmillan Co., 1934, Vol. 14, pp. 441-44; and Ting Wang, "Looking Inside China: The Succession Problem," *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), May-June 1973, pp. 13-25.

made, for each such decision raises the prior question of *who* is to make it. Because this question cannot be answered until the succession crisis is resolved, significant decisions are reached through circuitous and time-consuming consultation and compromise. This is known as "collective leadership" and may last for a period of several years. In the absence of authoritative leadership, tendencies toward rift, vacillation and deadlock are prone to attenuate the efficacy of the entire regime, and for this reason collective leadership is normally followed by an eventual return to personal rule, albeit more limited.¹⁵

Our prognosis of institutionalized revisionism for the Chinese succession corresponds closely to the pattern in an interregnum of collective leadership. Even before the death of Mao there were some concrete developments in China which pointed in this direction. Witness the leadership's reluctance to hazard any significant "line" decisions that might grant one group a policy advantage over the others: Teng Hsiao-p'ing's attempt in the summer of 1975 to lay down a "General Program for All Work of the Party and the Nation," meant to provide guidelines for work over the next 25 years,¹⁶ was followed by Teng's purge in the wake of Chou's death; and the radicals' subsequent attempt to exploit the anti-Teng campaign to eliminate his associates was stubbornly resisted.

This comparative perspective also enables us to predict, however, that the dangers of "authority leakage" during the interregnum

period, and the inherent instability of any collective leadership, will lead to its eventual supersession by a strong personal ruler. Can Hua Kuo-feng press his initial advantage to entrench himself in the leading role, or will someone else emerge? In other Communist systems, the eventual successor has triumphed by controlling personnel policy (Stalin), by resorting to clandestine factional maneuvers (Stalin and Khrushchev), or by appealing to outside constituencies (Khrushchev, and to some degree Brezhnev and Kosygin). The books under review are strongest in their analysis of these time-tested techniques, all of which have been and may continue to be used in the Chinese succession struggle.

But since the Cultural Revolution, it has been widely assumed that Chinese politics differs in certain crucial respects from other Communist systems, introducing new and incalculable variables into the succession equation. Integral to the Chinese conception of politics are such notions as "class struggle" and "mass movement," which suggest more latitude for mass participation in certain types of elite decisions than exists in other Communist systems.¹⁷ The medium through which this participation has been achieved in the past has been ideology, and ideology was thought to have been revitalized in turn by the participation that it legitimized. Articulating this ideology was a revered—even deified—party chairman, sur-

rounded by a group of publicists, who seemed to have fashioned a political tool capable of mobilizing support from a congeries of disprivileged social groups for a coherent set of radical policies. Though they received scant consideration in the prospectuses for the future examined here, a revitalized revolutionary ideology and a propensity for active mass participation in politics seemed to many to comprise the legacy of the Cultural Revolution.

At the time of writing, however, a new development has taken place in the succession struggle that may vindicate the authors' cursory treatment of this radical legacy and even throw open to question whether the Cultural Revolution left any enduring legacy at all. Hua Kuo-feng, without much heed for the radical commitments that accompanied his rise to national prominence, appears to have aligned with established military and bureaucratic elites to eliminate the radicals from contention in one fell swoop, despite the apparent efforts of mass supporters of the "gang of four" to register backing for their patrons through strikes and other forms of public agitation. The episode seems redolent of the 1953 purge of L.P. Beria by Stalin's heirs; the radicals, like Beria, had their own political base and in the view of the moderates in the ruling apparatus constituted a threat that had to be removed.

At present, the Hua group appears to be in control of the situation. But recent reports of continuing ferment in the provinces make it clear that mass activism has not vanished with the arrest of the radical leaders. This underscores the longer-range dilemma confronting the leadership. If Hua (or a successor) completely aban-

¹⁷ Elsewhere the reviewer has tried to show that this was true, for instance, of the Cultural Revolution. See Lowell Dittmer, *Liu Shao-ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Mass Criticism*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1974, pp. 295-335. Naturally, other types of decisions (foreign policy decisions, in particular) allow very little latitude for popular participation and may be viewed as issuing from a system of elite meetings.

¹⁵ Myron Rush, *Political Succession in the USSR*, New York, NY, Columbia University Press, 1965, Chap. 4 *et passim*.

¹⁶ Parris Chang, "Mao's Last Stand?" *Problems of Communism*, July-August 1976.

dons the radical legacy, he will be thrown into the arms of China's more coercive political organizations. On the other hand, the leadership clearly cannot and would not choose to revert to the unreserved embrace of activism as advocated by Mao. The basic issue, then, is whether Mao's successor will be able to find some

stable middle ground between repression and permanent revolution. A possible avenue of approach may lie in taming the revolutionary ideological heritage—specifically in Hua's editorial revisions of the forthcoming fifth volume of Mao's selected works—and in providing scope for a civil form of mass participation under

the chaperonage of mass organizations aligned with the center.

The alternatives ahead are not easy ones, and the future is still uncertain. In any case, with her first succession crisis, the People's Republic of China has clearly turned a corner and launched into a new phase—one in which decisive changes could yet occur.

East Europe's Economic Reforms

By Andrzej Brzeski

JAN MARCZEWSKI. *Crisis in Socialist Planning: Eastern Europe and the USSR*. Tr. from French by Noel Lindsay. New York, NY, Praeger, 1974.

L. A. D. DELLIN and HERMANN GROSS, Eds. *Reforms in the Soviet and Eastern European Economies*. Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, D. C. Heath and Co., 1972.

IANCU SPIGLER. *Economic Reform in Rumanian Industry*. London, Oxford University Press, 1973.

JANUSZ G. ZIELINSKI. *Economic Reforms in Polish Industry*. London, Oxford University Press, 1973.

AS EARLY AS 1966, Gregory Grossman writing in this publication observed that "nearly all the countries of Eastern Europe [had] succumbed . . . one after the other, like so many dominoes, to the winds of economic change." Only Romania and Albania had "escaped the epidemic of eco-

nomie reform."¹ Today, ten years later, there are no exceptions: all the Communist countries of Eastern Europe have carried out reforms, and no doubt further changes are in store.

Of course, attempts to streamline Communist economies, to make them more efficient, are anything but new. From the earliest Soviet era, Communist leaders—including Lenin—have for one reason or another tinkered with their economies. Yet, the main features of Stalin's system seemed to have solidified after 1931, and it was this Soviet prototype—proclaimed as the ideal blueprint—that spread indiscriminately throughout Eastern Europe in the postwar years. All local critics of this model were silenced; indeed, even the outside world began to regard it as a crude but nonetheless awesome engine of material progress. Not

until the mid-1950's (if one excepts Tito's heresy) was the case for a general overhaul of the Soviet-type economies opened, by the historic Polish debate on the "economic model of socialism." However, it was only when the rates of growth of the East European economies tapered off drastically at the beginning of the 1960's that economic reforms were proposed and essayed on a wide front.

In attempting to assess the past, present, and future of economic reforms in Eastern Europe, we are faced with a growing array of literature, in a dozen different languages—beyond anyone's capacity to keep abreast. The four books under review offer a mere sampling from this mass of writings. Jan Marczewski's volume, despite its brevity, is comprehensive and self-contained. He proceeds from a description of the old Stalinist system to a cross-national survey of changes in the planning and management of agri-

¹ Gregory Grossman, "Economic Reform: A Balance Sheet," *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), November-December 1966, p. 43.