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Mao Tse-tung and China

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its merry way, one instantly senses he is also addressing any large modern organization. The bottom line of this fascinating work emerges with force. How can overcontrol, rigidity, and inflexibility mesh with managing the great stresses and crises of world war. It is a chapter right out of tomorrow's lecture: "Managing the modern defense establishment." It is, as an impressed student once muttered, "nonquant all the way!" Dixon spares no one in his candid overview of British military leadership. From the Crimea to Singapore, to Arnhem; from dolts of the battlefield to geniuses; from Nelson to Rommel and Zhukov, they come under his steely and perceptive stare. Dixon should be read. He will make you uncomfortable and insecure. He will make you think. And maybe, just maybe, he will cause us to nod ever so slightly in the direction of change. This is a book no war college worth its competence should be without. Come, let us all be angry together.

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FitzGerald, C.P. *Mao Tse-tung and China*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1976. 166pp.

Brief and readable, C.P. FitzGerald's most recent book is a good introduction to developments in 20th-century China and Mao's role in shaping these events. Although written by a senior academic in the field of Chinese studies, the book was not written for scholars of East Asia. It contains no footnotes and only a short reading list at the end.

The book is straightforwardly arranged by chronology. The first seven chapters deal with discrete periods of time and articulate Mao's involvement and growth in stature during these periods. The chapters by period are: Youth and Background; The Young Communist; Guerrilla War; Yenan and the Japanese War; The Last Civil War; Mao Tse-tung in Power: 1949-1957;

Policy Conflicts: 1957-1966; and The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. During the course of the narrative, the emphasis is sometimes on Mao, sometimes on revolution. As a compromise, the book is neither definitive biography nor complete history, although it does competently cover the major events of the periods reviewed.

FitzGerald's generally sympathetic view of the Chinese revolution gives the work a systematic bias. For instance, the author quotes an unnamed British diplomat's estimate of the number of people executed in the purges of the early 1950's as being between 100 and 150,000. This figure calls into question the more widely accepted figures in Western scholarship of several million executed. A second example is that he is much less critical than many American scholars of the Great Leap forward in the late 1950's, intimating that the droughts of that period would have resulted in mass famine had the Great Leap not taken place at all. FitzGerald's sympathetic views are worth consideration, but they should be weighed against other available studies.

The central thesis in the book is that Mao has been the main force in guiding the Chinese revolution and in making it successful. In the late summer of 1970, at the Second Session of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, Lin Piao and Ch'en Po-ta eulogized the theory of the "genius in history," naming Mao Tse-tung as an outstanding example of the theory in practice. Mao's subsequent speech strongly condemned the genius in history theory, Mao himself seeming to be afraid of what he called "kicks under the table while hiding the feet." The account of these events in the chapter on Lin Piao is one of the more valuable aspects of the book. It shows how the "kicks under the table" turned into an assassination attempt on Mao by Lin, and how the response by Mao was swift and deadly.

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FitzGerald seems to opt for the great genius theory:

If the "rare genius" theory, which Mao himself so fiercely condemns, is not the whole explanation of the transformation, it must be said that the leadership of Mao Tse-tung has contributed a very significant influence and, in the years of full power, has become a dominant factor.

Further on, he again endorses the genius theory:

The Cultural Revolution was his (Mao's) answer, and yet the very boldness and originality of such a response might be taken as a proof of political skill of such rarity as to be close to genius.

As a proponent of the genius theory, FitzGerald is interested in the problems of succession to Mao, and in whether or not the revolution can continue without his moving genius. The last chapter is devoted to speculations about succession. He dismisses the possibility of an emergent joint leadership as lacking precedent. Of the few names he mentions, Wang Hung-wen's is the most discussed, and Teng Hsiao-p'ing's is the least. Subsequent events have shown that Western speculations have been wrong, and FitzGerald's speculations are no exception.

The epilogue weakens the argument of Mao's primacy in the Chinese revolution. The book was written after the Fourth National People's Congress in January 1975, in which Chou En-lai took prominent part, but before Chou's death in early 1976. The final sentences of the book indicate that Chou En-lai has been as important a figure in China's recent history as has been Mao Tse-tung:

Mao is endorsed as Chairman and Commander-in-Chief, the highest position in the state; Chou En-lai is endorsed as Prime Minister. Both are old; Chou has been a sick man for nearly a year, and Mao

Tse-tung is rarely seen in Peking. Whatever else the Congress may have decided, the great and vital question of who will succeed these two dominant figures remains unanswered.

What now remains unanswered is whether or not it might have been equally justified to have written a genius in history book about Chou En-lai rather than about Mao Tse-tung. The comparative evaluation of Chou's and Mao's places in Chinese history awaits further study by both Eastern and Western scholars.

FitzGerald lucidly describes the ebb and flow of Mao's power over the course of 80 years, half of them spent as the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party. Chief among Mao's abilities was the ability to survive, whether it be from the rigors of the Long March, from the political isolation he found himself in when Liu Shao-ch'i became head of state, or from the assassination attempt by Lin Piao. As Mao himself put it regarding attacks against him, "the man recovered from the bite, the dog it was that died." Mao might have gone on to point out that after the man died, the dogs would snap at each other.

The introductory nature of *Mao Tse-tung and China* will make it satisfying to those first taking an interest in Chinese affairs, but insubstantial for anyone having already read a good biography of Mao or a history of modern China. It is a book that could be recommended for an introductory course on 20th-century China. FitzGerald is to be commended for writing clearly, with wide knowledge and understanding. The lack of citation of source materials and the inconsistency of the central thesis frustrate someone looking for a more comprehensive work by a Sinologist of long experience.

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