

authors have also created extensive cross-references between entries which allow the reader to move easily through the dictionary. The A–Z entries range in length from half a page to two or three pages. While a publication such as this is necessarily limited by space, this dictionary contains detailed lists for further reading which take account of recent publications and should allow a reader to pursue any of the subjects in much greater depth.

In reviewing a reference book that sets out to provide concrete facts to the reader, the focus should perhaps be on its factual accuracy. And while it is hard to fault the content of this book as it has been written, the authors have selected the 15th Party Congress as their cut-off point. This has meant that the entries do not reflect the major changes made to personnel and government organization at this year's National People's Congress (NPC); thus for example, the entry on education discusses the organization of the State Education Commission which was disbanded at that meeting. While the authors were no doubt working to tight deadlines, it seems a shame that publication could not have been delayed to reflect the outcomes of such a significant meeting. Elsewhere, the only factual error this determined reviewer could find was the use of 1995 figures for the population of Sichuan. While these were no doubt correct for 1995, they do not reflect Sichuan's population after the creation of Chongqing municipality in 1997 which meant it was no longer the most populous province in China.

The selection of subjects has clearly been undertaken with some care as they cover a wide variety of areas and balance both contemporary and more historical issues well. Selection is always a highly subjective task: with more space one might question why certain provinces have been omitted and why, for instance, there is an entry on Tibetans, but not Uyghurs or Mongolians, and an entry on Seypidin Azizi but not Ulanfu. With regards to the political system, a section on *guanxi* and informal relationships in the political process would have been a useful addition. However these are very minor omissions.

This dictionary fills the need for a reliable and manageable reference work on the Chinese political system, bridging the gap between more academic publications and the bulky volumes of classic reference works on China. As the introduction rightly points out, it will prove very useful for students as well as government, media and business personnel seeking information on China. However, at £60.00 in hardback, it seems likely that libraries, companies and other large institutions will be the main purchasers.

IAN SECKINGTON

*Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution.* By YAN JIAQI and GAO GAO. Translated and edited by D. W. Y. KWOK. [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press (SHAPS Library of Translations), 1996. xxv + 659 pp. \$48.00. ISBN 0-8248-1695-1.]

The task which the authors of the present work have set themselves is “to investigate the causes of the Cultural Revolution, the course of the

revolution itself, and the principles and methods for preventing its recurrence under possible new guises" (p. xxiv). That is to say, they attempt rather more than the mere chronicling of events or simple narration of a "story." Their aim is to *explain* what is probably the most extraordinary political movement in China's modern history. However, what counts as an adequate explanation of a historical phenomenon must, in the words of Hayden White, "be adjudged to be 'relative' to the time, place and cultural conditions of its formulation" (*Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 30, p. 244). And, reading *Turbulent Decade* more than 20 years after its initial gestation and a decade after it first appeared in Chinese, one cannot help but feel that whereas it may well have counted as an "adequate" explanation then, it is rather less than convincing by today's standards of scholarship. As a history, Yan's and Gao's work is by now clearly inferior to the work being done by historians at the CCP Central Party History Research Office, Contemporary China Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing University and elsewhere in China.

The form of *Turbulent Decade* is essentially that of a chronological narrative, with some overlap between the three parts of which it is made up: "The 'Need for More Personality Cult'", "The Rise and Fall of Lin Biao"; and "Jiang Qing and the Politics of the Cultural Revolution." In 1987, the eminent historian Wang Nianyi from China's National Defence University had already published an extended scholarly critique of its first edition in *Dangshi tongxun* (*CCP History Bulletin*), listing numerous factual inaccuracies and mis-representations. One would have expected the authors to pay Wang's amicably-worded critique the attention it deserved and revise their work accordingly – especially since, living in exile, they now no longer have to worry about censorship. But instead their work continues to be fuelled by a mix of intellectual arrogance and ignorance. Uncritical use of secondary sources of dubious reliability leads them to make a number of quasi-empirical statements – on which their analyses are then made to rest – that are simply untrue. Their claim that Lin Biao in his speech at the Lushan Plenum on 23 August 1970 "discoursed copiously on the question of genius" (p. 307) is completely false, as anyone familiar with the transcript of Lin's speech will know. Peng Zhen's "February Outline" did not "call for doubting everything" (p. 200), as anyone in possession of a copy can confirm. If the authors had bothered to search for a single actual quotation to buttress their claim that Lin Biao had a habit of "parading the 'Peak Theory' (*dingfenglun*) slogan" (p. 184), they would have discovered that Lin never once referred to such a "theory."

The persuasive power of many statements in this book would have been enhanced considerably had the authors occasionally inserted qualifying markers such as "appeared to," "as far as we know," "may," "might" or "one would like to believe..." But instead of admitting that what much of what they say still remains to be proven, the authors assert simplistically that they *know* what "Mao dreamed of ..." (p. 306), the "Chinese Communist Party has a tradition of believing ..." (p. 257), and

Lin Biao “also pondered” (p. 310). Given their disciplinary background in political science and sociology, it is particularly surprising that they appear to have little appreciation of the *complexity* of politics. Often their explanations are too simple to be convincing (e.g. Tao Zhu’s alleged inability to “comprehend,” “realize,” or “fathom” the machinations of the people who toppled him (pp. 116–17)).

The present edition is a great improvement on an earlier unauthorized English-language edition published in Taipei (reviewed in *The China Quarterly*, No. 122, pp. 311–13). Its user-value has been greatly enhanced by the addition of a translator’s preface, extensive translator’s notes and a Chinese-English glossary. Unfortunately, the apparent unfamiliarity of the translator with the subject matter of the Cultural Revolution has resulted in some irritating non-standard terminology (e.g. “capitalist” rather than “bourgeois” for *zichan jieji*; “Ministry of Propaganda” rather than “Propaganda Department” for *xuanchuanbu*) and the occasional serious gaffe (e.g. *bigongxin* translated as “ruthlessly forced confessions and letterwriting” (p. 198) and *wuqi yi gongcheng* translated as “Outline of the May 1971 Project” (p. 422)). But otherwise the translation is quite readable.

Teachers searching for a history of the Cultural Revolution to assign to students may want to consider, instead of Yan’s and Gao’s work, Barbara Barnouin’s and Yu Changgen’s superior *Ten Years of Turbulence: The Chinese Cultural Revolution* (published in 1993). It is rather more expensive, but on the whole more accurate and better written.

MICHAEL SCHOENHALS

*Portugal, a China e a “Questão de Macau”*. By FRANCISCO GONÇALVES PEREIRA. [Macau: Instituto Português do Oriente, 1995. 192 pp. ISBN 972-8013-14-0.]

This book, written by a practising and experienced Portuguese lawyer from Macau, addresses two fundamental themes: the historical evolution of Macau’s political status determined by changes in the relative positions of Portugal and China and the interaction between their individual strategies towards Macau; and the impact of the transition process on the nature and main features of Macau’s present constitutional status and system of government. The volume is structured around a series of papers previously published by the author between 1986–1994 (with the exception of Chapter 9) and reorganized in two parts for greater coherence.

Regarding the historical evolution of Macau’s political status, Pereira argues that Portugal has always had a limited sovereignty over Macau as demonstrated by the prevalence of dualistic tax, legal and social systems and the payment by Portugal of a rent (*foro do chão*) until at least the mid-19th century. However, as he rightly points out, there have been periods where Portugal increased its control and successfully removed