

enthusiastic interest in social change. It is an enthusiasm which is clearly transmitted to the reader. The result is a political sociology of the People's Republic of China which will be of use to a wide range of undergraduate students in the social sciences.

One problem faced by every introduction to China during a period of rapid change such as has been experienced during the 1980s is the need for up-to-date information. Blecher meets this by concentrating on more recent developments and summarizing what he considers the necessary background of earlier history. Thus, there are chapters on the Chinese Communist Party's rise to power; and an outline survey of 1949–85; as well as a short but stimulating chapter comparing Chinese and Soviet socialism. In addition, this third chapter challenges the notion that Chinese politics since 1949 has been in any sense cyclical. Blecher argues that the Cultural Revolution was not the re-enactment of the Great Leap Forward, but a new synthesis; and that developments since 1978 have no precedent in China. Political change results from a learning process rather than simply the alternation of rival policies and leadership factions. The remaining four chapters discuss the 1980s in terms of government and politics; social change; the economy; and domestic and foreign policies more generally.

Blecher's exploration of Chinese socialism starts from a fairly obvious contrast with the Soviet experience. He highlights the fact that the Chinese Communist Party was originally rural based with a broadly popular participatory politics. Unfortunately, that observation is not consistently or convincingly pursued as a theme. Other themes – for example, the emergence of an East Asian model of development, or the pattern of intra-elite conflict – seem to intrude disproportionately to the detriment of the broader perspective. Thus, in describing the Socialist Education Movement of the early 1960s Blecher becomes almost carried away by the detail of relations within the elite and Mao's later perspective of "Two-line struggle."

DAVID S. G. GOODMAN

China's Legal Development. Edited by JOHN R. OLDHAM. [Armonk, New York and London: M. E. SHARPE, 1986. 315 pp. \$50.00.]

China's Legal Development is a hardcover reprint of seven articles from the May 1983 issue of the *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, which was specially devoted to the People's Republic of China, plus two additional contributions. It shares the usual virtues and vices of symposium volumes – there are some interesting articles, but the collection as a whole displays little unity either of theme or of quality.

The good news is that the book contains, for those unable to find it elsewhere, the best available bibliography of English-language sources on modern Chinese law by Jeanette Pinard of the Library of Congress. No student should be without it. There is also a thorough, if slightly dated (1984), treatment of tax aspects of doing business in the

People's Republic by Timothy Gelatt and Richard Pomp. Stanley Lubman contributes a thoughtful survey of western scholarship on Chinese law and highlights problems for research and methodology, and Professor Rui Mu of Beijing University provides an interesting account of economic law and legislation in China.

Those who buy the book on the strength of the title will be disappointed. Leaving the bibliography out of consideration, only three of the remaining eight contributions can really be said to be about the development of law in China. Three other contributions are about international legal issues, one is about the teaching of international law in China, and one is about western scholarship on Chinese law.

Perhaps most disappointing is the evidence provided by the book that Chinese scholars capable of much better are still allowed to reproduce the standard government line and have it called scholarship. The preface notes that in an article by a Chinese scholar on the international legal aspects of the Taiwan issue, the author's views, "while stated in his private capacity as a scholar, coincide with the official position of the Chinese government . . ." (p. ix). Just coincidence? Similarly, another article on "Building new China's legal system" is more suited to the *Beijing Review* than to the academic journal where it first appeared. Four editors of the *Journal* worked to translate this lengthy piece, although it contains not a single original insight or argument of importance. It is all very well to understand the difficult position of the Chinese intellectual community, but I do not believe we do it any favour by maintaining the polite fiction that this sort of thing is scholarship. Nor can we continue indefinitely justifying the publication of such pieces as "an articulate presentation of the views of the Chinese Government" or something like that. Let the government find its own publisher. We will not hear the true voices of Chinese scholars until we abandon misplaced notions of good manners and a patronizing double standard.

DONALD C. CLARKE

Rural China Today. By FRANK LEEMING. [London and New York: Longman, 1985. 201 pp.]

Readers of *The China Quarterly* have doubtless learned to expect little from popular literature on China bearing titles like *Rural China Today*. But *this* effort manages possible fulfilment of our most naive expectations: it makes sense of China's often exotic rural institutions and the complexity of their recent evolution, summarizing the principal lines of geographic diversity, differentiating theory from practice, and all in a 200-page well-organized and cohesive account that can be absorbed by the least initiated reader.

Frank Leeming's specialty is geography which probably provides the best basic orientation for this kind of task. Any general