



## THE POLYGLOT'S SHELF

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### *Hanseatic coolness*

Helmut SCHIMDT,  
*Menschen und  
Mächte*, Siedler  
Verlag, Berlin, 1987.

On the aims and pretenses of **Men and Powers**, the reader is clearly informed already in the Preface. "This is not an attempted autobiography, as I have always been suspicious of political self-reflections. By their very nature, they are a temptation for the author to portray himself free of errors, or at least in a better light than later historical judgment would justify ... I would not like to pretend that I am supplying a version of the history of my time as experienced by myself; I would rather prefer to pass on what I have learnt or understood from foreign interlocutors. I am not relying on official documents, or on files which have recently been made public, and not even on publications by these interlocutors of mine. I am no historian, and the dealings and analyses described here rely on my own, personally kept notes. They furnish no objective view of history, but rather the impressions from which I acted, or thought I was acting, with the impressions and judgments which I achieved".

The composition of Schmidt's book, in fact, reflects the world-political structure. The main theme is on how to live with the Russians, the second deals with the problems of the USA with regard to its role as a world-power, the third describes China as the

third world-power, and the text is rounded off by Schmidt's considerations from a European point of view.



Schmidt begins with his first meeting with Brezhnev in May 1973. "This was the beginning of a very special and personal relationship between a Russian, emotional yet thoroughly capable of political calculation, and a cool, though by no means emotionless North German". The meeting opened with a complex and sensitive dialogue about the suffering resulting from the Second World War, and Schmidt's account immediately clarifies how one of his central poles of political thinking is the experience of the war generation, with all its infernos, corpses and fearful impressions which could not even be erased even by such an active political life as his own.

These world-political observations obviously mirror the many-faceted personal relationships Schmidt had as fifth Chancellor of West Germany. A Hanseatic form of attraction to Herbert Wehner is noticeable, as also the respect he had for the analytical and conceptual gifts of Egon Bahr, whilst it is impossible not to sense a certain disdain for Willy Brandt. Many of these domestic figures are briefly men-

tioned, but in general remain flat and unclear; at the best, he mentions these personalities only in-so-far as they are pawns in the game of international dynamics, (which is the game he prefers to deal with), and treats all phenomena, however different, in accordance with his own basic concepts of undeniable pro-Western alliance, national responsibility, and strategic balance. Anything nearer than these world-political horizons merely receives borderline attention, as example his first meeting with Erich Honecker.

This is in line with the traditions followed by all previous West German Chancellors, as is also the emphasis on the American guarantee for the freedom and security of West Germany. Schmidt only rarely shows emotion, as in the passages on his pro-American declarations on entry into office in 1969, and on his fall in 1982, yet this does not hinder him from unsparingly criticising Carter or Reagan, to both of whom is attributed a fair share of amateurism. Looking back with some historical remove, he will probably have to correct this opinion of the Reagan administration, at least in the field of defence policy.

Schmidt then retraces the development of his image of America going back to the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Tom Sawyer" of his schooldays, and to his reading of Whitman, Dreiser, Lewis, Faulkner, Hemingway and Stein-

beck at the end of the war. "I was enthused by their maturity and strength". As an itinerary of Schmidt's intellectual development, this is the most personal part of the book, and will change the minds of those who have seen purely him as an active politician. At the same time, the statesman's later dilemma is made clear. Schmidt is fascinated by the USA, and places his sympathies and feelings in that direction, but when obliged to condemn harshly the political reasoning of the various American administrations, he shows all the classic symptoms of the disillusioned lover. His desire to understand the motives and identify the ideals behind American actions is obliged to give way to merciless condemnation, and only Gerald Ford, Henry Kissinger and George Shultz ultimately survive his judgement.

Some readers will certainly wonder on what authority he can look down and show either praise or criticism on his former interlocutors. This, however, is his Hanseatic coolness at work, awarding the leading actors of world politics a schoolmark for their behaviour. Here, Schmidt's subjective ranking takes over from historical reasoning, and the enlightened reader will draw his own conclusions. Schmidt ranges widely from his touching declarations of sympathy for the USA, to what amounts to a political credo: "American policy towards the rest of the world is shaped by idealism, romanticism

and belief in its own power and greatness: if the rest of the world does not espouse American ideals and American ways of achieving them, then it is just too bad for the rest of the world!" Explicative, and yet reflective of the ambivalence in Schmidt's feelings, this lyrical passage concludes the chapter on the only note of emotion which the author allows himself.

Schmidt also gives a further example of his analytical power in the closing parts of the book, dedicated to the rise of China, to the course undertaken by Japan, and to his preoccupation over Europe. The increasing complexity of the international situation, the growing speed of change, and the dynamics of new problems, all make the question of Europe's ability to act the key

theme behind German politics. Schmidt's warnings against European short-sightedness seem justified: "The Western European states must thus combine their interests, in order to become politically, militarily and economically capable of action in world politics".



**A political personality of world renown, Helmut Schmidt represented the SPD for many decades in the German Parliament. He has been leader of the SPD Parliamentary group, Defence Minister, and Finance Minister, and was Chancellor from 1974 to 1982. Today he is on the editorial board of the German weekly "Die Zeit".**

Werner Weidenfeld

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### *The man in the grey coat*

Michel TATU,  
*Gorbachev: l'URSS  
va-t-elle changer?*  
Editions du  
Centurion-Le Monde,  
Paris, 1987.

**M. Gorbachev** and the question whether **the USSR is going to change**, have been the subject of numerous analyses over the last few months, but this one deserves a particular position in the ranks of the literature on the CP-SU General Secretary and his domestic and international policies. Tatu's book is not only a biography but also an assessment of his political plan and his chances of success in the attempt to renovate Soviet society. The focus of

the analysis is therefore domestic, whilst the dynamism and new approaches he has introduced into Soviet foreign policy, with all their undoubted successes, have only a marginal position in the book.



The section of the book devoted to reconstruct Gorbachev's biography is the product of original and careful research. Michel

Tatu has attentively sought new sources and new information on a character whose past life and career still present appreciable unknown areas, despite the clamour he has caused. And he has been careful to check details, and avoid the hagiographic propaganda and genuine misinformation which always accompany the succession of a new leader in the Kremlin. Thanks to the great wealth of information made available by the SOVT network, (a data bank specialized on the Soviet Union), it has been possible for Tatu to carry out a series of cross-checks on the careers of personalities favoured by Gorbachev since his coming to power, and thus reconstruct a map of the "debts" Gorbachev has incurred in the past with the *nomenklatura* of which today he declares to be the reformer.

Some light is thus thrown on the ambiguities of this character — the only "younger" man chosen and co-opted by a gerontocracy so immobile as to be almost mummified, the aim of this operation being clearly to perpetuate the system by guaranteeing an exclusively biological renewal.

This obviously does not mean, however, that once esconced in the Kremlin, the new General Secretary is not capable of freeing himself from pacts and setting himself his own political objectives; one of the most common acts of political life is revolt against one's own king-makers, or even, in the most tragic of political environments, parricide. A

young and internationally very successful leader like Gorbachev, who can expect to stay in power for life, and is understandably anxious to leave his mark on the Soviet regime and society, could easily discover that his political objectives mix continuity and innovation in different proportions and emphases to those, for example, of a Gromyko. Yet as far as his coming to power is concerned, the fact is that the "junior" Gorbachev was chosen by the fossilized Soviet leadership purely for his similarity with his "seniors", i.e. for his "junior/senior" personality.

This is not new for those readers acquainted with other Gorbachev biographies — that by Zhores Medvedev, for example — and in general for those who understand the functioning of societies in which the selection of the power elite takes place by co-optation. Moreover, Tatu is not prejudiced against Gorbachev; on the contrary, he allows his sympathy to show clearly. With respect to the image of Gorbachev we have had up to now, what is new in this acute and precise reconstruction, is the profile of an ambitious politician, born and bred in a society by now without any innovatory ferment, completely extinguished, where the dominant caste is blindly attached to its privileges, and its subjects have learnt from Russian, and even more, Soviet, history, to be content with mere survival, and not to harbour any pernicious illusions: to supply

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nothing but minimum effort, more often than not simply pretending to work.

In order to further his ambitions, the junior Gorbachev had to make himself noticed by those in power without engendering alarm as a potential rival, thus having no alternative but to hide his ambitions and assume the most discreet — and the “oldest” — manner and become accepted as one of the many grey figures on the generally grey scene. His personal story, as described by Tatu, reminds us of that of Julien Sorel, the unforgettable hero of *Le Rouge et le Noir*: he had dreamt of enrolling in the dragoons, but understood that in Restoration society, in many aspects similar to the USSR today, it was “more useful for his hypocrisy” and for his fortune, to take the cloth, even though his faith was not sufficiently strong as to prevent his betraying the sacrament in Madame de Renal's bed. Like Julien Sorel, Gorbachev “knows where he is going, but also knows when to make the necessary deviations.”

Yet, as stated above, Tatu's book is not only a novel reconstruction of Gorbachev's personality and his ambiguities. It is also an appraisal of his political project, as developed over the last three years since March 1985, when, with Gromyko's determining help, he reached the summit of Soviet power. The stages of this are well-known. From a simple re-launch of Andropov's efforts to give new life

to the declining Soviet economy, through an increase in pressure on the population, by then even physically exhausted, to “radical reform” and *glasnost*, Gorbachev's objectives in domestic politics have been getting more and more ambitious. But the results of this first three-year period are almost nil, and this leads Tatu to a fairly pessimistic conclusion.

It may be observed, of course, that it is too early to draw up a definitive balance, though in politics, three years may be considered quite long depending on the situations, actors and on their strategies. Immediately after access to power, every politician usually declares the most important measures in his programme, because the logic of succession itself involves the possibility of modifying or reversing policies which have failed, by crediting responsibility for them to the preceding ruler. As permanence in power is prolonged, however, it gets more and more difficult to change course, because this implies an admission of error — or at least of co-responsibility — which can even be paid for by the loss of power. A political course must thus be changed by degrees, and minimized in public declarations, trying to keep as much as possible the appearance of surface continuity.

At the beginning of a mandate, then, it is generally better to get things done quickly, if changes with respect to the past are to be introduced. With the passing of

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time and the accumulating of responsibility, those in power normally tend not to correct errors, but to "gain time", as in the language of all *nomenklaturas* in the world is commonly termed what ordinary people would name "wasting time".

This general rule is all the more true for a leader such as Gorbachev, who reached his position of power in order to carry out reforms indispensable for the survival of the regime, and declaredly to correct the insufficiencies and immobility of the Brezhnev years. In this case, three years are more than enough to be able to draw up a preliminary balance; and this is also proven by the fact that in the field of foreign policy, where he has met with favourable conditions, Gorbachev in his first three years has not restricted himself to mere verbal escalation towards more and more audacious objectives. He has acted at a devilish pace, obtaining remarkable results in both real agreements and propaganda, and is battling for more — immediately.

No one would think of contesting the fact that after three years a positive balance in foreign affairs is possible. Analogously, however, it is not too soon to give a negative balance to *perestroika*, nor is it prejudiced to say that the escalation of domestic political objectives such as intensification, *perestroika*, *glasnost*, and even democratization as a "guarantee of the unreversibility of the changes under

way", is like the continual raising of the stakes by a poker player who loses one round after the other. Gorbachev, just when he is reaping in the greatest international success, seems to have exhausted — as *Le Monde diplomatique* has written — the possibilities on the domestic front offered by the "state of grace" of his first few years.

Tatu's precision in his description of the nature of the obstacles Gorbachev's reforms have had to face could not be better matched: the entire Soviet system is built in order not to evolve under the pressure of the real world, but on the contrary to resist this pressure as ferociously as is possible. Faced with this situation, declaring the inseparability between *glasnost*, democratization and the battle against bureaucratic paralysis, is a sign of weakness, just as "appealing to the *intelligentsia* and to the media, because this implies trying to use persons with no power at all, to overcome the resistance of those persons who control all the power: the officialdom of the Party apparatus. For this reason, any *glasnost* which does not quickly succeed in questioning the prerogatives of this apparatus is bound to appear fragile, and thus not sufficiently credible".



**Michel Tatu, born in 1933 in Lyon, is a graduate in "Hautes Etudes Commerciales". He has worked at the *Le Monde* from**

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1987 as correspondent in Moscow (1957-64), in the Middle East (1966-69) and Washington (1977-80). He was Head Foreign Correspondent for *Le Monde* (1977-80) and from 1980 he has been a columnist for the same

paper. A Member of the International Institute of Strategic Studies (London) and founder of SOVT, data bank on the USSR, he is one of the leading specialists on the Soviet World.

Giuseppe Sacco

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### *At face value*

Daniil PROEKTOR,  
Volker RÜHE,  
Karsten VOIGT,  
*Mehr Vertrauen,  
weniger Waffen.  
Militärische  
Entspannung in  
Europa aus  
sowjetischer und  
deutscher Sicht,*  
Verlag Bonn Aktuell,  
Bonn, 1987.

The concepts behind **More Trust, less Arms. Military Deterrence in Europe from the Soviet and German Points of View**, go back to the year 1978, and the book is about the East-West double option debate and its consequences. The authors, a Soviet and two West Germans, follow the line of their party political mentors, but know their subject thoroughly. They do not handle it with scholarly severity, but rather reflect the vivacity stemming from their positions as leading party members.

In Western Germany, the NATO double option has caused continuous discussion of the concept of military and political security by all the parties, even though none of the contributions to the debate can be said to exercise any decisive role in the defence of the country from military aggression.

The reasons for the book's appearance at this point, just ten years later, are to be found in the dynamics of security relations

between East and West, as also in the changes presently under way in the Soviet Union. In fact, the rapid succession of CPSU General Secretaries, and the 1982 change of government in Bonn led to the manuscript's publication being repeatedly postponed. Even now, inclusion of the events of Summer and Autumn 1987 would lead to alteration of the text, the situation of the two blocks in the light of the INF-decisions throwing up new questions and problems to which the book can only hint.



Using the rhetoric typical of Soviet officialdom, Daniil Proektor outlines the concept of security current in his country. His panorama begins with the "dialectic of our present era", and his reflections summarize all the commonplaces of Soviet security policies: preoccupation over the possibility of being surrounded, denunciation of US "hegemony", and justification of de-

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fence measures. Gorbachev's new course in Soviet politics is in evidence and alongside the economic role of arms control, and the desirability of conventional disarmament with regard to future world problems; Proektor emphasizes the aims of Soviet policy as being "to prevent war, and free humanity from nuclear weapons" (p. 74).

His plea for a new policy leads to the official Soviet project for step-by-step disarmament, the latter's clearly controversial political content explaining the restricted field open to action.

Both the German contributions treat the subject of security between East and West on the basis of the dominant - though - not unchallenged positions of the political parties to which the authors belong. Following Egon Bahr's formulation of "security partnership", Karsten Voigt (SDP) calls for a "reduction in antagonism, rather than deterrence" (p. 106). At the core of his reflections is the view that security may only be achieved and kept on a stable level by co-operation, and that co-operation is the only suitable way to introduce the reforms and changes needed to reduce the threat of aggression.

Along this line, Voigt demands comprehensive agreements over limitation of the use of force, protection against surprise attack, the establishment of a permanent "advisory group" including both sides, the reduction of conventional forces by 50%, and a change in military doctrine and

potential in the sense of an "ability not to attack". On the nuclear side, the concept includes the achieving of the zero option on intermediate-range missiles, the freezing of global strategic systems, and the shelving of SDI.

As important premises for a "second phase of detente policy" (p. 120), he finally mentions the corridor models for the disarmament of chemical and nuclear weapon systems in Central Europe, as developed by his own party together with the East German SED.

Volker Rühle supplements Voigt's point of view by formulating the moderately conservative CDU position. Starting from the concept of mutual security, (as a synonym for security partnership), Rühle refers the West's security beliefs to the concepts of "reciprocal security in the Alliance", and "reciprocal security between East and West", as so often used in Western Germany.

The first part of the formula requires more intensive information and consultation in order to strengthen the contents of the Atlantic Alliance. He views the primary task as the "strengthening of the European pillar" in NATO, (p. 149), to be attained by reviving the West European Union, (WEU), formulating a common European foreign policy, and taking effective measures in the fields of European economic, military and technical co-operation without the US nuclear guarantee losing its significance, however. For Rühle, re-



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ciprocal security must be strengthened through active armament control and disarmament policies, and he values the October 1986 summit in Reykjavik as a positive signal in this direction. Finally, he defers giving a decisive opinion on SDI in line with the present West German government until definitive research results are available.

Whilst Voigt's and Rühle's contributions exactly reflect the respective points of view to be met in West German political debate, the Soviet contribution is somewhat unconnectedly situated on the side. The ensemble is thus not very original, the authors having taken some efforts to conceal their intellectual powers behind the refined verbal packaging of politics. The reader who is less well acquainted with the subject, viz. West German political debate will nevertheless find the book, with its useful brief documentation at the end, a reliable guide to the confronting positions of the West German security issue, and a helpful compass in

this field thanks to the rapidly varying subject-matter.



**Prof. Dr. Daniil Proektor**, (b. 1917), is a leading scholar at the Institute for World Economy and International Relations of the Soviet Academy of Science in Moscow. He took part in the Second World War, still has the rank of Colonel, and taught for a long period at the Frunze Military Academy. Due to his many journeys, he knows West Germany, Europe, and the USA.

**Volker Rühle**, (b. 1942), is a member of the West German Parliament. He is presiding representative of the CDU/CSU group in the Bundestag, and their Spokesman for Foreign, Security, German and Development Policies.

**Karsten Voigt**, (b. 1941), is a member of the West German Parliament, and Foreign Policy Spokesman for the SPD group in the Bundestag.

Josef Janning

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### *Here to stay*

Aldo RIZZO, *Guerra e Pace nel Duemila*  
Laterza, Bari, 1987.

Showing an admirable capacity for synthesis and simplification, **War and Peace in the Year 2000** provides in 200 pages an explanation, intended for the layman, of all the main contempo-

rary issues related to defence and superpower equilibrium. Thus, a first section deals with the origin of the strategic nuclear balance commonly known as "Mutually Assured Destruction"

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and of its recent decline, leading to the the analysis of the growing insecurity in Western Europe, due to Russian conventional superiority. A second one is devoted to SDI and to similar Soviet endeavours. And four more chapters focus on the technological revolution under way in conventional arms, on the Eureka project, on proliferation, and on pacifism in the West. Finally, the conclusion discusses the ways in which, given an apparent Russian willingness to accept an agreement through reciprocal concessions, it could be possible to put an end to the present age of incertitude, and find a new, more stable superpower equilibrium.



The political relevance of this book is that it represents a typical European view of the main strategic issues of our times. Such a view can be found in two crucial statements.

The first is that "the concept of strategic defence has come to stay". This statement takes on a particular meaning when we think of the debate on the SDI project subsequent to the book's publication, and to the most recent developments of superpower summitry. On the one hand, after the initial enthusiasm, new, more limited aims have been given to the idea of a space shield, even by that section of the US scientific and military establishment that did not from the

outset oppose Reagan's proposals, on the unique grounds of domestic political prejudice and hostility, and of the internecine struggle among the various bureaucracies in uniform.

To a certain extent these aims have been confined to the defence not of the whole American territory, but to a selected number of areas of major strategic interest. On the other hand, and to an even greater degree, it is thought that in the last few months, the mistakes made in other fields and the rapid decline of the Reagan Administration have weakened the commitment to SDI. The possibility of a serious maiming of the project by Congressional and pro-Soviet forces has thus been made more realistic by the resignation of the US defence Secretary, Caspar Weinberger, and by the unashamed surfacing of Reagan's pathetic eagerness to reach a "historic agreement" with the Soviets before the end of his Presidency.

The second statement to be emphasized concerns what Rizzo sees as the most delicate problems - those of the European countries, during the formulation of a new global strategic balance. Up to today, these have been "dependent on America for their strategic security, and also obliged to blandish... the neighbouring Soviet Union: in effect, they are hostages, though in different senses, of both the former and the latter". The mere hypothesis of a radical subversion

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of the postwar order is already a dramatic challenge to these countries, which up to yesterday have demonstrated that "they have not wanted, or been able, to shake themselves free from this situation of dependancy. And here we find the difference between Europe and China, or Europe and Japan. Following their own ways and rhythms, both of these Asian nations have been preparing their role in the twenty-first century, the respective efforts involving problems and sacrifices. Europe has been in a condition which is largely unsustainable. The Western Europeans have thus considered the rules of the game to be different from those between the superpowers themselves, or between the superpowers and the emerging countries. The problem has thus not been to restrain impatience or mistaken calculations, but to defeat a prolonged period of apathy, or at least enter into the game, in order to avoid being excluded from it, and perhaps for ever".

Aldo Rizzo's European convictions are clearly to be seen here, even though he is careful to separate his own preferences from his

analysis of the global strategic situation. The most interesting pages thus include those on the Eureka project, on Edward Heath's pro-European plans for the role of Great Britain, on the contradictions between European ambitions and nationalist hesitations in France, and on the new "doctrine" regarding the conventional defence of Western Europe, (Airland Battle 2000). This relatively small book takes each of these themes, and presents their essential points, summarizing them with great lucidity, and stressing those questions which have become - after publication of the book - of even more vital interest.



**Aldo Rizzo is a columnist and special correspondent for the Turin daily newspaper *La Stampa*, and has been chief of the Rome editorial office. Between 1980 and 1983 he was director of the Radio channel GR-1. He is also author of *Il Problema nucleare*, Turin, 1966; *L'alternativa in uniforme*, Milan, 1973; and *La frontiera dell'eurocomunismo*, Rome, 1977.**

Giuseppe Sacco

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## *Asia without myths*

**In China and India: a sociological survey**, one of the most prestigious German sociologists and

his wife, a university trained educator and radio journalist, venture to give a general account of

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the political position, socio-economic situation, and range of developmental problems in the two largest Asian countries. The study systematically looks at the common aspects of, and the differences between, these countries, with special emphasis on written expression, social traditions, family, class, the Party, the socialist economy in the People's Republic of China, (hereafter the PRC), and language differentiation, religion, caste, generation gap and state capitalism in India. Differences between urban and rural society are emphasized in the case of both nations.

In a very brief conclusion, the authors then identify the weight and immobility of the Party and State bureaucracies as the major problem for the future development of the PRC, whilst India's progress seems to them to be threatened by the discrepancy between the establishment of that country as a nation-state, and the fact that it has so far been unsuccessful in nation-building. Yet despite these problems, both countries aspire to influence world politics, and, given the fact that they comprise about one third of the world's population, the authors feel that their future course seems eminently important.



The present reviewer does not claim any specialized knowledge of India, but over twenty-five years of continuous observation of developments in the PRC, he

has experienced a veritable flood of amateurish literature, produced by less-than-expert observers in the field of Chinese studies. These are amateurs who, after short, officially guided tours to the PRC, have ventured into generalized and over-euphoric statements which have strongly influenced Western public opinion, which were utterly misleading from the beginning, and which have been subsequently proved false by revelations from the PRC itself.

This booklet is definitely different from such sycophantic journalism, and the two authors take an extremely sober and cool approach. They have not been deceived by official propaganda, and do not lose their critical distance when faced with the objects of their enquiries. For general statements, they rely on decent, specialized scholarship, and for their impressions, rely on their own experiences during their travels, and are thus free from wishful thinking. They thus come to grasp the manifold and differentiated realities of the countries they are surveying.

In the section on the PRC, even a specialist on contemporary China would find very few errors. It should be pointed out that the Sinologists Wade and Giles were British, not American, (cf. p. 24), and the authors do not seem to know that Chinese ideograms have been computerized in Taiwan since 1981, without their use in data processing causing many problems.

Erwin K. and Ute  
SCEUCH *China und  
Indien: eine  
soziologische  
Landvermessung,*  
Edition Interfrom,  
Zürich 1987.

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On the other hand, the Scheuchs were well advised not to believe that the living standards of the rural population are now two to three times higher than that of urban dwellers. In fact, in the 1986 village/city ratio of real income per head was given as 1: 1.95 by official PRC sources. For the share of taxes and other payments by the peasants in exchange for the distribution of collectively owned land to individual families, the figure of 55 - 65% of the total crop seems too high, and the present reviewer's own research data indicate as more likely a variance of 27 - 46% (cf. p. 37). Furthermore, a study published in 1987 seems capable of estimating the average 1986 industrial wage as 111 Yüan, rather than "stagnating below" 100 Yüan, (cf. p. 48). Yet these are very minor flaws, and in any case are very rare.

In all, then, the Scheuchs have presented an excellent piece of sociological research, and even a specialist can learn much, particularly from their approach and from the sobriety of their statements. For the general, educated reader, this small book presents a condensed and well-organized panorama of facts,

which leaves whole libraries of Western travelogues on India and the PRC far behind. It would certainly be of great help in many Anglo-Saxon countries, if this study were soon published in an English translation.



**Erwin K. Scheuch**, born in 1928, is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Institute for Applied Social Research at the University of Cologne. He has published numerous studies in the fields of political sociology, income stratification, and other major subjects, and is mainly concerned with the situation in Western Germany. He has held visiting professorships at Harvard, Princeton, Auckland, Stockholm and Paris, and is considered one of the most outstanding academic representatives of German sociology. His wife, Ute Scheuch, was born in 1943, has an M. A. in education studies, and now works on the news programme of the German "Deutschlandfunk", a Cologne radio station connected with the West German government and broadcasting mainly into East Germany.

Jürgen Domes

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### *The imaginary Pyrenees*

**Like the teeth of a saw (France - Spain from 1975-1985; a decade)** deals with the relations of the Spanish society, and especially

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of the Spanish intellectuals, with France, starting with the analysis of the inferiority complex of Spain and the assumed superiority of France.

The analysis goes back to the closing years of the Franco regime, through the transition to democracy, the advent to power of the Spanish Socialist Party and the admission of Spain into the EEC. The later chapters look in more detail at specific areas: economic and cultural relations, the impact on the relations between the two governments of Basque nationalism and terrorism and the unending difficulties created by France to Spain's admission in the EEC.

The book concludes with a survey based on opinion polls of the two countries' perceptions of the other.



In his widely documented research and effort of interpretation, Acuña comes to the conclusion that France occupies a position of disproportionate importance within the wider framework of the relationship of Spanish society to the outside world, and that "the greatest historical mistake for Spain has been to underplay itself while exaggerating France and the French. Two mistakes which are now being rectified". The book's singularity is in its treatment of a subject not usually dealt with, enriching the paucity of literature on a topic certain to

interest experts in international relations.

The story of Franco-Spanish relation in the last decade is marked by the change in the position of France, from an attitude of coolness - if not hostility - which dates back to Spain's transition to democracy in 1975, to a rather intimate political relationship, due to the "family pact" between the two countries' Socialist Governments.

Acuña describes the firm support of West Germany to the Spanish transition from dictatorship to democracy, and contrasts this attitude with the grudging behaviour of conservative French President Giscard d'Estaing and Prime Minister Raymond Barre, which always seemed to cast doubts on Spain's credibility as a democratic country. This marks a strange inversion in the popular perception of the two countries. "For centuries, after the French revolution, France in Spanish eyes represented advanced ideas", and neither "the subsequent monarchic restorations nor Charles Maurras' nationalist and reactionary ideas in the 20th century ever succeeded in changing the algebric sign to this Spanish identification of France with the progressive".

At the same time, "Germany was identified as the representative of stability", and the associated ideas "of discipline and hierarchy seduced that section of the Spanish population that leaned towards militarism and strong

**Ramon-Luis ACUÑA**  
*Como los Dientes  
de una Sierra  
(Francia-España  
de 1975 a 1985,  
una decada),*  
Plaza & Janes,  
Barcelona, 1987.

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regimes.... Under Franco, official Spain kept in high esteem what it believed to be the German mind", but with the advent of democracy German support and French irritating hesitations brought about "a new phenomenon in Spanish social and cultural life: the appearance, probably for the first time in modern history, of the first progressives critical of France, and even anti-French".

Acuña believes that the causes of these difficult bilateral relations are to be found in terrorism and the EEC enlargement process, as well as the deeper and more pervasive factors - cultural, historical, sociological. Of course, at this peculiar passage of its history, "Spain needs France more than France needs Spain", so that "Spain is hypersensitive towards France. France is indifferent to Spain". A situation that Acuña, and many fellow Spaniards, tend to resent, in spite of the fact that they should know, from the fact that this same situation is curiously reproduced (in reverse) between Spain and Portugal, that it does not imply any feeling of superiority.

The main argument of the book, put in a fighting and spirited style, is that in France the political forces of the Centre and of the Right have never understood the Spanish reality, but that during the Mitterrand and Fabius rule the French comprehension of Spain greatly improved. "Mitterrand put Franco-Spanish relations on a par with those between

Spain and other EEC countries". Acuña adds to this the accusation that Giscard wanted to make Spain "a satellite" of France. On the contrary, Mitterrand and Felipe Gonzalez, their ex-Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Moran and Cheysson, and the French and Spanish Ambassadors, Guidoni and Raventos, are the people responsible for building the present "honeymoon" climate between the two countries. He argues that without the Socialists the "trans-Pyrenean misunderstanding" would have persevered.

For the future, "in spite of manifest signals of better relations, no one dares state that an unexpected return to past aggravations is impossible", as the recent confrontation over fishing rights at Fuenterrabia Bay has shown. But the Author is confident that the present collaboration against terrorism has placed the two countries' diplomatic friendship on firmer ground.



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