

kant geveg het) aan sy lesers voor lê. Die deel sal afgesluit word met A.C.H. Uggla se verslag oor die herdenkingsbyeenkomste van die slag van Magersfontein (Stockholm, 1926).

Op p. ix van die publikasie verskyn 'n bibliografie van bestoende werke in Afrikaans, Engels en Nederlands wat aandag aan die lotgevalle van die Skandinawiese korps wy, waaromtrent tans – danksy die jongste publikasie – meer bekend en toeganklik gemaak is as in die verlede die geval was.

Kol. Dr Jan Ploeger

Dick Wilson: *Mao the peoples Emperor*, Hutchinson, 1979, R25.75

Dick Wilson has written a detailed account of Mao Tse Tung's life, from his beginnings as a peasant's son, to the day he entered Peking to proclaim to China and to the world the beginning of a new order.

He invented for China a completely new system of life, economy and government. In the course of devising it he left behind a body of theoretical and expository writing – as well as a small collection of excellent poetry. His self-appointed task was the impossible one of dragging a decayed, corrupt and inefficient imperial order, which had moulded the Chinese people for many centuries, into modernity. By 1920, as a primary school headmaster, he became convinced that Communism was the only possible instrument for China to cut cleanly through to social justice and economic advance.

Mao struggled for thirty years to establish a Communist state with almost another thirty years of power to build Socialism in China.

His desire to seek power and to hold it, destroyed his own family: several of his children were lost in upheavals, his first wife met a violent death, his second wife died insane, while his third wife, two daughters and nephew were disgraced immediately after his own death, because of their political activities on his behalf.

The wonder of it is that Mao survived for so long. His position was often tenuous, and we will not know for several years what the Chinese themselves really think of Mao.

Mao's tragedy was that he could not in the end bring about all the reforms which he wanted for

China, he underestimated the resistance to them. This book presents the story of how he came to form those ideals, how he fought for them – against enemy and friend – and how in the end he failed.

J.C. Boshoff

De Villiers, Dirk en Johanna: *PW, Tafelberg* 1984, pp. 375.

Die verskyning van die eerste omvattende biografie oor die lewenswandel van die eerste staatspresident van Suid-Afrika onder die nuwe grondwetlike bedeling kon nie meer geleë gewees het nie. Terwyl die Republiek van Suid-Afrika nou op die drumpel van 'n nuwe staatkundige bedeling staan en terselfdertyd sterk na vore tree as 'n dinamiese faktor in interstaatlike betrekkinge in Suider-Afrika, is dit begryplik dat dit allerweë 'n nuwe belangstelling in die leidende staatsmanne gaande sal maak. En die sentrale figuur in al dié gebeure is uiteraard Pieter Willem Botha.

Soos tereg op die stofomslog aangedui word, het die skrywerspan Dirk en Johanna de Villiers wyd gesoek en diep gedelf in hul jarelange navorsing vir dié boek. Die eindresultaat is nie 'n enge en strakke kronologisering van biografiese feite nie, maar 'n gesaghebbende werk wat spreek van veelheid – nie net van feite nie, maar ook van insigte en perspektiewe.

Vanuit 'n militêre oogpunt beskou, is dit veral die 5de deel (DIE YSTERVUIS) wat in 1966 'n aanvang neem, wat van belang is. Nie alleen word die ampstermyn van mnr P.W. Botha as Minister van Verdediging (en later Eerste Minister) in fokus gebring nie, maar dit word ook aangebied teen 'n wyse agtergrondskildering van gebeure. Hierdie besondere kroniek het begin toe wyle dr Hendrik Verwoerd in April 1966 besluit het om mnr Botha as Minister van Verdediging aan te stel.

Mnr Botha se skertsende antwoord ("Maar Dokter, watter sonde het ek begaan dat jy my so moet straf?") was nogal nie sonder betekenis nie. Soos die skrywers trouens aandui, het mnr Botha "noulks kon besef watter moeilike taak Verwoerd in 1966 aan hom opgedra het." Dit was die begin van 'n nuwe en gevaarlike tydperk in Suid-Afrika, skaars losgesny van die Statebond, moes opnuut besin oor sy posisie in die internasionale gemeenskap. Dit was nie net die begin van koloniale ontvoogding in Suider-Afrika nie, maar ook van revolusionêre insluiping op die kontinent. En dan was daar die kwessie van wapenboikotte wat eers vrywillig-