

# A Note from the Editor

Chris Bramall

This issue of *The China Quarterly* is a watershed in being the last to include a *Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation*. The *Chronicle* was “...designed to provide a narrative, backed by documentation, of the major events of the preceding three months. In preparing it, the editorial board has as far as possible avoided comment” (Issue 1, March 1960). Its success in providing an enduring, illuminating and judgement-free record of developments in China over the last half century is not in doubt, and that success owes much to the work of its compilers — during the 1960s and early 1970s by the Editorial Board as a whole, in the mid and late 1970s by Brian Hook, Dick Wilson and Michael Yahuda, in the early 1980s by Gerry Segal and Tony Saich, and between 1982 and 2009 by Robert Ash. Since January 2009, the *Chronicle* has been edited by Rod Wye, who has not only maintained the *Chronicle's* meticulous standard of scholarship and breadth of coverage, but also brought a fresh eye and a sharp pen. Nevertheless, the dawn of the internet age, and the scope it provides for electronic searches, has increasingly restricted the usefulness of the *Chronicle* to the China Studies community. Perhaps the clearest indication of this is the limited number of times it has been downloaded in recent years. Accordingly, the Editorial Board, Executive Committee and I have concluded that the time has come to bring the *Chronicle* to an end. To Robert Ash, to Rod Wye and to their predecessors go our grateful thanks, and our appreciation of all that they have done to help us better to understand contemporary China.

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Since my remarks on the future direction of *The China Quarterly*, set out in the December 2011 issue, I have received a range of comments; I thank all of you who have taken the trouble to contact me. Many of the points I made were not new. The *Quarterly* has always given priority to some areas rather than others; I am doing little more than making that policy transparent. Moreover, my view that politics and economics have been neglected in recent years, and that too much contemporary research is myopic in its approach, only repeats the observations of several previous editors of the *Quarterly* (as published in the December 2009 issue).

Nevertheless, it is evident that my remarks have struck a chord with many readers, and that my intention of re-orientating the *Quarterly* towards the publication of more articles on contemporary politics and economics has been well-received. At the same time, a number of other readers have expressed concern that some areas will be marginalized in the process. I should like, therefore, to take this opportunity to re-assure these readers, as well as all prospective contributors to its pages, that high-quality articles will always be warmly received by the *Quarterly*, irrespective of the subject matter they address. On my watch as

editor, I have every intention of ensuring that *The China Quarterly* remains a broadly-based area studies journal and at the same time ensuring that macro-level political and economic issues receive the attention they deserve. Nor is this an empty promise. Our decision to bring the *Chronicle* to an end will now be freeing up new space for more diverse contributions to the journal, and I am happy to report that a large number of articles based on careful and extensive fieldwork are currently being assessed by referees; papers on the Cultural Revolution and the Great Famine are either in the publication pipeline or under active consideration; and a paper on house churches has recently been accepted for publication. Further, by adopting a more flexible approach to article length, it will now be possible for those whose research is primarily based upon fieldwork not only to report their detailed findings but also to situate their work within the context of larger issues and debates, and to draw out some of the more general implications of their work, both for China as a whole and for their respective disciplines.