

John

Felicity and I went into the city to hear Rowan Callick speak about China under Xi at an AIIA function. His analysis was truly alarming. It seems that China is now run by the Communist Party even more than it was under Mao. I asked C what influence the military has on policy. He said that the previous military heads had been sacked and were replaced by those who were educated in the Communist line and this applies more or less across the board, including in the media. Just about every important organisation has been “communised”. At universities there are watchers who reports on any dissidents and, at a recent discussion attended by students, seven cameras had been installed.

I asked Rowan if his critical remarks had put him in danger of being ostracised, even “punished”. He indicated that he is careful to avoid quoting those to whom he speaks, particularly as one academic to whom he spoke had been punished. I said that it sounded like the China which Pierre Ryckmans had experienced and he nodded.

Rowan had a written text and I asked two of the AIIA officers whether his speech would be circulated to AIIA members. They said they would try to arrange that. I thought it was remarkable that they had not already got his approval.

There is quite a bit more I could say but it is late and I hope the text will become available.

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