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book review of All We Are And All We Have by
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The Mind Of China's Ruling Class

ALL WE ARE AND ALL WE HAVE, by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

WE CHINESE WOMEN, by Mme. Chiang Kai-shek. John Day. \$1.25 each.

Reviewed by
Agnes Smedley

AFTER reading these two frail volumes, one lays them aside with mingled feelings. On the one hand they reflect the truly just demand of China and all submerged Asian peoples for national independence from the white imperialism which has ruled or dominated it for two centuries.

On the other hand, these writings reveal but the faintest realization of the meaning of political and economic democracy which advanced peoples of this age strive toward. Both volumes are a reflection of a small but well-entrenched ruling class of China which has concentrated all power in its hands and intends to give nothing which would weaken that power.

The volume of Generalissimo Chiang includes his writings and messages from Pearl Harbor to Nov. 17, 1942, while that by Madame Chiang includes speeches and writings from Feb. 12 to Nov. 16, 1942. The former volume begins with the Generalissimo's eloquent message to President Roosevelt, immediately after Pearl Harbor, while Madame Chiang's volume is more belligerent, scathing, and even arrogant.

Taken as a whole, the two booklets reflect the high confidence which Chinese of every class had in the prowess of American arms when the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor. China believed America to be invincible, but as months passed it saw rising Japanese imperialism take the white nations for a ride on their own terms and with their own weapons. A vast disillusionment unleashed a reactionary wave which strengthened semi-fascist forces within the Chinese government, which in turn further suppressed the democratic people's movement, which had been fighting for its life since 1939.

Generalissimo Chiang's speeches and messages often reveal an attempt to maintain the prestige of the western countries upon which he depends for arms and financial assistance. In the light of our defeats, however, his words often sound pathetic.

The Generalissimo hailed the abolition of British and American extra-territoriality in China as a sign of our sincerity, and the ringing of the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia as a "beautiful and touching gesture." Many of us, however, believe that gesture to be empty, for we abolished extra-territoriality only after the Japanese had beaten us to our knees.

Generalissimo Chiang's speeches show that he reacted immediately to every decent or efficient action we in America have taken. The abolition of extra-territoriality was, to him, a challenge to base China's life on basic social and political principles of the modern world. The rationing of food and the prosecution of violators in America caused him to speak scathingly to his own rich countrymen who, after five years of war, still tried to evade any sacrifice.

Despite such speeches, we see that the Chinese government still has not conscripted the sons of rich men. The Generalissimo merely appeals to them to "set an example to the people."

One is also amazed at his reasoning that the Chinese government is "liberal" because, after five years of resistance, it has done nothing to curtail normal commercial transactions in foodstuffs. Similarly, Madame Chiang's statement in one of her articles that China is ploughing in the direction of socialism is more than astounding. This statement she couples with a confused sentence that "the Chinese do not accept the much-mooted theory of enriching the poor by dispossessing present owners of their wealth."

Nevertheless, Madame Chiang does a considerable amount of plain speaking about the past imperialist policies of America, Britain, France, Germany, Japan, and other countries against China. There is contempt in her remark that western countries for so long indulged Japanese insults, indignities, and face-slapping with a meek and mild mien, then surrendered whole armies to the Japanese on the plea that they were unprepared for war.

These two small volumes are necessary in any informed person's library, but they should be read only in connection with many factual books on China. What we can gain from them is a knowledge of the nationalist mind of the ruling party in China; and we can see through them that China will react positively to every democratic reality in our own country.

In a way, it is up to us to become truly democratic and to realize the freedoms for which we say we are fighting. If we wage this war as merely an alliance of political forces, some of them fascist or semi-fascist, and if we continue to support British imperialist policies in India, we cannot expect China to do more than protect itself against us, utilizing this war as we do for our own selfish aims.