

VI - 73 C - 26. Smedley, Agnes, "The Generalissimo" book review of Chiang Kai-Shek: Asia's Man of Destiny by Dr. H. H. Chang. The Nation, August 26, 1944.

Weygand were working hard for capitulation. Reynaud meant well, but, paralyzed by nefarious influences, he did not assert his authority. As for Albert Lebrun, he appears as the perfect French President—a non-entity absolute.

Even at the worst hour there still was some hope; the treachery of Chautemps and Alibert destroyed it, and made Vichy possible; it fell to minor characters to deal the decisive blow. If there are 1,500,000 French prisoners, most of them captured without a fight, Pétain almost alone is to blame: he left the armies without directions and practically ordered them to lay down their arms, before the terms of the armistice had been given. But in spite of Pétain France was "bloody but unbowed"; before the armistice was signed, she was back on the firing line, for De Gaulle had already sent forth his great *Sursum Corda*.

Thus we reach the penultimate chapter, 247 pages out of 280. So far, Fernand-Laurent agrees with Pierre Cot, with Raoul Aglion, with Philippe Barrés, as well as with Kérillis and Pertinax. In Chapter XVIII, The Government of Post-War France, the rift appears. "De Gaulle began in 1940 as the magnificent symbol of resistance. . . . But he became a politician." A familiar fallacy; it will be the refuge of all the Laodiceans. The Free French had to turn themselves into some kind of government if they wanted to administer the territories which had remained faithful to the Republic. They needed to form a political entity if they did not want to be treated merely as foreign mercenaries in the pay of England. The book was evidently conceived when Giraud was still a factor, although his elimination is mentioned. Today it is a trifle off key.

Fernand-Laurent raises the problem—Third or Fourth Republic? He wants the Third, the Republic headed by Albert Lebrun, the Assemblies which committed suicide at Vichy and whose powers have long expired. Naturally his opinion will be hailed with approval by the men who refused to sever relations with Pétain, and who clung to Darlan, Giraud, Boisson, Noguès, Peyrouton, the men who professed to be horror-stricken when Pucheu was executed.

Let us remember Fernand-Laurent's personal equation. It is important that a conservative should have written the first sixteen chapters; it was inevitable that he should write the seventeenth. The cause he defends is not lost by any means. The ghost of the Orleanist-plutocrat Republic is not exorcised yet, and dynamic democracy has a hard fight ahead. Fernand-Laurent is seeking allies in America; but there are quite a few Americans who believe in the Four Freedoms, not in the divine right of the bourgeoisie.

ALBERT GUERARD

The Generalissimo

CHIANG KAI-SHEK: ASIA'S MAN OF DESTINY. By Dr. H. H. Chang. Doubleday, Doran and Company. \$3.50.

THOUGH the publisher announces that this is an official biography of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek "which does not present him as a demi-god," the sub-title alone clearly states the thesis that the Generalissimo is not only China's, but Asia's "man of destiny."

Apparently to prove this thesis, the author exhumes a prediction from the Book of Pophcey published during the Tang Dynasty that "a general will one day rule China: he will be one with grass on his head." The author explains that the Chinese words for "general" are *chiang chun*, the *chiang* being the same as the Generalissimo's family name. The sign of "grass" is also *chiang*, but written differently. However, if you make some extra strokes over Chiang's family name, you get the sign for "grass." Ergo: Chiang Kai-shek is that "general with grass on his head."

Should we reason in similar vein, we could omit, say, the "ill" from Churchill's name and have the word "church" left. Ergo: Winston Churchill will one day become Pope!

The book sets out to prove that from the day of his birth in Chikow in Chekiang Province, Chiang Kai-shek was extraordinary. He never made a mistake; was filled with piety; and in later years (1931-37) the whole nation was wrong and he right in appeasement of Japan, which was occupying China's whole northeast while Chiang and the German Reichswehr officers on his staff were waging a war of extermination against the Chinese Red Army.

Even in his 'teens, Chiang is pictured as the one man who realized that he was destined to rid China of the decrepit Manchu Dynasty and revive the nation. Strangely, Tseng Kuo-fan, the feudal-minded puppet of the Manchus, became one of his life-long heroes, and the Manchus not only educated him in the Paoting Military Academy, but sent him to Japan for over four years of study. Chiang's background, and his close connection with Japan before the present war, can alone explain a cast of mind that often baffles the Western world.

The author sweetens and glosses over many things in the Generalissimo's life, such as his relations with women, with the Shanghai stock exchange, and with the underworld of opium traffickers and gamblers known as the "Green Gang." This Green Gang played a major role in the so-called "Communist" purge in Shanghai in April, 1927, the story of which was told in André Malraux's novel, "Man's Fate." Dr. Chang happily declares that following this purge "the bourgeoisie" came to power and the Nanking government was founded and recognized by all powers but the Soviet Union. After the purge, Chiang became "tired" and rested his "body and soul" in a temple—and in the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. In Japan he negotiated with Mrs. Soong for marriage with her daughter, his present wife, a marriage which put him on the map again, after which he became supreme head of the Nanking government.

Dr. Chang's interpretation of Chinese-Soviet relations from 1923 onward, and his interpretations of the teachings of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, differ greatly from that of Dr. Sun Fo, son of Dr. Sun and author of the new book "China Looks Forward." Diametrically opposed to Dr. Sun Fo and to Chinese agrarian research scholars, he states that there is no "social malady" in China's agrarian economy. He draws heavily on the absolutist ideology of "China's Destiny," the anti-democratic book published in Chungking last year under the name of the Generalissimo.

Only about one-third of the book is devoted to the Sino-Japanese war, and this most incomplete. For the first three

years of the war Chiang Kai-shek emerged as the great leader of a united nation. Disunity set in after 1939 because of the growth of proto-fascist institutions such as the ubiquitous secret political police, concentration camps, censorship, suppression of civil liberties, official corruption, and war profiteering. Little or nothing is mentioned of such things, and China's liberal democrats are dismissed as men without a following, the author's information being based on a "chat" on a street corner which he had with a democratic leader.

Toward the end of the volume occurs a strange and significant episode: a friend of the author's recently traveled overland from Shanghai to Chungking. En route he saw officials and policemen who worked for the Japanese "pleasantly chatting" with representatives of "free China." The author's amazing conclusion is:

For hard-boiled realism there is no one who can beat the common man (*sic*) of China. With him it is a question of three square meals a day, and if conditions are such that they cannot serve China, what difference does it make for the moment if they are pressed into the service of the puppet regime?

While writing, the author appears to have kept a jar of honey at hand, to smear over various episodes in his hero's life. He seems also to have taken a huge salt-shaker filled with Confucian proverbs, and sprinkled them over the whole manuscript, happily "chatting" all the while. His book could be better evaluated by the public had the publishers explained the author's activities in Europe during the Spanish Civil War, during which time the American press carried something about him. An objective biography of Chiang Kai-shek would be of service to the United Nations in this war for democracy, but this one fails to fill that need.

AGNES SMEDLEY

What Americans Think

MANDATE FROM THE PEOPLE. By Jerome S. Bruner, Duell, Sloan, and Pearce. \$2.75.

BY WAY of high compliment one might say that 130,000,000 Americans have been co-authors of "Mandate from the People" and that their combined efforts have been brilliantly digested, analyzed, classified, and interpreted by Dr. Bruner, associate director of the Office of Public Opinion Research of Princeton University. Making full use of all the results of the recognized opinion pollsters, Dr. Bruner has brought together in one modest volume the thinking of the American people on most of the social, political, and economic problems that will have to be resolved in the post-war years. He is to be particularly commended for having recognized the limitations of his basic data, public-opinion polls. Furthermore, while Dr. Bruner's own convictions are clearly progressive, he has been careful not to inject wishful thinking into his interpretations.

It is somewhat regrettable that the charts are not as self-explanatory to the layman as they should be. It is even more regrettable that the Appendix, which might have been a valuable self-contained summary of poll results, is used merely as a supplement, without page references for those polls cited in the text.

Two significant generalizations strike the reader on almost every page of this book. The first is the relative confusion, lack of understanding, and even ignorance of the public in matters of supreme importance. This is sometimes reflected in a mere lack of knowledge of the facts. Thus five months after the enunciation of the Atlantic Charter, only twenty-three of every hundred Americans had heard or read of that historic document. And only one-third of those twenty-three could name even one provision of the charter. Similarly, when the political question in North Africa had reached the boiling point, only four Americans in ten knew who De Gaulle was and only three in ten had heard of Giraud. Even more crucial, if less surprising, is the failure of the public to see the relationship between facts they know or convictions they hold. A 1943 poll shows that only 13 per cent of Americans opposed this country's participation in a world confederation. But a poll taken a few months previously showed that only 55 per cent favored joining "even if Russia had as much to say as the United States." Fifty-five per cent is still a majority, but one wonders what kind of world organization was in the minds of the 32 per cent who disapproved of an equal voice for the major powers, to say nothing of the minor powers. This sort of inconsistency appears to be a consistent characteristic of American public opinion.

The second generalization emerging from these pages is hardly surprising: Americans, like every other people, are motivated primarily by self-interest, and this self-interest is conceived in personal rather than in national terms. A job is

370
returned from
Guadalcanal
last week

— and only a bus met these
silent, tired men!

● 100,000 more G.I.'s are coming back home every month... Are we going to let them sell apples on street corners again? Are we going to let demagogues exploit and subvert them? DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS NOW! But first, read this book by a veteran and the son of a veteran. It's written for the veteran's family, friends and his employer...

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