

VIII - 75 - 22. Letters from Lt. Col. Evans F. Carlson, R.F.D. #2,  
Box 353-E Escondido, California to Miss Agnes Smedley,  
Yaddo Estate, Saratoga Springs, New York:

November 13, 1944  
November 14, 1944  
December 4, 1944

RFD Route #2, Box 353 E  
Escandido, California  
13 November 1944

Dear Agnes:

Your letter came today and I am replying right bang off so that you may receive this before the broadcast.

I haven't heard from Stilwell yet, though I have written to him. I did receive a letter from Chu Teh, Chow En-lai, Yeh Chien-yin and Nieh Yung-chen, which I have said nothing about publicly, because I did not feel it was wise to do so. The letter was dated August 14. The American observer group of 18 officers under Col. David Barrett had just arrived. They said in part "The coming of our American friends is an important and long desired event. We always knew, as you and other true friends of the Chinese people knew, that if we and our Allies fought together and coordinated our activities our struggle would be more effective, that of our Allies would become easier and the victory of our common cause would be accelerated. We were confident that nothing could keep the fight of our forces in the rear of the enemy and that of our Allies apart indefinitely, and one of the causes of our confidence was the knowledge that friends like you, true representatives of American democracy, were speaking, writing, and working to make the truth about our struggle and the opportunities for cooperation evident to all honest people who desire the defeat of Fascism."

I infer from what I have heard of recent developments that the blockade continues. I believe, however, that the strong light of public opinion abroad which has been thrown on the true state of affairs in China through the instrumentality of Stilwell's recall will force the Kuomintang crowd to liberalize their policy. In the final analysis Chiang and his crowd know that China cannot stand alone. While it is not politic for foreign governments to meddle in the internal affairs of a nation, they can withhold assistance until that nation puts its house in order. The fact is that there is nothing democratic about the Kuomintang Party or the government which it administers. The only organized group in China which labors to improve the welfare of the people is the Chinese Communist Party. You and I know that the government which this party has set up to administer the areas under its control is representative government and nearer to democracy than anything else in China. It should be an axiom of democratic peoples throughout the world to applaud and support democratic action wherever it is observed. Professed supporters of the democratic pattern who fail to do so are either negligent in their obligations or they hope to profit by the continuance in office of the existing regime.

Thanks for the copies of your review of Belden's and Snow's books. They were both good, for you have the knack of perceiving and emphasizing the vital themes. I thought Ed's presentation of the Indian problem was most lucid. Belden, despite his emotionalism, deserves highest commendation for his honesty and courage as well as his own perception of the major issues.

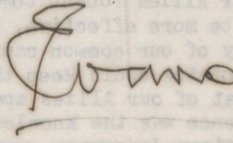
Congratulations, Agnes, on your work with the NCPAC . I wish you could have done some work in Connecticut to defeat Clare Luce. However, the defeat of Ham Fish was a major victory, and we had a number of other significant successes. What a pity that Wallace could not have gone back in. Perhaps, though, he can do even more effective work in another post. I have confidence in the judgement of FDR. He is working in the interests of all the people, even though from time to time he has to make compromises.

Good luck with the radio broadcast. We'll be listening. If I get any timely dope I'll shoot it on to you.

Remember me to Mrs. Ames and tell her I sincerely appreciate her invitation. Keep your emotions in hand and give that heart a rest once in a while. You must take care of yourself.

Peg joins me in love to you,

Sincerely,



PS: What China needs right now is immediate restoration of freedom of speech and of the press and the establishment of a coalition government with Communist and Progressive Kuomintang leaders as well as representation from the Right Wing Kuomintang and the other minority parties.



Thanks for the copies of your review of Haiden's and Shaw's books. They were both read, for you have the knack of perceiving and emphasizing the vital themes. I thought W's presentation of the Indian problem was most lucid. Haiden, despite his eclecticism, deserves highest commendation for his honesty and courage as well as his own perception of the major issues.

RFD Rt #2, Box 353E  
Escondido, California  
14 November 1944

Dear Agnes:

I wrote you a letter last night and this morning your note of the 11th came. I'll supplement what I said yesterday with some pertinent remarks on the Time article. I believe I referred to it yesterday.

Time's article on China in the issue of Nov. 13 is decidedly misleading and contains a number of statements which even the most casual visitor to China knows are erroneous. On page 45 Col. 3 appears the statement "If Chiang relaxed the blockade, perhaps all of China would ultimately be lost to the democratic cause." This statement is designed to convey the idea that the Chungking government is not only democratic but the soul hope of democracy in China. The truth is that there is nothing democratic about the Chungking government and that the only hope for a democratic China, as things stand at present, lies in an expansion of the policies now being practiced and promulgated by the Chinese Communists.

As I see the picture China is now reaping the whirlwind as a result of Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal of the Chinese people in 1927 when he purged the liberal elements from the Kuomintang in order to gain favor with the Shanghai bankers and the foreign powers. By that act he departed from the precepts laid down by Dr. Sun in his San Min Chu I, turning his back on Dr. Sun's objective of representative government and of improving the people's livelihood. Since 1928 the Chinese nation has been in what Dr. Sun called the period of Political Tutelage, during which the Kuomintang party is charged with preparing the people to exercise the franchise. I know of not one measure which has been promulgated by the KMT which is designed to prepare the people for assuming the role of citizens of a democracy. As a matter of fact Dr. Chen Li-fu Minister of Education, told me in December 1940, that the primary object of China's educational program is to make the youth loyal members of the Kuomintang. The truth is that the present leaders of the Chungking government do not want China to become a democracy because they know that with the inauguration of representative government they would immediately be thrown out of office by the people. Consequently their struggle to maintain the present oligarchy is a struggle for self preservation at the expense of the people.

The Chinese Communist party, on the other hand, has consistently ~~promulgated~~ provided a program of education designed to make the people literate and to prepare them for representative government. I don't know Wang Shih-wei, but he sounds like a Trotzkyite. Undoubtedly mistakes have been made, but the facts are that the Communists have representative government in the areas under their control, and they do operate a program which improves the people's livelihood.

If you want to get dirty you might suggest that Time's attitude toward the China situation may have some remote connection with the imperialistic policy enunciated by Henry Luce in his "American Century".

( see Life magazine of 2½ or 3 years ago). It is rather significant also that it was Henry Luce who, in the early months of 1941 sponsored the organization of United China Relief, whereby all agencies in the United States providing relief for China were banded together under one head. Quite a battle developed within UCR when the board insisted that all funds should go to Chungking government. Shortly thereafter (Spring of 1941) Henry and Clare made a trip to Chungking. Could it be that Henry has made certain arrangements with leaders of the Kuomintang which will be of benefit to him in the post war era? As he has no standing with minority party leaders, could it be that he has more than an academic interest in preserving the power of the KMT as now constituted?

I have no specific knowledge as to whether Stilwell delivered an ultimatum to Chiang that he be placed in command of all Chinese armies. My personal opinion is that he did not. I know that Stilwell has been doing his utmost to achieve unity for the purpose of increasing China's capability to fight Japan. I suspect that his repeated urging for a working agreement with China's Communist armies resulted in Chiang's agreement to allow foreign correspondents and an American Military Mission to proceed to Yanan. Later I suspect that Chiang either repented his weakness, or was prevailed on by his cohorts to restore the blockade. Stilwell being the chief instrument of pressure for reconciliation then became the instrument for saving Chiang's face.

Sorry I cant help you more Agnes, but perhaps the things I have said may aid in bringing to mind facts you already know. It would be better not to attribute any recent quotations to me, for I still may have an opportunity to work in the China field. You can anything that I have written in the past and say that you have reason to know that my views have not changed, and that I wholeheartedly support democratic action wherever it appears and by whatever name it may be tagged.

With love as always,

Evans

The President has handled the China situation with infinite tact & understanding. His hands should not be tied by misleading articles designed to divorce public confidence.

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For and I may have an opportunity to get back to New York in a couple of months. It's a lecture proposition that has to be handled with great delicacy so please don't mention it until I can give you more details.

RFD Route #2, Box 353 E  
Escondido, California  
4 December 1944

Dear Agnes: I'm sorry to have been in the hospital again for a small operation on my arm.

You and Vincent really did a grand job on the broadcast. I am surprised that J.B. has become so terribly reactionary. I don't think it's so much a matter of conviction with him as fear engendered by his economic situation and possibly ill-judged loyalty to the KMT which stems from his support of it in the days when it was really revolutionary. Goette, of course, has always been impossible - just a status quoeer interested only in his own well being. Under the circumstances I thought you kept your temper remarkably well.

I have considered carefully your suggestion that I review Emily Hahn's book. Saturday I got a copy of it and scanned it. It's a lousy piece of tripe - in fact the comparison is an insult to tripe. However, I believe that an honest review of it would do more harm than good by giving it the dignity of serious consideration. One has only to read it in order to lose any respect he may have had for the author. I cannot believe that any intelligent person would accept Micky's opinion on any serious matter. She is an exotic parasite with a flair for exhibitionism. She has never lived in China - only in Shanghai, Hongkong and Chungking. She has never known Chinese - only those Chinese nationals who have become contaminated by contact with foreigners. While it is unpleasant to be even referred to by such a person, the reference is better ignored. If I were writing a review of this book I would simply say "Miss Emily Hahn has written a book of her experiences in the demi-monde of Shanghai and Hongkong, including a fleeting visit to the flesh pots of Chungking. Nothing in the book throws any light on the Chinese people, their culture, economy, or politics for the simple reason that the author appears to have had no interest in them and never strayed far enough from the flesh pots to be exposed to the realities of China's problems."

From your review I take it that Larry Rossinger has done a pretty good job with his book. I used to talk to him a good deal when he was with the IPR, and was impressed by his honesty and his zeal.

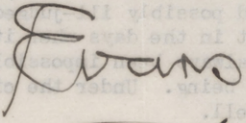
It was awfully thoughtful of you Agnes to send the greeting cards and the correspondence cards. The Chinese paintings are grand. Many thanks, darling.

I have a portrait for you done by a young Russian named Chodorow, which you will receive as soon as I can get a folder large enough to mail it in.

Peg and I may have an opportunity to get back to New York in a couple of months. It's a lecture proposition that has to be handled with great delicacy so please don't mention it until I can give you more detail.

Despite my remarks about Micky and her book I feel more pity for her than anything else. The girl is really a psycho case. That doesn't prevent her from being a menace, though I believe her support of the Kuomintang does the latter more harm than good. I'm sore as hell because she dragged the Communist business into her book simply to say that we were all liars, though she didn't know anything about it.

Well, blessings on you, old dear. You're doing grand work. You write with more restraint and less emotion, which gives your work more power and increases respect for your authority. Peg joins in sending love to you.

Sincerely,  


I have considered carefully your suggestion that I review Daily Hahn's book. Saturday I got a copy of it and scanned it. It's a lousy piece of crap - in fact the comparison is an insult to me. However, I believe that on honest review of it would be more than good by giving it the dignity of serious consideration. One has only to read it in order to lose any respect he may have had for the author. I cannot believe that any intelligent person would accept Micky's opinion on any serious matter. She is an exotic parasite with a flair for exhibitionism. She has never lived in China - only in Shanghai, Hongkong, and Hanking. She has never known Chinese - only those Chinese nationals who have become contaminated by contact with foreigners. While it is unpleasant to be even referred to by such a person, the reference is better ignored. If I were writing a review of this book I would simply say Miss Daily Hahn has written a book of her experiences in the best sense of Shanghai and Hongkong, including a detailed visit to the flesh pots of Hanking. Looking in the book through my eyes on the Chinese people, their culture, economy, or politics for the first reason that the author appears to have had no interest in them and never beyond the search for the flesh pots to be exposed to the realities of China's problems.

From your review take it that Larry Heston was a pretty good job with his book. I used to talk to him a good deal when he was with the IPR, and was impressed by his honesty and his wit.

It was awfully thoughtful of you to send me the greeting cards and the correspondence cards. The Chinese greetings are grand. Many thanks, darling.

I have a portrait for you done by a young Russian named Choborov, which you will receive as soon as I can get a folder large enough to mail it in.