

# Two Views of China

Edgar Snow's new book controverts the wordy evasions of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek and gives a firsthand report on China. A review by Isidor Schneider.

THE BATTLE FOR ASIA, by Edgar Snow. Random House. \$3.75.

CHINA SHALL RISE AGAIN, by Mme. Chiang Kai-shek. Harper & Bros. \$3.

"THE Battle for Asia" is a book of many virtues. It is vivid reading. Without any pretentious to-do about passing on inside stuff, it provides much serviceable information, so presented as to compose a proportioned and realistic picture. No foreign correspondents' book I have read comes up to it in perception, in comprehensiveness, in sheer interest. It is a more important book, in its thoroughness and its range, than Snow's own *Red Star Over China*.

What does the book tell us?

About Japan—that its feudal aristocracy has turned the productive forces of its own and conquered lands into an economy for war; that this economy, evil and risky as it is, is stronger than the economic-exhaustion theorists have led us to believe; that it has, through a peculiar Japanese development, become a monopoly of the army whose leadership has succeeded in concentrating economic and political, as well as military, power in its hands; and that, as a consequence, Japanese imperialism, even more than others, is spinning in an accelerating spiral of military expansion aimed first at the conquest of Asia and then of the world.

About Japan's imperialist rivals—principally England and the United States, that they have shown incredible shortsightedness. It is with their help entirely that Japan has become formidable. Snow might have added that it was on the dangerous and insinuated hope that Japan was arming herself against the Soviet Union that England and the United States armed Japan, as it has proved, against themselves; and that, unable wholly to surrender an anti-Soviet hope, they continue to do so. Japan's military machine comes out of American and British mines and mills and is powered with their gasoline.

At one time, according to Snow, British imperialism was more culpable than American which, when it sought united action to restrain the Japanese, was crossed and double-crossed by the British. It is not improbable that the British Foreign Office thought of improving upon the proverbial bird killing by adding a third bird, America. In that way, by helping to keep Japan's end up against America as well as against the Soviet Union, Britain sought to keep all three snapping at each other while she cultivated her Chinese gardens in comparative peace.

About the European and American groups in Shanghai and other concession areas in

China, Snow describes the blindness that descended upon them, making them incapable of acting in their own interest. They stumbled like parasites who have become so adapted to living on their hosts that some of their organs have atrophied. These groups had the amazing naivete to expect Japanese imperialism to honor their seniority rights and leave them undisturbed in their holds on the body of China. Before the Mikado's men slapped them awake they were full of praises and help for the Japanese, considering Chinese independence the far greater evil. Even Kuomintang was Communism to them.

MOST TIMELY of all, Snow tells us about the Chinese people, about their desperate need for a new system, socially, politically, culturally; about their unending nurturing, out of their torment, of new movements for national salvation and individual human rights: about the unsuppressible Communist Party that has led their struggle; and about the Chinese bourgeoisie into whose trembling money-passing hands history has placed the task of eliminating feudalism and foreign oppression.

This bourgeoisie, moreover, is itself an incompletely evolved class. It contains elements of the old—feudal landlords, mandarin bureaucrats, usurers and *tuchuns* (war lords) and their staffs. It has few representatives of a modern economic development. Therefore when control of Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary party, the Kuomintang, came into the hands of the bourgeoisie, this class brought into it its own heterogeneous character and counter-revolutionary interests. However as the anti-Japanese movement progressed, a democratic element again filtered into the Kuomintang, but this has not proved sufficient thus far to offset such dominant influences as that of Ying-chin, the pro-Japanese Minister of War. It can therefore be seen how essential to any united fight of the Chinese people is the Communist Party, which has been the initiating force and core of the anti-Japanese struggle and which has shown its unity and democratic character in every campaign it has fought and every administration it has organized. Open and practical recognition of this is a precondition for a successful continuance of the United Front.

The Chinese Revolution which overthrew the Manchu dynasty has had a singularly unlucky environment. As long as foreign imperialists kept hold of China's strategic ports and transportation centers it could not complete itself. These strongholds of imperialism formed and, to the extent that they survive,

still form military, financial, and conspiratorial foci for the counter-revolution. China's political fate has shuttled between the growing force of the people and the developing interdependence of Chinese counter-revolution and the imperialist powers. This might have continued, had not Japan left the imperialists' cooperative (the so-called consortium of powers) that has been functioning in China, to try to get all for herself. Japan's aggression raised the popular indignation to an irresistible pitch and the Chinese bourgeoisie was finally compelled to make a fight and, to carry it on, to revert to its old alliance with the Communist Party.

What such an alliance (which, in effect, is a first step in freeing the Chinese people for full action) could accomplish, had been shown by Sun Yat-sen's campaign (directed, after Sun's death, by Chiang Kai-shek) for the unification of China against the *tuchuns*, or war lords. This historic and brilliant campaign fell short of complete success only because of the intervention of the foreign imperialists. Chiang was then faced with the choice of knuckling under to them and to the collusive Chinese landlords, comprador, and merchant class, or continuing the revolutionary movement in alliance with the Communists.

Chiang, himself of upper class origin and allied through marriage with a Chinese banking family, made a class-prompted decision. He chose to attempt to establish a dictatorship of the Chinese bourgeoisie, by way of the one party—a Kuomintang political monopoly; and he turned on his former comrades in arms in a treacherous massacre.

NEVERTHELESS, the people's movement continued. This was inevitable as long as the Kuomintang withheld from the people the national unity, economic betterment, and democratic rights for which they were in the field. Within the Kuomintang there were democratic ferments. And wherever the Communists reappeared and began organizing they were able to strike root. The Kuomintang wasted national resources in a criminal and futile series of "annihilation campaigns" against the Soviet districts. They considered this of greater importance than resistance to Japan. They continued in this course until on one of his Communist suppression campaigns Chiang was kidnapped by detachments of one of his own suppression armies. During his detention he consented to a policy of resistance against the Japanese.

The Kuomintang's peace with the Communists was ambiguous and hypocritical. While on their part the Communists consented to ad-

Learn Now the Simple Truth . . .

## The Way Out EARL BROWDER

The Way Out, by Earl Browder, just published is a vital, basic analysis of the main issues confronting the American people today. It indicates the fundamental solution to the problems agitating the hearts and minds of working people of America. 256 pages — cloth bound. **1.00**

## America Is Worth Saving

THEODORE DREISER

**1.69** An urgent plea for democracy and peace. It is appropriate that this great author should issue this blasting J'Accuse at the very moment when the effort to silence brave voices is at fever heat. Reg. \$2.50. SPECIAL PRICE—LAST WEEK.

## England's Money Lords

SIMON HAXEY

"This book (published in England as "Tory, M.P.") proves that a few great industrialists, bankers own and control most of England and most of parliament; that these same men and businesses were linked to Hitler, Mussolini and Franco. **49c**

## America's Siberian Adventure

**3.50** GENERAL WM. S. GRAVES  
Long Out of Print—Now Available

"We Pay the Postage"

**WORKERS' BOOK SHOP**  
50 EAST 13th STREET

# THE DECISION IS TO LIVE...

*My Immediate Response*

NEW MASSES

Established 1911

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
FUND DRIVE  
FOR \$25,000

NEW MASSES  
461 4th Avenue  
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ as my donation to  
the NEW MASSES thirtieth Anniversary Sustaining Fund Drive for \$25,000.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City & State \_\_\_\_\_

4-1-41

minister their territory as "border districts" and to fight as divisional troops of Chungking, the Kuomintang refused official acknowledgement of the United Front, blockaded the Communist occupied districts, interfered with the communications and supply services of the Eighth Route and the Fourth Route Armies, precipitated clashes by attempts to occupy districts they had won back from the Japanese, and withheld ammunition, equipment, and pay, which it should have furnished.

In the very midst of the war against the Japanese, Chinese construction, military resources, and the energies of hundreds of thousands of men were used by the Kuomintang to build and garrison a ring of blockhouses around the Communist "border districts." Mr. Snow estimates that, in addition, more than a million able-bodied men who should be bearing arms against the Japanese are in the villages and towns guarding property and protecting the privileged—bearing arms, that is, against the people at home. So much does the Chinese bourgeoisie fear the people.

It became increasingly evident that the Kuomintang, which had entered the United Front unwillingly, would respect and fulfill its obligations only to the degree that it felt compelled to do so, and that it would continue to regard defense against democracy at home as more important than defense against Japan.

This was shown not only in its continuous dirty dealings against the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, but in its dirty dealings against the people. Szechuan, the Kuomintang's main base now for men and supplies, is in an economically pitiable situation. Land tenancy is almost universal. Usury keeps the masses in debt slavery. Profiteers hoard food and despite plenty, ask famine prices. And the rich send their money out of the country.

The last piece of data is both characteristic and important. The course of the war had pushed free China into the most backward districts. Industry essential for continuing resistance was lacking. Here was an opportunity for rich patriots to serve their country by investing in vitally needed industry. Instead, while peasants were risking their lives the profiteers refused to risk dollars. Money transmitting agencies can tell an ironical story. While Chinese workers abroad, sweated laundry men, farmhands, and stevedores were sending contributions from their wages to China, this money was crossing outbound millions dispatched to financial safety by the well-off, who would not even take profitable risks for their country. The story of Indusco, the system of small industrial cooperatives that seeks to fill this economic void, is wonderful, a monument to the devotion and industry of self-sacrificing and heroic workers and professionals, but tragic, too, for it is a monument at the same time to the dishonor of a class that deserts its country in its hour of need.

Snow gives many saddening pictures of this and similar swinishness. It has happened monotonously often before, for the bourgeoisie of every nation has a similar swinish history;

yet one's gorge rises to read of China's gilded youth carousing within sound of the battlefields where the youth of the poor were barring the enemy with their bodies, having been equipped with little else to stop bombs and bayonets.

ONE CAN FIND a kind of official confirmation of the stiff-necked, reality-evading attitude of the Kuomintang in the compilation entitled *China Shall Rise Again*, edited by Mme. Chiang Kai-shek. The book opens with say-nothing platitudes by her husband, the generalissimo. These evade the issue of a democratic program. They shift the emphasis to faults in individual character which provide occasions for dulcet exhortation and excuses for doing nothing. It is, in effect, an Oriental version of Hoover's rugged individualism which puts all troubling issues on the spiritual shelf.

Mme. Chiang's main statement is an elaboration of this matter in very prissy language. The madame is so madamified that she cannot use the plain word "rape"; in her lingo the Japanese "molest" Chinese women. Speaking of the so-called "New Life" movement, which was started as a mild social-work substitute for the land and other reforms that Chiang's "bandit suppressors" had suppressed in Kiangsi Province, Mme. Chiang says it was started to heal "the ravages of war" (omitting, of course, that the ravages had been inflicted by Chiang's armies). The final chapter is an article by Madame Chiang in which, apparently stung by the pretenses of American and British aid to China and the reality of their aid to Japan, she admits that the only real aid China has received has come from the Soviet Union.

The rest of the book consists mainly of reports by Chungking department heads, some of whom are notorious fascists and not above suspicion of dealings with Japan's puppet Wang Ching-wei and with the Japanese themselves. None acknowledge existence of the United Front, or pay even chivalrous enemy tribute to the achievements of the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies. On that issue they maintain the silence of hangmen. Unless one considers the value of reading between the lines there is little in these department reports worth reading with the exception of the report on Indusco which is written by the Australian, Rewi Alley, who had the biggest hand in getting and keeping the Indusco organization going.

When one compares such stuffed-robe pronouncements with the frank, lively, realistic, never-evasive interviews with the leaders of the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, reported by Snow, one knows where the real leadership in China's struggle is, no matter where historical circumstances locate the titular leadership.

It is a tribute to the Chinese people that they have achieved so much despite the accident of history which timed their rise out of feudalism at the moment when the imperialisms were digging in on China's back and that the class to whom power fell was such a weak,

# TWO *Outstanding* EVENTS

"ART FOR EVERY POCKETBOOK"

## NEW MASSES

2nd Annual

# ART AUCTION

Sunday, MARCH 30th

FROM 3:30 P.M. THROUGH THE EVENING

### CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS INCLUDE

William Gropper, Joe Jones, Gardner Rea, Philip Evergood, N. Cikovsky, Moses Soyer, A. Walkowitz, Elizabeth Olds, Fred Ellis, Maurice Becker, Tschabasov, Judson Briggs, Chaim Gross, Helen West Heller, Benj. Kopman, Herbert Kruckman, Louis Lozowick, Phillip Reisman, Louis Ribak, Reginald Marsh, Harry Sternberg, Raphael Soyer, H. Glintenkamp, D. Burluk, A. Refregier, Ben Yomen, A. Birnbaum, and many others.

### ART FOR YOUR POCKETBOOK

This 30th anniversary art auction offers a signal opportunity to the discriminating art buyer to purchase genuine art values at prices that will probably never be matched again—because of the very special circumstances under which the auction is being given. Bids will range from \$5.00 up and down. Included in the auction will be the sale of oils, water colors, etchings, wash drawings, pastels, silk screen, charcoal, pen and ink, lithograph, and other mediums. Also on sale will be original manuscripts by Earl Browder, William Gal-  
lacher, D. N. Pritt, William Blake, Ruth McKenney, Richard Wright, the original MSS of Blitzstein's "No For An Answer," and others.

## ACA GALLERY

52 WEST 8th STREET  
NEW YORK CITY

Admission — 25 Cents

**PASS THE WORD NOW:**

"ART FOR EVERY POCKETBOOK"

## NEW MASSES

*presents*

# "INTERPRETATION, PLEASE!"

(Number Three)

on

Next Month's Headlines

### PANEL OF EXPERTS

WILLIAM BLAKE  
ALAN MAX  
A. B. MAGIL  
PHILIP J. JAFFE  
JOSEPH STAROBIN

An up-to-the-minute sparkling, analytical, round table discussion on the most pressing issues of the day, followed by the usual informal reply to questions.

**Friday Eve., APRIL 4th,**  
8:30 P. M.

## WEBSTER HALL

119 EAST 11th STREET

TICKETS: 55c. Reserved section for those buying in advance at Workers Bookshop, 50 E. 13th St., Bookfair, 133 W. 44th St., NEW MASSES, 461 4th Ave.



★

**THE MUSIC ROOM**  
suggests  
**KEYNOTE RECORDINGS**

**THE OLD CHISHOLM TRAIL**  
Sung by Tony Kraber  
Eight Ballads of the American Southwest  
3—10" records in album . . . \$2.75  
" . . . Best of new recordings of American folksongs. Keynote is turning out some choice albums. . . ."  
Howard Taubman—N. Y. Times

**ERIC BERNAY'S**  
*Music Room*  
UNION SHOP  
133 W. 44 St., N. Y. LO 3-4420  
open evenings mail orders promptly filled

★

**BUY DIRECT from FACTORY**  
**WESER PIANO CO.**  
NATIONALLY KNOWN MANUFACTURERS selling consumer direct. Tremendous savings. New, used, Spinets, Grands, Steinways, Chickering's, Knabes, others. Bonafide Values. Payments.  
**524 W. 43rd—ME dal. 3-3512**

**THE WOMAN QUESTION ?**

Is the Housewife Paid?  
For Whom Does She Work?  
By Whom Is She Paid?

**for the ANSWERS read . . .**  
**IN WOMAN'S DEFENSE**

By Mary Inman  
Third printing just out

ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN: "I find this book very helpful. I refer to it continually for facts, arguments, and new ideas on the problems of women."—*Daily Worker*.

HARRISON GEORGE, editor *Daily People's World*: "Not since 1893, when August Bebel wrote his book *Women and Socialism* has any comprehensive challenge to the philosophy of woman's enslavement been written—until Mary Inman's *In Woman's Defense*."

Cloth \$1.25; Paper 50c

At your bookstore or order from  
**MERCURY PRINTING CO.**  
755 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles, Cal.

undeveloped, decayed-in-the-bud kind of a bourgeoisie.

The immense verve, spirit, and resourcefulness of the Chinese people, winning through, at great cost, against such obstacles comes out magnificently in Snow's book. It is there in the whole; and it glows in the detail.

It is a pity, therefore, to have to report that Snow permits himself some asides on matters far away from China that fall very far aside. To speak of one of them: Snow has some misinformed comments about American Communists that indicate a naivete, unbecoming a journalist, which takes at its dirty face value the anti-Communist press.

Among other things he criticizes the American Communists for running a Negro candidate for Vice-President. The Russians, he remarks, would not run one of their Eskimos for high office. The answer is that they would. It is as possible for an Eskimo to be among the Soviet leaders as for a Georgian, a Ukrainian, an Armenian, a Finn, or a Jew, to name a few of the representatives of formerly oppressed nationalities who are now in Soviet leadership. And the answer is also that the Negroes, with a 15,000,000 population and an identification with American life since the foundation of our country as an independent nation, are very different from the several thousand Eskimos who have only, in the last few years, been brought into functioning contact with Soviet life. I think a brief study of the situation in America will persuade Snow that the Communist course is sensible, just, and necessary.

It is unfortunate that even in this small and parenthetical fashion he should contribute to the current anti-Communist hue and cry of the reactionaries. To the extent that he adds anything to it, he adds a mite to the difficulties of the Chinese Communists as well. They have, to a great extent, escaped the smearing that other Communist groups have experienced; but they are coming in for it. Chungking propagandists and Japanese propagandists here will not fail to make use of it. When he reads the April issue of *Asia*, Snow will get a personal foretaste of it. For the editors felt it necessary to balance the clear, good article he wrote for them with a jet of Freda Uteley's frothing-at-the-mouth entitled "Will Russia Betray China?" and dedicated to discrediting the Chinese Communists as inevitable co-betrayers.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

## Spiritualism

THE UNOBSTRUCTED UNIVERSE, by Stewart Edward White. E. P. Dutton & Co. \$2.50.

MR. WHITE, known for more than a generation as a novelist of the great open spaces, shifts in this book from sentimental stories of the campfire to rather less likely tales of life after death and the fun that spirits have roaming the uncharted expanses of the cosmos, unhandicapped by the presence of the natural body. It is a wild and woolly book that makes the yarns told by

cowboys to dude ranchers sound tame and factual in comparison.

Mr. White receives his reports of the beyond from the immortal soul of his dead wife, Betty, who communicates her impressions through a friendly medium. The resulting picture is a familiar one to those acquainted with spiritualist literature over the past twenty-five years or so. The basic philosophy of the spiritualists is simply a variation of metaphysical idealism and rests on the proposition that everything in the universe is in the last analysis composed of mind or consciousness. All the different forms of consciousness, from a lowly piece of mud to the body of a human being, assume their particular manifestations according to their differing rates of frequency vibration.

Says the dead Mrs. White to her rapt listeners: "The only reason you cannot exist and operate in the *entire* universe, as I do—for I operate in your universe as well as mine—is because you are not able to step up your frequency." In other words, when we shuffle off this mortal coil, so hampering to a free soul, we immediately start operating with an other-worldly body of such a speedy frequency that it can easily pass through all those gross forms of matter—such as wooden doors, concrete walls, and plate-glass windows—that sometimes get in our way. Thus at death we become the fortunate inhabitants of an altogether "unobstructed universe."

It is not difficult for a medium to give expression to a quite generalized world view that combines philosophical idealism with some of the patter of modern physics. But when the details of the after-existence are asked for, then real trouble begins and the less said the better. On these concrete details Mrs. White is pretty vague, and coyly passes off embarrassing questions by remarking, "Now you're trying to get me to be Oliver-Lodgish again!"

As spiritualist books go, *The Unobstructed Universe* is undoubtedly one of the better ones. But its main importance lies in the fact that it appeared at this catastrophic juncture in human affairs when so many people in every country are looking for an easy escape from intolerable actuality and when the death tolls from war make the promise of a beautiful immortality especially relevant. The publishers evidently understand the situation, since the book has received almost unprecedented promotion for one of its kind, including full-page advertisements in the book review sections of the *Sunday Times* and *Tribune*.

Just as during the last war there was a noticeable recrudescence of spiritualism and other species of religion, so we must expect a similar phenomenon during the present conflict. But this time, due to the influence of Marxism in general and of socialist humanism in the Soviet Union, I believe that the drift to compensatory supernaturalism is going to be both more limited and more temporary than before.

CORLISS LAMONT.

April 1, 1941 NM