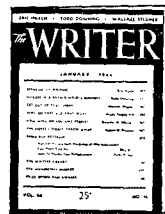


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Chinese Civilization and Politics Today

THE MAKING OF MODERN CHINA:
A Short History. By Owen and Eleanor Lattimore. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1944. 208 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by NYM WALES

THIS is the only book of its kind, a brief, popular, but authoritative history of China from the early Shang period to the present. It is a successful attempt to visualize China both steadily and as a whole, for the better understanding of the American public. Of necessity highly generalized, it achieves perspective somewhat in the manner of the ten

thousand *li* landscape paintings of the Sung dynasty, yet it has plenty of depth for any reader. The authors leave many controversial stones unturned in the immediate foreground, but seldom fail to indicate the possibility of scorpions underneath.

Owen Lattimore and his gifted wife have each written several valuable books on Asia, and have lived a large part of their lives in China. They write not only from first-hand experience, but only of a keen and sympathetic interest in China and all its problems, both historical and immediate. One of the useful features of their book is its analysis of China in relation to the bordering areas of Mongolia, Turkistan, and other regions, a subject on which Lattimore is the standard authority. As they state: "One of the master keys to Chinese history is an understanding of the balance of power between China and the 'barbarians' of the outlying regions."

The book will be of special interest to many because Owen Lattimore recently served as political advisor to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. No state secrets are imparted, however, and the point of view is strictly objective and non-controversial, if such a thing is possible in describing some of the tense problems in China today.

China's history is succinctly narrated in four sections: The Land and the People, dealing with geographical and social factors; The Oldest Living Civilization, describing the rise and fall of dynasties from about 2766 B.C. to the Boxer Rebellion in 1900; Modern China, from the 1911 Revolution to Pearl Harbor; and Today and Tomorrow, an interesting discussion of the present problems of democracy, centralization, and local government, industrial coöperatives, women, education, post-war relations with Asia and the rest of the world.

The Lattimores are very fair, though a little lenient, in explaining several policies of the Chinese government and the Kuomintang during the present war, such as the theory of "magnetic warfare," "trading space for time," unification by dictatorial methods and increased Kuomintang control, etc. A few of their statements should not pass unchallenged, however, such as this (p. 182): "China is a democratic country in the sense that the Party and the government represent what the vast majority of the people want."

An important point is brought up: "The Kuomintang, as the party that controls the government, has yet to make a great historical decision—

THE COMMON THREAD **By MICHAEL SEIDE**

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N. Y. TIMES BOOK REVIEW

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whether it will champion the interests of the people as a whole, or itself submit to domination by the landlords who are the strongest survivors of the old society of China." I do not find sufficient recognition of the extent to which the latter alternative had already occurred, and it is a question whether the Kuomintang as such controls the governing power, except civil administration in Chungking, or whether the landlords and allied forces are not absorbing the Kuomintang as a liaison instrument to help prevent the spread of peasant unrest which has already occurred in several provinces, and to check the influence of the reforms instituted by the Communists—which idea has spread to a population of perhaps fifty million in guerilla areas. Since the Kuomintang lost its modern middle-class economic base in 1938 after the fall of Hankow and Canton to Japan, the Chungking government has been dependent on the old landlord system of the interior for economic support, except for foreign aid.

This is a basic reason for the anti-democratic swing to the Right which began in 1939 and 1940, and which may result in civil war. The reinstitution of the old *pao chia* system with the aid of the Kuomintang is a reversion to landlord control, not a progressive measure. The section on "Centralization and Local Government" in the Lattimore's book raises a question in the mind of the reader as to whether or not the Kuomintang policy described will have "revolutionary consequences" as indicated or the contrary, by establishing closer coöperation between the landlord system and the Kuomintang.

That "The Making of Modern China" is essential reading on the subject goes without saying, and it is important that it should reach the broadest public possible. Such a short, readable study of China has been badly needed in these busy war days, and the Lattimores have brilliantly filled the requirement.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. W. S. Gilbert: "The Policeman's Lot."
2. Oscar Wilde: "The Ballad of Reading Gaol."
3. Coleridge: "The Ancient Mariner."
4. Tennyson: "Break, Break, Break."
5. Alexander Pope: "The Rape of the Lock."
6. Robert Browning: "Pippa Passes."
7. Shelley: "To A Skylark."
8. Samuel Woodworth: "The Old Oaken Bucket."
9. Thomas Hood: "The Song of the Shirt."
10. Sir Walter Scott: "Marmion."

MARCH 25, 1944

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The Phoenix Nest

WHAT LIBERAL FRONT?

INOTE as dangerous a certain type of name-calling recently indulged in by George Creel in a "fighting" article defending Secretary Hull from attacks by his critics. The article appeared in *Collier's*, a national magazine with a large circulation. Mr. Creel bunched the Secretary's critics all together as "the self-styled Liberal Front." To my mind a genuinely bad thing was Mr. Creel's branding of

the ideologists, emotionalists and fellow travelers who make up the self-styled Liberal Front. They want him [Hull] to import his policies from abroad, putting the interests of other countries above America's, while he insists on *home* products, holding to the old-fashioned theory that the welfare of the United States comes first.

Therefore, presumably, the *New York Herald-Tribune*, Walter Lippmann, Bruce Bliven, Freda Kirchwey, Dorothy Thompson, the *New York Post*, *PM*, Samuel Grafton, Drew Pearson, and many others who have criticized Secretary Hull or certain of his policies, all want that, and are all of that ilk. In the summation to his article Mr. Creel lets fly again:

Not that it matters to the muddled emotionalists, parlor pinks, fellow travelers and avowed Communists who form the self-styled Liberal Front,

They are indeed, terrible people; but are they all of them all of those things? Or what is Mr. Creel's "Liberal Front"? Does it reduce itself

to Earl Browder? But I understand that Mr. Browder has now written to *Collier's* that he deeply respects Mr. Hull! And the Communists have had their hands full, since Mr. Creel wrote his article, explaining Stalin's recognition of Badoglio—even as Secretary Hull is now asking him to explain it! No; Mr. Creel says at one point, "reputable men and women, even reputable newspapers, joined in the hysterical hue and cry."

But surely it is ill-advised in the extreme, and by no means serving the Secretary's cause, to lump all his critics together as something to sneer at—"The Liberal Fronters ought to be a pushover," and then call them all sorts of names. Were Mr. Creel's argument for the Secretary's policies absolutely irrefutable and correct in every particular, it would still be a bad thing to make a mock of the word Liberal. Besides, it reduces itself to nonsense! Just the other night I heard Joseph C. Hartsch in "The Meaning of the News," over WABC, remark that, "Our cautious diplomatic policy has proceeded side by side with a tarnishing of the Moscow declarations." Can it be—O horror!—that Hartsch is a "fellow traveller"!

Mr. Creel puts the blame for many of our policies squarely on Congress. Another outspoken epithet-slinger, Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, wouldn't

like that! In the same week that I read Mr. Creel's article, I read of Captain Rickenbacker, at a public function, branding all critics of Congress as "termites."

These signs and omens do not augur well for free speech or reasonable argument. The times are full of public issues that demand a thorough airing. When it has been a question of criticism of the Administration (meaning one essentially gallant man in office) many high-sounding things have been said about free speech and the necessity for open and unhampered comment. But now, if you criticize him, Mr. Creel, well the pleasantest thing the Secretary of State'll call you will be a "muddled emotionalist."

In any event, as liberals, we can turn from such heated gentlemen and congratulate *The New York Times* upon the sanest and clearest statement of what is at issue in regard to the Soldier's Vote, and what makes practical good sense in the situation, in their editorial of March 9, called (with reference to Governor Dewey's proposal) "It Won't Work." In regard to the contention of the Departments of War and the Navy, *The Times* went on to say that "we fail to see any nonpartisan, nonpolitical reason for the furious opposition with which this proposal has been received in Congress and elsewhere." That will certainly make Captain Rickenbacker awfully mad!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 40

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. The solution to Crypt No. 40 will be found in the next issue.

WROW, WROW ZI, ZI; WROW,
WROW ZI SAW, ZI SAW; QTW
WROW, WROW ZI SAW, ZI
SAW WROW WROW ZI; SAC
ZI WROW, WROW ZI, WROW
WROW ZI SAW.

—OTWRAC TSDSAYS.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 39
IN EVEN A MEDIOCRE ARTIST
ONE SOMETIMES FIND A RE-
MARKABLE MAN.

—F. W. NIETZSCHE.

—BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE MISADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES <i>Ellery Queen, Editor</i> (Little, Brown: \$2.50)	Thirty-odd imitations, burlesques, etc., of the famous Sherlock with amiable notes by Mr. Queen.	Diverting mixture of talented and trivial material. "Must" for Sherlockians and pleasant pastime for all mystery fans.	<i>Pièce de résistance</i>
THE ROPE BEGAN TO HANG THE BUTCHER <i>C. W. Grafton</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Kentucky lawyer's first case quickly turns into double murder mystery. At price of smashed face he nabs killer.	Well-developed—although not entirely unguessable—plot; bevy of interesting characters—including the killer—and a likable and believable detective.	Very good
NO LITTLE ENEMY <i>Oliver Weld Bayer</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Famous cartoonist and merchant-marine hero head bond-selling tour that produces three murders. Cartoonist gets his man.	Suspenseful and timely tale with more to it than meets the eye. Characters ably done and pay-off, 'tho telegraphed, a thriller.	Good stuff
FIVE WILL FREEZE <i>Margaret Miller</i> (Random House: \$2.)	Driver of Canadian "sno-bus" vanishes and plunges passengers into maelstrom of murder and inexplicable happenings.	Bang-up thriller and excellent character study of group of conflicting personalities. Puzzle is rewarding, 'tho it tends to solve itself.	Worth-while