

Chiang Kai-shek's American Twins

CHINA'S DESTINY. By Chiang Kai-shek. Translated by Wang Chung-hui. Introduction by Lin Yutang. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1947. 237 pp. \$2.75.

CHINA'S DESTINY. By Chiang Kai-shek. Including Chinese Economic Theory. Notes and Commentary by Philip Jaffe. New York: Roy Publishers. 1947. 332 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by JOHN GOETTE

GENERALISSIMO Chiang Kai-shek will be amused and bewildered by the race of two New York publishers scurrying to beat each other by mere days in presenting to American readers his four-year-old "China's Destiny." The Generalissimo published his Chinese version in 1943, revising it in 1944. He had been battling Japanese aggression since 1931. His government had been driven from Nanking to Hankow and finally settled down in bombed Chungking. The war's outlook then was not too bright. His people needed revitalization.

Chiang Kai-shek therefore aimed at two objectives. In the absence of current military victories he compiled for domestic consumption a résumé of past achievements of his revolutionary party. The second aim, and in Chinese minds the more important and rational, was that the Generalissimo wrote for the ages. This, perhaps, is difficult for the Occidental to appreciate but it is obvious in the book's thorough foundation on Confucian and earlier Chinese psychological, moral, social, political, and economic precepts of the past three thousand years. Chiang Kai-shek inherited the power mantle of Dr. Sun. In "China's Destiny" he strives to inherit Dr. Sun's historical role in the national Valhalla. Confucius, Mencius, a score of intermediate scholars, statesmen, and soldiers, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, and then Chiang Kai-shek, is the very clear succession which Chinese read into this book. Hence the Generalissimo cannot escape amusement over two American publishers competing in terms of days whereas, in the Chinese classical manner, he dreams of annotators centuries or even a millennium hence.

Nonetheless, time-spurning Orientals suffer from its vagaries as do we of the hurried West. The Generalissimo was a good prophet in 1943 when he predicted the war's end in two years. He was a bad one when he asserted that loss of Outer Mongolia, among other areas, would destroy China's national defense. Outer Mongolia is gone under Chiang's own

treaty with Soviet Russia. Again he predicts, "China has come to a dividing line in her destiny. Her future will be decided in the course of this war of resistance and at the latest within the next two years." Four years have passed but very little seems to have been decided.

Another of the Generalissimo's predictions is of vital interest to industrial America. Following the program of Dr. Sun's International Development of China, the Generalissimo gives lengthy tables for a ten-year plan involving 20,000 kilometers of new railways, 253,000 kilometers of highways, 451,570 automobiles, 12,000 civilian airplanes, and 2,700,000 technical graduates, to name but a few items. He predicts on this score, "I believe that if all our people will strive hard, the minimum goal for the first ten years as listed above can easily be exceeded and the figures will not seem too ambitious."

Conceding reasonable justification to Chiang Kai-shek's seventy-five-page indictment of the wickedness of the unequal treaties, this must be read in the light of its design for domestic consumption and wartime morale-building. He goes far afield, however, in blaming most of China's economic, social, moral, and psychological ills

on those unequal treaties and the foreign concessions. It is untenable to Occidentals that, in creating China's only modern cities, industries, banking system, international trade, railways, airlines, maritime customs, and postal administration, we of the West were alone responsible for blocking her industrial progress, and at the same time ruining the moral fibre of her 450,000,000 people, masses of whom never saw a foreigner.

The Macmillan edition of "China's Destiny" is the official translation made by Dr. Wang Chung-hui, leading international jurist. It carries an appendix of the 1944 alterations to the 1943 original, allegedly made to soften the author's blunt criticisms of imperialistic nations. The introduction is by Dr. Lin Yutang.

The Roy Publishers translation was made by two unnamed Chinese, is unofficial, and is edited by Philip Jaffe, editor of *Amerasia*, who does not temper his dislike of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang Party rule.

Mr. Jaffe includes an unofficial translation of "China's Economic Theory," also by Chiang Kai-shek. In addition to explanatory footnotes and differences in the 1943-44 texts of "China's Destiny," Mr. Jaffe contributes sixty-two pages of commentary. He stresses the points where he feels that the Chinese Communists were misused by Chiang Kai-shek.

LITERARY TEMPEST IN A CHINESE TEAPOT

TWO translations of Chiang Kai-shek's "China Destiny" reviewed on this page appeared amidst a flurry of statements and counter statements. The race for publication was close: Roy Publishers's "unauthorized" translation was on sale by January 24, Macmillan's official version four days later. Because of the background of civil war in China, this literary tempest in a teapot is not without political significance, for the Roy edition of the book is frankly anti-Nationalist, while the Macmillan version, being the official one, is naturally pro-Chiang.

Both sides agree that Roy Publishers were not legally bound to ask for an "authorization," since there is no copyright agreement between China and the United States; but the Chinese News Service has insisted, in a statement prepared for *The Saturday Review*, that some authorization is called for in order to satisfy the author and the reading public that "the text used is authentic—and that there be no misinterpretation and twisting of the author's intent."

For their part, Macmillan is satisfied that its edition is "in fact the authorized translation of Chiang Kai-shek's original work." Although the negotiations for a contract were started as early as 1944, they add, "The actual manuscript was not placed in our hands until last year." Roy Publishers, on the other hand, state: "We do not dare to doubt this statement, but we do feel that it is rather strange that plans ostensibly laid so many years ago should have borne fruit in publication only at this late date."

Authorization for an English translation of the book, according to their information, "was denied by the Chinese Government between 1944 and 1946." They feel that "in view of the widespread interest the book has aroused in government circles over many years," and the "vital significance of its contents for a clearer understanding of the nature of the Chinese State, it seemed right and just to us to proceed with our translation without 'authorization'."

A Way of Life Immortalized

THE FAIR FIELD. By John Moore.
New York: Simon & Schuster. 1946.
240 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by LEO LERMAN

EAST End Avenue in Manhattan is a thoroughfare of some ten or twelve streets. But within its brief compass it is a microcosm of New York City. Rich, poor, artists, writers, musicians, the middle-classes, the Mayor of New York City, and even members of that American aristocracy—the Hollywood set—all live there. Joan Crawford, one of Hollywood's more indestructible institutions, lived there some years ago and possibly she does still. The children who played in the surrounding streets were fascinated with her. She gave them such a lovely feeling of being part of the great, glittering, unencumbered screen world where even poverty seems tolerable and everything is always for the common good.

There's a grocery, vegetable, and meat market which we called "Johnny's," and which never seemed to mind how huge a bill we ran up. It is operated by a vast Italian family who have been there for years and who are intensely intimate with the surrounding gentry and can and will tell you all about them. And on one corner there is an old-time saloon replete with pot-bellied iron stove. Here the same customers gather nightly to tinkle, to decide the fate of nations, to "shoot pool," to sing, and to try for some little time to vanquish night and terror and everyday fears. I remember especially the large, neatly dressed, peroxide blonde with the small, incredibly turned ankles. She sat there night after night over her beer. She never spoke to anyone. No one ever spoke to her. In the late spring and summer afternoons I would see her leaning on her windowsill down the street, her enormous bosom bulging onto the ledge, her ample, fair-skinned arms and plump, well-kept hands propping her aching head. She would lean motionlessly, staring steadily into the street. But she never seemed to see anything, and she did not seem to be waiting for anything save night and her beer. Directly under her, in the same tenement, two ancient females sat side by side at their window. They had a nervous dog which would rush onto their fire escape and bark and bark while the women quavered and screamed frantically, "Stop eet! Stop eet!" Sometimes they beat the beast with a roll of newspaper. Sometimes, after the beast had subsided, they sat at



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Reading John Moore's "The Fair Field," you will be forced to look about and see."

their window scowling at one another. Two windows at the top of this tenement were opaquely shrouded winter and summer. But sometimes they were opened a crack and through these twin crevices twin pairs of binoculars surveyed the Avenue. I never saw who spied so cautiously upon our cosmos—I never really wanted to see. It was such a good mystery!

The special pet of the Avenue was Madame Torelli. She ran a magnificent junk shop. She was plump, ageless, utterly amiable. She had all the charm of a fat, wayward little girl who peers wide-eyed and innocently at the world but knows more about it than any of her elders. People came from everywhere to prowl in Madame Torelli's junk shop: sometimes they found beautiful or amusing objects. Then if she didn't like her would-be customers she said the objects weren't for sale. She would sit on a battered chest of drawers from Grand Rapids, swinging her short legs, or she would coil up on the frayed needlepoint of a rosewood sofa and spend her time making *decoupage* and visiting. She loved her business, her son, her memories, good manners, and talking. She always put her tongue out when she laughed and even when she talked. She wore a species of Mother Hubbard, and when the whim took her she threw an old shawl (usually salvaged from one of her "finds") over her Mother Hubbard and, leaving the shop—frequently open—went off on mysterious errands.

East End Avenue, as you can see, is a little village within New York City. It is a village with its own village characters, institutions, and prob-

lems. Now John Moore's "The Fair Field" is not about East End Avenue in New York City but about Elmbury, a very real market town deep "in the heart of England." And it is not about Elmbury at one special moment, but about it from 1913 to sometime in 1944, when the young author, in a bomb-blasted Normandy town, views it finally in a letter from home. I have written, in this review, about East End Avenue rather than John Moore's Elmbury for two reasons: John Moore has himself written so beautifully about Elmbury that it would be impertinent and conceited of me to try to do it again; and I want you to realize at once the immediacy of this smooth, reflective, exquisitely integrated book. "The Fair Field" is as pertinent to you as any apartment house, city street, or city you call your home. It is not only unique parish history, but it is a carefully textured chronicle of a way of life which is fast fading from the world.

Today there are still places in the world where life seems to mellow goldenly like fruit ripening in its own good sunny time. There are places where solitude, so necessary for reflection, is possible, where civilization is not mistaken for culture. "The Fair Field" will open your eyes to these places about you, will make you look at the faces and objects which have so become a part of your consciousness that you no longer find anything at all to see in them. In a mechanized, competitive world, each of us must especially find his own private worlds of beauty. We must keep our minds and eyes open to see. We must wrest from the tortuous business of everyday living some moment in which to probe why we are here, what it's all about, are we really living. Reading "The Fair Field" you will be forced to look about and see or you will not go on reading it long. You will say that it is not your "kind of book." You will take it back to the library or give it away, and you will be out not only the library fee or the \$2.75 it costs, but you will have turned away from living life more tolerantly, more richly. In his introduction, Irwin Edman writes, "It is hard enough in all conscience to say exactly what constitutes a major classic, and a minor classic is even more difficult to define. But if anyone wanted an illustration, I should not hesitate to offer 'The Fair Field.'" I do not know whether "The Fair Field" is any sort of classic, but I do know that it takes a way of life and, while delineating it beautifully, elevates it to a work of art which must lend both the way of life and the work of art as much immortality as anything man-made can sustain.