

(459) WHEN CHINA UNITES: AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION. By Harry Gannes. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1937. pp. 293. \$2.50. 459

UNMISTAKABLY this book is from the pen of an ardent sympathizer with the cause of Chinese national liberation. As such it should be appreciated by every defender of democracy. It is meant to be a bird's-eye-view of how and when China achieved her political unity, but there are several pinnacles that are overlooked. There are traces of hurried writing, perhaps due to the author's anxiety for early printing because of the present extraordinary interest in the Sino-Japanese armed conflict. 459

The book begins with the Opium War and the Taiping Movement, followed by the 1911 Revolution, the 1925-7 Revolution, and the struggle between the Kuomintang and the Communists. It ends with an account of the Japanese conquest of Manchuria and parts of North China, and the gradual establishment of a united national front against foreign invasion. 460

In order to understand all the reasons why and to what extent China is united, one must examine the diplomatic and constitutional history of the nation. A clear analysis of such factors as foreign interventions and their ramifying influence is certainly essential, as is a recounting of the resulting political, economic and social developments in China since the middle of the last century, with equal emphasis on internal and external relations. Mr. Gannes' book does not, however, give equal emphasis to the diplomatic and constitutional phases of recent Chinese history, nor does it give an adequate explanation of either. There are some sparkling spots in the book, revealing incidents related to imperialist intrigues in China, but the tie-up between these intrigues and Chinese domestic politics is not followed through. 460

There seems to be no justification for the sub-title of the book, because no effort has been made at "an interpretive history of the Chinese revolution." Granted that the Taiping Movement, the 1911 Revolution and the 1925-7 Anti-Imperialist Movement are successive steps of the unbroken and yet unfinished Chinese Revolution, each has its own background and its own distinguishing characteristics. Since the author has not clearly differentiated between them, the reader can hardly be expected to appreciate the general line of progression or the historical continuity. 460

Important omissions are many. The author does not seem to realize that the present Japanophile group owes its origin to those same politicians who resisted the re-organization program of the Kuomintang in 1924. Nor does he seem to realize the long process that was necessary for the establishment in Manchuria of the "fifty thousand anti-Japanese armed volunteers." Neither has he explained how the Japanophile group ever got into Nanking as a political faction, nor how the Soviets were organized in Kiangsi, except to refer to them as "revolutionary ruling councils in numerous interior agrarian districts." Though the "Red Trek" from Kiangsi to the northwest is described at great length, nothing is said about communications, agriculture, trade unions and the general political organization in the Soviet regime itself, without knowledge of which one wonders what is the basis of strength of the Red Army (now known as the Eighth-Route Army of China). Even in his description of the long march of that Army, Mr. Gannes has not adequately explained the new nationality policy towards the minority peoples, which policy was the secret of its success on the march and the pursuance of (460)

which must be regarded as the cornerstone of a real national unity in the face of Japanese aggression. 461

There are many oversimplified statements such as that the Ko Lao Hui was a "secret society carrying on *Taiping traditions*"¹; and that "beginning in 1849 and lasting for fifteen years, until finally put down by British and American aid, the Taiping revolt had actually ruined the rule of the Manchus." There are a host of typographical errors, some of which are rather significant. The foreign concession of oilfields was not in Shansi (p. 203) but Shensi; the Northwestern Volunteers (p. 232) should be Northeastern; Suiyan (p. 252) should be Sian; the First Congress of the Communist Party of China was in 1921 and not in 1924 (p. 61); and in four places at least (pp. 33, 90, 95 and 127) Kwangtung is printed as Kwantung, which is in the extreme north instead of the extreme south of China. 461

Here and there the author has introduced into his book many a pronouncement embodying sound ideas, and some of his quotations are in themselves excellent. Often, however, they seem isolated because salient points are not brought out. For instance, while commenting on the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5, he says, "By this means of territorial conquest and handsome indemnities, Japan was able to obtain the initial capital accumulation for its rapid capitalist and later imperialistic development, only to mature as a more powerful menace to China's sovereignty." (p. 15) There seem to be no relevant facts to back this statement except for the mention that 200,000,000 taels indemnity was forced upon China and that the Manchu Court had to borrow 280,000,000 yuan within forty months. As a matter of fact, the Chinese had to pay an additional 30,000,000 taels for the Japanese evacuation from South Manchuria; and what Mr. Gannes has failed to point out is the very significant fact that, according to the general estimate at that time, the total expenditure for war on both sides was not more than 150,000,000 taels. In other words as a result of this war, China was forced to pay 80,000,000 taels more than the total expenditure of both sides. While the sum of 280,000,000 yuan must have reference to the war loan of 100,000,000 taels and the foreign loans of 80,000,000 taels during 1895, the author has completely ignored the subsequent foreign loans totaling 300,000,000 taels for paying the principal and interest of the Japanese indemnity. Only these loans—which are still not completely paid—can give substance to his statement. 461

Mr. Gannes has some excellent ideas. It is therefore to be regretted

¹ Italics are the reviewer's. (461)

all the more that he was not able to organize the necessary facts to establish them. Perhaps this is largely due to his failure to appreciate the close link between the external and internal phases of Chinese political and economic history (462)

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