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Chinese Communism, World War II and Nationalism

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point for the best fruits of contemporary theology, and is the hinge which secures catechetics to the Church's present-day pastoral renewal.

The list of contributors is distinguished. Aside from Fathers Stone and Hofinger, there are these names which will be especially familiar to those engaged in catechist-formation work in the Philippines: Fathers Alfonso Nebreda, Paul Brunner and Jose Calle. Other authors, e.g., Andrew Greeley, Bernard Cooke, Gerard Sloyan, Frank Norris, and William Reedy, will also be known to many of our readers.

In sum: a work which fills a need, which fulfills its purpose, and deserves many readers.

C. G. ARÉVALO, S.J.

CHINESE COMMUNISM, WORLD WAR II AND NATIONALISM

PEASANT NATIONALISM AND COMMUNIST POWER: THE EMERGENCE OF REVOLUTIONARY CHINA, 1937-1945. By Chalmers A. Johnson. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962. xii, 256 pp. Notes. Index. Bibliog.

The book is a study of the activities of the Chinese Communist Party during the period of the Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1945. What Chalmers Johnson seeks to illuminate is the source of the power and the authority that the Party commanded after the war. China experts, economists, political scientists, and even generals, agree that the Communist military conquest of China would not have been possible without at least the acquiescence, if not the active support of the Chinese masses. Consensus breaks down, however, in the explanation of how the Communist Party was able to win the people. Some stress the economic program the Communists offered the peasants; others, the adroit use of organizational techniques and totalitarian instruments of mass control. Johnson looks for the answer in the Communist appeal to the sentiment of nationalism which the war developed among the Chinese people.

Johnson does not refer to ideology when he speaks of nationalism: "Ideology itself... does not in and of itself mobilize intellectual elites or nationalist masses" (28). Using conceptual tools furnished by Karl W. Deutsch (*Nationalism and Social Communication*. New York: Wiley, 1953), Eric J. Hobsbawn (*Social Bandits and Primitive*

Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1959), and Edward H. Carr (*Nationalism and After.* London: Macmillan, 1945), Johnson analyses the wartime activities of the Communist Party in an effort to arrive at a functional definition of nationalism, i.e., "one that identifies specific physical pressures which by acting upon given political environment give rise to nationalist movements" (ix).

The primary sources for the study are materials from the archives of the Japanese army and the Koain, the Asia Development Board. The documents contain secret, classified information; presumably therefore, they give a realistic appraisal of military and political development in China. Moreover, the data are internally consistent and corroborated by other non-Japanese sources of information. Many Japanese sources, according to Johnson, are actually materials captured from Chinese nationals.

The most significant effect of the Japanese invasion was to awaken the hitherto politically dormant peasantry of north and east China. The retreat of the central government to Chungking resulted in the breakdown of the established patterns of political authority and the creation of a power vacuum. The failure of the Japanese to maintain a viable order in the areas they could not occupy exposed them to guerilla harrassment from these bases. The punitive expeditions that they launched against the guerillas forced upon the peasantry the need to organize for self-defense. By taking up the cause of resistance against Japan in the no-man's land between the Kuomintang and the Japanese lines, the Communist Party won the leadership over the war-mobilized Chinese peasants.

Japanese propaganda effort only served to cement the alliance between the Party and the peasantry. The puppet regime established at Nanking publicized the Communist war efforts by singling out the Party as the principal enemy and discounting Chungking as a mere tool of the Communists. The fact that the puppet government, like the Nationalists, also called itself the Kuomintang, further confirmed among many the status of the Party as the real vanguard against Japan.

The concern of the Japanese over guerilla operations directed by the Communists is one indication of the support given by the masses to the Party: "guerilla warfare is not so much military technique as it is a political condition." The prerequisite for such a warfare is well understood by Mao Tse-tung: "because guerilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and cooperation" (286-287). More picturesquely, Mao characterized the relationship between the guerillas and the people as

being like that of the fish and the sea. Unfortunately, the Japanese chose to take the metaphor literally and responded with punitive "drain the water" operations against communities suspected of harboring guerrillas. In 1941, General Okamura assumed command of the North China Area Army and launched the *sanko-seisaku* three-all policy—kill all, burn all, destroy all. The effect of the policy was to deprive the common people of any alternative but resistance, and resistance under the banners of the Communist Party.

During the war years, Johnson points out, the Party succeeded in attracting a mass following such as it never enjoyed during the Kiangsi period. The explanation for this success, according to Johnson, could not have been any promise of economic benefits that the Party made to the peasants. As a matter of fact, the Party moderated its agrarian program lest it create class division in the community and weaken resistance against Japan. What mobilized the masses on the side of the communists was the appeal to nationalism, one to which the identification of personal and national enemy made the masses increasingly more responsive. To support this thesis, Johnson presents the analogous case of Yugoslavia where the Communist Party also rode to power after the war on the strength of the mass following that it captured in the course of the resistance movement against a foreign invader.

The most damaging critique of Johnson's thesis has been that made by Donald G. Gillin in an article published in the *Journal of Asian Studies* (Vol. XXIII, No. 2, 269-289). Gillin's main objection is that at least in the northwestern province of Shansi, the thesis is not borne out by the facts. Even before the Japanese invasion in 1937, according to Gillin, the Party, by the admission of Yen Hsi-shan himself, already enjoyed the sympathy of 70% of his subjects. The source of the Communist appeal lay in the social and economic reforms that the Party promised. This is reflected in the measures that Yen Hsi-shan took to undermine the popularity of the Party: the creation of the Force for the Promotion of Justice to stop the exploitation of the poor and proposals to nationalize and to redistribute cultivated lands in Shansi.

The anti-Japanese stance which the Communist assumed after the invasion seems to have been designed to impress the intellectuals and the privileged classes whose power and vested interests were threatened by the Japanese. To the peasants, the war appeared to be only another struggle among rival warlords. Shansi propagandists appealing to the patriotism of the peasants did not do half as well as the Communists in establishing popular support despite the fact that the Party played only a secondary role in the defense of northwestern China against Japan. The popular antagonism towards the Japanese which later developed was largely due to peasant dis-

content with the existing social and economic structure which the privileged classes, according to Communist propaganda, were conniving with the Japanese to preserve.

Gillin also disputes Johnson's contention that the Communists moderated its agrarian reform program in the interest of maintaining unity against the Japanese. Under the guise of organizing resistance against the enemy, the Communists although refraining from openly redistributing the land, introduced other reforms which effectively altered the social structure in Shansi. By banning usury, the Party freed millions of nominally independent but permanently indebted peasants. By forcing the wealthy to shoulder virtually the whole cost of war and making confiscation of land the penalty for failure to pay taxes, the Party gained a pretext for altering the patterns of landholding.

Gillin's study of the Shansi area by no means discredits the whole of Johnson's work. Johnson's conclusions about the origins of Communist power in Hopei and Shantung stand until someone can do for these areas what Gillin has done for Shansi. Gillin's study points out, however, the need to test theory against facts.

Johnson and Gillin disagree over the stimulus that mobilized the Chinese masses. Johnson's concluding observation, however, seems to depend less upon what mobilized the peasantry than upon the fact that the mobilization was an indigenous achievement. If the Communist Parties of China and Yugoslavia show signs today of being less amenable to Soviet control, the explanation, according to Johnson lies in their independent rise to power. The Chinese and the Yugoslav Communists did not have to appeal to Russian arms for authority, nor to orthodox ideology for legitimacy. As a result, they have enjoyed greater freedom than the Eastern European satellites to adapt what was after all Soviet *national* Communist ideology to their own interests. What is difficult to determine is whether and how far in-trabloc ideological conflict among the three National Communist States is permitted to modify the ultimate objectives of Communism. The question of the extent to which Communist ideology affects the National Communist states, as Johnson points out, should be the subject of continuing investigation.

EDILBERTO C. DE JESUS, JR.

ON THE THEOLOGY OF MARY

THE QUESTION OF MARY. By Rene Laurentin. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965. 161 pp.