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## **America and the Loss of China: America's Failure in China**

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The book, provided with a 40-page index, is a very useful symposium on communist China, though not on the Far East.

L. LADANY

## AMERICA AND THE LOSS OF CHINA

AMERICA'S FAILURE IN CHINA, 1941-1950. By Tang Tsou. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1963. xvi, 614 pp.

The political and military alignment in East Asia and the West Pacific today is uneasy and ominous. It exists such as it is, largely because of the Communist Party's rise to complete power in mainland China. This happened contrary to the interests of the United States and to such hopes and plans as she had for peace in the post-war world. Blameworthy or not, America failed in the objectives that were hers through the 1940's.

Historians and political scientists will find in this book of Tang Tsou a careful and copious chronicle of Sino-American relations from Pearl Harbor to the start of the stalemate in Korea. The author likewise offers them fair interpretation and keen, tenacious analysis of factors contributing to the losses America sustained regarding China.

The average reader too, if he lived on another planet, would judge this work highly entertaining. It has the dramatic structure and weighty content of tragedy. Men of stature and strong character, like Chiang and Mao, Stillwell, Hurley and Marshall, FDR and Truman are on the stage.

But all of us were engaged in these events of enormous consequence.

The U.S. principle of preserving Chinese territorial and administrative integrity has terminated in the reality of two Chinas. Non-intervention has passed into an American-enforced *de facto* cease-fire in the civil war. Traditional sympathy for the underdog of the Far East has been superseded by fear of the awakened giant of Asia. Pride in America's moral leadership in China has been replaced by apprehension about Chinese ideological influences in Asia. Missionary and philanthropic activities have given place to political and propaganda warfare. Neighborly dialogue has been supplanted by mutual denunciation. Historic friendship has been consummated in reciprocal hostility. On the horizon looms an ever-present chance of war (p. 591).

"Within the four seas, all men are brothers," a Chinese adage runs. Christ came in our midst to tell us, and show us how, to love one another. There is the pity of it. The loss in human values, in friendship and possible cooperation is saddening, and challenging!

Tang's six hundred pages are written compactly; they are meaty. It is not possible to summarize his story in a brief review. He demonstrates unto evidence that any simplist explanation of America's China debacle is erroneous.

An excellent index helps make the book a valuable reference tool to refute such charges as that a conspiracy of writers and State Department personnel shaped events and betrayed America's interests. The measures and means which their Government employed for China through various stages in these years were what the great majority of Americans then wanted, however inadequate they were to achieve the ultimate goals desired. Such is the inconsistency of mortals with limited wisdom and will-power.

One great road-block in America's policy towards a unified, great, and friendly post-war China was the refusal and/or inability of Chiang Kai Shek to effect domestic reforms. The Nationalist Party did not until too late implement its program of restricting interest rates and distributing land tenure. It clung too long and too jealously to a claim of exercising political tutelage, intended as a temporary measure to educate and prepare the people for constitutional democracy. This attitude alienated the sympathies of sincere and able men in the minority parties. In military and administrative matters, Chiang seemed to look upon loyalty to himself rather than competence in fighting the war and efficient, honest public service as the most important criterion in the allocation of equipment and supply, and in promotion and advancement. This demoralized well-qualified and patriotic officers.

The attitudes of the KMT and its leader are understandable, if not excusable, in view of the brutal blows inflicted on China by the Japanese war machine, and of the many-pronged attack against the Nationalist Government pressed with growing, relentless intensity by the Communist Party.

Distributing blame for the present sorry situation, the author of this book seems to let Japan off rather lightly. The span of years he mainly treats of begins with 1941, after Japan's damaging aggression in China was far advanced. Nationalist China was never driven to its knees in surrender, and this fact won worldwide admiration; but the country was virtually flat on its back, bleeding from many deep wounds. In a brief paragraph, Tang Tsou tells us:

The Sino-Japanese war... decimated the Nationalist army and drove the Nationalist government from its home base, causing a new surge of the centrifugal policy in Chinese politics. Secondly, it gave the Communists opportunity to expand their control over the most important regions of China. Third, it greatly weakened the upper classes, which had been the strong and capable supporters of the Nationalist government, and created conditions which alienated the middle classes from the government. Finally, the stresses of war caused a demoralization of the bureaucracy and the army (p. 49).

The first and main impact of the Japanese assault was against the Nationalist Government, not the Communists. It swept away arduous positive achievements of the preceding ten years. In January, 1945 General Hurley could honestly praise Chiang as "a man who led his nation in revolution, and who has led an ill-fed,

poorly equipped, practically unorganized army against an overwhelming foe for seven years."

Another point to Chiang's credit is his clear, steady grasp of the totalitarian Marxism of Mao Tse-Tung, whose verbal adherence to a united front against Japan was contradicted by vigorous prosecution of civil war. In the autumn of 1937, shortly after the united front was formed, Mao is reported to have said:

The Sino-Japanese War gives the Chinese Communists an excellent chance to grow. Our policy is to devote seventy per cent of our effort to our own expansion, twenty per cent to coping with the [nationalist] government, and ten per cent to fighting the Japanese. This policy is to be carried out in three stages. During the first stage we are to compromise with the Kuomintang in order to ensure our existence and growth. During the second stage we are to achieve a parity in strength with Kuomintang. During the third stage we are to penetrate deep into parts of Central China to establish bases for attack on the Kuomintang.

Citing this speech, Tang Tsou says that its authenticity cannot be proved or disproved. "But the general direction of the policy attributed to the Communists, as distinguished from specific details, was in accord with the strategy and tactics laid down by Mao in his intraparty directives and speeches which have since been made public" (p. 131).

In June, 1944 Chiang endeavored strenuously to convince Henry Wallace, then U.S. Vice-president and on a mission to do what he could to bring the Chinese Nationalists and Communists together, that the Chinese Communist party was part of the international Communist movement. While responsible American officials thought that the Chinese Reds were not tied to the Soviet Union, and were mere "agrarian democrats", Chiang remarked that "The Chinese Communists were more communistic than the Russian Communists." Curiously, this statement was made a few weeks after Marshal Stalin told Ambassador Averell Harriman in Moscow: "The Chinese Communists are not real Communists. They are 'margarine' Communists. Nevertheless, they are real patriots and they want to fight Japan" (p. 163). Twenty years later, Mao proves Chiang right and Stalin mistaken or untruthful.

The book under review relates at length the rise, consequences, and fall of the American view that the Chinese communists were the true democrats, simply agrarian radicals, trying to effect some highly desirable reforms in an amiable Robin Hood spirit. The Chinese people were generally believed to be too individualistic, too humanly moderate, too fun-loving, and too much enamoured of democracy (and perhaps of America) to accept, or acquiesce under, totalitarian Communism. The extremes to which a nation-wide brain-washing and terror-campaigns could reduce a great people were not then known as they are now. Total mobilization of the press, the schools, the army and police, of every economic lever that might induce pressure has accomplished changes which were thought to be impossible.

A not untypical remark was this statement of Dr. Walter Judd in September 1942:

You could persuade Herbert Hoover, J. P. Morgan, and Winston Churchill to be Communists as easily as you could persuade a land-owning Chinese peasant, whose ancestors have lived on one piece of land for centuries, to take the only tangible thing he has and dump it into a common pot just on the promise that around the corner will be something better (cited on p. 225).

Similar statements are still current about various peoples, including the Filipinos. Judd had been a missionary to China, and later was in Congress a sharp critic of the Truman-Marshall policy. He and foreign service experts, and columnists in the N.Y. Times and Saturday Evening Post, were mistaken. Surface attitudes may prove shallow and shaky; or we may underestimate the instruments of persuasion which a materialist regime is ready ruthlessly to employ.

General Carlos Rómulo has always based Philippine opposition to seating Red China in the United Nations on the valid grounds that the Peking regime flaunts the basic principles of the United Nations charter. The book under review clearly establishes the intransigence of Mao Tse-Tung. An apposite quotation from an important speech of Mao's in November 1938 on his politico-military strategy shows that his views on war, dissident from Khrushchev's, are of long standing.

"The central task and the supreme form of a revolution is the seizure of political power by force of arms and the solution of problems by war . . . Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Mao further observed that "experience in the class struggle of the era of imperialism teaches us that the working class and the toiling masses cannot defeat the armed bourgeois and landlords except by the power of the gun; in this sense we can even say that the whole world can be remoulded only with the gun" (Cited p. 132, from the Peking edition of the Selected Works of Mao, vol. II).

A paragraph about the numerical strength of Communist armies in 1945 reveals something about the problems facing government troops in Vietnam today:

Only an overwhelmingly large number of regular forces can cope successfully with guerillas who have popular support. In their fight against the Communist guerillas in Malaya, the British employed, at the worst period of the war, fifty armed men, in various capacities as combat troops, supporting troops, police and home guard, against one guerilla. In general, it takes between ten and twenty soldiers to control one guerilla in an organized operation. Conversely, 'one guerilla has effectively tied down or dissipated the usefulness of ten conventional soldiers'. But the Chinese Communists were obviously not active against Japan's occupation forces. They put much greater stress upon 'economic guerilla warfare' than on guerilla activities of a purely military nature. In 1944 and 1945, the Japanese largely left them alone (p. 302).

At the end of the war with Japan, America helped the Nationalist forces, insisting through the Emperor that the Japanese garrisons surrender arms and equipment only to Nationalist troops, transporting armies to the main cities of East and North China, and later to Manchuria. But by this time nothing less than large-scale, direct armed intervention by U.S. troops could possibly have constituted decisive aid. Such direct intervention in the internal affairs of China ran counter to traditional American policy there. The mood

of the troops and the climate of V-day public opinion were strongly opposed to new fighting; and troops in sufficient numbers were simply not available, with the demands for occupation forces in Japan and Europe what they then were. Estimates were that no less than 150,000 men, or, on another basis, seven divisions of U.S. troops in Manchuria and fifteen divisions in other parts of China, would be needed to stabilize the situation favorably. At the end of 1946, there were 12,000 U.S. soldiers and marines in China; there was only one and a third divisions in the United States itself.

For many reasons, the Nationalist hold on mainland areas deteriorated rapidly. Marshall, as Secretary of State, informed his Nanking Ambassador, J. Leighton Stuart in October 1948:

To achieve the objective of reducing the Chinese Communists to a completely negligible factor in China in the immediate future, it would be necessary for the United States virtually to take over the Chinese government and administer its economic, military, and government affairs. Strong Chinese sensibilities, regarding infringement of China's sovereignty, the intense feeling of nationalism among all Chinese, and the unavailability of qualified American personnel in large numbers required argues strongly against attempting such a solution (cited, p. 488).

In my opinion, at the time in question, Marshall correctly assessed the situation. Mere material assistance was wasted, or quickly lost to the enemy. Foreign troops were unwelcome on Chinese soil. Americans demonstrated no charisma for governing well China's complex and teeming society. Neither in quantity nor quality were acceptable administrators in economic, military, and governmental fields available—not for the initial commitments needed, nor for the extensive continuing responsibilities that had to be foreseen.

A policy of American disengagement was then decided upon, and was being carried out substantially, but in stops and starts, because Republicans in Congress demanded concessions of help to Nationalist China for their votes in support of measures to defend and rebuild western Europe. But Truman adopted a "hands off Formosa" policy, and it seems he had no intention of intervening with military means to keep the island in friendly hands. In May 1950, military and diplomatic advisers believed that Taiwan would fall to Peking rule before July 15. During the two weeks before the outbreak of fighting in Korea, the Chinese Communist troops on the coast opposite Taiwan increased from about 40,000 to about 156,000.

The Soviet Union, however, triggered the North Korean attack on June 25, and seems to have done so not in concert with Peking's plans. On June 27 Truman announced that the U.S. Seventh Fleet was dispatched to the Formosa Strait, and declared both that the fleet would repel any attack on Taiwan, and that no attacks should be made from Taiwan on the mainland. This was then seen as a measure to localize the new war, and to discourage Com-

munist-bloc moves elsewhere. With the full-scale commitment of Chinese Communist "volunteer" troops in the Korean war against U.S. and U.N. forces, additional reasons for support of the Nationalist government and the people of Taiwan against Communist attack developed. This neutralization of the strait of Formosa, fourteen years old now, has kept free from Communist oppression and out of the Red orbit a population of 11,000,000, as large as Hungary's, and equally precious in human dignity.

America's policy regarding China, Tang Tsou holds, was vitiated at least from 1941 to 1950 by an imbalance between ends and means. The flaw took two forms; one was "an unwillingness, and, at times, an inability to use military power purposefully to achieve political objectives." The other was "an unwillingness and inability to abandon unattainable goals in order to avoid entanglement in a hopeless cause."

There was not enough intelligent subordination of military to political aims regarding China in the way the U.S. waged its war against Japan, granted. But to my mind there is no proof that direct, armed U.S. intervention in the Chinese civil war was morally justified, or that it would surely have achieved goods proportionate to its cost in many values.

And high goals which for a time are unattainable are not to be abandoned lightly, nor are causes apparently hopeless always so to the great-hearted and enterprising. The vision of a re-united China great, free, democratic, and friendly in the family of nations offers a goal to be worked for by every discoverable good means; it is a cause that all who want peace, growing prosperity, and full human dignity in the Orient and the 21st-century world should never regard as hopeless. It is worthy, rather, of efforts positive and persevering, no matter how long and laborious they must be.

The present book is the second major work of Tang Tsou; it is to be hoped that he will continue to contribute to the cause we have just mentioned his fine scientific and human talents.

CHARLES J. MCCARTHY

## CHINA AND THE WEST

CHINA'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST: A DOCUMENTARY SURVEY 1839-1923. By Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, with E-tu Zen Sun, Chaoying Fang and others. New York: Atheneum Paperbacks 44, 1963. xi, 296 pp.