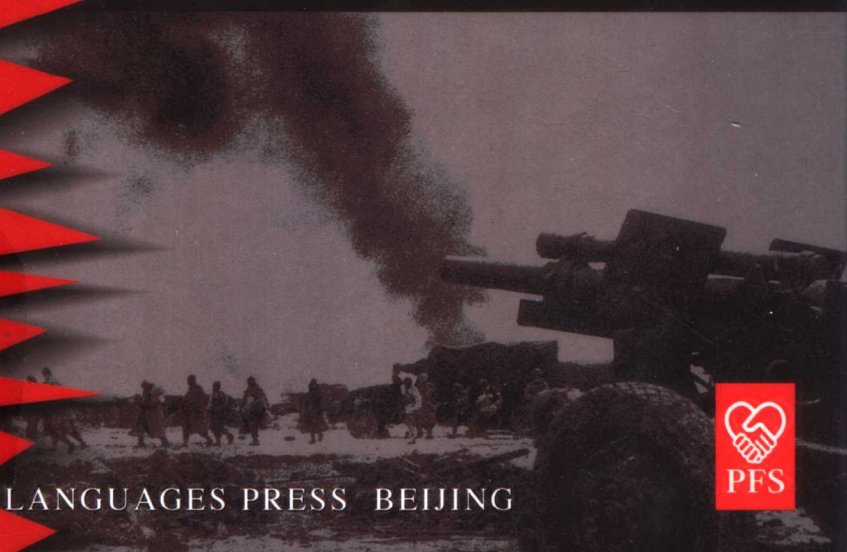
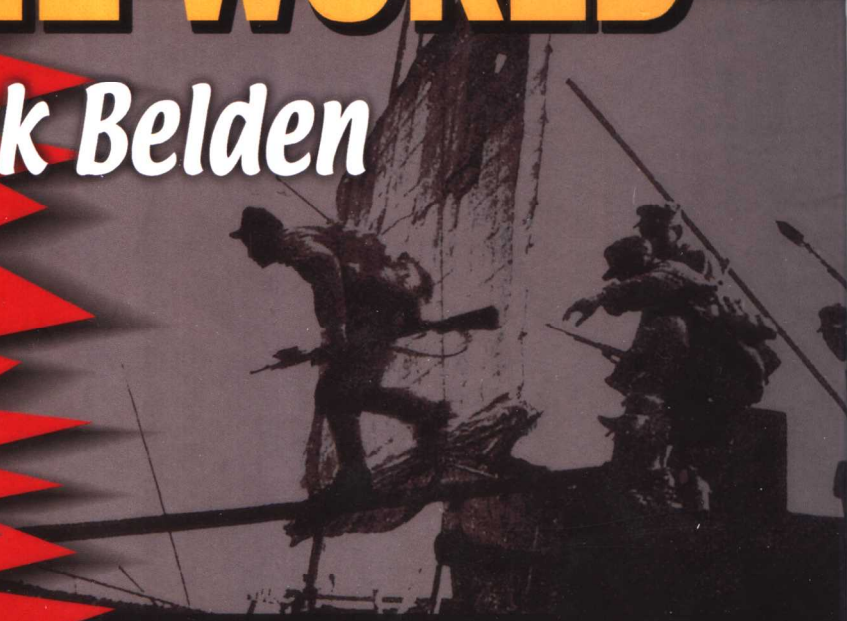


CHINA SHAKES THE WORLD

Jack Belden



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CHINA SHAKES THE WORLD

by
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PREFACE

Huang Hua

It is a great honor for me to write a preface for the new, PFS (China Society for People's Friendship Studies) 50-book series under the general title of *Light on China*. All these books were written in English by journalistic and other eyewitnesses of the events described. I have read many of them over the seven decades since my student days at Yenching University. With some of the outstanding authors in this series I have ties of personal friendship, mutual regard, and warm memories dating from before the Chinese people's Liberation in 1949.

Looking back and forward, I am convinced that China is pursuing the right course in building a strong and prosperous country in a rapidly changing world with its complex and sometimes volatile developments.

The books in this series cover a span of some 150 years, from the mid 19th to the early 21st century. The numerous events in China, the sufferings and struggles of the Chinese people, their history and culture, and their dreams and aspirations were written by

foreign observers animated by the spirit of friendship, equality and cooperation. Owing to copyright matters and other difficulties, not all eligible books have as yet been included.

The founder of the first Chinese republic, Dr. Sun Yat-sen wrote in his Testament in 1925, “For forty years I have devoted myself to the cause of the people’s revolution with but one end in view: the elevation of China to a position of freedom and equality among the nations. My experiences during those forty years have convinced me that to attain this goal we must bring about an awakening of our own people and ally ourselves in common struggle with those people of the world who regard us as equals.”

Chairman Mao Zedong declared, at the triumphal founding of the People’s Republic in 1949, “The Chinese people have stood up.” Today, having passed its 53rd anniversary, we see the vast forward strides that have been taken, and note that many more remain to be made.

Many foreign observers have traced and reported the real historical movement of modern China, that is: from humiliation — through struggle — to victory. Seeking understanding and friendship with the Chinese people, their insight and perspective were in basic harmony with the real developments in China. But there have been others who viewed China and the Chinese people through glasses tinted by hostile prejudice or ignorance and have invariably made irrelevant observations that could not stand the test of time. This needs to be better understood by young people and students, at home and abroad. The PFS series *Light on China* can help them gain an overview of what went before, is happening now, and will

emerge in the future.

Young students in China can additionally benefit from these works by seeing how foreign journalists and authors use fluent English to record and present historical, philosophical, and socio-political issues and choices in China. For millions of students in China, English has become a compulsory second language. These texts will also have many-sided usefulness in conveying knowledge of our country to other peoples.

Students abroad, on their part, may be helped by the example of warm, direct accounts and impressions of China presented by their elders in the language that most readily reaches them.

Above all, this timely and needed series should help build bridges of friendship and mutual understanding. Good books long out of print will be brought back to strengthen the edifice.

My hearty thanks and congratulations go first to ex-Premier Zhu Rongji, who has been an effective supporter of this new, PFS series. They go to all engaged in this worthy project, the Foreign Languages Press, our China Society for People's Friendship Studies, and others who have given their efforts and cooperation.

Chairman Mao Zedong has written: "So many deeds cry out to be done, and always urgently. The world rolls on, time presses. Ten thousand years are too long. Seize the day, seize the hour."

The hour has come for making these books available to young people in China and abroad whose destiny is to build a better world together. Let this series add a small brick to that structure.

Beijing, Autumn 2003

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PART I

INTO RED CHINA

1. Foreword

WHEN World War II ended, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek must have been content.

The Japanese Army, which he had resisted so stubbornly, but so unsuccessfully had just surrendered to him without a fight. The Western powers, with equal docility, had given up their hundred-year role of imperialist aggression, returned the treaty port concessions and recognized China as a fully sovereign state and Chiang as her rightful ruler. Among his own countrymen, Chiang's position appeared even more secure. Under his command, he now had an army of four million men, thirty-nine divisions of which had been American trained and equipped; he had the largest air force any Asiatic mainland power had ever possessed and he held captive or had made innocuous nearly every warlord or politician who had ever opposed him. The only possible challenge to his power was a band of Communist guerrillas whom eight years before he had penned up in the barren loess and cave country of the northwest and all but liquidated.

Emerging from his wartime hide-out at Chungking, China's dictator returned in triumph to his capital in Nanking, ready, willing and seemingly able once more to assume undisputed sway over 450,000,000 people. Outwardly, the generalissimo appeared to have become the most powerful

ruler in the last two centuries of Chinese history.

Less than four years later, as I wrote these words, the prospects of Chiang had undergone a cataclysmic change. He had already fled from his capital and sought refuge in his ancestral home, the premier of his government had unblushingly urged the United States to revive the unequal treaties and establish military and naval bases in China and his wife had come to this country to beg American officials to save the shattered fortunes, perhaps, in the long run, the very life of her husband.

In the meantime, these same despised Communist guerrillas have conquered all of Manchuria and North China, captured the capital of Chinese nationalism at Nanking, crossed their Rubicon on the Yangtze and are threatening to overrun the whole country and bring tumbling into ruins, not only the twenty-year reign of Chiang Kai-shek, not only the 100-year reign of Western imperialism in the Orient, but also a way of life that has existed almost unchanged in China for over two thousand years.

Unless all signs are deceiving, it appears likely that just as the Russian Revolution was the greatest by-product of World War I so the Chinese Revolution will be the greatest by-product of World War II.

You will find few such abrupt changes in history—especially if you remember that it involves one-fifth of the world's population. Nor will you find many people who foresaw this dramatic turnabout in China's civil war.

When I returned to China at the end of 1946, I found that among foreign observers there were three general opinions about the outcome of the war between Chiang and his enemies of twenty years' standing.

A small group of Western military men believed that the generalissimo would overrun the Communists within a year and force them to surrender or liquidate them. An even smaller group (considered very radical and leftish) believed, if there were no foreign intervention, that the war would go on for twenty, thirty and even fifty years. The opinion of by far the greatest majority, however, was that Chiang, though not being able to eliminate the Communists entirely, would nevertheless be able to drive them back in the hills, open up the railways and once more unite the coun-

try with no one to dispute his control.

In the light of events, these opinions must be considered as ill informed as those of the poll takers who predicted that the American people would vote President Truman out of office. Fundamentally, these prophecies backfired for the same reason—failure to look into the hearts of a number of very common people.

This would seem so trite as to need no further elaboration. But even today, when the Chinese Communists are everywhere victorious over Chiang Kai-shek, the causes of these tremendous events are either ill understood or deliberately blurred. Thus we find such highly placed people as ex-Ambassador William C. Bullitt, Congressman Walter Judd, General Claire Chennault, Alfred Landon, and a strange group of lugubrious mourners at Chiang Kai-shek's bier putting the blame for this supposedly regrettable state of affairs on mistakes in George Marshall's policy, Russian machinations, Communist propaganda and God knows what else. Looking around right and left, casting their eyes heavenward in horror, but never earthward in sympathy, these China experts have discovered every reason for the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek but the right one—the Chinese Revolution. This revolution—and nothing else—is the miracle that has brought China's once proud dictator to his feet in near ruins and has so changed the correlation of forces in the Orient that the whole history of the world is likely to be altered.

This mighty event did not take place overnight and it is still going on; the fact that it ever occurred at all was due to one of the greatest tragedies of modern times—the collision between the capitalist West and the feudal East. The intermingling of these two civilizations resulted in the slow, but nevertheless cataclysmic, proletarianization of nearly the entire Chinese people. Such a process proceeded not along any narrow Marxian path, but unrolled down a broad avenue of almost universal dissolution, with peasant, intellectual and ruler all being dispossessed from their environment. By 1945, this abscessed condition of the Chinese people burst forth once more in renewed civil war and quickly thereafter passed over into revolution.

The premises of the Chinese Revolution, like any other great social revolution were: 1. A disintegrating society, so diseased that it had become incapable of solving the urgent problems of the nation or the living conditions of her people. 2. A bitter hostility to the existing regime plus a revolutionary mood among huge masses of people who were so far gone in despair that they were willing to undergo supreme sacrifices and resort to the most extreme and even suicidal measures to save themselves. 3. Irremedial contradictions within the ruling group which had lost all creative powers and confidence in its ability to get society out of its blind alley. 4. A new group or party which could utilize all the above factors in order to gain control over society and put into practice its own program for saving that society.

All of these factors produced, and are still producing the Chinese Revolution. Undoubtedly, it is in the historic conditions which formed China that one must seek the chief clue to the Chinese Revolution. The changed economic structure of China, as a result of Western penetration, along with the destruction of nearly all previously held life values, produced a conflict of classes within Chinese society which led to the need for revolution.

Between need and possibility, however, there is a wide gulf. For a hundred years the necessity to transform Chinese society by revolution has been imperative. But that revolution never was completed for the simple reason that foreign imperialism was entirely too strong to permit the Chinese people to take control over their own destinies. The Second World War which brought about the defeat of Japan, most dangerous and most powerful of the imperialist countries in the Far East, plus the weakening of western European imperialism, was what made the Chinese Revolution possible and also what changed it in a new direction.

Here again, however, there is also a wide gulf between the possibility of revolution and the success of revolution. It is perfectly clear that without the defeat of Japan, without the weakening of Western capitalism and without those changes which took place inside of China during

the Japanese invasion, the Chinese Communists would never have been able to conquer state power. However, it is equally clear, that the Second World War, except in a basic way, cannot account for the immediate events of China's civil war. Nor can the changes in China's economy or the social bases of her classes between 1945 and 1949 account for the twists and turns which that war took. These changes were entirely too insignificant to explain why the Communists were victorious over Chiang Kai-shek just at this moment in world history.

Without wishing to give psychological elements any more weight than they deserve, it is nevertheless impossible to avoid the conclusion that China's dictator was defeated when he was because of the swift and intense changes which took place in the feelings of a decisive portion of the Chinese people between 1945 and 1949.

This change in mass consciousness did not take place in any serene and academic atmosphere, but in one highly charged with emotion. Between 1945 and 1949, it was emotion that played the principal role in China's civil war. That this emotion was produced by previously existing external conditions, the writer does not deny. But it was only when the passions of the Chinese people burst their old confining fetters and in turn reacted on the objective conditions of Chinese society that the Communists and their allies were able to ride to power.

It was passion and principally passion that overwhelmed Chiang Kai-shek. The radiant hopes and murderous hates that the Chinese peasantry poured into the sphere of war and revolution released a flood of emotional energy that exploded with the force of an atomic bomb within Chinese society, nearly dissolving it. The extent and depths of these passions could be felt and seen and heard in the trampling rush of peasant feet toward the landlord's manor; in the dying gasp of a village noble whose body, as well as whose land, was divided by club-swinging peasants; in the flash of a pig knife plunged into the heart of a clan leader whose ancestral tablets the farmers might normally have worshiped; in the shriek of a girl whose mother led Chiang Kai-shek's secret service to chop off her

daughter's head and pull out her intestines; in the religious groans of village witches who called down gods to their incense tables and chanted in sepulchral tones: "Chiang Kai-shek comes!" in the snick of scissors wielded by women cutting off the flesh of a village oppressor; in the lamentations of village brides beaten by their husbands and in their murderous cries of vengeance as they organized themselves into Women's Associations and beat, scratched and tore the flesh of their hated lords and masters; everywhere on the good Chinese earth, across the plains, the mountains and the fields, these passions rose up as a new and unconquerable force.

Primarily it was the task of the civil war and the revolution to canalize these tremendous emotions.

There was almost no precedent to follow, no chart by which to steer. Where Chiang Kai-shek had been successful previously in maintaining his rule over the Chinese people, it had been because the despair and the hate of the masses had not been sufficient to stir them out of their traditional apathy. When new conditions arose and the peasantry rose angrily with them, it was necessary that Chiang Kai-shek try to understand both the conditions and the emotions of the peasantry. He failed in both respects; in fact, he did not even try to understand the hearts of his own people. That is part of the inner history of Chiang Kai-shek's defeat and it is also part of the history of American policy in China. Neither the American government, the American press, nor the American people, nor many of their representatives in the Far East in the embassies, the military establishments and the business offices sought to look beyond their own narrow national or personal interests toward the heart of the admittedly ignorant, but terribly emotional, bitter men and women of China.

To all such people, one could justly address the words Mohammed used to denounce the Meccan merchants:

But ye honor not the orphan

Nor urge ye one another to feed the poor.

No such words could be addressed to the Chinese Communists. For they