

AID CHINA

Arthur Clegg



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS BEIJING



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1937-1949

A MEMOIR OF A FORGOTTEN CAMPAIGN

By

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Foreign Languages Press

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

支援中国 / (英) 克莱格 (Clegg, A.) 著

— 北京: 外文出版社, 2003.12

(中国之光)

ISBN 7-119-03523-1

I. 支… II. 克… III. 医药卫生组织机构 — 技术援助
— 历史事件 — 中国 — 1931~1949 — 英文 IV. K260.5
中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2003) 第 101559 号

外文出版社网址:

<http://www.flp.com.cn>

外文出版社电子信箱:

info@flp.com.cn

sales@flp.com.cn

中国之光丛书

支援中国

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责任编辑 蔚文英

封面设计 蔡 荣

印刷监制 冯 浩

出版发行 外文出版社

社 址 北京市百万庄大街 24 号 邮政编码 100037

电 话 (010) 68996121 / 68996117 (编辑部)
(010) 68329514 / 68327211 (推广发行部)

印 刷 三河市汇鑫印务有限公司

开 本 小 16 开

印 数 1000 册

版 次 2003 年第 1 版第 1 次印刷

装 别 精装

书 号 ISBN 7-119-03523-1 / Z·683 (外)

定 价 68.00 元

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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

Foreword

It is a great pleasure for me to have been asked to write a foreword (although it certainly needs none) to the book of my old friend Arthur Clegg on the China Campaign Committee. This was a group formed in the United Kingdom to help the Chinese people to the utmost of what was possible in the anti-Japanese war. In eleven chapters, Arthur Clegg charts the ups and downs of this organization from the invasion of Manchuria by the Japanese in 1931 to the declaration of the establishment of the new state in China by Mao Tse-tung from the T'ien An Men Gate in Peking, in 1949.

I had been made strongly aware of the importance of China and its history in 1937, when three Chinese scientists had come to Cambridge to do research in biochemistry. They had far more influence on me than Cambridge ever did on them. Shen Shih-chang worked with me personally, Lu Gwei-djen worked with my wife, and Wang Ying-lai worked in David Keilin's laboratory at the Molteno Institute not far away. I was so struck down with the beauty of the Chinese script, the wealth of Chinese literature, the depth of Chinese thought, and the marvellous human qualities of the research workers themselves, that I

decided I must learn Chinese. So it came about that I was one of the very few British scientists who knew anything of the language and culture of China. Thus I was invited by our government to go there for the duration, where I became Scientific Counsellor at the British Embassy in Chungking. Afterwards Shen Shih-chang went to Yale University at New Haven, and spent the rest of his life there, Wang Ying-lai returned to China, and became ultimately Director of the National Institute of Biochemistry and Chairman of the Academia Sinica's branch in Shanghai, while finally Lu Gwei-djen is now my Associate Director at the East Asian History of Science Library in Cambridge.

But in fact these were not the first Chinese people that I had ever met. In the late twenties, that distinguished Quaker professor, H. G. Wood of Selly Oak, Birmingham, had founded a "Society for the Study of Secularism," and I was one who used to attend their meetings. Some of the members were extremely interesting, such as T. S. Eliot, the poet, whom I came to know quite well. Now some time between 1931 and 1935, one of our meetings somewhere south of London was attended by a Chinese philosopher. Unfortunately, I cannot now remember his name, but I do remember giving him a lift back to London in my car, during which time he told me all about the Lytton Report of the League of Nations which condemned Japan's invasion of Manchuria.

Thus when I went to China in 1942, I was already well acquainted with a number of Chinese scientists and philosophers. Essentially I felt that I had really come to learn, and not to teach. Wherever I went, there was some chemist or medical doctor, some engineer or mathematician, who proved to be extremely interested in the history

of that subject in Chinese culture. In this way I learned what books should be read, and what books should be bought if possible. So, in a word, I got a wonderful introduction to the history of science and technology in Chinese culture, which could perhaps have been gained in no other way.

Arthur Clegg's book is really of absorbing interest. The China Campaign Committee was a great feature of life in the England of those days in the thirties, and I believe it really did much towards making China that great ally in the Second World War which it afterwards became. I would like to commend it heartily to all readers. It goes just about as far as the foundation of the Britain-China Friendship Association which had Jack Dribbon as Secretary. This was a great fact of life when I returned from China to UNESCO after the war, and finally went back to Cambridge. The years from 1931 to 1949 were of crucial importance for the future of China. I was privileged to see this at close hand for four years (1942 to 1946). Nothing could be more timely than Arthur Clegg's resurrection of a "Forgotten Campaign."

Joseph Needham

Acknowledgments

Just before I completed this study of the China Campaign Committee I heard from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in London that the International Peace Hospital, which the C.C.C. did so much to establish and maintain, still exists. Known as the Bethune International Peace Hospital it is now at Shijiazhuang in Hopei Province and is no longer up in the mountains of Wutaishan. That this hospital still continues is a great reward to all those associated with the China Campaign Committee.

In writing this study I have received much help from many people which I gratefully acknowledge. I am indebted to the following either for the gift of papers or for permission to consult them. Mrs. Mary Barnett (Mary Sheridan Jones) for many China Campaign Committee papers; Mr. Christopher MacLehose for permission to consult Dorothy Woodman's papers; Miss Victoria Bridgeman for the gift of some of the Reginald Bridgeman papers which have now been passed to the Brynmor Jones Library, Hull University; Mrs. Innes Herdan (Innes Jackson) for C.C.C. and Bournemouth C.C.C. papers; and Mrs. Annabel Cole for certain Margery Fry papers.

I also wish to give thanks for the generous assistance given by the librarians of the following libraries: the Modern Records Library, University of Warwick (Gollancz papers); Cambridge University Library (Needham papers); Churchill College Library, Cambridge (Noel Baker papers); Hull University Library (Edgar Young papers and Minutes of the Union of Democratic Control); Rhodes House Library, Oxford (Hilda Selwyn Clarke papers among those of the Fabian Colonial Bureau); the Library of the Anglo-Chinese Educational Institute (Clegg Collection); British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics (Minutes of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Minutes of the League of Nations' Union); the British Library, the Marx Memorial Library, Edmund and Ruth Frow of the Working Class Movement Library, Manchester, and the Communist Party Archives for pamphlets and printed material of the China Campaign Committee and the International Peace Campaign; the British Library Newspaper section, the Southampton, Cleveland, Newham and Birmingham Public Libraries for photocopies of press reports on dock strikes and C.C.C. and I.P.C. Meetings. The Ripon Public Library helped me with obtaining books on the 1930s.

Mary Barnett and Dr. John de Courcy Ireland contributed valuable recollections of their part in the Aid China Campaign and Innes Herdan, Jock Anderson, Livia Gollancz and Margot Kettle sent recollections of various events. Noreen Branson made available Trevor Stallard's memories of the Southampton Dock Strike.

Thanks are due to Dr. Stefan Feuchtwang, and especially to Don Gaspar and Barbara Ireland, for help in newspaper research and to the City University which gave a grant towards that. The Birmingham

Branch of the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding also helped with a search of Birmingham newspapers. My thanks are also due to the Earl of Listowel and to Mr. Bernard Buckman who contributed towards the cost of typing.

Mary Barnett, Innes Herdan and Israel Epstein read the whole of the first draft and made valuable suggestions. Derek Bryan's comments on the earlier chapters helped to remove errors. Joan Farr, Sydney Saunders and Lord Listowel also read the first draft in whole or in part. Any errors that remain are my own as are the opinions expressed.

Jack Lindsay, Aileen Tai, Gabriel Carritt, Bill Moore, Pearl Binder (Lady Elwyn Jones) have all helped me with information about various events and Tien Ju-kang of the Australian National University sent me the Chinese text of Mao Tse-tung's message to the C.C.C. which was printed in English in China News, July 1939. The extract of Mao's message included in the text is from a fresh translation by Innes Herdan as I have failed to find the China News version.

I would like to thank my wife for patiently removing certain infelicities of language and punctuation from early drafts and Mrs. Barbara Hornsby for typing the final version.

A.C.

February 26, 1985.

Introduction

Some periods of time are turning points in world history. After them the whole political climate is different. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars were such a period, as was the First World War with the toppling of the imperial houses of Germany, Austria and Russia and especially the emergence of the Soviet Union. The period 1931-49, which saw the Second World War, the defeat of Fascism, the rise of Communist China and the political undermining of the whole nineteenth century structure of imperialism, was certainly of no less significance and perhaps of even more.

Forty years later we live in the midst of the unsolved problems it left. Disputes about the meaning of the agreements then concluded still continue and the shadow of the nuclear weapons that were evolved darkens our horizons. But it seems significant at least to me that the tenuous links then established between the Powers have never been totally ruptured. Though the United States certainly considered using atomic weapons against China both during the Korean and Vietnam wars it eventually decided against doing so. Perhaps in the long run the emergence of Communist China, the most populated country in the

world, will be seen as of more importance than nuclear weapons. Certainly, all those who in the 1930s helped China's resistance to Japanese aggression and who later defended the right of the Chinese people to determine their own future can take a measure of pride in that work. In 1950 I published *New China, New World*. I thought then and think now, though many call me too optimistic, that with the defeat of Fascism and the emergence of China with its promise of the end of all imperialism that world politics was not only different but better, with a stronger promise both of peace and democracy.

The story of the China Campaign Committee takes place against this crowded historical canvas. It is a British conceit that dates the Second World War from 1939, when we got involved. Its real start was in September 1931, when Japan invaded Northeast China and Britain prevented the League of Nations from taking any action, to stop it, thus beginning the destruction of the peace system that emerged from the First World War and which would, it was hoped, prevent another. That was two years before Hitler came to power with the backing of German generals, bankers and steel manufacturers.

Strictly speaking the system of government in Japan was not a fascist one. Japanese landlords, militarists and big capitalists - the *zaibatsu*—so dominated the country that they did not need a Fascist party. But their rule was akin to Fascism both in its expansionist desires and internal repression. In 1936 a militaristic Japan and Nazi Germany declared their common aims in the Anti-Comintern Pact (joined a year later by Italy). This was part of a process of fresh aggression—the war in Spain, Japan's second invasion of China, and Hitler's conquest of Austria and Czechoslovakia. My story really be-

gins with the second Japanese invasion of China. From then on—1937-45—large-scale fighting was continuous.

China's troubles were not over when the Second World War ended in 1945. Puffed up with their possession of the atomic bomb and the defeat of Japan, American public opinion cried out, "the Pacific is our ocean!" Nevertheless the atomic bomb contributed little to Japan's defeat. Japan—and everybody else—knew it would have to surrender unconditionally once the Soviet Union entered the war in the Far East. But that was not what the American people were led to believe. American domination of the Pacific also meant American hegemony over China. To this end the United States allied itself with the dictatorial regime of Chiang Kai-shek and his Kuomintang Party. Still, China had been resisting Japanese conquest for far longer and with far greater sacrifice than the United States. Moreover, the Chinese people had not conducted that resistance nor endured those sacrifices only to fall under the control of yet another foreign power or to continue Chiang's dictatorship. The United States and the Chinese people were thus on a collision course.

In one sense much of world history since 1945 has consisted of America's hard lessons in learning that the Pacific was not its ocean—that it was only one Pacific power among many. This has been a more humbling lesson for it to learn than the one Britain had to learn in the early postwar years that it must dismantle at least the political structure of empire if it was to retain any of the economic substance. In China the United States lost not only political but economic control. In my opinion both the Soviet Union and China, knowing how traumatic this process was in the United States, exerted themselves in their

various ways to let the Americans down lightly and succeeded in keeping lesser confrontations from becoming major ones. But this is not the place to discuss those events. Suffice it to say that the job of the China Campaign Committee and of all friends of China did not end with the defeat of Japan. My story continues down to the first days of the People's Republic of China when China and its people "stood up."

The second of the great tasks of the 1930s movements was accomplished. Not only had Fascism been destroyed but a new, united and independent China had been born. Of course the task has not yet been fully completed. Great Britain has at last agreed to return Hong Kong to China but the United States has not yet given up its interference in Taiwan nor has the old British imperialist concept of a Tibet separate from China yet died. Nonetheless, New China is a fact of international life and is exercising an increasingly beneficial effect in bringing about the decline of all forms of imperialism.

Movements like the China Campaign Committee have long been part of the democratic tradition in Great Britain. They date back to the English Revolution when the Levellers took a stand for Irish independence and the end of English interference in Ireland. In the first Opium War, 1839-42, the Chartists and also William Gladstone similarly opposed British interference in the affairs of China. Modern movements to support China against imperialism date back to the "Hands Off China" campaign of 1927 and to the founding of the League Against Imperialism in that year. These gave rise to the Friends of the Chinese People which in turn helped found the China Campaign Committee, so there has been a continuous tradition since 1927 of organized assistance for the Chinese people. But the peace and collective security

organizations of the late 1930s of which the C.C.C. was one included far more than those who had long defended China's right to independence.

The strength of that collective security movement lay in the coming together of two groups - those who started from the defence of independence and those who started from the defence of peace. Of course the two were inextricably linked. The right of all nations to live free from invasion and foreign intervention is central to the cause of peace and China's struggle for independence has always been part of the struggle for peace. Some in the West in the 1930s were slow in making the connection.

This study should not be seen solely as a record of the 1930s, nor only as a study in democratic politics. It is both a tribute to, and a continuation of, the work of all those who have never ceased to strive for a peaceful and cooperative world order.