

Asia. Just four weeks ago, in its issue devoted to "America and the Challenge of Asia," *SRL* published a checklist of recent books on Asia (Aug 4, page 24). But a continent where so much history is being made evokes a number of significant volumes each month, as the quartet of new books reviewed below attests. Former *Fortune* editor Herrymon Maurer provocatively analyzes the struggle taking place between two cultures in "The Collision of East and West." Harold R. Isaacs, who published a valuable book on "The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution" in 1938, has revised his study to cover the two decades since; he finds Stalinism the villain of the piece. George A. Malcolm, an American jurist who spent four decades in the Philippines, has written an encyclopedic volume on the islands in "First Malayan Republic." Christmas Humphreys, a convert to one of the East's religions, writes of it in a small book called simply "Buddhism."

Behind China's Red Curtain

THE TRAGEDY OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION. By Harold R. Isaacs. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press. 335 pp. \$5.

By HAROLD M. VINACKE

THE PERIOD of the Chinese revolution, as viewed by the author of this revision of a work originally published in 1938, extends from 1924 through 1927. The roots of the revolution he finds in the soil of the past and in the changes in the class pattern clearly perceptible after 1918. But the overthrow of the Manchus in 1911, and the struggle to maintain the Republic from 1912 to 1917, is not viewed as part of the revolutionary process, since

the basic approach in this work is one that seeks to contribute to a radical transformation of all social relations and political institutions to bring about the fuller popular acquisition of greater material welfare and political and cultural freedom. . . . This has involved a prolonged struggle against political and economic domination by Western nations. It has required . . . an end of the system of Western colonialism. It has involved the need to create new social and economic relations in which the masses of the people could begin to free themselves of the fetters of intolerable poverty. It involves, further, the effort to find a way out of the blind alley of national sovereignty into some broader and more inherently cooperative organization of the world in which all people can hope to thrive.

It was the idea of the world revolution as brought to China by the Russians, and the existence of newly developed mass organizations of workers and peasants in China, with an

anti-imperialist motivation, which differentiated for the author, in terms of actors and theme, the "nationalist" revolution from the previous phases of the revolution. In other words, he found a mass movement in being which aimed at a revolution in the power relations of classes and at the elimination of Western capitalist-imperialist colonialism. This movement was in fact energized and led by the intellectual class, which the author does not clearly enough perceive as one of the distinct classes in Chinese society and to which he does not give sufficient attention in his class-structure analysis as a factor in the Chinese revolution.

The events and relationships of the brief span of the revolution (1924-

1927) are subjected to a detailed and documented analysis by the author. The vehicle of the revolution was the reorganized Kuomintang, pushed by the mass organizations and the Communists and intellectuals who led them along lines dictated by the Comintern. At the end of the period the Kuomintang leaders, having destroyed the separate mass organizations of workers and peasants, carried on as the instruments of reaction from 1927 until replaced by the reaction under the Chinese Communist Party.

In the author's words:

In a few short, swift years, a stupendous mass movement rose from the streets of Chinese cities and the tired land of Chinese fields. It threatened to destroy all that was corrupt and rotten in Chinese society. Russia intervened in this movement and, blindly defeating its own purposes, prevented this movement from breaking clear of the hold of the exploiting classes. As a result, the Chinese revolution was halted in its forward surge, the new organizations of the people were shattered, their leaders cut down. Such was the cruel irony, such was the tragedy of the Chinese revolution.

There is room for limited dissent from the author's stereotyped treatment of imperialism as a factor in the revolution. On this he is dogmatic rather than analytical. Also his view of the Kuomintang as exclusively an instrument of reaction introduces a certain distortion into his treatment. Despite this, however, his analysis of the revolution is acute and makes exceedingly interesting reading.

The greatest immediate value of the work, however, is in the light which it sheds on Asian strategy and tactics. No one can read the book and support



"... the fetters of intolerable poverty." People sweep up rice spilled from passing truck in a Chinese street.

the view of the infallibility of Stalin's judgment, or conclude that Stalinism represents anything but a policy of promotion of Russian state interests under cover of the concept of world revolution. "The impulse to subordinate revolutionary movements abroad to Russian national interests appeared almost from the beginning" of the Russian revolution. "It began to play its role in some of the earliest maneuvers of Soviet diplomacy. It was reflected in Russian domination of the Communist International and the 'Russification' of Communist parties abroad, in organizational structure, attitude, and policy." In China the workers' and peasants' organizations and the Communist party itself the author shows to have

been sacrificed to Stalin's desire to ally Russia with the dominant bourgeois-militarist elements in the Kuomintang. Incorrect analyses of the changing situation in China by Stalin resulted in faulty direction of the revolutionary forces and of the Chinese Communist party through the Comintern. From this point of view, responsibility for the tragedy of the Chinese revolution is placed on the Russians and on Stalin himself.

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The Failure of Well-Intentioned Men

COLLISION OF EAST AND WEST.

By Herrymon Maurer. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co. 352 pp. \$4.50.

By KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE

HERE IS a thoughtful survey of the relations of the United States with China, Japan, and Korea, especially between 1937 and 1947. Its general thesis is that here there has been a collision of cultures and that military and diplomatic events, while important, are merely aspects of that collision. The author believes that the record has been one of failure, "the failure of well-intentioned men to reach any inward understanding of each other, the failure of men of good will to move in any direction save toward breakup of community and conflict of war." With this as his guiding theme, the author sketches the history of the relations between the Far East and the West. He prefaces this survey with a brief description of what he believes to have been the ideas which shaped China and Japan. Then comes an equally short summary of the impact of the West on China and Japan before 1937. There follows a more nearly detailed account, but still an outline, of the course of Chinese-Japanese relations from the outbreak of full scale war in 1937 to Pearl Harbor, the part of the United States in China, the advent of Communism and Russian influence, American action in China following the defeat of Japan, the American occupation of Japan, and the Korean episode. The author sees little but tragedy in the relations between the United States and the countries with which he deals. He holds out only slight hope for the future, for he believes that the year 1947 may

have been "the point of no return." If there is hope, he finds it in rectifying what he regards as the fundamental mistake. This, he holds, can only be when "a sufficient number of persons grasp a profound, simple, but very taxing fact of human experience; the use of other persons or other peoples as devices to make oneself feel superior provokes hostility. . . . Other persons, whether they be of one culture or another, must be treated as ends in themselves, not as means to some other end."

The author is equipped by residence in unoccupied China during part of the war and by extensive work for *Fortune*. He writes clearly and with conviction. While his thesis colors his interpretation, his account of events is excellent narrative.

With part of the thesis there can be no quarrel. What is taking place in the Far East is to a large degree a clash of cultures. Much of the friction between Americans and the peoples of that region has been due to misunderstanding because of the difference in inherited backgrounds and therefore in basic presuppositions and ways of acting. At times, although by no means always, Americans have sought to use individuals and nations as means to ends which they deemed desirable and thereby have awakened resentment and resistance. Even more frequently there has been an attitude of lofty superiority, not only among Americans, but also among Chinese, Japanese, and Russians. In one or another way all this has been said many times before. It needs resaying, especially in the original manner of this book.

However, one rises from a reading of the forceful pages with a strong feeling that the author has overstated his

case. In China and Japan the native and imported cultural traditions have not been as little mingled as he would have us believe. There have been indigestion and unresolved contradictions, but there has also been more of assimilation and adaptation than he seems to recognize. In China the disintegration of the inherited Confucianism and Taoism has proceeded much further than Mr. Maurer would lead us to suppose. Nor is it yet demonstrated that the American occupation of Japan has been as much a failure as is here assumed. That the Japanese will reject much that SCAP has sought to accomplish is probable, but that Japan will never again be as it was before the occupation is certain. The author makes too little allowance for the variety of ways in which individuals react to what has come from the Occident. Particularly does he treat Japan as though it were a solid unit and not with the many different and often conflicting convictions and attitudes to Western ideas that have been and are found.

There is also too much foreshortening of history. The decade 1937-1947 of which Mr. Maurer makes much is undoubtedly important and critical, but so have been others. The decade from 1855 to 1865 was one, and that from 1895 to 1905 was another. There will be still more in the future. The years 1937-1947 constitute a chapter, but only one chapter, and that incomplete and not necessarily the most decisive, in a drama which seems only to have begun.

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Herrymon Maurer—"sees little but tragedy."