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ER/44/B37

## IN CHINA NOW

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abreast of the rising tide. The Government supplies them with official rice, with official cloth, salt, and oil. On this they must get along, hungrily envying the profiteers and their more practical friends.

The war is responsible for blockade and inflation—with their mentally evil consequences. No change of Government, no legislation sleight of hand, can acquire for China more trucks, more copper, more electric power, more medicines, until the blockade is broken. Any Government in China would have to resort to inflation, because there is no real source of revenue in the country except grain; and more cannot be taken from the people without a social revolution of a cataclysmic nature.

### Deadlock in Chungking

The war is not responsible, however, for the flat, black deadlock of politics in Chungking. There were alternate solutions facing the Chinese Government when the blockade forced a re-orientation of its thinking; it could have appealed to the people and liberal intellectuals in dynamic and revolutionary terms demanding even greater sacrifices in return for greater freedom and hope. Instead, it chose to defend itself and the nation by regimenting conduct and freezing thought under the control of some of the hardest characters in national life.

To understand the politics of China one must understand that the machinery of government is in the hands of a single party. According to the theory on which the Chinese Government is founded, the masses of people are insufficiently educated and experienced to handle their own destiny. Until education and modern life lift them nearer to the economic and literacy level of the Western democracies, their sovereignty is held in trust for them by the Nationalist Party. The period during which this party holds trust is known as the "period of political tutelage."

You have to live in Chungking to feel the weight of this party in men's personal lives. Censorship hangs over authors, playwrights, moviemakers, and all participants in public expression. The Press lives in a shadow world of gossip, hand-outs, and agency despatches. None of the great problems of China — famine, inflation, blockade, foreign relations or public personalities — can be honestly discussed in public. The greatest paper in China is the *Ta Kung Pao* — staffed with some of the ablest and most liberal journalists of the nation. In the early winter of 1943 the *Ta Kung Pao* published a powerful description of the Honan famine. It did not delve into the corruption, extortion, and inefficiency that accompanied it. The *Ta Kung Pao* was promptly suppressed for three days.

If, by some historic necromancy, Japan were defeated to-morrow and the troops of Chiang Kai-Shek marched into Nanking victorious, it is quite possible that they might crush the Communist armies in a six-month campaign or so overawe them by show of force as to exact submission. But the war in Asia is a long one, and throughout its course the Communists have been gaining in influence and power much as Marshal Tito has been gaining in the

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