Recognition of Red China?
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RECOGNITION OF RED CHINA? Robert F. Newman (Macmillan. $1.95)

This book provides a refreshing change from the ready-made and ex cathedra opinions in the press and elsewhere on the subject of the recognition of 'Red China' and its representation in the United Nations. Mr. Newman has attempted a careful and judicious analysis of the pros and cons, and in his final chapter, come to the conclusion that "The United States should extend diplomatic recognition to the Communist Government of China with or without the guarantee of reciprocity, with or without agreement on Peking's effort to renounce all claims to sovereignty over Taiwan. I see no other possible conclusion."

Few dispassionate and objective students of contemporary history will dispute the correctness of his conclusion. Mr. Newman has adopted the rather unique method of converting himself into both an advocate for the prosecution and for the defense, and finally the judge between them. He has done it analytically and intellectually, and though it is not an easy task, he has seemed to have accomplished it with fairness and courage. The fact that he has proceeded from a presumption in favor of non-recognition and placed the burden of proof on the advocates of recognition invests his conclusion with conviction.

The fact that Mr. Newman has had to write a dissertation of 288 pages, closely packed with facts, arguments, and counter-arguments, is evidence of the complexity with which the question of recognition of 'Red China' has been cloaked in the United States.

Each passing year has added to the prevailing confusion and controversy, and has led to a hardening of attitudes. Today, those opposed to recognition appear so firmly entrenched that there seems less chance of a rational and unemotional approach to the question than ever before.

Mr. Newman's book brings out in clear relief the strength of the non-academic and moral objections in the United States to the recognition of 'Communist China.' He has devoted considerable space to an examination of what he calls the concept of merit, or, in other words, "Does the Communist Government deserve recognition?" Throughout the book, he rightly displays disapproving awareness of the highly charged and emotional viewpoints prevailing in the United States which hold fast to the presumption that it is morally wrong to recognize 'Communist China'.

Mr. Newman urges that arguments based on the merit or morality of the People's Republic of China are not regarded by most political scientists as worthy of serious consideration. Most of the moralist arguments put forward do not stand scrutiny and the author has convincingly demolished them.

For example, he says at one place, "Americans are foolish in their concentration on Korea as proof positive of China's aggressive nature. It is not the record that supports such a charge. It is primarily on the Indian border that available evidence points to the aggressive nature of the People's Republic." At another time he recognizes "Had China developed the strength and efficiency achieved by the Communists and built a mainland regime as powerful as that built by his rivals, he too would have invaded Korean borders and looked longingly at the fertile and under-populated lands in the south."

Nevertheless, in his final tally, he says "the issue of merit, if it is accorded any relevant to support continued recognition of the Nationalist and non-recognition of the Communist; but it cannot alone be decisive." In my view, any present comparison between 'Red China' and the Nationalist regime is illogical and perhaps meaningless, since they are separate entities, representing different political values and realities. Cynically, one might say that the present Nationalist Government of China is toothless and incapable of doing much wrong.

In actual practice, governments have a pragmatic approach to recognition, applying principles that were laid down for the United States by Jefferson, namely, that a de facto government of any country should be recognized, so long as it actually controls the country and sufficiently expresses the will of the nation to have reasonable prospects of permanency.

There was never any question of the People's Republic being the de facto government of the Chinese mainland since 1949, actually controlling the territory of China and having all the attributes of permanency. The emergence and increasing strength of that government is in fact the most eventful and far-reaching change in our generation. Public or parliamentary discussion on recognition of a new government is usually avoided since there is danger, as seems to have happened in the United States, of what is or ought to be essentially a sovereign executive act of external nature being transformed into a playing field of domestic politics. As Mr. Newman points out, it would have been much easier (and indeed there seemed to be some possibility) for the United States to have recognized the People's Government of China prior to 1951. Thereafter, with the involvement of the Chinese question in the sphere of controversial domestic politics, the rise of McCarthyism and the Korean War, there came about a hardening of attitudes in the United States, and the possibility of recognizing the People's Republic of China became more and more remote.

Whether one approves of any particular aspect of Chinese international behavior or its internal organization, the impact of what has happened and what is happening in China is one that cannot be ignored by any single nation or by the international community. Mr. Newman mentions the importance of China's participation in disarmament negotiations, the need for bringing China within the sphere of international relations and exerting upon her whatever powers of diplomacy are available, and the promotion of trade with China. I take issue with him in that I give greater weight to these arguments, and regard them as strongly favoring recognition. I regard them as only "moderately favoring" recognition.

On the contrary, in a world of interdependent nations and international cooperation, the importance of bringing the People's Government of China within the range of discussion, persuasion, argument and compromise, and into the mainstream of world trade and economy, cannot be overestimated. China may or may not prove too fanciful in any future arms talks, but if disarmament is the problem of problems on which the survival of the human race depends, and if China must be a party to any effective disarmament scheme, then the recognition and admission of China as a participant in disarmament negotiation cannot be a matter of secondary importance. Indeed, no disarmament treaty providing for global inspection and control can be effective without China's signature; and the chances of an agreement by China to any treaty must necessarily be reduced if it is not associated in the negotiations from the very beginning.

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