

cially when it deals with the future" (a maxim attributed variously to an ancient Chinese sage or a guru—though I suspect it was Casey Stengel who said it first). Rather, they set out the variables. This is sometimes done to excess, as in Christine Urban's nearly seventy-page overview of "Factors Influencing Media Consumption," which concludes "that consumer behavior appears to be a function of situational and individual factors as well as the content and format of the media." What is certain, however, is that new media will have a profound effect on our lives. [WV]

**SEEDS OF DESTRUCTION:
NATIONALIST CHINA IN WAR
AND REVOLUTION, 1937-1949**
by Lloyd E. Eastman
(Stanford University Press; 311 pp.; \$32.50)

Robert W. Barnett

Seeds of Destruction is an exquisitely crafted reassessment of why a Kuomintang dominated by Chiang Kai-shek was done in between 1937 and 1949 by a populist Chinese Communist opposition led by Mao Tse-tung.

Lloyd Eastman's analysis carries special weight and poignancy because he eventually finds the answer to "Who lost China?" in Chiang Kai-shek's own, largely ignored, speeches and writings. According to Chiang, it was the Kuomintang itself that brought the downfall of Nationalist China—not a niggardly Washington, not a vandalizing Soviet Union, not even the rapacious Japanese occupation forces. As he wrote in his *Soviet Russia in China* in 1956: "The mortal blows suffered by Nationalist China sprang from defects in organization and technique, from serious errors in policy and strategy, and above all, from the weakening of our national will power at a time when it most needed to be strengthened."

Eastman observes that Chiang spoke of the causes of defeat on the mainland in primarily moral and psychological terms. He never comprehended that political institutions and policies could be the real source of Kuomintang frailties. His own particular indifference to the need for policies designed to reform rural China meant that peasants and soldiers were being given no real inducement to fight or to cooperate with the authorities. Chiang, like an emperor of the Ching dynasty, saw politics as a matter of competition among "court" elites. Practicing rule through balancing weaknesses, he failed to create a basis for popular

and efficient governance.

One is surprised to find Chiang expressing unabashed admiration for the organization, discipline, and moral dedication of the Communists. His faith in the ultimate victory of his own side was apparently based on the conviction that the Kuomintang's ideology and political line were more suited to the needs of the nation and would prevail if implemented with sufficient moral fervor.

Eight microanalytical chapters precede Eastman's persuasive presentation of Chiang's postmortem on the loss of China. For his own account of the byzantine mismanagement of Chungking's relations with the provinces—Yunnan province in particular—Eastman leans heavily upon the now-available reporting of our China foreign service establishment. He reminds us of its prophetic insights and sophisticated appreciation of the many dimensions of the China scene. There were many more than those which were being observed from Yen-an and held such fascination for the world press. His account of the involvement of Chiang Ching-kuo and his father in the drama of Nanking's bold and suicidal attempt to control inflation by issuing the Gold Yuan is based upon rich Chinese-language sources that have never been examined so carefully, I think. Seven other chapters make use of materials in English, Chinese, and Japanese. They tell how peasants were ground down by taxes, conscription, and the compulsory labor levies administered by corrupt, self-seeking bureaucrats; they sketch the abortive attempts to reform the old-line Kuomintang, such as a short-lived Youth Corps; they trace establishment responses to the Ko-hsin movement (a lower-level Kuomintang effort to create a liberal, forward-looking basis for peace and reconstruction); they tell the sickening story of the deterioration of the health, discipline, and morale of Chiang's wartime military establishment; and they make vivid the horror and disappointment that attended the discovery, after the Japanese surrender, that even when Chiang's armies were not short of supplies China's common people were unable to trust or respect their intent.

Lloyd Eastman has made a major contribution to our understanding of the internal dynamics of Kuomintang China, which yielded to the People's Republic of China on the mainland and to the tainted but progressively more convincing and constructive Republic of China on Taiwan. The unique interest of Eastman's scholarly achievement derives from his careful clinical analysis of the real vulnerabilities of Nationalist China, an analysis carried on almost without regard for what writers sym-

pathetic to Mao's revolution had to say on that subject up until 1949 and for the way authorities in Peking—and its ill-informed friends and foes elsewhere—have construed the history of the preceding twenty years. If there had been no Yen-an, Chiang still might have lost China. [WV]

PROFITS WITHOUT PRODUCTION
by Seymour Melman
(Alfred A. Knopf; xix + 344 pp.; \$18.95)

**FORCES OF PRODUCTION:
A SOCIAL HISTORY OF
INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION**
by David F. Noble
(Alfred A. Knopf; xviii + 409 pp.; \$22.95)

Albert L. Huebner

Following the deepest recession in more than four decades, the U.S. has been enjoying a sustained recovery that is all the more impressive because accompanied by remarkably low inflation rates. The immediate economic outlook is rosy. Yet the longer view is deeply disturbing, and not only because of the huge deficits: an unfavorable balance of trade grows steadily worse; many manufacturing jobs have been lost forever; and productivity remains low.

Seymour Melman, professor of industrial engineering at Columbia University, and David Noble, professor of the history of technology at MIT, address this decline in manufacturing and the staggering impact it is having on the well-being of Americans. Although their subject matter overlaps, the authors approach it from different perspectives and with different emphasis, and the net effect is that the books complement each other extremely well.

Melman insists that industry in the U.S. has been sapped of its productive strength by two powerful forces that developed after World War II. First, there was a shift in the philosophy underlying industrial capitalism that paved the way for a new breed of corporate management. The ideal executive became "the financier-strategist, the shrewd, nimble operator who combined disparate firms into conglomerates that maximized the short-term profit-taking opportunities afforded by tax laws, securities transfers, the milking of production assets and other financial legerdemain."

Of course, it isn't attention to profits that's new but the separation of profits from production. Melman points to the steel industry as one of many examples. Citing losses in