

MR. WILLKIE, GLOBAL TRAVELER

"One World," by Wendell Willkie. Simon and Schuster, Rockefeller Center, New York, 1943. Cloth, 206 pp., \$2.00; Paper, 80 pp., \$1.00.

When a book sells over a million copies in a month, that is news. Because five million people have probably read "One World," it is important to consider its merits and its shortcomings.

The book is heartwarming; it is eloquent; it is courageous. It is an epitomized history of the world of today and tomorrow—with a glance backward to yesterday. It is geography, people and scenery; it is politics, war and economics. It is hope, and despair, and yet it has faith and vision. It is a plea for democracy and the common man.

Willkie states in his Introduction that "... the world has become small and completely interdependent" and that his trip around the world "... gave me some new and urgent convictions, and strengthened some of my old ones."

The author has been called a good reporter by the reviewers. No one, however, has said that he seemed to discern any fundamental answer to the unwarrantable conditions of poverty, disease and lack of sanitation he witnessed.

Early in the book (p. 20) he establishes a premise with the following:

"Throughout the Middle East there is a small percentage of wealthy landowners whose property is largely hereditary.... The great mass of the people, outside of roaming tribes, are impoverished, own no property, are hideously ruled by the practices of ancient priestcraft, and are living in conditions of squalor."

Does he offer any hint of a solution? He does not. He touches upon social problems only in generalities, such as politicians do, who would "plan"—then change their plan, and enforce all of their changing plans by the criminal law or the bribe, euphemistically called subsidies.

Nowhere does Willkie discuss the taxing systems of the countries he visited, nor how such forms of taxation can be either a power to destroy or a power to keep alive. He does not know what economic, social and political means are necessary, in concrete terms, to solve the problems of poverty, unemployment, and war, although he uses the phrase "economic, social and political" very often in his book.

Willkie recognizes the despotism in Russia, for he states (p. 24):

"Behind the journalists, I saw the Kremlin, having talked twice at great

length with Mr. Stalin, and observed something of how power is really exercised under the dictatorship of the proletariat."

After describing a talk with a superintendent of a factory who admitted his pay was ten times that of other workers, and who said the present conception of Socialism was not equality of reward, but was (p. 65): "Each according to his capacities, to each according to his work," and when the superintendent said, "Some day we'll have political freedom, too," Willkie writes:

"How can you ever have political freedom and economic freedom where the State owns everything? He poured out his theories in a seemingly endless rush. But he had no answers beyond the Marxian ones in which he was so well grounded, and to that basic question Marxianism gives no basic answer."

Admittedly Willkie bravely states what he sees and understands. He writes (p. 154) on China:

"There must be a loosening of the tight controls over Chinese economic life and of hereditary property, and a mobilization of the enormous human resources of the country for the production of goods and services on a far larger scale than at present." Again (p. 156), "It is up to the Chinese people to decide how they want to organize and finance that greater flow and production of goods and services. More widespread ownership of the land than I found anywhere in China would help."

But how implement that?

When in China discussing that country's problems in relation to the world's trade, did Willkie not get a glimmering of the truths from Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who certainly must have learned something from the great Sun Yat-sen, founder of the Chinese Republic? Did not any of the Soong sisters, one the widow of Dr. Sun Yat-sen; one the wife of the Generalissimo, and another, the wife of H. H. Kung, China's financial wizard, impart to Willkie what had been fully reported in the New York Times of September 11, 1927, by Paul Blanshard?

I will tell it to Mr. Willkie. Dr. Sun Yat-sen realized that with national independence, free trade, and the development of China's natural resources and her waterpower, there would come great increased value to certain lands. Here are the Doctor's words:

"Let us take time by the forelock and make sure the unearned increment of

land shall belong to the people and not to the private individuals who happen to be the owners of the soil."

Concerning our nation, he says (p. 183):

"In the United States, we are being asked to give up temporarily our individual freedom and economic liberty in order to crush the Axis. We must recover this freedom and this liberty after the war. The way to make certain we do recover our traditional American way of life with a rising standard of living for all is to create a world in which all men everywhere can be free."

If I may address myself directly to you, Mr. Willkie, how do you propose to do this? Your book does not give any blueprint. Your book reveals, instead, that you, too, are a regimenter, a controller, a planner.

You see the necessity of free trade between nations, for you state (p. 204):

"Economic freedom is as important as political freedom. Not only must people have access to what other people produce, but their own products must in turn have some chance of reaching men all over the world. There will be no peace, there will be no economic stability unless we find the method by which we can begin to break down the unnecessary trade barriers hampering the flow of goods."

You examine the reasons for the amazing economic development of the United States. You recognize the abundance of our natural resources, but you don't seem to realize that the free land of the United States was one of the greatest economic forces that drew millions of Europeans to this country, because it represented economic opportunity.

Unhappily your dream cannot come true so long as Pashas own most of the land of the Middle East; so long as 70% of the People of China are tenant farmers; so long as the Junkers own the large estates in Germany; and to the degree and length of time the Rhinelanders, Astors, Goellets and Vanderbilts in New York; the Potter Palmers and Marshall Fields in Chicago; the Rockefellers in Cleveland, and the Hearsts in New York-South Dakota-California continue to collect the unearned increment of their land in the United States.

I am tempted to offer you, Mr. Willkie, your regular fee as a lawyer for one hour's time, in which to discuss the issues that this book raises in my mind—pointed up by sheafs of marginal notes and underlinings on the pages of my copy. Would you accept?

HARRY WEINBERGER