

**"The Red Barbarians"**

I DON'T think I ought to let pass Mr. Boorman's comment (in his bibliographical note to his article on "Mao at Seventy") that my biography of Mao Tse-tung is "pure fiction," notwithstanding his sop compliment to the pictures in the book.

No doubt it will upset Mr. Boorman to learn that my book, *The Red Barbarians* is the most widely read biography of Mao outside the Communist bloc. First serialised in the London *Sunday Express*, it was then translated into most of the languages of Europe and Asia, including all those of India (at the time of the Indo-Chinese war). The book even went into a paperback edition. I think it only fair, then, to my millions of readers, to suggest to Mr. Boorman that he is being almost libellously sweeping in his abrupt condemnation.

Let me name just one referee, on my side. Mrs. Sylvia Stewart, widow of Judge Penrhyn Grant Jones, C.B.E., Consul in Changsha in 1927, commented that my facts were "most accurate." One cannot say the same for Mr. Boorman, who even gets the name of Mao's third wife wrong—see *On the Long March with Chairman Mao* (Peking: Foreign Languages Publishing House). I am also assured that Mr. Boorman's chronology of Mao's student days is inaccurate. But far be it from me to criticise Mr. Boorman too harshly. All I ask is that he should read my book in the spirit in which it was written, as a general introduction to the man, Mao, and not as a history book for Mr. Boorman's students and accomplices. Though, of course, it is perhaps worth noting that *The New York Times* in its three-column review of the American edition of my book accused me of following too closely the chronology of a Chinese history of the May Fourth Movement *et seq.* I suppose the Chinese and I are always authors of pure fiction and only Mr. Boorman can really be trusted to get at the truth.

ROY MACGREGOR-HASTIE.

Mr. Boorman replies:

No comment.