



Embracing the Lie: Ding Ling and the Politics of Literature in the People's Republic of China

Charles J. Alber

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This volume is the first serious attempt to reconstruct Ding Ling's biography during the last few decades of her life. Most Westerners know her as a progressive woman writer who became famous during the May 4 Movement, championed its values in Yan'an and was criticized in the rectification campaigns that followed. Few know about her life afterward and the arduous process of rehabilitation. Here for the first time readers will learn about her life in the Great Northern Wasteland, solitary confinement in Qincheng prison, her visit to the United States, participation in the spiritual pollution campaign, and finally, the attempt to launch the journal *China*. All of this puts a new perspective on the life of one of China's most preeminent woman writers.

Alber includes considerable new information about the rectification campaigns of the late fifties, supplemented by a series of interviews with the author and her contemporaries in the years 1980 and 1981, the very point when she began to turn left and to compromise her progressive beliefs. Ding Ling is generally acknowledged as a major figure of the May 4 Movement and an ardent admirer of Lu Xun. As such, the study sheds light on the legacy of China's greatest writer and the influence of Western ideals on contemporary Chinese literature. The primary audience is the educated reader who has an interest in contemporary Chinese literature and politics. It should be especially interesting to women, but the coverage is broad enough to include anyone interested in the intellectual history of China.

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