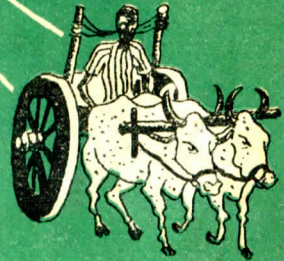


# DEMOCRACY WITH A TOMMYGUN



VANE

W.C. BURCHETT



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## DEMOCRACY WITH A TOMMYGUN

is a challenging and outspoken book on the problems of peace and war in India, Burma, China, the Philippines and Japan. The book begins in India and the first chapters expose with passionate words the sufferings in the Bengal Famine and the incompetence of those responsible for that tragedy. The scene then shifts to Burma, from then on to China, presenting what is probably the first unvarnished account of the Chungking Dictatorship. The chapters on Pacific Landings and on the author's entry into Hiroshima, where he stole a march on 250 correspondents to give the world its first historic description of that atom-bombed city; and a merciless analysis of democracy's fate in the Philippines are all highlights of this unique account. But war, power and politics are not the author's only concern. His style, hard-hitting as it is when it comes to political attack, becomes tender when he writes of the peoples who are the pawns in the game. His contention is that while naval and air fleets, armies of men and columns of tanks played their parts, the Second World War was essentially the little man's war — the man with a tommygun.

DEMOCRACY WITH A TOMMYGUN

*By* WILFRED G. BURCHETT:

PACIFIC TREASURE ISLAND, NEW CALEDONIA  
Voyage through its land and wealth. The story of its  
people and past.

BOMBS OVER BURMA

WINGATE ADVENTURE

# DEMOCRACY WITH A TOMMYGUN

by

WILFRED G. BURCHETT

F. W. CHESHIRE PTY. LTD.  
MELBOURNE AND LONDON

First published, 1946.

In London:

WADLEY & GINN,  
Dominion House, Bartholomew Close,  
London, E.C.1.

*Registered at the G.P.O., Melbourne,  
for transmission through the post  
as a book.*

Wholly set up and printed in Australia by  
ARBUCKLE WADDELL PTY. LTD.  
20-22 McKillop Street, Melbourne.

## CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. FIRST GLANCE AT CHINA .....	10
II. THE BURMESE AND THEIR PROBLEMS .....	22
III. A CLOSER LOOK AT CHINA .....	43
IV. THE GOODNESS, HONESTY AND DIGNITY OF CHINA .....	68
V. THE PAO-AN GUERILLAS .....	89
VI. FAREWELL TO CHINA .....	104
VII. COUNTER-ATTACK FROM INDIA .....	119
VIII. LIFE AND DEATH IN CHINA .....	145
IX. THE WORLD'S LARGEST QUESTION MARK .....	169
X. "AUSTRALIA THROUGH COLOURED GLASSES" .....	183
XI. THE STREETS OF MELBOURNE .....	194
XII. ON THE WAY TO VICTORY .....	200
XIII. FLOATING AIR POWER .....	218
XIV. ANNIHILATION BY FIRE .....	236
XV. THE PHILIPPINE GUERILLAS .....	244
A POSTSCRIPT: HIROSHIMA .....	261

## FOREWORD

THE title of this book perhaps needs a word of explanation. During the tragic, but on the whole successful attempt by leftist Greek patriots to resist with arms attempts to reimpose an unwanted monarchy on that ancient battleground for liberty, British Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, made one of his inspired and inspiring speeches.

With more regard for a fine turn of a phrase than its aptness, he produced with rhetorical flourish the following gem, afterwards hailed by those who supported Mr. Churchill's case, as a "classic exposition of democracy."

"... Democracy is not a harlot on the street to be picked up with a Tommy-gun."

Beside the point is the notion that a harlot has to be persuaded by a man with a Tommy-gun. But pertinent is the fact that ever since the idea of freedom was a gleam in our ancestors' eyes, liberty, freedom and more recently democracy have been "picked up" or won by men with Tommy-guns or muskets, pikes or clubs. The right to use the ballot-box has ever been won with bullets and blood. We know that from past history in England and America. We know it from history at present in the making in Europe, where patriots in every occupied country have risen with their Tommy-guns not only to drive out the invaders, but to settle accounts with those who made invasion possible and oppression more intolerable. There will be many books written about the valiant part people with Tommy-guns played to instal or restore democracy in the "Old World."

Part of the purpose of this book is to show what has been done by the man with Tommy-gun, home-made cannon and carbine, with dah and bolo, to achieve democracy in South-East Asia and the Pacific. Democracy is used in the broadest sense as meaning the desire of people to decide their own fate, rule their own destiny. The book will show

that the spirit to use the Tommy-gun has been strongest in countries where independence and a measure of democracy had already been tasted, and has tapered off in subject countries where Japanese occupation merely meant substitution of Japanese for existing Dutch, French or British overlords.

The book is not by any means a history of the war against Japan, or of the resistance movements in the various countries, but the author has tried to present a background of the places in which the war was fought, and how it was fought, with a view to better understanding of future developments. It is hoped that if thoughtful people understand the background they will not be content merely to observe but will play their part in shaping the pattern of development in these areas.

If we are interested in peace within our own lifetime it is time to get interested in the Pacific and Far Eastern world. It has been a common-place during the past few generations to regard Europe with its mosaic of nationalities, its disputed frontiers and spheres of economic interest, as the nursery bed in which the seeds of war are nourished. But Europe is now tired and exhausted. We know her and will watch her. Plans will be made by the Allies to hog-tie and, if necessary, cripple any potential trouble-makers in the West. But not so in the East.

Unless the West plays its part in seeing that those countries which are just emerging from feudalism and the lowest grade of colonial status, set their feet along the right paths, we may still have wars which would make the one just concluded seem infantile.

Imagine an industrialised India with a population of 400,000,000 battling with a modern, industrialised China with a population of 450,000,000 for supremacy in Asia with Indo-China, Malaya, Burma and Siam as pawns. Or, imagine an industrialised India and China allied in a crusade to drive the white man forever off the face of Asia — and perhaps farther.

These are fantastic ideas, but that an unknown paper-hanger would conquer the whole of Europe in less than 10 years was a fantastic idea in 1933. The world is shrinking fast with no world capital more than a couple of days' flight from another. That is one reason why we have a right, even a duty, to watch as closely as we can peoples and movements in countries even so remote as those of South-East Asia and the Pacific. That is the chief excuse for this book.

If any further apologia is needed for adding one more to the scores of war correspondents' books written during the past five years, it seems that correspondents are still best fitted to write the little fragments of war history which, as they are being pieced together now, will give the nearest to a complete picture of these years of madness, valour, energy and suffering. War correspondents do have special privileges and facilities to pry and poke into all sorts of odd places and, best of all, they can write of what they find without more than normal human prejudice.

Any book on any part of this war is incomplete, and this one not less than others. For the most part it will be restricted to writing about places visited, people known and actions witnessed, whilst "covering" the war against Japan since October, 1941, to the time of writing in August, 1945.

## Chapter One.

## FIRST GLANCE AT CHINA.

FROM the top of the mountain ridge the trucks looked like threaded brown beads slowly drawn across a deep green scarf. Captain Wang, my Chinese friend and driver, had halted our car at the tip of a 5,000-ft. ridge so that we could look back across the road by which we had climbed from the beautiful valley below. In its very pit was a tiny sliver of jade green water and across the sliver hung an arched bridge over which the beads moved in an endless stream.

The slope looked like one of those charts on which statisticians delight to picture costs of living or price indices, with the sharp brown zig-zags laid against the emerald mountainside from shadowed valley to sunlit summit. A few paces from us was working a group of people, obviously belonging to one family. A venerable looking old man in thin blue shirt and trousers, with a goitre as large as a football extending half way down his chest, wielded a small hammer which seemed as heavy as his frail body. His wife or daughter, a teen-age boy, two younger girls and a little toddler with padded pants, all armed with hammers according to their size, pounded away at the cluster of rocks the old man had broken off a chunk of granite. Even the toddler, clasping a tiny hammer in her chubby fists, banged away at the rocks and helped stack the small ones in neat piles by the roadside.

Sweat poured down their brown faces, but they scarcely paused in their work of breaking big stones into little ones and little ones to smaller ones, even to gaze at the "waig-woren" (foreigner) who stared so impolitely at them.

The first of the truck convoy was now in sight again, puffs of vapour spurting from the radiator as it lurched round the last bend before the mountain top. Captain Wang

waved his thin hands at the groaning convoy strung out behind the leader and said:

"Good. Very good. But late. Much too late."

He let in the clutch and we moved off down the other side of the mountain for the last stage of our journey to Kunming. It was then October, 1941, two months before Pearl Harbour, and I don't think Captain Wang, honoured pilot of the Chinese Air Force, realised how really late it was. But someone in China realised that time was getting short. Piles of lend-lease equipment were accumulating at Rangoon faster than trains and trucks could move it. On every vacant allotment in Burma's chief port and capital trucks were being assembled, bodies built at a feverish rate. Supplies were being pushed up the Burma road as fast as truck space, red tape, graft and corruption would permit.

Entering China via the back door was a bewildering experience, but perhaps a good introduction for a newcomer. There along that 1,200 miles of rocky road from the Yunnan-Burma border to Chungking are encountered all the contradictions that make up China to-day. The ultra-modern with the ultra-primitive, the up-to-date with the medieval. Latest ten-wheeled American trucks driven by turbaned, skirted Orientals, and on the same road pack-trains of mules, ponies and human beings. Wealth and greed, poverty and selflessness, graft and corruption, patient honesty and sacrifice. They are all there, painted in broad colours along the Burma Road — China's greatest monument to her faith in herself.

In Lashio, the boom town terminus of the Burma rail system and real starting point for the old Burma Road, one marvelled at the wealth being dissipated by Chinese drivers. There were Burmese and Indian drivers, too, but for one new to the East, they all seemed Chinese at first. Restaurants and shops were overflowing with them, eating the best food, drinking the most expensive liquor, buying luxury goods in lavish quantity. I had thought of Chinese as poverty-stricken people, and surely truck-drivers could not be high up on the wage scale, but here they were spending money



at a rate a movie star could hardly afford. Most of them had revolvers stuck into hip pockets or swinging in flashy new holsters by their sides.

But soon one could see there was a wide gap between the lives of these easy spenders and those one saw along the Burma Road—the pinched-faced peasants who built the road with their hands; who toiled patiently by the hundreds of thousands carving a road out of rock and mountains with hoes and home-made blasting powder; who carried every pound of dirt and rock for foundation and facing in little woven bamboo baskets; who shaped perfect road rollers out of solid rock with crude chisels and then hauled them up and down till earth and rock was padded flat and hard so that guns and bullets could roll past on their way to kill Japanese; who were lowered down the sides of cliffs on ropes and pecked away at a solid rock wall till there was room to stand, widened footholds into shelves for their neighbours, shelves into ledges and ledges into wide cuttings; who coughed their lungs out and shivered with cerebral malaria till their lifeless frames were flung into the bushes to putrefy and spread disease amongst their fellow workers; whole villages wiped out with the malaria and dysentery that followed the camps—whole villages robbed of their manpower as China's ports were nipped off one by one and need for the lifeline through Yunnan to Rangoon became ever more pressing.

There was a gap between those leather-jacketed young men who piloted the trucks and the emaciated coolies who plodded along the same road, their thin jackets coated by the swirling red dust flung up by the careening trucks, their backs bent double by some great piece of lumber or chunk of rock salt. The coolies whose equipment for a thousand-mile journey was rice bowl and chopsticks, a piece of rag and a forked stick to prop up the burden when a halt was made on some sharp hillside to wipe off the sweat and recover one's breath.

There was a difference in the diet of those who lived off chicken and steaks and good whisky in Lashio, and the

hungry-looking peasants who used to gather round the little inns at which Wang and I ate along the Burma Road. Partly it was to observe with shy humour the spectacle of a foreigner dropping chunks of food over the table in his clumsy first attempts to use chopsticks. But partly, too, it was to savour the smell of good meat and vegetables which their meagre earnings denied them the pleasure of sampling.

It was not difficult to discover why the truck-driver ate chicken and the peasant, soldier and worker starved on poor grade rice. While the peasant and his family laboured to provide the rice that kept China alive; while the miserably-equipped soldiers fought with what they had to keep some of China still free; while the workers toiled long hours in arsenals to put weapons in the hands of their troops, a few thousand truck-drivers, merchants, bankers and bureaucrats carried on one of the greatest rackets of all time along the Burma Road.

Trucks from which war supplies had been dumped to provide space for highly profitable contraband were rushed through the customs' posts because customs' officers received a good slice of "squeeze" to let them through without inspection while other trucks with the guns and ammunition so badly needed were held up for days at a time. An honest man with honest cargo couldn't afford to pay "squeeze," so why should a customs' official hurry him along? Let him wait. Trucks which were supplied to the government under American lend-lease had number plates changed, were loaded with trade goods, driven to Kunming and sold complete with goods at enormous profits and sent back to Lashio for another load. Truck-drivers piled goods into suitcases and under the seats. If they carried the right sort after a couple of trips they could buy trucks of their own and join in the wholesale swindle in a bigger way.

Wang, by his actions (for he spoke only a few words of English), helped me to understand something of this in our four-day trip from Lashio to Kunming. He would race his Chrysler staff car dangerously close to the cabin of a truck, yelling fiercely at the driver and, if necessary, waving his

pistol at him, until he pulled his truck into the side of the road. Then Wang would clamber over the cargo, fish out boxes and bales of anything from whisky and cigars to quinine and condroms, usually hidden under boxes of ammunition or aeroplane parts. The drivers were always wide-eyed with simulated horror and astonishment, but Wang berated them in shrill tones, covered reams of paper with painted character as he noted down names of drivers, truck numbers and types of contraband, then set out to overtake the next convoy. Many times Wang got so infuriated and excited I thought he would end by shooting a driver or being shot himself, but we reached Kunming with nothing worse happening than Wang beating one surly truck-driver over the head with a bolt of silk he had found hidden under his seat.

Through interpreters at Kunming it was explained that Wang had no official sanction to check up on contraband other than the duty of an honest patriot, but he had seen enough of what was going on at Lashio to inspire him to find out things for himself and present a documented report to the government. Whether he did or not it was impossible to discover, as I never saw Wang again after I left Kunming a few days later.

The situation on the Burma Road was bad, and many outsiders who saw what was happening concluded the whole Chinese people were graft-ridden and corrupt and could never be trusted to run their own affairs in an honest and efficient manner. But since then the scandal of the air traffic over the "hump" from India to China has been uncovered. This time it was not Chinese truck-drivers and bureaucrats who were displacing valuable war materials with drugs and contraband. It was mainly American military personnel, a few civil airline pilots and some Red Cross workers.

The Chinese who were cheating their fellow countrymen by smuggling on the Burma Road were no more representative of real China than were the United States military personnel involved in the cigarette and gasoline racket in

France representative of real America. To evaluate China one had to look beyond the trucks on the Burma road to the farms reamed out of the mountain sides; to the bowed-backed peasants toiling from dawn to dusk to keep their country fighting.

In Kunming the townspeople were patiently softening up the rubble to which their mud brick homes had been reduced by a Japanese bombing raid a few days previously. A little water mixed with the dust, the mud shaped into bricks and laid out in the sun to dry. It was all very simple. Whole blocks of shops and houses had been levelled, but out of the dust and rubble new walls were already rising again. The American "Flying Tigers" were just getting organised in Kunming, and the Japs had come over in a surprise raid, just to let the Chinese know that they were keeping an eye on the place.

The Post-office truck on which I travelled from Kunming to Chungking on a bed of mail-sacks had constantly to pull to the side of the road while long lines of troops squeezed past. As in Rangoon, the idea that Japan might go to war was still something to be scoffed at; it was surprising to see Chinese soldiers marching down the Burma Road, as I was told, to man the Yunnan-Burma border. They had six or seven hundred miles to march from where I passed them.

Behind each battalion of yellow-clad, sandal-shod troops came the battalion cooks, each with a ten-gallon copper, frame and all, suspended on each end of a carrying stick. Behind the cooks came wheelbarrow teams, trundling clumsy-looking, high-wheeled barrows up and down the mountain-sides, keeping up with the troops or at least catching them up by nightfall. At some villages little bands turned out to cheer them along with fiddle, fife and trumpet. Incidentally, that was the only place in China where I saw troops welcomed with music. Slender, tattered and hard, for the most part very young troops, they were to be ready near the Yunnan-Burma border when Japan plunged into war. When they passed a halted convoy they peered wonderingly and envyingly at the shiny new guns in crates on some of the trucks.

The heaviest weapons they carried were three-inch mortars and Bren-type machine-guns.

The scenery between Kunming and Chungking is as beautiful as I have seen anywhere in the world. The rice harvest was almost complete. The last golden sheaves were being beaten into great cane baskets, the headless straw packed into stooks that, piled along the edge of the clipped terraces, looked like balustrades flanking golden steps leading up the hill-sides. As we neared Chungking the stubble had already been ploughed under and the terraces were flooded with water. The peasants had performed miracles by transforming mountains into lakes. Flooded terraces stepped from the valleys right up to the very tips of the mountains, reflecting red and gold of autumn-tinted chestnut and willow leaves in the dead calm waters. There were beautiful mosaics of pattern and colour in the neatly-fitted fields, with the blue of peasants' backs, gold of stubble, tender green of freshly-planted rice, red of the leaves and a few poppies clinging to the edges of the rice fields.

We passed two wrecked postal trucks between Kunming and Kweiyang and three more between Kweiyang and Chungking, representing 33 per cent. of the total number on that stretch of road during the 48 hours in which they had crashed. In order to save gasoline and sell the surplus saved on the black market, postal truck-drivers had the habit of coasting down the steep mountain slopes with engines cut off. As brakes were rarely checked before commencing the day's run, it was surprising that any reached their destination. There seemed to be skeletons of trucks and cars down almost every gorge we passed. My driver, before we left Kunming, had been duly impressed by the director of Postal Services that he had a "waigworen" on board and must curb his natural instinct to hurtle down the mountain-sides as his colleagues did. After looking at the scattered remains of one of his friend's trucks scattered all the way down a couple of thousand feet of gorge, he seemed relieved that he had been ordered to take all steep slopes

in second gear. Our brakes, tyres and oil were not checked during the five days between Kunming and Chungking.

The casual, wasteful way Chinese look after their motor vehicles has been cited by pessimists to prove that Chinese have no aptitude for mechanical things, will never be good technicians, and can never run a modern, industrialised country. It is not so many years ago that we were regaled with similar doleful prophecies about the Russians. Travellers came back with stories of tractors sent out without essential parts, broken down cars and trucks littering every highway, agricultural machinery left to rust in the fields. Impossible that the Russians could ever industrialise their country. Yet a few years later we find them chasing the most highly mechanised army in the world faster than any army has been chased since warfare began. Their handling of motor transport and supplies has been one of the wonders of the war.

It is maddening to see good equipment being smashed and ruined because of clumsiness and lack of attention, especially when much of the equipment has been supplied under lend-lease or credits, paid for by taxpayers' money in America and Britain, but one must be careful not to draw too far-reaching conclusions from that. Give the Chinese a few years and they will learn as the Russians learned and us, unfortunately for us, the Japanese learned.

In the mists of a late autumn morning, looking across the broad, brown, swirling Yangtse river, Chungking looked like a dream city. Tier after tier of lightly-veiled white buildings rose from the steep banks of the river till the top-most were lost in the grey mist. A most surprising sight, for one expected nothing but a bone-pile of buildings from the — at that time — most-bombed capital in the world.

It wasn't till the little ferry boat that the strong Yangtse current tried to clutch from its course and send hurtling downstream to the famous gorges, had fought its way nearly to the Chungking side of the river, that one noticed the buildings were roofless and sightless shells. Windows were boarded up or empty of frames, back walls

dissolved into shapeless heaps of bricks and dirt or were propped up with huge bamboo poles. The white was a dirty grey, the mist a depressing pea-soup fog. Never again, except at night, when the scars disappeared and lights twinkled on every hill and in every hollow, did one have the impression that Chungking was a dream city. It was a city that had suffered much. Grey and unsmiling, with grave-faced children, little more than toddlers, working and looking like old people.

I had been warned at various points along the route from Australia to China that I would find that the Chinese hated foreigners. Many reasons were cited, most of them quite logical ones. The Chinese felt they had been more than usually exploited by our traders. They had been victims of our guns during the Opium Wars and the Boxer Rebellion; been victims of our indifference and greed in supplying the Japanese with weapons to conquer their country. They hated us because of our assumption of superiority based on the colour of our skins; they hated the British particularly, because they had closed the Burma Road, which was their particular hand-made pride.

But travelling along the Burma Road one had nowhere experienced hostility. The first time I stopped for food at a little inn I was slightly alarmed at a large crowd which gathered round my table and overflowed to the footpath outside. But it was soon apparent they were only displaying a fresh, uninhibited curiosity. They were amused at my poor efforts with chopsticks, nudged and spoke to each other behind their hands. Their mirth expressed itself first in polite giggles, then in hearty guffaws as I grinned back at them. Yunnanese had not seen many foreigners pass through at that time, and certainly few had eaten at the dirty inns to which my friend Wang took me. Several times along the Burma Road and many times since a Chinese peasant has wonderingly put his fingers round my wrist and exclaimed at the size of the wrist bone, or run his hand over the hairs on my arm and pointed to his own slim, hairless arm in comparison. Of course, to see my portable type-

writer in action was an endless source of wonder. There was plenty of healthy curiosity, but nothing more. Perhaps, could they have spoken to me, they would have asked embarrassing questions, and from my replies resentment would have been kindled. That, one couldn't know.

In Chungking, the atmosphere was different. Foreigners were no novelty there. Indifference was the keynote among the people on the streets, and among the officials there was either a pleased acceptance that a "foreign friend" (the New Life Movement substitute for the traditional term of "foreign devil" formerly applied to all outsiders) had come to share the hardships of life there, or there was a guarded politeness which, if expressed in words, one felt meant: "Well, I wonder what you've come here for. We had better find out before we decide how to treat you."

The latter attitude I encountered in meeting Dr. Chu Chia Hua, at that time Minister for the Organisation of the Kuomintang and, as I discovered later, with strong pro-German leanings. I carried a letter of introduction to him from the Chinese Consul in Melbourne, and most of our first conversation centred around what types of people and organisations interested in China I had associated with in Australia. One worry for Chu Chia Hua was that I also had a letter from the Australia-China Co-operation Movement, formed merely to promote goodwill between the two countries and to raise funds for relief purposes. Chu Chia Hua sensed in the word "co-operation" some connection with Rewi Alley's Industrial Co-operatives, which were on his black-list at the time, and whose members he was busily tracking down and pushing into concentration camps.

It was strange to find out within the first few weeks that the liberal-leftist groups, which all over the world had been foremost in promoting goodwill for China, had raised millions of pounds for her defence; had organised boycotts of Japanese goods and strikes to prevent shipments of war material to Japan, were regarded by the Chinese government as subversive, although the help was eagerly accepted. In many countries where the "Aid to China" movement was

strongest, conservative government circles frowned upon such movements as assisting a country in the hands of "leftist" people, who were only one step removed from communism. It was, in fact, a piquant situation. In "leftist" China anyone with even a faint tinge of liberalism was being persecuted as relentlessly as their counter-parts in Japan or Germany. But the myth of a near Communist China was a propaganda line glibly used by Japan and eagerly accepted by those who were making millions by selling Japan her war requirements.

For a long time, of course, liberal movements such as the Industrial Co-operatives were allowed to flourish because they were sure draw-cards for money from liberal sources the world over. But once lend-lease and British credits became available, such liberal "luxuries" as industrial co-operatives and incipient democratic movements were no longer necessary. The money was coming in, anyway, so the draw-cards could be put back in the pack — in this case into concentration camps. A campaign of suppression was instituted against the co-operatives and co-op sympathisers from abroad were regarded with suspicion.

The atmosphere in Chungking became clear after Japan took her plunge on 7th December. Those who acclaimed us as sympathetic "foreign friends" now greeted us with unmistakable warmth as fully-fledged allies. The suspicious attitude of the others increased, especially amongst those who believed their government had been too hasty in lining up with the Allies against not only Japan, but Germany and Italy as well. The dismay felt in America and Britain at Japan's blows at Pearl Harbour and Singapore were not reflected in Chungking. People and officials were frankly jubilant. Even ricksha coolies and street stallholders relaxed their normally sombre expression to give a grin as a "waig-woren" went past. Little children would smile and shout "ABCD front," or the nearest equivalent to it.

The idea of the new alliance between America, Britain, China and Dutch East Indies caught their imagination, and the repetition of "ABCD" as a slogan seemed accepted as a

magic talisman for victory. This is the more remarkable when one considers that in the alphabetless Chinese language "ABCD" can have no significance. There seemed no doubt in people's minds that their troubles were now over and Japan would soon be crushed by combined blows of the mighty British and American naval and air forces. Even the early setbacks at Hong Kong and the sinking of the "Repulse" and "Prince of Wales" during the first days only temporarily dampened people's spirits.

Even official circles were so convinced that final victory was at hand that it was being openly discussed in some military and political quarters that now was the time to settle affairs with the Communists. Chinese armies would no longer have to worry about the Japanese, and they could concentrate on consolidating Kuomintang power so that by the time America and Britain had defeated Japan, the Communists would be liquidated and the Kuomintang be in undisputed control of China. This idea penetrated very close to the top, but whether the Generalissimo gave ear to it or not, one couldn't know. In any case the assumption about the Japanese soon proved wrong when they launched another attack in China — this time their third drive down the Hankow-Canton railway, with Changsha their preliminary objective.

China's best equipped armies then, as now, were stationed along the Yellow River front to ensure no supplies reached the Communists. Those in Hunan were the usual ill-fed, ill-equipped troops which comprised the bulk of the central government armies. But in General Hsueh Yueh's Hunan command there was less corruption than usual and a splendid fighting spirit, probably inspired this time by the entry of Britain and America into the Pacific War. The soldiers fought valiantly, suffered heavy losses, but imposed still heavier losses on the Japanese. By destroying roads, they forced the Japanese to leave their heavy equipment behind, and by the time the decisive battle was fought in and around Changsha itself, the Chinese were fighting their enemy on almost equal terms.

The Japs had to discard their artillery because of road destruction, and could use only pack guns and heavy mortars while the Chinese had a few good field pieces secreted in the hills on the opposite side of the river from Changsha. They popped away with these to good effect, and after extremely heavy fighting at the very gates of the city, the Japs were forced to withdraw, leaving several thousand of their dead on the battlefield. Those of us who visited Changsha and followed the path of Japanese retreat while their dead were still practically warm, were convinced that here, at least, the Chinese had fought bravely and skilfully. The Japanese suffered one of their worst defeats in China and their first defeat since Pearl Harbour.

Very impressive was the efficiency with which the city of 200,000 had been evacuated and every building in a strategic spot converted into a fortress. At every street corner machine-gun nests and small concrete pill-boxes; houses and shops torn down to clear lines of fire; rubble from Jap bombings cemented together to make tank obstacles; barricades made from beds, doors and paving blocks. Changsha was a demonstration of the best that Chinese armies can do with their natural ingenuity supplementing their meagre arms.

Even there, in probably the most honest war area in Central Government China, it was interesting to slip away from the official party and watch a typical example of army graft. A few of us went to watch some Chinese soldiers being buried, and we were surprised at the decent, solid-looking coffins in which the bodies were carried to their last resting place in the rich, yellow soil of Hunan.

In China, to be buried in a good coffin is an important thing. In cities where the guild streets still function, where the silversmiths, lacquer workers, porcelain painters, tailors, cabinet-makers and other artisans occupy separate streets, the coffin-makers' street is always one of the most attractive with its display of beautifully-made massive black-polished, sometimes silver-inlaid, coffins. People cherish their coffins

in China, buy them years before they die, and a dying person is greatly comforted if relatives bring in a handsome coffin as proof he will be decently and honourably buried.

For the soldiers there is a special fund established to provide each fatality with a separate coffin, and the knowledge that such provision has been made is an important factor in maintaining the troops' morale.

In following the burying parties as they staggered along with heavy coffins swung from their shoulders by ropes and poles, we discovered at the burial ground the same coffin was made to serve many times. The coffin was lowered to the bottom of the hole, a couple of sharp taps, and the top part was pulled up again leaving the corpse on a cheap pine board, which had been temporarily nailed to the bottom of the coffin. The bodies were hastily covered up; the troops had already left the area, and no one except the burying parties—who were probably given extra rations to keep their mouths shut—knew about the coffin swindle except some officer, who doubtless pocketed most of the money from the special fund. It was common gossip in China that troops carried their dead comrades with them for days in order to draw their rations and share them, but this was understandable, knowing the meagre diet on which they normally lived. But the coffin swindle seemed a particularly callous exploitation of the dead.

The Jap armies began to withdraw from Changsha early in January, 1942, and the energetic "Little Tiger," as General Hsueh Yueh was dubbed, immediately commenced preparations for the next battle of Changsha. He was sure the Japs would attack again soon, because they wanted to link up with their forces in Canton, cut Free China in two, and re-establish the rail supply line between Hankow and the Kwangtung capital and port of Canton. Hsueh Yueh said he expected the Japs to attack next spring, but actually they did not move till autumn, 1944, when they launched their fourth and only successful attack against Changsha, sweeping on down the railroad to capture an American air base at Hengyang and to narrow the gap between their Yangtse-

based forces and those based on Canton to little more than 100 miles.

In Hunan, the Central armies seemed to have established good relations with the people. Several of the divisional commanders and General Hsueh Yueh himself emphasised the good work done by peasants, carrying wounded back and caring for them, taking food and water to tired troops right up to the front lines, even acting as volunteer ammunition carriers. We saw peasants coming back to the Changsha countryside bringing gifts of rice, sometimes pieces of pork, and eggs that must have been hard to part with, for the soldiers. The troops had saved their city and won back their land, and the peasants repaid them as well as they knew how. It was a vastly different situation from that existing in provinces I visited later, where the peasants, with good reason, still regarded soldiers as medieval bandits who came to rob and plunder.

By the time we left Changsha the black-gowned townspeople were streaming back with their bundles and barrows to dig up precious possessions buried before they left the city. Lovely, slim-varnished boats, with woven bamboo sails, the pride of the famed Hsiang river boat-builders, were moored at the river's edge disgorging hundreds of joyful citizens come to repossess their city. Cormorant fisher boats with the bedraggled black birds clustered over them like flies on a piece of meat, were anchored out in mid-stream, selling fish as fast as the quick-diving cormorants caught them. While the stink of death still hung heavily over the city, Changsha was coming to life again.

Back in Chungking feeling had hardened amongst those, and there were plenty of them in top government circles, who favoured the Axis side. Hong Kong had fallen. The Japs were slicing through Malaya and the Philippines without likelihood of being stopped. The invasion of Burma had just commenced. In the west the Germans were still pushing through Russia at ten or twenty miles a day on a wide front.

Much of China's financial support had come from Hong

Kong, and the overseas Chinese in Malaya, Burma and the Dutch East Indies. With the fall of Hong Kong one of China's last two contacts with the outside world was lopped off. How long would the other — the Burma Road — last?

Out of office had gone foreign minister Dr. Quo Tai Chi, many believed because he had been too hasty in persuading the Generalissimo to declare war on Germany and Italy, though the popular story was that his pretty concubine was taking up too much of his time and money, and was out of favour with Madame Chiang.

Chinese who were wholeheartedly pro-Allies looked anxiously to their "foreign friends," and the latter suffered some embarrassment explaining what their respective fleets were doing, and why the Japanese were advancing almost at will against British and American troops in Malaya and the Philippines. The full story of Pearl Harbour and the virtual destruction of the British air force in Malaya were not known at the time, and devastating blows by air and sea against the Japs were still expected.

Others who were not so pro-Allies regarded the "foreign friends" with greater coldness than ever, and hardly bothered with the traditional politeness. Little cliques held meetings to discuss if it were not better now to make overtures to Japan and join the Axis. Japan, they thought, would help them settle with the Communists, and Japan herself, though victorious, would be weakened by having to deal with America and Britain. Suave, intelligent, German-educated Chu Chia Hua, with his key position in the government controlling all party appointments, held a tea-party with some of his Nazi-minded friends, where such possibilities as a deal with the Axis were discussed. Chinese officials recently returned from Germany painted a glowing picture of conditions there.

Home morale was boosted enormously by the victory at Changsha, and the Chinese people gained new confidence in themselves by contrasting their own success in Hunan with the defeats inflicted on the Allies. The Japanese propaganda line that westerners were a soft, decadent people

with no spirit for fight began to have an effect. The trend of thought amongst even progressive Chinese began to be something like this:

"In the past we have relied too much on the West coming to our aid. We have had too great regard for their material achievements. With all their great ships, their clouds of planes, and big guns, fellow Asiatics are defeating them right and left. In a few weeks Britain and America, with all their material strength, have lost greater possessions to the Japanese than we lost in years with our home-made weapons. The Japs can defeat the westerners and we can defeat the Japs. At Changsha our soldiers have shown again that we alone can defeat the Japs perhaps because we have superior spiritual qualities. We must look to ourselves in future and not rely on foreign friends so much."

Liberals were heartened by the arrival in Chungking of Madame Sun Yat Sen, the gracious widow of the founder of the republic and sister to Madame Chiang and Madame Kung. She had been living in Hong Kong due to her disagreement with the totalitarian, illiberal policies of her brother-in-law, the Generalissimo, and had escaped from the besieged city in one of the last planes to leave. In Chungking she was kept under surveillance by the secret police, mainly because she believed unswervingly in the teachings of her late husband, Dr. Sun Yat Sen, and was in favour of their immediate application. Of the three people's principles laid down by the father of the Chinese republic, only one showed any evidence of application — nationalism. To speak of applying the other two principles of "democracy and people's livelihood" smacked of subversion to the Kuomintang party bosses. Madame Sun was one of the few people in Chungking who dared give voice to her opposition to Kuomintang policy.

Another, the only one close to the Generalissimo who dared criticise him, was the famous "Christian General," Marshal Feng Yu Hsiang. He was old enough to be regarded as an "elder statesman," and used to the full his special privileges on that account. He was one of the few high

Kuomintang officials who would give frank replies to honest questions. A jovial giant of a man, with a smooth, round face and bald head, he replied to my question as to China's most pressing needs by saying tersely, "Food, bullets, drugs, planes, planes and more planes," then added: "and honesty in their distribution."

Marshal Feng, dressed in peasant blue, stuck to a bicycle rather than the sleek sedans in which most high officials travelled, and several times roundly berated the Generalissimo at meetings of the Military Affairs Commission. He was probably the only channel by which true conditions of the troops — and the suppressive activities of the secret police — reached the Generalissimo. For the rest, Chiang was surrounded by a "cordon sanitaire" that ensured he never obtained a true picture of what was happening outside of Chungking.

Shortly after Pearl Harbour Field-Marshal, then General Sir Archibald Wavell conferred with the Generalissimo and accepted the latter's offer of Chinese troops for use in Burma. By the middle of January, 1942, those troops, which I had passed a couple of months earlier marching down the Burma Road, were already camped on the Yunnan-Burma border awaiting word to march into Burma. Details as to their employment by General Wavell had been decided. The Chinese were to bring in their own rifles and machine-guns; the British would feed them and light artillery would be supplied from American lend-lease stocks already in Rangoon. Air support was to be furnished partly by the British and partly by American Volunteer Group squadrons, the latter originally formed to protect the Burma Road and Chungking, but now released by the Generalissimo for use in Burma.

For the first time in nearly a century Chinese troops would fight outside their own boundaries in an effort to preserve China's last life-line to the outside world. The fate of Burma was so closely tied up with China's fortunes that there was little wonder that the Chinese public eagerly awaited news of their troops in Burma.



## Chapter Two.

## THE BURMESE AND THEIR PROBLEMS.

SINCE for over a hundred years Burma was administered as a province of India, it is usually accepted abroad that Burmese are "sort of Indians." Nothing could be further from the truth. The Indians are mainly Aryans and Dravidians; the Burmese are Mongols. There is as much difference between Burmese and the main races of India in background, culture, religion and language, as there is between the Mediterranean Italians and the Baltic Swedes. They have one common interest, however—the desire to rule their own countries.

Your typical Burman townsman is a plumpish, orange-complexioned person, lively, good-humoured and easy going. His country cousin is a browner, leaner version, with the same genial temperament. The Burman has neither the passivity of the Indian nor the energy of the Chinese. He has been fairly accurately described as a bridge between the peoples of India, China and Malaysia. His nearest racial relatives are in Thailand and parts of Indo-China. Burmese women are slim, sprightly and beautiful, with a natural exquisite taste for dress and decoration. Throughout the East they are known for their shrewdness in business dealings, their independence, and the fact of their higher social status than any of their sisters in Asia.

Burma was separated from India in 1935, had progressed farther along the road to independence than had India, and by the time World War II broke out, it seemed Burma was within measurable distance of self-government within the Empire. In fact, in July, 1940, Secretary for India and Burma Amery had declared, that at the end of the war:

"His Majesty's Government will grant Burma a constitution which will enable her to take at once her due place as a fully self-governing and equal member of a Commonwealth or Federation of free nations that may be established as a result of the war."

Burma's problems are simpler than those of India. The population is almost entirely Buddhist; there are no communal problems; no caste systems; no Jinnahs with demands for a separate nation within a nation. But although Burma was progressing towards political independence, her people were losing their economic independence. The largest rice-exporting country in the world, Burma's economy is based on peasant agriculture with 75 per cent. of the people tilling the soil. But the peasants were losing their land. By 1940 more than 50 per cent. of the main rice-growing areas were already owned by absentee landlords, and few of these were Burmans. The great majority of the land-holders were the hated Indian Chettyars, immigrant money-lenders from Madras province. It was not difficult for them to get control of the land.

Money comes in but once a year for the peasant, at harvest time. Even for the provident ones, and Burmese are notoriously improvident, it is almost impossible to put away enough money from one harvest to last a whole year till the next one. The Chettyars were eager to lend money at anything from 15 to 50 per cent. on the security of home and land, till autumn came and the crops harvested. A couple of bad seasons with low prices and the peasants would fall behind with their payments. The Chettyars, with the law standing behind them, would seize the farm and either keep the Burmese family on as landless laborers or, as this was usually the case, instal some miserable relative to run the farm for a monthly pittance.

The inroads by the Indians on their peasant economy was a source of bitter hatred towards all Indians in Burma. It was the real reason behind the anti-Indian riots which broke out from time to time — the latest one in 1938 resulting in about 200 Indians killed. Even during the great Thara-

waddy riots of 1930/31, when the fanatic Saya Saw, after giving his followers charms against bullets, led them in an uprising that cost 2,000 lives, it was mainly the Indian population that suffered from their killing and looting. Incidentally, there have never been riots against the British or Europeans as such in Burma, nor have there been any political assassinations of Britishers as in India.

For the great mass of Burmese peasants, the real enemy has seemed the near enemy—the Indians who grabbed their land. British government was fairly remote—a shadowy force in the background with which the majority of the people had no contact. There was even a good deal of mutual admiration and respect between lots of the Burmans and English administrators. Even at the height of the Burma campaign, when the British were being thrown out of the country lock, stock and barrel, it was safe for a British civilian to go anywhere in Burma unarmed. He would, nine times out of ten, be treated with the kindness and courtesy which are the natural traits of the Burmese people.

But not so the unfortunate Indians. Poor coolies and market stallholders, most of whom had nothing to do with money-lending or expropriation of farms, were beaten up and robbed, many of them murdered, during the course of their fifteen hundred mile trek back to India. It was pitiable to see them, in family groups, with their possessions on their backs or piled into hand-carts, most of which were abandoned half way, women and children in the centre, males armed with staves and spears in front and rear to protect the group from murder and pillage. Doubtless most of the wealthy Chettyars skipped out by ship or plane, but to the Burmans who had so long suffered from grasping money-lenders, one Indian looked much like another, and with the breakdown of law and order in Burma, they took their revenge in full.

While the peasants seemed to regard the real enemies as neither the British nor the Japanese, but the Indians, to the townspeople and intellectuals from whom the Thakins

were organised, the picture looked different. They resented the fact that the British were there at all. Merchants and budding Burmese capitalists resented the fact that British firms had a virtual monopoly in exploiting the timber, mineral and oil reserves, in shipping, banking, insurance and rice-exporting businesses. With no clear idea of what they wanted as an alternative, at least they knew they wanted the British out.

There were divisions of thought amongst the Thakins. There were those influenced by Marxist theories who looked towards Russia and were thus anti-fascist and anti-Japanese in outlook. Many of these were locked up long before Russia entered the war because they objected to their country participating in an "imperialist" war. Had they been released when Russia entered the war the Thakins may well have been mobilised on our side during the Pacific war. Others looked towards Japan for help in getting their independence. Though a few were undoubted traitors to their cause and their country, and accepted bribes from the Japanese, most of them genuinely thought they could accept the help of the Japs to drive out the British, at the same time arming themselves to expel the Japs later if they seemed intent on permanent occupation of the country.

The Japs had no intention of allowing the Thakin movement to become strong and well-armed. Disarmament of many of the Thakins who helped in the initial stages of the campaign commenced before the fighting was half completed. The so-called "Burma Independence Army" was reduced virtually to the status of a police force, and the Thakins realised, too late, that they were much farther away from independence under the Japs than they had been under the British.

The Burmese were not prepared for the impact of war, least of all for invasion by the Japanese. For years previous to the attack on Pearl Harbour they were kept in ignorance of what Japan was doing. Carrying on anti-Japanese propaganda was a criminal offence. Chinese war films were banned, and it wasn't till 1940 that Chinese newspapers were

allowed to go to print. All this because we were afraid of offending the Japanese in those days. For the same reason we closed the Burma Road for three months in 1940.

After September, 1939, there was some attempt to make the Burmese war-conscious by publicising the European war. One of the most famous posters exhibited was a realistic portrayal of Warsaw in flames. Once our own air defence broke down in Burma, and we had started to retreat, the main effect of the lurid picture of Warsaw's agony was for people to hope the Japs would conquer the country quickly, so that the air bombings would cease.

Our propaganda, once Burma was invaded, was as cumbersome and old-fashioned as our military equipment. We used press and radio, but these reached few people. The Japs had their agents throughout the bazaars, the real information centres of the East. The Thakins went ahead of their armies through the countryside whispering that they were liberating Burma with Japanese assistance. The Japanese must be received as brothers. The peasants were apathetic. They helped us as we retreated with food, water and information. They helped the Japanese as they advanced in the same way. They were bewildered and confused with what went on around them, but one thing they did understand — the daily lengthening lines of Indian families filing along the roads, with their handcarts and rickshas piled high with their possessions, leaving Burma. That was something to rejoice at.

Among Burma's border tribes-people the attitude was different. Kachins, Karens, Chins and Nagas are different, harder people than the Burmans. They represent the difference between mountaineers and plainsmen. Their land was not valuable enough for the Chettyars to covet, and they remained free of money-lenders' entanglements. More than 90 per cent. owned their own land. They were much farther from political independence than the Burmans because they belong to the "restricted" areas, outside the Burmese legislature, administered direct by the Governor.

Government officials had close day-to-day contacts with

these tough, tribal hill-dwellers, whereas in Burma proper officials tended to be a little remote and god-like, with very formal relations between administrators and administrated. The hill-dwellers liked their land and owned it, were prepared to fight for it. They naturally turned to the administrators for advice when the Japs neared their territory, and it was not difficult for the officials to persuade them the Japs intended grabbing their land. When the Japanese came they fought like the primitive people they are for man's most primitive instinct, defence of home and land. They had fought their neighbours for the same reasons for generations past, and no Japanese intrigues or Thakin agents could make any impression on these colourful, fierce, border tribes-people.

The invasion of Burma was necessary to Japan for several reasons, apart from the general one that Burma fitted in with their overall scheme for expansion. The immediate objectives in Burma were as follows:—

- (a) Protection of the line of communication between Indo-China, Thailand and Malaya. For the invasion of Malaya the Japs' main supply line was along the railway between Bangkok and Singapore, running within a few miles of the Burma border.
- (b) To cut the Burma Road and close the last supply route to China before lend-lease supplies reached there in such quantities as to prolong Chinese resistance.
- (c) To control Burma's raw materials, particularly her large resources of petroleum, minerals and rice, and gear them to the Japanese war machine.
- (d) To secure a good springboard for the invasion of India — in the next phase of Japanese expansion.

Immediately the Japs attacked Malaya the Governor-General begged the officer commanding British troops in Burma to order his troops manning the Burmese section of the long goose-neck which separated Burma and Thailand from Malaya, to move across into Thailand, occupy the few miles of territory between the Burma border and the Gulf of

Siam, through which runs the railway which was carrying streams of supplies and reinforcements to the Japanese in Malaya. A glance at the map will show what such a move would have accomplished. Unfortunately General McLeod considered he was unable to move without express approval from his immediate chief, Air-Marshal Brooke-Popham, down in Singapore.

For several days in succession the Governor-General repeated his demands to the General, offering to accept full responsibility himself as direct representative of British government in Burma. Communications between Rangoon and Singapore were very bad, and in any case Brooke-Popham had plenty to worry about nearer home.

The reply didn't come for many days, during which the Japanese poured train-load after train-load of troops and equipment through the undefended goose-neck. By the time permission was given, the Japs had occupied the area, and the few companies of Burma Rifles we sent in were cut to pieces long before they reached the railway.

Such an incident couldn't affect the outcome of the fighting in Malaya and Burma, where we were caught so completely unprepared — both physically and mentally. At worst it hastened the end by perhaps a few weeks, but it did illustrate the unwieldiness of the defence command and the sort of difficulties that arose from time to time between the military and civil government in Burma. Burma command was soon taken away from Air-Marshal Brooke-Popham and restored to India Command. General McLeod was replaced by Lieut.-General Hutton, who was afterwards replaced in turn by General Sir Harold Alexander.

Within a few days after the Japs — spearheaded by a few hundred armed members of the Thakin party — invaded Burma from the very point at which the Governor had suggested we invade Thailand, they had attained their first objective.

Guided by a few Burmans who knew elephant trails and jungle tracks unmarked on any military map, they advanced with little difficulty through Tenasserim division south of

Rangoon. With the occupation of Mergui, Tavoy and Moulmein by the end of January, they removed any potential threat to their communications with Malaya. This danger removed, they could afford to pause and finish off their Malayan campaign, meanwhile urging the Thakins to carry on their work of demoralisation. They guessed, correctly, that Burma would be ready to fall like a ripe plum by the time they could switch their full weight to the attack.

The story of procrastination in the south was repeated in the north, where Chinese troops had been sitting on the Yunnan-Burma border from the day Burma was invaded. Scattered from the frontier back to Kunming were more Chinese troops than we had British troops in the rest of Burma, and their arms were about equal to ours. For weeks, while we retreated up the Tenasserim coast, the Chinese sat patiently on the frontier, giving artistic touches to the bamboo camps they had built, weaving themselves new hats and sandals, laying out vegetable gardens for the next comers, awaiting the word to move into Burma. British officers at the front fumed with impatience, wondering when the Chinese would come to their assistance. Chinese officers at the frontier fumed with impatience wondering why they were not allowed to cross the frontier. Chunking fumed. Rangoon fumed, and messages were flashed to and fro with no apparent effect.\*

Meanwhile, Malaya was about finished, and the Japanese prepared for an all-out push to cut the Burma Road at Pegu and isolate Rangoon. By the time the signal was given for units of the crack Chinese 5th Army to move into Burma, the Burma Road was cut, and hope of further reinforcements of men or material for the defence of Burma was finished.

It was interesting to watch the behaviour of Chinese troops in Burma and the reactions of Burmese to their presence there.

Chinese-Burmese relations were generally good. Whereas all other races were regarded as "foreigners" in Burma,

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\*In an earlier book, "Bombs Over Burma" (Cheshire, Melbourne), the author has dealt at length with the reasons for the delay.

the Chinese had been looked upon as relatives. They were, after all, fellow Mongols and fellow Buddhists. There were cultural affinities between the two nations, and a long record of peaceful trade. Chinese who migrated to Burma generally settled there, married, and raised a family. The money they earned stayed in the country, as distinct from the Chettyars and seasonal workers who returned to India after harvest time, with their carefully hoarded earnings. The Chinese had a good reputation as faithful husbands and affectionate fathers. The offspring of the many marriages between Chinese men and Burmese girls were usually credited with combining the best qualities of both races. (This, incidentally, is a noteworthy feature of Chinese mixtures with other races in various parts of the East, including Hawaii.) The Chinese, on the whole, were the best respected "outside" people in Burma.

Nevertheless, they weren't 100 per cent. popular. They had a virtual monopoly of the government liquor stores and opium dens. They were suspected of smuggling in opium and cocaine. They owned most of Burma's pawnshops and incurred the odium which usually pertains to owners of pawnshops. Once, in 1931, there had even been riots against the Chinese.

With the opening of the Burma Road and its subsequent importance as China's last link with the outside world, more and more Chinese entered Burma — thousands of business men, officials and truck-drivers. The Burmese began to have fears that perhaps China really wanted to annex the country and secure for all time a back door to the sea. Towards the end of 1941 the Burmese legislature signed a treaty with China — the first Burma had ever negotiated in her own rights with a foreign power — to limit the flow of immigrants over the frontier. To take the sting off this limitation of Chinese immigrants, there were exchanges of goodwill and cultural missions between the two countries at about the same time.

This vague fear of Chinese penetration was cited as one reason why Chinese troops should not be allowed in the

country, even if they were there to repel the Japs. "If we use the Chinese to drive out the Japs, who is going to help us to drive out the Chinese?" was the plaint in some quarters.

The Chinese armies, however, behaved splendidly in Burma, except for a certain amount of justifiable looting of food by some starving troops during the final stages of the retreat. Burmese-speaking political officers preceded the soldiers into the villages, explaining why the troops were coming. Benefiting from lessons learned from the Communist armies in China, they promised the food required would be paid for, that any misdemeanors by Chinese soldiers should be reported by the villagers and the culprits would be punished. There were very few incidents between Burmese and Chinese, except a few times when Chinese intervened to prevent unfortunate Indian refugees being looted. It was not healthy, however, for a Burmese to be caught near the front lines or suspected of contacting the Japs.

The Chinese 5th Army and one division of the 66th Army fought well and gallantly. If their 6th Army collapsed under the first real Jap assault and disintegrated, hastening the final collapse in Burma, it could be partly excused as consisting of untried troops, fighting in a strange land on a front far too extended for the troops at their disposal, and without the artillery and air support at first promised.

It was not until the Chinese troops entered Burma and some sort of a line was established across the parallel Toungoo and Prome roads leading north from Rangoon, with the British manning the Prome, the Chinese the Toungoo roads, that an orderly defence was organised. Before that time our troops had been pulling back fighting sporadic, unorganised battles wherever the enemy found us.

There have been sufficient books written about the Burma campaign to absolve me from the task of describing our defeat here. Suffice to say that we were outnumbered in troops and planes; outmanoeuvred in political as well as military strategy; that we never recovered our balance from the initial shock of our own unpreparedness. Official lethargy and military ineptitude were equated by the

courageous, dogged, fighting retreat of British, Indian and Chinese troops, through many hundreds of miles of foodless, waterless, often trackless jungle. Mistakes were made which hastened our defeat, but given the conditions under which the campaign started and British commitments elsewhere, it seems inevitable that Japanese occupation of the whole country could not long have been delayed.

After the fall of Malaya, when Japan could concentrate all her strength in planes and tanks against Burma, the issue was not long in doubt.

But Japan only succeeded in part of her objective. She did protect her communications between Malaya, Thailand and Indo-China. With the subsequent building of a link between the Malaya-Thailand and Burma rail systems at the cost of many lives of British and Australian war prisoners, she vastly improved Burma's communications with the pools of Jap troops and planes in the South-East Asia hinterland. She did cut the Burma Road, but within a few months supplies were already being flown into China from India, and a new road was under construction with a fair chance of completion before the Japs could push far enough into Yunnan to render it abortive. Japan did get control of Burma's considerable mineral, oil, timber and rice supplies, but due to the constant and ever-increasing activities of British and American air forces in India, and the constant reduction of Japan's merchant shipping, it is doubtful if much of Burma's wealth was reaching the Japanese war machine. Japan's fourth objective, to transform Burma into a base from which the occupation of India could be launched, failed completely.

What were the consequences of Japanese occupation of Burma? One of the most important is that Burma perforce had been opened up to the outside world. Before the war she had no rail connection with any of her neighbours. Now there is direct communication between Rangoon, Bangkok and Singapore. (Now that the Japs have been driven from Burma the situation in China demands completion of the Rangoon-Kunming railway.) Burma had no overland

routes to India. Now she has the new road built by American and Chinese labour linking the Indian railhead at Ledo with the Burma railhead at Myitkyina. She has new roads built by the British in Central Burma from Imphal towards the Chindwin river, and in the south along the Arakan coast to Akyab, and doubtless eventually to Prome on the Rangoon-Mandalay railway.

These new lines of contact with the outside world have as much significance as the development of air transport has for the rest of the world. Next to the Japanese invasion itself, the new transport routes are the most important thing that has happened to Burma since the British first occupied the country. But they are the only items on the credit side of the ledger of Japanese occupation.

Burma's cities have been shattered, first by Jap bombings then by ours. The peasant economy has been a heavy casualty because, on the one hand, Jap shipping difficulties made purchase and distribution of the rice crop impossible; while on the other hand scarcity of trade goods sent prices sky-rocketing. Farmers receiving only a fraction of what they normally got for their rice harvest had to pay many times normal prices for necessities like cooking and fuel oil, cloth for loongyis, salt and flour.

"Self-government" had been a mockery with Jap forces garrisoning every town, rigidly controlling the entire economy of the country.

But still Burma hasn't suffered from the war like China has, and like countries in Europe have. There has at least always been plenty of rice to eat. Damaged homes are not so important when the climate is mild enough the year round to sleep without a top covering. There have been no transfers of population for slave labour — fortunately Japan's war factories were too far away. If there have been food shortages that is mainly a matter of distribution, and can be quickly corrected now that Japan is defeated. After three years' Allied hammering at rail and road bridges, locomotives and river steamers, internal transportation must be fairly well shattered. But the peasants still have their

lumbering ox-carts and the cattle to draw them, and the river-dwellers still will have barges or rafts on which to float rice from the areas of plenty to villages of scarcity. Peasant villages of thatch and bamboo matting are easily repaired or rebuilt; there are still plenty of poles in the forest, and plenty of bamboo thickets.

Burmese abroad are looking forward to the day when they can return to help in the building of a new Burma. Many of them were fighting with British forces inside Burma, helping to win their land back. What sort of a new Burma were they fighting for?

The original demands of Burmese nationalists will probably have been tempered by the hard fact of Japanese occupation for over three years, and the other hard fact that British and Allied troops have done most of the work in winning back the country. With the departure of the Japs, the country is occupied by British troops, so it would not seem the Burmese have much bargaining power, except by appeal to a collective Allied conscience—if such a thing exists. Their minimum demands are going to be something like this:—

- (a) Immediate self-government. Free elections to be held as soon as they can be organised.
- (b) Inclusion of the tribal areas, including Shan States, Kachin, Chin and Naga areas, in the Burma legislature.
- (c) Some measure of State control over Burma's natural resources of oil, timber, silver, lead, tungsten, etc.

After much discussion with many Burmese nationalists I think these are three points on which there is the greatest degree of unanimity. Many, of course, want complete independence, but for reasons of defence most of them, I think, would be satisfied with the same status as Australia, Canada, etc., that of a self-governing dominion with powers to make and break treaties, draft their own land laws, regulate social legislation and finance. The question of Burma's natural resources is a tender subject, as they are controlled almost entirely by British capital. Many Burmans favour ex-

propriation with compensation, but few have clear ideas where the money will originate from.

With the new trade routes to China and India, both of which countries are desperately short of oil and many of the minerals Burma produces, forward-looking Burmans hope to convert a much higher proportion of the country's wealth into its development and improved social services.

There has been no statement yet which sets out exactly what Britain has in mind, but after having visited Burma government in Simla several times, I think the following would be a fair summary of the maximum they can offer the Burmese:—

- (a) Stricter control of government at the top by a British governor with greater Burmese participation in district and village administration. This would operate until Burma's economy was set in order again.
- (b) A restatement of the dominion status offer, with possibly a definite time limit set, such as "End of war plus . . ."
- (c) No change in the "restricted" status of the tribal areas but some sort of educational programme laid down and preparation of Burmese officials to assist in the border area administration. A period of gradual "preparation for self-government."
- (d) No change in the ownership of natural resources or the means of their exploitation, but perhaps a greater "rake-off" for Burma in the way of increased royalties.

To make the British offer more palatable there will be a definite plan for rebuilding towns and cities, repairing roads and railways; a comprehensive scheme of public works, including plans for hydro-electric power for greater electrification of the country. A new deal for education with emphasis on secular schools rather than the present system of tuition by hpoongyis in the Buddhist kyaungs. In other words, as Governor Dorman-Smith promised in the nearest thing to a definite statement yet made on British policy:—

"We intend to set Burma's house in order before we hand the country back to the Burmese."

Burma's future trade will probably be more with her neighbour countries than with England. In the pre-war years 60 per cent. of her exports went to India — carried in British ships. With the industrialisation of China's rich south-west, there will be a great demand for Burma's oil and minerals and reciprocal trade in coal from China. Burma will provide a market for trade goods which an increasingly industrialised India should find it profitable to supply. Burma probably will increase her import trade with India from the meagre 7 per cent. of pre-war years to something nearer her export figure of 60 per cent. Burma's rice will flow across the newly-made roads into India's rice-deficient provinces of Assam and Bengal, returning trucks carrying India's cottons and silks for loongyis and blouses that formerly came from Japan.

But we are a long way ahead of the story. To bring it back to its proper chronological place in the book, we should be back along the Indo-Burmese frontier trudging along a leech-infested tunnel through the undergrowth, on a track which leads from the malaria-ridden Hukawng Valley to Ledo in Assam.

It was along this track that I tramped 130 miles back to India after following British and Chinese troops during four months' fighting from the Salween river in South Burma till the Japanese chased them across the Irrawaddy and virtually ended the Burma campaign.

After a few weeks' spell nursing my malaria in Calcutta it was time to return to Chungking and find out how China was reacting to our further defeats. General Doolittle, meanwhile, had bombed Tokio, and we had won our first naval victory against the Japs in the battle of the Coral Sea, so there were a few cheerful points to discuss with the Chinese.

### Chapter Three.

#### A CLOSER LOOK AT CHINA.

ONE had mixed feelings leaving Calcutta to fly to Chungking in June, 1942. On the one hand there was relief at leaving the Empire's second city with its ostrich head stuck well into the sand and legs waving wildly in the air. It was a relief to get away from the snobbery and exclusiveness of its clubs and hotels, dressing and bands for dinner, burra sahibs keeping a "stiff upper lip" by refusing to admit that ragged, disease-ridden British troops were battling with the Japanese a few hundred miles away to keep the borders of India safe. Calcutta was a replica of Rangoon, Hong Kong and Singapore before the axe fell and left the ostrich head in the sand. On the other hand, there were feelings of trepidation in returning to Chungking when the Japs might isolate the place at any time by pushing those last few hundred miles up the Burma Road to capture Kunming.

The C.N.A.C. plane flew low along the valley of the muddy lazy-looking Brahmaputra, to avoid the piling monsoon clouds impaled on the sombre green peaks that marked the Indo-Burma border country. We stopped in at Dinjan, an airfield torn out of an Assam tea plantation by the hands of thousands of plantation labourers, men, women and children. We took on a few cases of Red Cross supplies and boxes of ammunition for General Chennault's fighter planes. Drenched but cheerful-looking air transport command personnel waded across the muddy field, slush half-way up their knee-boots, rain streaming down their waterproofs. The monsoon had just started in earnest, and these boys straight out from the United States wondered what they had run into when three or four inches of rain plummeted down within a couple of hours.



The idea of trying to supply China across the sixteen thousand feet Karakoram mountains with a few planes and half-finished airfields must have seemed crazy to them, anyway.

Leaving Dinjan we had to head for the monsoon clouds and climb through them till we reached around 17,000 feet. Then, if we held a straight course and level altitude we would just scrape over the lowest of the peaks. It was an uncomfortable feeling, flying through cloud formations so solid that even the tips of the wings disappeared into rushing vapour, trusting only to the pilot's navigation and the correctness of the instruments. I have flown the "hump" several times since, but usually in clear weather when one could gasp at the beauty of the gleaming white peaks, depthless black shadows and deep green valleys; when one could calculate how much the plane had to increase elevation to negotiate the lowest saddle between the peaks ahead, and incidentally keep a look out for enemy planes. On this day the air was bumpy and at each sudden drop several of our Chinese passengers were sick, and I expected any moment we would drop right down a sharp, cold chunk of rock about five miles high.

Three hours after leaving Dinjan, however, we dived down through the swirling clouds and mist over Kunming to repeat what to me is still an ever-recurring miracle, the finding of a few dozen acres of ground without land or skymark of any sort. That negotiating the "hump" and finding Kunming was no easy job was soon demonstrated when traffic was stepped up. For several months our losses due to "operational hazards" averaged nearly a plane a day.

Late that evening we put down on the tiny island airstrip in the Yangtse river at Chungking after nine hours' flying time from Calcutta. Incidentally, we had traversed in one hour the area over which I had spent four days' Jeep travel and seven days' walking out of Burma to India.

My bags were nearly torn apart that first evening at the press hostel by correspondents and publicity department officials ferreting out the extra supplies of razor blades,

shaving cream, tooth paste, flashlight cells and other small items I had brought from India. At the first indication the Burma Road would be closed, most trade goods of this nature disappeared from the shops, either hoarded by the shopkeepers themselves or bought up by the large-scale hoarders for resale when black-market prices reached their zenith. Whisky was fetching about 80 dollars (American) per bottle, cigarettes 12 dollars for 50, and the lowest price for a girl was around 30 dollars for an hour, according to those best-informed on the subject. The mess bill at the press hostel was about three times what it was when I had left five months earlier.

Europeans in Chungking were still anxious, although the Jap drive along the Burma Road seemed to have been halted. Maps were being studied and trails from Chungking to India via Tibet and to Russia via Turkestan were much under discussion as possible escape routes. To Chinese friends, visitors from the outside world were doubly welcome as symbols that Chungking was considered safe for at least a while.

China was now facing the most difficult period of her long years of war. Her last supply line was cut. Since the fall of Burma the Japanese were closer to Chungking than they had ever been. China's bankers and merchants were unashamedly hoarding, and dealing on the black market. China's idolised allies seemed to have feet of clay, and the early pipe dreams of America and Britain finishing off the Japs while China settled her own affairs had resolved into a sober awakening that she was for the first time really alone. Some of their crack troops had been lost in Burma, including the first fruits of lend-lease equipment in the way of tanks and light artillery. For the first time there was open talk that China would quit the war and make a deal with the Japs.

In Calcutta correspondents had even been cabling back stories that China was on the point of folding up. I don't think there ever was that possibility as long as the Soong family held the reins in Chungking. Madame Chiang and

the Kungs knew America, had seen what American production meant. They knew whatever happened temporarily the Japs would be beaten. They would not want China to be on the wrong side at a future peace conference. Dr. Kung confirmed this viewpoint a few days after I returned to Chungking. At a United Nations' Day banquet China's Finance Minister said: "China won the war against Japan when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour." Shrewd, rotund, little "Papa" Kung knew the United States and Britain and knew what he was talking about.

But in those days of mid-1942, when German armies were racing across to Stalingrad, there were riots in India, and the Japs seemed set for a junction with Germany somewhere in the Near East, there was dark pessimism in Chungking and a sense of tremendous disillusionment with the western allies.

One of the attracting reasons for my return to China had been a half promise from Assistant Information Minister, Dr. Hollingtos K. Tong (Holly to the press corps), that he would arrange an interview with the Generalissimo. But the Generalissimo was very busy, and the days went by without any signs of my interview eventuating. Meanwhile the Japanese had launched an attack against China's eastern provinces of Chekiang and Kiangsi in order to liquidate the "bomb Tokio" bases in this area. The Japs were still not sure from where the Doolittle raid had been staged, but were taking no chances on further raids from the heavy bomber fields at Chuhsien, Lishui and Kinhwa in Chekiang province. Impatiently I suggested to Holly that I see the Generalissimo quickly so I could set out for the new front, but Holly countered with the idea that I should first make my trip to the front and then I would have something to talk about with the Generalissimo. He would be much more inclined to see me if I had something of interest to tell him. That seemed a reasonable idea, so I left Chungking on 15th June by air to Kweilin on the first stage of a three months' trip that was to take me through many of the provinces left in Free China.

Kweilin, the capital of Kwangsi province, is a delightful spot, and at that time was still receiving hundreds of refugees from Hong Kong. (It was occupied by the Japs in late 1944.) In an apartment house, which might have been moved straight out of Montmartre, I found the well-known writer on Chinese affairs, Israel Epstein. He had cut his way through the barbed wire at the Hong Kong prison camp, and in a patched-up boat with a broken paddle reached Portuguese Macao, thence via guerilla territory to Kweilin. He lived in a sort of communal living establishment with a dozen Chinese writers, intellectuals, artists and musicians, including the famous Chinese ballerina, Tai Ai-Lien and her artist husband. It was an open house for as many fellow-refugees as could squeeze in. Most of them had long waits in Kweilin until they could wangle a ride to Kunming or Chungking.

Kweilin, despite the fact that it was a town of refugees with little money, was the brightest spot in Free China. There were art shows, music recitals, Chinese opera, even a showing of Gogol's "Inspector General" during the few days I spent there.

The interpreter that the Information Department was to send to Kweilin never arrived, and as I was eager to push on and knew little Chinese, I set about finding a substitute in Kweilin. Great good fortune was with me! Through the refugee circle I met a highly intelligent and cultured Chinese poetess and writer, formerly literary editor of the Hong Kong edition of the "Ta Kung Pao," China's most liberal newspaper. Her name was Yang Kang; her paper had recently transferred from its palatial offices in Hong Kong to a cave in one of Kweilin's rocky outcrops, and her old Hong Kong boss was agreeable to her travelling as my interpreter as long as she was free to write stories for her own paper. Her front-line reports were later hailed by her fellow journalists as the best account of front-line conditions written for years.

Her job was a difficult one — to interpret as accurately as her intellectual honesty urged her, and at the same time as a patriotic Chinese to prevent me from seeing and hearing

those things which would give me a bad impression of China. At times, in her eagerness for her own story, she would take an interview right out of my hands, then tell me what she thought I ought to know afterwards. But on the whole she did a magnificent job, interpreting not only words, newspapers and interviews, but every facet of Chinese life as it was presented us.

After reducing my baggage to a roll I could carry in one hand, and fitting Yang Kang out with a few sets of blue dungaree trousers and shirts that she thought most appropriate for visiting the fronts, and after a rousing farewell dinner given by our "Montmartre" friends, we set out on the next leg of our journey, by train to Hengyang. Our train was held up for an hour outside that city next morning while the Japs bombed the railway station.

We ran into our first experience of the peculiar outlook of some of China's missionaries later in the day. Hengyang's hotels were closed and we had been advised to stay at the large missionary establishment near the centre of the town. I introduced Yang Kang as a fellow newspaper woman and the missionaries were glad to have us stay, suggesting, though, that I should dine with them and Yang Kang with the servants. I explained gently that Yang Kang was a colleague, a writer who had translated many English and European classics into Chinese, a cultured savante and linguist, but to no avail. Apparently it was feared the servants would get wrong ideas if they saw a Chinese girl sitting at table with Europeans. We therefore ate at Chinese restaurants during our stay in Hengyang. I don't know how the missionaries reconciled the doctrine they preached of all human beings being created equal with their personal lives. In Kweilin another large missionary establishment, with accommodation for hundreds of people, was kept almost entirely locked up, though refugees were living practically in each other's pockets.

The A.V.G. were still using Hengyang as an air base and the Japs were doing their best to drive them out. We reached Hengyang on 3rd July, and that night being bright

moonlight, we had three raids, with bombs falling uncomfortably close to the mission. Fortunately there were deep shelters to which the hospital inmates walked, crawled or were carried according to their condition. The rest of us stood around until we heard the familiar swoosh of falling bombs, then dived for the shelter entrance.

The following day was the last on which the A.V.G. operated. Henceforth the Army Air Force was to take over. On the airfield on the "Glorious Fourth," talking to the pilots, many of whom I had known in Burma, the alarms went again, and I watched the squadron go into action for the last time. They had their beloved "pea-shooters" (P.40's) high into the air by the time the Japs arrived, all except one, which had stalled during take-off. Within a few minutes one of the Japs headed groundwards to crash in nearby paddy-fields. But three more managed to sneak under our screen to strafe the stalled machine, setting it ablaze after the third attempt. That was our only casualty for 7 Japs shot down, and the pilots came in tossing off their helmets in even higher spirits than usual after a good day's work. For most of them that was their last flying, except as passengers for many months. They were officially disbanded next day and most of them returned to Chungking to await transport back to the States. Some transferred to the A.A.F. and went right on fighting.

Yang Kang and I set out for Kian in Kiangsi province in a car that was sent to collect a pilot who had "baled out" several days previously. We drove along a fairly flat highway lined with green rice-fields, till we came to the village of Anfu, still about 60 miles from Kian. Here, our fine, well-surfaced road petered out into a narrow bridle trail, flanked by water-filled ditches.

The driver was puzzled because he had travelled the same road a few days previously right through to Kian. We sought out the local magistrate, who is the chief civic authority in a Chinese village, and asked what was happening. He was a dignified old man, with trailing mandarin moustaches and beard, clad in black silk cap and long-

sleeved padded gown, into which his hands disappeared after the first salutations.

He explained through Yang Kang that the military situation was very bad. The Japanese were advancing on Kian and orders had been given to destroy the road to embarrass the enemy in case he tried to drive through to Hengyang.

Since early morning the peasants had been out tearing the road to pieces with their hoes and bars. The magistrate would be pleased to arrange for us to sleep in the local gendarmerie, and to arrange for sedan chairs in which we could continue next day to Kian, if we still insisted. The pilot for whom the car had been sent was well and already on his way to Hengyang by another route, so our driver's problem being solved he turned back.

The gendarmerie arranged a fine scratch meal for us from those little bits and pieces with tasty sauces that the Chinese seem able to produce from nothing but their long sleeves. We had an embarrassing half hour going to bed that night. The garrison commander was pushed for space, and seemed to conclude naturally but very wrongly that Yang Kang and I were rooming "a deux," so gave us one room in the front of the building. We blew out the miserable little oil lamp and commenced undressing prior to retiring to our respective plank beds, when we heard suppressed giggles from the curtainless window. Inspection revealed that the major part of the village population had gathered there, apparently to see what a "waigworen" wore underneath his uniform. No shouts of mine, no threats or cajolment from Yang Kang could persuade them to go away. The moon was still bright enough, the window tattered enough, for them to have a good view, so there was nothing to do but button up again and go to sleep fully dressed, doubtless to the great disappointment of our audience.

I felt ashamed next morning to clamber into the bamboo seat of a sedan chair and be lugged off by two stalwart Kiangsi peasants, but the eager look on their faces as we paid out their preliminary wages, and the thought that if

the Japs did come to Kian we would have enough walking to do, helped quieten my conscience. They were good but hard seats, with black hoods to protect us against the sun and mounted on stout bamboo poles which bounced up and down on the shoulders of the bearers as they jog-trotted along. Each chair had a spare porter, and they would change places without hardly missing a stride. We had a breakfast of delicious creamy bean milk into which a couple of raw eggs had been beaten, before setting out after sun-up.

Men, women and children were already at work on the road, hacking and digging at it until only a winding path about nine or ten inches wide was left. The rest was cut down to the level of the rice fields and flooded with the water that lay deep over the fields. Every couple of hundred yards gaps were cut in the winding centre trail, and across the gaps were laid planks, easily removable in case the Japs should come. Bridges were torn down with only sufficient framework left to support a narrow plank. Along these roads the Japs could bring no trucks or tanks; no artillery except what could be carried on their own shoulders. Not even the big, raw-boned Jap horses could pick their way along such narrow tracks. It was just about wide enough for the two favourite Chinese transport media — the ubiquitous wheelbarrow and their tiny, nimble-footed ponies.

Road destruction was China's most successful "secret weapon." The land is under water for most of the year, and for horses or motor transport to try and travel off the roads over paddy-fields is to be hopelessly bogged down within the first few hundred yards. Later I was to see bodies of scores of Japanese horses which had bogged down in the paddy-fields and died trying to extricate themselves.

Our chair carriers, who had small farms of their own, were grumbling about wives and children having to turn out on the road destruction work when they should have been working back on the farms. They explained that though their crops were good, taxes were so high that since the collection of taxes in grain was enforced they had to take

outside work to buy enough rice to feed their families. They seemed to be caught in a vicious circle.

"All the rice we grow is taken by the government, the landlord and the army between them. We must work in town or act as chair carriers to earn enough to feed our families. If we go away the ground isn't cared for properly and the crop is smaller. Now they take our wives and children, first to build roads and then to destroy them. Our crops get still smaller, but the landlord, the government and the army still demand the same number of baskets. And for the rice we buy we must give three times the price the army pays us."

We saw many farms which had been abandoned, the rice terraces overgrown with rubbish. The porters exclaimed:

"Those farms have bad land in them, but the government levies taxes by the mow (one-third of an acre) whether it's all good land or not. These people couldn't even grow enough rice to pay their taxes, so they have gone to the town."

"Well, what will they do in the towns?"

"Maybe they get work shining shoes or pulling rickshas. Maybe they starve. But they think if they do starve at least they don't have to work so hard in the town. Here we work hard all the year and grow good crops and still we starve."

Most of the time they avoided the road and carried us between the rice-fields, along little paths of cobblestones, across streams, pausing here and there at some old farm house for a cup of "cha," actually nothing but hot water, as few peasants could afford tea in these hard days.

They were romantic souls, those bearers. For all their worries they chanted across to each other as they jerked and bumped us along through the countryside. Perhaps we would be passing through a particularly large and flourishing rice-field and they would speculate whimsically as to what they would do if it were theirs. One would hoard it and wait till his landlord was starving then sell him rice for a fabulous price. Another would turn his horse and pigs

into it to watch them grow fat. A third would sell it and have a big feast for all his friends. Once, as we approached a little willow-lined stream, Yang Kang heard them calling across to each other:

"Here is a beautiful, wide river. What shall we do?"

"Let's build a great bridge and march straight over it."

"No. We shall carve a beautiful boat and sail across."

One, more practical-minded, without a sense of fantasy, suggested: "I think we should just walk straight through it." At each sally there were terrific guffaws of laughter that threatened to shake us right out of our chairs.

At night we stayed at little wayside inns where the villagers gathered round and anxiously asked for news of the Japs. There were few men to be seen anywhere, and the women told us they were either all in the army or were hiding in the mountains in case the Chinese equivalent of the "draft board" came to grab them.

Several times we saw batches of unhappy-looking farmers marching along the road, their hands tied behind their backs, the whole batch roped or chained together and guarded by a couple of armed soldiers. That was the Chinese way of bringing in the conscripts which so horrified the Generalissimo recently when he saw it outside Chungking that he reputedly abolished the practice. The poor fellows might well look unhappy. Not five in a hundred would see their home villages again.

Some of the little hamlets were incredibly poor. At one farmhouse, where we stopped to peel a few woody pears we had bought at a previous village, I noticed a woman fixedly watching my actions. No sooner had the first crescent of peel hit the dirt floor than she pounced on it and crammed it into her mouth. A younger woman, probably her daughter, hurried shamefacedly out of the hovel, but soon returned when Yang Kang called to her. They wolfishly devoured the rest of our pears within a few minutes.

Kiangsi province, through which we were travelling, was once the base of the Chinese Communists. It was from here that the famous "Long March" to their present base

in North China started. It was noticeable that years later the Red Army was not forgotten. People would ask us casually was it true that the Red Army was marching south to join in the fighting at Chekiang? Was it true that Japan had attacked Russia and the Red Army had occupied Manchuria? All sorts of rumours and legends about the Red Army were in circulation, though no one wanted to give the impression that he or she favoured the communists. That was a quick way of getting into trouble.

It took us 2½ days to travel the 60 miles to Kian, although the porters would have done it in less had we not insisted on halts to talk with the peasants. In Kian the situation didn't look too good. The Japs were only 60 miles to the north up the Kan river. The banks had evacuated, and with them our chances for travelling further. Chinese money in the quantities necessary for travel in those days of inflation took up a lot of space and weight, especially as it was useless carrying notes of large denomination in backward areas. I had arranged to pick up "bricks" of money at three or four places en route, and Kian was one of them. The next was at Kienyang, in Fukien province, a long way from the front, so there was nothing to do but wait in Kian till either the fighting came to us or the banks returned.

A magical pass with an enormous red seal provided by the Military Affairs Commission in Chungking procured us quarters in the Kian Y.M.C.A., with a bed for Yang Kang in the secretary's office. An impressive-looking Chinese newspaper man took us in charge and volunteered to keep us posted on the war news. With a shock of unruly hair, massive head and pock-marked face, he looked more like Danton of the French Revolution than a Mr. Hu of the official Chinese Central News Agency. He was a genial soul, had just returned from the front where he described the situation as "dangerous and confused," and had a nice appreciation for his country's cooking.

The Japanese did not get to Kian after all, though as the largest city left in North Kiangsi and terminal of the road from Hengyang, it was an important prize for them.

They were stopped by a handful of courageous and ingenious peasants, led by the "pao chieh," or headman, of their village about 50 miles north of the city.

The spearhead of a Jap force had outflanked the main Chinese force and was swinging unopposed merrily down the road to Kian, when there was a terrific explosion followed by a fusillade of shots, and a dozen Japs were left writhing in the dust with horrible gaping wounds. Where the road was narrow and flanked by almost inaccessible cliffs, the peasants had set an ambush with some of their famous home-made cannon. The barrels were hollowed logs, bound tightly with wire ripped from telegraph poles, muzzle-loaded with chunks of broken glass, nuts, bolts and old nails, and detonated with locally-made black powder. Fired down the cliffs at point blank range, they were very destructive—for the people firing them, too, if they weren't careful. After each shot the barrel was examined. If it didn't look too good, more wire was wrapped round or the barrel replaced.

Reinforced by hunting guns and boulders, which they cascaded down the cliffs, 107 stout-hearted villagers fought a rousing battle with about a Japanese company. The Japs weren't certain what they had struck. Their radio crackled, and within half an hour two planes came to bomb and strafe. Some of the ambushers were killed, but the others kept the battle going as soon as the planes flew away. The "pao chieh" was killed by a lucky Jap mortar shot, and before long the supply of barrels gave out. Towards evening, after they had fought the Japs for nearly four hours, the seventy-odd peasants still alive decided to take their two-handed swords, knives and hoes and die in hand-to-hand fighting. Fortunately for them, the Japs, apparently thinking the Chinese were there in force, withdrew to await reinforcements. By next morning a detachment of the Chinese 58th Army, brought by messengers from the village, arrived, and after a short scuffle, the Japs gave up the attempt to take Kian and swung back north along the Kan river.

While we were waiting in Kian to see whether the Japs would come or the bankers return, we were aware of something strange happening in some villages on the outskirts of the city. There were whispers in the newspaper offices of a peasants' revolt, and there were movements of troops from the garrison headquarters—not towards the Japanese but in the direction of the rumoured revolt.

It was difficult to get a clear picture of what was happening. The special commissioner—a sort of super-magistrate appointed by Chungking with dictatorial powers over military and civil officials in the districts to which he was assigned—primly told us there were no disturbances. He explained that one of his main tasks since arriving in Kian had been to round up all the firearms in the district, even including ancient flintlocks and blunderbusses, giving in place a nice, red-sealed receipt from the Central Government that the owners had “contributed” their weapons. He was uneasy at our questions, however, and it was obvious something was up.

With the aid of a peasant guide and another interpreter, so as not to embarrass Yang Kang, I was able to slip out to a nearby village and find out what was afoot.

It all started, as so many of China's troubles do, with the tax-collector. The one in this district was notoriously corrupt (even the Special Commissioner admitted that) and when he asked for some chickens as “squeeze” in addition to exorbitant tax collection, which left an unfortunate farmer without any rice till next harvest, the outraged peasant beat him up. The tax-collector returned next day with some of his henchmen, thrashed the peasant and burned down his house and several adjoining ones. The farmer, together with his neighbours, sent a petition to the Kian garrison headquarters demanding the corrupt official be dismissed. Soldiers were sent out, and they beat up unoffending peasants from the wrong village and burned down a few more houses.

The villagers, several hundred strong, banded together, stormed the local gendarmerie, commandeered the guns, and sent a ten-point memorandum to the garrison headquarters

demanding, amongst other things, the dismissal of the tax-collector, and that the soldiers be sent to the front to stop the Japs (who were still threatening Kian at that time) instead of fighting their own people. The memo. concluded by announcing the intention of the villagers to defend their own farms as the army seemed incapable of doing so.

More troops had been sent against them, the villagers had taken their families with them, abandoned their farms and retreated to the wild mountains a dozen miles away. The government sent them an ultimatum issued from Chungking demanding they surrender their arms, return to their farms and, if they wanted to fight the Japs, enlist in the army.

I never discovered what happened to those people. Such news is hard to come by in China. General Lo Tso Yin, who had been in charge of Chinese armies in Burma, arrived in Kian while I was there, with orders, according to local rumour, to crush the revolt at all costs.

It seemed that Chungking was taking no chances of a revival of a people's movement in Kiangsi, but this little revolt was the pattern for many more spontaneous uprisings in 1943 in areas as far apart as Kansu in the north-west, Yunnan in the south-west and Kwangtung in the south. It was a warning to Chungking that the people had reached the end of their patience. They were prepared to suffer and starve if they felt that sacrifices were equal and for good cause. But the sight of a tax collector growing fat on the profit from over-charged taxes, of rich landlords' sons escaping conscription while the peasants' children were taken to the last one; of officers getting rich by trading with the enemy instead of fighting him, was enough to snap the last thread of their patience.

They would sweat and toil from dawn to dusk to grow rice for landlord, soldiers and government; turn out to build airfields, roads and bridges; farewell husbands and sons for ever when the army required them, but they expected at least some honesty and justice in return. It was a good thing for China and for the Allies that these peasants did have the

capacity for such enduring suffering, and that they had the spirit to stand up and fight like wild beasts when injustice and oppression became too intolerable. For it was not the military equipment of her armies that saved China. It was the spirit of the hundreds of millions of blue-clad peasants who could work, suffer, endure — and at the last fight for freedom and their handkerchief plots of yellow soil.

The communist armies in the north understood that, and they were able to mobilise the spirit of the people to an extent the Central Government armies never could. That is why the Japs had made no important gains against the communists in seven years, but were able to travel almost at will through Kuomintang China. In the Red Army areas army and people are one, according to every foreigner who has come through there in recent years. Farmers are active soldiers by night, soldiers are active farmers by day. The communist army, with at most 500,000 troops, would exist for a few months only if it were not for the millions of trained soldier-farmers amongst whom it lives and fights.

In Kuomintang China fraternisation between army and people is not a thing to be fostered. The troops might sympathise too much with the sufferings of the people. That is why troops rarely fight in the provinces from which they are recruited. I found Yunnanese troops in far-away Kiangsi and Kwangtung troops in Chekiang, Hunan troops in Yunnan. And that is why the peasants in much of Kuomintang China still regard the soldiers as foreign bandits, no different from the mercenary troops of the old-time war-lords.

I didn't find out the fate of the Kian revoltees because the Japs had moved back and the bankers moved in, so I was able to draw three or four pounds of bank notes, sufficient to take me to the next banking centre. The efficient Mr. Hu had decided we could go no further into front-line areas without a servant, otherwise officers would have to provide us with their own orderlies. He produced a spruce, lean, ex-soldier called Lim. Lim had been wounded fighting under the redoubtable Chang Fa Kwei in the defence of Shanghai, and as his home was in one of the provinces

through which we would be passing later, he was glad to attach himself to our party.

The Kian garrison commander came to the water's edge to farewell us as we embarked on a river launch for an overnight ride up the Kan river to the headquarters of the 58th Army which had shared in the recent fighting. A General Hsu, travelling on the same boat, insisted on Yang Kang and me sharing his cabin, and as it was the only one on the boat, we gladly accepted. A difficult problem of sleeping arrangements was solved by the appearance of so many and such peristent bugs in the bunks that we sat up all night drinking tea which the good general provided.

It was my first experience of bugs in mass formation. It wasn't till I saw the general lift his long cotton underpants and disclose a dozen or so black objects scurrying away from the beam of his flashlight that I understood the source of red hot pin pricks in scores of places on my body. The general seemed equal to all occasions, and produced little pots of Tiger Balm which magically took the itch out of the bites.

For most of the rest of our trip we had the bugs along with us, and Lim's main duty came to be a minute inspection of our gear each day and destruction of all potential sleep disturbers.

After leaving the bug-ridden river-boat we spent nearly three weeks travelling on horseback, spending the nights at regimental, divisional or army headquarters, in the area where the Japs had finally been halted in their drive through Kiangsi. The heaviest fighting had taken place along a series of wooded ridges overlooking a tributary of the Kan river. The Japs had started off from the Poyang Lake area, quickly over-running stop-gap provincial troops, and had occupied most of the Nanchang-Hangchow railway and the airfields near the Kiangsi Chekiang border. They had hoped to break through to other air bases in the South Kiangsi area but rugged mountaineer troops from Yunnan were waiting for them along a line running roughly from just south of Nancheng to Kian. The prize tactical objectives were the



ridges which dominated valleys through which any large body of troops must pass, and these changed hands many times. The Japs would seize them by day, the Chinese re-take them at night.

A tall, raw-boned General Liang, who constantly mourned the fact that he hadn't seen his Yunnan home for over five years, described one of the night raids he led against Jap positions: "The Japs are very careless about posting sentries, and this night they had only three. Our scouts garotted them without any noise. Then my men, naked except for shorts, crept up through gullies and dry stream beds until we were all around the mountain-top. We carried up bamboo whistles and hollow bamboos to beat like drums, and when everybody was ready we blew our whistles, beat our drums and threw fire-crackers. The Japs jumped out to get weapons and we killed most of them. The rest ran away and left their supplies behind them."

The Chinese seemed to have some understanding of psychological warfare and exploited it to make up their deficiency in heavy weapons.

There were ample signs that the Chinese had fought well, despite their miserable physical condition. There were plenty of dead Japs and dead horses still lying around unburied. Most of the fighting had been of the hand-to-hand variety with surprise attacks and ambushes rather than heavy-weight slogging matches. Neither side had artillery or tanks, and battles consisted mainly of chasing each other round mountain sides, or off the tips. An interesting point was that the Chinese troops who had defended the Kian area had marched from Hunan, where they had participated in the previous battle of Changsha, 250 miles in 10 days, on short rations. To look at their emaciated bodies and tattered uniforms it seemed impossible that they could march so far—let alone fight at the end of it.

Officers complained that the rice ration had been cut down. "We used to get 30 oz. a day. Now we get only 22 ozs. and much of that is dirt and husks. How can men fight on that?" one officer said. The troops had stolen from the

peasants to keep from starving, and the peasants had retaliated by withholding their help at the front. "It is so much different fighting here and in Hunan," one divisional commander lamented. "There the people did everything for us. Helped our wounded and brought us food and water. Here in Kiangsi they run away when we come near."

We saw soldiers limping about with leg and arm wounds, with nothing but green leaves held in place by dried pus and blood, clapped over the sores. One army we visited had two doctors and they were both kept at headquarters to look after staff officers. For the troops there were only a handful of unskilled dressers working with paper bandages and no medicines.

"Ninety per cent. of our casualties never rejoin their units," a commanding general told us. "Seriously wounded men just die. Light wounds develop into serious ones. We have no spare troops for stretcher bearers. If the local people don't help us, casualties have to get back the best way they can. Sometimes their comrades carry them back. Often they stagger back only to find that their unit has already moved on. They try to get to the nearest town and, if they have money, buy medicines. Otherwise they beg or try to get a mission hospital to accept them. They are all half-starved and have no resistance to fight infections. When they got paid regularly it wasn't so bad. They could buy pieces of meat and vegetables to supplement their rations. But now none of us has been paid for more than six months. Unless the soldiers steal they can't live."

Yang Kang always explained to army people that part of our job was to write about conditions in the field so that help might be sent, and always emphasised that I was going to see the Generalissimo when I returned to Chungking. Because of this the officers spoke freely of their difficulties.

In one division the commanding officer estimated that even without fighting they needed thirty per cent. replacements annually through malaria, dysentery and typhus. There was no quinine to be had in front-line areas. Soldiers

with malaria were expected to buy their own quinine at village pharmacies for 30 cents a pill. Yet Rockefeller Institute and Red Cross officials in Calcutta and Chungking assure me there were huge stocks of quinine in the country, sent specifically for free distribution to the armies. Somehow, like a lot of other medical supplies sent in from abroad, quinine found its way to the private pharmacies where it was sold for fantastic prices. In Kian, as a "special favour," I was able to buy about a dessertspoonful of Yatren for use in case of dysentery. It cost the equivalent of 12 dollars. I had an inflamed throat treated at an army headquarters medical station with iodine captured from the Japanese—the first stocks they had had for more than six months, the doctor said.

Almost every high-ranking officer I met I asked about China's future. What about the problem of the communists, for example? In practically every case the answer was the same. In fact, the replies were so stereotyped that I suspected they originated from some common source. The following comment from a lieutenant-general is typical: "Well, we think the communist problem isn't very serious. In fact, it will soon be solved. Next month (September, 1942), the Japanese will attack the Russians in Siberia. Immediately the Generalissimo will order the Red Armies to march into Manchuria and then our armies will follow up behind them and occupy the present communist-held areas."

"But supposing the communists refuse to march into Manchuria?"

"They wouldn't dare refuse such an order from the Generalissimo. And if they did, the Generalissimo would have the support of the people if he attacked them."

The idea that Japan would attack Russia in September was widespread amongst all the top-ranking officers with whom I talked. Fortunately, it was incorrect, but the solution for the problem of the 8th Route Army smacked strongly of the plot to smash the Communist New 4th Army in January, 1940, when it was ordered to move north of the Yangtse river from South Anhwei. As soon as it commenced

to move the Central Government armies attacked from the rear, killed the Field Commander, General Han Ying, and captured the Army Commander, General Yeh Ting.

During that three weeks on horseback I developed dysentery, and soon found that that unpleasant disease and horse-riding don't go well together. Climbing up and down the back of even a small Chinese pony several times an hour gets wearying after the first few days. The Yatren I bought had no effect, and I discovered later I had bacillary dysentery and the precious Yatren is used only for amoebic dysentery. We couldn't halt because the army headquarters had no medicines, and the only chance for treatment was at an Irish-Catholic mission at Nancheng. No one knew if the fathers were still alive after three weeks of Japanese occupation. So I was set upon a wheelbarrow and, with one lusty Chinese harnessed to the front pulling and another pushing from behind, we managed to make progress. The flagstones along the paddy-field paths were often broken and uneven, and sometimes it took three or four attempts to make the crazy barrow leap from one stone to another, which made my dashes for paddy-clumps even more frequent.

Yang Kang did an heroic job on horseback. As the favourite daughter of an old-time mandarin she was not used to the rough life, had never been on horseback, was used to having proper meals at regular hours, and a soft bed to sleep on. Now she spent her waking hours on a horse, slept on anything from the hard ground to a door pulled off its hinges, ate rice and rice alone, and usually only once a day at that, but never once did she complain. Lim seemed to enjoy himself, and soon made friends with the small escort of soldiers sent to protect us from isolated bands of Japs still in the area.

One could weep with the peasants to march through their crops, prematurely yellow and dying at the roots because the Japs had broken down the irrigation walls and turned their horses loose to gorge on the rich heads of grain. Village after village was burned to the ground, rice-grinders, threshers, ploughs and water-wheels wantonly

smashed and thrown in ponds and cesspools. Peasants we met would complain to Yang Kang that the government had taken away their guns, otherwise they would have defended their farms to the last.

As we left each village our guide would confidently say, "We shall get some eggs and chickens at the next place." But it, too, would be a mess of ashes and rubble, and we had to share the rice our escort carried. We started out each morning before the sun peeped over the tips of the mountains and travelled till we reached some wrecked village just before sundown. Then Lim would search round for some doors or planks for Yang Kang and me to sleep on, start a fire to heat some water and cook our rice. It was the hottest time of the year, end of July and early August, so one could sleep well under the stars without blankets.

We avoided staying in towns overnight, because cholera had broken out and was spreading rapidly. In Tsungjen, for example, the largest town before Nancheng, as we passed through soldiers were pulling putrid corpses out of the river. The Japs had rounded up all the old folks and children in the city and forced them at bayonet point to march into the river until the water drowned their cries. A few had managed to elude rifle shots, swam to the far bank and escaped to tell the story. The magistrate assured us that every inhabited house in the city was stricken with some disease. We travelled many miles that evening before we thought it safe enough to make camp for the night.

The way led along lovely valleys, over cloud-capped mountains planted with spruce, tung and individual bamboo trees, where little stone shelters and shrines provided the only shade from the fierce sun. Sometimes we found wild Chinese dates and pears, which we ate only after soaking them in permanganate solution.

One day, just after my dysentery was kind enough to let me clamber aboard horse again, our ponies slipped and slithered over a path cut out of a steep mountain-side to squeeze through a narrow pass at the top—and there was the city of Nancheng spread out before us. The romantic

walled city of Nancheng, but now a blackened, flattened waste of rubble. From the distance it looked as if it had been beaten into the ground by giant bull-dozers. But there was one set of buildings standing, and as our guide said that was the mission station, we left our escort behind and trotted down the last couple of miles to see what had happened to the fathers.

They were alive and well, glad to welcome us, and eager to relate their experiences. Lean, ascetic Bishop Cleary established Yang Kang in the nuns' quarters, myself with the monks. An English father who hadn't stayed for the Japanese occupation had returned from another mission station in Fukien with some fresh meat and vegetables, so we were able to have a fine meal of roast beef and potatoes to start off with.

"We told the Japs we were neutrals from Ireland," one of the fathers said, "but the officer in charge just grunted and said, 'No such thing, neutrals. Either for Japanese against Japanese. If stay China must be against Japanese.' They didn't harm us personally, but they took everything we had. Our money, wrist watches, fountain pens, silverware and crockery, every scrap of clothing except what we had on. And what they couldn't take, the thieving devils smashed."

The Japs had thoroughly worked over the fine mission buildings, smashed almost every stick of furniture, typewriters, book cases, ripped books to pieces until they got tired of ripping, smashed chalices, destroyed vestments. They took all the foodstuffs except a little the fathers had prudently hidden, killed the two milch cows, smashed the electric light plant, used the mission cars as long as they remained, and burned them before they left.

"The only time they offered violence was one night when a frightened girl ran here for protection," the Bishop said. "She had been one of our mission orphans, and when the Japs came she was rounded up with the rest of the women and herded into the salt gabelle warehouse for the enjoyment of the troops. One night she ran away and a soldier chased

her up here. She rushed into the chapel just as I was saying evening prayers and, clinging to my robes, begged me to protect her. The soldier rushed in with his rifle, and seeing the girl was determined to hide behind me, levelled his rifle at me. He actually fired a shot at the ceiling, but an officer who was taking an inventory of our furnishings came in and ordered him away."

One of the pilots from the Doolittle raid had bailed out near Nancheng and was brought in by peasants; he had a broken collar-bone. The Japs knew that he was cared for in the mission hospital and they questioned and cross-questioned the Bishop to find out where the plane had come from. The canny Irish bishop stuck to the story the pilot first told him when he was brought in: "I was on my way to Chungking and ran out of gas." I didn't question the bishop further, but was fairly certain he knew all about the Doolittle raid and that the planes had been carrier-borne.

During the fighting for Nancheng the Japs had shelled the mission, although there were no Chinese soldiers in the vicinity. About a dozen shells went through the chapel and residential buildings, and the little mission school was completely destroyed.

Before the Japs left the city, which houses about 50,000 people, they went through it methodically, street by street and house by house, setting the whole place ablaze. Straw mattresses and furniture were used for kindling and gasoline where necessary. The whole city, except for the mission and one tiny corner of half a dozen houses, had been burned to the ground.

"If I had never loved the Chinese people before, I would love and admire them now," Bishop Cleary declared. "No sooner had the Japs moved out than they began moving back. With their wheelbarrows and baskets, their carrying sticks and suitcases. They looked at what was left of their homes, and perhaps a few of them shed tears. Then they scabbled in the dust and ruins to try and find a few things that might have escaped the fire. A handful of nails, a block they used for a pillow, an old jar to keep seeds in, a

sewing needle. Whatever they found would be reverently laid aside and cleaned. From the few things they found they started to build up again.

"You can go down to the riverside and see them now with their bits of shelters and stalls. Trade has already started again with the fish from the river and the fruits from the land. How can the Japanese or anybody break the spirit of a people like that?"

How, indeed? As we left the city a few days later Yang Kang translated a freshly-painted sign which hung across the east gate: "Our homes you can break and burn, but our spirit is stronger than the tiger's."

## Chapter Four.

## THE GOODNESS, HONESTY AND DIGNITY OF CHINA.

FROM Nancheng we had two days' easy walking through country where the roads had been destroyed as effectively as in the Kian area. We still had an escort of soldiers, and one night we were hustled out of a little shop in which we had sheltered and were hidden by our escort captain near some hayricks. Soon we heard the clop-clop of approaching horses and splashes as they forded a nearby stream. We were certain they belonged to Japs and expected to hear a fusillade of shots break out at any moment. But they passed without incident, quite close to our hayricks—fortunately the horses didn't smell the hay—and after an anxious couple of hours, we heard them filing back in the direction from which they had come. The escort leader told us next morning they were not Japs but bandits, who had heard there were "wealthy foreigners" in the village.

"Why didn't you fight them?" asked Yang Kang.

The officer shrugged his shoulders. "There were too many of them for us, and in any case, they were quite satisfied when we assured them there were no wealthy foreigners but just some newspaper people."

He sent back to Nancheng, however, for reinforcements, including a Bren gun team, before we moved on to Lichwan. We were nearing the border of Fukien, and that rocky, poverty-stricken province which supplies most of China's emigrants, is famous for its daring bandits. They are recruited mainly from army deserters and live in the almost inaccessible, forest-covered mountains. We were not troubled with them again.

The wave of Japanese invasion had exhausted itself near the border mountain between Kiangsi and Fukien. More

burned and broken villages marked the area along which it had receded. More mountain trails lined with putrid Jap dead, their bodies bloated and blackened from the heat. Sometimes one saw bodies horribly hacked and mauled, probably where infuriated peasants had caught up with straggling wounded.

Red-eyed women in one village told of how their people had come back too soon. The Japs returned the same night, murdered the men-folk, raped the young women and carried off all young boys between ten and sixteen years. The officer in charge of our escort confirmed this, and said the Japs had rounded up hundreds of boys in North Kiangsi. They used them as personal servants and later sent them to Hankow, where the youngest and brightest were well treated and trained at a special school for spies. Later they would be sent through the Chinese lines as Jap agents.

Fukien at that time was the only coastal province which the Japs had not penetrated. Roads were still intact, and after we crossed the frontier we were able to travel by bus. Our next objective was Kienyang, the headquarters of General Ku Chu Tung, war area commander in charge of Chekiang and Fukien provinces.

We were conscious of an atmosphere of corruption from the first moment we entered Fukien till the day we left it a couple of weeks later. The driver of the military truck which was to take us from a border village to the town of Kwangtseh held us up in one of the loneliest parts of the road and refused to budge till we paid the amount of a new tyre, which he said he must buy at Kwangtseh. We had to pay up or be stranded on the road, so I paid, but reported the matter to the magistrate of Kwangtseh when I arrived. The magistrate ruefully admitted that he had no control over the military and added that military drivers under orders to take officials from one place to another often dumped them off with their baggage, miles from the nearest village, unless they paid good "squeeze" money.

The trio of fine airfields at Chuhsien, Lishui and Kinhwa to the north in Chekiang had fallen and the Japs were now

pushing down towards the Fukien border. The roads were jammed with trucks — not carrying reinforcements to the north, nor evacuating precious equipment from the airfields — but piled high with officers' personal belongings. Precious gasoline which had travelled half-way round the world to reach Fukien was being wasted in these trucks loaded to the brim with suitcases, cane chairs and furniture, sewing machines and, in some cases, officers' wives and concubines. I discovered later that many of them, mostly supplied by lend-lease, were carrying trade goods which the officers sold for fabulous profits in Fukien towns.

At Kienyang we waited nine days to see General Ku Chu Tung, but it was impossible to interview him, though we had many questions to ask. Several times at his headquarters aides told us he was "out of town," though we knew from other sources that he was there. Each time we were told that "to-morrow" he would return, but "to-morrow" never came. Some other foreign observers who reached Kienyang a couple of weeks after we left had the same difficulty in getting to see Ku Chu Tung.

Refugees were pouring into the city every day — missionaries and students amongst others. They one and all had the same tale — that the Chinese armies had not fought. In the Chekiang capital of Kinhwa, for example, the streets were barricaded, barbed wire entanglements set up, machine-gun posts installed, but then the city was abandoned without a shot being fired. No road destruction was carried out, and the Japs had virtually a clear run through the city. Chinese civilians were even more disgusted with the army than were the foreigners.

One day, while we were sheltering under some rocks from a Jap reconnaissance plane, we were joined by a Chinese soldier who had just returned from Chekiang. He was from an artillery regiment and was bitterly critical of the way things had been managed.

"Our regiment had sixteen guns," he said, "beautiful guns, set up to kill Japanese. Suddenly we were ordered to retreat from our good positions for no reason. And seven

of our guns were lost without us ever having a chance to fire them. We have marched all the way back here since and never yet seen a Japanese."

The shops in Kienyang and other villages in the neighbourhood were well stocked with Japanese goods. With sea-foods, canned goods of all types, crockery, cloths and medicines. Shopkeepers explained to Yang Kang that these were from old stocks, dating back to before the fall of Shanghai, but according to many of the students, the goods were of recent origin, and front-line officers in Chekiang were so busy making fortunes trading with the enemy they had no time to fight. They either bought stuff direct from the Japs for resale or "licensed" Chinese merchants at a good fee to pass back and forth between the lines.

Numbers of the students had originally lived in Shanghai and infiltrated through Japanese lines to continue their studies at Kinhwa university. Many spoke English and were eager to discuss the shortcomings of the army, as they had seen it in action in Chekiang. The loss of the airfields, especially Chuhsien, was a bitter blow to patriotic Chinese. It had been built by nearly a quarter of a million peasants in record time, and Japanese officers who questioned Bishop Cleary at Nancheng said it was the best heavy bomber base they had seen, complete with underground hangars and workshops. Like the Burma Road it was an indication of the tremendous projects Chinese were capable of undertaking with nothing but their bare hands. Now it was lost, and before the Japs withdrew from the area they dynamited the hangars and workshops, and diverted a river through the centre of the field.

Around General Ku Chu Tung's headquarters there was universal disapproval of the Doolittle raid. Officers complained that if the raid had not taken place, the Japs would never have launched their attacks. The fact that Tokio had been raided despite Jap promises to their people, and the consequent loss of face for the military leaders, meant nothing to them. Nor did the effect of the Doolittle raid on Chinese morale. In the western provinces the effect had

been electrifying, news of the raid coming as it did just when things looked blackest. Ku Chu Tung's officers seemed to think the best way to win the war was not to provoke the Japs, and in any case they said the raid was a waste of time. As a matter of fact, had officers in Ku Chu Tung's command been more efficient the raid would have been a greater success and would have been followed up by several more before the Japs had time to reach Chuhsien.

Because a Jap patrol boat spotted our carriers, the raid was staged in daylight instead of moonlight, as originally intended. The B25's reached China at night instead of early dawn. The aerodrome commanders at both Lishui and Chuhsien were not at their posts to receive the Generalissimo's orders that plans had been revised and the airports must be lighted up. As a result, instead of welcoming lights, the whole countryside was blacked out and air-raid warnings were sounded at the planes' approach. It was a night of wind and rainstorms, and Kinhwa and Lishui residents heard the planes circling in the pitch blackness overhead. Everyone thought they were Japanese planes. As planes ran out of gas, crew members "bailed out," some of them to land behind Japanese lines and subsequently be executed. According to local stories one of the airport officers, who was out playing Mah Johng instead of being on the job, was summarily executed, another escaped through to Japanese lines.

One story which fitted in well with Ku Chu Tung's officers' resentment at the Doolittle raid and the Jap reaction was that they had just taken delivery of an extra large consignment of Japanese goods and hadn't had time to clear them before the Japs attacked and captured the lot.

A noticeable difference in the atmosphere round the army and divisional headquarters compared with those in Kiangsi, was that the officers in Kiangsi were eager for information about happenings in other parts of the world. Night after night at divisional or regimental headquarters I was asked to talk on world affairs, comparative strengths

of Russia and Germany, the Burma campaign, the Indian political situation, and kindred subjects. Discussions often lasted till well into the morning. The Kiangsi officers felt they were part of the wider world struggle; those in Fukien were wrapped up only in their local troubles.

The Generalissimo could not be blamed for such conditions as existed on the Chekiang front. There was little he could do about it. He could threaten Ku Chu Tung with dismissal, as he did, but Ku Chu Tung could counter with a threat to turn his whole army group over to the Japanese, as army commanders had done before and since. There was no way in which the Generalissimo could deal with such people. The breakdown in communications and transportation, shortage of roads, trucks, tyres and gasoline made control from Chungking of outlying provinces like Chekiang and Fukien almost impossible.

War area commanders like Ku Chu Tung reverted to the status of old-time war-lords with virtual dictatorial powers over several provinces. In the last analysis he could be displaced only by force of arms — and how could Chungking send an army against him? Chinese unity in some provinces was maintained by slender threads like Ku Chu Tung, and one had to make the best of it. Chiang had retained an almost feudal internal organisation in his armies, and every now and again he had to pay for it — or rather, China did.

One thing the Generalissimo could have done to lessen the incentives to trade with the enemy was to encourage industrial co-operatives to carry on with their programme of front-line production. If they had been able to establish their units to produce things like cloth and medical supplies near the front-lines, trading with the enemy would have been unnecessary, and the fronts would have been re-established on a war basis.

To retain one's faith in the goodness, honesty and dignity of China, it was necessary to be down on the river during one of Kienyang's almost daily air raids. There were some river-boats along the bank, and while Yang Kang and I were

waiting for the "all clear" to sound, a shrivelled old couple emerged from one of the boats and beckoned us to come over. They had cooked some rice and fish, had seen us sheltering for hours by the river bank waiting for the Jap planes to finish, and knew we hadn't eaten. We were glad to share their meal and offered them a handful of notes. But they wouldn't take them. Yang Kang, who knew some Fukien dialect, explained that we were rich people and held out the notes again, but the wrinkled, honest, old boatman stood up very straight, shook his head, and closed her hand over the notes. Perhaps the bombings had upset our emotions, because Yang Kang was weeping when she turned to me and said:

"They say, 'If a foreigner comes to us and shares our troubles, the least we can do is share our rice with him.' They won't take your money."

They were poverty-stricken, humble boat people, but I never saw greater dignity in people's faces as they once again refused what must have represented a fortune to them, bowed to us, and watched us step from their broken gang-plank on to the river bank and start on our way back to town. It is little incidents like that which make a foreigner love China and have faith in her people.

Lim, the soldier-servant, developed a bad case of malaria at Kienyang and Yang Kang, the aristocrat-writer, looked after him like a mother, wringing out cold towels for his head throughout the nights, cajoling extra eggs and bean-milk out of the inn-keeper. Fortunately we had atebrin with us, and after five days the fever left him. He was too weak to travel, however, and as we wanted to make a diversionary trip to Foochow, we arranged for Lim to stay behind and catch us up when his strength returned.

Travelling in the charcoal-burning buses of Fukien and South Kiangsi was the most arduous part of our three months' odyssey in China. The loads they carried were prodigious; the heat from the charcoal-burners and human bodies in the hottest weeks of the year was almost unendurable. Day after day the temperature was around the

110° mark. To get a bus seat one had to camp outside the starting point and try to take up a position near the doors when they opened, hours before the bus was due to depart. The minute the garage opened people attacked the vehicle through doors and windows till every seat and space was carrying twice the weight for which they were intended. Half an hour later the driver would appear and drive round to the ticket office, where people started to swarm in again, till one was really in danger of suffocation.

When there seemed no square inch of space left, the driver piloted the bus to his private headquarters and filled in every chink with bags and packages of trade goods he intended selling further along the route.

Once, when Yang Kang and I were jammed in the rear seat with packages under and around our legs, people leaning over us hanging on to whatever they could grip, a genial, round face appeared at the window over my seat, grinned in a friendly fashion when he saw I was a foreigner, and said: "You like take my baby, yes?" Before I could say a word a weeping two-year-old was thrust through the window on to my lap — and the bus moved off.

Yang Kang's lap was piled high with bags and parcels. There was no room even to move my arms, and there I sat for 150 miles with a child on my knees who squalled every time she looked up at my strange un-Chinese face. Yang Kang and those of the passengers who had room to turn their heads derived much merriment from the whole business, and I wondered what would happen to the child when we reached our destination. But, sure enough, when the bus stopped, proud father and beaming mama, with three more little ones, were there to take charge. "Ah. Much thanks, uh? No loom in front, uh?" — and they hurried happily away.

One picture that remains fixed in my mind is of a crowded bus rounding a street corner in Kienyang, a man taking a flying, horizontal dive through the window, arriving with his forequarters wedged into the lap of a portly Chinese general, his legs waving wildly in the air and the



furious general pounding his backsides with all the power his fat arms could generate.

Leaving a disconsolate Lim to convalesce, Yang Kang and I travelled by bus to Namping at the head of the Min river, origin of the notorious Min river pirates, thence by river-boat down the Min to Foochow on the Pacific coast. Foochow was formerly the greatest tea and timber port in China, and also the centre for the lovely eggshell Fukien lacquer ware. The Japs had occupied the city for a short time in 1941, but withdrew after grabbing all the scrap metal they could lay hands on. It was a fine, dreamy city, and seemed completely cut off from happenings in the rest of China—and the world.

We luxuriated in the first hotel with bath I had seen since leaving Calcutta. England still maintained a Consul in Foochow, a Mr. Tripp, and the first day I arrived Mr. Tripp asked me to step along to the "English Club" about 6 p.m. It was a fine building, almost next door to the Consulate, and my host was waiting at the club doorway in dinner jacket to welcome me. The inside was even better than the exterior—three good billiard rooms, a large library and an upstairs ballroom. The latter was hung with cobwebs, two of the billiard tables were deeply coated with dust, and the place had partly the atmosphere of a Hollywood conception of a haunted castle. Consul Tripp hurried downstairs when he heard footsteps, and introduced me to another dinner-jacketed Englishman.

"Shades of Empire!" The newcomer was manager of Jardine-Matheson, the big British shipping and trading firm. He was introduced as the "other member" of the Club. The last two upper-crust Englishman in Foochow and they met almost every evening to have a game of billiards in the English Club.

"Afraid we haven't much to offer you to drink," apologised Consul Tripp, "but if you'd like to sample some of our gasogin we would be delighted to have you join us."

A decrepit old Chinese "boy," who seemed to match the cobwebs and dust, gravely mixed me a concoction which

tasted like liquid fire with a dash of picric acid. While I clung to the edge of the billiard table and gasped, with vapours gushing out of my mouth, the manager of Jardine-Matheson explained:

"It's the best we can do here. We ran out of liquor years ago, and then the post-office developed this spirit from sugar-cane. They use it for fuel in their trucks. We had it analysed by a local chemist and he assured us it won't actually kill you."

There was another club, the "Foochow Club," which lesser breeds of Englishmen and other Europeans in the Chinese Customs' Service haunted and to which even the two "English Club" members repaired when they felt the lack of company too strongly.

The Consul complained that the Chinese government and the British Embassy in Chungking were always trying to get him to shift to the new capital of Fukien—Yung-An. "Well, you see how we are set up here," he said, waving his hands to indicate the spacious rooms and delightful furnishings. "Now what would I have in a new place like Yung-An?" And his American-born wife agreed. "Personally, if the Japs come, I'd sooner stay here and chance things than go wandering over the hills in the middle of this bandit-ridden province." Since then the Japanese have come to Foochow, and I expect the Consul and his wife have changed their minds.

In the good old days Foochow was a busy treaty port. Pagoda Anchorage, at the mouth of the Min river, harboured scores of vessels putting in for the lucrative tea and timber trade; waterside restaurants and tea-houses were filled with sailors from a dozen different lands. To-day trade was at a standstill, except for that brought by a few Chinese junks that still sneaked up the coast from Kwangtung in the south and Chekiang in the north. We called on the garrison commander to find out how the Japs enforced the coastal blockade. He was a serious, efficient-looking officer who answered our questions frankly.

"You see," he explained, "the Japanese don't want to waste troops garrisoning this place, and they don't want to waste their navy blockading the coast. They have been very clever. For centuries there have been Chinese pirates operating out of the little coves and bays along the coast. The Fukien and part of the Kwangtung coasts are the last real pirate strongholds in the world. The Japs mobilised these pirates against the rest of China. They offered them Diesel-driven boats to replace their old junks, a few machine-guns instead of their brass cannon and cutlasses, and for reward — all the booty they can capture. They organised them into two 'naval divisions,' each with a regular beat to patrol. Any boats that try to slip through they are supposed to attack. If big boats come of course, they radio Formosa for help from the Japs."

"But don't they consider they're being traitors to their own people?" I asked. "After all, they are Chinese."

"They never think of themselves as Chinese. They are just pirates, who have always robbed Chinese or anyone else that passed their way. However, I think they do double-cross the Japs and indulge in a little trading themselves between Formosa and our coast. Lots of Japanese and Formosan goods come in that we can't account for otherwise. They either carry goods themselves or accept some 'squeeze' to let Chinese boats carry them.

"Sometimes they get too conceited and the Japs punish them. Earlier this year they were supposed to collect some rice from the island at the mouth of this river. They got the rice, but kept it for themselves, and the Japs sent an expedition after them. We heard a lot of the 'puppet navy' was killed."

Foochow was a pleasant place in which to linger, but despite the excellent food and the luxury of hotel room with bath, there was still a lot of ground to cover before we completed the tour. Two nights were all we could give Foochow, then we rejoined the Min river steamboat for Namping, travelling with some missionaries who had evacuated from Chekiang. Amongst them were the mother

and father of John Davies, at that time political adviser to General Stillwell and now attached to the U.S. Embassy in Chungking. They all had the same tales of military defections in Chekiang, of posts and equipment abandoned without fighting, but they were all appreciative of the help they had received from Chinese people while en route from the war areas.

Back at Namping, whilst in the midst of an interview with the garrison commander, my limbs began to shake and my jaws began to tremble so violently I could no longer speak, and had to be carried out of the office and put to bed with the worst and most inconvenient attack of malaria I have ever had. Foochow and the Min river valley are second only to Yunnan as the worst malarial areas in China. Fortunately the attack was as short as it was sharp, and within four days we were on the road again, rejoined by a healthy, smiling Lim.

The road through Fukien was built by the Generalissimo in the days when he was chasing the Communist 8th Route Army troops through China. It is the worst road in China. Not nearly as well graded as the Burma Road, it is narrower and banked the wrong way on its brutally-sharp turns. There are no water tables or drains, and streamlets from the mountain-sides cut straight across the surface. The charcoal-burners did well while they were hurtling downhill, but always "gave up" near the tops of the mountains. All passengers clambered out to supplement the feeble beats of the charcoal-prompted engine with their combined push-power. Fukien residents muttered darkly, however, each time the bus stopped. Several told us the bus-drivers were often in league with the bandits. A bus would break down in a lonely part of the road, the passengers disembark, then the bandits would swoop down, steal the goods and pay off the driver later. Certainly the country was wild enough to have sheltered armies of bandits, with steep, brush-covered mountains, and neither cultivation nor villages for scores of miles at a time.

At Changting, where we stopped overnight, I was surprised to see the market stalls displaying attractive, fat, little, dewy-eyed puppies in cane baskets, but Yang Kang explained that puppy-flesh is regarded as the choicest of succulent dishes in Fukien. They were about the only decently-fed dogs I saw anywhere in China.

We crossed from Fukien to South Kiangsi province at the old communist border capital of Hsueh Chien, where there were still a few Red Army slogans painted on the walls and a statue of Lenin in the outskirts of the town.

At Kanchow, the capital of South Kiangsi, we looked forward to meeting Chiang Ching Kuo, son of the Generalissimo's first wife, killed in 1938 during a bombing attack on her home town in Chekiang. Chiang Ching Kuo is an original character who will probably make a name for himself in China in years to come.

In the early 1920's, when Dr. Sun Yat Sen was still in power and Russian advisers were helping the Chinese republic struggle to its feet, it was the fashion among Chinese leaders to send their sons to be educated in Russia. Chiang Kai Shek, then a fervent revolutionary, sent Chiang Ching Kuo to study in Moscow. In 1927, after Sun Yat Sen died, the Generalissimo turned on the Communists and massacred them by the thousands. The Russian advisers, including Borodin and the American writer, Anna Louise Strong, barely escaped with their lives to Russia. Chiang Ching Kuo, who seemed to have adapted himself to life in Russia, denounced his father as a traitor and proclaimed his intention of not returning to China as long as the Generalissimo remained in power.

After the "Young Marshal," General Chang Hsueh Liang, kidnapped the Generalissimo in Sian around Xmas, 1936, and extracted a promise from him to call off the fight against the communists and join with them in resisting the Japs, Chiang Ching Kuo returned to China, bringing with him a beautiful Russian wife. He became reconciled with his father, and after a short army assignment, he was given the job as special commissioner over several districts in the

former communist stronghold of South Kiangsi. He was, in effect, governor of nearly half a province. What he thinks of his father's renewed antagonism towards the Communists as demonstrated during the past few years one doesn't know.

It is symbolic of the Generalissimo's changed political views, incidentally, that his second son, Chiang Wei Kuo, nearly ten years younger than Ching Kuo, was sent to Nazi Germany to be educated, and actually marched with the Germany Army into Austria in March, 1938.

The morning after we arrived in Kanchow Chiang Ching Kuo invited us to inspect a model children's village he was building a few miles upstream from the city. He is a small man, chubby and good-natured looking. Dressed in peasant's blue dungarees, he was indistinguishable from hundreds of villagers that thronged the streets, except for a wide peaked cap, similar to those worn by Russian workmen. We walked about three-quarters of a mile from garrison headquarters to a little wharf where was tied the boat which would take us upstream, and I was impressed by the numbers of humble-looking people who stopped Ching Kuo in the streets to discuss problems with him. He had the same amiable greeting for each, talked with them, and sometimes jotted down notes of their troubles.

We clambered into a miserable-looking boat which I feared would sink before we had travelled a hundred yards. It was a good thing it did look so dilapidated. We had hardly reached midstream when the air alarms sounded, and before we could pull over to the bank a Zero came zooming down a few feet over our boat. Ching Kuo grinned at my alarmed expression, and said, "I don't think he'll waste ammunition on an old tub like this." He was right. The pilot was looking for richer targets and found them in some trucks hauling gasoline to the Kanchow airfield.

While we sheltered under some bamboo thickets I asked Chiang whether he had any trouble with the Communists in his area now.

"No," he said emphatically. "You see, the people favoured the Communists here because they had been exploited by

the tax-gatherers and landlords. Even if they had farms of their own they were usually in debt for thirty or forty years ahead. If they worked for a landlord he didn't leave them enough rice to live on. My first job was to cut up the big holdings and see that each peasant had enough land to live on."

"Well, how about the landlords?" I asked. "How would they like that sort of business going on?"

"We left them enough land, and if they liked to work themselves with their families they still had a good chance to make a living. Of course, many of the landlords fled when the Communists came, and we gave them a certain period of time during which they could claim their land. If they didn't return then we divided it among the peasants.

"Peasants had been leaving the land like they did in North Kiangsi. Here they had the added attraction of work in the wolfram mines where they could earn enough to keep them alive. But then we weren't growing enough rice here to feed the district, and as we had no trucks or gasoline to carry rice from one province to another, we had to get the people back on the land."

"What about taxes? In North Kiangsi they say they can't grow enough rice to pay their taxes, let alone feed their families."

"We have regulated taxes on the basis of what the peasants can produce, leaving them a fair margin for their own requirements. And if the tax-gatherers try any funny business we have a way of dealing with them. I have what I call "complaint boxes" all round the districts. Letters that go into these boxes are brought to me personally, and I encourage the people to write about any injustices that are being done them. That helps keep a tight check on corruption and oppression."

Chiang Ching Kuo was more interested in talking about his pet project — the Children's Village — than discussing tax-gatherers and rice production. After the "all clear" sounded, and we moved on upstream, he had the floor of the boat covered with blueprints and plans, explaining the lay-

out of the place. The children were some of Madame Chiangs' "Warphans" and, as we saw later, Ching Kuo had gone to a lot of trouble and expense to provide modern, well-lit school rooms, not forgetting kindergarten and nursery schools, good living quarters for the staff, playing-fields and even a swimming pool.

Much of the work had been done by the elder "Warphans" and the community was intended to be as nearly self-supporting as possible. Only a few of the homes and school rooms were complete, but the energetic planner expected to have the whole thing running within another few months. He had picked an ideal park-like place with the buildings built as nearly as possible under the trees, which afforded natural camouflage from bombings. The few children around the place plainly worshipped him, and I noted he seemed to know them all by name.

While he was as enthusiastic as a mother with her first-born babe about his Warphans' Home, and wanted us to see every corner of the place, he was shy of talking about other things. However, while I was working on him in a mixture of English, Russian and German, Yang Kang was pumping his companions, who were nothing loth to discuss him and repeat some of the popular tales about him. Later she read me some extracts from her notes.

"He has walked over every inch of his districts," one of them said. "He went to each village to find out personally about the magistrates and how they worked. Some of them he had shot on the spot because they were corrupt and inefficient. He just walked into their offices like a peasant would. No one guessed he was the Generalissimo's son. He increased our rice production in a few years so that, instead of being dependent on other provinces, we are now self-supporting."

"And what about the bankers' wives?" eagerly interjected another.

"Yes. That was very funny. When Chiang Ching Kuo came here first, many officials stayed away from work, playing Mah Johng. They would even play it in their offices,

and no one could interrupt them till the game was finished, even if it lasted half a day. So Ching Kuo prohibited the playing of Mah Jongh. One day he heard that the wives of some of our bankers played every afternoon. He went to see them and caught them at it. What did he do with them? Did he put them in jail? No! He made them kneel in the public square every afternoon for a week."

I asked Ching Kuo about literacy in South Kiangsi, because the previous day, when we entered Kanchow, Yang Kang had seen a bunch of peasants standing outside one of the city gates reading out aloud from some chalked-up characters.

"What she saw is really part of our literacy programme," he said. "First of all we have compulsory schooling for all children here. And then we have groups that teach in the homes at night. Of course, we are short of teachers, but children are supposed to help their parents. Families must group together, half a dozen or more at a time, and twice a week teachers visit them in one of their homes, and start them on the way to learning characters. Each week we print some simple sentences at the gates of the city and the policeman on duty asks the peasants to read them over as they pass through. Some of them treat it as a joke, but most of them are serious about it. People anywhere like to learn if they have the chance."

It seemed that Chiang Ching Kuo had picked up some good and original ideas while he was in Russia, and one couldn't help wondering what his father thought about his son's experiments. Ching Kuo was an enthusiastic supporter of the industrial co-operatives, and some of the most flourishing Indusco units were in his districts. There seemed to be no ground wasted in South Kiangsi. The irrigation banks dividing the rice-fields were thickly sown with soya beans, hilly land too poor for cultivation was planted with pine trees.

As we left next day by bus on our way to Shaokwan in Kwangtung province, I mentioned to Yang Kang that I thought Ching Kuo was a bright young man with good ideas,

and that the districts round South Kiangsi were the best cared for that we had seen during our trip. Yang Kang overheard a merchant, who evidently understood some English, grumble to his neighbour: "That Chiang Ching Kuo. He ought to be shot for a Red, and he would be if he were not the Generalissimo's son." The last part of his observation, strangely enough, was true.

Lim, our faithful Don Pancho, left us at Kanchow. He was within a few miles of his home village, which he hadn't seen since before the defence of Shanghai, in which he had participated. He was a very happy man the day he boarded a river sampan bound for his home and people.

Two more days of crowded buses and we arrived at Shaokwan, the beautiful temporary capital of Kwangtung province. A dozen Jap bombers flew over the city a few hours after we arrived, but continued on to bomb Hengyang to the north. The city was full of refugees still filtering through from Hong Kong, and I was able to make contact with some of the famous Pao-An guerillas, who operated in Jap-held territory near Canton and Hong Kong and helped escapees to reach friendly territory. How such contacts were made is better not discussed, but their story is of such special interest that it deserves a chapter to itself.

From Shaokwan we travelled by rail back to Hengyang and on to Hsiang-tan on the banks of the Hsiang river, from where we embarked by river-steamer for Changsha. It was a different city from that I had seen nine months earlier. The wide streets were cleanly swept, shops gaily decorated, market stalls overflowing with persimmons, pomegranates, oranges and beautiful Chinese plums. Hotels and restaurants were crowded and animated with, at tables, a fair sprinkling of the beautiful girls for which Changsha is noted. Tank traps and barricades had been removed, bomb damage patched up, but pill-boxes at intersections and in strategic positions on the roads just out of the city, were still in place, to remind people that there would be a fourth battle of Changsha. There was — and the Chinese lost for the first time.

The American "Yale in China" hospital, in the city's outskirts, almost completely wrecked when the Japs occupied it during the third battle for Changsha, had been repaired. Amongst its inmates, and convalescing in its grounds, were some people whom I had been trying to contact for a long time — a group of Australian guerilla fighters. It seemed strange, in this wholly Oriental atmosphere of Changsha, so remote from the west and its ways, to encounter slouch-hatted, khaki-clad, profane boys from Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. Their arrival in China was known to most correspondents, but their presence and activities had been a banned subject as far as new stories were concerned.

I had last seen them almost twelve months previously in a Bush Welfare School in Maymyo, Burma. They were robust, fine-looking specimens then, bronzed, tough and glowing with health. Now they were pallid, wasted shells, hollow-framed and spindly-legged. Theirs was a sad story. They had been victims of an ill-conceived venture aimed at giving British "token aid" to China at a time when we had little else to offer.

They were picked volunteers from Australian troops in Malaya, sent to Burma for specialised training in guerilla warfare, demolitions and any tough jobs that were out of the line of duty for regular troops. In charge of the school in Burma was Captain (now Brigadier) "Mad" Mike Calvert, one of the late Major-General Wingate's chief lieutenants.

Originally they were to be sent around the back of Japanese lines during the Malayan campaign to do demolitions, but the fighting in Malaya never lasted long enough to get them started. Then three groups of 50 each, including one of English boys, were sent into China to be trained further at another commando school near Hengyang. During the early stages of the Chekiang-Kiangsi campaign they were sent up near the north Hunan-Kiangsi border, in terrible country with insufficient rations and medical equipment. There they sat for weeks waiting for permission to go ahead and blow bridges, tear up the railway track parallel-

ing the Poyang Lake along which Jap supplies were fed from the Yangtse river, and generally put into effect the cunning tricks they had learned so hardly.

But the word was never given. The Chinese really didn't want them. They had guerillas enough themselves and didn't want our men starting something they couldn't finish. They didn't want us to provoke Japs by blowing bridges and tearing up railway tracks and then not have the troops to repel Jap counter-measures. Chinese troops were fully engaged trying to stop the Japs further south.

The men sat in the jungle and the Chinese didn't see why they should make efforts to get special food to them. Rice was good enough for Chinese troops and ought to be good enough for westerners. But the men couldn't adapt themselves to Chinese diet. They developed dysentery and malaria. Two Australians died from typhus. And their year's specialised training, their super-equipment and special gadgets were being wasted. After spending a useless 8 or 9 months in China the whole lot were pulled out without firing a shot or lighting a fuse — except in practice. The scheme ended in ill-feeling all round. Our men thought they had been let down by the British, the Chinese and the Australian governments. They had suffered formidable hardships without accomplishing a thing. The Chinese despised us for projecting such a futile scheme.

The Chief of Staff to General Hsueh Yueh, to whom I posed the question of the use (or non-use) of these commando specialists, said, "Well, we think their special knowledge should not be risked in such dangerous operations as they intended. Would you and Yang Kang care to be my guests at a violin concert this evening?"

And the subject was tactfully closed. Incidentally, the violin concert, by a young Paris-trained Chinese, was excellent.

Our journey was nearing its end. Another boat and train journey to Hengyang, then back by train to Kweilin. Yang Kang, the frail daughter of a mandarin, had stood the journey better than Lim or myself. I was sorry to say

goodbye to her at Kweilin, where her old editor received her with literally open arms, tenderly enquiring after her health. He wanted to refund me the salary and expenses I had paid on her behalf, claiming that her stories were the most valuable they had published for years from the war fronts.

Yang Kang is a great woman, and a good example of the type that will help to build China's future. Born and reared in feudalism, she was nevertheless able to adapt herself to China's changing destiny. She had none of the fastidiousness affected by so many of the old type Chinese scholars, but was prepared to go out and suffer with her people better to understand and reveal the cause of their suffering. I would ask for no better companion for future travels in China.

When I had been in Kweilin almost three months earlier, China's notorious Gestapo Chief, Tai Li, had been paying a visit from Chungking. There was some speculation as to the reason. What it was few knew, but the results at least were common knowledge — wholesale arrests, running into hundreds, of students and teachers. A professor at the University was found by students swinging from a rafter in a lecture room. The police explanation was suicide, but this hardly tallied with the blood-saturated clothes, or welts and bruises that covered his body. He had been displayed as a warning to others of Kweilin's intellectuals who might be harbouring "dangerous thoughts."

## Chapter Five.

### THE PAO-AN GUERILLAS.

THE story of the Pao-An guerillas is the story in miniature of the struggle of young, virile and democratic elements in China trying to rise from the morass of feudalism, privilege and reaction still entrenched in high places, at the same time spearheading the military and political resistance to the Japanese aggressor. It is a story that has been repeated dozens of times during the past 30 years, ever since Sun Yat Sen and his followers overthrew the Manchu dynasty in 1911. It is the counterpart of the story of the Generalissimo's relentless pursuit of the Eighth Route Army, of the New Fourth Army's forced retreat from south of the Yangtse river in 1940. It is a story that reveals all that is best in China and all that is worst. A story of greed, treachery and criminal governmental stupidity and of selfless courage, ingenuity and devotion to the cause of liberty. The spirit which sustained the Pao-An guerillas in their dual warfare against the Jap invader and the local oppressor is the spirit which made possible China's steadfast war of resistance, despite the shortcomings of the police-state rule of the Kuo-mintang.

In Chungking we began to hear of the activities of guerillas in the Canton and Hong Kong areas from the first days of the Pacific war. When the Japanese attacked Hong Kong news quickly came of guerillas attacking the rear and flanks of the Japs trying to link up with the British troops. There were reports of large-scale sabotage on the Canton-Kowloon railway on which Jap supplies greatly depended.

The guerillas did make a valiant attempt to break through to the British and Canadian troops, desperately fighting their way back through the New Territories towards the strip of water that separated them from Hong Kong

island, but events moved too fast. Unfortunately no contacts had been established between the British military and the guerillas in the pre-war days, except insofar as partisan soldiers were disarmed and interned whenever the Japs pressed them across the border into British territory. In one case three guerillas were turned over to the Japs for punishment.

There was no machinery for liaison between Chinese and British troops when the Japs attacked on 7th December. Within three days all British territory on the Asiatic mainland was lost, and on Xmas Day, less than three weeks after the Japs attacked, Hong Kong itself surrendered.

The Central government spokesman in Chungking had no information for correspondents about those guerillas operating in the Canton-Kowloon area, but Communist General Chou En Lai told us he was in contact with the partisans and had ordered them to give every assistance to Allied troops.

The next we heard of them was in connection with the dramatic escape from Hong Kong in motor torpedo boats of a group of Chinese and British government and military officials led by a colourful one-legged Chinese Admiral, Chan Chak, Chief General Chinese government official in Hong Kong. After a running fight with Jap patrol boats and attacks by enemy planes, Chan Chak's party reached the mainland, expecting to have to fight their way through Jap patrols or at best bribe their way through regions infested with bandits. Instead they were received by well-disciplined fighters who passed them on from post to post, gave them food and clothing, and eventually escorted them to Free China without the loss of a man.

The guerillas were organised right in the heart of Japanese occupied territory, and seemed to operate under the noses of Jap troops. But still it was difficult to get any details of how they came into existence, from where they got their arms and financial support, what was the extent of the area they controlled, what were their political aims, and how they were viewed by the government.

It was not until I contacted some of their representatives in a filthy, bug-ridden inn at Shaokwan, the temporary capital of Kwangtung province, that I heard the full story of their birth and growth. Most of the latter part of the story—dealing with events since the Pacific war—has since been confirmed by Chinese and British refugees from Hong Kong, who owe their lives to the existence of this ragged band of peasants, workers and intellectuals.

The official name of their organisation is the Kwangtung People's Anti-Japanese Guerilla Corps, the name Pao-An Guerillas from the territory between Hong Kong and Canton in which they mainly operate is better known in China. The force comprises two battalions, the Third and Fifth, organised originally in the days before the fall of Canton in October, 1938. The two battalion commanders—gentle, scholarly Wang Tso Yao commanding the Fifth and rugged, knobbly Chin Sheng—both graduated as revolutionaries in the Canton Students' Movement in the early 1930's. In their own humbler roles, Wang Tso Yao, the frail theoretician and the fighting leader Chin Sheng, have been compared with the two great Communist leaders at Yen-an—Mao Tse Tung, the almost effeminate-looking political director, and Chu Teh, the granite-hard, rough-hewn guerilla chief.

Both Wang and Chin had been persecuted in the mid-1930's for leading the students in their demands for an end to internal strife and the forging of national unity against the Japs. By 1935 students' strikes and agitation were nation-wide, universities from Peiping in the north to Canton in the south were boiling over with indignation as the government continued to devote its energies to oppressing China's liberal-leftist leaders and ignored Japanese inroads into Manchuria. Chin Sheng's prominent part in the anti-Japanese movement earned him a high priority place on the local Chinese war-lord's execution list, and eventually he slipped away from Canton to go to sea as a merchant seaman. For three years he sailed up and down the China coast as an ordinary sailor, his talent for organisation and his ingrained sympathy for the underdog prompting him



to start a Seamen's Mutual Aid Organisation — a sort of co-operative trade union.

When Canton fell in late 1938 Chin felt it was time he did something practical about the war. He left the sea and, with some members of his Seamen's Aid Organisation, who persisted in following him, he started volunteer service groups to help the regular Chinese Army in Kwangtung. This was the beginning of his career as a guerilla leader.

Wang Tso Yao's part in the student movement was less conspicuous and he remained, through the early stages of the Sino-Japanese war, in Canton, organising students and intellectuals in a "Model Militia Unit," which should set the example for people's resistance if the Japs actually attacked the Kwangtung capital. In those days the Popular Front between Communists and Kuomintang was still in its heyday and the formation of people's militia units was encouraged by the Central Government. Wang stressed the need to carry on political education in his Model Unit in the hope that it might provide the nucleus for leaders in the fighting which was sure to come.

Treachery and corruption amongst the regular Chinese Army leaders lost Canton after a fortnight's sporadic "token" resistance, and it was left to the irregulars to carry on the fight as in North China. Wang's detachment, with an initial thirty rifles, fought Japs wherever they met them, laying ambushes, making night attacks and avoiding day combat when they were heavily outnumbered. The troops were dispersed among the villages and were supported by the local inhabitants. Gradually the detachment built up a supply of arms from ambushed Jap patrols, and by purchase from deserters from the Chinese regular army. Villagers, whose security depended on the protection received from Wang's militia, contributed gifts and money to feed the troops and buy more guns. The militia, when they were not engaged in fighting, helped the farmers with work in the fields. From the beginning the closest unity was established between peasants and fighters. Unlike the soldiers of the war-lords' armies, who robbed and raped and were

despised and hated by the villagers, Wang's men were adopted as their sons and brothers.

The main requisites for effective guerilla warfare, as shown by results of the Maquis in France, the guerillas in the Philippines, the partisans of Tito in Yugoslavia is, first, the will to resist, and, second, complete solidarity between the warriors and the people. These conditions were immediately established in the area of operations of the Pao-An guerillas.

Chin's service groups had meanwhile expanded into regular partisan units, and for months after the fall of Canton the two leaders worked in co-operation with regular government troops, but most of the latter soon withdrew from the area, some to be interned by the British in Kowloon, others to be incorporated in General Yu Han Mou's Kwangtung army, operating many miles to the rear of the Canton-Kowloon area. For nearly a year the guerillas operated with the full blessing of the government. The area in which they were active was recognised as the Fourth Guerilla area; contact was maintained with the regular army; detachments multiplied and grew in numbers, experience and audacity.

Several times they raided into the outskirts of Canton, securing valuable supplies of weapons and information. One of their chief tasks, which they performed very successfully, was the permanent disruption of the railway out of Canton by destruction of the rolling stock and the removal of long stretches of rails. Farmers and even the landlords had confidence in these ragged bands, who forced the Japs to keep their distance, allowed the peasant to reap his harvest, and the landlord to collect his rent without interference. The policy of the guerilla chiefs was to fight the Japs and leave the long-vexed problem of landlord-peasant relations and agrarian reform to be solved after the invader was expelled. Unity in the fight against the Japs was their slogan for victory.

By the beginning of 1940 relations between the Kuomintang and Communists had greatly deteriorated. The

fine revolutionary ardour of the first years of China's resistance had been quenched and the hunt was on for anyone who had liberal, leftist, or even democratic leanings. History was repeating itself. In 1927 Chiang Kai Shek had taken advantage of Sun Yat Sen's death to turn against the former communist collaborators of the great founder of the republic. Chiang had massacred them by the thousands in Shanghai and hounded them until the day of his kidnapping by Marshal Chang Hsueh Liang, when he agreed to call off the chase and unite with them against the Japs. By early 1940 the Kuomintang seemed to fear the local resistance movements were becoming too strong and might have too great an influence on post-war developments in China.

The theory of the one-party feudal-landlord state would be endangered if peasants became organised, politically conscious and with weapons in their hands. Orders were given for the disbandment of all the guerillas, as well as the retreat of the Communist New Fourth Army from south of the Yangtse river. That the areas wherein the guerilla and communist troops had been operating would fall into the hands of the Japs didn't seem to worry the government. They were gambling on the Western powers seeing to it that the Japs would be defeated and expelled, but who would expel the people from their own land if they became too strongly entrenched with their own militia? Any political or military organisation not under the direct control of the Kuomintang could not be tolerated. They must be disbanded or destroyed.

The commander of the Fourth Guerilla region was ordered to disband his forces. Before there was even time to pass on such an order to the various partisan organisations Central Government troops, under General Hsiang Han Ping, were ordered to attack the guerillas, just as farther north, in Anhwei, the instant the Communist New Fourth Army carried out its orders to retreat north of the Yangtse river, Central Government troops attacked them in the rear.

Wang Tso Yao decided that his battalion would not disband, but to avoid clashes with the government troops he

would retreat from the area and leave its defence to the Kuomintang troops. His Fifth battalion commenced a three hundred mile march to Hoifung up the coast from Canton with a whole division of General Hsiang's Kuomintang troops in pursuit.

During the withdrawal the guerillas tried to negotiate with General Hsiang to try and reach some agreement whereby both sets of troops could continue the fight against the Japs. At Hoifung Wang sent a delegation of two men, escorted by a company of troops to make an eleventh-hour appeal to unity and to ask that the battalion might return to the defence of the Pao-An area. On the pretext that it would help along the "peaceful negotiations" by showing confidence in General Hsiang's good intentions, the escort allowed itself to be disarmed. In typical war-lord style Hsiang invited the two delegates to dinner, had them both shot, and the whole company thrown into a concentration camp, where they were allowed to starve to death.

For a couple of months Wang still hoped the government would change its policy and then, after continued rebuffs, decided to march the guerillas back to Pao-An and resist by arms any further attacks by General Hsiang's men. Hsiang was not making any attempt to fight the Japs in the Pao-An region, and Wang and Chin Sheng who, with his Third battalion had followed the Fifth to Hoifung, decided they must return and justify the faith the peasants had invested in their powers of protection. By August, 1940, both battalions were back in the area, where they were eagerly received by the peasants as they took up their old duties of helping in the fields and attacking the Japs whenever they ventured too close.

Early in 1941, after the remaining forces of the Fourth Guerilla Region had been liquidated, Wang and Chin's two battalions united to form the Kwangtung People's Anti-Japanese Guerilla Forces. Shortly afterwards General Hsiang set out, not only to crush the guerillas, but also to wipe out all the villages that supported them. The whole Pao-An region was declared "Red," and Hsiang's troops,

with supporting artillery that must have been badly needed on fronts against the Japs, started a clean-up campaign, burning every village en route, massacring and torturing peasants, destroying livestock and crops. It was a typical old-time Chinese war-lord campaign of the pattern waged in pre-republic days. The troops were mercenaries, whose reward for faithful service was the pleasure and profit from rape and plunder. Hsiang had a special "guerilla" force recruited from coastal bandits to act as guides through mountain trails and to spearhead the advance, so the rape and plunder could be more efficiently executed.

Hundreds of Chinese families, whose only crime was their patriotism, that they had helped feed and hide compatriots who protected their villages from the enemy, were tortured and murdered. Refugees from Hong Kong, passing through Pao-An a year later, saw the ruins of once prosperous villages along the path of Hsiang's advance.

The effect, however, was the opposite to that intended by the Kuomintang. Instead of frightening the villagers away from the guerillas, it made them turn more than ever towards them. Thousands of peasants, with no farms left to till, offered their services to the guerilla battalions; village craftsmen turned their talents to forging weapons. They would go into battle with scythes and pikes, using rifles only as they became available from their own casualties or taken from enemy dead. The entire populations of some of the wrecked villages attached themselves to the rag-tag and bob-tail army, turning into nomads ready to pack up and move from one mountain outpost to another as movements of Japs or Hsiang's mercenaries determined. The whole countryside teemed with their spies and supporters, and they were always a move or two ahead of both Japs and Central troops. On one occasion two companies were hemmed in between Jap and Hsiang's troops, but they managed to slip away, and for once Hsiang had to fight it out with well-armed Japs.

Word leaked out to Chinese communities abroad, by the queer "grape-vine radio," which seems to operate par-

ticularly well in Chinese circles, that things were not as they should be in South Kwangtung. In Malaya, the Philippines, Indo-China, Burma, the Dutch East Indies and Hong Kong, there were excited meetings in the various societies which existed for the support of the war against the Japs.

By devious means and routes delegates slipped through the Japanese lines to visit the guerillas and report back to their organisations. Some brought money and arms with them and promised more support when they had reported to the committees which had sent them.

When they discovered that the General Hsiang Han Ping, whose "guerilla" organisation they had been financing, was fighting his own people instead of the Japs, they were furious. When they returned to their homelands hundreds of angrily-worded telegrams — including some from Chinese societies in Australia and the United States — were sent to the Generalissimo demanding the dismissal of Hsiang Han Ping. When the requests were ignored they ceased sending money to Hsiang and arranged for help to be sent direct to Wang and Chin Seng's fighting men. Who knows what innocent-looking junks and sampans slipped through the Jap blockade to glide ashore at dead of night along the tree-lined Kwangtung coast to bring in arms for the guerillas, bought with money from market gardeners and merchants, bankers and laundrymen?

The guerillas had good fortune early in 1941 when they ambushed a large Jap force in a narrow mountain file. Despite artillery and planes sent to their rescue, over 400 Japs were wiped out and the guerillas captured a rich bag of weapons.

With contributions from abroad they were able to arm most of their members, also to establish a military training centre to turn out better officers, and a college to step up the general education and political knowledge of the peasants. By the time the Japs attacked Pearl Harbour and Hong Kong at the end of 1941 most villagers who had contact with the Pao-An guerillas knew something of the world situation, the significance of Chinese resistance, and especially that of

their own guerillas in the whole pattern of the war against Fascism. Shortly after the Pacific war spread out to include Britain and America, General Hsiang Han Ping's forces were weakened by the defection of two companies of his mercenaries, who went over to the Japs, so the guerillas were left alone for a few months.

When the Japs attacked at Kowloon the Pao-An guerillas went into action immediately, following hard at the heel of the Japs as they pressed the British troops back off the mainland to the island of Hong Kong. They made big hauls of booty, including light and heavy machine guns, mortars and a few artillery pieces, abandoned by the British as they retreated.

As soon as Hong Kong fell Wang and Chin decided their most important task for the near future was to make use of their connections inside the city and their exceptional knowledge of the country between Hong Kong and Free China to help refugees escape. During the first three months after the surrender of the city they rescued or helped to safety thousands of Chinese and more than 30 British or Americans.

The only requests they made to the first British soldiers rescued was to show them how to handle the machine guns and other unfamiliar weapons they had acquired, and to lecture them on the world situation.

The mere existence of the guerillas had a good tonic effect on Chinese and foreigners alike. Their morale, shaken by the loss of the great British stronghold after eighteen days' fighting, the refugees were given a renewed feeling of hope to encounter these well-organised troops eager to continue the war and unfaltering in their belief in victory.

Officers and troops from the Hong Kong garrison stayed behind to teach the guerillas how to use British Army equipment. Chinese doctors and nurses organised clinics and lectured on treatment of recurrent fever, dysentery, malaria, typhus, and other diseases common to the region. Writers and artists contributed their talents by organising propaganda classes. The guerillas drew strength from their guests,

and the refugees were immensely heartened by the attitude of their tattered hosts. They went on their way with fresh hope, promising to urge support for the Pao-An guerillas when they arrived at the capital. Many Chinese and a couple of British stayed with the guerillas, believing they could do most for the war effort by placing their technical skill at the disposal of the peasant fighters.

Amongst the British helped by the guerillas were Professor Gordon King and an Australian, Professor Ride, both from Hong Kong University, Major Munro, of the Royal Artillery, Captain A. G. Hewitt, Lieutenants Trevor, Wedderburn, Passmore and Fairclough, of the British Army, Lieuts. Douglas and Hurst, R.N.V.R., several R.A.F. officers, half a dozen officials of the Hong Kong government and the British Ministry of Information, and Miss Elsie Fairfax-Cholmondley, formerly with the Institute of Pacific Relations. I met many of these escapees as they arrived in Kweilin or Chungking, and all were enthusiastic in their praise for the Pao-An guerillas and their work for China and the Allied cause. Most of them directly or indirectly owe their lives to Wang's and Chin's organisations.

Sometimes the guerillas contacted refugees in Hong Kong itself, sometimes not till they had reached the bandit and pirate infested Kwangtung coast — usually by junk from Portuguese Macao. They kept a close watch on those parts of the coast where refugees were most likely to land, and often had advance information from contacts with the pirates. Sometimes people would fall into the hands of bandits, who would hold them for ransom until the guerillas obtained their release by money or threats according to the respective size of the bandit and guerilla forces.

Refugees usually spent the daylight resting in some forest hideout, plied with the best food the guerillas could provide. It was the guests who fed on chicken and pork if there were any available — the guerillas and villagers were content with rice. Travelling was mostly done at night, and if there were Japs in the area the guerillas would stage a diversionary attack while an escort slipped through some

well-hidden trail with the evacuees. With the whole population acting as eyes and ears, the Japs could hardly send out a patrol or change a guard without the guerillas knowing of it, and they were able to sneak their charges through the Jap lines with rarely a challenge.

In Chungking and Kweilin, as the refugees began to arrive in a steady stream, the activities of the Pao-An guerillas were passed on by word of mouth till everybody in the foreign communities were discussing them. Correspondents were not, however, allowed to refer to them in news stories. We could only write vaguely about "assistance rendered by Chinese villagers." Everyone of consequence who passed through their territory tried to win support for the guerillas from the government. At least one foreign embassy, supported by Madame Chiang Kai Shek, pressed for immediate financial and military aid to be given them. But to strengthen the guerillas was one thing the Kuomintang leaders were determined to avoid. In fact, they were drawing up quite other plans of their own.

In May, 1942, the guerillas were still helping Chinese political refugees out of Hong Kong. They didn't question a person's background too closely. Anyone that wanted to get way from the Japs was a potential active supporter of the anti-Japanese war, and was thus entitled to help. Early in May there had been more people than usual in Hong Kong seeking contact with the guerillas for a passage on the "underground" to Free China. They were passed along the usual route, from one company headquarters to another, till they reached the headquarters of either Wang's or Chin's battalion, where some would stay a few days before continuing on to Shaokwan, thence to Kweilin or Chungking.

By the end of May several newcomers told the guerilla leaders they had been sent in by the Kuomintang as spies. The Central Government was annoyed by the rising popularity of the guerillas and was frightened that if they were not nipped in the bud they would blossom into problems of the same magnitude as the New Fourth and Eighth Route Armies. Accordingly, General Yu Han Mou, Commander of

the Kwangtung War Area, was going to attack them with two divisions early in June.

The agents had been sent especially to Hong Kong to pose as refugees so they would learn the secret routes used by the guerillas. Then they were to continue to Yu Han Mou's headquarters to act as guides for the punitive expedition. They had been told that the Pao-An guerillas were bandits working for the Japanese, but now they had seen for themselves that they were true Chinese fighting against the Japs, several of them decided to warn the guerillas of what was afoot. But some of their less patriotic colleagues had already left the guerilla area and were probably already at Yu Han Mou's headquarters.

Ironically enough, only a couple of months earlier the partisans had organised the escape of Madame Yu Han Mou, the War Area Commander's wife, had passed her through the Japanese lines, and refused a gift of money she had tried to press on them. She had gone on her way singing the praises of the Pao-An guerillas, promising to do all she could to gain them the whole-hearted support of the Central Government. Now her husband had been chosen to deal the final blow to wipe out the whole of the guerilla movement.

There were only a couple of weeks left before Yu Han Mou was to start the attack, and during those days the guerillas made their preparations. Old men and children were escorted out of the villages to mountain fastnesses from where they could be moved further if the necessity arose. The rest of the villagers in some scores of little hamlets were kept on a mobile basis ready to withdraw with their livestock and goods when the line of advance of Yu's troops became clear.

The attack came in mid-June, as expected, but Yu Han Mou's divisions found the guerillas as elusive as the Japs did. The few villagers who had stayed behind were butchered without mercy; men, women and little children were first tortured to try and force them to disclose the guerilla hide-outs, and then killed.

Yu did not succeed in destroying the guerillas, but he

did succeed in laying waste to hundreds of square miles of farmland and burning scores of villages which were the bases from which the guerillas drew their strength. Wang and Chin's policy, like that of the partisans all over China, was to go to any length to avoid armed conflict with their Chinese troops. If the Central Government armies occupied their territory — well and good. They would have to fight the Japs and were much better equipped to do so.

This is a story without an end, like so many other stories one finds in China. At the time I spoke with those fierce, earnest delegates in Shaokwan, the Pao-An guerillas were still in existence, driven out of the area where their resistance was most effective back into the hinterland. They were still fighting the Japs because it was impossible for them to live and equip themselves without making frequent forays into enemy positions. A black-out censorship on guerilla activities has made it impossible to find out what has been their fate since late 1942. One finds out about these things only by first-hand investigations, and few people can elude the vigilance of the Kuomintang officialdom long enough to visit guerilla territory to make first-hand investigations.

Only one thing we know from newspaper reports. After the guerillas were driven out of the area they had so well defended, the Japs had no difficulty in beating down the Central Government troops and occupying the area right through to Shaokwan, the provisional capital of Kwangtung. As in many other places the Kuomintang troops have proved themselves incapable, despite their vastly superior equipment, of holding from the Japs an area they have taken from the guerillas. Without the support of the peasantry, which was the whole basis of partisan defence, the regular troops are as helpless as a man fighting without eyes or ears and only one arm.

Although the Kuomintang regime tried to brand the Pao-An guerillas as "bandits" (the synonym for communists) this is not correct. Long after they were organised, and at a time when they were not getting financial or military

support from the Central Government, the Communists sent out advisers, and what financial aid they could spare, rather than see the guerillas go down through lack of support. They made no attempt to put anything in the nature of a socialist or communist programme into practice, and some of their most enthusiastic supporters were the landlords whose properties they protected.

By their treatment of such organisations as the Pao-An guerillas, however, the Kuomintang is driving them all into the arms of the Communist Party as the only source to which they can turn for assistance. The Kuomintang seems to be determined that there shall be no middle way in China by persecuting any movement of a democratic nature until its members are either wiped out or assimilated into the increasingly powerful Communist Party — the only existing alternative to the Kuomintang.

## Chapter Six.

## FAREWELL TO CHINA.

BY the time I arrived in Chungking the capital was decking itself out for a fitting welcome to the late Wendell Willkie, who was on the last leg of his world trip and would reach Chungking via Soviet Russia and Chinese Turkestan.

Preparations were made to give him a reception such as no other foreign visitor had had in modern China. Each outlying village, each hamlet, was expected to provide its quota of flag-waving welcomers, and the flag-makers and slogan-painters were jubilant about the unprecedented boost to their trade. Fathers, mothers and children were to turn out with one flag each for the Kuomintang and the Chinese Republic. Such decorations in the shops, such throngs of cheering, waving people, such energy of cheer leaders had not been seen since the Generalissimo returned from the Sian kidnapping incident. Military testified with bands at the airport, civilians with slogan-painted streamers in the streets, officials with banquets and tea-parties that China welcomed Wendell Willkie.

One began to fear that Mr. Willkie was being so banqueted and feted that he would have no chance to see life in Chungking, or to talk to people other than officials. But he was a man of prodigious energy and enquiring, unprejudiced mind. Despite the time-consuming ceremonies, he saw a great deal and learned much about China in his brief stay. His two fellow-travellers, Gardner Cowles, publisher of the Des Moines "Register" and "Look" magazine, and Joe Barnes, Office of War Information representative, skipped many of the banquets, saw and learned even more. With a greater background of foreign affairs, they knew better where and how to look for their information. "Old

China hands" were amazed at their grasp of the situation after a few days in the capital. Willkie, to his great credit, seemed to have a flair for sensing — and avoiding — "stooges" primed to sell him a certain line of talk.

The scenes at Mr. Willkie's arrival in Chungking were mainly staged by the efficient Information Ministry, but no one could have stage-managed his subsequent receptions. He radiated goodwill towards China, and the people felt that and reciprocated. Wherever he went and spoke he was wildly acclaimed. After all, he was a symbol of the genuine friendship and sympathy American people had for China, and the determination of his government to stand by China through this war against Japan. His visit was a cleansing wind that swept away many fears and suspicions that the Allies were going to leave China high, dry and defenceless.

There was already plenty of goodwill towards America at that time. Best of all, for the first time since the Chinese capital had been established in Chungking, the bombing season had come — and almost gone — and there were no signs of Jap bombers. The only planes seen over the city were American. A few weeks earlier the Japs had come to bomb Kweilin; people retreated to their shelters as usual, waiting at the entrances to watch the fat bombers leisurely circle the town selecting their targets. Out of the sky swooped American "pea-shooters." Within a few minutes all nine Jap bombers were plummeting to earth in flames. For the first time in memory foreigners saw normally impassive and undemonstrative Chinese folk dancing up and down for joy, shouting and yelling and hugging each other like children at a Punch and Judy show.

Despite the loss of the Burma Road, supplies were still coming in, flown over the "hump" by American transport planes. More and more U.S. military personnel were seen around Chungking. U.S. troops had appeared for the first time in the Pacific war since their defeat in the Philippines, with the landings at Guadalcanal. Despite academic discussions in Chungking military circles as to whether this was a "defensive" or an "offensive" move, it was generally

accepted as proof that America was ready to stage a comeback against Japan. Small wonder that this representative American leader was popular.

Mr. Willkie's naiveté, his sentimentality and lack of real political knowledge were assets in his favour. He said many flattering things as well as hard things that needed saying, and got away with some criticism of Chinese political disunity, financial dealings, inflation and black-marketing that would have been ill-taken if proffered by anyone else. His candour and honest desire to learn about China were two things that impressed all correspondents.

The highlight of his visit, as far as newspaper men were concerned, was the opportunity to accompany him on a short trip to the Yellow river front, China's "sitz-war" area, where the Yellow river and General Hu Tsung Nan's troops separated Kuomintang China from both the Communists and the Japanese.

We flew via Chengtu to Sian — capital of Shensi province and scene of the most momentous incident in Chiang Kai Shek's career. Willkie visited the Military Academy where the Generalissimo, in December, 1936, scolded students for their lack of fervour in the fight against the Communists, and their unruliness in questioning the rightness of his policy. We banqueted in the governor's palace where the Generalissimo was held prisoner by the "Young Marshal," Chang Hsueh Liang, and to which Madame Chiang, Australian adviser W. K. Donald, and Communist General Chou en Lai were flown to assist in the negotiations which led to the Generalissimo agreeing to call off the fight against the Communists and help them fight the Japanese instead. Chang Hsueh Liang has been in detention ever since for his "insubordination."

Joe Barnes extracted from the Shensi governor the admission that although the Red area adjoins Shensi and the Communist capital at Yen-an was not far to the north, there was virtually no intercourse between the two areas, and special troops were stationed along the border to ensure no trade was possible.

Before the discussion could enter deep waters, we were called away to be entertained at a medieval type banquet, with a brass band playing behind screens, a fantastic procession of succulent Chinese dishes, interminable pewter kettles of steaming yellow wine, and in the background chestnuts popping on glowing charcoal-filled pans. Toasts were drunk, food was stuffed away, soft-footed waiters padded to and fro like shadow dancers, bringing more rice, more food, above all, more wine.

Frequently-brought warm towels only temporarily postponed the inevitable lapse into a hazy coma in which all thoughts of political, economic or military problems were dissipated.

Many of the participants lapsed into a floating dream world from which they only emerged next morning to find themselves on a train bound for Tungkwan on the Yellow river bend — their best chance for probing into Shensi politics lost for ever. Whenever was more pleasant pepper so skilfully thrown into one's eyes than at that sumptuous Sian banquet? On our return journey we were hustled straight from railway station to airport.

We travelled by train till we reached a point where only the half-mile wide "River of Sorrows" separated us from Jap guns, and here we transferred to a half dozen trolley cars. Most of the track was protected from enemy observation by thickly-planted trees and along these sections our operators proceeded in a more or less leisurely fashion, but worked up terrific energy, their arms pumping like valve tappets, when we came to gaps in the hedges.

It was early morning when we sped along in the trolley cars, and either the Japs weren't awake or they thought the things that flashed past the gaps in the hedges were not worthy of their shots. They did fire a few shells into Tungkwan station, however, and strafed a "blue coach" similar to the one in which we had travelled, just to show us they knew something was afoot. At a point a couple of miles from Tungkwan we left the trolley cars due to the shelling ahead, and walked along a sunken road parallel



to the railway, into the town itself. The road was cut deep into the rich Shensi soil and was protected by the railway embankments so that traffic could circulate freely without being spotted by the Japanese.

Tungkwan is a stage set of the Chinese war produced for visiting foreigners. "Life" editor, Harry Luce, had been up here before us, a British parliamentary delegation followed us. It bore as much resemblance to the real war as a streamlined motor-launch does to a sampan. The whole town was a labyrinth of underground defence works, complete with medical stations and a few batteries of big guns overlooking the Japanese positions. It was possible to look from an observation post and see Japanese strolling around nonchalantly on the far bank. We asked if they ever fired their big guns, and the commanding officer said:

"No. If we start firing the Japs only fire back, and that would do neither of us any good." It was a reasonable answer.

In the afternoon we were treated to a first-class military manoeuvre, with a couple of battalions of Chinese troops, protected by a creeping barrage, advancing up a valley to take an "enemy" strongpoint. The whole thing was well done. Our military experts proclaimed the artillery fire accurate, machine-gun supporting fire well placed, and troop movements excellently co-ordinated. Later we attended a mass review of one of General Hu Tsung Nan's crack divisions.

One could hardly believe that those troops which we saw at the Yellow river review could be part of the same organization that provided those I had seen on the fighting fronts of Hunan, Kiangsi, Chekiang and in Burma. These were big, well-fed looking chaps. Uniforms were of excellent quality. Company after company marched on to the parade ground, complete with supporting weapons. There were Italian, German and Russian tanks, Krupp field pieces, American howitzers and anti-tank guns, a plenitude of American army transport and Jeeps. That one division had more fire power than all the rest of the troops I had seen in

China. For the first time I saw soldiers equipped with tin hats and gas masks.

I remembered an unhappy, half-blind soldier from the Kiangsi front who explained how, when the Japs used gas, the soldiers had to urinate on the ground, spread a urine and dirt paste on a piece of rag, and wrap it round their faces till the gas had dissipated. But here in Shensi troops who had never seen action were provided with everything a modern army needs. To cap off the whole spectacle they took the salute by strutting past the review stand—doing the goose-step. The last time I had seen that was at a military review in the Sportspalast Stadium in Berlin. General Hu Tsung Nan was a great admirer of German methods, and Nazi advisers had much to do with the training of his troops.

Hu Tsung Nan is one of the most powerful men in China, and one of the trio of leaders from whom the successor to the Generalissimo would be chosen should that become necessary. A question I often asked in China is: "What would happen supposing the Generalissimo died to-morrow?"

The reply would always name, according to the person's viewpoint, either General Hu Tsung Nan, General Ho Ying Chin (then War Minister) or General Cheng Chen (in charge of the Yangtse armies on the Ichang front) as the obvious successor. Those three men between them virtually control all the armies in Free China through a system of allegiances to one or the other of them, by the various war area or army commanders. Each has his own following among military and political cliques in Chungking. Each hopes to extend his spheres of influence as the Japanese position in China weakens. Each hopes to keep as intact as possible the armies upon whose support he could count in the post-war scramble for power, and this partly explains such retreats as that of Ku Chu Tung's troops in Chekiang.

The Yellow river area and north China for Hu Tsung Nan; the Yangtse and Shanghai for Cheng Chen; Canton and South China for Yo Hing Chin. These are more or less

the areas in which the generals are expected to stake their claims according to many officials with whom I spoke.

Hu Tsung Nan is not even a war area commander, and only a major-general, but he commands China's powerful First Army and has the support of some of the best generals. He has long been waiting for the go-ahead signal from the Generalissimo to cross into the Communist territory, try out his troops against those of General Chu Teh and Mao Tse Tung, and wipe out a potential threat to his post-war plans. He was prepared to move in April, 1942, but the Japanese broke through to Yunnan from Burma and some of Hu's troops and equipment were rushed down to defend Chungking whilst troops from Chungking were pushed down into Yunnan.

Hu is an impressive-looking fellow, shrewd and cold, but with a massive head and a certain similarity to the Prussian generals he so much admires. There was a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes as he stood on the dais, with Wendell Willkie at his side, taking the salute from those steel-helmeted, goose-stepping automatons, who paraded past in the magnificent natural stadium, flanked on three sides by brooding dark mountains. It was a setting fit for a Wagnerian opera. As General Hu watched the last division of tanks and battery of artillery rumble past, he was probably thinking: If only I could persuade this fellow Willkie that I have everything I need except planes, he will get his government to send me those, too.

Returning to Sian by train, we were served a good meal aboard and, to our amazement, the first beer and imported wine most of us had seen in China. Slim, dapper and intelligent Captain Chiang Wei Kuo, the younger son of the Generalissimo, attached to Hu Tsung Nan's staff, made a short speech in excellent English, explaining that a Chinese raiding party had crossed the Yellow river and stumbled across several cases of Tientsin and Tuborg beer and some French wines. Who could doubt such a story when there was the excellent proof in the bottles? Even the cynics, who suggested the liquor was acquired through the large-

scale trading that went on between the Chinese military and the Japs in this area, admitted the stuff was of fine quality and were not behind the rest in sampling it.

Captain Chiang Wei Kuo is the antithesis of his brother. Perhaps the one quality they have in common is their good humour. Ching Kuo is serious, thoughtful, quiet-living, slow-speaking, even a little stolid. Wei Kuo is light-hearted, gay, a good conversationalist in English and German, as well as Chinese, and obviously a "bon viveur." It was easy to believe the stories of his high living in Germany, and during his return to China via the United States. He was eager to discuss good night clubs and other places of interest in Berlin and Vienna, but was shy of talking about anything touching on local politics. He asked me a good deal about Ching Kuo, and how he was getting on down in South Kiangsi.

Settling back against the comfortable cushions of one of China's de luxe, wagon-lit type "blue coaches" after another magnificent feast, with the debris of crisp, spiced duck, shark-fin soup, creamed fish, doves' eggs, chickens' blood, sweet and sour pork, and a dozen unclassifiable delicacies, with bowls of magnificent Sinkiang apples, pomegranates, luscious white grapes and slices of melon still on the table, Paul Yupin, Catholic Bishop of Chungking, who had joined our party at Tungkwan, began to tell a few of us an unforgettable story of horror.

He had just returned from a tour of Honan and brought with him the first news of a famine which had been developing there for several weeks. As our train whisked merrily through fertile fields of wheat and kau liang, millet and maize, through country as colourful as an artist's palette where ragged white puffs of cotton, crimson chillies, yellow mustard mingled with the green of crops sprouting through the yellow Shensi soil, the Bishop told us of a mass exodus of peasants from a land stricken with death, of peasants eating bark and grass and bunches of leaves brought in from distant areas and sold at exorbitant prices; of people collapsing by the roadside and dying by thousands; of families

too weak to drag themselves out to greet him when he called.

The combination of Yellow river floods, conscription of peasant labour, wholesale army requisitioning of grain, plus the newly-ordered collection of taxes in rice, had proved the last straw. Their last reserves gone, even their seed rice for next harvest eaten, tens of thousands of them had left the land and were flocking to neighbouring provinces. Trains were jammed top and bottom with clinging, starving humans who often dropped to their death from weakness. Children were being sold for a few cents or a bowl of rice. Yupin cited one case of parents binding their children to a tree as they wandered on, so they would not endure the pain of watching them die before their eyes.

Reports were beginning to trickle in from outlying districts and it seemed almost the whole province was affected, and Yupin estimated that at least 18,000,000 people were endangered. He was hurrying to Chungking to try and organise relief, but was pessimistic that action could be effective before tens of thousands of people died. The total number of deaths in that great Honan famine will never be known, but it certainly ran into millions, and was eclipsed only by the Bengal famine of the following year as the worst in the Orient for a generation. It was the greatest disaster for China since the Japanese invasion, and upset the peasant economy in Honan for years to come.

At Sian Mr. Willkie was again welcomed by what must have been almost the entire population of the city. The enthusiasm seemed spontaneous and genuine, and although some people of whom we enquired believed Mr. Willkie was President of the United States, the rousing reception was nevertheless a striking demonstration of friendship for America. We were hurried straight through to the airport, thence by plane to Chengtu, where we stayed overnight in the fine hostel for U.S. army flyers, still bearing signs in Russian over the doors from the days when Soviet airmen fought in China. Early next morning Mr. Willkie and party left for the United States via Siberia, and the rest of us returned to Chungking.

It was time for me to jog Hollington Tong's memory again about my interview with the Generalissimo. Teddy (Theodore) White, from "Life" and "Time" magazine, had come to China with the same half-promise that he could interview the Generalissimo, so Holly told us he would try and arrange both at the same time. It would be the first interview with correspondents that General Chiang had given since the Pacific war started, so we were both keen to pull it off. One Saturday evening an excited Holly raced down to our rooms at the Press Hostel, waving an impressively be-sealed piece of parchment at us, which he said was our invitation to see the Generalissimo the following morning at 8 o'clock at Political Training Institute, not far from the Press Hostel. Holly had come down to brief us on how to conduct ourselves with the Generalissimo.

"Now, Teddy, you have just come from India recently. You saw all the disturbances and interviewed Indian leaders. The Generalissimo will want to know all about that. Don't mind that he asks you a lot of questions. He is very interested in India. Went there himself earlier in the year, you'll remember. Tell him all you know about Indian production, Indian leaders' ideas about the war. The more you can tell him the more inclined he will be to talk to you later. And you, Burchett. You have just returned from that long trip through the war areas. You were with the Chinese armies in Burma. Tell the Generalissimo all you saw. Tell him what you think about the different Chinese generals you met. Answer all his questions fully. Speak frankly; he will be interested in your impressions. Be patient, and when the Generalissimo has finished asking you questions, then you can both start in on him. But don't have too many questions. You'd better get together and decide what you're going to ask beforehand."

Teddy and I stayed up most of the night working out our questions. We worked out a series that would give each of us what we wanted without wasting time and duplicating our work. Teddy was mainly interested in Chiang's ideas for post-war China. I was more interested in current ques-

tions of politics and strategy to beat Japan. After several hours' work we felt we had evolved a masterly dozen questions framed in such a way that the Generalissimo had only to say "yea" or "nay" and we would have a few pages of good copy. We knew the reputation of General Chiang for brevity, and also the difficulties of interpretation, and felt it would be more satisfactory to have questions that could be turned into replies merely by an affirmation or negation.

Holly called for us next morning in his new sedan. After we entered the grounds of the Political Training Institute we were stopped every hundred yards by guards, who held their Mauser pistols at the ready until Holly produced our magnificent document of invitation. Guards were stationed at about 20 yards' intervals on each side of a half-mile drive. Ubiquitous Chinese camera-men were waiting to take our pictures as we mounted the steps to an ante-room where we should await the arrival of the Generalissimo. Also waiting were many of China's top-ranking military and political officials. War Minister Ho Ying Chin, Information Minister Wang Shih Chieh, the "Christian General" Feng Yu Hsiang, Minister for Overseas Chinese Wu Te Chen, and half a dozen other notables.

A brass band began to play "San Min Chu I," the Chinese National Anthem, the Generalissimo's bullet-proof limousine drove up, and a slim, white-gloved figure stepped out and hurried up another set of steps to a room on our left.

After a few minutes Holly went down our steps and up the others, to reappear shaking with the nervous excitement for which he is noted when in the company of the Generalissimo or Madame, and told us that China's military and political leader would see us immediately.

Down the steps and up the steps into a room where the Generalissimo was already rising from a broad, smooth-topped table. I was amazed to see how much older he looked without the military cap in which I had usually seen him. Shaven-headed and smiling, dressed in his general's uniform, he uttered a few welcoming "hao hao's" (good, good), which in the abbreviated way he pronounces them

sound like short, dry coughs, like the beginning of the German "hoch hoch." Holly began the introductions:

"Jeh shih Bai Shensheng. . . ." (This is Mr. White . . .) and reminded the Generalissimo that Teddy worked for that good friend of China, Mr. Harry Luce, of "Life" magazine. General Chiang interjected with a few more approving coughs, "hao hao hao . . ." and when Holly came to the end of his speech the Generalissimo gave vent to a whole series of "hao, hao, hao, hao's," nodding his head and shaking Teddy's hand. Then I was introduced as "Jeh shih Bae shensheng . . . Ingwodi paokwan" (this is Mr. Bay from an English newspaper), reminding the Generalissimo that my paper was owned by Lord Beaverbrook. I was in turn treated to several "hao hao's" and shaken by the hand. We were all waved to seats.

Chiang turned to Holly with a short burst of Chinese. Holly turned to us and said, "The Generalissimo wants to know how long you boys have been in China."

Holly turned back to the Generalissimo, explained that I had been there this time for five months, Teddy for a few weeks. "Hao, hao, hao."

Another question from the Generalissimo. Holly asked us how long we intended staying in China, then interpreted to General Chiang that Teddy hoped to stay a year; I would stay only a few more weeks.

"Hao, hao, hao."

Teddy and I exchanged glances, each hoping the other hadn't forgotten the questions allotted him, and both of us thinking the interview was going pretty well so far.

But what was that? Some more "Hao, hao, hao's," unprovoked this time, and there was the Generalissimo rising from his seat looking at his wrist watch. "Hao, hao, hao. Hao, hao."

We rose automatically, and before we had time to recover our balance Holly was pushing us out of a door which magically had opened.

"That's all, boys, that's all," Holly was saying.

Then, as we were nearly out on to the stairs beyond, another staccato outburst from the Generalissimo, who was looking at us smiling benevolently, and Holly said, "The Generalissimo says you can stay and watch the swearing-in ceremony of the new political academy graduates if you wish."

Teddy looked at me unsmiling through his thick-lensed glasses and said:

"Well, there's obviously only one comment you can make to all that, and that is 'ho, ho, ho,'" imitating the Generalissimo's dry bursts.

We stood stiffly at attention on a concrete floor for an hour watching the ritual of the swearing-in ceremony at which General Chiang presided, and I thought back with some bitterness to that three months of tramping around China living on rice and sleeping on boards, getting dysentery and malaria, endured mainly so that I would have a worthwhile interview with China's leader when I returned. The Generalissimo read the last page of the text, then the graduates swore oaths to do faithful service to China, and the show was over. Information Minister Wang Shih Chieh came running over towards us with an anxious expression and Holly whispered in his ear.

"I am sure there must be some mistake," said Wang. "The Generalissimo probably wants to see you again now. Don't worry, boys, I'll go and see him."

Two minutes later he came sheepishly down the steps. "I'm afraid that is all," he said, adding weakly, "I am very sorry, but the Generalissimo is very busy these days."

As compensation, Holly arranged for me to see Madame Chiang a few days later, but warned me it would be in the nature of a courtesy call rather than an interview.

Slim, soigne and beautiful, dressed in a dark frock with white pin-point stripes that made her appear taller and contributed to the illusion of a commanding presence, Madame Chiang did not have the happy knack of putting one at ease that her plumper and elder sister, Madame Sun Yat Sen had. The first time I met Madame Sun it seemed

natural to clasp both hands outstretched in welcome. When Madame Chiang advanced into the room I had the absurd feeling I was expected to drop on one knee and kiss a skirt hem. There was no smile on the beautiful face as we shook hands. Our discussion was on a formal basis, and the atmosphere hardly warmed up, even when cups of green tea were brought in and Madame Chiang lit a cigarette.

Holly, whose services as interpreter were, of course, not needed with Madame Chiang, withdrew soon after introductions were made. Conversation centred around generalities for a while, how long I had been in China, whether I had been there in pre-war times, etc. A few days previously the British Ambassador, Sir Horace Seymour, had presented a substantial cheque from the London Lord Mayor's Fund for War Relief in China. I asked Madame Chiang if there was anything I could cable my paper about the way the money would be used, and she gave me a list of orphanages, soldiers' homes and other war charities that would benefit. I reminded her that I thought there had been some request with the gift that part of the money would be used for Industrial Co-operatives, and Madame Chiang agreed that "of course, the Co-operatives will get their share."

I mentioned having seen Chiang Ching Kuo's "Model Children's Village" at Kanchow, but after volunteering several pieces of information about his progress without eliciting response, decided that was a poor subject, too. I asked if plans had been made for the absorption of China's millions of soldiers due for demobilisation after the war, and got a better reaction this time.

"Yes, we have plans. There will be a great deal of developmental work to be done in China after the war. There are new areas to be opened up in the north-west, for example."

"Does that include Sinkiang, too?"

Madame Chiang considered a moment, then said: "Yes, of course. Sinkiang is part of our north-west." (At that time there was great excitement in Chungking about developments in Sinkiang where Russian influence had been extensive.

The Generalissimo was taking advantage of Russian pre-occupation with the battle of Stalingrad to bring Sinkiang within the orbit of Kuomintang China. Central Government troops have since entered this vast and wealthy province for the first time since the Chinese republic was founded.)

Commenting on China's pleasure that Britain and the United States had agreed to the abolition of extra-territorial rights, Madame Chiang said special areas such as the International Settlement in Shanghai would have no reason for existence after the war. About Hong Kong she concluded, "That is a subject for later discussion." I felt with my mention of Hong Kong I had struck off the first sparks that could have been fanned into a warm exchange of ideas, but at the moment Holly entered, Madame Chiang arose — and it was time for me to bow my way out.

My story was submitted to Madame Chiang for revision, and two alterations were made. The reference to Sinkiang was deleted altogether, and the word "gratitude" in a sentence that "Madame Chiang had expressed the gratitude of the Chinese people for the gift from the people of London," was changed to "appreciation." That was a fair-enough change, and was indicative of the new feeling of dignity China had about herself in relation to the outside world.

## Chapter Seven.

### COUNTER-ATTACK FROM INDIA.

THERE was one more call to make before leaving China, and that was at Chengtu — the capital of Szechwan province.

During the last days of the Burma campaign, the remnants of the small Royal Air Force unit stationed in Burma—their planes all shot out of the air—had withdrawn with their motor transport along the Burma Road to Kunming. From Kunming they were sent across to Chengtu. I flew across to see them and found a disgruntled handful of officers and men who wanted to take part in the war against the Japs, but had no planes to fly. Nothing would have so bolstered British prestige in China in those dark days as a squadron, or even a flight or two, of R.A.F. planes in the sky. Originally the British intended to send some in but needs elsewhere were pressing and the men sat in Chengtu twiddling their toes and cursing the fate that had exiled them to this city almost on the edge of Thibet.

Eventually however they began to train young Chinese pilots, and out of the scheme started at Chengtu was established a primary training school for Chinese in Lahore, India. Those graduated from Lahore were to be passed on to the United States for completion of training.

The Chinese Air Force, incidentally, is quite distinct from General Chennault's American 14th Air Force in China. and it seems to have been used lately mainly for quelling revolts such as broke out in Kansu early in 1943 and in northeast Sinkiang a year later. It is as hard to understand that Kuomintang China could spare its infant Air Force for such jobs as it is to understand that she could spare the divisions of troops necessary for the invasion of Sin-

kiang during late 1942 and early '43. Both divisions were far removed from the area of operations against the Japs.

Most of the R.A.F. officers at Chengtu were pessimistic about the possibility of ever making good flyers out of the Chinese boys. There were many bad smashes and the students seemed to lack natural flying aptitude. But one older officer who had been flying for fifteen years didn't share his fellow instructors' views.

"They are keen and learn quickly," he said, "but they have some sort of inferiority complex. They feel that westerners have no faith in their mechanical ability, and when they begin to get good they want to prove they can do everything better than anyone else. That's when the smashes come. But they'll get over that after a while—those that survive.

"Another thing is that these chaps we get come too much from the one class. They are all rich landlords' or merchants' sons, have never been used to manual labour or discipline, and they don't like starting from the bottom up. They always come in with the one idea—that they should jump into a plane and learn to fly without learning anything about what makes the 'prop' go round. If we got a leavening of ordinary people like the busdrivers and bank clerks we have in the R.A.F. at home, it would be much better."

It seems doubtful that they will get such a leavening in Kuomintang China, because the Air Force is something the ruling powers hope to have as their ace weapon for use against the communists or any other popular dissident movement. With recruits all taken from the "right" class they could depend on the Air Force even should the peasant soldiers make trouble. They have used the Air Force for such purposes plentifully in the past, and will in the future—if the Western powers are prepared unconditionally to supply them with planes.

From Chengtu I flew back over the "hump" to Dinjan in India, arriving there just in time to catch the first Jap mass air attack on the Assam fields. They knocked out

on the ground about a dozen of our transports and most of the fighters that were to protect the 'dromes. It was a heartbreaking setback to Air Transport Command, but new fighters and transports were rushed to the spot from all parts of India, and traffic over the "hump" was hardly interrupted. The next time the Japs came over they were badly mauled. After that they gave up trying to knock out the fields by air and prepared for a push across the frontier from India, to cut them off from their supply base at Calcutta instead.

It was late in October when I flew from Assam to Delhi. The monsoon was just finishing and the great brown waste of land over which I had travelled six months earlier was now painted with lush rice crops as far as the eye could see. A vast green plain, over which the broad, muddy rivers spread careless and unchecked. After China's neat terraces and reamed hillsides, India's sprawling, treeless plains, stretching from Assam to Delhi and beyond, looked untidy, the cultivation haphazard.

Along the Indo-Burma border, rivers were subsiding, jungle camps drying out and preparations were in full swing for the first counter-attack against the Japs. Our objective was the strategic island of Akyab, about 60 miles down the coast from the Indo-Burma border, site of a good airfield and anchorage, and a necessary toe-hold for further operations in south Burma.

My feelings about this first Arakan campaign are tinged with a certain bitterness, due to the fact that half a dozen Jap Zeros peppered my back, right leg and arm, with numerous bullets on the first day of combat, causing me to spend three months in hospital and follow the progress of the campaign from accounts of wounded men as they were wheeled into beds alongside me.

Apart from the fact that the only transport media to the front were lumbering, three-knot wooden sampans, powered by courageous but cadaverous Arakanese natives, and apart from the fact that an Indian Army intelligence officer travelling to a front for the first time

in his life disputed my judgment that the planes ahead were Jap Zeros and not R.A.F. Mohawks—until the Zeros started shooting—I don't attribute my wounds to the incompetence of the Indian Army. But the failure of the Arakan campaign certainly must be attributed to its incompetence.

All the faults that later were to result in India Command being relegated to the role of supply, training and defence of India, while operations were entrusted to a newly formed South East Asia Command, came to the fore in the battle for Akyab. None of the lessons of Malaya or Burma had been applied. Our troops were as ill-equipped, ill-trained and badly led as ever. The atmosphere around brigade and divisional headquarters was that of a boy-scouting expedition, except that divisions in rank were more sharply maintained.

Where the Japs used motor launches, we used sampans; where they used trucks we used mules; where they by-passed our strong points we attacked theirs in beautiful "Light Brigade" style. Where they lived lightly but healthily off the country we lived lightly but unhealthily off bully beef and biscuit rations laboriously carried with us. From the point at Rathedaung, about halfway between the frontier and Akyab, where the Japs decided to resist we never succeeded in budging them a hundred yards. Gradually they pushed us back by the same looping encircling tactics they had used in Malaya and Burma.

Eventually disease began knocking out our troops faster than we could replace them, and we pulled right back to the border, having learned that we had still learned nothing about the Japs except that they were "dogged little bastards, by Jove."

Back at New Delhi the official explanation to correspondents was: "Our men are just not good enough yet. They can't be expected to live in the jungle like the Japs do. Besides, we haven't had enough time to train men for jungle warfare. It's hard enough to train British troops

in this sort of fighting, but with Indian troops as well it's much more difficult."

Suggestions that perhaps our methods of training, our conception of jungle warfare or the actual command might be at fault were scouted by Public Relations Director Brigadier Ivor Jehu, and he instanced the success of the justly famed 4th Indian division in the Middle East as proof that there was nothing wrong with the Indian Army.

And the truth is that there is nothing wrong with either the British or Indian troops that make up the Indian Army, but there is a great deal wrong with the command and administration at New Delhi. All the inefficiency, orthodoxy, stodginess, inertia, complacency and snobbishness in the British army seem to have gravitated to India, and there found a congenial resting place. A thirst-provoking climate, and amplitude of liquor (in pre-war days) and a dearth of work have effectually spiked any initiative which originally existed in the "old India hands," while new officer recruits were quickly infected by the "do nothing, say nothing, wait for promotion" virus.

American and British soldiers who had graduated in World War II, were at first amazed and delighted to find the G.H.Q. at New Delhi was an antiquarium of Colonel Blimps, types they believed existed only in the imagination of cartoonists. They were not so amused to visit the fronts and see the results of this "blimpishness."

Anyone with new ideas, with a sense of urgency, who tried to prod Blimps out of their lethargy, was regarded as "a bit of a Crusader, don't you know, has no dashed idea that you just can't get things done with these people, and in this blasted climate."

Strangely enough the 4th Indian division, comprised of the same people, operating in a similar climate in the Middle East, performed magnificently. The only feasible explanation is that it was rescued from the demoralising atmosphere of Indian army administration and put into contact with a modern British army made up of a cross-section of English life—people who were desperately



anxious to get the fighting over with and return to their farms, factories and homes. The Indian units, men and officers, were caught up in the swirl and enthusiasm of doing things. War in the desert was no longer a glorified boy scouting expedition against long-cloaked Pathans with home-made rifles. It entailed dealing with tanks and planes, and keeping pace with one's comrades, free people who fought with the energy and passion of such.

Indian troops are good, brave fighters, but until such time as they have their own freedom to defend they respond almost solely to the personal leadership of their officers. If they love and respect their officers—as many of them do—they will follow with fanatical disregard for danger wherever their officers will lead. But personal leadership was sadly lacking in India.

While on the subject of Indian troops, it may be timely to lay the myth that India's fighting men are mainly Muslims. The most famous warriors are the Sikhs and Gurkhas. The tall, Caucasian featured, black-bearded Sikhs have a religion of their own that is far removed from either Hinduism or Mohammedanism, while the stocky, nobbly-legged Gurkhas from the independent kingdom of Nepal are Mongol Buddhists. The Rajputs, another of India's famous fighting regiments, are Hindus; the Punjabis (apart from the Sikhs) are mainly Moslems. In many Indian Army brigades, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists are about equally represented and usually get along well together.

Headquarters at New Delhi was far removed in both time and space from the war. No hostile aircraft ever ventured within hundreds of miles, no enemy troops within a thousand miles of the Imperial Secretariat which houses General Headquarters. For the horsetail-moustached "Delhi-Brigade" staff officers who sipped tea in the great red sandstone building fronting the Viceroy's residence, war along the Indo-Burma frontier was just another variation of war along the north-west frontier. There were always some "beggars" causing trouble along India's fron-

tiers. The Afghans, the Waziris, the Afridis, and now the Japanese. Nothing that could really touch India of course.

As they puffed and pedalled their bicycles—Delhi's greatest war sacrifice was the burra sahibs' substitution of bicycles for automobiles—homewards in the evening their thoughts and conversation were centred around the possibilities of promotion, or the latest scandal at the club, rather than the sufferings of British troops in the malaria-ridden jungles of the Indo-Burma border.

Many of the regular Indian Army officers congratulated themselves that by their exile in Delhi, they avoided the rigors of war in other parts, though indulging in considerable self-pity that headquarters had to remain in Delhi during the blazing summer instead of transferring to the cool heights of Simla as in previous years. The formula for a quiet life and steady promotion was not to make mistakes, and the best way to avoid making mistakes was to avoid shouldering responsibility. As a result the art of "passing the buck" was as deftly handled in New Delhi as in any place in the world.

"Bearing the white man's burden" was a mission in life they had voluntarily shouldered—though not supported uncomplainingly—and most of them seemed prepared to accept that "burden" for the rest of their days. Their capacity for sacrifice was without limit—and besides, how could one afford to live in England on the same scale as in India, with servants, bearers and clerks to do all one's work for a few rupees a month?

One of Public Relations Director Brigadier Jehu's chief executives—an old Indian Army hand—went for a brief trip in mid-1943 to England, and replying to my questions as to how he found life at home, he said:

"Tell you the truth old man, I was damned glad to get back here and have a decent meal. Food's terrible over there. I was hungry from the time I arrived, till the time I got back here and had a good curry."

"But weren't you glad to see England again and visit your people?"

"Well, I have my wife here in India. Everybody's too busy to talk to you over there. No-one's interested in what we're doing here. Everything's such a rush and bother that nobody has time to listen to you. I was dashed glad to get away from the place."

One can imagine that his complaints of terrible heat, shortage of liquor, servant difficulties and the impossibility of ever getting anything done in India—the stock subjects of conversation in India—would not make for sympathetic listeners in an England with four years of war, tight food rationing and blitzed cities behind it and the work of creating a second front ahead. Many of the old hands were in some ways to be pitied. They had severed their roots with England and had not taken root in India. They were unhappy in both places.

The old regime was in such a majority in New Delhi that the dribble of modern energetic officers from England soon had their ardour quenched. Some fought for a while, then accepted the formula that you can't hurry things in India; many others pleaded to be transferred to more active theatres. The products from the old guard who did go to the front made a hopeless mess of things by their unwillingness to think along new lines and by their implicit acceptance of the magic superiority of white over yellow skins.

Thousands of British and Indian troops had to be sacrificed before the idea was drummed into the heads of the Delhi Brigade that a tank is stronger than a mule, a motor launch faster than a sampan, a concrete pillbox is resistant to bayonets, even if the tanks, launches and pill-boxes are manned by undersized people with yellow skins and buck teeth, who have not even heard of the playing fields of Eton or seen a cricket match.

The legend that menial work was beneath the dignity of white skins was maintained, and the colonel of a unit freshly arrived from England was soundly scolded because he allowed British troops to strip off and do some road work alongside Indian coolies. What on earth would

become of the Empire if these coolie fellows got the idea that England was not populated exclusively by officers with hordes of coloured servants to do all the hard work?

There was no dearth of recruits for the Indian army, but the pretence that they volunteered for defence of India or love of Empire was as ridiculous as the idea that British officers came to India for love of the Indians or to help them protect their country. With few exceptions the motives were the same in both cases—an improvement in living standards and social position.

Any British officer who came to India, unless he was a bounder that played around with the "chee-chees" (by-products of illicit unions between British officers and planters with Indian girls) had an assured position with all clubs open to him. He became in other words a "burra sahib" and received extra pay (all provided by Indian taxpayers) to enable him to perpetuate the myth that white-skins lived like gods. When he had served his time he could retire with a pension sufficient to permit him to provide models for the cartoonists at the best London clubs. He would be recognisable by a magenta complexion, handle-bar moustaches and inane conversation.

Indian recruits joined up for the reasons that have prompted mercenary soldiers since time began—for money, adventure, release from pressing financial or domestic obligations. A few were eager because the army offered chances for learning new trades, a few, doubtless, because they wanted to learn to handle arms, a few more because soldiering was traditional in their clan. There was almost no contact between British officers and the troops. Officers, except for a few of the old hands who were fair linguists, learned enough Urdu or Hindustani to shout commands in the imperative tense and a bad accent. Political education seemed limited to explaining that the King Emperor was in trouble and needed Indian help at a few rupees per month. Amongst N.C.O's with whom I could talk, at least half believed that England was fighting Russia as well as Germany and Japan.

Defence of country meant little to them, because although to us India may seem one nation, to a Gurkha from Nepal, a Sikh from the Punjab or a Rajput from Rajputania, the Indo-Burma frontier states of Assam and Bengal are countries as foreign as Malaya or Syria, inhabited by different races, speaking different languages. They understood loyalty to leaders they could respect; only expert personal leadership could get the best out of them, and it was an unfortunate thing for the progress of the war that just in India, qualities of inspiring personal leadership were sadly lacking in our command.

The Arakan campaign was a failure. British troops were dispirited and began to feel that the Japs were too good for them; Indian troops were bewildered and disheartened after trudging for weeks through the jungle, only to trudge back again without coming to real grips with the enemy. Years of malnutrition made them easy prey to malaria and dysentery, the twin enemies that always inflicted more casualties than the Japs. The Delhi Brigade leaned back in their chairs and pondered sleepily over the nuisance of having to work out another complete set of plans for next season's attempt on Akyab. (The next attempt was a replica of the first, except that the Japs chased us further back and crossed the frontier into India. It was only in the third attempt that Akyab was finally taken by an unopposed amphibious operation.)

Something had been brewing, however, in India, that jerked those nodding heads to attention with a start that nearly snapped their necks. The yeast moving the brew was an English soldier named Charles Orde Wingate, and India command was never the same after that brutally energetic forty year old brigadier rampaged through the hollow halls of general headquarters and prodded some of the tea-sippers into activity. He took the outrageous view that it was possible to do something in India, despite the climate, despite the people and despite India Command.

He waved plans in staff officers' faces, thumped tables, fought down opposition in brilliant word battles, demanded

—and eventually got—action. He couldn't be drugged by vice-regal soirees, or by whisky-swilling parties at the Imperial Delhi Gymkhana Club. Out upon their parties and clubs! Wingate wanted to fight Japanese. The more the staff officers belittled his schemes, the more fiercely did Wingate pour scorn on their lack of faith in themselves and their troops.

In an earlier book ("Wingate Adventure," Cheshire, Melbourne, 1944) I have written at length about Wingate's famous expedition into Burma, and here, at the risk of repeating material used in that book, I shall briefly sketch his career and his Burma adventure in early 1943.

Wingate was one of the great figures of this generation and had he lived for a few more years he would have been recognised as such, no matter what sphere he had chosen for his many talents in post-war years. That he would have given up soldiering, is certain. He had no liking for the military life and regretted the necessity of having to divert 20 years to becoming a good soldier. But he felt by the end of the current war the necessity for soldiers would be over and he could devote himself to pursuits nearer his heart's desire.

"I would not have become a soldier," he told me, "had it not been that when I was seventeen I was convinced that soldiers would be needed in my generation. I was keen on the League of Nations idea, but when I saw they were going to castrate the League by not giving it force to implement its decisions, I knew it would fail and we would have to fight again."

It was in 1920 that Wingate made that decision, and it was typical of the man that he should stick to it against his inclinations, which were those of a scholar and philosopher.

"When this war is finished, I shall settle down and become a literary critic," he said, after his Burma expedition.

His interests were varied, his thirst for knowledge insatiable. Like his distant cousin, Lawrence of Arabia, he

was attracted to the countries of the Middle East and became a student of Oriental languages, including Arabic and Hebrew. (Often when I went to see him in connection with my book, I would find him pacing the room, stark naked, massaging his body with a rubber brush and chanting prayers in Arabic. The motion of the brush and the rhythm of the Arabic chant gave him a feeling of relaxation, he explained.)

His young days as a soldier were spent in the Sudan, along the Abyssinian frontier. He was the antithesis of the usual young officer in the foreign service. Aloof, studious and quiet living, he was more at home roaming along smuggler and elephant trails into Abyssinia, mixing with his friends the Ethiopians, learning their likes and dislikes, than in the officers' clubs and bar rooms of Khartoum. He became used to leading men on long marches across waterless, unmapped, often trackless terrain, studied the border area of Abyssinia until he knew it by heart.

"Most important of all," he stressed, "I learned there the qualities one needs to become a leader of men."

That sounds like the remark of an egoist, and Wingate was an egoist. When I first mentioned his relationship to Lawrence of Arabia, he said: "Pshaw! At the time I went into Abyssinia one only had to take off one's hat to an Ethiopian to be called 'Lawrence of Abyssinia.' Then it came out that we were related, so the newspapers tried to prove that we were practically identical characters. As a matter of fact there are more points of difference than of similarity between us."

And he reeled off a dozen or more instances of differences in personality between Lawrence and himself. The most striking was his description of himself as an extrovert and Lawrence as an introvert.

"Lawrence could not express himself well in words, was modest, diffident, would not force his demands. But he was a sensitive writer, who could express in literature the disappointments and frustrations he experienced at conference tables. I am at my best on such occasions. In fact

no-one ever beats me in discussion. There's nothing I like better than to batter down people's arguments one by one. But I haven't the patience that Lawrence had to sit down with pen and paper. And I am not shy or modest. If I think I can do a thing better than anyone else why should I keep silent about it?"

His boast of never being bested in argument was probably true. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge on every subject under the sun, a natural oratory, and a razor sharp mind that detected the weak points in an opponent's case almost before they were uttered. It was partly his brilliance in debate that irritated regular staff officers who couldn't defeat his arguments but distrusted anything hinting at unorthodoxy—and Wingate was nothing if not unorthodox.

In Palestine during the Arab revolt of 1938, Wingate incurred the displeasure of his fellow-officers by suggesting that if the Jews were given assistance to deal with the Axis-inspired revolt, the whole uprising would quickly die a natural death. Wavell gave him the opportunity of putting his theories into practice, and the results are still talked about in Palestine, where Wingate was regarded as a modern David by the Jewish farmer-settlers.

Wingate organised mobile Jewish squads from among the harassed settlers—units that appeared suddenly out of the night to round up warring chieftains or raid their hideouts to seize their German and Italian made arms. Within a few weeks he had settled the revolt in the sectors allotted him, but his methods were unpopular with the regular staff officers in Palestine. The Jewish squads were disbanded and Wingate was shipped back to England at five days' notice.

To be accounted pro-Semitic in those days was regarded as a social stigma by brother officers, whose sympathies were often with the Arab sheiks, who entertained royally—many of them with funds supplied by the Axis. Wingate because of his inborn passion for justice, was bound to espouse the Jewish cause in Palestine, just as his sister was

bound to espouse the cause of the Republicans in Spain.

After the Burma expedition was finished I told Wingate that amongst other publicity in the newspapers, someone had dug up a story about his sister fighting with the Republicans against Franco in the Spanish Civil War. His normally sombre, brooding face lighted up:

"Did they mention that?" he asked, "Well, I'm glad. I'm prouder of that than anything they can write about me."

Wingate on his return from Palestine had his first meeting with Winston Churchill—then a virtual outcast of the Conservatives—a lone voice raised in protest against appeasement. British policy in Palestine was one more instance of appeasement, and Churchill used Wingate's arguments to try and force the government's hand in stopping Axis trouble-making in Palestine.

It was a momentous meeting between two men of widely differing outlook, but similar temperament. Both were patriots, both were men of vision and action. While Churchill still had the outlook of the Empire builder, who measured England's greatness mainly by the physical possessions to which she could lay claim, Wingate's conception of greatness lay in a nation's contribution to human progress and ideas. In that meeting of a few hours before Churchill rose in the Commons to make his vigorous attack on policy in Palestine, each took measure of the other.

Wingate recognised in Churchill a fearless and inspiring leader, who would not be bound by orthodoxy or tradition, one who was progressive, at least insofar as technique in dealing with England's enemies was concerned. Churchill seems to have filed Wingate away in his mind as a man to be relied on in desperate situations. A man with original ideas, the energy and ability to impose them on a general staff, and the courage to carry them out.

When Italy entered the war and the question of Abyssinia came up Churchill remembered this solemn, hawk-faced young man who had spent so many years in the Middle East, learning languages and people; who knew

more about the Abyssinians and their country than any other white man, and who was now on Wavell's staff in Cairo. The word had gone out for an Abyssinian revolt, but no revolt seemed to be brewing, so Anthony Eden was sent to Cairo to see what was happening, with a reminder from Churchill that young Major Wingate might be the man to do the job.

The Abyssinian revolt was delayed by the concessionaires and economic camp followers, who were working out spheres of interest and economic exploitation to be whacked up when the country should be reconquered. Wingate bitterly opposed such schemes as the partitioning of the country between the Sudan and Kenya colony, or artificially dividing it by giving the Galla tribes their autonomy. He prompted Haile Selassie, who was being completely ignored by the oil and mineral seekers, the colonial opportunists, to cable Churchill and ask whether the intention was to restore Abyssinia to the Ethiopians or not. Churchill confirmed that such was the Allied intention and appointed Wingate as commander-in-chief of patriot armies under Haile Selassie.

Something of Wingate's personality and character appears in a memo he drafted for the guidance of the handful of British officers that assisted him to lead the patriot armies.

"First of all we have to convince the Ethiopian that . . . these white men with whom he has to treat will give him a fair deal. He must see us first fighting not at his side but in front of him. He must realise not only that we are brave soldiers, but devoted to the cause of liberties . . . Example instead of precept is what we want."

All the years Wingate had studied the Abyssinians and the terrain along the Sudanese-Abyssinian border, everything he had learned in Palestine, he made use of in fighting the Italian Colonial army. Exploitation of a friendly population, once he could unreservedly promise them they were fighting for their own independence was one of the greatest factors. Forced marches, superior mobility, am-

bushes, night attacks, dispersal and regroupings when faced with overwhelming odds, bluffery, psychological warfare and his own genius for accurately estimating an enemy's reactions, all contributed to his great success in Abyssinia.

In a few months, with 3,000 Sudanese and Abyssinian patriots, 50 British officers and 40 men, he defeated a force of 36,000 Italian and Colonial troops and 800 officers. More than half the enemy were taken prisoner, the rest killed or dispersed.

Wingate on a white charger with a few of his men, escorted Haile Selassie in a triumphal march through the streets of Addis Ababa, then rushed back to Cairo with more ambitious plans for the conquest of Libya, hoping to use the Libyans as he had used the Abyssinians, by first ensuring their post-war independence.

Before we leave the subject of Abyssinia it is worth mentioning that the future of that country was something in which Wingate took a keen personal interest. He was bitterly critical of our failure to intervene in the Italo-Abyssinian war, and regarded the Ethiopians, with their civilisation extending back to the days of Solomon as a worthier people than their Italian conquerors. He had fought like the "Lion of Judah" himself to prevent the country being split up into spheres of Allied "interest." I know he had the fear that in a possible post-war betrayal of his pledges to the patriot armies and Haile Selassie, there might be at least one close parallel with his cousin Lawrence and his betrayed promises to the Arabs after the last war.

It was partly because of his ardent espousal of independence for Abyssinia that he found himself in disfavour when he returned from Addis Ababa to Cairo, where General Wavell had been replaced by General Auchinleck. Old rivals from Palestine were entrenched in the headquarters staff, new enemies had been created round the conference tables where staff college "experts" whose criticisms of his plans for Abyssinia had been scornfully and summarily dealt with by Wingate.

No one wanted to see him, not even to look at his report

on the Abyssinian campaign, far less to look at his plan for the conquest of Libya. Days and weeks went past and Wingate was coldly given the "silent treatment." Headquarters wanted nothing of him. Wingate waited around Cairo a lonely unwanted man while the Germans and Italians were chasing General Auchinleck's armies back across the desert. He might have been a leper for all the notice headquarters took of him. He became more and more depressed as he waited fruitlessly for a summons to G.H.Q. Eventually the "silent treatment" took effect, his repressed energies boiled over and he had a near nervous breakdown, which resulted in two months of hospital in Cairo and a return trip to England.

Then came war in the East. When things began to go awry in Malaya and Burma, Churchill despatched the two men he believed most capable of handling desperate situations, General Sir Harold Alexander and Brigadier Charles Orde Wingate, with orders to salvage as much as possible from the wreckage of crumbling Imperial defences.

Alexander took over command inside Burma, and though it was too late to save the campaign, he eventually managed to extricate more of our troops than at first seemed possible. Wingate made a quick survey of the situation, produced a plan for guerilla activity, which had the immediate support of General Alexander. Unfortunately he had to return to India and get the approval of the general staff at Delhi.

One quality that Wingate lacked was diplomacy. He despised militarism and what is normally known as the "military mind." He had regard for neither rank nor privilege. He knew what had to be done, was sure of the correctness of his ideas, and above all appreciated the need for urgency. When he walked into a conference room with a sheaf of papers under his arm, he was prepared to fight with passion and logic for the immediate acceptance of his plan or the production of a better one by his opponents on the spot. If he had flung an incendiary bomb into the conference room instead of his plan for Long Range Pene-

tration into Burma, there could have hardly been greater consternation.

I think Wingate enjoyed shocking the Delhi Blimps in the hope of jerking them out of their habitual somnolence. Clad in a not too carefully pressed bush jacket, with his famous coal-scuttle shaped East African topee laid on the table in front of him and his China blue eyes blazing with energy and enthusiasm, he lectured, stormed and pleaded. He was a Savonarola, Richard Coeur de Lion and Cromwell rolled into one. To his more obtuse critics no matter how far they outflanked him he addressed scorn and derision with his natural eloquence, and flung at them apt quotations of anything from the Gospel of the Scriptures to the gospel of military science according to Clausewitz, Napoleon or Alexander.

Delhi was sceptical. Yearlong procrastination and avoidance of new ideas had made the Delhi Brigade impervious to fiery crusaders. The Burma campaign was over before Wingate could force his plan through, and even then it was only accepted because Wavell gave it his official blessing against the advice of most of his staff. Wingate was grudgingly given a brigade, consisting of a battalion each of British, Burmese and Gurkha troops. The British were over-age, second line troops who were never intended for front line combat, but had been sent out to do policing work in India. The Gurkhas were new recruits and the Burma rifle battalion had had some battle experience in Burma, but—unjustly—were not highly regarded by most staff officers.

The material was not very promising for the type of job Wingate had in mind—a super commando raid into the heart of enemy occupied territory, to disrupt rail communications and keep the Japs busy throughout the campaigning season, till the monsoon arrived in mid '43. Above all Wingate wanted to collect information about Burma and prove to the world and the soldiers themselves that ordinary troops can be taught to beat the Japs in jungle fighting.

In training, he kept in mind the idea of an expedition that should be like an armor-piercing shell to bore right through Jap defences and explode in the heart of northern Burma. Troops were given a rigorous training for three months in jungle country similar to that which would be encountered on the expedition. Camp routine was hard. At first officers and men alike cursed Wingate for a fanatical slave-driver, but later when they saw he shared their hardships and discomforts, and worked twice as hard as anyone else, they came to respect and eventually worshipped him. What finally won them over was the occasion on which the camp was flooded, and Wingate, clad only in his topee, spent most of the night swimming around amongst the trees to make sure his men were safe. All that he had learned in the Sudan, Abyssinia and Palestine, every new technique and weapon available, he mobilised for his Burma adventure.

His unorthodoxy continually perturbed the Delhi brigade. Splitting up a force into columns instead of regular battalions and companies worried them. Depending entirely on supplies of food and ammunition dropped from the air at radio reference points in the midst of jungle-covered enemy territory was considered "scatter-brained." Twice during training the scheme was ordered abandoned, but Wingate, mainly by sheer force of personality, kept the thing going, and when Wavell came down to the training area to see the first big manoeuvre, he was amazed and delighted to see what Wingate had created out of the doubtful seeming raw material.

At the last moment, on February 6th, when Wingate had already rehearsed his airdroppings, had practised dispersal, fadeouts, long night marches successfully, when he had his men actually assembled at Imphal ready to cross the frontier into Burma, General Wavell flew up with the news that the whole thing would have to be called off. Due to the set-back at Arakan, Wavell's staff had raised such strong objections to "wasting" more men and material on that "crackpot Wingate" that General Wavell felt the

expedition must either be stopped or at least greatly reduced in scope. There ensued a long discussion between Wingate and General Wavell, with American Service of Supply chief, Lt. Gen. Somervell, who had flown to Imphal with Wavell, an interested observer.

"Just because the Japanese are chasing us out of Arakan," argued Wingate, "is all the more reason why my men should go in. If we do nothing else, I can guarantee to keep the Japs busy for a few months. Isn't it worth something of a gamble to keep the enemy tied up till the monsoon starts? My men will never again be as fit to go into action as they are at this moment. They are trained to their highest point of efficiency, and from now on if they don't start to operate, their efficiency will decline."

Wavell carefully weighed Wingate's arguments, and at one point turned to General Somervell and asked his opinion. Somervell said "Well, General, I don't see that you're risking much." The tired, old soldier, who was a man of vision and imagination himself, and had long supported Wingate against his staff, decided to back his own judgment, and at the end of a fifty minute debate told Wingate to go ahead. Wavell reviewed the troops the same day, saluted the men as a gesture of the hazardous nature of the expedition to which they were committed, and that afternoon the first columns set out on their long trek through Burma.

That Wingate fully realised the dangers is apparent from his remark to a correspondent who accompanied the expedition for the first few days:

"If this operation succeeds it will save thousands of lives. Should we fail, most of us will never be heard of again."

The results of the expedition were well publicised at the time in the press, and since in my own book, and "Wingate's Raiders," by Rolo. The "Chindits," as the force was called, kept a large proportion of the Jap army in Burma engaged in trying to run them down. They put the main railway out of action long enough to force the

Japs to call off operations they had already commenced against the Chinese protecting the American road-building project over the Naga Hills, and against British-led Kachin guerillas in north-west Burma. Wingate proved the correctness of his theories, pioneered new techniques and demonstrated that Allied troops properly trained and led can run rings round the Japs when it comes to scientific jungle fighting.

His men marched and fought their way upwards of a thousand miles or more with never more than a few days rations in their knapsacks. Food, ammunition, extra weapons, rubber boats were called for by radio when required, and dropped with meticulous accuracy on the spots requested. Wingate surveyed the country as it had never been surveyed by military eye before, and made good use of the knowledge gained in the subsequent operation, in which he was magnificently assisted by the American "Flying Circus" under Col. Cochran. (It was in this dramatic episode in which glider-borne troops were set down astride the enemy-held Mandalay-Myitkyina railway, on fields selected by Wingate in the first operation, that he lost his life.)

Wingate was not one to draft out plans and then send in others to test their accuracy. He accompanied his men through the worst of their adventures, from the first swimming of the Chindwin river into Burma proper till the day nearly three months later, when, haggard, bearded, tattered and emaciated, he volunteered to lead a small party in swimming back across the Chindwin in the face of expected Jap opposition to arrange the rescue of the remainder of his dispersal groups.

He led about 3,200 men and 1000 mules into Burma, and brought out about 2,400 men and 1 mule. When the force was ordered by Delhi to return and Wingate announced the only chance of recrossing the two great rivers, the Chindwin and Irrawaddy, was to abandon all heavy equipment and eat their mules, some of his officers were aghast. Wingate answered their objections with typical clear-headed logic:



"The total weight of supplies I propose abandoning is about 6 tons. We must keep things in their proper perspective. On the high seas in a single month we have often lost a million tons of equipment before any of it could be put to good purposes. Every pound of ours has performed good and valuable service, but to keep it longer is to jeopardise the safety of our men. Their lives and experiences are now of far more value. Sufficient mules will be taken across the Irrawaddy to carry the wireless charging sets. As long as we have our radio we can have fresh mortars, machine-guns and demolition equipment dropped when we have crossed the river (Irrawaddy)."

During these harrowing days of the march back, when half-starved, they had to make prodigious night marches to keep a few minutes between themselves and the pursuing, encircling Japs, Wingate's mind was at its best. He not only maintained the spirits of his comrades, keeping them spiritually alive by his brilliant dissertations on an endless variety of subjects, from literature to archaeology, from Oriental religions to dietetics, and kept them physically alive by pitting his wits against the Japs, who vastly outnumbered the party, but he was busily planning a more ambitious campaign into south-east Asia on the basis of lessons learned in this "full dress rehearsal."

No sooner had he arrived back at Imphal than he began drafting out requirements and suggestions for presentation by the time he reached Delhi. General Sir Archibald Wavell had left India, to return later as Viceroy, Field Marshal Lord Wavell. His place as commander-in-chief was taken by General Sir Claude Auchinleck. For Wingate, with his memory of the Abyssinian campaign, this was an unpleasant case of history repeating itself. He arrived in New Delhi with another plan "burning a hole" in his tattered bush jacket pocket, and again received the "silent treatment." No one wanted to talk to him—except newspaper correspondents—no one was even keen to see his report on Burma. He waited for days without seeing the C.I.C., then flew back to Imphal to superintend

rescue missions for those of the dispersal groups who were still making their way out—some of them were on their way through north Burma to China, and were eventually returned to India via Kunming.

Arrangements in hand for their rescue, Wingate flew back to Delhi, and was again the lone, unwanted figure he had been in Cairo after the Abyssinian campaign. Day after day, week after week he waited for the Commander-in-Chief to send for him, but no summons came. For weeks I spent each morning with him, gathering material for my book. In the afternoons and evenings he was always alone at Maidens' Hotel, alone except for officers and men from the expedition who dropped in to dine and chat with him, on their way to hill-stations for leave.

He was exhausted from the terrific ordeal in Burma, mentally depressed by his failure to get things moving for the next expedition. It was mid-summer and the blazing red heat of Delhi was enough to knock out men physically stronger than Wingate—even without the terrific strain he had just been through. Staff officers, whose business it was to plan and direct future operations in Burma, were not even interested in talking with this one man who could have told them more in half an hour about jungle fighting than they had learned in years of text-book learning, or their own muddling experiences.

When he could stand it no longer he wrote a courteous note to the Commander-in-Chief, stating that he felt the need for a brief rest in the hills, and asking if the C.I.C. wanted to see him before he left. The reply from a military secretary stated that General Auchinleck was frightfully busy with staff conferences. It would be quite alright for Wingate to take a brief holiday. "If and when he returned to Delhi" the C.I.C. would try to see him. A postscript added: "The Commander-in-Chief has been interested in your doings."

Wingate left forthwith for the little hill station at Naini Tal, where he was born, and no sooner had he gone than G.H.Q. was in a furore looking for him. It

happened that I took an outline for my book in to the censors shortly after Wingate left, and a Public Relations officer asked:

"Where is that fellow Wingate? The beggar just dashes off without saying a word to anyone, leaving no address. He's wanted back here immediately."

I explained that I knew he had received permission from the C.I.C. to leave, and that no one had even bothered to ask him where he was going.

It was from Wingate that I learned the sudden interest in his whereabouts. He phoned me a couple of days later, and when I met him he grinned and pointed to a new star to his D.S.O. (originally won in Palestine and added to after Abyssinia).

"They'll be giving me an O.B.E. next, and then I'll really know they're finished with me," he said jokingly. "G.H.Q. is suddenly being nice to me. Just saw Auchinleck and he pinned on this extra star and told me Churchill wanted me to go to London immediately. They've fixed a plane for me in the morning."

He was flown to London in two and a half days, and it was a great surprise to him to find that he rated next to Churchill and Montgomery as No. 3 on the list of England's war heroes. He dined with Churchill the evening he arrived, and was promoted to Major-General on the spot, and asked if he could leave immediately as Churchill's adviser on jungle warfare at the impending Quebec Conference.

"But my wife is in Scotland and I haven't seen her for two years," he pointed out. "Can't I at least see her before I go?"

Churchill and the Chief of General Staff, General Sir Alan Brooke, arranged long distance phone calls, had express trains started, stopped and diverted, and a bewildered but happy Mrs. Wingate was almost snatched from her bed and rushed to a port where she joined her husband and Prime Minister Churchill on a cruise to Canada.

Wingate told me later that the few weeks he spent

with his wife in Canada, including the two-way sea voyage, were amongst the happiest weeks in his life. That was the last time he was to see the beautiful girl who decided at the age of 15, when she first met him on a homebound boat from Palestine, that Charles Orde Wingate was the man she must marry. That trip to England, his official recognition as an outstanding leader, and the reunion with his girl wife, was the one oasis of pleasure in the long desert years of frustration, loneliness and hardship. Out of it was born the one child of his marriage—born a few weeks after Wingate's tragic death in a plane crash along the sombre, jungle-covered mountains of the Indo-Burma frontier.

By the time he arrived back in India from Quebec, his topee discarded for a red-banded Major-General's cap, great changes had taken place. South East Asia command had been created, under the leadership of Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. Wingate's plans for an operation into Burma, co-ordinated with American and Chinese moves, were enthusiastically supported by Mountbatten, who had met Wingate at Quebec. He was to have everything he needed in the way of men, planes, radio and other equipment. India command was reduced to the status of a vast supply and training organisation, and this time Wingate got what he wanted—or else heads would fall.

One of the last occasions on which I saw him was at the New Delhi airport the day Admiral Mountbatten arrived. The C.I.C., together with high-ranking British and American officers were at the airport when the "Marco Polo" Liberator plane of Mountbatten arrived and Lord Louis stepped out. General Auchinleck greeted the new commander and introduced him to the various Admirals, Generals and Air Marshals lined up in front of the plane. In the midst of the introductions Lord Louis turned and asked: "Where is Wingate?" and the C.I.C. explained that Wingate wasn't feeling well and hadn't come along.

At that moment a flushed and panting Wingate

appeared, to be warmly welcomed and engaged in long conversation by Mountbatten.

Although it had been decided at Quebec that Wingate was to be Mountbatten's right-hand man for land operations, India command hadn't let him know when Lord Louis was to arrive. By an intuitive flash, he had telephoned a friend that morning and discovered the plane was due in forty minutes — just in time for him to speed by taxi from Old Delhi, pick up a staff car in New Delhi and arrive at the airport just as the plane landed. The Delhi Brigade ran true to form to the very last.

Now Wingate is dead—because he believed in running the same risks he asked his troops to take. He died while supervising the expedition which was to disrupt Jap communications while American and Chinese troops pushed through to clear the way and open up a new life-line from India to China. From a military viewpoint, perhaps, his loss was not irreparable, though in London his death was compared to the loss of a battleship. He had trained officers who could carry on what he had started. The military leader could be replaced, but not Wingate the man.

He could no more be replaced as a personality than a Michelangelo, a Beethoven or a Bernard Shaw. His work was too individual for that. There will be other military leaders as good, just as there have been other artists, musicians and dramatists as good as Michelangelo, Beethoven and Shaw (G.B.S. might question this).

Wingate was a military artist who was able to bring his intimate knowledge of a hundred different subjects, from physics to veterinary science, from psychology to the Scriptures, plus the accumulation of all his experiences, to bear on the military problem of the day.

Of all figures in British public life Wingate was one England and the world could least afford to lose.

## Chapter Eight.

### LIFE AND DEATH IN INDIA.

DEATH by starvation is not an unusual phenomenon in India, but when in the late summer of 1943, people began inconsiderately and odorously to die along the sidewalks fronting the best hotels in the Empire's second city of Calcutta, India's hunger victims began to make headlines in the world press.

It was an offensive sight to the eyes of well-fed Westerners and Indians alike, to move along Calcutta's streets, perhaps en route to select a seven course meal from a choice of fifteen or twenty dishes at the Great Eastern Hotel or Firpo's Restaurant, to contemplate scores of sprawling emaciated wrecks with empty bellies and shrunken limbs waiting for death to end their agonies. Their glazing eyes followed questioningly, hopelessly as one hurried past. They rarely spoke, seldom pushed forward an empty plate for food. They were neither beggars nor knew how to beg. They were villagers, artisans, peasants, labourers—a cross section of Bengal life, driven to Calcutta by aching stomachs.

Calcutta was the Mecca to which they had struggled because there, in the great capital, there must be stores of rice. Some were delegates from families in distant villages, entrusted with the last pieces of money that could be gathered together that they might buy rice in the city and take it back home. But prices were higher in Calcutta than in the villages, their money ran out feeding themselves. Their families waited and starved in the country; the delegates died in the city streets.

Each morning the trucks rolled round the suburbs of Calcutta, like the plague carts of seventeenth century

England. Bring out your dead! By September and October they were picking them up—mainly women and children—at the rate of a hundred a day. The burning ghats at the river's edge couldn't cope with the Hindu bodies that were sent from hospital and corpse collecting squads. Muslim burial parties in the villages were too weak to dig graves, and they let the bodies float down to the sea. The air was tainted with the smell of the dying—a peculiar distinctive sourish odor which the victims gave off a few hours before the end.

By day malignant looking, bald headed vultures squatted broodingly in the tree-tops, swooping down in the evenings in search of unclaimed dead. On the roads at night, jackals did not even wait for the end to come.

Little children that seemed all heads, heads that were only two staring eyes, until you wrenched your glance from their heart-searching appeal and peered lower to see sticks of arms and legs from which flesh and rumps had disappeared, and a skin like burnt paper, through which bones and ribs could be counted, were the worst sufferers. Helplessly they sat, dazedly they regarded the strange city sights, dumbly they suffered and died. Babies sucked at breasts that were empty or already clay.

Down at the banks of the Hoogli river, a fanatic devotee of the Goddess of death, Kali, with whitened skulls dangling by chains from his wrists and neck, a crooked staff in his hands, danced in lecherous frenzies of delight as each fresh batch of bodies was carried in from the death carts. The fire-tenders did their best, but there were no natural fats left in these bodies to feed the flames. Wood fuel had gone up in price; day-old bodies were piled up awaiting their turn for cremation.

Each train that pulled into Howrah station disgorged hundreds more eventual candidates for Kali. They were packed into third-class compartments, crowded on the rooftops, squatting underneath on car axles, even standing on the buffers. Many had no strength to carry themselves out of the station, but huddled on platforms or on the side-

walks in front, vainly hoping that "government" would do something for them.

At stations ten or twenty miles from Calcutta, where freight trains with sealed trucks of bulk rice paused before being shunted to private sidings, starving people scrambled amongst the rock ballast to pick up the few precious grains that dropped from the cars. Hardly had a train stopped than it was surrounded by hundreds of people armed with pieces of thin wire or knives. They ingeniously inserted them in the cracks between the boxcar steel doors, pried and wiggled until a tiny stream of grain began trickling into waiting caps or hands. In the few hours that a train waited one could catch enough rice for a decent meal. The police rarely interfered. Who could not have sympathy for these wretched fellow humans? In any case, better the grain go straight into the mouths of the hungry than the hoards of the black marketing merchants.

Along the country roads there were lines of dusty scarecrows, predominantly women accompanied by children with bloated bellies and shrivelled limbs, moving towards the magic capital, where surely food must be abundant. Skeletons already whitening—for vultures and the Bengal sun bleach and clean a corpse within a few days—were huddled in the postures in which death had overtaken them along the roadside. Jackals and vultures obviated the need for corpse disposal squads in the country. Sunken eyes gazed hopelessly at the flourishing crops of grain in the fields—Bengal's most bountiful winter rice harvest for half a century—but not to ripen for a couple of months yet.

For more than twelve months there had been warnings in the press that a food crisis in Bengal was imminent, but the public in India through government spokesmen, and in England by Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, were assured with soft, calming words, that all was well. Early in 1943 Mr. Amery assured the House of Commons that there would be no famine in India. Through July and August of that year came alarming reports of skyrocketing food prices and widespread distress, but as long as people

were content to die quietly in their villages little notice was taken. By September they had the temerity to come to Calcutta to die and by October the stench of death even reached as far as the Viceroy's palace, and it was felt something ought to be done.

Back in New Delhi, Mr. Kirshner, who as Chief Press "Adviser" to the Government of India, decided what the world public should know about Indian affairs, had evolved a formula for the terms of reference a correspondent might use in cabling stories about conditions in Bengal. The macabre skeletons littering Calcutta's streets might be referred to as "sick destitutes"; the catastrophe that produced the curious and hitherto unclassified disease of "destitute sickness" might be called "food shortage." Not on any account should the words "starvation" or "famine" be used.

The Central government sitting in the circular sandstone mausoleum at New Delhi blandly absolved itself of any responsibility for happenings in Bengal, announcing that any interference from the Centre "would cut right across the principles of provincial autonomy as provided by the 1935 constitution."

The 1943 famine with its toll of unknown and unknowable millions of lives—Mr. Amery refuted local estimates of upwards of six millions by announcing that "not more than a million died"—is as good a starting point as any for a brief look at the ills of the body, political, social and economic in India. The starving Bengalese, by flocking to the streets of India's largest city to die, underlined weaknesses which had only been hinted at in the past, and at least served the purpose of turning world attention for a brief moment to some of the problems that face a sixth of the world's people. The Bengal famine contained the elements of all the troubles that vex India; communal differences, party jealousies; the cumbersome machinery of provincial relations with the Centre; pressure of population on production; corruption and indifference of government and Indians alike to the sufferings of the lower strata;

inefficiency and muddleheadedness of British administration.

First of all a few elementary facts, necessary to any understanding of why the Bengal famine came about. The 1941 census alarmingly showed that India's population was increasing at a rate of five millions each year. Agricultural production is not keeping pace with population increase, and in a normal year, allowing only one pound of food grains per head of population, India is between five and ten million tons short of rice. In pre-war days one and a half million tons were imported from Burma. Sixty per cent of the people are chronically undernourished, a proportion between harvests are on the verge of starvation, a smaller proportion are on the verge all the time. It needs only a slight upset in the balance between availability and appetite to cause a catastrophe.

India has an overall population of 390,000,000, of whom 93,000,000 live in 562 feudal autocratic states, ruled over by mediaeval rajahs, maharajahs, nizams, gaikwars, et cetera. The States have separate treaties with Britain dating back to the days when they capitulated in face of the British invasion, or remained neutral during the Indian Mutiny. The rulers are assisted by British "advisers" or "agents."

The remaining 300,000,000 Indians are divided between the eleven provinces of British India. Eighty per cent. of the total population are agriculturists, nearly ninety per cent. are village dwellers. Under the 1935 constitution, provincial governments were elected on a limited franchise basis in the eleven provinces in British India, and continued in office till the outbreak of the European war. In eight of the provinces, Bihar, Bombay, Orissa, Madras, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Assam and the North West Frontier, Congress ministries were in power, in the remaining three, Bengal, Punjab and the Sind, where Muslims are in the majority, composite ministries were formed under Muslim premiers. When the Viceroy, without consent of the elected governments, committed India to support of the war against Germany, the eight Congress ministries

resigned, but the composites, including Bengal, decided to carry on.

Ruling over the whole of India is the Viceroy, direct deputy of the King-Emperor, responsible through the Secretary of State for India to the British Government. Assisting the Viceroy is an Executive Council of British and Indian appointed members, corresponding in so far as they are each heads of departments, to Cabinet Ministers in England, or Secretaries in the United States. An important difference, however, is that they are responsible to the Viceroy, and not to any electors.

A two-house Central Legislature, consisting of part elected and part appointed members, meets in New Delhi to debate matters and introduce bills affecting the country as a whole. As the Viceroy has powers of veto over any laws passed by the legislature, its powers are strictly limited. The Central All-India Legislature has no relationship to the provincial governments, nor has it any real relationship to the Viceroy's Executive Council.

The real work of governing India, insofar as British administration is concerned, is in the hands of the Indian Civil Service. Originally inherited from the East India Company's officers, it was entirely British, but now comprises 573 English and 632 Indian members. Membership of the Indian Civil Service is considered a high social distinction in India, and it is subdivided into a pyramidal hierarchy, with appropriate military rank automatically accorded each grade of the service. Employees are entitled to, and do, use the letters I.C.S. after their name, and on the brass name plates fronting their residences.

When former I.C.S. members from the Burma government (originally part of the Indian administration) were taken into para-military Burma Civil Affairs administration, each was given the badges and rank equivalent to his former civil status, of assistant superintendent, district officer, district commissioner, et cetera.

The Central government, that is, the Viceroy and his Executive Council, control defence, foreign affairs, post and

telegraph services, railways, income tax revenue, customs and currency. There is ample provision for intervention on provincial affairs, one reason being "in case a state of famine is declared," while the "Defence of India Act" gives the Centre unlimited powers to deal with anything that comes under the wide definition of hampering the war effort.

There is no automatic machinery by which provincial governments can get together with the Central government, or by which provincial premiers can meet together in conference. One of the subjects with which provincial governments deal is food—unless, as mentioned above, a "state of famine" is declared, and the responsibility passes to the Centre. However, late in 1942, food was already recognised by the Centre as an All-India subject, by the decision to launch a "Grow More Food" campaign.

Bengal province at the time of the 1943 famine had a population of 63,000,000, of whom 55 per cent. were Muslims, the rest Hindus, the total being added to at the rate of almost a million each year. In normal times, Bengal produced insufficient rice for its own needs. The largest rice-producing province in India, it exported high grade rice to Arabia, Ceylon and Persia, importing about 200,000 tons in excess of exports of lower quality grain from Burma. Unlike many other provinces the Bengalese are exclusively rice-eaters, refusing to use wheat, millet or maize products consumed elsewhere.

By 1942 imports from Burma had ceased, and the inevitability of food shortage in Bengal was first realised. Then occurred a succession of accessories to the fact of famine. Hundreds of thousands of Indian refugees poured into the province from Burma. Hundreds of thousands of rice-eating soldiery poured in from the rest of India, to be posted along the Bengal-Burma frontiers or installed in training camps in the province, making a total of nearly half a million extra mouths to feed.

In order to prevent Japanese infiltration through the myriad waterways along the rich Brahmaputra and Ganges

delta region, thousands of boats and sampans were rounded up and either destroyed or removed. This was probably a justifiable military move, but it made inter-village distribution of rice impossible in areas where the waterways are the sole means of communication. The military act was not accompanied by a compensatory civil measure to ensure that inter-village commerce was possible.

The final crushing blow was a series of natural disasters, beginning with the terrible tidal wave in east Bengal in late 1942, which claimed fifteen thousand humans, a quarter of a million cattle and destroyed a million and a half tons of rice, ending with the enormous devastation caused by the Midnapore cyclone of early 1943. The "smart" merchants saw the writing on the wall and began quietly buying up foodstuffs wherever they could lay hands on it.

A vicious spiral of inflation and hoarding set in, and neither the provincial government in Calcutta nor the Centre in Delhi lifted a finger to stop it. The Governor of Bengal, Sir John Herbert, partly because of extreme ill-health, took little interest in the problem. Rice began to disappear from the grain markets. The villagers, at first selling recklessly at tempting prices offered by travelling buyers, who resold in the city at fantastic profits, later hoarded for their own needs. Rice prices jumped from double to a hundred times normal within the three months July to October, eventually being pegged by the government at ten times normal—when one could buy it through official channels.

On the bottom end of the scale were the landless population of the villages—blacksmiths, cobblers, carpenters, agricultural labourers, brassworkers and other artisans, who depended on the small village surplus for their supplies. Most of the surpluses had already passed into the hands of the city speculators. In thousands of small villages people began selling their household possessions, women their little pieces of silver jewellery, just to buy a few days' food supply, until all their wealth had disappeared and

they had only their empty stomachs left. Then they began their trek to the larger towns in hope of finding food and the earnings to buy it with.

At the top of the scale were the rich merchants and speculators who had cornered thousands of sacks of rice and bought and sold amongst themselves as if they were dealing in stocks and shares instead of human lives. Between the merchants and landless artisans were the small-scale farmers, lower paid white-collar workers, minor government officials and even struggling professional people who suddenly found their earnings would feed them for a couple of days in the week—and even then poorly.

That there were huge rice stocks in the hands of the Calcutta merchants everybody knew, but the Bengal government seemed to lack the energy to seize it, or even to attempt to fix food prices. The provincial government's handling of the situation was handicapped because both Hindus and Muslims were playing politics, while the Viceroy, with his tongue in his cheek, insisted that the Central government could not interfere in Bengal affairs.

In March, 1943, before the famine had really got under way, the composite Ministry of Mr. Fazlal Haq and Dr. Syam Prasad Mookerjee had resigned, its place taken by a Muslim League Ministry headed by Sir Nazimuddin and Food Minister Suhrawaddy. Fazlal Haq and Dr. Mookerjee—the latter leader of the ultra-nationalist, anti-Congress Hindu Mahassabha organisation—were at loggerheads with the new Muslim League Ministry from its inception. While thousands of people were dying in the streets, the opposing political parties were much more concerned with laying the blame at each other's door than doing anything to rectify the situation. Haq said in effect "See what a mess you Muslim League people have made since you took over?" Nazimuddin retorted: "Impossible to correct in a few months the blunders you fellows have committed for the past years." Mookerjee howled for an inquiry into Muslim League interest in the grain trade.

In press and parliament the parties tried to justify themselves and vilify their opponents, while the death toll steadily rose. Some British officials in Delhi who hadn't seen the appalling effects of the muddle, seemed secretly pleased at the spectacle of Indian politicians running their country into ruin. "How can you give independence to such people?" they demanded.

For the Muslim League ministry to appeal direct to the Central government, or to declare a "state of famine" existed, would have meant loss of face, and Jinnah's first Muslim League Ministry in Bengal couldn't afford to have that happen. Failure of the government to take action against hoarders was charged by the Hindus to the fact that the chief hoarders were the Brothers Ispahani, largest grain dealers in Bengal, and strong supporters of the Muslim League. To make matters worse the firm of Ispahani Bros., in which Hindus charged Food Minister Suhrawaddy had financial interest, had been appointed chief grain buying agents for the government.

Correspondents were hampered by the iniquitous censorship restrictions, and were not even allowed to cable back news items published in the local papers. It was not until Lady Linlithgow, wife of the Viceroy, made a broadcast appeal for relief of famine victims that we were able to cable something approaching the truth back to our papers abroad. By merely quoting the text of her appeal we were able to convey the idea that a catastrophe had stricken Bengal. Eventually we were able to use the words "starvation" and "famine," but at no time were what the censors regarded as "horror stories" permitted to leave the country. When the Bengal famine made front-line news in England and America, questions were asked in the House of Commons, and as a result the Central government was forced into action.

Private charitable organisations had started feeding people in Calcutta with whatever they could lay hands on. The Indian Army and American Red Cross contributed canned milk, various church societies, the British Friends'

Ambulance Unit, Hindu and Muslim relief organisations started distributing food in public parks and buildings. At first the government complained that this sort of thing would only attract more "sick destitutes" to the capital, but at last decided to do something itself.

The main thing was to get more grain into the province, restore people's confidence and get released those stocks still available in Bengal. The Punjab had a large grain surplus, but after a few preliminary shipments, could not be persuaded to send more because "prices were not high enough." The Central government forced compulsory conferences, and it was discovered the Punjab farmers didn't really object to the prices offered, but they did object to the large profits the Bengal government and individual dealers were making on the rice sent for relief. It was disclosed that nearly half a million rupees (\$150,000) had been made on the first shipments.

It took weeks of cajoling and eventually threats to wring any more grain out of the Punjab. When grain began rolling to Calcutta it mysteriously disappeared on arrival. In Delhi you could go to the Food Ministry and look at fascinating charts showing the movements of grain by railway and ship towards Calcutta, but you could go to Calcutta and find the grain markets empty, and no trace of the rice once it was unloaded from the freight cars. That much of it disappeared into the hands of the hoarders and speculators was certain. The trade unions and Communist party in Calcutta organised vigilance committees that unearthed great stocks of rice, but during the whole course of the famine no prosecutions were launched against hoarders.

Throughout the famine rationing was not introduced in Calcutta. The wealthy could—and did—eat their fill at any of the big restaurants and hotels, choose a six or seven course meal from a twenty-dish menu—including rice curry. A tired, unimaginative Viceroy, long out of temper with Indians and their affairs, looked out from his five-and-a-half-million dollar palace, and didn't consider



it worth while visiting Bengal to see conditions for himself. In any case he was only filling in time till his successor should arrive, so why add one more unpleasant memory to the years of frustration in India?

The new Viceroy, Lord Wavell, arrived in New Delhi and left almost immediately for Calcutta. There had been a last-minute effort to clean up the city, push the human derelicts out of sight and burn up the accumulated deficit of bodies at the river's edge. But Wavell knew the ways of the bureaucrats. He made a midnight tour of the city, prodded and pried into side streets on unscheduled trips of his own, and saw sufficient in a few hours to give him some picture of the situation. He had terse words with the Bengal government, flew to one of the worst affected country districts at Contai and returned with a plan to go into operation immediately.

He had only just laid aside his Field Marshal's uniform for civilian dress, so it was natural he should look at the problem with the eye of a soldier. His solution—call in the Army.

The news that the Army was to undertake distribution of rice to the villages was a blow to the black marketeers. Grain deliveries from the Punjab were speeded up. The sight of the first convoys of trucks manned by British and Indian soldiers, methodically pumping grain into distribution centres, plus the fact that shiploads of wheat were being rushed from Australia, frightened the hoarders into releasing their stocks. Fearing a sudden drop in prices would catch them with huge stocks of dearly-bought grain they disgorged, and there was a vast improvement in Calcutta. Within a few weeks of Wavell's visit to the capital rice re-appeared in the markets in almost normal quantities.

Military transport sufficient to shift over 2,000 tons of rice daily for three months was made available, and never has the Army in India performed an assignment better, nor enjoyed so much the doing of it. British troops and Indian sepoy rejoiced alike at the chance of carrying out

a mercy task such as seldom comes in a soldier's line of duty. For once, troops moving through the Indian countryside brought life instead of death, for once a soldier's uniform was a symbol of humanity and kindness instead of oppression and misery.

In their camps, warm-hearted soldiers had been helping unofficially long before they were ordered to the task. In many cases they had voluntarily gone on half rations and less, in order to feed the hungry from near-by communities. British troops often shared their rations with Indian comrades, so that the latter might give all their rice to the starving. Officers sometimes dipped into quartermasters' supplies to provide free handouts of grain.

During those three months of grain distribution by the army there was more goodwill created between British troops and the population than anytime since they have been stationed in India.

Derelicts were rounded up in the Calcutta streets, sent to reception camps at the city's outskirts, fed and given medical treatment. If the army had already dumped sufficient food in their village to keep the place going until the next instalment arrived, refugees were transported back, otherwise they were looked after in the camps. Peasant carts and boats were pressed into service to keep the grain moving from the points where army transport ceased. Gradually the zone of plenty was widened until the precious grain was being fed to the furthest corners of the province.

For weeks after the army took over, however, the death rate was not reduced. Winter was coming on and people suffering from chronic mal-nutrition, who normally survived the crop of pulmonary epidemics which came with the winter months, had no chance, with their resistance lowered by a season of famine.

The startling discovery was made that Bengal, with its 63,000,000 population, had a total of 8,400 hospital beds. Calcutta, with its 3,000,000 population had only six small hospitals available for famine victims. Again the Army

stepped in with medical aid and provision of beds in its own hospitals. Army doctors administered help in every building that could be wrested from the Bengal government and private charity. Only those, however, who were on the verge of death had the slightest chance of being hospitalised, so scarce were beds.

By the end of the year the Army had distributed relief in the form of food, clothing and medicines to more than ten million people, which gives some idea of the extent of the distress. By January, 1944, when rationing was first introduced, the bountiful "aman," or winter rice harvest, was coming on to the market, and the food shortage, if not over, at least was reduced to normal proportions.

While on the subject of the Bengal famine it is worthwhile noting some of the contributory causes to food shortage in India.

Methods of agriculture are archaic. Despite the great natural fertility of the soil, India's rice production per acre is less than half that of the United States, and only one-third that of Japan. The best natural fertiliser, the dung of more than a third of the world's cattle, is available in India, but instead of enriching the soil, it is dried and burned in the homes for cooking fuel.

Human excrement, which alone has kept China's fields producing rice for thousands of years, flows to the sea in India. The crops drag the goodness from the soil, and nothing is put back to refertilise it. Artificial manures are beyond reach of the vast majority of farmers.

Most of the ground is scratched to the depth of a few inches by ancient wooden ploughs, instead of being sliced deeply open by good steel ploughshares. The same few inches of top soil are used generation after generation, and without fertiliser, become exhausted. Small wonder that yields are low. Irrigation projects, apart from the Punjab and the State of Mysore, are few and far between. Tens of thousands of acres of land at present uncultivated, could—and must—be opened up by irrigation if India's present annual population increase of five million is maintained.

Some estimates give 50 per cent. as the proportion of available land actually cultivated. The rest lies idle because it is marginal land, unprofitable to farm by present methods.

Despite the establishment of a few agricultural colleges and research stations—the first Agricultural Research Institute incidentally was founded by a Mr. Henry Phipps of Chicago in 1904—there has been virtually no application of modern science to India's food production. None of the fruit of India's meagre higher educational system returns to the village. The few wealthy landowners who can afford to have their children educated at all, want to see them established as professional men. In any case there are few inducements for a college student to forgo the delights of a city career in order to improve the lot of poverty-stricken peasants.

Most of the crops that have benefited by the research institutes have been those in which foreign capital has been interested, and which, capturing a competitive export market, depended on the quality of the products—for instance, tea, jute, tobacco and cotton. Rice—that's only coolie food! In a country where the peasantry is about ninety per cent. illiterate, there is no way in which ideas of new technique can reach the people. Even could they learn the new ways, most of them can't afford fertilisers or new implements, or take the risk of trying out new seeds and methods. One season's failure and a peasant is ruined. It seems that nothing less than an agricultural revolution on the Soviet scale can put India beyond reach of recurring famines.

One interesting point in connection with the Bengal famine was that the victims protested they could eat nothing but rice, and it was actually found in many cases that their stomachs had been so used to handling rice, and rice alone, that they rejected anything prepared from millet, wheat or maize. Many times I filled my pockets with bread rolls from the dining room at the Great Eastern Hotel and gave them to the emaciated unfortunates who camped on the sidewalks nearby. Some would slowly chew

them, others would still be clutching them, uneaten, in their hands when I passed by hours later.

The Japanese made a bad blunder, from their own point of view, by bombing Chittagong and other Bengal areas during the height of the famine, adding the horror of fire and destruction to the misery of starvation. One British officer spoke truly when he told me:

"If the Japs had come over and bombed the villages with sacks of rice, they'd have had better results amongst the Indians in a few days than in months of propaganda pounded out over the radio. Fancy if they'd dropped leaflets with the rice, saying they were pushing in from Burma to save their Asiatic brothers, bringing rice with them. They had millions of tons of the stuff they didn't know what to do with in Burma. They could have put us in a lovely spot."

Fortunately for the Allied cause, the Japs didn't have enough imagination to carry out such a program, and they earned the undying hatred of thousands of Bengalese, who saw relief work being held up by Jap bombing raids.

If one wished to indulge in casuistry one could easily find half a dozen credible scape-goats responsible for the Bengal famine. One could blame the "force majeure" that caused the floods and cyclones; the peasants who in the first place did not grow enough rice; in the second place sold too much to the speculators; the speculators who tempted ignorant peasants with high prices; the merchants who kept the grain off the markets and sold it at enormous profits "under the lap"; the provincial government that refused to take swift action against black marketeers, and was slow in pressing for help from the Central government; the neighbouring provincial governments that refused to rush grain to stricken Bengal. There were many apologists for the Central Government in New Delhi who were eager to blame the catastrophe on one or a combination of these causes.

Without wishing to absolve merchants, speculators or

the provincial governments for their contributions to the tragedy, we must look for the chief culprit elsewhere.

The British Government has assumed responsibility for administration in India, and cannot consider that responsibility discharged because a provincial assembly elected (under terms imposed by Britain in the 1935 constitution) by nine per cent of the people, falls down on the job. Until the Indian people have full charge of their own affairs the British Government must accept the ultimate responsibility for what happens in any part of India.

From the first moment that potential famine in Bengal was apparent the Central government had power to intervene. It was not slow to interfere in provincial matters in the past—to suppress newspapers, for instance, whose views were considered harmful. There are no words too harsh to condemn the inhuman conduct of the Indian speculators who traded in the flesh and blood of their fellow nationals; but sometimes sins of omission are as great as sins of commission. The Central government, from Lord Linlithgow down, were guilty of sins of omission, and must be considered primarily responsible for India's greatest tragedy for nearly half a century.

Part of the trouble was due to the same tendency that we had noted in the previous chapter, the well-known game played by both military and civil officials in India, known as "passing the buck."

The famine-stricken villages of Bengal were hardly fair examples on which to base an impression of Indian village life, so I made a brief tour with an intelligent Indian interpreter, of a group of five Indian villages, all within seven miles of New Delhi, to see how peasants lived under normal conditions.

In each of the villages visited the routine was roughly the same. A group of dirt-encrusted children would run away at our approach, then reappear peeping behind mother's skirts as the women folk came out to the low doorways of the mud hovels that formed solid walls to the dirt trails intersecting the village. The interpreter would hail

the first men he saw and start talking with them. Within a few minutes peasants would leave their fields, artisans emerge from the houses to stroll across until we had gathered a large group. Then we would gravitate towards a shady tree with the women hovering in the background.

One scene particularly sticks in my mind. As we completed a mile walk along a terrible mud track, at the beginning of which we had had to park our car, two old grey-beards, squatting in the dirt under a great spreading banyan tree, hurried to their feet, whipped off their close-fitting caps and salaamed us. One used his cap to wipe the dust off a rough stone seat, and they begged us to be seated. A group of women in the background were moistening heaps of cow dung, patting handfuls into little cakes, then slapping them on the windowless mud walls of the houses to dry for future fuel. Between the village and the road, on each side of the mud trail, men and oxen were at work in the fields, ploughing and weeding.

The interpreter had some trouble in convincing the grey-beards that I was not a high government official—although strangely enough neither they nor anyone else from the other villages ever remembered a Westerner visiting them before. The interpreter explained to their mystified satisfaction that I was a visitor to the country, had been a farmer in Australia and wanted to know something about the lives of Indian farmers.

Soon we were joined by half a dozen men from the houses, and when those in the fields saw a crowd collecting they left their work and in twos or threes came over to us. Some brought with them their gentle-eyed oxen, pink skin showing through their soft white hairs, either hitching the cattle to the rambling roots of the banyan tree or else throwing the tether to semi-naked children, who peeped in through their elders' legs. Round the outer circle stood little girls, mostly with babies astride their hips, legs almost dragging in the dirt.

From time to time women with brass or earthenware pots on their heads would come towards the communal

well at the side of the banyan tree, ostensibly to draw water, but really to listen in to the conversation. Flocks of socially conscious Indian minah birds hopped about chuckling over fat grubs picked out of the damp earth near the edge of the well. A smell of cow dung mixed with cheap cooking oil drifted over towards us, light blue smoke from the houses drifted lazily skywards. Along the highway a couple of miles distant a convoy of camel carts went past, the ungainly looking carts piled high with sugar cane, the camels' heads darting forward like snakes at each step.

At first it was difficult to get any replies to questions. Mostly the men just grinned until they nudged someone into unwilling spokesmanship. Then when he got stuck for words, they would shyly prompt him with the right answers. The question about the outlook for next harvest will produce a reaction from a farmer anywhere in the world, and it doesn't fail in India.

"Sahib. Our crops grow well so far. But if rain doesn't come soon, they will all be ruined. Already they show yellow at the roots." (It had been a particularly dry season in the Delhi area).

"Yes, sahib. Prices are good now, but then everything we buy is very high too. The war has made all prices go up. We can't afford to buy cloth any more, and we run short of cooking fat and oil for our lamps."

Most of the questions produced similar answers in all villages. The nearest school was from two to five miles away, and no children went to school because their labour was needed on the farms or to look after the babies, and in any case parents couldn't afford to pay school fees. Medical service was restricted to "dispensers" who made periodic visits to the villages, and gave injections in case of epidemics.

From all the villages, I only found one person who had seen a cinema show, although Delhi, with plenty of English and Indian language movie houses, was within walking distance. The cinema attender was a bright young fellow and was the best informed person we met. He was the only

one who had heard of Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League. He knew a little about the war, knew that Italy had capitulated, but was very surprised to know that China was also in the war.

On the whole, ignorance about the war and the outside world was fantastic, although the government had made some attempt to inform people by placing loudspeakers in two of the five villages, and broadcasting an evening news summary. No one admitted to knowing anything about Congress, although several said they had heard people speak of Gandhi, and said it was related of him that he was a good man, "friendly to the poor people."

In the village described above I asked the spokesman what I thought was a leading question:

"Tell me. If the government after the war would grant you just one request, what would you want most?" I expected the immediate retort that the British should leave India to the Indians. There was much shuffling of feet and scratching of toes in sand, however, and then a little old man with a stubby white beard, red-rimmed eyes and a greying dhoti dangling about his legs, pushed his way forward and spoke, earnestly watching my reactions:

"Sahib, we want our land back again. Let the government give the village back its land."

I queried what he meant by the government giving land back.

"When I was a young man, sahib, the village owned the land. We all had land, worked together and there was rice for all. Then in the last war, because we didn't send our sons to the battlefronts the government gave away our land. Now we each have small plots for which we must pay much money each year to the landlord. Our land never increases, but our families do. Our daughters grow up and we have nothing to give them for marriage dowry, so they must stay with us and not marry. Our sons grow up and still we have only the one small plot of land for all to live in. Our families grow big but only the same amount of rice, and most of it going to the landlord. Let the

government give land back to the village and we can work and share our rice as in the old days."

While the old man was still speaking, and in a mood to say much more, there was a movement amongst the crowd, and with a startled look in his rheumy old eyes, the patriarch slipped away as agilely as the children that popped in and out between the grownups' legs. A big fellow, barefooted like most of the others, but carrying a heavy stick as symbol of higher social position, came striding over towards us. A few muttered words and one of the men slipped out of his leather sandals and pushed them across to the newcomer, who had evidently come straight from the fields.

He started talking to the interpreter, twisting his heavy black moustaches, looking like a stage villain of the Victorian era, and obviously trying to impress us that he was a big shot. We discovered in him, the only person from all five villages who could read and write. More important, he was a "zemindar," or landlord, and owned three villages. During the last war his father, as special reward for recruiting other fathers' sons for the army, had been given title over the people's land by a grateful British government. Neither father nor son went to the war themselves, but son inherited the British "gift."

His arrival put a quick finish to our discussion. He resented our speaking to his "serfs," and probably suspected they had been complaining of his overlordship. At the sight of his surly, scowling face, most of the men began to drift back to the fields, the women picked up their pots, and with many a backward glance returned to their houses.

The landlord told us he had been sent to school because his father had performed good services for the government. He could read, had a daily paper delivered from Delhi and gravely assured us he told the people all that was good for them to know about the war.

It can't be pretended that these five villages are typical of Indian peasant life, except for their poverty and illiteracy. In each province conditions vary, there are

greater and lesser degrees of social organisation, literacy and political consciousness. The interesting point in these Delhi villages was that such appalling ignorance and poverty should exist almost within the shadow of the Viceroy's palace. The United Provinces (actually a single province in which Delhi is situated) has a population of 50,000,000, of whom 85 per cent. are Hindus, although in the villages I visited there were as many Muslims as Hindus, living side by side, and, according to my informants, without friction.

It was a depressing experience to peer even for a short time into the lives of the peasants that make up eighty per cent. of the country's population. Dirt, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, lack of organisation and a fatalistic acceptance of their lowly status of life seem insuperable barriers to any real progress in the country. One began to think that until the roots of India's philosophic and religious systems, with their emphasis on humble resignation, were torn up, there was no chance of mass organisation for the better life. In the cities perhaps, where a wartime boom in industrialisation had proletarianised a section of the population there was a chance of people banding together and improving their living standards. They at least had a chance of vocational training there, but on the land where there has been no real change of life for a thousand years, the position seemed desperate.

But there were some grounds for hope. First, of all, agriculture in Russia had been on a similar low level, with illiteracy and poverty abounding, land broken up into wasteful handkerchief plots and tilled in the most primitive fashion, with, as often as not, wife and draft animal yoked side by side, pulling plough or harrow. In a few short years Russia had broken down the family and village boundary ridges, thrown plots into fields, fields into great communal farms. By a stupendous agricultural revolution, in less than 20 years, her backward peasants had become as forward looking as any farmers in the world.

New seeds and fertilisers revitalised the fields; trac-

tors and combines multiplied acreage and harvests; electricity, sanitation and literacy brought culture and light to the villages. Conservative agricultural experts in India and England shake their heads and say that similar methods would bring "disaster" to India; but would they not have said the same thing about Russia twenty years ago?

A start has been made in India by the farmers to raise their living and cultural standards. It was at the beginning of this century that the first peasants' co-operatives were formed, and to-day they have six million members, with a paid-up capital of \$30,000,000. The movement for co-operative cultivation, ironing out divisions between the tiny plots and making larger scale farming possible is strongest in the Punjab. More than a million acres of strip cultivation have been converted there, and the movement is still slowly progressing.

Best of all, from the viewpoint of progress, peasants—again particularly in the Punjab—have banded together to resist unjust taxes and exorbitant rents. They have protected neighbours about to be thrown off their properties through inability to meet their taxes, or rents. Their organisations, originally purely economic in basis, founded on questions of immediate self-interest, have now taken political form. Under the aegis of the small but powerful Communist Party of India, a Peasants' Union, or Kisan Sabbha as it is called, has been formed from individual committees, and now numbers over a million active members. I saw their delegates in April, 1943, flocking from all parts of India, 20,000 strong, for their eighth annual conference at a village near Amritsar in the Punjab.

The Kisan Sabbha may well be a starting point for a great peasant emancipation movement in India. It has not been indoctrinated with the semi-mystical ideas of Gandhism. It is international as well as national in outlook. Amongst its 1943 resolutions, in addition to demanding the release of the Congress leaders, the Confer-

ence urged fullest support for the war against Fascism. It also had some pertinent things to say about hoarders and black marketers. In the beginning, composed of small village committees fighting purely local problems, it has now been raised to a higher level, demanding national changes, purely because of its active organisers and intelligent leadership. It is still close enough to earth to devote its main energies to fighting the day to day issues in the villages.

As British financial interests, as far as they are centred at all in Indian agriculture, are concerned only with non-staple crops like tea, tobacco, cotton, jute, there is not much possibility of improvement in food cultivation except by activity from the farmers themselves.

Short of actual revolution on the Russian scale, the best answer to peasants' problems seems to be the extension of the Kisan Sabbha and co-operative movements. These alone have the power of injecting new life into rural India.

## Chapter Nine.

### THE WORLD'S LARGEST QUESTION MARK.

OF all the problems of the post-war world the question of India's future seems the most difficult of solution. If the problem seems difficult from London, Washington or Canberra, it becomes increasingly so as one approaches India, and grows in intensity the longer one stays and the more one travels in that unhappy land.

It is an over-simplification to blame all of India's troubles on to the British Government or to believe that if the British withdrew the country's troubles would be quickly regulated. It is also over-simplifying things to suggest that the Indians will never be able to run their own country or to govern themselves.

The thing that perhaps strikes a foreigner most forcibly after he has lived in India a few months, and followed the nationalist press is, that the forces making for disunity in the country are stronger than those making for unity; that the gulfs dividing the leading political parties are much wider in India than in any other country in the world. Were it not so India could have achieved substantial independence by now.

Some of the dissension is of recent origin, much of it has its roots far back in history, derived from social organisation, religious and racial differences. The British Government in the past has doubtless exploited these differences, played one side against the other on the "divide et impera" theory of simplifying rule from the centre. But the fact remains that there are solid walls of dissension which are being strengthened every day and cannot be melted away by explaining their origin. With the best will in the world — as Sir Stafford Cripps discovered — the British adminis-

tration cannot convene a government acceptable to the masses of India, and walk out and leave the place without an almost certain civil war.

Perhaps a civil war is inevitable anyway. There are many in India who think so and feel that only out of a great upheaval will the type of leaders be found to guide India through the great social revolution necessary to bridge the few centuries of time lag and bring India into line with the rest of the world. But Britain is not likely to risk plunging the country into civil war, for obvious reasons.

The well-gnawed bone of contention at the moment, of course, is the stand of Mohammed Ali Jinnah on Pakistan, or the establishment of separate independent Muslim States in those provinces where the Muslims are in a majority. Jinnah's Muslim League with little support before the war has had a great boost since war broke out, especially after Congress adopted its "boycott the war" policy. Although Jinnah has given no active support to the war and has always referred to it in vague wishy-washy terms in his speeches, his Muslim League took no active part in the Congress boycott; Jinnah in fact roundly condemned the boycott. Therein he showed political astuteness rather than any warmth for Allied ideals. He gained the support of the British, and after Congress leaders were locked up his party seized their opportunity and captured elections in provinces where they had been hopelessly defeated by Congress before.

He claims the support of the whole Muslim population, about 90,000,000, although in few Muslim villages I visited did anyone even know his name. As the Muslims have been the most successful warriors in India since they first invaded the country in the eleventh century, he carries some weight when he threatens to lead his 90,000,000 people in revolt if his demands for Pakistan are not met. He will not agree to take part in any government unless Pakistan is already established, and will not even discuss with Congress leaders the possibility of forming a government unless his demands for Pakistan are agreed to "unconditionally" beforehand.

Jinnah refuses to believe the evidence of his own eyes

that Muslims and Hindus can get along together. In villages and cities all over India one finds them living and doing business together without a suggestion of bad feeling. In a long talk with Jinnah on Hindu-Muslim relations, before I left Bombay for the last time, I pointed out that Hindus and Muslims worked successfully together in the trade unions in Bombay. Their interests were the same, both wanted decent wages and living conditions. They voted with one voice, and when there were divisions in the votes cast there were Muslims and Hindus with the "ayes" and Hindus and Muslims with the "nays." Division of voting was never on a communal basis.

"Ah ha. But you do not know," replied Mohammed Ali "My Muslim people always have the worst of it in the trade unions. It may not seem like that to you, but we are usually in a minority and it is the Hindus that always get what they want."

"But surely when people are fighting for questions of immediate self-interest, improvement of living conditions and such, there can be no room for communal quarrels. Surely a few annas more per day in wages or a couple of hours off the length of the working week is desirable and acceptable to Hindu and Muslim alike? Don't the workers regard themselves as wage-earners first and Hindus, Sikhs, Parsees or Muslims last?"

He shook his narrow silvered head and pursed his lips, and without answering my question said:

"My next great task is to take my people out of the trade-union movement and form separate Muslim Trade Unions. Only then will my people get justice."

This was a typical Jinnah utterance. He had taken no part in the formation of trade unions in India nor in their hard-fought struggle for legal recognition. But once they were established as a powerful, effective organisation Jinnah would carve off a large slice for his own use, just as in the broader struggle for Indian independence he had capitalised on Gandhi's awakening of a nationalistic spirit amongst Indians by splitting off a large section of the workers for



independence to follow his super-nationalism of Pakistan. Jinnah has never had to build from the ground up as have the Congress leaders, but has taken great sections of Muslim voters from existing organisations. His sections and blocs have been created ready made for him, but he has learned much from Hitler and Mussolini in manipulating racial and nationalist issues to satisfy his own lust for power.

Jinnah and other smaller party leaders are breaking united organisations up into their racial or religious component parts and so the process of disruption goes on and India's hopes for presenting united demands, representative of the wishes of the whole country, recede.

Where is there hope for new leadership for India? That was a question I tried to have answered during my two years' peregrinations in the country. It was never answered satisfactorily. There are so many contradictions amongst the present leaders that few thoughtful Indians believe any will survive the immediate post-war period, unless Jinnah runs away with the bit between his teeth and succeeds in setting up some form of fascist dictatorship. Gandhi is an old man whose astonishing political somersaults have bewildered his own followers, and it is generally recognised that his day is done.

The great apostle of non-violence, he shares some responsibility for the greatest bloodletting in India since the Amritsar massacre. He fatalistically accepted the consequences of the Congress boycott of the war and the arrest of its leaders, which he invited. A friend of the Untouchables he still believed in maintaining the caste system. Postulating the creed of the primitive, and an enemy of the machine age, some of his best friends and chief supporters are India's leading industrialists, who saw in Gandhi's nationalism a chance to retain the profits of India's rising industrialisation for themselves and in his conservatism a bulwark against the socialist minded younger leaders like Nehru.

Nehru, the great white hope of liberal friends of India all over the world, and the idol of intellectuals inside the

country who hoped he would lead a Socialist Congress after the war, has lost much support, both abroad and inside India, by his weakness in trailing along with the Gandhi band waggon, getting himself arrested at the old man's behest, and refusing to make any attempt to grasp the torch of leadership from the faltering, eccentric hand that held it.

The weakness in Congress leadership seems to originate from the lack of contact with ordinary problems of the masses. The voluble conferences and meetings which sway back and forth across India discussing this and that way of getting rid of the British rarely bothers with the day to day difficulties of the people. The leaders are drawn almost exclusively from the professional classes. One felt the whole organisation needed a transfusion of new blood from the working and peasant classes to bring Congress down to earth again.

The Communist Party in India, as in most other countries where it operates, is nearer to the masses than any other party. It is small numerically, but probably ranks in importance next to the Congress and Muslim League. Membership, of course, is open to Hindus, Muslims and Untouchables alike, and its main power comes from its influence in the trade unions and peasant organisations. It has increased in prestige since the outbreak of war, which it actively supported.

It was notable that during the August, 1942, riots, there was practically no striking in areas where the Communists controlled the trade unions. During the period of Jap air raids on Calcutta and the subsequent wholesale flight of workers, it was the Communists who stepped into the breach and organised gangs to clean the streets and carry on essential services. They also did good work in organising famine relief and spying out food hoarders during the Bengal famine. Many intelligent Indians and British officials with whom I spoke, including the Home Secretary of the Indian Government, Mr. Maxwell, thought that the best leaders for India of the future would come from the ranks of the Communist Party whether or not they remained inside the party

organisation. Mr. Maxwell incidentally should know, as most prominent figures in India's political life have passed through his hands at one time or another on their way to gaol.

Another example of the contradictions in Indian life, however, is the fact that some of the workers, especially the Untouchables, distrust the Communists because they say the leadership is in the hands of high-caste Brahmins, the traditional oppressors of the Untouchables. The Communists have not clearly expressed their attitude towards Pakistan, but have announced themselves in favour of "self-determination" for minorities.

Almost the whole civilised world wants to see a free, self-governing India for various reasons. Liberals, because they believe the ideals of liberty and democracy should be available to all peoples of whatsoever caste or creed. The common man, because he knows that any country as rich as India as long as it remains a colonial dependency, is in danger of becoming a pawn in the scramble for power. Most English people, because they don't see why their sons should be sent to India to keep the peace, fully believing England continually must make sacrifices to "mother" such countries as long as they are dependencies. Business people because they see in India's 400,000,000 an enormous potential market once their living standards are raised, and surely when a country can plan for itself and organise its own economy, living standards and purchasing powers will be increased.

There is plenty of goodwill towards India from all quarters of the globe. That doesn't mean that there aren't interested factions in England that will fight tooth and nail to prevent any measure of self-government being established in India, because they fear for the safety of their Indian investments; but such factions represent an insignificant minority of English opinion. There has never before been such worldwide interest in India's future, but the Indian leaders themselves have been slow to capitalise on the interest and sympathy of world opinion. By their failure

to present united demands they offer an excuse (if not justification) for Britain to remain in the saddle at New Delhi.

One of the most hopeful and practical outlines for real independence came not from the politicians but from a group of Indian industrialists and business men. Known as the "Bombay Plan" it was drawn up by a group of India's most forward-looking business leaders, and was designed to revolutionise the whole basis of Indian life.

Based on the Russian series of "five year plans," the Bombay Plan over a period of fifteen years envisages a doubling of the per capita income of the country. Industry is to be stepped up from providing 17 per cent. of the national income to 35 per cent., and agriculture will be reduced from 53 to 40 per cent.

They are no starry-eyed dreamers who have worked out this plan for a forward surge of India's life. They are men like the Tatas, owners of the sixty million pound Tata enterprises, including the greatest iron and steel plant in the British Empire; G. D. Birla, millionaire mill-owner, friend of Gandhi and president of the Indian Chamber of Commerce; Sir Shri Ram, banker and owner of the Delhi Cloth Mills; and other hard-boiled industrialists, bankers and manufacturers, all of them used to planning and building in a big way.

The plan calls for tremendous development in the basic industries, to produce first the raw materials, and then the machines that make machines. The estimated expenditure necessary to put India into the foremost ranks of manufacturing nations by 1960 is over ten million crores of rupees, or seven billion pounds sterling.

Electric power, industrial chemicals, housing, transportation, agriculture, education, nutrition, none are neglected in this master plan which has now been submitted to the government. Cottage industries and village crafts will be harnessed to the general scheme and absorbed into industry as the plan develops.

The total industrial investments in pre-war India, excluding railways and transport, amounted to seven hundred

crores. The plan calls for an expenditure of six times that amount on industry alone. The following is a break-down of the proportions in which it is proposed the entire ten million crores should be used.

Industry .....	4,480
Agriculture .....	1,240
Communications .....	940
Education .....	490
Health .....	450
Housing .....	2,200
Mining .....	200
	<hr/>
Total .....	10,000

And here is how the money is to be raised:

Hoarded Wealth .....	300
Balance of Trade .....	600
Foreign Borrowing .....	700
Savings .....	4,000
Credited moneys .....	3,400
Sterling securities .....	1,000
	<hr/>
Total .....	10,000

When it was announced in January, 1944, the plan got a mixed reception in the Indian papers and little notice in the world press. Jinnah dismissed the whole thing as "the genesis of Indian Fascism," presumably because the planners were Parsees and Hindus. Viceroy Lord Wavell welcomed the plan as a constructive basis for post-war planning in India, but indicated that one would have to be satisfied with something on a less grandiose scale. The Communists gave high praise to the general conception, but pointed out that the question of ownership of the utility and other services it was intended to supply must be gone into and the riches of the country must not be mobilised for the profit of a few private persons.

Whatever the defects in the plan, the fact remains that it is a great energiser, which by reason of the standing of

those who drew it up can not be dismissed as an impractical vision. It is the one effective, constructive idea which has come out of India for decades. Not until something like this "Bombay Plan" has been realised can there be much hope for real independence for India. An industrialised country means an organised country, and a tremendous raising of the educational and cultural level. The drafts for the plan were not released to the press till a couple of weeks after I left India, but the enthusiasm and intelligence of some of the planners was infectious enough to send me away with a glimmer of hope that even in our generation there might be some explosive change of life comparable to that which took place in Russia and Turkey at the close of the last war.

Prophets of gloom who fear that an industrialised India would become self-supporting and disappear as a world market should take courage from the case of Russia, whose imports from abroad increased steadily in proportion to her socialised industrial expansion. There are no limits to the appetites of 400,000,000 people once they have the power to buy.

An industrial revolution would be a new broom to sweep away the cobwebs of ignorance and superstition which dominate every phase of life in India. Caste systems and communal differences cannot stand up against the impact of the machine age and the education necessary to sustain it. If the son of an "Untouchable" proves a better mechanic or draughtsman than the son of the Brahmin, then it will be he that gets the better job, and he will lift his family forever out of the caste to which some traditional vocational pursuit of his forebears has condemned him. Trade unions and political parties will rise based on practical needs and led by practical men who have graduated as leaders in the ordinary day to day struggle for improvement of life. The negative mysticism and pacifism of a Gandhi, or the artificial creeds of a Mohammed Ali Jinnah, would not gain much support amongst people with any measure of industrial organisation and resultant political consciousness. But it

is not until the masses become used to self-government in the narrowed forms of activity within trade unions, peasants' societies and co-operatives that they will be able to take part effectively in a broader form of national self-government. Industrialisation, with the necessity for vast numbers of technically trained workers, will, perforce, step up educational opportunities.

Only the economic freedom that an industrial revolution can bring about can do away with the horrible social abuses which exist all over India at present — the caste system whereby "Untouchables" live in filthy ghettos and pick up their education by trying to listen through doors and windows of the school rooms — not daring to associate with caste children inside; the slave status of widows who have been unfortunate enough to have their husbands die — often in childhood before the marriage was consummated; the ruinous position of even a high caste Brahmin who has been "cursed" with a family of daughters that he must richly endow at marriage; the corroding corruption which has arisen in every government department because of shortage of jobs and the necessity of bribing one's way to advancement.

That these things still exist in India to-day, after almost 200 years of British rule, was vividly illustrated in a news story published in the "Hindustan Times" of 3rd July, 1943. The story is a verbatim quote from the newspaper and needs no explaining.

"May God forgive me. May the world forgive me." This is the touching conclusion of a letter addressed to the press by Mohanjal G. Desai, a railway employee working at the Palej station near Broach, who, driven to desperation by various circumstances poisoned two of his daughters, then burnt his wife and a woman who was living with him, and finally set his own clothes on fire in the most tragic drama ever enacted on a railway platform.

"It is reported that Mr. Desai, who had been working for seven years at the Palej station, was ordered to be transferred, recently. Mr. Desai is believed to have con-

sidered this unjust and defied the order. He was consequently dismissed from service. This, it is alleged, upset his mind.

"On 18th June, Mr. Desai entered the Palej station at about 4.20 a.m., accompanied by his wife, Nirmalaben, aged 25, and the woman whom he looked upon as his sister Shantaben. He had equipped himself with pieces of cloth dipped in kerosene, a few bottles of kerosene, and a sharp-pointed bamboo spear.

"Then shutting the door of an office room on the platform, which he had entered with the others, he quietly proceeded to set fire to the clothes of his wife, the other woman and ultimately himself.

"When the station master tried to force his way into the room he was threatened with the spear. A customs sepoy on the spot fired a shot at Mr. Desai, but it missed him. Another sepoy is reported to have rushed to the spot and aimed a shot which killed Mr. Desai. His body had already been severely burnt. Of the two women, one died on the spot and the other in hospital.

"Before coming to the station Mr. Desai had given poison to two of his daughters, Bhanu (aged 7) and Baby (aged 4). The younger girl died and the other was saved by a doctor. Mr. Desai's third, the youngest, daughter, Usha was away with her maternal uncle at the time of the tragedy."

The most lurid light on the whole grim story is thrown by a letter which was addressed by Mr. Desai to the press in Guajrati, in which he said:

"This is neither suicide nor murder. This is just a sacrifice at the altar of official high-handedness and injustice. I hope this sacrifice will quieten the roaring flood of official cruelty.

"Previous officers used to take bribes and do some good to those from whom they got the bribes. But they never used to cut the head off one to give it to the other. They took bribes to give a good post. And the man who gave the bribe got the post. This may not be justice, but it is common practice. To-day a man who can give money can get him-

self transferred to any place. And while favouring him the officers never care for the other man that is affected by the transfer. If the transfer is to be stopped he has to bribe. Higher officers know these facts; but they observe silence, God alone knows why. I was served with a notice. If I had spent Rs 500 I could have got that notice withdrawn. But I have neither taken bribes nor given, nor will I ever do.

"There is a woman called Shanta staying with me. She is just like my sister. My relation with her is pure. We used to talk with each other innocently. But the world could not bear this and people started making ugly allegations about us. But we never cared. I can never forget her pure, selfless love for me. She is also a victim of society like me. As she could not bear children her husband drove her out and married a girl of twelve. My wife very well understands my relationship with the unhappy woman. She also sympathises with this helpless sister. I wrote to Shanta sending my last salutations. She at once came here. She also decided to die with me. I said that the world would speak ill of us because a sister has no right to die with her brother. But she wouldn't listen. She said that society had criticised us a lot and that it still will.

"There is only one thing that pains me. And that is the condition of my daughters. In our Anavala Brahmin community to give a daughter in marriage is to plunge into ruin. Even a pauper when he goes out to marry a son demands nothing less than Rs 2,000 as dowry. What would happen to my daughters in this wicked community? If my daughters live they will be in a terrible condition, and then they will curse men for life.

"I have brought up my daughters as sons. They are more than sons to me. But after our death how can they live? It is too terrible to imagine. My heart refuses to kill my dear little ones. Why did God reserve this cruel task for me? If this was to be their fate why should God have given me these daughters? I can't divine the mystery of life. I can't realise whether the step I am going to take is right or wrong. I only realise this much—that I am doing

it to save them from the greedy clutches of the Anaval community.

"Still one of my daughters will survive. She will pull on somehow. I have my father's sister. She won't live long after hearing of the tragedy. She is already ill. May God forgive me! May the world forgive me!"

In the course of a letter to her father, Nirmalaben, the wife of Mr. Desai, is said to have written as follows:

"Don't be afraid. What fate has decreed will happen. God knows us and will give us happiness in the other world. My husband had refused me permission to participate in his sacrifice. But it is my duty to go with him. It is difficult to find a husband as kind-hearted as he is.

"Take care of my youngest daughter Usha. Get her married to a decent man and make her happy. Now you are everything to her. We have not made her happy. At least you do. Bring her up with care so that our souls might rest in peace. On the day of the marriage get a rose sprinkler, engrave her name on it, and give it as a present.

"I remember my child very much. I have not done anything for her. She is young still. She has great love for me. When I took leave of her some days back at Maroli she cried bitterly. I gave her a piece of cloth which she liked immensely. I remember that incident very much. Don't let Usha cry at all. Everybody has to return to the Maker sooner or later.

"There is one request. Please take away my clothes and jewels from my box. My last respects to all my relatives. Please do away with the customary mourning."

It was with mixed feelings that I left India for the Pacific on the last day of 1943. I think few Europeans can stay long in India and not have a sense of relief at leaving the country, probably because by going away we feel we have escaped the responsibility of trying to find some solution to the ills that beset the place. There is much to depress, and

little to offset the feelings of depression. I doubt if there is any country about which one has a greater feeling of hopelessness.

From a military viewpoint, however, there were encouraging signs. Lord Louis Mountbatten had arrived in October, and a good clean breeze swept through GHQ at New Delhi to blow away some of the worst of the obstructors and Blimps. India command was relegated to training, supply and defence against the North-West Frontier tribesmen. A new operational command, staffed by new vigorous personnel, eager to finish the war, was formed to carry on the war against the Japs.

For a time the two commands existed in opposite buildings of the Imperial Secretariat at New Delhi, and one unconsciously quickened one's gait when crossing the road from India Command to the South-East Asia Command headquarters.

Before long SEAC headquarters was removed from the corrosive do-nothing atmosphere of New Delhi and transferred to Kandy in Ceylon. Relations between the three British services and between British and American staffs improved noticeably within a few weeks of Lord Louis' arrival, and there was for the first time a certain amount of energy and enthusiasm in the air.

The central Pacific area to which I was being transferred was a theatre untroubled by political complications of subject peoples, independence movements or communal strife. I looked forward to it as a theatre where a general or an admiral could concentrate on fighting rather than on diplomacy and politics.

## Chapter Ten.

### "AUSTRALIA THROUGH COLOURED GLASSES."

MY orders for the new assignment were rather vague. On Xmas Day I had received a cable from the "Daily Express" foreign editor, which read "Proceed Sydney contact Expresser Henry Keys and upsplitted Pacific cumhim Stop Bestest Hunting Foley." By 31st December, I was aboard a former Italian luxury liner leaving Bombay for Melbourne to confer with my colleague, Keys, and decide how we would "upsplit" Pacific war coverage.

The transport was crowded with Chinese students en route to the States, some Polish refugees, a handful of missionaries and oil men. Apart from contributing a few articles to the ship's paper, which was most enterprisingly published in Chinese, Polish and English, there was nothing much for me to do except eat, sleep and try and sort out the jumbled ideas which had accumulated after almost two and a half years of war reporting in China, Burma and India.

One conclusion was that it was possible to differentiate sharply between the reactions of the peoples of the three countries. Independent China, with all the corruption and inefficiency and oppression, was still fighting, and would continue to fight against the aggressor. Inside China the quality of resistance was highest where democracy was strongest — in the areas where the Red Army had instituted land reforms and established some sort of equality of work and income. China had been able to mobilise 10 or 12 million troops. Whatever internal troubles boiled up, they were never prompted by the people wanting to make peace with the Japs. The masses of the peasantry were still as determined as ever to drive the enemy from their soil, and were often ahead of their government in organising

resistance. Whatever pro-Japanese feeling existed in China was strongest amongst the high officials; it was non-existent among the people. Even though their land was in the hands of landlords and money-lenders the Chinese still felt they were defending their own soil.

What a difference in colonial Burma! Burmese were not even allowed to join the army. Only tribespeople from the border areas were trusted with arms in the Burma rifle battalions. The people were almost completely apathetic at the prospect of one foreign oppressor replacing another foreign oppressor. A few of them actively helped the British — probably an equal number helped the Japs. There was no feeling that they should co-operate with the British in defending their land. Who owned their land? Foreign government, foreign money-lenders, foreign landlords, foreign employers.

Of course, had our propaganda department been efficient, we would have warned them that the Japs would be brutal and rapacious overlords compared with the more easy-going British, and perhaps we would have aroused some enthusiasm amongst Burmans in assisting the lesser to defeat the greater of the two evils. That is, if we had been prepared to arm them. In the border areas, where it was simple to explain to the Kachins, Chins and Nagas that the Japs were coming to rob them of their land and women, resistance was good. They didn't even wait for us to organise them, but started on their own initiative to defend their hills like tigers defending their cubs. Later we helped them with modern arms and enlightened leaders, and they fought magnificently. The Burmese, with a fair measure of self-government, but virtually no economic independence, were appalled but passive spectators to the plague of battles that swept from one end of the country to the other. They regarded the war as a duel between outsiders rather than as an assault upon their liberties.

The war had hardly crossed the borders of India at the time I left, but it was evident that the reaction of the Indian people would be even less favourable to the Allies than in

Burma. India was much further from self-government even than Burma: there were well-organised sections of pro-Japanese who had done a terribly effective job of sabotage during the August, 1942, riots, putting railways out of action in some places for months at a stretch. There was no feeling of a need to defend their country amongst the people of Bengal or Assam, and dissatisfaction — to use the mildest term — with British over-lordship blinded people completely to their fate under Japanese substitutes.

The one thing that was clear in the three countries was that the flame of resistance burned brightest where the people had the highest degree of self-government, — that the threat to whatever economic or political democratic rights people had was sufficient to mobilise them in their defence. Independent China, despite her isolation from the rest of the world, the miserable production of her war factories, was far ahead of the colonial countries, in the quality of her resistance to aggression, and inside China, resistance was strongest where democratic rights had been established.

One other striking conclusion on leaving India was how easy it is to form false impressions of a people in a foreign country. From one's contacts with many of the Chinese officials in Chungking one could easily believe that the Chinese people were the most politically and morally corrupt in existence, but what a difference when one travels amongst the Chinese peasants — humble, courteous, honest people, asking no more of life than that they might live and toil from dawn till dusk, give their sons and daughters in marriage, and have a fine solid coffin when death claimed them. And what a different impression when one meets a fine intellectual of the type of Chou En Lai, the Communist representative at Chungking, with whom one can talk and receive straight replies to straight questions. What a poor picture of England a foreigner receives by travelling in India and thinking that the Old Guard officers with their mental and emotional processes atrophied by sun, liquor and an excess of servants, are representative of the English people.

Fortunately for English prestige in the eyes of American military personnel in India, the new type Englishman had begun to arrive in large numbers by the time I left. Men and officers of the Eighth and First Army type, who were appalled at the conditions in India, and regarded the Blimps and bureaucrats with the contempt that most of them deserved.

The 14th Army, which was built out of this new material and officered by men eager to see the war finished, gave the Japs the greatest thrashing on land they have ever received, marching over 1,000 miles into Burma and killing more than 100,000 Japs en route. The Blimps and "duds" were weeded out to make room for those who wanted to get on with the war. The officers of the Indian Army who stayed were revitalised by the fresh spirit injected into the army by the new blood from England.

It is someone else's privilege to write about the 14th Army's magnificent campaign to clean the Japs out of Burma; of the boys from England's mills and fields who hung on in the jungle from the time we were pushed out of Burma into India, till the day 2½ years later when the advance went forward across the jungle-covered mountains back again. That is someone else's story, as the campaign was only in the planning stage when I left India.

If in the preceding chapters I have unduly criticised British rule in India and the Kuomintang in China, it is without malice towards British or Chinese, but because the British Raj in India and the Kuomintang dictatorship represent decaying systems of government which need a few hearty pushes to unseat them once and for all.

Throughout the early years of the Sino-Japanese war, when the issue was a straight-out one of support for China or for Japan, anybody with a sense of justice backed China's case. There were too many people with "axes to grind" that supported Japan and to have stressed China's weaknesses and dissensions in those days would have been to play into the hands of the vested interests who were helping Japan. Writers who visited China wrote about the admirable

qualities of the Chinese people and the justice of their case, but played down the Kuomintang trend towards a police-state. When Britain and America were forced into the war at China's side, there were no longer the same reasons for politically conscious writers to gloss over the unsatisfactory conditions in Kuomintang-ruled China, just as there was no longer the necessity for the Kuomintang to cultivate longer the liberals and leftists who had been their chief support from abroad.

One of the greatest privileges of friendship is the right to criticise, and I can claim that privilege as an old friend of China who supported her case with pen and from the platform from the earliest days of Japanese aggression in Manchuria. If friends of China criticise her present regime it is because we wish to see the Chinese people reap full reward for their years of heroism and suffering and not be subjugated by an oppressive system of secret police and concentration camps.

In the last days of my stay in India, Mr. Robert Casey, former Australian Minister to Washington and British Minister for the Middle East, had arrived to take over the Governorship of Bengal. To his own consternation and that of the Australian public, he had been the object of hostile demonstrations. The Bengalese didn't take kindly to the idea of a representative of "White Australia" being appointed to rule over them, and they voiced their disapproval by urging him to go back to his own country from which Indians were excluded by the "White Australia" policy. The demonstrations aroused interest rather than resentment in Australia, where the general public is little aware of the results of its racial discrimination amongst Asiatic peoples.

By the time I reached Melbourne in the middle of January, 1943, the newspapers were much agitated over the question of "White Australia," and the correspondence columns were full of letters to the editors expressing divergent views as to the advisability or otherwise of revising the Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act.



As the question of "White Australia" is one that is going to come more and more under examination at international conferences, particularly as attention focusses on post-war policies in the Pacific, it is perhaps not out of place here to discuss its origins and its effects on Australian relations with her Pacific neighbours.

An Australian does not have to travel far in the East before he is aware of the smouldering resentment aroused by an immigration policy which places every Asiatic wishing to enter the country on a level with the coolies who invaded the country in the gold-rush days of the middle of last century, or the primitive South Sea Islanders who were "black-birded" into the country by agents for the cane-growers.

No one questions the right of Australia to have her own immigration laws and to select the type of immigrant she considers best fitted for the country. But Chinese and Indian business people, students and tourists feel at least they should be able to visit and do business with the country on the same basis as nationals of other countries. In the post-war world Australia will have to turn with increasing attention to the neighbouring countries of South-East Asia for an outlet for her secondary industries, and she may be painfully surprised to find a boycott started against her goods by countries whose nationals have been discriminated against. The Chinese and Indian press make frequent reference to the indignity contained even in the name "White Australia" attached to a friendly government's policy. Chinese business men find it unattractive to do business with Australia when they can come to the country only "under exemption" and set up business on a year to year basis, applying each year for a continuation of the "exemption" from the Immigration Act.

Fears that a relaxation of the discrimination against Asiatics would lead to them over-running the country are, of course, absurd. The trend in China for the past decade has been towards a mass return of settlers from abroad, even during the war years. In India one sees no signs of Indians

wanting to emigrate to any country. Indians have always had to be tempted to leave their country, and all sorts of inducements and even pressure had to be adopted to get indentured Indian labourers to go to South Africa and, earlier, to Fiji. In any case our immigration laws, just as those of any other country, can be enforced to prevent flooding of the country with any one type of national. To continue the enforcement of the White Australia policy is to take no account of a changing world; and for Australia, with a population of 7,000,000, to attempt to live in a social vacuum is to run the risk of being ostracised by a thousand million Asiatics in China, India and the South East Asia area.

The White Australia policy has its origins in conditions which are non-operative to-day. In the early days of settlement in Australia one of the great attractions for many of the would-be settlers was the country's proximity to the vast cheap labour reserves of Asia. For the first forty years the squatters had the use of convict labour and had to look no further than the pens at Botany Bay for the labor to build their houses and tend their sheep and cattle.

In 1840 deportation ceased entirely and for some years prior to that there had been suggestions that now was the time to tap the reserves of Asia and bring in Chinese. "A constant stream of these most industrious and skilful Asiatics would not only supply the needed labour, but in the course of a century, would probably convert the enormous wilderness of Australia into a fruitful garden," as one prominent citizen, E. G. Wakefield, hopefully expressed it. Some Chinese and Indians were brought in about this time, and some wretched South Sea Islanders were virtually kidnapped and brought over to work on plantations in North Queensland, but it was not until the discovery of gold in 1851 that there was any large-scale immigration from Asia.

The shipping companies, by propaganda, posted in the chief Chinese ports, describing the wealth to be picked up on the streets of Australia, were, of course, encouraging unlimited migration and reaping a neat profit on the passages.

Chinese began to pour into the gold-fields, and as the quest for the yellow nuggets grew more fierce and the Chinese worked harder than anyone else, sending most of their wealth back to China, they soon became unpopular.

On several gold-fields, riots developed against them, and from one field the Chinese were thrown out with all their belongings, several dying of exposure.

The States began passing legislation, limiting the number of Chinese a ship could carry to one for each ten tons of registered tonnage. Capitation fees were imposed, and other measures introduced to cut down the influx. In 1876, Queensland introduced an Act against "Asiatic and African aliens," levying heavy fees for them to mine, or carry on business transactions on the gold-fields. The British Governor objected to the Bill on the grounds of discrimination against British subjects — many of the Chinese were from Hong Kong, — and the Secretary of State for Colonies upheld the Governor's objection.

From that time on, the question of legislating against Asiatics became mixed up with the fight for self-government, and the merits or de-merits of the question of a "White Australia" became lost in the fight to establish the right to legislate on that and other matters by and for ourselves. The "Asiatic and African Aliens" Act was dropped, and the parallel fight for self-government, a Union of the States, and the exclusion of Asiatics continued.

By 1880, restrictions against Chinese in the United States and British Columbia had diverted thousands of Chinese to Australia, and outbreaks of small-pox and the discovery of leprosy amongst some of the migrants encouraged the State Governments to further increase the head tax and to place all vessels bearing migrants under a 21-day quarantine. After that, the shipping companies were not so enthusiastic about carrying Asiatics.

In 1896 another draft Restriction Bill to exclude all coloured migrants, including British subjects, was agreed to by several of the State legislatures, but again turned down by the British Government, and the fight for the right to

make uniform laws for the whole country acceptable to Britain, was intensified.

On 1st January, 1901, the separate Colonies of Australia merged to become the Commonwealth of Australia. One of the prime reasons advanced by Sir Alfred Deakin, one of the most eloquent advocates of Federation, was that common demands should be presented to Great Britain on the question of Immigration: "No motive operated more powerfully in dissolving the technical and arbitrary and political divisions which previously separated us than the desire that we should be one people without the admixture of other races."

One of the first laws on the Statute Book of the Commonwealth Parliament was the Immigration Act, which included a provision that all migrants should be subjected to a dictation test of fifty words in a European language. Although, nowhere in the original Immigration Act, is there mention of the word "Asiatic," this dictation test has been the operative factor in preventing Asiatics from entering Australia. The dictation test has never been administered to Europeans, except on occasions where the Government has desired to exclude persons for political reasons, although thousands of illiterates from South Europe have entered the country.

The passing of the Immigration Act, and subsequent amendments to it, (forcing merchants and students to remain here only on a year to year basis, forbidding even Australian-born Chinese to bring their wives to the country) putting an end to the indentation of South Sea Islanders to work on the cotton and sugar plantations, became known as the "White Australia" policy, and has been accepted as such by the outside world.

In the early days of Federation when Australia was struggling to her feet, trying to pioneer a new social order, with trade unions fighting to secure and maintain decent living standards, the "White Australia" policy was highly justified.

Cheap labour from China and the South Seas could have

become a permanent threat to new world standards, constituting a reserve labour force which could have been used as a weapon to keep the workers as the sort of slave labour force the squatters had available during the convict days.

To-day the picture has changed completely. We have established our living standards, and our unions are strong enough to enforce acceptance of union conditions by both employers and workers from whatever country the latter originate. Economically, there is no longer justification to make any distinction between Asiatics and Europeans in the administration of the Immigration Act. Politically, it is suicidal for Australia to persist in carrying such a dangerously-poised chip on her shoulder. We are the only country in the world that has gone out of its way to insult more than half the world's population by flaunting a slogan which contains the implicit acceptance of the superiority of a white skin. It is so easy for propagandists to sway people's feelings by asserting that the abandonment of the White Australia policy would mean the country being flooded by Asiatics, that no political party seems prepared to advocate it. "How would you like your sister to marry a Chinese?" is a common reaction to any suggestion of dropping the White Australia slogan, and that horrifying possibility is regarded as a final answer. The truth is that without altering a word of the Immigration Act, we can still treat our Asiatic neighbours on the same basis as Europeans, and have no higher a percentage of Asiatics in the country than at present, at the same time scrapping the whole conception of White Australia by a simple government announcement.

A peculiar thing that most Australians travelling in the East must have noticed is that Australians are esteemed for just those qualities for which their country is condemned. Probably of all foreigners in China, for instance, Australians are the most popular, mainly because of their personal lack of racial discrimination. Several of Chiang Kai Shek's closest advisers have been Australians. Throughout the East, Australians have held high business and government

positions because of their ability to get along with the local people, and treat them as normal human beings. There would be a vast amount of goodwill towards Australia from the peoples of Asia, if they felt they could visit our country under the same terms as other people without the humiliating face-losing pinpricks to which they are at present subject.

## Chapter Eleven.

## THE STREETS OF MELBOURNE.

RETURNING to Australia after nearly two and a half years in countries like Burma and India, where enthusiasm for the war was non-existent, and China, where political disunity had dampened enthusiasm, and production in any case could not equal the will to fight, it was like coming from darkness into light to see what a free, independent people organised in its own defence, could do.

With memories of Chinese troops eating grass and roots, of fever-ridden British forces along the Indo-Burma border living on half-ration of bully-beef and biscuit; of starving Bengalese dying in the streets of Calcutta, one was tempted to utter the popular cliché, "They don't know there's a war on" at the sight of Melbourne's well-stocked shops and well-filled bars. But Australia did know there was a war on, and in proportion to her population and resources, had a record that was as good as, or better than, that of any of the Allied nations.

Because of her geographical position, she had been spared the suffering and destruction that had been the lot of the people of England and Europe, but that does not make her war contribution any the less impressive or valuable. Australian troops had fought with distinction in the Middle East, Greece and Malaya, and at the beginning of 1944 were still bearing the main brunt of the fighting in the South West Pacific area. In the streets of Melbourne, in those first days back in my native town, I saw few men that would have been capable of bearing a rifle or driving a tank. Women had taken over many formerly exclusively male functions on the railways, in the workshops, and were driving taxis, carrying mail-bags and generally releasing men for the Services wherever possible.

Statistics are bloodless things and an unsatisfactory media with which to sketch a picture of Australia's war effort; but having been away from the country during the war years, I must leave it to others to present the flesh and blood account of the deeds of Australia's armed forces, and the story of the country's switch over to war production. I must be content with presenting a few figures which will serve as the easiest basis for a comparison of Australia's war effort with that of other countries.

By the end of 1943, from a total population of 7,700,000, almost 1 in 8, or 913,000 men and women had enlisted in the armed forces, and 3 out of every 7, or 3,300,000 were at work. Of 2,830,000 men, aged 14 and over, 2,530,000 were either in the Services or at work; of whom 1,181,000 were in the armed services, or making munitions. From a total of 2,820,000 women aged 14 and over, 849,000 were working and 191,000 either in the defence forces or in war plants.

With greatly depleted labour supplies for the farms, Australia was called upon to feed at least 12,000,000 people, including American, Dutch and British Service personnel, stationed all over the Pacific.

The importance of Australian food supplies to American troops in the South West Pacific area is best indicated by figures for Reverse Lend-Lease up to January, 1945, and released at the time of writing. Against a total of £303,000,000 worth of Lend-Lease equipment received by Australia, £223,118,000 had been paid back, mainly in the form of food supplies. Australia by January, 1945, incidentally, was supplying greater value of goods per month to America than she was receiving under Lend-Lease.

As General MacArthur's forces increased in number, and more populated territory came under Allied administration, bringing more and more mouths to feed, demands on Australian food production increased, and the Government had been forced to release some personnel from the armed forces to work on the land.

Unfortunately in 1944, the pressure on Australia's food production was intensified by one of the worse series of

natural disasters yet experienced in the country. Bush-fires in Victoria destroyed millions of acres of grass-land, and more than half the State's stud sheep, and widespread drought conditions in every State cut down Australia's wheat yield to one-third the pre-war figure, — 53,000,000 bushels, compared to 155,369,000 in 1938-39. Tens of thousands of cattle died from lack of feed and water; tens of thousands more were slaughtered by their owners, rather than witness their sufferings as the parched grass disappeared entirely and creeks and water-holes dried up. Great herds of cattle were driven from the drought areas in an effort to bring them to grass and water, but most of them died en route. Millions of bushels of wheat were made available from the meagre harvest for cattle fodder, but enormous losses of stock continued.

With all the difficulties of labour shortage, bush-fires and drought, Australia maintained her food commitments to the troops and still had enough left over to feed her own population adequately.

The industrialisation of the country has been one of the most surprising features of Australia's war effort. New industries undreamed of before the war were created literally out of nothing. Ship-building yards, non-existent before 1939, have since turned out the fast Tribal class destroyers, equal to the best in the world's navies, as well as scores of corvettes, sloops, merchant-ships, patrol and transport craft.

The new-born Australian aircraft industry has turned out thousands of aircraft for the R.A.A.F., including Beau-fighters, Mosquitos, Mustangs — and more recently, Lancaster bombers. For the first two and a half years of the Pacific War, Australian shops carried out most of the repairs for the U.S. Army Air Force in the South West Pacific area. Tanks, armoured carriers, artillery and munitions of every description, were produced by local plants, either built or converted since the war began.

It is doubtful if any of the Allied peoples have turned back in taxes a higher proportion of their war-time earnings than Australians. It has become increasingly difficult for

the munition makers to amass fabulous fortunes in this war. In keeping with the traditional enthusiasm for economic democracy that was to be expected from a Labour Administration, it has been the upper strata of income earners who have suffered most from taxation. The following table shows the different rates of taxation in Great Britain, U.S.A. and Australia, and emphasises the policy in Australia of making mainly the higher income groups pay for the war, especially as compared with the United States, where the emphasis is on the lower-salaried class. The assessment is that for personal exertion income of a single person without dependants:

INCOME	AUSTRALIAN TAX	GREAT BRITAIN TAX	U.S.A. TAX
10,000	8,155	6,802	2,269
5,000	3,530	2,777	1,138
1,000	355	338	211
500	137	129	100
350	75	67	70
250	37	35	48

After a glance at the official records of Australia's war job, it was obvious that Australians were working harder for less profit than ever before in their lives. With one person in eight out of every man, woman and child either in the armed services or having served with them, it was fatuous to judge by the still-high living standards that Australia "didn't know there was a war on."

If one multiplies the figures for Australian mobilisation and production by fifty times, and compares the result with the actual contribution of India to the war, one has some conception of what Britain has lost by having a colonial, unorganised, unenthusiastic India at her side. India, with a population fifty times as great as Australia, has contributed, instead of one in eight, one person in two hundred to the armed forces and of the two million enlistments claimed, only a tiny proportion have seen combat duty. Colonial Burma, with a population twice that of Australia, but little incentive for self-defence, contributed virtually nothing to the Allied war effort.

Hampered as she was by the difficulties in free development of her industries imposed by British exporters in the pre-war years, Australia made immense strides when danger to the Empire over-shadowed questions of patent rights and exporting privileges. Restrictions that previously prevented the manufacture in Australia of machine tools and precision instruments before the war — restrictions that are still holding back Indian industrialists — were swept away when the Empire needed our production. There are now over 100 factories producing machine tools in Australia, compared with three in 1939. Nearly two hundred factories produce tools and gauges, as against two in 1939. Steel production — at about 60% the cost of American steel — had been stepped up by 150%. Had Australia been allowed to cultivate the natural wealth of her raw materials and develop her secondary industries before the war, her contribution to the defeat of Germany and Japan would have been even greater.

Watching Australian-made planes and tanks roll off the assembly lines it was impossible to think she would ever revert to the pre-war role of solely a market-gardener for the Empire. Her basic industries had come to stay, and with the defeat of Japan and the disruption of the latter's industries, Australia would be the only industrialised nation in South East Asia and the Western Pacific.

After three weeks in Australia it was time to push on to Pearl Harbour, from where I would operate with the U.S. Central Pacific Fleet as my share of "up-splitting" Pacific with my colleague, Henry Keys, who was going to follow the campaigns of General MacArthur.

In the South West Pacific the 1st Marine Division which had landed on Cape Gloucester on 26th December, 1943, in the first offensive action against the Japs in New Britain, were gradually enlarging their perimeter. In New Guinea the Australians having captured Finschhafen, were passing north along the coast towards Sattelberg. While I was still waiting for my plane from Brisbane to Pearl Harbour in the first days of February, 1944, news came of the greatest

offensive yet from the Central Pacific — the invasion of the Marshall Islands—by crack marine and army troops.

After many years of defeats and retreats it was exhilarating to be on my way to a theatre of victories and advances. It was exciting, too, to be able to participate in the war effort of the most highly industrialised country in the world — a country where free people had organised to defend their way of life, and built up the most powerful navy the world had yet seen.

## Chapter Twelve.

## ON THE WAY TO VICTORY.

**A**FTER a flight across the Pacific, visiting newly developed and won bases in New Caledonia and Guadalcanal, and after a few weeks inspecting installations at Pearl Harbour, it became obvious that the main difference between fighting the Japs in the Pacific, as distinct from the Indo-China-Burma theatre, was that in the Pacific we were making the Japs fight the war our way. On the other side we had been forced to fight the way the Japs wanted.

Fighting in the trackless, malaria-infested jungles that stretch from the Indo-Burma border, with only a few breaks, right across to Indo-China and Thailand, we were stripped of the natural advantages we have in the way of superior resources and technique. We couldn't bring our preponderance of ships, planes, tanks and heavy artillery to bear when we were restricted to fighting in tunneled undergrowth, hundreds of miles from the sea. We had to fight the Japs on their own ground, where they could force us to adopt their own sparse living standards and light equipment; force us to abandon those weapons in which we excelled, and fight it out with rifle and bayonet, rice and atebirin.

The Central Pacific presented a different picture. There, by exploiting aero-naval superiority, the Americans had jumped forward five or six hundred miles at a time, completely obliterating Jap control at any points selected for occupation. The Japs were forced to fight the war our way or give up.

Against the products of America's immense technical and productive superiority the Japs could only oppose the same puny weapons they had used to good effect in the jungles of South East Asia. Once they were no longer willing to risk their navy and air force in defence of the outlying

areas, they had to depend on the individual soldier with his rifle and grenades.

In the Central Pacific, too, Japan was stripped of one of the weapons she had used most successfully in South East Asia. There were no politically sophisticated native populations to be attracted by Japan's honeyed promises of liberation from the white man's rule. The rewards of independence dangled before the noses of Malayans, Javanese, Burmans and Indians, in return for assistance to the Jap "liberators," had stood them in good stead in the East, but in the Pacific — at least until the Philippines were reached — it was what Admiral Nimitz characterised as a "knock-down and drag-out fight" — a purely military campaign without political complications.

Another great difference between SEAC and CINCPAC theatres was the question of supply, or, in military language, the problem of logistics. I had watched supplies trickling into China for a couple of years from the Burma Road days till the time when transport planes flying the "hump" — the 16,000 feet high Himalayan foothills — stepped up their loads and equalled the monthly haulage along the Old Burma Road. The most that either route carried was the equivalent of a couple of ship-loads of war material per month. Travelling a thousand miles by rail before it reached the air transport bases in Assam, the shiploads from there passed through a series of bottlenecks of diminishing size until a tiny trickle of supplies, carried on the backs of men or mules, was eventually passed up to the front to be used against the enemy.

At the Marshall Islands invasion, American transports dumped more supplies straight from the munition shops in a few days, than reached the fighting fronts in China or Burma in half a year. Guns from scores of warships poured more steel ashore at Kwajalein and Eniwetok in pre-invasion bombardments than the Chinese, or British artillery along the Indo-Burma border would fire in a year's fighting. Great fleets of warships and transports dumped shells, personnel and supplies ashore within a few hundred yards of where

they could be brought to bear against the enemy, instead of having to travel half way round the world by ship, train, plane and mule.

Each amphibian leap across the Pacific pushed storehouses and bases forward until thousands of tons of equipment could be dumped daily right at Japan's front doorstep.

The problems of the Central Pacific have been roughly the same from the beginning of the war, the question of pushing men and material west from Pearl Harbour to Japan or to the China front. To do this they have had to seize strategic island bases on the way capable of being developed as jumping off points for the next move. The first two of these leap-frogging operations had already been accomplished by the time I reached Pearl Harbour. Anchorages and air bases in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands had already been secured, and plans were being laid for the next move.

Each new landing presented the planners with an intensification of the same problems that existed in the previous one. The question of destroying Jap air power within range of the target for occupation, of preventing interference by the Jap fleet, of scratching together sufficient transports to land enough troops to deal with Jap garrisons, of getting the men ashore over the treacherous reefs that guard most of these island bases, with the minimum of casualties.

As this book is not intended to be a personal narrative, or war history, I will try and describe typical Central Pacific actions as experienced by the ground troops, by the fleet and by the Super-Fortress crews who came into the Pacific picture after the development of the Marianas as B-29 bases, rather than give a chronological account of the Pacific War.

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Guam was our objective, and for weeks past the troops on our transport had been studying rubber relief maps, photographs, and a large plasticine model of the island set up on deck, until they felt they knew not only every hill

but every rock and tree in the sectors in which they would operate. They were hard physically and in spirit — these marines. A crack unit from an elite organisation. Most of them were from the famed raider battalion of Lt.-Colonel Evans Carlson and now part of the new-formed 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, which later became the Sixth Marine Division. They had been reserve troops for the Saipan operation and had been on the water for five weeks after Saipan was invaded. Morale was not the best during those weeks of inactivity, steaming west by day and east by night, awaiting orders to land. But it picked up as word was passed round that we were to invade Guam on 21st July. Days were spent in endless cleaning and oiling of rifles and machine-guns, sharpening of slim marine knives, rough and tumble wrestles on the sun-warmed decks. Nights were passed in uneasy, sweaty sleeping in the airless troop compartments. On 20th July we had the "condemned man's" banquet — steak which had been carefully hoarded by the ship's caterer for an eve of battle dinner. Last church services were held, last letters written, card debts were paid, and those who felt they could sleep turned in early. Many, including myself and two colleagues, John Beaufort of "The Christian Science Monitor," and Bill McGaffin of the "Chicago Daily News," slept on deck so as not to miss anything.

We woke early in the morning with the fresh sweet smell of land in our nostrils. Tiny red pin-points of light drifted in lazy parabolas through the blackness dead ahead, to disappear momentarily as a white flash fanned out and monopolised one's vision. Drifting lights and white flashes seemed strangely unrelated to the swish-swish of the ocean as our transport pushed through the dead-calm sea to the assignment for invasion. As we advanced the red pin-points enlarged until they looked like ping-pong balls tossed from side to side in a tournament of titans.

Dull mauve silhouettes of mountains were etched out of the darkness and soon the tossing red balls were associated with the dull booming of battleship guns, the fan-



shaped flashes with hits on petrol stores and ammunition dumps. Boomings developed into deafening cracks, faint glows into scarlet fires, low-hanging clouds into smoke-palls as we dropped anchor in the transport area five miles offshore. Battleships, cruisers and destroyers were leisurely steaming up and down, firing single salvos which burst amongst drooping palms on the shoreline.

We had dropped anchor in a sort of cove sheltered on the left by the high plateau of Orote Peninsula, site of Guam's best airfield and main objective of the 1st Marine Brigade. Between our transport and the peninsula a battleship was firing across at the airfield and on our right more heavy warships were spouting tawny flames and mustard coloured smoke as one by one transports and LST's took up their positions for disembarking the troops. Orote Peninsula at a right angle from our landing area ahead divided up from the northern beachhead where the 3rd Marine Division was due to land, but by the pillars of smoke which reached up to merge with the clouds it was obvious that the north beachhead was receiving similar treatment to our own.

No sooner had our screws stopped turning than a boat was lowered and we three correspondents, together with the landing control officer for the southern beachhead sped away to the destroyer "Ringgold," which was to act as the parent control ship directing the assault waves and movement of supplies to the beachheads. The first waves were due to hit the beach at 0830 and by 0630 we were aboard the "Ringgold" moving in to within 2,000 yards of the beach.

By the time we had clambered up the destroyer's conning tower, spectacular things had begun to happen. First came wave after wave of "Helldiver" dive bombers, circling high in the air, then winging over one by one and plummeting down in breath-taking plunges, releasing bombs to continue in the angle of their dive, while they zoomed low over palmtops before lifting up to re-form again.

Blossoming pillars of dark smoke and earth rippled along the beachheads a few seconds before the thunderous succession of explosions that followed each wave of "Hell-

divers." Then the "Hellcats" came in on their strafing runs with guttural coughing bursts which seemed more portentous of death than even the bomb explosions.

Over Orote Peninsula expanding jet black puffs in the sky showed that the Japs were reacting at last, and one of the black puffs glowed crimson as a "Helldiver" was hit and dropped like a fireball on to the airfield.

When the dive-bombers and strafers had finished, the warships opened up again, this time firing broadsides instead of salvos. The entire beachhead disappeared as hundreds of tons of steel poured into the narrow strip of palms that fringed the shoreline. It was impossible to think that humans still existed under that deluge of bombs, bullets and shells, but within the next hour the assault waves would find out how successful that bombardment had been. Behind the flaming guns of the warships, landing craft and amphibian tanks or "alligators," were buzzing about in the water, forming up into their lines of departure, crammed with sombre-faced troops in jungle greens with life-belts strapped round their waists.

The barrage from the warships increased in intensity as the first waves formed up behind the rocketfiring LCI gunboats. From our control boat the signal was hoisted "EXECUTE ONE" — and the first waves moved off with their LCI escorts.

Lessons of the Tarawa landing, where troops were forced to disembark when the landing craft reached the island's protecting reef, and were mown down as they waded through the coral-studded water, had been well learned, and the first assault waves at Guam were carried across the reef in amphibious weapon-carriers and tanks which were equally at home in the water, on reefs, or on land. Working within rifle shot of the shore the previous day under-water demolition teams had blasted breaches through blocks of concrete and coral, iron spikes and bound cocoanut logs which the Japs had thickly sown on the approaches to the beaches to rip the bottoms out of the landing craft.

The LCI's could not continue past the reef line, but spat

out their flights of rockets with a tearing, rasping sound, smothering cliff faces and water's edge fortifications with a blasting barrage that continued until the "alligators" were well on their way towards shore, heading for marked passes in the Jap under-water fortifications.

When the first wave was still 500 yards offshore, a crimson flare dropped like a bloodstain down the grey pall of smoke over the beachhead as a signal for the warships to lift their fire from the shoreline and lay a box barrage half-way up the hills, which rose up steeply from a thousand yards inland, to prevent Jap artillery emplaced in the slopes from firing at the advancing "alligators."

Spouts of water when the craft were a few hundred yards offshore showed that the Japs were still on the job, determined to prevent the landing if possible. Two craft were soon dead in the water, three more were burning, but by 0830 exactly the first line of "alligators" trundled out of the water and lurched across the sand strip to disappear into the line of shattered palms.

Red winkings from Jap machine-gunners on a little rocky outcrop to the left of the beachhead soon ceased when a destroyer moved in and chipped off great chunks of rock with five inch and forty millimetre guns. The barrage from battleships and cruisers had eased off, and guns were firing at individual targets selected by Kingfisher escorting planes. Larger craft — LCM's and LCT's — were at the reef line now, unloading supplies into the first "alligators" to return from the beach and which had started to run a ferry service from reefline to shore, hauling ammunition, light artillery and other supplies.

A battery of enemy 75's cunningly concealed in a little knoll right on the shoreline had knocked out several of the landing craft, scoring a direct hit, and killing all the occupants, including a regimental padre. It was quickly silenced by the first marines to disembark, but had caused more than 30 casualties.

By 11 a.m. we three correspondents were ashore, inspecting the remains of Jap frontline trenches and foxholes from

which they had been forced to withdraw by the pre-invasion bombardment. Some of the amphibian tanks had penetrated nearly half a mile before disembarking their troops. The few Japs who remained near the shoreline had been quickly dealt with, and by midday marines were feeling their way up woody gullies, trying to secure the high ground behind the landing beaches by nightfall. Demolition squads were already on the job blasting passages through the reef so that supplies, artillery and tanks could be hauled ashore as quickly as possible.

The first impression on the Guam beachhead, as on every other I have been on, is the seeming casualness of everyone. With the ear-splitting noise of battleship bombardment, heavy and light machine-gun fire, rifles cracking, grenades bursting, there are people still standing about, moving unhurriedly, giving orders, pulling, pushing, carrying, walking, flopping to the ground for an instant if a shell lobs too close, or bullets are actually zinging past, but for the most part carrying on as if they were on manoeuvre, instead of in the middle of sudden death. The beaches were littered with life-belts, which are the first discards on any invasion, and a few torn and huddled clumps representing the last-ditcher force left behind when the main body of Japs withdrew.

One had only to look at the trees to understand why the Japs had pulled out of their prepared positions. Every palm tree had been hit in several places, many of them shattered completely, and of those left standing most were as scarred as a victim of smallpox. It would have been virtually impossible for anything above ground or in open trenches to have survived the pulverising bombardment.

The resistance so far was not fierce and the main work on our beachhead consisted of cleaning up odd snipers and pushing the front line ahead far enough to ensure a comfortable night. We found the regimental commander, Lt.-Col. Alan Shapley, head-quartered in a palm surrounded, broken piece of ground about a hundred yards inland from

the beach, and he told us the going was not too bad and casualties had been light so far.

We returned to the control ship after an hour or two ashore to get our first day's story written and despatched, and went ashore about nightfall to camp with some Seabees and see what sort of reaction the Japs would provide for that first night of the invasion.

We prepared a communal foxhole close to the beach by enlarging a dried-up drain, stretching our waterproof tent-halves over a couple of breadfruit trees which had fallen across the top. We didn't have too long to wait before the fireworks started. By ten o'clock we had dropped off to sleep but were almost immediately awakened by a muffled put-putting sound. Peeping through the edges of our shelter we could see showers like golden rain cascading towards us from the hills. There were confused cries, shouting of orders, and the soft exploding of forty millimetre shells with which the Japs were plastering the beaches.

Star shells from our destroyers brilliantly lit up the hills at the back of us, and as they slowly dropped, shadows rippled up the palm and tree trunks. As far as eyes could see there appeared to be stealthy movement. One imagined dark forms slipping from tree to tree, clambering among the branches, even sliding into our foxholes. Brisk exchanges of small arms and machine-gun fire flared up, to die down as quickly as they started. First from one side, then the other, then in the centre of our perimeter, came the sound of heavy firing, shower of tracers, flashes of bursting hand grenades, and above all the other noise we thought we heard the rattling of tanks. There was nothing for us to do but hug the bottom of our foxholes. To have moved over the edge, even to perform one's natural functions, would have been to invite a score of bullets from our own light-fingered marines. The only way to distinguish between friend and foe was that the Japs were the ones likely to be on the move. The marines were content to hold their positions till next morning.

We lost count of time watching the positions of the

firing, trying to judge where the Japs were attacking and if they had broken through our lines. As long as the cascading tracers were not headed our way, we would sit up and peer through the dying branches of our breadfruit trees, trying to detect human substance in the flickering shadows which glided and clambered all round us as the destroyers maintained their star shells in the sky. A fresh one flared up as soon as its predecessor dropped down, continuously flood-lighting the ground outside our perimeter so our forward troops could spot marauding Japs.

There was no more sleep for us that night. At about 2 a.m. a particularly heavy fire-fight flared up about four hundred yards to our right, as near as we could tell, along the beach. For nearly two hours there was no let up in the firing, light artillery and mortars nearly drowning the soprano chatter of the machine-guns and the roast chestnut poppings of carbines. By dawn everything had quietened down again, and after a drink of water from our canteens and a few biscuits from our K-ration packets we set out to find regimental headquarters. We found a tired Alan Shapley where we had left him the previous afternoon, sitting, as he had been all through the night, with a poncho wrapped round his shoulders, receiving reports from his forward companies. He mustered up a weary grin and asked us how we had slept. We asked him how he had fared.

"Phew! I'm not quite certain yet. That's the worst deal I've ever had — last night. They broke right through to within twenty yards of here. I don't know yet how our boys held them. We knocked out four of their tanks less than two hundred yards from here."

At that time Alan didn't know that he had saved the beachhead. It had been a mess of confused fighting with the marines just shooting at everything that moved and refusing to budge even if some Japs got past their foxholes. They left them to be dealt with by the boys behind.

Around the long circle of the perimeter the Japs had staged three attacks, using from 200 to 1,000 troops each time. The first came on the extreme left flank about 10 p.m.

and the battalion commander defending the area requested Alan to send him the reserve headquarters company for reinforcements. By the description of the attack Shapley decided it was not the main one of the evening, and told the battalion commander to do his best and keep him informed. The fighting soon died down there but flared up in much fiercer fashion in the central sector, where the Japs, spearheaded by half a dozen tankettes, swept down from the slopes, breaking through the lines in several places, spearing marines in foxholes with bayonets bound to poles. The battalion commander sent an urgent request for reinforcements and Shapley actually ordered his sole reserve company to the area, but cancelled the order almost immediately on some last minute hunch that perhaps the worst was still to come. With bazookas and grenades the marines put four tanks out of action in the central sector and smothered the attack, shooting from their foxholes at the leaping, screaming Japs, who seemed to go berserk when their tanks were set afire.

At 2 a.m. came the big attack along the beach on the extreme right flank, and here Shapley threw in his reserve company. The Japs intended to sweep right along the beach, isolate the forward troops from the beachhead and at worst destroy all supplies which had been landed, at best annihilate the entire landing force at the southern beachhead. In bamboo thickets and palm groves, on the glistening coral sand, the marines battled the Japs back, fighting from the ground as much as possible, but emerging to do battle with them on the beach in the light of a sinking moon and still-flaring starshells. The Japs pushed far beyond the outer perimeter, leaving twenty of their own dead for every marine killed in their reckless rush against well-placed machine-guns. The final skirmish took place just outside Alan Shapley's headquarters at about 4 a.m., and after defeat there the Jap remnants withdrew.

A count later on in the day showed just under six hundred Japs killed in that one attack and about 950 for the whole night. Marine losses were less than sixty killed.

By the end of the second day the 1st Brigade had occupied the dominating Mount Alifan feature behind the landing area, had handed over the ridge to a regiment of the 77th army division and were taking up position for a drive along Orote Peninsula to secure the airfield.

There are no safe spots on a beachhead, especially on an island beachhead where there can be no element of surprise in the landing and where there is no room for the enemy to manoeuvre and withdraw except within a space of a few square miles, no alternative but for him to fight it out where he is. That was the case at Tarawa, Kwajalein, Saipan, Guam and at Iwo Jima, and to a lesser extent, at Okinawa. One can deny the Jap air and fleet support, one can blast out his heavy artillery and usually his tanks, but there's still the little fellow in hole and cave with rifle, machine-gun, mortar, grenade and bayonet, who will lie doggo all day for days on end, and then suddenly come to life and shoot up a dozen or so people before he is exterminated.

For the first five nights on Guam, McGaffin, Beaufort and myself had no sleep at all, and we were in the safest position we could find. We camped more or less under the noses of our artillery—by the second day 105 mm.'s and 155 mm. "Long Toms" were ashore. Each night we were kept awake either by our own artillery or by Jap counter mortar and forty millimetre fire. The troops had less chance to sleep than we did, because they were constantly attacked in the forward area by Jap infiltration parties, and shelled if they were "resting" in rear areas.

Memories of those early nights on Guam beachhead are still very vivid. A confused jumble of the chinking sound of shells being carried to the guns; the flash and almost simultaneous roar of "Long Toms"; sharp crackle of rifles; padded bursting of Jap forty millimetre shell set to explode a few feet above the ground; sudden, lone cry of someone wounded or killed by a Jap infiltrator; the constant play of shadows in the trees; the heartwarming normal sound of trucks starting up their engines again and rumbling along the road

after an enemy mortar barrage had ceased; ceaseless, nattering annoyance of mosquitoes; and the long cold hour waiting for dawn and the cup of coffee we scrounged from some friendly souls — usually the Seabees — before setting out for a look at the front lines.

No one is safe in a rear area even in daytime until the Seabees have been through with their bulldozers and levelled every bush and tree, scooping out all possible hiding places for snipers.

At the beginning of the battle for Orote Peninsula we were moving up the road leading to the airfield with Major Messer of the 2nd Battalion of Alan Shapley's 4th Regiment. With a headquarters platoon and a collection of signallers and other oddments we had reached a point half a mile behind where the front was supposed to be, on the edge of a quarry. While the signallers were looking for a suitable place to establish their radio sets there was a terrific splatter of small arms and machine-gun fire, three men fell, and the rest of us leapt for cover. Beaufort jumped so far back that he tumbled over into the quarry. McGaffin, Major Messer and myself, and a few more headquarters men, dropped behind a clump of three breadfruit trees; several more behind two crated Jap aircraft engines about ten paces from our protective trees.

Medical Corps men appeared from nowhere and dragged the wounded behind the aircraft engines and started to give them plasma while the bullets whanged into the breadfruit trees and we grovelled in the dirt wondering how long it would be before machine-gun bullets would come right through the stout trunks.

At any moment we expected the Japs, who were not thirty feet distant, on the far edge of the road, would rush our slenderly established position. The ground slopes gradually away from the road's edge and the whole area opposite was thickly covered with the tangled undergrowth of a neglected cocoanut grove. Our signallers, all except one who was trying to contact regimental headquarters, were using their carbines, and the headquarters platoon were

squirring on their bellies through the long grass trying to get their machine-guns set up to fire on the flanks of the Japs opposite our breadfruit trees.

The machine-gunners would wriggle along, dragging their guns behind them and suddenly flop forward pushing their gun ahead on to the trunk of a fallen cocoanut palm, firing immediately.

From somewhere ahead of us on either side of the Jap positions more firing had broken out when advancing marines, whom the Japs had let press forward unmolested, realised that there was a deep wedge of Japs inside their lines. Jap mortars had joined in the fray, and were lobbing shells just behind us in the coral quarry where there were some Jeeps standing by a newly established gasolene dump.

Fortunately for us, two tanks which had been on their way to re-fuel at the quarry gas dump, trundled right up to the edge of the road and began firing at a furious rate, forcing the Japs to keep their heads down. For seventy-five minutes the battle raged without a let-up, and more and more of our headquarters company were pulled back for plasma and bandaging behind the crated aircraft engines. When the firing had eased off a bit I crawled over behind the stout side of a tank to peer through the tread and see what was happening down the slope where the marines were now pushing ahead, throwing grenades into Jap bunkers. I was comfortably established in the safest possible position when the tank which had remained stationary for almost an hour, moved off, leaving me feeling very naked, just as another burst of firing started the whole thing off again. I squirmed over to a cocoanut log and joined another marine who had been there since the fight started.

"I'll be a sonavabitch if I ought to be here, goddamit," he lamented. "I'm only a water-carrier. Not supposed to be here while all this firing's going on at all."

I hastened to tell him I was even less of a combatant than he was.

And that's the way it is. The front is every place where there is a cover for Japs. They don't fight to a point and

then withdraw to take up new positions. They fight and die where they are with little thought for tactics or making best use of their forces.

The fight for Orote Peninsula was the fiercest of the Guam campaign. The Japs were entrenched in bunkers which were part of the landscape, slight grass-covered mounds which fitted in perfectly with the contours of the area. But underneath those mounds were strong log-reinforced cells containing upwards of thirty men, well-provided with machine-guns and ammunition. In the end, bulldozer scoops were fitted to Sherman tanks and the pillbox mounds were scooped out of existence; the inmates were finished off by following infantrymen with grenades and engineers with demolition charges.

On the North West corner of the peninsula there was a mangrove swamp, seemingly impossible to defend, but when the marines tried to by-pass it, Jap machine-gunners from nests in the mangrove trees opened up, inflicting very heavy casualties on the 22nd regiment of the 1st Brigade. The whole advance was slowed down while men waded through the foul-smelling waist-deep mud, prodding Japs out of the trees.

Behind the front lines German Shepherd dogs and Doberman Pinschers were used to ferret out Jap snipers, and several Japs gave themselves up when they saw the dogs had picked up their trail. Usually the dogs would track the Japs to their lair, and while a machine-gunner poured a stream of lead through the cave or bunker opening an engineer would seal the whole thing up by tossing in a demolition charge.

Japs hiding out in caves on the cliff faces at Sumay, site of the former U.S. naval base on Orote Peninsula, proved a problem to dislodge, and we accompanied a mopping up party one day to see how they managed such obstinate customers. Usually, it was a question of sealing up the entrance with dynamite and leaving the inmates to suffocate, but in one place some snipers were particularly difficult to get at though in a good position to shoot up our supply

convoys. The cave opened out on to a small ledge about half-way up the cliff face, with a clump of chestnut trees opposite the opening. It was impossible to lower a dynamiter on ropes because of an overhanging piece of rock which would have slung him out far enough for the Japs to get a shot at him. If he clambered down a ladder which the Japs had for access to the cliff-top, and threw in the charge from the shelter of the chestnut trees, he would stand a good chance of being blown up by his own charge. Every time the marines tried to work round the bottom and bring the opening under fire the Japs threw grenades and opened up with their machine-guns. Two marines were wounded in the first ten minutes.

Eventually the squad leader called for a flame-thrower, and from my vantage point behind a comfortingly solid block of concrete I watched the flame-thrower operator cautiously let himself down the ladder till he reached the base of the trees. There was a squirt of vapour and an angry voice shouted:

“The goddam thing won’t light!”

A hand-grenade exploded in front of the trees as the first reaction to his complaint, but a few seconds later a bamboo pole with what looked like somebody’s underpants burning on the end of it was gingerly pushed over the cliff-top and wriggled until the burning rag fell near the feet of the flame-thrower operator. There was another spurt of vapour, then a long curl of black smoke and dusky flame, which was directed straight into the cave mouth. The blood-chilling yell which followed will always ring in my ear. After a second or two, the flame was cut off and two charred Japs were dragged out. The squad moved off to deal with the next problem, and a medical corpsman turned aside to be sick.

In ten days of the bitterest fighting in the Pacific up to that time the Orote Peninsula was cleared, and the 1st Brigade were pulled out for a few days’ rest. They marched back like men walking in their sleep. Their jungle greens stained the colour of the soil in which they had lived, their

faces covered with stubble, their reddened eyes glazed from lack of sleep, they stumbled back on the first quiet Sunday since we had landed, to a rest area almost free of enemy activity.

We transferred to the Third Marine Division, who were about to launch an attack on Agana, the island's capital. Arriving fairly late on the morning of the attack, we were looking for the forward battalion command post when we stumbled across the commander of a company which was to spearhead the attack on the town.

"Your luck's in!" he exclaimed enthusiastically, when we told him we were looking for a story on the capture of Agana.

"We're jumping off in seven minutes, and you can come right along with me. I'll be going with the forward platoon, so you won't miss a thing."

He was a very eager young man, and in the face of his enthusiasm none of us could refuse to go with him, although that was the last thing we wanted. Guy Harriott, from "Sydney Morning Herald," had joined Beaufort McGaffin and myself, and at the end of seven minutes we all jumped up and followed the energetic little company commander, who had pulled out his pistol, and was leading his men in best advance tradition. We started off from a point a few hundred yards south of Agana just past the town cemetery, which we all glanced at sideways but without comment.

We were to proceed straight along the main street with one squad ahead of us, another on each of the parallel streets, the rest following on behind. Tanks and artillery were on call, and positions had already been occupied on the high ground overlooking the city. The idea was to advance about twenty paces, then halt till those behind had caught up, then another twenty paces, leaving those behind to consolidate the ground we had won. We hugged every piece of rubble and stout tree we could find as we entered the main streets, fingers on triggers waiting for that first shot which would touch off the terrific firefight which was expected. There it was! A great spouting explosion

ahead looked as if enemy artillery had our range, and all heads were down for a few moments. But it turned out that someone had set off a landmine, which we now found plentifully strewn along the road. A single crack of a rifle and one of the boys ahead lugged a Jap out of a culvert by the leg. And that was the only shot fired in the capture of Agana. We went from one end to the other of the town, but not a Jap to be found. They had abandoned the place the night before, most unexpectedly and inexplicably. The broken rubble and masonry made it an excellent place to defend, and the Japs would have inflicted heavy casualties on us had they decided to fight for its ruins, but apparently they felt more at home in their jungle holes and had retired to fight it out there.

The rest of the fighting for Guam was mainly a slow routine process of forming a line east-west across the island and squeezing the Japs through densely wooded rain forest country towards the northern tip of the island. The main part of the campaign was over with the occupation of Orote Peninsula and Agana, and although there were still lots of Japanese — and American boys, too — to be killed, as far as a news story was concerned, it was finished for us. It was time to hurry back to Pearl Harbour and prepare for the next operation — the invasion of Peleliu in the Carolines.

## Chapter Thirteen.

### FLOATING AIR POWER.

WHEN future historians come to write the history of the Pacific war they will probably acclaim the United States development of carrier warfare as one of the decisive factors in the defeat of Japan. And they would be correct to do so. Without the mobile air power which carriers of the United States Central Pacific fleet provided it would have been impossible to march across the Pacific via Tarawa, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa to the China Coast and Japan. It would have been impossible likewise to have maintained our invasion forces in the Philippines without the magnificent work done by carrier-borne aircraft, until General MacArthur's land-based planes could take over the job.

The most decisive defensive battles of the Pacific war were won by aircraft carriers, without the supporting warships on either side coming to grips. The Battle of the Coral Sea, which blocked the Jap drive south to Australia and Port Moresby, and the Battle of Midway a month later, which stopped the Jap thrust east to the Hawaiian Islands, were won by the U.S. aircraft carriers, "Yorktown," "Lexington," "Enterprise" and "Hornet." The few U.S. carriers that the Japs had overlooked when they destroyed the backbone of the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour, backed by some land-based planes, were sufficient to halt the second expansive phase of the Jap war programme, and together with their work during the invasion of the Solomons, completely turned the tide of the Pacific war. After Coral Sea, Midway and Gaudalcanal, the Japs never regained the strategic offensive in the Pacific.

By the time we were ready to invade Palau we had half a dozen times as many large aircraft carriers as were avail-

able for the Coral and Midway Seas battles, as well as scores of lighter escort carriers splendidly suited for close-in support of landings. I was fortunate enough to attend the Palau landings aboard the U.S. "Franklin," the newest carrier to come into commission at that time. Her keel had been laid down the day Pearl Harbour was attacked, and she had been launched two years later.

Our job was to go up to the Bonin Islands, pound air-fields at Iwo and Chichi Jima, then back to Yap in the Carolines, arriving at Palau in time to support the invasion on 21st September.

We cruised up to within about 600 miles of Tokyo without a sign of a Jap plane, except for a momentarily expanding red glow in the sky late one night when our night fighters shot down a Jap search plane that ventured too close. For the ship's gunners and even the pilots it was an uninteresting trip — at least the first part. Only eleven Jap planes were found airborne at the Bonins and they were shot down in as many seconds. We lost one torpedo plane, but the crew was picked up within half an hour by a rescue submarine stationed in the area for the purpose.

For the ship's and air group personnel it was a routine performance, but for me even the routine operation of an aircraft carrier was a dramatic and intensely colourful performance. If one could close one's ears to the terrific roar of motors and shut one's eyes to the purely mechanical side of things, it would be easy to imagine one was attending some stupendous ballet performance, with a spacious backdrop of sparkling blue sea and towering cloud masses.

There is the ballet master, for instance, the officer known as the flight director. Dressed in an orange pullover and cap he signals the planes to start on their run of a few hundred feet, to take off into the wind over the bow of the carrier. In front of him are the star performers — the planes. There is a row of fighters in front with wings spread ready for flight, and more behind them, wings slung back, snug against their bodies. Behind them again are the bombers, their wings folded straight up and almost joining overhead, like



conventional stage fairies awaiting their cue to perform.

There is the "corps de ballet" — hundreds of men on the flight deck, dressed in coloured sweaters and close-fitting skull caps, ear flaps twisted on top, giving them a pixie-like appearance. Those in red sweaters and caps load fuel, ammunition and bombs. The ones in yellow direct the planes into position on the flight deck. The blue boys act as plane pushers. The brown ones are plane captains, each has a plane allotted to him. He grooms it, guards it, and practically lives with it as long as it is aboard ship, yielding his place only to the pilot that flies it. There are green ones who control the arresting gear which brings home-coming planes safely back on deck. Finally, there are the leading male dancers — padded, goggled, helmeted heroes with red scarves streaming behind them, who fly the fighter planes.

To the onlooker at first the flight decks are a confusion of colour, movement, and sound, but as the operation gets under way, the pattern takes shape and it is then seen that each colour group and each unit in the colour group has a definite rehearsed role to play.

The red flag on the air captain's bridge is changed to green. The ship is swung into the wind, so that its speed will be added to the wind velocity along the flight deck. Red sweaters are still moving about the planes — adjusting rockets, dragging the little trucks loaded with flat, 2,000-pound bombs and long, sleek, oily-looking torpedoes for the dive-bombers and torpedo planes at the rear. Orders are given to start up the fighter engines, and one by one, the blades commence swinging slowly, then in spasmodic jerks until they whirl around with a mighty roar. Our ballet master in the orange sweater — a merry, red-faced, former Texan lawyer, stands beside the right wing of the foremost fighter. He watches the torpedo plane's propeller, with his right fist vigorously spiralling — demanding more and more revolutions from the straining, quivering engine. When it seems as if the eardrums can stand no more, and the engine must shake itself free of the fuselage, his left arm

sweeps forward in movement so sudden, so urgent, with a look of such demoniac demand on his face, that he seems to hurl the plane along the deck by his own energy, and at the same time, managing to combine a farewell, good-luck wave all in one gesture.

Planes take off at the rate of two, three and sometimes four a minute, dipping gently over the bow, then veering to starboard to take their slip-stream out of the way of the following planes. As the last plane thunders by, orders are shouted "stand by to land planes." The blue and yellow boys move offstage. The reds and browns disappear altogether. Here is where the green sweaters have the stage to themselves for a while.

In little galleries, on either side and just below the flight-level deck, their green-capped heads are popping up. On a little platform beside the flight deck stands a man in a white sweater with something that looks like red ping pong bats in his hand. He is the landing signals officer. A white flag replaces the red one and the white jersey holds out his arms and red bats in a wide, welcoming gesture. The stage is cleared for the last act. The formation of planes circles the ship, strung out in a line 30 seconds apart. The first one swoops down and a rigid hook swings out from its tail. As it comes over the deck the tail drops first, the hook catches and the wheels bang down and the seven tons of hurtling plane are brought to a stop.

But here is where all resemblance to the graceful rhythmic movements of the ballet ends. In fact, the way the plane plunges to the deck and writhes to free itself from the restraining cable reminds one more of roping a wild steer than of anything else. The green boys come into their own here. The moment the planes are safely hooked, the green sweaters rush to unhook them, and they are hustled off to the forward parking space. They are ready for the second landing twenty seconds after the first one.

An eager plane captain persuaded me to take a few trips in his dive-bomber, piloted by a dare-devil Swede named Hansen. After two flights I decided I was not cut out for

that sort of work, and ever since then I always take "evasive action" when invited to ride in a dive-bomber. I still feel like making deep obeisance every time I meet a "Hell-diver" pilot.

My second trip was a support strike for H-hour on D-day at Peleliu. The first part was interesting enough — to take off from the carrier and glide smoothly upwards till we came over the Palau group, odd-looking islands like clumps of dung some prehistoric monster had dropped in the ocean. Below us battleships and cruisers were spouting flame, and ahead of them, clustered like bacilli on a bacteriologist's slide, were the landing craft, tiny white tails slung behind them, headed in towards the beach. We circled round for half an hour watching Jap counterfire set up boiling eddies as it plumped into the water. Low over the island scores of planes were circling, diving and strafing targets designated by the air co-ordinator. My earphones began to buzz and Hansen's voice came through:

"Do you hear me? Do you hear me?" to which I replied with the official "Roger."

"They've given us an artillery battery at 136 Fox George."

I looked at the little checkered co-ordination map and found 136 Fox George was a point near the north of the island on a slim neck of land. We commenced to climb again, till I nearly froze at 12,000 feet. Again the earphones buzzed.

"Safety belt strapped tight?"

"Roger."

"Parachute attached?"

"Roger."

"Hatch open?" I wound the hatch open;

"Roger."

Then we tipped over at an unearthly angle and I thought: this is terrible, I can never stand it. Then suddenly the bottom dropped away from me and I was hanging in the safety belt with the plane's nose pointed down in a ninety degree dive. In a dreadful, horrifying few seconds, in which I was conscious of the altimeter needle rushing round anti-clockwise, black puffs of smoke and a plane

plunging down in flames on an airfield beneath us, and a square patch of earth slightly rocking, but rushing towards us at a devastating speed, we hurtled down from 12,000 to 2,000 feet, pulling out with a sickening rush of blood to my head that made me want to vomit violently.

It was one of the most comforting sights that have ever met my eyes, half an hour later, to see our task group again, and a vastly comforting feeling to bump gently to rest on the deck of the "Franklin." The enthusiastic young plane captain helped me out of the rear-gunner's compartment with a happy smile: "Isn't she a sweet plane, sir? She just rides like a feather."

Back in the briefing room Hansen was very disgusted that I hadn't been able to tell him just where the bombs had dropped. He was relieved, however, to know that I was still in the plane. I hadn't answered any of his questions after the dive because I had gone stone deaf, and Hansen thought I might have fallen out.

But such flights are routine for the carrier boys, and a "Hell-diver" pilot can't understand why some people want to fly fighters or torpedo-bombers.

"Wouldn't catch me flying those things," Hansen assured me, watching a "Hellcat" fighter land, "Boy, they're really hot!"

I left the "Franklin" for what I believed would be more interesting assignments, and it was not long after that she was hit by a Japanese bomber that killed 50 people and injured 70 more. On her first cruise after repairs had been effected, a Jap bomber dropped two 500 pound bombs amongst planes loaded with gas and bombs. This time casualties reached nearly 1,200, the greatest loss of American naval personnel in this war. By the very good seamanship and extraordinary courage of the remaining crew members, the ship was brought safely to port, — a tribute to the design and construction of American aircraft carriers as well as to the fortitude of the crews.

My next job was on Admiral Mitscher's flagship "Lexington," and our task was to carry out the first carrier raid on

Formosa, in support of the forthcoming invasion of the Philippines. Formosa, with its scores of airfields, was expected to put up stiff opposition. It was being used as a training ground and air pool from which air reinforcements could be drawn for any part of the Jap Empire. It was also the chief staging area for planes being flown from Japan down to the Philippines.

Formosa was not an easy place to hit, with a high spine of mountains running down the east coast and most of the airfields on the flat country the other side of that range. Fighter sweeps were to be sent in first to stir up any Jap planes that might disturb our later strikes by dive and torpedo-bombers.

Skirting the formidable mountains which reach up to 12,000 feet on the east coast, the fighter squadrons reached their target areas on time. Expectations of Jap preparedness were fully justified. They were there in hundreds, and throughout the day it was a session of deadly duels, planes whirling and diving in a mad medley of combat in which we seemed to be doing most of the shooting.

It was the first time since the great Marianas battle that the Japs had shown aggressiveness, but it availed them little. Formosa's paddy-fields, hillsides and surrounding waters were soon dotted with smoking funeral pyres of Jap planes. Valuable installations, including the great hydraulic power plant supplying three-quarters of Formosa's power, built in 1931, with the aid of a U.S. loan of 22,000,000 dollars, were damaged. An aluminium plant fed with bauxite from the Dutch Indies, nickel smelting works, airplane assembly plants, radio stations, alcohol refineries, shipyards and docks all received their share of damage. The day's total number of planes downed was swelled by 15 more shot down over the task force, plus nine more that night by ships' gunfire. It was one of the greatest disasters suffered up to that time by Nippon's air force.

After their drubbing the Japs showed little enthusiasm to continue the tournament into a second day. The skies were relatively clear and bombers were able to continue

without interruption their wrecking of ground installations.

The following day was the most exciting experienced aboard the carriers. It was decided to launch a further strike against Formosa, staying in those waters an extra day.

Early in the morning Jap snoopers began trailing us, and all that afternoon came the first series of attacks we had been expecting since the first day. For the first time we were under attack by bombers and torpedo planes. We were warned that several hundred planes were winging our way. Flight after flight of Hell-cats took off to intercept them, shooting down scores before they were within sight of the task force. Aboard the ship our evening meal was interrupted by the booming of our five-inch guns.

I rushed up on top just in time to see two low-flying torpedo planes disintegrate as they hit the water and the sound of the gun chorus was replaced for a few minutes by cheers from the gun crews. All around us enemy planes, which had escaped our fighter screen, were diving from heavy clouds or skimming low across the grey waters, but mostly stopping short as they ran into the steel mesh, which, like old-fashioned chain armour, was set up around our ships by the incredible, rapid-fire, patterned curtain of exploding shells.

Sullen, white-capped waters, spouting flames and smoke from burning planes — turned the blackness of night into a spectacle that took on the dramatic brilliance of pyrotechnics at a world exhibition. Red and white tracers streamed and cascaded upwards like coloured water sprayed from hundreds of hosepipes, with now and again a plane bursting in crimson balls of fire in the middle of the streams.

In what I believe was the first Jap suicide attack, one crazy Jap hero tried to crash his plane on one of our cruisers, and partly succeeded by landing half his flaming craft on the cruiser's stern, starting a small fire. The debris was shoved overboard and the fire extinguished within a few minutes. As the battle continued into early night our night fighters shot down three Jap torpedo planes in as

many minutes. Eventually, remnants of the Jap striking force had enough and went streaking back toward their homeland. Planes destroyed that afternoon and evening accounted for most of the total of 259 planes announced by Admiral Mitscher.

The next day was comparatively quiet. Our group continued fuelling while other units struck again at Northern Luzon. The Japs contented themselves with fighting the war that day by radio, shooting down our planes by hundreds and sinking scores of warships, according to "Tokyo Rose." Next morning, however, they sent out another attacking force, losing an additional 52 planes which were shot down by escort carriers. It was in the late afternoon that day that a feeling of jubilant excitement spread through the ship as the mighty carriers and fastest modern battleships swung around and again headed for North Formosa. Word soon passed around, "the Jap fleet is out."

It looked as if the Japs believed their own fantastic claims of sinking and crippling most of our fleet and were sending task forces to polish off the remnants. There were constant sessions of alerts that afternoon as we retraced our course towards Formosa. Jap snoopers were shot down for the most part many miles distant, before they were able to discover the size of our force. Most of us were optimistic that this time the Japs were really coming out.

Vice-Admiral Mitscher, however, remained pessimistic, or perhaps realistic. He had been cheated too many times by the Japs to believe they were anxious to join battle. He had chased them farther than Cunningham chased the Italian fleet in the Mediterranean. Hunched up in his swivel chair on the flag bridge, surveying the might of the fleet silhouetted on the horizon, he opined: "I still don't believe they'll come out and fight. They'll run as they always do." Sure enough when our first search planes returned from pre-dawn sweeps there was no sign of the Jap fleet. During the morning we sent out more searchers, but it was soon apparent that some Jap snoopers, before they were shot down, got word that the American "devils" must have

resurrected their fleet once again or had sufficient left to engulf anything the Japs had.

Their brief, timid foray ended in an ignominious scurrying back to the safety of distant harbours out of range of our planes. This was the extent of the tremendous naval battle they boasted to their people of having successfully fought. Announcing destruction of 932 enemy planes, of which 600 odd were shot out of the air, Mitscher said these included at least 400 naval types. These, plus those destroyed in the great Marianas battle, represented virtually all the planes of the entire Japanese naval aviation, the admiral believed.

However, even without the fleet encounter, Admiral Mitscher dubbed this "the most exciting voyage I've yet taken," and from him that means a lot. His whole life has been spent in taking exciting voyages. In 1919 he piloted one of three naval planes first attempting an Atlantic crossing. In 1930 he made the first Pacific crossing from San Francisco to Pearl Harbour. He commanded the "Hornet" bearing Doolittle's fliers to within 600 miles of Tokyo, in April, 1942, and later, commanding the same ship, took part in the great battle of Midway Island. Since he took over command of the fast Pacific carrier force, he had destroyed 4,000 Jap planes, over 30 combat ships, plus hundreds of thousands of tons of cargo shipping. His carrier-borne air force made possible the landings in the Marshalls, Marianas, Hollandia, Palau and the Philippines.

Vice-Admiral Marc A. Mitscher is a kindly little gnome-like man with eyes as blue as the sea and sky. His face is criss-crossed with tiny furrows through a life exposed to sea and wind, and dominated by craggy, bushy, fair eyebrows. Terse and soft-spoken, he sits all day hunched in a swivel chair on the bridge, directing operations with a minimum of fuss and bother. His greatest concession to excitement is to remove his baseball cap from his balding pate and rub the latter softly with his hand.

But that's when things get really hot, when he is actually under attack. His seamed and wrinkled face was wreathed

in smiles as the Jap radio continued announcing the destruction of the U.S. Fleet, but his only comment was: "Guess it's cheaper for the Jap navy to let Tokyo radio do its work than to come out and fight."

Within a week, however, the Japs had apparently believed their own propaganda and decided to test their strength with the "remnants" of the United States Pacific Fleet.

The Japs were caught in a trap set by their own misinformation, and sent their fleet out to try and hold off the invasion of the Philippines against the cream of the American Navy, in what became known as the second battle of the Philippines Sea.

Tokyo radio, which has "sunk" the U.S. Fleet so often in the past, was partly responsible for the Japanese defeat this time.

After the air battles off Formosa, in which we shot down over 600 planes, the Japs claimed the sinking and damaging of 57 U.S. warships, including 17 aircraft carriers. At first we were inclined to believe these purely propaganda claims were designed to bolster morale, increase production and rally the puppet governments in the Philippines and elsewhere; but now it seems more likely that they were taken in by their own story, at least in part.

Tokyo radio and the whole Japanese nation indulged in an orgy of celebrations after the Formosa sea battle. They boasted that the U.S. navy was now so badly crippled that the projected invasion of the Philippines would have to be cancelled. When the invasion actually started a couple of days later, Tokyo radio solemnly prophesied this could only end in disaster with the backbone of Nimitz's fleet already sunk in six miles of water off Formosa. Their deductions must have seemed correct when their intelligence reported that MacArthur's invasion transports were protected only by baby carriers, a few light cruisers, and old, slow battleships. It might have been a different story had the Japs known that Halsey's 3rd fleet was waiting in the background. Halsey, who was holding his breath, hardly

dared to believe the Japs would actually sally forth from their hiding places west of the Philippines.

The Japs evidently thought there was little risk involved in sending 6 of their best battleships, 14 cruisers and 20 destroyers against that insignificant little fleet Admiral Kinkaid had protecting the vast armada of transports in Leyte Gulf. The Japs mustered up all available planes, rushed them to the Philippine bases, and prepared for that sort of engagement they had always dreamed about. With superiority in armament, speed and numbers, they could chew off a small portion of our fleet with the help of land-based planes. It was their textbook strategy, and here was a chance to prove it.

The air-naval battle which followed the landing of General MacArthur's troops at Leyte on 19th October, 1944, was on a scale unsurpassed since the battle of Jutland. For numbers of ships engaged and damage inflicted it far exceeded any battles previously fought in Pacific waters. The Japanese seemed to overlook the fact that apart from Admiral Kinkaid's 7th fleet of escort carriers and old battleships, mostly repaired since they were damaged at Pearl Harbour, there was Admiral Halsey's 3rd fleet comprising nearly a dozen great carriers with battleships, light cruisers and cruisers in proportionate strength.

The Japanese plan to split U.S. naval forces into small parts and overwhelm them one at a time, failed miserably, and after the battle Admiral Halsey sent a message to all ships, saying that the Japanese Navy had been "beaten, routed and broken." This assessment was proved correct by subsequent developments.

The battle was split up into three sectors, each separated by several hundred miles of ocean. It ranged from the South China Sea, across the Central Pacific, off Leyte, up the North Pacific, and between Luzon and Formosa. Both sides' land-based and carrier-based aircraft, as well as the guns of capital ships, played a part.

The Japanese objective was to envelop U.S. forces that had been landed on Leyte Island in the Central Philippines,

destroy our light naval forces and transports concentrated in Leyte Gulf, and possibly prepare the way for Jap landings in our rear.

Two Jap task forces were sighted moving from Singapore and the Dutch East Indies respectively, one heading for the Surigao Straits south of Leyte, between Leyte and Mindanao, the other for the San Bernardino Straits north of Leyte, between Leyte and Samar Island. A third, including aircraft carriers, was sighted between Formosa and North Luzon, heading south from the homeland.

Planes from Admiral Mitscher's carriers were sent to attack the force heading towards the San Bernardino Straits, and pilots brought back reports, later proved to be over-optimistic, that the Jap task force had been badly hit and had fled towards the Western Philippines. The northern force, the only one containing carriers, seemed the main threat, and it was against that that Admiral Halsey devoted his main strength.

The Jap air force, which had been inactive during the first days of the Philippines invasion, suddenly sprang into action. Our carrier task forces were attacked by at least a couple of hundred Jap planes. There was a brisk shooting match for a few hours, with our guns joining in as the Japs' persistent attacks broke through our fighter screens. One managed to score a direct hit on the light cruiser "Princeton." Our guns later sank her after nearly all the personnel had been taken aboard other ships. That hit on the "Princeton" cost the Japs 150 planes, downed by our fighters and gun crews.

The 3rd fleet commander, Admiral "Bull" Halsey, passed over to Vice-Admiral Kinkaid, commander of the 7th fleet, the job of guarding the Surigao Straits, through which the Japs were expected to attempt to pass that night, while he raced 3rd fleet elements north to engage carrier and battleship forces. In the meagre light of a thin crescent moon, around 2 a.m., Kinkaid contacted elements of the Jap fleet. A few hours before dawn a bitter battle was fought. Not a

single Jap vessel got through and at least seven were sunk outright.

Admiral Kinkaid drew up his battle line in semi-circular formation and waited until the last of the Jap force was within range of his battleships' guns before he gave the word to open fire. The Jap ships, without room to manoeuvre in the narrow Surigao Straits, were blown out of the water before they knew what had hit them.

By dawn next day, — 24th October, the task groups of Vice-Admiral Mitscher's First Carrier Task Force, of which the carrier "Hancock," to which I had transferred from the "Lexington," was part, were racing north and had reached a point less than 200 miles from the Jap carrier-battleship force. Our group had paused to re-fuel, and during this operation we received word that a small force of our baby carriers were under attack by Jap battleships many hundreds of miles to the south. The "Hancock" and a couple of other carriers were immediately ordered to the rescue. Fuelling was cut short, lines cast off, and with every knot of speed we were able to muster we raced back, leaving Admiral Halsey and the rest of the carriers to engage the enemy to the north.

The stage was now set for a battle royal. It appeared that one of the Jap battleship forces had negotiated the maze of islands in the South Philippines and while its counterpart, with which it later hoped to effect a junction, was being pummelled by Kinkaid's surface craft in Surigao Straits, it had slipped through San Bernardino Straits and was now out in the Pacific pounding away at our unfortunate baby carriers.

The Japs' thrust through San Bernardino Straits was an audacious move, and the projection of their fleet into the Pacific at all was an indication they believed their own claims of having sunk a major portion of the U.S. fleet off Formosa. Halsey and his fleet had long been waiting for such an opportunity and it was certain that with his reputation for dash and energy he would not leave a single stone unturned to pound the Jap fleet to pieces.

We sped southwards, flying fish scudding from our racing bow, pilots munching toast and swilling coffee as they were briefed for targets. On the flying bridge the air captain roared, "Get torpedoes off five torpedo planes. Put on 500-pounders, armour-piercing. Shake it up. We're after them." A minute later action stations was sounded and the guns were manned, but it was a false alarm. Pilots were warned they would have to take off at absolute maximum range, with a good chance of not being able to return to the ship, if we were going to save the baby carriers from the battleships. Planes were armed with the greatest speed. There was no time to attach extra wing tanks. At 10.30 the first pilot took off, with little apparent chance of regaining the carrier.

One plane dived into the water while taking off and the rear-gunner was drowned. Others got away safely, 33 planes being launched in 14 minutes. Other carriers likewise launched planes and we continued full speed ahead, the long lines of planes like wild geese in flight, strung out and heading dead south. There was no circling to make formation; it would only have wasted precious gasoline. At 12.30, about the time we reckoned the first strike was over the target, the second strike was launched. Then came news that Halsey, having seen a good start made in the attack against the Jap force at North Luzon, had ordered a battleship squadron detached from our main force in the north to speed southwards and try to block San Bernardino Strait in case the Japs should try to return the way they had come.

Our job was twofold — to rescue our baby carriers and cripple sufficient Jap ships to slow them up and give the battleship force time to blockade San Bernardino Straits. With Kinkaid still patrolling Surigao Straits, the Japs then would be bottled up. Fast as the new U.S. battleships are, however, it seemed too much to expect them to beat the Japs to San Bernardino. Around 3.15 p.m. the first of our pilots was seen returning.

They caught up with the Japs off the east coast of Samar Island. As the "Hell-divers" pilots tipped their planes over the cloud banks in a vertical plunge at the battleships' decks, the Jap force went into a crazy dance of death, wildly zig-zagging, their funnels belching smoke as they tried high-speed manoeuvres and struggled to wriggle away from the orbit of hurtling planes. Protecting destroyers flung up a vast box barrage of black ack-ack bursts. Battleships and cruisers were singled out. Pilots scored hits on three battleships and several cruisers. One fighter pilot swooped down within 200 feet of a battleship's decks, strafing it with his 50-calibre guns. "It was fun watching the tracers bouncing like red golf balls across the decks. Their guns were throwing out flames 15 feet long," he said later.

That first strike did its job nobly. The Japs fled at top speed towards San Bernardino Straits. Only three out of a dozen of our bombers returned. Several landed on the water and the pilots were picked up. Others landed on the decks of the baby carriers they had protected.

The Jap force was forced to flee, but a major part of it still had sufficient speed to make San Bernardino Straits 75 minutes before our battleship force arrived. The latter had to be content with picking off cripples in the early morning, getting at least one heavy cruiser and two more smaller ships. Our searchers, however, were able to follow oil slicks through the straits and picked up a force of three battleships, two cruisers and six destroyers between Mindoro and Luzon. Some of the latter were straggling behind, and strikes from the "Hancock" sank one battleship or heavy cruiser with two torpedo hits, a seaplane tender which blew up and sank immediately after a direct hit from a 1,000-pound and a 5,000-pound bomb. There were also two torpedo hits on a Fuso class battleship, and one 500-pound hit and four near misses on a light cruiser. Another battleship, or heavy cruiser, belched black smoke, and settled at the bow after receiving two torpedo hits.

From the north came welcome news that the 4 Jap carriers had been sunk as well as 3 cruisers.

The Japs lost what was the last great naval battle of the Pacific war, with 58 warships sunk or damaged. Their fleet has never appeared since except for one miserable foray by the "Yamato"—one of Japan's two crack battleships—and a few cruisers and destroyers during the early stages of the Okinawa invasion. The whole of that force except three destroyers was sunk within a few hours by Mitscher's carrier-planes.

How complete was the victory over Japanese sea power in the 2nd Philippine Sea Battle was demonstrated during the Iwo Jima action in February, 1945, when I accompanied another brand new American aircraft carrier — on the first carrier raid on Tokyo, since Doolittle's "token raid" in April, 1942.

Instead of the sixteen planes that were used on the Doolittle raid our carriers launched 1,200 planes at the Japanese capital.

For two days just prior to the Iwo Jima invasion and for two days after the landings we cruised up and down off the coast of Japan, at times within 30 miles of the coast, and the only sea-borne opposition encountered were two picket boats by day and one which tried to make a suicide attack at night.

Carrier-planes hammered away at the Imperial capital's airfields and harbour area without provoking more than mild air opposition. Of the Japanese navy there was not a sign.

American air-power borne on the flight and hangar decks of the mighty Essex-class aircraft carriers alone made possible the tremendously swift advance from the Gilbert Islands to Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

One of the miracles of this war has been the production of these vast carriers and the pace at which they have been projected into the Pacific war during the twelve months since June, 1944.

No less remarkable is the expansion and training programme of the United States Navy which enabled the

carriers to be manned by competent crews and expert air groups as fast as the ships came into commission.

It would be hard to name any group of combat personnel who have contributed more towards winning the war against the Japanese than the carrier-pilots and the admirals who have directed carrier warfare with such consummate skill.



## Chapter Fourteen.

## ANNIHILATION BY FIRE.

WHEN Japan caught us unprepared for a Pacific war she was able to project her armies so quickly in all directions that a buffer zone was established which seemed unbridgeable by bombing planes. So it was in those days — when the Flying Fortress and the Liberator, with maximum range of a couple of thousand miles, were the best planes we had — and those in minute quantities. Tojo was able to boast with some justification that the sacred homeland would never be violated by enemy planes. But plans for the production of long-range bombers and the capture of bases close enough to use them proceeded side by side.

The Super Fortress was the design accepted for the plane to bridge the gulf between potentially accessible bases and Japan, and the Marianas were selected as the best available bases from which the super-raids could be launched.

It is another great tribute to American planning, production and organisation that the fruition of these parallel plans was achieved simultaneously. While Marines and Army troops were fighting — at that time the bloodiest battle of the Pacific War — at Saipan, in the Marianas, the appearance of the giant planes which were to operate from there was dramatically announced with the news of the first Super Fortress raid from bases in China on the Japanese steel producing centre of Yawata.

By the time Saipan had been captured and the necessary fields developed, enough Superforts had come off the assembly lines to stage the first mass raid on Tokyo. While lying offshore at Saipan on the eve of the invasion we had been told that within six months U.S. planes would be

bombing Tokyo from Saipan. The first raid actually came within five months.

Conversion of the sugar-producing islands of Saipan, and later Tinian and Guam, into some of the world's greatest heavy bomber bases was one of the major achievements of the Pacific war. It requires an extremely good foundation for taxiways and hardstands to support the weight of monster Superforts loaded with bombs and gasoline and extra long and strong runways to get them into the air.

Existing fields on Saipan had to be strengthened, lengthened and widened before even the ordinary planes could operate. Aircraft engineers who built the first operational field landed six days after the assault troops, filled up 600 craters in the Jap field and had it running as a fighter strip within twenty-four hours.

Fortunately the island abounds with mountains of coral rock which forms an excellent base for roads and airstrips. Crushed and mixed with asphalt it provided good surfacing material.

Special black-tipped roads were built to bring the coral rock from the quarries to the airstrip, roads along which no one could travel unless they were hauling coral. Along the "Great Coral Road" dump trucks travelled night and day, one every 40 seconds for weeks and months on end. Air force engineers and Seabees (construction battalions) quarried, scooped, dumped and levelled, keeping pace with the workers in Boeing's factories, who were turning out the giants at record speed for the first great raid.

Lavish use of equipment and back-breaking work on Saipan was matched by the enthusiastic support of the heavy-bomber programme back in Washington. Dozens of airfields on the U.S. west coast and hundreds of transport planes were thrown into the project, to give the advance teams on Saipan everything they needed to have the base ready on time.

By the time I arrived in Saipan in mid-November, the base was almost complete and B-29's were arriving daily, to be checked over for their history making mission.

The Super Fortress, apart from being able to deliver heavier bombloads farther than any other plane, is also the most beautiful aircraft yet produced. Smoothly tapering like an artist's brush handle, it rides like a feathered dart. Inside the seemingly slender tube are gadgets which enable it to be flown comfortably through the sub-stratosphere by crewmen without oxygen masks, and which enable the guns to be fired by remote control with director as much as 40 feet away. Pressurized and heated cabins permit pilots and crewmen to move around in normal dress in an altitude considerably higher than Mount Everest. The central fire control, with the principle of the naval gun director applied to an airplane for the first time, increases the gunners' efficiency and makes the Superfort the most dangerous aircraft in the world for fighters to tackle — as the Japs have since discovered to their cost. The gunner simply twirls two knobs, like focusing a camera, keeping the enemy plane in a rectangular frame. A special computer automatically calculates the gunner's and the enemy's plane speed, direction and flight angle. He just presses a button when an enemy plane fills up a sufficient portion of the rectangle. Each gunner can fire his own guns as well as others from five different gun positions if companion gunners are wounded and the central control can take over all five positions if necessary.

The first raid was delayed for several days because of bad weather, and that was a difficult period for the pilots and crewmen. Each morning we went along at 4.30 a.m. to the field. Crewmen were in their planes, and for the first few mornings some planes actually taxied up for the take-off, when reports came in that there was still a "front" over Tokyo and bad weather along the sixteen hundred mile route. Weather planes were sent out morning and evening to track down storms and plot the best course for the raid, but the weather continued to be bad. Pilots and crewmen, tense with excitement after each evening's briefing, had a badly let-down feeling when the raid was cancelled morning after morning.

The hazards on the thirty-two hundred mile return flight from Saipan to Tokyo were enough to turn a layman's hair white overnight. With the bombload they were carrying, and the height they needed to attain to avoid Jap fighters and anti-aircraft fire the planes had only just enough gasolene to make the round trip. The most direct route was over Jap held islands with good anti-aircraft defences. At that time Iwo Jima was still in Jap hands and there was no possibility of the planes making forced landings on fields within 600 miles of Tokyo. In the event of "baling out" at the height at which the Superforts would be flying, one had to clamp on an oxygen mask, jump with an oxygen bottle under the arm and drop for two minutes before pulling the parachute rip cord, otherwise the three minutes' oxygen supply would be exhausted, and in the rarefied atmosphere one's lungs would collapse within thirty seconds. And if one did survive the parachute descent, it would be to land in Jap occupied territory or in the sea. Small wonder the strain of waiting began to tell on people's nerves.

But the day came on 24th November, when the weather was judged perfect. Perfect over the target area, along the route and a perfect forecast for the night landings back at base.

One by one the beautiful silvery "dream-boats," as the crewmen call them, floated off the runway, the first rays of the sun glinting on their polished wings. They seemed to use up the last hundred yards of the runway before they lifted off and then dipped away out of sight over Magicienne Bay to wheel north and appear later soaring in evenly spaced line bound for Tokyo.

The postponement for a few days enabled Brig.-Gen. Hansell, who as Commander of 21st Bomber Command was directing the raid, to send more planes than originally intended, as fresh batches were arriving daily. Instead of 70 planes as at first planned, more than 100 took off to commence the destruction of the world's richest cluster of military targets.

The Tokyo, Yokohama and Yokosuka areas, each within 20 miles of the other represent to Japan what the Ruhr does to Germany with the Bremen and Hamburg ship-building yards and docks thrown in.

From the spillways of the great Mitsubishi plant in Yokohama and from the Yokosuka naval yards near Yokohama slide Japan's major output of carriers, battleships and cruisers. In the 20 miles separating Yokohama from Tokyo are factories turning out aircraft engines, machine tools, precision instruments, rolling stock, locomotives, and heavy guns. About 40% of Japan's heavy munitions production stems from this area.

Back in our Quonset hut we waited with some anxiety for the flash signal of "bombs away" that would tell us the Superforts had reached their objectives safely. With great winds roaring through the sub-stratosphere at well over 100 miles per hour it was a ticklish navigation feat to bring the planes over the target areas, especially with no landmarks available until snow-capped Fujiyama came in sight. But the signal did come, the planes got to Tokyo, and all but four returned safely.

At the air-strip that night the ground crews were "sweating it out" on the hardstands waiting for the planes they worked and lived with, to come home. When mechanics are allotted to a plane they worry about plane and crew almost as wholeheartedly as a mother frets over her first-born babe. As the sun went down and darkness closed over the airfield, they paced up and down the hardstands, allotted to their particular planes, glancing nervously at wrist-watches, taking a few puffs at cigarettes and throwing them away.

There were eager glances at the sky as we heard the heavy drone of motors, and cheers went up from all over the field as powerful landing lights lit up the runway and the first returning Superfort headed down to land. By the time the first plane hit the runway a second pair of headlights were already gleaming through the velvety blackness. The planes landed as precisely as they had taken off — one

a minute — raced down the runways then veered off with dully roaring engines to taxi across to the hardstands and the exultant waiting ground-crewmembers.

Planes were eagerly scanned for flak-holes, and some of them had gaping rents in fuselage and wings that would soon be patched up again. In one, the rear gunner had been suffocated when a piece of flak penetrated the pressurised cabin, stunning him before he could clap the emergency oxygen mask to his face.

The first planes had taken the Japs by surprise, but by the time the second and third waves swept over the capital, heavy ack-ack was reaching up for them and Jap fighters weaving round waiting to pounce.

Brig.-Gen. "Rosie" O'Donnell, who led the raid, was in the second plane to land, and as he dropped out of the hatch, a tired, greyfaced, boyish looking figure, he told correspondents:

"We didn't intend to score a knock-out blow with one punch, but at least we've landed the first punch and we'll keep on hitting until Japan begins to bleed internally."

The first B-29 raid was a landmark in the war against the Japs. It was a propaganda weapon the effect of which the Japs could not dispute. They could cover up land defeats, present naval disasters as great "victories," but they could never laugh off the fact that fleets of Super Fortresses had hammered and would continue to hammer their sacred capital. The first raid was not intended to destroy Tokyo, but was a strategic blow at the Japanese aircraft industry, designed primarily against the Nakashima aircraft engine factory.

General Hansell had warned correspondents before the planes took off that we must not expect that Tokyo would flame up like the matchwood city it was popularly thought to be:

"We are not trying to set fire to Tokyo in these raids. Perhaps later on we will decide to destroy not only Tokyo, but every other big city in Japan. When we want to do that we will do it and we'll carry the right sort of bombs to do

the job with. For the moment we are concentrating on their industries."

It was just four months later that the policy on bombing Japan was changed. Perhaps it was because of the difficulties in the street fighting for Manila and the Jap deliberate destruction of that city that influenced the decision to burn out the Japanese cities.

I was in Guam on 10th March, 1945, when the Superforts came back from dumping 2,300 tons of incendiaries on Tokyo in the greatest fire raid of the war and the first on Japan. The world's greatest incendiary target had been touched off by the war's greatest incendiary raid. Never, since the great fire of London, had there been such a conflagration as started early that Saturday morning in the centre of down town Tokyo, where in the most inflammable portion of the city the population density exceeds 100,000 people per square mile.

As the last planes to leave the target area arrived back, crewmen told of fires seen eighty miles distant and of smoke pillars up to eighteen thousand feet. Soot in the bomb bays of the planes in part confirmed their stories.

For the first time the Superforts had gone in at night on a low-level attack, dropping their devastating new fire bombs from five to six thousand feet. Tokyo's elaborate anti-fire precautions were of little use against raids of this size. The whole city had been divided off into "fire units" with streets of houses ripped down to provide wide breaks between each isolated unit of fifty to a hundred street blocks. Water reservoirs had been built into the fire-breaks, so that fires started in one area would not sweep through to neighbouring "units." This would have been all right in the case of fires started in one small section of the city, but was useless in pattern bombing from three hundred planes which dumped their loads into each individual "fire unit" and burned it out completely.

Photographs brought back by reconnaissance planes the day following the fire raid, showed fifteen square miles of the city, from north and east of the Emperor's Palace and

in a broad swathe down to the waterfront, completely burned out, with roofless walls of a few concrete buildings in each "fire unit" the only objects still standing. Later photos showed even these walls crumbling under the camera's lenses.

While the fires in Tokyo were still smouldering another fire raid was launched against Nagoya, Japan's third largest city, and even more inflammable than Tokyo. Osaka-Kobe, Yokohama and Nagasaki districts soon had their turn, and every few days later raids of increasing dimensions against Japan's leading cities were carried out.

The destruction of Japan had begun.

The Superfort raids, like the development of carrier warfare, were something the Americans were able to perfect in an amazingly short time for the specific purpose of waging war across the long reaches of the Pacific, destroying at a blow the defensive weapon of distance that the Japs most counted on to ward off defeat.

## Chapter Fifteen.

## THE PHILIPPINE GUERILLAS.

AFTER writing of the prodigious feats of American production, the facile handling of new and ponderous weapons; of the fruits of the greatest application of science and industry to warfare yet experienced, it may seem anticlimactic to follow up with a chapter on the primitive resistance war of the Philippine guerillas. But the spirit which motivated the Philippine guerillas to use their bolos and knives against the Jap for two and a half years, was the same as that which prompted the people of Britain to carry on the fight as long as was necessary alone against Germany, and the American people to send out vast armies to Europe and the Pacific, to build scores of aircraft carriers and hundreds of thousands of planes. It was the urge for that liberty and freedom which people of Britain and America accepted as their birthright, and which the Filipinos had already tasted in greater measure than any other colonial people, that forced them to take up arms against the Japs.

One of the greatest disappointments Japan received during her infamous adventure for world conquest was the poor response to her "clever" slogan: "Asia for the Asiatics." As a slogan, it should have set the East in a blaze, for the relationship of East and West had not been too happy—but it hung fire. The common people of Asia had good reasons for not trusting the nation who produced and publicised this rallying cry for them. The brutal crimes which stained Japan's invasions of Korea and Manchuria at an earlier date not only lowered her prestige in the civilised world, but they menaced her success in seeking allies amongst the Asiatics. It was all deplorably bad policy, for the Chinese were spread all over the Pacific world, and

the tales of Japanese barbarous cruelty were known in advance of her appearance.

There were small minorities in all these countries who were prepared to co-operate with the Japs but, generally speaking, they belonged to the class who were most ruthless in exploiting their own countrymen, and who feared Democracy more than the Japanese. This was as true in the Philippines as it was in China and Indonesia. The mass of the Filipinos disliked the Japanese, whilst many of the holders of the great estates, the descendants of Spanish Grandees and representatives of Catholic Orders, mine owners and industrialists, were prepared to make terms with the invaders.

In the Philippines the majority of the people were more inclined to co-operate with the Americans than were the native peoples who were under the heels of more ancient Imperialisms. They realised that the Americans, in making a mass attack on illiteracy, had rendered great service to them. Also, they had better roads and many public amenities which did not exist before their coming. The costs, certainly, were charged up to Philippine revenues, but America did not commandeer the wealth of the country and starve the social services to the same extent as prevailed where the hoary, hardfisted Imperialisms still ruled.

I came to the Philippines with the conquering fleets, airforces and armies of the Allies and knew little, personally, of the struggles of those who lived through the Japanese "Terror." I am indebted to my friend, Mr. Howard Handleman, for the following account. Mr. Handleman was veteran International News Service Correspondent, who covered the Pacific war from the earliest days. He landed in the assault waves at Leyte and covered the Philippines campaign without a break until the capture of Manila. During much of that time he was associated with the guerillas. He explained to me that the Americans at home knew little of the Filipinos, and even Americans in the Philippines knew very little more, so that it was a matter

of speculation how the Filipinos would react to the Japanese invasion.

They were surprised, then, when the Filipinos began risking their lives to help the few who were left roaming the islands after the surrender. One American who escaped from the Death March to Camp O'Donnell said:

"I'd been in the Philippines quite a while in the Army, but I didn't know the Filipinos. The only Filipinos I knew at all were the boys who cleaned our rooms and the bartenders in Manila. Actually, when a Filipino boy found me after I'd hidden I was afraid he would turn me over to the Japs. I didn't even know Filipinos liked us."

That soldier, turned guerilla, lived on the protection of Filipinos three years, and finally married a Filipino girl, who put on a pistol and turned guerilla with him.

Another soldier, Joseph St. John, refused to surrender, tried to get to Australia in a small native boat, or banca, failed and then lived three years on Mindanao and Leyte, where he was a coast watcher, put it this way:

"The Japanese knew Americans were in the Philippines, and knew just about where we were. They tried to catch us often. They offered big rewards for information. Despite this we were able to walk openly in any barrio or town where there was no Jap garrison. We walked unafraid. We didn't have to worry about spies. There were a few, but the Filipinos took care of them for us.

"None of us would have lasted a week loose in the Philippines if the people hadn't taken care of us. We all knew it, too."

Planned resistance was important though. At first the lawless elements took over, organised little bands of armed men who ruled by terror, low grade fascists who taxed, looted, raped and murdered to control small sections of the Philippines. They called themselves guerillas and even used a despised American gang dodge to "sell" protection to the people. They said they were protecting them from the Japanese, but the people, able to laugh even at their own troubles, laughed. They knew these "guerillas" never

fought the Japanese, always hid when the Japanese came near.

Gradually these gangs were wiped out as a few Americans and a lot of Filipino patriots organised true guerilla outfits and went to war on both the Japanese and the brigands. The guerillas organised both their fighting units and their home front. The soldiers, as Filipinos refer to guerillas, were in regular military units, from division to regiment, to battalion to company, to platoon to squad. A division might have been of 1,000 men instead of 15,000, but the guerillas did not let the table of organisation bother them. They just cut down every other unit to one fifteenth its normal size and let it go out to fight.

At home there were two main organisations that supported the guerillas who hid in the hills—the Civilian Volunteers and the Women's Auxiliary Service.

The CV's were boys, old men and young men who for one reason or another were better fitted for duty in town than in the country with a gun. Young mayors, for instance, who ingratiated themselves with the Japanese and worked under cover for the guerillas, could serve better as civilians than soldiers. Their duties were varied. They were the men of the guerilla spy system, one of the most remarkable any resistance movement has had. A peasant carrying a bag of rice from one town to another on a plodding carabao might also be carrying in his head the exact number of Japanese who had been moved into a new garrison, along with the number and types of weapons and the hours that they changed guard.

There were other things for the CV's to do, too. Guerilla units wandered far from their bases. Often they operated in areas none of them knew. CV's would join them for a single operation, or single series of operations, to serve as guides over the paths of their native jungles and mountains. CV runners operated the "bamboo telegraph," a message service that worked by the relay system like the old English post boys, except the Filipinos changed men instead of horses. Sometimes the bamboo telegraph

runners started about even with a movement of Japanese troops and reached their objective with the warning hours ahead of the Japs.

Then some of the CVs became eager and conducted little skirmishes of their own. One town on Leyte had a mayor who felt he had to kill Japs. Sometimes in the early morning he would arise, sneak out to his bicycle, ride close to the Japanese garrison, kill a guard with rifle or grenade, and race back home, where he would be in bed, ostensibly asleep, when the Japanese came to complain. Always the Japanese cried "guerilla in town." Always the mayor wasted a lot of time, waking up, denying guerilla in town, and then reluctantly going along with the Japanese to search for the guerillas.

The girls of the WAS drilled "like regular military" in towns where there were no Japs, and met in publicly announced places for lessons in first aid, jungle cooking, weaving and sewing. These were the main services they performed for the guerillas. Some WAS girls stayed in their home towns or barrios, others moved into the hills with the guerillas to keep house, cook, patch old clothes and make new shirts, shorts and hats.

Resistance went deeper than the organisations, of course. Farmers gave rice and camotes and chickens to guerillas. Townspeople gave paper and cloth. Paper was important. Guerillas printed their own money on any paper they could get, school books, paper with blue lines, anything. The money was backed only by the promise of the Philippine government in exile that it would be honoured, and the vague backing of the United States Treasury. But guerilla money was worth more than Japanese invasion money. With every American success in the Pacific, every move closer to the Philippines, guerilla pesos became greater in value, and Jap pesos less.

Finally, when Americans hit Palau and the Moluccas simultaneously, the guerilla peso was worth 200 Jap pesos, and there were no takers. Nobody believed in the Japanese

notes any more, not with 25 centavos' worth of rice, peace-time market, selling for 1,000 to 1,500 Jap pesos.

Filipinos delighted in any word or action that demonstrated their comradeship in resistance. Stories of their guile in this field will become the legends Filipino mothers will tell their children for generations, the legends on which are based the first pride in nationality. Such stories as that of the Baybay band will send little Filipinos to bed smiling for years. Japanese troops sometimes were landed at Baybay when they came to Leyte from other islands. Always a high officer of Leyte's garrison went south to Baybay to greet the newcomers. Always he wanted music for the occasion, and always he hired Baybay's little band. Always he was happy with the music and smiled his appreciation, and always the Filipino people laughed behind their hands. Because always the band played the same two tunes, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" and "Over There," two of America's great war songs from 1917.

Another legend will be based on the mayor of a town in Mindanao, who was used as interpreter wherever Japanese dignitaries spoke to the townspeople. Every speech he interpreted reached the gathered people with the opening declaration:

"Long live the U.S.A."

Several Japanese generals were happily surprised by the ovations their opening remarks received after they were sifted through the bright wit of the interpreter.

There will be legends, too, about the resourceful war the Filipino guerilla soldiers waged on the Japanese, a war that had to be resourceful because the soldiers were so poor. They had American guns, old Enfield rifles salvaged from Bataan and a precious few carbines, Browning automatics, Tommyguns, machineguns and Garands smuggled in by Americans in airplanes and submarines. But they had to depend a lot on weapons they could make from old lengths of gaspipe fitted to handcarved stocks and equipped with firing mechanisms that worked on everything from a rubber band to the mainspring from a broken clock. They

had to make their own ammunition, too, and that was a guiding factor in their war.

They couldn't waste bullets.

It takes a lot of guile to wage war without wasting bullets, and the Filipinos had plenty. That was one phase of the war that was purely Filipino, not American. Americans didn't know how to wage war economically, and never had to learn. Americans could never have worked the "soyac" trap, for instance. Filipinos did. They knew the paths the Japanese travelled on night patrols. During daylight hours they lined either side of the paths with needle-pointed bamboo stakes, or soyacs, driven firmly into the ground at 18 inch intervals, hidden in the tall cogan grass. The soyac points were turned toward the paths.

At night the bullet-poor Filipinos hid in ambush, awaiting the patrol. They waited well, too, remaining hidden until every Jap soldier was within the trapped section of the path. Then they cut loose with a great many shouts and a few bullets. Well trained soldiers, the Japanese dived for cover, off the path. Some were killed outright on the spikes. Others were just hurt. The Filipinos were on the wounded ones fast, swinging their wicked bolos.

Swinging a bolo didn't cost anything. In fact, it cost nothing to make a bolo knife. The Filipino blacksmiths with the guerillas made them from the salvaged steel of old automobile springs.

There were two reasons why Filipinos liked to kill Japs with the bolo. First was the forced reason, economy. But almost as important was the fact that guile had to be used to kill a Jap with a knife, and when guile was used there was something to talk about and laugh about. It was fun to fool the Japs.

It was fun to laugh about the daring guerillas who planted an American propaganda map on the desk of the first sergeant of a Japanese garrison, and to throw empty American chewing gum wrappers in the way of the Japs, just to show them the Americans were still in touch.

Or the time two "peasants" walked slowly toward a Japanese sentry at breakfast time, offering to sell him the chickens they carried in their arms. The Japanese had strict orders against permitting any Filipinos to approach too close to the gate, but he also had a taste for chicken. As the peasants approached slowly he kept warning them away, but also kept eyeing the chickens. Before he knew it they were next to him, thrusting the chickens into his arms. He probably never knew that beneath the chicken feathers were bolos which killed him quickly. His fellows, squatted on the floor eating breakfast in their messhall, hardly knew what hit them when about 50 bolomen poured through doors and windows. They were so surprised they were unable to get their rifles to fire a single shot. Twice the guerillas on Leyte worked that trick, getting 33 Japs once, 17 the second time.

Both were the greatest type of guerilla victory. No guerilla bullets were expended. No guerillas were hurt. Jap guns and ammunition were captured for guerilla use. And the Japanese had been tricked.

The Filipinos had to be economical of men as well as ammunition. There weren't enough fit for guerilla duty. Filipino commanders demanded bloodless victories in the skirmishes with the Japs. They demanded that their unit leaders, the lieutenants commanding platoons or companies, plan operations so well they could kill Japs without suffering a single casualty, killed or wounded.

The guerillas were an army in every sense. Their communication system, although unorthodox, was superb. On Leyte everyone knew puppet President Jose Laurel was shot and seriously wounded at Manila golf course late in 1943. They knew he was shot three times by a single assassin who had told underground friends that if the President played golf on a certain day, as was his custom, he would be shot. Filipinos who travelled from Manila southward in bancas brought the word.

Filipinos on one island knew how much rice cost on the other islands, knew of Japanese troop and ship movements,



of the movement of American and Filipino prisoners from one camp to another. Guerillas collected this information and spread it among the people. They also listened to news broadcasts from San Francisco, and mimeographed little news sheets for general distribution.

Brig. Gen. Courtney Whitney, who lived in Manila before the war, and who directed the administrative side of the resistance movement from Gen. MacArthur's headquarters told correspondents early in the Leyte campaign:

"You are getting many stories about the exploits of the guerillas, great stories of courage and daring. They are true stories and well worth telling.

"But I like to think of this unknown campaign in the Philippines as a 'resistance' movement, rather than a 'guerilla' movement, because without the support of the great majority of the Filipinos the guerillas would have been unable to carry on their fight.

"The guerillas spearheaded the movement. They were the strongest element of the people, best able to fight. But it took just as much courage for the old men and young boys and women to stay in the towns and barrios, under the eyes of the Japanese, and carry on their resistance work, which was every bit as essential as the work of the guerillas."

Resistance of the people wasn't something that just happened. It took a lot of planning before it became effective, planning by the Filipinos themselves, by Americans stranded in the backwoods of the islands.

But without the will to resist that was the dominant emotion of most Filipinos during the three dark years, no amount of planning could have hurt the Japs much. Whitney said that. So did the Filipino guerilla leaders, like Col. Kangleon of Leyte. But more emphatic was the testimony of the Americans who owe their lives to the Filipinos' will to resist.

On Luzon there was a guerilla organisation that wanted independence, and that considered the return of the Americans a mere step in a longer program, not a program

in itself. That organisation was Hukbalajap, a word made of the first syllables of the phrase "people's army against the Japanese." It was Communist led and was centred in Pampanga province, north of Manila.

Pampanga is the seat of Philippine revolution, the New England of the Philippines. The influence of Hukbalajap spread from Pampanga to neighbouring provinces, Neuva Ecija, Bulacan, Tarlac and into Manila itself.

Hukbalajap fought Japs, and long before Americans invaded Luzon had eight towns in Pampanga so well organised that Japs refused even to patrol them, and Hukbalajap men walked the streets with rifles slung over their shoulders, operated their own police organisation and had their own mayors.

There were many differences between the men of Hukbalajap and the men of USAFFE (United States Forces in Far East), differences that make Hukbalajap worth remembering. There was the difference of program. USAFFE wanted the Americans back. Hukbalajap wanted the Americans back so that the Philippines would be independent, and they could work on their program to build Soviet provinces. USAFFE guerillas posted signs in their barrios. The signs said "Welcome U.S.A.," "Welcome Our Liberators," "Welcome Our Brothers in Democracy." Hukbalajap guerillas posted those signs, but also posted signs with a different tinge, signs like "Down with Fascism," "Down with Japanese Imperialism," signs reflecting a political consciousness not found in the USAFFE ranks. Men of Hukbalajap gave the V for victory sign like all other Filipinos, but they also added "Long live Hukbalajap." Proud as all Filipinos are, Hukbalajap Filipinos were more proud. San Fernando, Pampanga, and Mabalacat were the only cities Americans entered where Filipinos did not cry "ceegaret, Joe?" Filipinos generally thought nothing of begging cigarettes and candy, didn't even consider it begging. They gave Americans anything they had because it is their way of life to share. They just couldn't imagine one man refusing another anything he really needed. But

Hukbalajap discipline was injected into the natural Filipino pride, and people in Pampanga did not ask for cigarettes.

It was a political measure with them, a best foot forward, to try to counteract the bad propaganda they knew they were getting from USAFFE guerillas and Americans in the Philippines. For no American aligned himself with Hukbalajap during the days of Japanese occupation.

Hukbalajap is important because, with the return of Americans, it was the only organisation left with a definite program, the only political group ready to meet the Americans with definite ideas of what it wanted for the Philippines.

Organised in 1936 under the venerable Socialist, Pedro Abad-Santos, the left-wing movement crystallised into a small, compact political entity with the coming of the Japanese, and now it represents a major problem for those rebuilding the Philippines. The American Army's civil affairs people were no help. They were woefully unprepared for such a problem, and the only measure they took was to persuade Hukbalajap soldiers to leave their rifles at home in territory the Americans occupied.

There are many other problems that will have to be settled, and will take a long time settling. Political opportunists are evident and loud. Commercial opportunists are working fast. And now that the Japanese are through in the Philippines, there is no issue to hold all Filipinos together.

Handleman concluded his story with the tale of the tragic fate of thousands of these Filipinos because of their loyalty to those they had chosen as their allies.

"For three years," he said, "the Japs went on complaining 'You Filipinos do not like us.' This was true. The complaint of the Filipinos was not that the Japs had taken their rice—though that was bad enough—but that they had slapped their faces and compelled them to bow to them. Now the time had come when the Japanese knew they were going to lose the islands, and they were determined to

revenge themselves on the people whose co-operation they could not win. Nowhere in the Pacific did the Japanese vent their hatred in more insensate slaughter—in such fiendish orgies of savage killings by flame and sword. In Manila, while the Americans were marching through the Northern Province, the Japs told the people: 'We know we cannot hold this. We are going to die, you'll die too.' Die the Filipinos did, by thousands.

"Worst massacre of all was in Intramuros, Manila's ancient walled city of Spanish cathedrals and agonised slums. There, last Jap stronghold within the city, Filipinos were herded into houses which were burned while Japanese stood guard to shoot down any who tried to escape the flames. Frustrated in their power lust, the Japanese of Intramuros got their last terrible thrill by killing the helpless, the poorest of the poor, the old men, young men, women and children.

"It was the same throughout the Philippines, wherever the Japanese were backed to the wall, beaten beyond hope, they turned the sword on the civilians, who hated them, and whom they hated. On little Ponson Island, off Leyte, where the Japanese did not even have a garrison, more than 500 civilians were killed in one day by 70 soldiers sent over with specific instructions to 'subjugate' all the islanders. The soldiers carried out their orders. Only about 20 of the Filipinos on the island escaped, most of them by feigning death after they were shot or bayoneted. There were four separate massacres that day, in the barrios, or villages of Dapdap, San Juan and Esperanza. Three weeks later, when Americans reached the island, the bodies were still in the streets, the houses, the alleys and the Dapdap Church, where more than 100 were slain. Four massacres in a single day leave no time for burying.

"Perhaps there are consciences in the world that can justify such massacres of civilians. Perhaps Japanese and German fascists, and fascists of all other lands, can say 'the people resisted, they did not like us, so we killed them, and it was right.' Perhaps that is one of the twisted

'new order' notions which have made most people the world over hate fascism instinctively.

"Certainly a conscience of that type could justify the mass murder of Filipinos without qualms, because the Japanese had few friends in the Philippines, and a remarkably high percentage of those who were not their friends were active in the resistance movement."

The reference in Handleman's story to Don Pedro Abad-Santos interested me, and I used my opportunity in the Philippines to learn more of the founder of this guerilla organisation known as "Hukbalajap." Don Pedro has been called the Filipino Gandhi, but he resembles Gandhi only in the personal sacrifices he has made for his countrymen and the fine quality of his life, and not in the methods he adopts for achieving his objectives. He sprang from a wealthy landed family and was a class-mate of President Quezon and Vice-President Osmena in the Santo-Tomas University. His brother, Jose Abad-Santos, is the Supreme Court Justice.

Early in life he questioned the justice of the established social order. On rainy days he would be driven to his school in a covered carriage, and passed workers in the streets barefooted, with flimsy shirts and trousers, without coats, sodden with rain. Why should there be this difference? he questioned. He read many books. Two writers, Leo Tolstoy and Henry George, exercised a profound influence upon him. During the third year of his law course at the University the revolution against Spain broke out. Don Pedro was already suspect by the Spaniards, and he was forced to escape to the Provinces, where he helped organise the insurgents. After the overthrow of Spanish rule he continued to fight against the new masters, the Americans, because he wanted, not only the independence of his country, but also the overthrow of an economic system to which the Americans were pledged, and which he abhorred. He was finally captured and sentenced to death by an American Military commission, but the father of General Douglas MacArthur commuted the sentence to

twenty-five years imprisonment. The American conscience later revolted against this barbarous sentence and he was pardoned. Completing his law studies, he later served two terms in the Legislature, and in 1922 he went to the United States as a member of the second "Independence Mission."

As he grew older his faith in constitutional means for securing social justice diminished. Capitalism, he found, was too strongly entrenched. In 1930 he began to organise the workers to enable them by direct action to secure their elementary rights. In 1936 the workers struck, but they were ruthlessly suppressed. Some were fatally shot and many others were thrown into prison. Don Pedro made his indignant protest to an American interviewer.

"We have," he said, "a real feudal system. The peasants have to hand over to the landlords sixty per cent. of the products of the land, and the mill hands in the sugar mills receive a wage that makes it impossible for them to live under decent conditions. When election time comes round they are told how to vote. As long as tenants remain under the bondage of landlords, democratic institutions don't do them much good. What is the use of a Social Justice Program if you cannot prevent the Capitalists from sabotaging it at every step? How can we bring about a change in social relations unless you allow strikes? We don't want violence, but these men should be allowed to strike, to picket to defend themselves. The Filipino peasant is the most peaceful man in the world. He would never use force if there were any other way." Don Pedro concluded emphatically: "People say the revolution is coming. I say the revolution is here. These men, and men like them all over the world, are not going to live like this much longer. If governments will do nothing for them, they will do something for themselves. Their time has come."

This, then, is the man responsible for the formation of a party that knows what it wants and is out to get it, and because it threatens the status quo of vested interest and privilege, despite its splendid service in the war against Japan, it is being ruthlessly suppressed. The Socialist

Party of Don Pedro has now united with the Communist Party, and the active leadership has passed into younger hands.

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After seeing the Capitalist system at work in Colonial territories I am convinced that no Colonial Power can establish a successful economy—that is, successful for the native people—when such a large share of the revenue is drained away never to return. It is like a continuous farming of land without fallowing or fertilising. The worst example of such a policy is, of course, India. America can justly claim that she has given the Filipinos a fairer deal than that enjoyed by any other Colonial people; but even that is not good enough. America's greatest blunder, after deposing the Spanish government, was in preserving intact the great estates which had grown up in Spanish days, one third of which were held by Spanish Catholic Orders, and permitting them to perpetuate conditions upon those properties bordering on serfdom.

One estate, Buena Vista, controlled by "Mother Church," has thirty-thousand persons living upon it in a state of extreme poverty and debt, with no prospect of relief while it remains possessed by the present owners.

The extreme tenderness with which all Capitalist countries treat vested interests in property and industry, no matter how outrageously they conflict with human needs and violate elementary rights, is still in evidence in the Philippines.

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Any close observer of events in the Pacific must have had his sense of justice violated by the cynical inconsistency with which leading men in different areas have been treated for the same offence. Some of the founders of the Indonesian Republic have been branded traitors and collaborators and deprived of active leadership, to appease offended interests. In the Philippines the most notorious

fascists and collaborators have been rewarded with office and have the active support of the American High Command. There seems only one explanation. The Indonesians were aiming at the deliverance of their oppressed countrymen and their success would ultimately imperil the revenues of international interests that trade in oil, sugar, gold and rubber—therefore they must be defamed and deposed. These men made use of the unique opportunity to secure the arms necessary for the liberation of their country, and the history of liberty provides plenty of precedents to justify their actions.

In the Philippines two men, Soriano and Rokas, have been raised to power since the defeat of Japan, whose story is worth recording. Soriano is a multi-millionaire landholder and has controlling interests in many industrial and mining companies. Rokas is a lawyer, and is the legal representative of Soriano; he, too owns large estates and also a chain of newspapers. Both of them collaborated with Japan and were left in possession of their estates. Soriano has been an active supporter of General Franco; he personally contributed £60,000, and collected another two million pounds to aid Franco crush the Spanish Republic. He was also one of the founders of the Spanish Falange, a super-fascist organisation. This man has been made economic adviser to American High Command, and is President of the Senate. Rokas entered the Cabinet of the puppet government which the Japanese established, and helped prepare the Constitution, and was one of the signatories. When Japan asked this puppet government to declare war on America, Rokas supported it, saying: "If our Allies—the Japanese—wish us to declare war on America, we should do it." As a further guarantee of his fidelity to Japanese interests, he prepared a letter urging the guerillas in Mindanao to lay down their arms and surrender. This letter was reproduced and distributed in thousands by the Japanese, and helped undermine resistance. This man Rokas has been made a Brigadier General, and has the support of the American Military Administra-

tion for the Presidency. Why should these men be rewarded for an offence for which, in their case, there was absolutely no justification, whilst Indonesian leaders were held up to public scorn? This illustration shows the natural bias of the military-capitalist mind towards "The Old Order" and its determination to perpetuate it at all costs. Soriano and Rokas are regarded as safe men who will protect American investments in the Philippines, whether America retains political control or not; therefore in spite of their ugly background of collaboration and fascism, they receive special dispensations, with expanded authority.

To ensure that sufficient armed strength will be available to clear the islands of the real patriots, branded subversives by Soriano-Rokas standards—a force of nineteen thousand Filipino Constabulary has been mobilised and armed with ten thousand machine guns. These, supported by bombing planes, will, it is expected, be strong enough to wipe out the resistance of the men whom Don Pedro Abad-Santos and his disciples have inspired with a vision of a new order with a juster society. That the slaughter is expected to be heavy is proved by the news that twenty-four field hospitals have been prepared for the operation.

This may cause an ebb in the tide of resistance, but the flood will eventually come again and sweep these obstructions into oblivion.

#### A POSTSCRIPT: HIROSHIMA.

THE gap between completion of a book and its publication, plus the rapid march of events these days, makes any book of this nature slightly out of date by the time it finds its way into the booksellers' windows. In a postscript one can but briefly review the events which brought about the final collapse of Japan, and have a quick glimpse of Japan in defeat, and sum up the situation as presented by later events and information.

After Iwo Jima was occupied, to provide a halfway haven for distressed Super Fortress crews and bases for their fighter protection, Okinawa was next on the list for invasion. The Okinawa campaign coincided with the projection for the first time of large scale British naval forces into the Pacific and the intensification of Japanese suicide attacks against allied shipping. The Japs enrolled virtually all their air, naval and undersea forces into the Kamikaze "sure death sure hit" units.

With nothing to look forward to but defeat on land, sea and in the air, to loss of their Empire and annihilation of their cities, the Japanese prepared for race suicide. The will to survive, to maintain the fruitful life and democratic privileges which had spurred on freedom-loving peoples to such prodigious efforts had no equivalent in Japan. The negative philosophy of fatalism, produced by centuries of misery and oppression, resulted in the mass "will to die," of which Japanese leaders were so proud.

The mass suicide attacks, with fifty or sixty planes hurtling out of the sky at a time and trying to plunge into the decks of the fighting ships caused heavy losses to the United States Navy off Okinawa, but failed to halt the invasion forces. Okinawa was secured, and by the beginning of August, 1945, substantial progress had been made in converting Okinawa into a spring board for the

invasion of Japan proper, scheduled for the beginning of November.

On August 6, I was on Okinawa inspecting the immense developmental work done there; the great Super Fortress bases laid down, the hundreds of miles of roads, thousands of acres of ground cleared, and already covered with supplies for the invasion. Standing near the end of a long line of troops, waiting for midday "chow," with tin plate and mug in hand, I could hear the radio crackling and indistinct words about a powerful new bomb which had just been tried. To me and a few score people standing with me, the damp Okinawa heat and our hunger seemed more important than any new bomb. No one paid much attention to the broadcast of President Truman's announcement. No one in that mess hall realised that a few hundred miles to the north the most deadly weapon of all time had been unleashed and the birth of a new source of power demonstrated.

It took several hours of repeated broadcasts before the significance of what had happened dawned on us. Then the reaction was "What the hell's the good of us working to develop this place? They won't need any thousand bomber raids any more."

Back at Guam, where 20th Air Force had its headquarters, the first photos of Hiroshima were soon available, and even the layman could see that something new and terrible had been accomplished by atomic bombing. One bomb had wiped out an area equivalent to that cleared by four or five hundred Super Fortresses in normal incendiary raids. And in Hiroshima the devastated area included the built-up part of the city, not just the bamboo and paper shack section.

Within a week of the atom bomb tearing Hiroshima apart it was obvious the Japs wanted to get out of the war. On August 15, before the surrender terms had been accepted, the 4th Marine Regiment, the same unit with which I had landed for the invasion of Guam, were embarked for landing operations in Japan. Officers and men

were conscious of the honour bestowed on the regiment that it should have been selected for this prize job of the whole Pacific war. Their previous assignment had been as part of the 6th Marine division on Okinawa, where they suffered over one hundred per cent. casualties, including men twice wounded and replacement casualties.

General MacArthur was to fly two airborne divisions to an airfield about 20 miles from Tokyo. The Navy was to put the 4th Marine regiment ashore at the great Yokosuka naval base, 10 miles south of Yokohama. There was uneasy speculation aboard the transport on which I travelled as to whether or not the Japs would resist. It was a slender occupation force with which to face three or four million armed Japs. We began to feel even more uncomfortable as we cruised off the Japanese coast and heard reports of Japs still shooting at our planes and suicide attacks against shipping off Okinawa.

Our transport fleet dropped anchor on August 28 in Sagami Bay, just west of the entrance to Tokyo Bay, in the shadow of Mount Fujiyama. That beautiful first evening, when we lay at anchor surrounded by the greatest concentration of battleships and cruisers seen in this war, and watched the sun set in a magnificent blaze of colour behind Mount Fujiyama, was the realisation of the ambitions of every man afloat since the Jap attack on Pearl Harbour. For the first time men could relax and luxuriate in the thought that it was really over and they were still alive. The calm of the smooth olive-green waters of Sagami Bay, the peaceful profile of mist-swathed Fujiyama were matched by the unhurried indifference of the Japanese people we could see on the shores. They did not appear to have any fight left in them, as we watched them through telescopes and binoculars. Adults were bathing, children paddling and splashing about as if life had always followed its normal course for them and always would. They seemed curiously uninterested in the vast armada which had suddenly appeared on their back doorstep.

Americans and British were vying with each other in

smartening up their ships for the triumphal entry into Tokyo Bay on August 30. The British battleship "King George" was the first to fly its peace-time flags and replace the brass caps on gun muzzles. Everything that could be polished and painted was painted and polished.

On August 29, the first enemy prize submarines were brought into the harbour. One, a huge craft with displacement of five thousand tons and hangar space for four aeroplanes was easily the largest of its kind in the world, twice the size of the famous French "Surcouf." The size of the Jap subs was a surprise to Allied naval men, but the Japs had used them very little for offensive purposes. Their main role was the supply of outlying garrisons with food and munitions.

In the small hours of the morning of the 30th, our convoy weighed anchor. Dawn found us moving through the narrow straits into Tokyo Bay, the shoreline dotted with white flags denoting Jap gun positions. Battleships and cruisers were drawn up opposite our landing beaches, the bared muzzles of the big battleships pointed shorewards, ready to smother any attempt to interfere with the landing. British Marines had landed before dawn on two small islands in the bay to remove essential parts from Jap coastal guns there.

Crowded into a landing barge headed for the shore we all had a sharp curiosity as to the nature of our reception. Either this was the easiest landing we had made or it would be the bloodiest. If the Japanese wanted to make a fight of it, one Marine regiment would be wiped out in a short time. We were to land in regular battle formation, with five assault waves, followed by reinforcements with guns and tanks. We churned in towards the beach, past the burned-out hulk of the battleship "Nagato." There was no sign of life on shore, and our barge came to rest gently on the beach, the door was lowered and we swarmed ashore without a shot being fired.

Marines spread out across what had been a parade ground of the Yokosuka naval barracks, setting up pre-

liminary defence positions. Within a few minutes a team of bedraggled looking Japanese, some in civilian clothes, others in nondescript uniforms, marched nervously down to the parade ground to offer their services as interpreters. They had been drawn from the ranks of post office employees, bank clerks and school teachers, and were as badly scared a group of men as I have ever seen.

In Yokosuka town, shops and houses were closed and shuttered. For the first hour or two there was no sign of life. Gradually people began to peep from windows and open their doors an inch or two. By midday some shop doors were wide open and by late afternoon people were walking the streets, returning from hiding in the hills and doing a brisk trade in the few souvenirs available. It was notable that food shops were completely bare, that every gap caused by bombing had been turned into some sort of garden, that people had even rigged off tiny plots on the footpaths with stones, filled them in with dirt and were growing tomatoes and egg plants on top of the kerb stones. Civilians seemed amazed and relieved that Allied troops did not rampage through the city shooting, robbing and raping as their own soldiers would have done in similar circumstances.

Tokyo was the main goal for correspondents, and as there seemed to be trains running from Yokosuka station, Bill McGaffin, of Chicago Daily News, and I, bought a ticket at the station and caught a train for Tokyo. McGaffin had been in America when the surrender offer was made and flew out to join the fleet just in time to be in at the death.

We created a sensation on the train. We were the only foreigners aboard, and although the train was packed, people cleared a space for us and stood around watching us with a mixture of fear and curiosity, but as far as we could see, no resentment. We knew little Japanese, and had to ask at each station whether that was Tokyo. Information was readily forthcoming, and soon an English-speaking Jap was thrust forward to explain how many stops

the train would make before we reached the capital.

The train travelled by way of Yokohama, and from the time we reached to within three or four miles of that city until we reached Tokyo, we travelled through devastation that we thought must be without parallel. That was before I visited Hiroshima.

Mile after mile the train rattled through districts which had formerly been the most densely populated in the world. Now there was nothing left but flat acres with green growing through the ashes, and hundreds of shacks improvised from rusted corrugated iron remnants of factories. Factories were reduced to shambles of concrete rubble, twisted girders and shattered, rusty machinery. Residential districts had disappeared almost without trace. We began to feel more and more nervous, sitting there surrounded by people who were technically still our enemies, with the evidence of such terrible destruction on every side. The Japs, however, gazed stolidly at us and the ruins, and showed neither hatred nor resentment at our presence.

Our first goal was the Imperial Hotel, but we found this taken over by colleagues who had landed with General MacArthur's airborne troops a few hours ahead of the Marines. We went to the only other hotel still extant in Tokyo, the Dai Iti. It was a bizarre situation. We were the first signs of occupation the manager had seen. He apologised that the hotel was full, and in any case uncomfortable. He explained that we would be the only foreigners amongst a hotel full of Japanese, some of whom, as he expressed it, were "hotheads." After more apologies and explanations he agreed to give us rooms and produced forms for us to fill in, exactly as if we had arrived on a Cook's tour. Solemnly we filled in answers to such questions as at what port we had landed, how long we would remain in Japan, had we been in Japan before, what references could we give in Japan. The manager was concerned when we told him we could not complete the section referring to passport and visa particulars.

Tokyo for those first few days was a prime example of

how completely the Japanese people had accepted defeat. A couple of weeks earlier to think of surrender was to commit a treachery. The propaganda services instilled into people's minds that with their wonderful suicide weapons no invasion of Japan would be possible. Every person was to be mobilised and ready to mow down with bamboo spears any invader who succeeded in setting foot on the sacred soil of Japan. Now, a couple of days before the surrender was signed, a handful of correspondents without any supporting troops, had taken over the nation's capital, and they occupied it alone for eight days. They registered in the hotels, wandered where they wished without molestation. The Emperor had told people to behave and not to cause "incidents," so the people behaved. Just as the initial wave of suicides outside the Emperor's palace stopped the instant the Emperor ordered no more suicides.

Much of the built-up portion of Tokyo was intact. The large modern concrete and stone buildings facing the Imperial palace were hardly touched. Most of the damage was in the residential quarter, where the first fire raid on March 10 killed 100,000 people in two hours, according to local figures. Three-quarters of Tokyo's population had fled to the country, most of the rest were living in the one-roomed, rusty iron shacks that had sprung up like weeds among the ruins, or in open dugouts that offered scant protection against the wet and cold that was already setting in in early September.

After Tokyo most of us wanted to see Hiroshima, but it was difficult to arrange transportation there. It lay about four hundred miles from Tokyo, we had little information about the roads, and first reports of the Hiroshima airfield were that it was out of commission. We were further handicapped by the reluctance of the Army Public Relations staff to shift their headquarters from Yokohama to Tokyo. I decided to take a long chance and try to travel to Hiroshima by train, as the manager of the Dai Iti hotel assured me there was a daily train which passed through where Hiroshima used to be.



At what was left of Tokyo's central station, I managed to squeeze in amongst a lot of Japanese soldiers to find standing room at the end of a compartment on a Hiroshima-bound train. I had stuffed my military cap and pistol belt into a bag, and dressed in jungle greens and carrying an umbrella—borrowed from the Dai Iti manager—I hoped I would be mistaken for a peaceful civilian rather than one of the occupation troops. There was a number of White Russians, Swedes, Swiss and Portuguese about, so there was a chance that I would be taken for a neutral. We were so tightly jammed together that there was no chance of even sitting on the floor, still less of getting into the compartment, which seemed full of Jap officers.

The troops were sullen at first, craning their necks to get a look at me, jabbering and gesticulating amongst themselves in a not very friendly manner. My cigarettes soon broke down the barriers, however, and by the end of six hours standing with them, they were all smiles, pressing bits of fish and hardboiled eggs on me in exchange for cigarettes. They all had enormous bundles with them, and I found out later they had just been demobilised and were allowed to take away from the barracks as much food and drink as they could carry—as well as their rifles wrapped up in blankets.

After the first six hours the crowd began to thin out and I managed to wedge my way into the compartment where there were fairly comfortable seats. If I had thrown in a hand grenade I could hardly have provoked more surprise or displeasure amongst the officers. They were the most unhappy collection of men I have ever seen. They still carried their long swords, many of them had pistols and short samurai swords as well. There was a great muttering and grumbling and fingering of sword hilts as I perched myself timidly on the edge of one of the seats. An officer in the seat shrank away as if I were a carrier of plague germs, and barked something at me, which of course I didn't understand. Soon, however, they settled down to

stare gloomily at the floor or into space, their hands clasped over their sword hilts.

About half a dozen seats away from me I could see the back of a grey head. The hair looked so fine and the shape of the head so much like that of a European, that when the train next stopped I forced my way down, and sure enough found a European with an English book titled "Contemporary Japan" on his lap. I asked if he was English and he replied:

"No. I'm an American priest."

I expressed great pleasure at meeting him and was probably more than ordinarily exuberant at meeting a fellow traveller with whom I could talk.

"Don't speak loudly and don't smile," he said quietly. "These chappies with the big sticks between their legs aren't happy to-day. I knew there was another foreigner on the train by the things they've been saying. They're not a bit pleased about you. They've just been sent home on account of what's happened on the big boat to-day. (It was September 2, the date of the surrender signing aboard the 'Missouri'.) If you want to speak to me, do so in a roundabout way, because many of them know a few words of our lingo."

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"I'm travelling under guard. I have been in camp the last years, and a few days ago they took me to Tokyo to broadcast to our troops and tell them what they must expect to find in Japan and how they must behave. Now they're taking me back to Kyoto to lock me up again."

I managed to get a seat near the priest, with a civilian sitting next to me and two officers opposite. I offered the civilian a cigarette, which he took, but the two officers shook their heads angrily, with tightly compressed lips, when I held out the packet to them. One of them even leaned over, snatched the cigarette out of the civilian's mouth and threw it out the window, muttering at him angrily as he did so. A Japanese general came into the compartment and asked about me. Half a dozen officers

began to try and explain how and when I had arrived.

"Take it easy," said the priest, "there's a pretty tense situation here at the moment and if we make any mistakes we may get into bad trouble. Don't laugh or smile whatever you do. They'll only think we are gloating over what's taking place on the big boat today."

When the priest referred to what was happening on the big boat this day, September 2, 1945, my thoughts naturally reverted to the scene where 250 of my colleagues, representing the World Press, with representatives of the allied nations, had gathered on the decks of the American battleship "Missouri" to officially seal the surrender of the greatest military and naval power the East had known, and bring to an end World War II.

I could imagine the scene with all its pageantry, and realised that even while the signatures of victors and vanquished were being affixed to the historic document—I, a rather lonely figure gambling with fate, was speeding to Hiroshima. My mission—if I arrived—was to give to the world from the ground floor the first description by a white observer, of this monstrous cause which had precipitated this surrender.

I didn't feel like laughing or smiling, especially as I watched the glowering officers playing with the hilts or tassels of their swords. The train had no lighting and we seemed to spend about half our time running through mile-long tunnels. My imagination worked overtime in those long jet black tunnels, and I thought I could hear swords coming out of scabbards every few seconds.

The tension ended in a curious way. I had asked the priest if my bags were safe out on the platform. There had not been room to bring them in with me.

"Your bags will be alright," he said, "They might bump us off, but an officer wouldn't stoop to steal your bags."

I mentioned that I had a Hermes typewriter which I would not like to lose, and it turned out that the priest had one of the same make which had been giving him trouble. I got my bags and produced my machine and he was

allowed to get his from the luggage rack. We exchanged typewriters, and as soon as I started typing half the officers crowded round to see what I was doing. They were intrigued to see twin typewriters produced in such circumstances and were even more interested in watching the words and sentences take shape. Their curiosity was expressed in a sort of joviality amongst themselves and they seemed better disposed towards me when the priest explained that I was a writer. I passed cigarettes around again, and this time they were accepted. I was given in return a roll of dark bread, some fish and a few pieces of grape sugar. A civilian produced a silver flask of saki and tiny goblets and soon everyone's suspicions seemed to be dispelled.

The officers never looked really happy, however, throughout the whole trip to Hiroshima. They looked like people stunned by some great disaster. Slumped over their swords, which would soon be stripped from them, they brooded darkly over a future which boded no good for them.

The privates standing on the platform were cheerful by comparison. For them the end of the war meant a reprieve from almost certain death. It meant they could return to their farms and homes, to carry on their lives from where they had left off when they were drafted into the army. For the officers it was the end of their world. Their social prestige, their financial standing, their careers were finished. Most of them were not trained for anything but war making. Their position in society was dependent upon their uniforms and side-arms. That was all over. But one could only wonder how many of those Jap officers really accepted the fact that it was all over. Militarism dies hard, and one can be fairly sure that most of these officers would plot and plan to stage a comeback—if not to wage war again at least to seize power inside their own country. Demobilised career officers make a dangerous army of unemployed, as we know from recent history in Germany, Italy and Spain.

My priest left me at Kyoto to return to internment

until our occupying forces should reach that city. I was sorry to see him go, as Kyoto was still ten hours from Hiroshima, and I didn't look forward to the long journey alone.

The train rumbled on through the night, and it was impossible to get any sleep, huddled in the seat with people and their bundles jammed in all round. The officers shoved civilians back on to the platform when they tried to swarm in through the windows, but brother officers were allowed in no matter how they arrived. The procedure was reversed on my return journey, when the surrender had already been signed. Civilians were pushing soldiers, including officers, off trains, so sudden was the lowering of the latter's prestige.

At 4 a.m. the civilian who had provided the saki prodded me and said: "Kono eki wa Hiroshima desu," and so I piled out through the window into Hiroshima station, with the civilian throwing my bags out after me.

The station was badly knocked about and I had to leave by some improvised wooden gates. Just as I was congratulating myself on having actually arrived without real difficulties—the first outsider to visit Hiroshima—I felt a hand on my arm, and there were two black-uniformed police, nearly stumbling over their long swords in their anxiety to grab me. I tried to shake them off, but they held on and escorted me to a shelter of bags and rusty tin, within a stone's throw of the station. There were a broken chair, a table and three bicycles, only one of which had tyres. My guard sat me down in the chair and asked me questions which I didn't understand.

I told them many times in my poor Japanese that I was a "shimbun kisha" (correspondent), but did not seem to impress them. They woke up a woman who slept on the floor behind a bag screen and she prepared a breakfast of hot water and beans. Several times I got up to go, but each time was gently pushed back into the chair. It was too dark to see anything, and light rain was falling outside, so I was not too anxious at first about the wasted time. As

soon as it became daylight, however, I opened up my bag, put on my officer's cap, strapped on my pistol and strode to the doorway. This time my two captors sprang to attention, saluted and let me go.

I never discovered why I was arrested and why released. Possibly they thought I was an escaped prisoner of war, until I put on my official garb; perhaps they thought they must protect me from the local civilians, who were reportedly extremely anti-foreign. It was a kindly detention.

The railway station was on the extreme outskirts of the city, and on the fringe of the belt of heavy destruction. The central ticket hall was still standing, but roof and windows were badly damaged. The rest of the station, offices, waiting rooms and ticket barriers had been swept away. From the improvised police station I could look across towards some outlines of buildings standing about two or three miles distant. There seemed to be nothing in between as I set out to walk towards those buildings in what I later found to be the centre of the city, I realised there was nothing left above ground for those miles and several miles beyond.

Walking through those Hiroshima streets one had a feeling of having been transplanted into some death stricken other planet. There was nothing but awful devastation and desolation. Lead-grey clouds hung low over the waste that had been a city of more than a quarter of a million people. Mists seemed to issue forth from fissures in the soil. There was a dank, acrid, sulphurous smell, and people hurried past without pausing or speaking to each other, white masks covering mouths and nostrils. Buildings had been pounded into grey and reddish dust, solidified into ridges and banks by the frequent rains.

As I gazed upon this panorama of terrible death and ghastly devastation which stretched to the horizon; with my nostrils assailed by the strange odour of this new death, I knew why the spirit of the men who signed the surrender had collapsed, and why even a nation of militarists, con-

fronted with this awful spectacle of man-planned destruction, had lowered their flag, realising the futility of war upon such terms.

The bomb had fallen just a month previously and there was no time for greenery to cover the scars, even if vegetation would grow on that infested waste. Many trees, especially young willowy ones, were still standing, but stripped of leaves and smaller branches. They had offered resiliency to the terrible blast, but older stouter trees were lying on their sides, with yawning pits where their roots had been. I walked along a tram line from which all trace of overhead gear had disappeared. Trams themselves were lying on their sides or backs, burned-out hulks blown fifty feet away from the tracks.

No one stopped to look at me. Everybody seemed hurried and intent on their own business, whatever it was that brought them into this city of death. In the centre of the town I found that the buildings I had seen from the distance were outlines only, having been gutted by fires which swept through after most of the city had dissolved in a great pillar of dust. In one building, however, there was a police headquarters, and here I managed to make myself and my wants known. Eventually the police provided me with an interpreter, car and guide. The latter was from the local Domei News Agency, the interpreter was a charming Canadian-born Japanese girl.

The Domei man, who was four miles from the centre of Hiroshima when the bomb fell, described the event as follows:

"We had an alarm early in the morning, but only two aircraft appeared. We thought they were reconnaissance planes and nobody took much notice. The 'All Clear' sounded and everybody started on their way back to work. Then at 8.20 a.m. one plane came back. We thought it was another photo plane, and alarms weren't even sounded. I was just about to leave for work when there was a blinding light, as if from a giant flash of lightning. At the same time I felt a scorching heat on my face and the house

dropped about me. While I was still on the ground there sounded a booming explosion as if a two ton bomb had dropped alongside me. When I looked out there was a tremendous pillar of black smoke, shaped like a parachute, drifting upwards with a scarlet thread in the middle of it. As I watched the scarlet was diffused through the smoke pillar until the whole thing was glowing red. Hiroshima had disappeared. I knew something new to our experience had occurred. I tried to phone our office, then the police and fire brigade, to find out what had happened, but I couldn't even raise the exchange."

He couldn't raise the exchange because all the telephone operators had been killed. Seventy-five per cent. of the police force, fire brigade and A.R.P. workers were also killed amongst the hundred thousand dead of Hiroshima.

From the third floor of the police station, which had formerly been a bank, and the most solid building in the city, one could see almost to the horizon, nothing but flat acres of ground, from which rose a few trees and factory chimneys. Amongst the buildings still standing was a church, which had jumped into the air from about three feet off the ground. It had twisted round and come to rest practically intact but crazily athwart its foundations. Low level heavy concrete bridges had jumped off their piles, some spans landing back again, others dropping down into the river. All balustrades and stone work from bridges had disappeared. Of the Emperor's palace and large military barracks there was not a sign except for red dust and broken grey tiles strewn on the ground. There were no broken walls, large chunks of rubble, blocks of stone and concrete, nor any craters as one usually sees in a bombed city. It was destruction by pulverisation. The only explanation for these buildings still standing seemed to be that they were directly underneath the bomb as it parachuted down to explode and they were perhaps caught in a sort of safety cone, as the explosive force expanded round about them.

Floating in the river were hundreds and hundreds of

dead fish, floating with their white bellies dully gleaming in the misty air. Although scientists who visited Hiroshima later testified that there was no radioactivity left in soil or water, they did not have an adequate explanation for the dead fish in the river. These could not have been victims from the original explosion, otherwise they would have been washed out to sea weeks earlier.

In an improvised hospital on the outer rim of the devastated city, I saw evidence of what atomic bombing does to humans. Stretched out on filthy mats on the floor were scores of people in various stages of dying from atomic radiation. At least the doctors assured me they must all die, unless Allied doctors and scientists had some antidote to the terrible wasting disease that had stricken down thousands of people since the bomb was dropped.

All the victims were terribly emaciated and gave off an odor that almost halted me at the hospital door. Some had purplish burns on face and body, others had bunched bluish black marks near the necks. The doctor in charge told me that he was completely at a loss how to treat his patients. A group of Japanese scientists working on some cadavers in a filthy dissecting room, told me they had no clue as to what caused the wave of deaths, after the bombing.

The chief doctor said: "At first we treated these burns as we would any others, but patients just wasted away and died. Then people without marks on them, who hadn't been here when the bomb exploded, fell sick and died. We thought there must be some poisonous gases left in the wake of the bomb, and people were told to wear masks. We soon found there was no damage to the respiratory organs, but people still feel safer with their masks. Patients came to us with swelling throats, and we thought we were in for a diphtheria epidemic, but they wasted away, hair fell out, they started bleeding through eyes, ears, nose and mouth, and within a few days they were dead. We tried to build them up by giving Vitamin C injections, but the flesh rotted away from the needle and they died just

the same. We have found out now that something is killing off the white corpuscles, and there's not a thing we can do to arrest it. There is no known way of replacing white corpuscles."

"What are you doing for these people?" I asked.

"We have no nurses. Most of them were killed and of those that were left some died through handling the patients, others just left. Now we don't admit patients unless their relatives stay here and look after them. We try and provide vitamin-rich foods and keep the wounds clean. Apart from that we can do nothing."

The assistant city health officer told me they had found that those who took sick after the raid, in almost every case, were those who had been digging round in the ruins for bodies of relatives or for buried belongings. They thought there must be some rays released by disturbing the soil, so now no one was allowed to dig amongst the ruins.

"There are thirty thousand bodies in the dirt and rubble," he said, "and they must remain unburied until we can find some way of dealing with the disease."

One curious thing that I heard several times when I was in Hiroshima was that cows and horses that were severely wounded and burned had nearly all recovered, whereas most humans who were marked in any way had died.

A commission of Japanese scientists was at work in the city, trying to decide whether it was safe to rebuild Hiroshima on the old site, or whether they would have to build elsewhere. The suggestion by one British scientist that the ground would be contaminated for at least seventy years, was taken very seriously in view of the atomic plague which had smitten the city.

Through the good offices and perseverance of the Canadian-Japanese interpreter I managed to get the first story of Hiroshima phoned back to my colleague in Tokyo, and so to the outside world.

My black-uniformed police took charge of me again

at the Hiroshima station, putting me under benevolent detention, feeding me on dried beans and weak tea, and allowing me to sleep on the wooden floor until my train left in the early hours of the morning, back to Tokyo.

Hiroshima marked the end of World War II, and the beginning of the new Atomic Age. If one can derive any comfort from the reverse side of a picture as terrible as that of Hiroshima, it is that by its very frightfulness the development of atomic power will force nations to renounce war as a means of settling their disputes. The horrible fact of Hiroshima has given added urgency to the United Nations organisation, has established in most people's minds that unless we can act together to build world peace, civilisation will be destroyed. The scientists who developed the bomb in America and Britain have uttered the most solemn warnings as to what will happen in the event of another war. The bomb that destroyed Hiroshima was the smallest unit which could be produced. Bombs twenty to fifty times as powerful are possible with the knowledge that scientists now have. Professor Oppenheimer, of America, and Professor Oliphant, of Great Britain, the leading atomic scientists of their respective countries, have confirmed that any country reasonably advanced in scientific research can produce atomic power within a year or two, and that international control is the only way of avoiding world catastrophe. Control or catastrophe are the only two alternatives, and control cannot be effective without a strong world organisation.

After leaving Hiroshima I had the happiest experience of my four years war reporting. I knew I was four hundred and fifty miles ahead of our occupying forces, and I determined to visit a number of prison camps which I could reach days before our relief forces could arrive. There were two camps on the west Honshu Coast and three on the inland sea. The personal risks were certainly great, but no greater than those taken on my one-man trip to Hiroshima.

Never will I forget the reception I got from our men.

American marines, British Imperial troops, and some Australians who were specially elated to think that it was one of their countrymen who should be the man to break the long silence of three and a half years with this wonderful story of victory.

After giving instructions to the Japanese Commandant, with all the authority I could muster, to obey surrender conditions and release the prisoners and see they were well fed, I then, in response to the entreaties of the men, gave a ten minutes talk, which I repeated at each camp. I have addressed various types of audiences in my time, but never such eager listeners. These men were famishing, they bore on their bodies all the evidences of physical hunger and suffering, but above all they were famishing for news. Hesitating for a moment whilst I called to mind the news most vital for them to hear, I felt the compulsion of scores of eyes that glittered with the intensity of their appeal, for me to begin. I could not stop long, and had to hurry away, leaving many questions unanswered.

My most dramatic encounter with Japanese authorities was at a large camp at Tsuruga. Here I sensed definite hostility by those in charge. I realised that I had to stage a supreme game of bluff, or fail in my mission. The news I heard from our men was disturbing. In the last few days there had been increasing concentration of troops around the camp, all fully armed, and our men had become suspicious. I put on my sternest expression, kept my hand on my revolver and sent for the Commandant. He saluted me on arrival, but I did not return it, but demanded why the terms of surrender were not being carried out. Why were these armed troops surrounding the camp? Why were not the prisoners released and placed in control of their own officers? The Commandant, in a surly tone, said he could not act without instructions from his superior officers. "Your superior officer," I said, "is General MacArthur, and I demand that his orders be carried out immediately. Parade before me in ten minutes your Chief of Army Troops and Chief of Military Police."

While this scene was being enacted I had a delighted audience of American Marines, who appreciated seeing the tables turned on a particularly venomous Japanese type, known—very secretly—amongst our men as “The Pig.” When the other officers arrived there was a hurried consultation between them, and I had some tense moments wondering how they would react to my bluff. To my intense relief they all approached where I was sitting, as if I had the whole of the Allies’ military might within call—bowed abjectly and said they would carry out surrender terms at once. By nightfall the Japanese had piled in their arms. A guard of our men were in charge, and to celebrate the great event the Japanese drove a cow into the camp, and our men had their first beefsteak in three and a half years.

Perhaps it was acting in an irregular manner, but it must be remembered I had just come from Hiroshima, where the whole fabric of our civilisation had received such a shattering that men everywhere were discussing whether the planet ever again could be made safe for human life. Why, then, delay such happiness as liberty could bring to these men one hour longer than necessary? Highly irregular? — So was the atomic bomb.

This was the end of my assignment in the Pacific, and this last act in four years of war I look back upon without regret.

\* \* \* \* \*

The end of the Pacific war brought with it a plague of troubles in the Far East, hinted at in earlier chapters of this book. The atomic bomb and abrupt ending of the war, shattered some prophecies I had made, particularly as regards China. Landings in North China were not necessary because Japan was blasted out of the war by other means. American troops who did land were not used to fight the Japanese, but to help Chiang Kai Shek attempt what he had never been able to do alone—to wipe out the Communists. In one of the most muddle-headed periods of

American diplomacy, the United States were within an ace of becoming committed to intervention in civil war in China. It is doubtful if Chiang Kai Shek would ever have attacked the Communist troops had he not been assured by Ambassador Hurley of United States support in supplying troops, equipment and transportation of Kuomintang troops.

Fortunately for democracy in China there was a band of impartial observers acting as war correspondents, which included many of the top-ranking journalists of “The States,” whose testimony could not be disregarded. With the end of the war they returned home, and, relieved of heavy-handed Chungking censorship, they began to publish the truth. All of these men were sincere friends of China, whose only concern was that these peasant people who had endured such unspeakable sufferings, should at least have the prospect of a happier future.

Alarmed by American policy, and realising that it was encouraging the Chungking government, through its sense of power gained by American backing and lend-lease weapons, to drift further and further away from the principles of the Republic, they set up a “Committee for a Democratic Policy towards China.” These correspondents, both within and without the committee, indulged in some plain speaking. One popular journalist declared that the Chungking government was “a cross between Tammany Hall and the Spanish Inquisition.” From Dr. Edgar Snow, the American public learned that Chiang had practically betrayed the revolution by committing the country to a semi-feudal economy of landlordism, peasant debt bondage and usury—the very evils which his one-time leader, Dr. Sun Yat Sen had spent his life to abolish. Edgar Snow also told the Americans that “It was fortunate that the Communist party existed, as it is the great barrier in the way of the realisation of Chiang’s fascist ideals, and the fact of its existence enables several minor parties with an important following, and liberals, to exist.” Madame Sun Yat Sen, whose loyalty to the principles of the revolution has never

wavered, and who has remained a poor woman whilst all the other members of the Soong family have accumulated great wealth, declared that "Reaction and fascism are strong in China. This is proved by the diversion of part of our National Army to the blockading of the guerilla areas, where the principles laid down by Sun Yat Sen still live." On August 26th, 1945, whilst I was on a transport on the way to Japan for the surrender, this American Committee to which I have referred, issued a statement over the signatures of Leland Stowe—a correspondent of international fame—and a number of other well known correspondents and authors, which read: "Today our government spokesmen and military leaders in China are adopting a policy which would not be approved by millions of Americans. They are lending political and military assistance to Kuomintang dictatorship, which has resisted democratic reforms in China and has given orders to Japanese and quivering puppet troops to hold their weapons, and if necessary use them, rather than surrender to the patriotic Eighth Route and new Fourth Route armies that have assumed the greatest burden of allied fighting in North and Central China. This policy on the part of our American representatives in China serves to wipe out the efforts of the Chinese people for a democratic and united nation. Now we are meddling, not to accelerate but to hold back the democratic working out of the Chinese situation."

The statement proceeded to show that there had been a rapid deterioration in the position since the recall of General Stillwell in response to the demand of Chiang Kai Shek, and that his successor, General Wedemeyer, by his extraordinary interpretation of the instructions governing the use of lend-lease weapons, was giving to the Chungking government not only transport for its armies, but military aid to suppress the Communists. Instruction from War Department said that weapons and personnel may not be used against the Chinese except for the protection of American property, "but," said General Wedemeyer, "the transport planes being used to transport Kuomin-

tang troops, are American property," therefore he issued orders that if they were fired on by either Communists or Japanese, they were to return the fire and drop bombs on their assailants. The Communists were therefore expected to allow their enemies to land without resistance, or be destroyed by bombs and fire from the air. General Wedemeyer also admitted that twenty Chinese divisions of the Kuomintang have been armed completely with American lend-lease equipment, including artillery, and that nineteen divisions have been armed to the extent of 50 to 75 per cent. It had been originally intended that those divisions should attack Japanese-held Canton, but they are now being used for civil war. In Chungking on August 3rd the General admitted that American weapons had been used by General Hu Tsung-Nan's troops against the Eighth Route army in Chunua and Shenshi, but claimed that he had not been responsible for the allotment of these weapons, and that "they must have been stolen by unauthorised persons."

As I pointed out earlier in this book, this General Hu Tsung-Nan is one of the three most powerful men in China, and I stated he has long been waiting for the go-ahead signal to cross into Communist territory and attack their armies. Apparently, from the information secured by the American Committee whilst I have been roaming the Pacific in air-craft carriers and battleships, the signal was given, and strengthened by the illegal seizure of lend-lease weapons, the attack was launched. As a further indication of the drift towards Fascism, we have the contemptuous flouting of liberal opinion by the Generalissimo's action in authorising General Ho Ying Chen to accept the Japanese surrender.

Of this General the American Committee stated:

"General Ho Ying Chen has long been known as the leader of the pro-Japanese Kuomintang clique. He was a close collaborator of Wang Ching-Wei, Chinese number one traitor. During the period of non-resistance from 1931 to 1937, General Ho Ying Chen went to Peiping and signed



the infamous Ho Umeta agreement, which practically gave a free hand to the Japanese in North China. He held the important post of Minister of War, but after the recall of General Stillwell, in obedience to public pressure both from within and without China, he was removed from office.

Now the Generalissimo, with his hand immensely strengthened by the support of General Wedemeyer and Ambassador Hurley, felt he was powerful enough to ignore liberal sentiment and give his own illiberal policy full rein.

Chungking, with more malice than wisdom, has just struck at the American Committee and revenged itself by banning eight of the highest ranking American war correspondents from again entering China. This Committee has, however, done its work and has created a public opinion which is reflected in recent happenings.

When it became recognised in America that support of Chiang Kai Shek would mean full scale intervention by American troops, there was such an uproar that Hurley was forced to resign. General Marshall was sent to China to try to bring about agreement between Kuomintang and Communists, with a bait of a five hundred million dollar loan as the reward for an all-party government and peace in China. American plans for economic exploitation of the China market will not permit of continued civil war there.

The "cease-fire" agreement reached later between the armies of the Kuomintang and the Communists in North China, is an admission that Chang Kai Shek realises that he is not powerful enough without active American assistance to complete his ten year old campaign for subduing the Communists, and other liberal elements opposed to his regime.

This successful opposition means the defeat of his ambitious plans for a one party, one leader, one voice government for China, as outlined in his dangerous book, "China's Destiny." There was grave danger that under his leadership the peasantry and industrial population

would still remain in bondage to be either exploited by their own wealthy countrymen or used to provide cheap labour for foreign industrial investors, thus perpetuating the scandal of pre-war Shanghai, with its daily harvest of dead tipped as refuse from its factories. The new life which the peasants have tasted in those areas where government of the people by the people is established has made them tough fighters, and with their tommy guns they are determined to hold what they have gained. The Japanese with all their superior armaments could not subdue them, and Chiang Kai Shek is at long last realising the hopelessness of his task.

The triumph of democracy in China is of tremendous importance to the world. It was in China that the flame of freedom was kindled early in the century by Dr. Sun Yat Sen. From there it spread to India, Burma, Indo-China, Indonesia, gathering strength later from the success of Russia's Socialist Republics—particularly those in Soviet Asia. With the defeat of Japan the future of the East will be influenced by the leadership China will give. She has natural qualifications through her freedom from the problems which delay the emancipation of India and other Eastern lands. With the Kuomintang reactionaries kept in the saddle by foreign assistance the freedom of one thousand million coloured people would be jeopardised and our chances of continued residence on this planet diminished.

No more critical situation has faced any people, and I am proud of the part played by my fellow correspondents in China—representing the world's greatest newspapers—in helping these sturdy democrats by giving publicity to their cause. Their co-operation with these peasant patriots in the face of much hostile criticism has been of the utmost value, particularly in marshalling American public opinion to prevent a continuance of the disastrous policy of Ambassador Hurley.

With the establishment of a really representative government in China, I would expect to see the rapid

emergence of a New China—a China in which the valliant men I met underground, and brave women like my guide, friend and interpreter, Yang Kang, can live above ground without threats of death and torture, to carry on their great work in the cause of freedom.

\* \* \* \* \*

Within a week of the end of the war, leftist governments in France and Britain, with the curious inconsistency which always seems to exist between Socialist home and foreign policy, were engaged in repressing local independence and anti-Imperialist movements in French Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies, with much the same ferocity that the Germans used in Europe. In one week in early December, 1945, the Americans had destroyed a village in Communist-held North China, the British wiped out a native village of 1,000 houses in the Dutch East Indies, and the French called upon the R.A.F. to strafe a village in Annamite-held Indo-China, as reprisals against activities by local patriots. One English paper drew a parallel between such acts and the German destruction of Lidice.

Japanese troops were being used by the Allies in Indo-China and Indonesia, Japanese and traitor puppet troops were being used by the Kuomintang troops, against the Communists in North China. In India nationalist demonstrations were being put down by shooting.

Liberation of the coloured peoples, both mentally and physically, is just as important for the welfare and progress of humanity as that of the white races. The quality of freedom everywhere is depreciated by its denial to the coloured man. Today the gravest charge that can be levelled against all Imperialisms is that their subject peoples have been compelled to live in a backwash of civilisation, by-passed by the creative forces which only freedom and education can release. At least five hundred millions of native peoples in the British and Dutch empires, through illiteracy can have no part in their heritage of the "Wisdom

of the Ages." Both empires have drawn colossal revenues from these possessions, and common justice should have dictated that a generous portion of that wealth should have been spent to provide the social services necessary for the mental and physical well-being of their subject peoples.

As fellow citizens of "One World" it should be a matter for congratulation, not for alarm, that the Spirit of Democracy is stirring throughout the East, and that these peoples are determined to use such weapons as are available, from tommy guns to automatic bows and arrows to gain for themselves what has been denied for centuries by their masters.

As I emphasised in the introduction of this book, freedom is won by the efforts of subject people fighting with weapons available to throw off their yoke. Freedom is not conferred upon them by the bounty of their masters, and whatever concessions to further their objectives is wrung from the oppressor is the result of their own efforts and sacrifice. Immediately the war ended, subject people in the East began to rise, realising that as far as their fortunes were concerned "the tide was at the flood." If the Indonesians had continued to remain passive servants of the Dutch they would have waited indefinitely for the title deeds of their freedom, or, like the Indians, they would have been given "The appearance of freedom without the reality."

Since "Democracy With a Tommygun" was written these Indonesians have fought for freedom with such courage and intelligence that today Dr. Van Mook, in an address at Amsterdam told the Dutch people: "The Indonesians no longer are our servants, and we must come to a mutual understanding with them. The people of Java were no longer a defenceless mass. They had a strong national feeling and realised the need for national defence."

What has caused these changed conditions? Why are the Indonesians no longer the servants of the Dutch? Simply because Democracy with a Tommygun has turned

the tables upon its oppressors and established its right to set up a government of the people by the people for the people. The fight of the Indonesians for freedom, like the struggle of the democratic forces in China, would be certain of victory if they were saved from foreign intervention and only had to deal with internal enemies. Democratic China we expect to see saved by the mobilisation of American liberal opinion directed to prevent the intervention of armed forces planned by the enemies of Democracy in China, aided and abetted by American reactionaries who haunt "the Capitol" in Washington. What is to save Indonesia from being robbed of the fruits of victory? Unfortunately the British government seems to be drifting more and more into a state of imperial partisanship, and it is suspect from one end of the Eastern world to the other. It has outraged Indian sensibilities, Hindu and Moslem alike, by ignoring their appeal for the withdrawal of Indian troops from theatres where they are being used for the suppression of coloured peoples, in the interests of the white races. We have now concluded an infamous arrangement, which could only have been reached between representatives of sympathetic Imperialisms, whereby we are to hand over to be tried by Dutch courts, persons charged with offences against Allied Military Administration. The hypocritical excuse given for this treacherous arrangement, which completely invalidates all our previous protestations of neutrality, is that the Dutch government is the sovereign power in N.E.I. That being so, it is our duty to immediately evacuate Dutch territory and let it prove whether or not it is the sovereign power.

The Indonesian-owned paper, "Independent" (January 4th, 1946) demands that Indonesian suspects taken into custody by the British authorities should be tried by the authority responsible for their arrest, and not by Dutch courts. It is impossible to imagine any greater violation of justice than this spectacle of an allegedly neutral government using its unlimited military power to arrest leaders directing operations for the freedom of their country and

handing them over to be tried in the courts and by the authority of the power opposing them.

As further evidence of the co-operative spirit between Imperialists when it is a question of conserving their privileges, we also find that the Dutch government is buying naval aeroplanes from British firms.

Since all powers that were a menace to Holland have ceased to exist, she can only be buying them to crush the Indonesian Republic.

These young democratic growths, struggling for existence in unfavourable environments, deserve encouragement rather than suppression by the methods to which I have referred. Part of the explanation for the inconsistency between socialist home and foreign policy is the reliance of the Foreign Minister on a Foreign Office staffed by those who have little sympathy with socialist principles, or with subject peoples. There is urgent need for the purging of that Department of government, of those elements that are saturated with the spirit of Imperialism, seventy-five per cent. of whom are drawn from that section of political thought in Britain which opposes the widening of human liberties, even amongst men of their own race and colour.

As an observer of events in the East, it is my considered opinion that Big Business and Finance Capital are exercising far too great an influence upon the foreign and colonial policies of all Imperial Powers. Since the days of the founding of the East India Company and its rivals in France, Holland and Portugal, the Orient has been a rich treasury, where, without any adequate return of labour, services or exchange of goods, the exploiting nations have dipped, without regard to the interests of the rightful heirs.

The energies of the modern representatives of these nabobs of the past are still directed to preventing the people of these territories getting control over their own lives and the resources of their country. In spite of the growth of Democracy amongst the masses of the Dominant

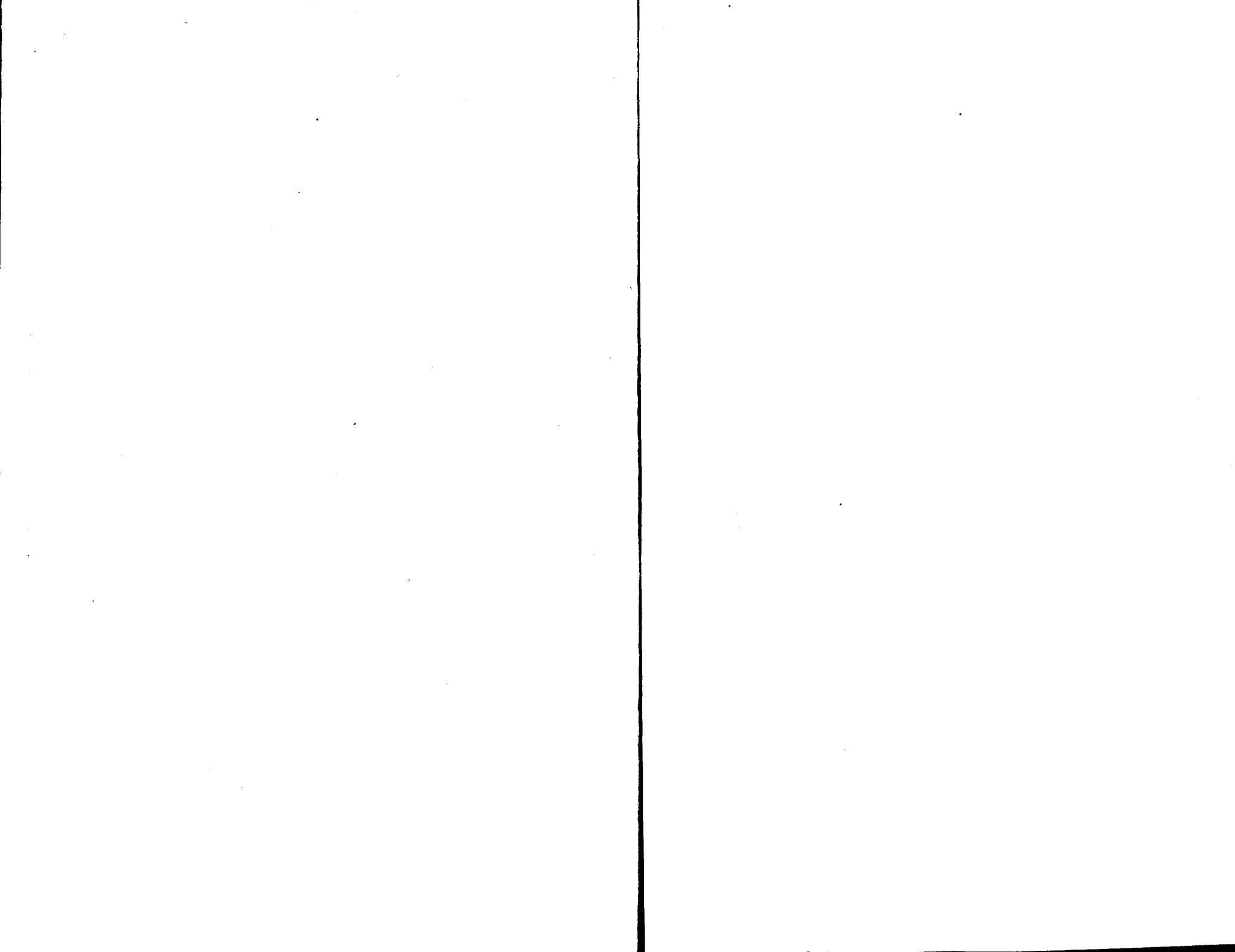
Peoples, and the desire of the great majority to see justice done to these semi-subject peoples, they find their will defeated through the control by wealth and privilege of practically all the instruments of propaganda and the machinery of Colonial Administration. It does not matter where we look—India, China, Korea, Malaya, Borneo, the Philippines or Indonesia—the same struggles rage, Big Business and Privilege, in league with all the internal reactionary forces, determined to delay the full emancipation of the people. In China they are ranged behind the Kuo-mintang to prevent the full programme of Dr. Sun Yat Sen being realised, knowing that China will not be as rich a hunting ground for concessions and investments if—as planned by Sun Yat Sen,—“all public utilities and enterprises of a monopolistic nature were to be operated by the State, and all subterranean minerals and natural forces economically usable for public benefit were to be the property of the nation.” The rule of the whole of the people narrows the field for economic exploitation, hence the fierce opposition of the Capitalistic world.

It is from Indo-China that French capitalists recruit the cheap labour to work the rich chrome mines of New Caledonia and, in spite of “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,” the risings of these subject people are being suppressed with incredible ferocity, to ensure that this cheap reservoir of labor will still be available. In Korea and the Philippines the people who have fought most bravely over the years, both for independence and against the Japanese, are being pushed into the background by military administrations that have little sympathy with People's Movements, and who are aiding their oppressors with both arms and authority.

In British territories—unless we intend to break faith completely with four fifths of the people we proudly number as members of the British Empire—we will need to change our ways and bring to heel the predatory interests that batten upon these weaker peoples and bring discredit to our name. They must be taught that human interests

take precedence over profits drawn from copper, gold, tin, rubber and oil, and that a very much higher percentage of the wealth extracted must be returned to these peoples in social services. Whilst these most necessary changes are still postponed, the native peoples of South East Asia may well be forgiven if they fail to share our jubilation in the victory over Japan. They see now their “liberators” allied with their former oppressors in denying them the freedoms for which the war was supposedly fought. The fine catch-words, “Liberty, Freedom and Democracy” must seem to the people of Asia to be terms which have meaning only for those possessed of white skins. At present the white races seem intent on building up a legacy of hatred against themselves in the Far East which will tend to draw the world more than ever into two camps—coloured versus white skins.

Progressive people the world over deplore the trend of events in the Far East, but are impotent to change them. They know there is no moral justification for oppression of backward peoples to subsidise high living standards at home, whether under a socialist or any other form of administration. If socialism in Britain and France is financed by colonial exploitation in Asia, then it's built on a rotten foundation, and doomed to collapse. The man in the street seems to see more clearly than his leaders that injustice in one part of the world leads to universal unrest, and universal unrest next time leads to atom bombs. The people that built the weapons and the men that wield them never intended that they should be used to deny our neighbours the freedoms for which we worked and fought. Unless the men in the street get together and shout loud enough for their voices to be heard in Whitehall and the White House, and in the Courts of the United Nations to prod the politicians on to some form of international decency, they might as well start digging-in to prepare for the age of the troglodytes. Our scientists tell us that is our only chance for survival in the next war—if we dig deep enough.



## WILFRED G. BURCHETT

is one of Australia's best-known foreign correspondents. His first book, "Pacific Treasure Island — New Caledonia," was the result of a long trip to that island, published in 1941. During the war he was the London's "Daily Express" correspondent in the Pacific and wrote "Wingate Adventure" and "Bombs Over Burma," and now "Democracy with Tommygun," are the trilogy in which his adventures and observations are put down in permanent form.

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