

VI - 73 C - 3. Smedley, Agnes "China - Front Door to Freedom" California
Arts and Architecture, April, 1942, p.17 et al.

CHINA

FRONT DOOR TO FREEDOM

by Agnes Smedley

WHETHER WE LIKE to recognize it or not, the easy Japanese conquest of southeastern Asia is exposing the canker that lies at the heart of foreign white rule of Asiatic peoples. Japanese propaganda appealing to Asiatic peoples to free themselves from the yoke of white-man rule is having far more powerful repercussions than will ever be admitted in our press or radio. A section of the Burmese people is actively helping the Japanese invaders, and Subas Chandra Bose, one of the most popular leaders of Bengal, former Mayor of Calcutta, has gone over to the Axis and is conducting air propaganda from Berlin or Rome against British rule of India. Others are doing the same from Bangkok. Subas Chandra Bose, who has been imprisoned by the British a number of times for his activities on behalf of Indian freedom, has a large following in Bengal province—the next territory of Asia in line for Japanese attack.

We may take it for granted that when the Japanese occupied Singapore and captured some 30,000 Indian soldiers, together with Malay and British troops, that they segregated the colored soldiers from the white, and have Indians and Japanese to conduct propaganda among them.

The canker at the heart of our civilization is being exposed. This canker is the assumption that white people are superior and are destined to rule the colored races.

The Japanese are smashing that conviction—drowning it in our own blood, while appealing to subjected Asiatic people to grasp this historic opportunity to drive out the white man. Yet the Japanese do not offer freedom to the peoples of Asia; they offer Japanese feudal militarism, Japanese imperialism, to take the place of white imperialism. Jawaharlal Nehru, nationalist leader of India, recognized by advanced Englishmen and Americans as one of the greatest living men, but whom the British have imprisoned eight times, recognizes that his country has nothing to gain from Japanese conquest of Asia, but

merely faces the danger of exchanging British chains for Japanese.

In all policies or propaganda of the countries we call the democracies, I can see nothing to inspire any man of Asia to fight for us. With the exception of the Philippines, the white rulers of Asia have given their subject peoples nothing to fight for—and nothing to fight with. Their condescending attitude toward the "natives" has bred servility or hatred in the hearts of subject peoples. Any hopes subject people have, lie *not* in us, but only in their own national movements which in turn have been attacked, often with fearful brutality by their white overlords. White rulers of Asia have feared to educate, organize, and arm their subjects to rule and protect themselves, lest these guns be turned against the foreign rulers.

Even today, when the British and Dutch Empires are being dealt death blows by the Japanese, we still have writers and radio speakers in America who repeat worn-out, imperialist attitudes about the peoples of India and other Asiatic countries.

The only effective counter-balance to Japanese propaganda among subjected peoples of Asia comes not from the democracies from which it should come, but only from China. Except for the Chinese, who are also members of the colored race, the Japanese could make a clean sweep of Asia. From my observations over a period of twelve years in China—three of them spent at the front with the Chinese armies since the war began—the Chinese people also have little reason to harbor sentiments of friendship for the democracies. It was American and British war materials that made Japan's war on China possible. America alone provided Japan with 85% of its basic war materials—petroleum products, iron and steel scrap, copper, metal-working machinery, ferro-alloys, automobiles and parts, while the British Empire supplied them with (continued on page 38)

and India
Nat.
Congress.

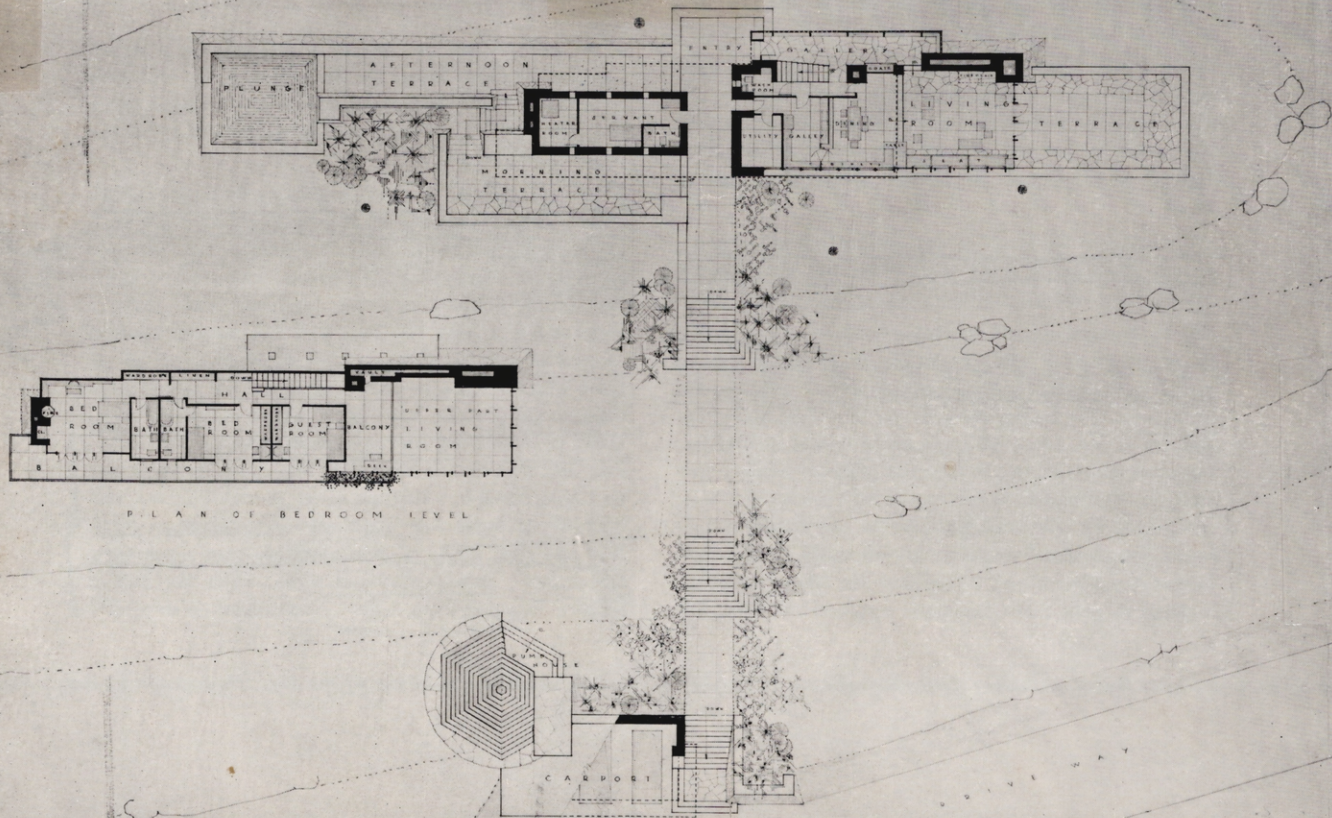
Kuan Yin, Goddess of Mercy, a Chinese figure brought out of Pieping a few days before the bombing of the city. Photograph by Ralph Samuels.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT
builds a desert house
for Miss Rose Pauson
in Phoenix, Arizona

You will find on a long, lean hill opposite the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix a graceful desert dwelling built mainly of desert rock and redwood boards. A house simply and almost coarsely built of the dense, sharp substance of the desert itself. The indescribable atmosphere that transfigures the Arizona desert transfigures this house into a thing of the spirit.

The structure is of overlapping redwood boards, making the same slope as the concrete-stone walls. A one-process house—the boards making the inside while they make the outside, sealed at all edges with tung-oil mastic.

Stopping at the carport, cut into the sides of the hill below the house, one comes up the flight of broad, wide steps and enters through a terraced loggia to a passageway lit by a long panel-board, perforated with an interesting pattern, abstract as the desert plants. The light through the per-



CAMOUFLAGE

continued from page 26

paints which differ only in pigmentation adjustment from accepted exterior paints long manufactured by the same company.

This delicate adjustment process is carefully checked in its manufacture. Each paint batch is carefully photo-tested for infra-red resistance, then immediately canned and sealed under supervision. Any dilution of the so-called "L-Series" with ordinary paint would materially reduce its efficiency.

Good painted camouflage is conceded to require both light and shadow combinations in order to resemble surrounding terrain. A wide range of low-visibility colors is desirable, ranging through the dull browns and greens. With the "L-Series" has been designed a "D-Series" which has the same color range but appears black (or shadow) in infra-red aerial photography. According to extensive testing, these two paint series in combination afford the camouflage as useful a range of concealment paints as has yet been produced. The heat-deflecting factor has an added significance. Petroleum and other industries where liquid storage is required face sizable evaporation losses when they paint their tanks with ordinary dark-colored paints instead of the standard white or aluminum. In the case of the "L-Series," however, controlled seven-hour sun-heat tests disclose the ability of this paint to deflect heat to the extent that inside temperatures of test objects remained about ten degrees lower than similar objects painted with the same color of ordinary paint; and but five degrees warmer than the aluminum painted containers.

One of the most essential of the many camouflage treatments, paint has often in the past been a most costly nuisance when removal or repairing was in order. Many less durable paints which are sometimes sold as camouflage coverings should be avoided on stucco and other surfaces where quality paints are ever again to be applied, as the clean-up and preparation cost will sometimes prove appalling. It is expected that camouflage architects and engineers will eventually demand all camouflage paint producers to develop these special finishes on formulas that will stand up under weather.

CHINA—FONT DOOR TO FREEDOM

continued from page 17

nickel, tin, aluminum, mica, rubber, lead, zinc, and other war materials. In the first years of the war, we supplied Japan with airplanes which destroyed Chinese cities and towns and slaughtered hundreds of thousands of people. American-made trucks transported Japanese troops into the heart of China.

When I went to Hankow, the Chinese capital, in 1938, after six months at the Chinese front, I remarked in a conversation with our American ambassador that our policy toward Asia was suicidal; that, after Japan had turned China into a base of operation, it would turn on southern Asia and America. I needed no prophetic knowledge to make this statement, for it was embedded in the "Tanaka Memorial," the Japanese blueprint of world conquest, and in speeches and writings by many Japanese politicians and militarists. But to my statement, our ambassador replied with complacency:

"Oh, by that time the Japanese will be too exhausted!"

How could Japan be exhausted when the beast was being fed war materials, and living off the food of China? I have never yet understood why all officials, responsible for the whole Far Eastern debacle, do not withdraw from public life in shame. No people in history have been so bereft of knowledge, vision, or of national or international responsibility as they.

Before I left China in May of last year, I talked with British leaders, soldiers, and officers in Hongkong. We all knew the Japanese would attack Hongkong some time. The British had spent £10,000,000 on its defenses in 1937 alone. Hongkong estimated that the colony could hold out for two to three months—until units of the British fleet relieved it. For the four years of war, the British entertained contempt for the Chinese armies, and were induced only in the latter months to reach an agreement with them for joint defense of Hongkong. Behind this policy was the British fear that if the Chinese defended Hongkong, they would later claim that it be returned to China—from whom it had been taken in the Opium Wars of 1839. In talking with British soldiers in Hongkong, I often heard this remark:

"Up to now the Japanese have only fought a third-rate power—China. But when they fight us, they fight a first-rate power, and will learn what real fighting is!"

It took the Japanese just eighteen days to occupy Hongkong. Singapore, the bastion of the Far East, fell in seven weeks, and the Dutch

East Indies in a much shorter time. Now New Zealand, Australia, and India lie in Japan's route of conquest.

For over four years, China stood begging at the doors of the democracies. Our loans to them totaled less than \$400,000,000, but our war materials to Japan ran up into the billions. The Chinese know this. Repeatedly, at the front, Chinese soldiers and officers asked me why Japan was furnished with war materials to kill Chinese. It was a terrible question for me, an American. At the Chinese fronts, there were no guns heavier than heavy machine guns or trench mortars. There were no trucks and no gasoline, and not even one airplane to drive off the Japanese planes that bombed us at will. Those planes were often American made, their bombs were always of American scrap, their gasoline, American. The only Japanese thing about them was the pilot. I was called upon to deliver morale lectures to the Chinese soldiers at the front, and I often felt ashamed to face them. Of course, I mentioned the small sums in charity which we were offering for the civilian air-raid victims and refugees—though these catastrophes were basically our doing. The Chinese fronts were often desolate regions, cut off from necessary supplies and but the rudiments of news. Since I had been connected with the Indian Nationalist movement for many years, I therefore tried to inspire the Chinese armies with the consciousness that they were fighting not for China alone, but for hundreds of millions of subjected Asiatic peoples who were watching them, hoping for their victory. One paragraph from such lectures was this:

"Do not feel isolated or abandoned on this gray battlefield. Try to realize that you are the vanguard of Asiatic peoples struggling for liberation. The eyes of hundreds of millions of people, particularly of India, are fastened on you, hoping and praying for your victory that you may be a bastion for their own liberation. Ever since the Japanese invaded China, the Indian National Congress has conducted a boycott of Japanese goods, has organized 'China days' on which small Chinese and Indian flags are sold and the proceeds are used to buy medicine for your wounded. The Indian National Congress sent the first medical mission of five surgeons to China, has paid all their expenses and kept them supplied with medicine and dressings. If this seems small in comparison with China's great needs, remember that India is much poorer even than China, and while helping you, it must also struggle for its own liberation."

BOOKS

continued from page 4

military aid from England. The righteous weak, in the long run, become just another charge upon the righteous strong.

This may not be what Steinbeck meant, but it's what he has said. More than that, it's what he has said repeatedly. The Joads at the end of *The Grapes of Wrath* still have their courage, but they're in an awful mess—with little hope of extrication unless some outside power intervenes. The fruit pickers in *In Dubious Battle* are worse off at the end of the book than at the beginning. Steinbeck writes of "the little people" with pity rather than with faith. His books are a cry for help, and this help can come only from others than themselves; it can come only from the strong.

But here is the point where Steinbeck always quits. He leaves his "little people" licking their wounds. He hints that the "little people," backed by strength and led by their own kind, will be the redemption of the world. But in a certain country of Europe (to imitate the tactful evasiveness of *The Moon Is Down*) the little people acquired strength under the leadership of one of their own kind who was a paperhanger. Certainly the outcome of THAT isn't what Steinbeck wants!

It's all very confusing, and probably Steinbeck, magnificent writer though he is, is just as much mixed up as the rest of us.

PATTERSON GREENE.

MUSIC

continued from page 5

hear and to appreciate the work of Mahler. Much of this new appreciation has resulted from the determination of Mahler's friend, associate, and pupil, Bruno Walter, that Mahler's music should be heard. No one can conduct Mahler's music like Bruno Walter. It was a special privilege to hear the *Kindertotenlieder*, the *Little Dead Children's Songs*, conducted by Walter on a Philharmonic program and sung by the lovely fresh contralto voice of Eula Beal.—PETER YATES.