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WHEN referring to the capitalist press Lenin used to speak of the "reptile press." I have often resented this and have been tempted to write an article in defense of reptiles. At last, instead of doing this, I have decided to put down a few facts about the foreign and the Chinese press in China and leave it to others to decide if any reptile of any species deserves Lenin's comparison.

There is in China a most servile and corrupt press and also a most servile and corrupt group of newspapermen who can be bought by any secret service, government, business firm, or gang leader desirous of having something suppressed or something published. But there are, too, newspapers and newspapermen who have put up a courageous struggle for the right to publish facts. Very few of these are foreign; many more are Chinese. The truth of this statement is attested to by the frequent reports of the arrest, imprisonment, or death of Chinese newspapermen, and of the temporary or permanent suppression of Chinese newspapers which have tried to inform the Chinese people about internal or foreign affairs. During the one year of 1934 more than 110 publications in the Peiping-Tientsin area were either temporarily or permanently shut down. In that same year at least three newspapermen were murdered by Blue Shirts in Tientsin.

To show the conditions under which newspapers and newspapermen work in China today, I offer the following two typical cases: In January, 1933, a Chinese newspaperman named Liu Yu-seng, editor of a supplement to the *Chingkiang Shen Jih Pao*, of Chingkiang, a city six hours by rail from Shanghai, was secretly shot in prison. The order for the execution was given by General Ku Chu-tung, governor of the province, who is one of the closest henchmen of General Chiang Kai-shek, dictator of the Nanking government. Chinese newspapermen investigated and learned that Liu Yu-seng had been killed because he had published a complete report about the opium traffic in Chingkiang, in which General Ku had a big and profitable finger. When the press protested against the killing, General Ku said that Liu had been executed because he was a Communist. As proof, he said that Liu had been in prison for political activities in 1927, and that he had once tried to organize ricksha coolies into a union. This proved that he was a Communist deserving death! Yang Chien, general secretary of the China League for Civil Rights, conducted an investigation of this case through a certain official in Nanking with whom he was on friendly terms. This Kuomintang official wrote Yang that when Liu's body was exhumed and examined by his family in the presence of officials, it was found that one of his legs had been crushed by torture. Yang refused to give this letter to the press on the ground that if he did so he and its author would share the same fate as Liu. Six months later Yang was murdered by Blue Shirts in Shanghai.

Here is the second case: On November 13, 1934, Sze Liang-zai, millionaire owner and editor of the *Shun Pao*, a Shanghai daily, was murdered outside the city. I am informed that the foreign police of Shanghai knew that the murder was contemplated and warned the Blue Shirts that if they killed Sze in foreign-controlled territory, the police would expose the facts about Yang Chien's murder. So Sze was killed outside the foreign-controlled territory. Immediately after the murder Chinese officials began spreading rumors to cover the tracks of the murderers. For instance, Tang Leang-li, propagandist for Wang Ching-wei, high

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By AGNES SMEDLEY

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official of the Nanking government, and taken as a newspaperman that Sze had been murdered by personal enemies. Others said he was killed in a quarrel over a concubine, and still others said he was murdered by business competitors. But every Chinese newspaperman, banker, and industrialist knew that he had been murdered by a band of Blue Shirts who had traveled in a high-powered automobile bearing a Nanking license plate.

For two years before this murder the Blue Shirts had tried to gain control of the *Shun Pao*, the largest and oldest Chinese daily. Following the Japanese invasion of Shanghai in 1932, Chiang Kai-shek had personally forced Sze Liang-zai to discharge his chief editorial writer, who was anti-Japanese and anti-Chiang. In January, 1934, the *Shun Pao* correspondent in Tientsin was murdered for reporting facts about the secret dealings between Nanking officials and the Japanese in the north. In 1934 the Central Kuomintang instructed General Wu Teh-chen, Mayor of Shanghai and henchman of Chiang Kai-shek, to order the *Shun Pao* to publish no more articles by the famous left writer, Lo Hsün. The Blue Shirts asked Sze Liang-zai to allow them to furnish the material for one full page of his paper. When he refused, they offered to buy his paper for one million dollars. He refused this also.

Not one Chinese or foreign newspaper in Shanghai had the courage to publish the truth regarding this case. The Chinese knew the facts to the last detail, and it was not "lack of proof" that prevented the foreign press from publishing them. Had the foreign press desired proof, it could have secured it from the foreign police. Incidentally, lack of proof has never kept the Chinese or foreign press from publishing anything. Quite the contrary. There was and is no proof of who murdered the American missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Stam, last January, but this did not keep the foreign press from carrying on a vicious international campaign against the Red Army of China, and from saying that the Stams were murdered by a Red detachment. In China the first reports of the murder of the missionaries showed that they were not killed by the Reds. Only later did the British press in Shanghai get the idea of using this case against the Communists. e

If one wishes to know why things are or are not published in China, one must look deeper than the surface of things. In the middle of 1932, for instance, a number of official documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Nanking government fell into the hands of a Chinese acquaintance of mine. They explain much. All of them have to do with the foreign and Chinese press, news agencies, and newspapermen in China, and many are signed by the chief of the Bureau of Intelligence and Publicity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Nanking Government. All are marked "Private and Confidential." One of them, dated May 23, 1932, begins:

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Incompetence, mismanagement, and dishonest manipulation of funds placed monthly at the disposal of the Director of the Intelligence and Publicity Department of the Foreign Ministry for publicity purposes have reduced the functions of the department to doling out various sums of "subsidies" to newspaper reporters, news agencies, both foreign and Chinese, newspapers and magazine proprietors, managers or editors. . . . The only method of publicity was that of subsidizing—bribing [sic]—news agencies and newspapers so that no news which might be considered unfavorable to the authorities would appear in print. To insure that no such information would leak out to the reading public, individual reporters were also given monthly "subsidies" . . . the demand of the newspapers and reporters are insatiable. There always exists the desire to be given larger sums. . . . The number of reporters and newspapers is constantly on the increase, so that there is no end to the demands.

One paragraph in this confidential report refers to the official British News Agency, Reuters, and reads as follows:

This written understanding with Reuters, which was signed on July 1, 1929, by the then assistant director of the department, provides for the payment of the monthly sum of \$3,000. . . . The most objectionable feature—and the one which reveals the true purpose of the contract—is the provision to "treat all outgoing news dispatches fairly and justly and not omit to give the Chinese side of the case in any issue." If Reuters operates in China as an independent foreign commercial news agency, as it claims to be, and if Reuters is faithful to the profession of news gathering and news reporting, Reuters should not accept any cash payment from the government in consideration of a "fair" treatment of news going out from the country. . . . The payment of \$3,000 to Reuters can only be regarded as a bribe which the government should not allow and Reuters should not accept.

There is a contract between Reuters and the Central Publicity Department of the Central Kuomintang in Nanking in which Reuters acknowledges \$10,000 from that department. This contract is known to practically every foreign newspaperman in Shanghai. When it became known that this contract had fallen into the hands of a new director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Publicity in Nanking early in 1932, quite a storm was raised around the Reuters office in Shanghai. So hot did things become for a time that T. V. Soong, Minister of Finance in the Nanking government, demanded that the director of the bureau surrender the contract to him and that under no conditions should it be published.

Why these contracts should have been kept secret from 1929, when they were made, down to 1932, is a question that others may answer. Certainly the United Press did not keep a business arrangement secret which it made with the bureau, according to which the official Nanking Kuo Min News Agency supplied news to the United Press and received the United Press service in return. The confidential reports state that this arrangement is "very advantageous for Nanking" because the United Press "cables abroad news given it by Kuo Min at United Press expense." In the light of these documents, one can more readily understand why, on New Year's Day, 1935, Chiang Kai-shek conferred the "Order of the Brilliant Jade" on Sir Frederick Jones, chairman of Reuters in London.

The Japanese are by no means niggardly in the bribery of the press in China. An outstanding example of the success of their methods is the *Far Eastern Review*, an American-owned and registered engineering monthly which is openly financed by the Japanese. The owner and editor is George Bronson Rea, who perambulates around Washington as "adviser" to the Japanese puppet state of Manchoukuo—at

a fat salary. When Mr. Rea was away from China on his sacred mission of aiding Japanese imperialism, his position on the *Review* was taken for a time by another American, George Sokolsky. Mr. Sokolsky, however, seemed a bit more broad-minded than Mr. Rea, for he traveled back and forth between the *Review* office and the office of the Ministry of Finance of the Nanking government, with occasional side trips to the British consulate. The present editor of this Japanese propaganda magazine is also an American, who, when asked why he did dirty work for the Japanese, replied: "I'm getting old. Old men can't be choosers." The *Far Eastern Review*, which defends the Japanese conquest of China, and whose editors have worked to this end, has operated for years without any kind of protest from American officials. But every American in China who attempts to publish news exposing the Japanese and the Kuomintang subjects of the Chinese people is hounded by the local police, while American consular officials do everything to force them to cease their activities.

Newspapermen of many nationalities are engaged in scraping in the shekels in the Far East. Until recently the editor of a Japanese imperialist daily in Dairen was an Irishman. During the Japanese invasion a correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* arrived in Shanghai to take my place, after the Nanking government, working through the German Foreign Office, had demanded my dismissal from that newspaper. I had refused to become an "adviser" to a department in Nanking—which meant keeping my mouth shut—and of course this proved definitely that I was a Communist! My successor, however, was not a Communist; so immediately upon arrival he dashed off to the Chinese mayor of greater Shanghai and asked for money to carry on in style. Someone blabbed, the news was cabled to Europe, and the impatient gentleman was recalled. Had he waited a week, the Chinese would perhaps have made him an "adviser" to some department in Nanking or the Japanese would have stalked into his room and plunked down a bag of yen.

The recent "international journalists' party" into the former Soviet regions of Kiangsi that have been overrun by Nanking troops is another case in point. This trip was demanded by the Japanese military headquarters in Shanghai. Of the six Japanese "journalists" on the trip, two were military spies. One foreigner, a Britisher, represented the *North China Daily News*. He was a military man and wrote no articles upon his trip—at least he has not so far. The Japanese, ably seconded by Nanking officialdom, refused to allow Soviet Russian correspondents in China to go with the party, but they accepted a White Guard Russian who was not even a journalist. Of course, the German Nazis went, as did a few Americans. In Nanchang, when the local Associated Press correspondent, an American, tried to join the party, the Japanese objected and he was not permitted

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to join the group. Needless to say, the journalists came out as "authorities" on Soviet China, and on the glories of Chiang Kai-shek. They are now propagandists for all the intellectual and economic imbecilities of Chiang Kai-shek's "New Life Movement."

As to the native press, twenty-two official Blue Shirt organs now exist in China, of which eight are in Shanghai. Apart from these organs of Chiang Kai-shek or some one of his henchmen, there are personal propaganda sheets maintained by Wang Ching-wei, who controls one Chinese daily in Shanghai and an English magazine, the *People's Tribune*, which is circulated in England and America. The editor of the *People's Tribune*, a henchman of Wang Ching-wei, draws \$10,000 a month from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and \$3,000 a month from the Ministry of Finance. He also "takes care of" English-language magazines in Shanghai and articles about China in the American and British press. Typical of the way he is able to force favorable reviews of his own books in China is this incident.

Last winter the *China Critic*, a Chinese magazine in English that is paid \$2,000 a month by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, broke its traces and reviewed General Yakhontoff's book, "The Chinese Soviets." The editor of the *People's Tribune* dashed to the telephone and called Nanking, whereupon the business manager of the *Critic* was ordered to Nanking. When he left that high fortress of the white terror he had signed an agreement to submit every article thereafter for censorship—which meant to the editor of the *People's Tribune*—and to review favorably every publication of that gentleman.

Censorship bureaus were established in all Chinese cities under Nanking control in July, 1934. Since then every manuscript and every advertisement must be submitted for censorship, and afterward two copies of each publication for check-up. No blank spaces may be left to betray the hoof of the censors. On the censorship boards in all cities are representatives of every local politician and general.

The foreigners all know what is going on between Nanking and Japan, but the Chinese people may not know. Every reference to contemplated treaties or agreements between Chiang Kai-shek and the Japanese is eliminated from the Chinese press, and allowed to appear only after the agreements or treaties are in effect. This was true of the Tangku truce agreement, and of the establishment of railway, telephone, mail, telegraph, and customs connections between China and Japan's puppet state of Manchoukuo. When the Japanese Minister to China and a high military officer conducted secret negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei in Nanking last February, not a word of the negotiations or of the true nature of the agreement was published in the Chinese press. Only after the negotiations were finished was the Chinese press allowed to publish a carefully manufactured statement issued by Chiang Kai-shek. In fact, I learn that but three people in China know what the agreement really was. They are Chiang Kai-shek, his wife, and a Chinese general, perhaps Yang Yung-tai. Yet as recently revealed the secret negotiations specifically arranged for Japanese financial and military "assistance" to Nanking in its wars on the Red Army and on communism, Japanese military and other "advisers" to take the place of the present German and other foreign advisers, Japanese investment—which means control—in Chinese industries, and a military alliance for war against the Soviet Union.

...and a military alliance for war on the Soviet Union. The agreement really makes Kuomintang China a Japanese colony with Chiang Kai-shek and his henchmen ruling as Japanese puppets, just as Henry Pu Yi rules in Manchuria.

I will give one personal incident as an example of the truthfulness of the news in the controlled Chinese press today. Three reports about me have appeared in the Chinese and Japanese press in the last three months. These have categorically stated that I have arrived in China, coming up from the Malay States, where I had been a "spy for India," and that I am a "notorious international spy" who did espionage work in London and Paris during the World War. I am said to have three different nationalities—American, German, Russian—and so my job in China is said to be that of organizing an anti-imperialist and anti-war congress to wage war on Japan. I am also said to be working with Mrs. Sun Yat-sen, the Chinese Communist Party, and two Russian Bolsheviks from the Third International—whose names were given, though the addresses were unfortunately omitted. We all planned to use the Chinese Red Army and Szechuan Province as "our base of action." I was called very beautiful and intelligent and said to speak ten different languages. I was graduated from the University of Michigan, was born in Ohio, and the police of the "whole world" is watching me!

The only things in the report that were true were my name and the statement that I was in Shanghai and that the police were watching me! Everything else was manufactured in the diseased brains of Japanese and Chinese spies and newspapermen. The British police knew just when I landed in Shanghai from America, for a British detective by the name of F. A. Pitts was put on my trail. That I have never been in London in my life, have never been in the Malay States, and that I was lying sick in a Shanghai hospital for months after my arrival instead of organizing secret congresses—all this was known to the men who manufactured these reports.

All of the above explains why I have become a defender of reptiles when I hear them compared to the capitalist press in China. Its' utterly unfair to the reptiles.