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By Agnes Smedley:

China Political Strife Heads to Showdown

Chiang Fears Communists Will Now Get Arms From Japs

Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang and the Yen-an Communists today headed toward a showdown as the approaching end of the war in the Far East sharpened their differences.

Yesterday, Chiang ordered the Communist-led Chinese armies to remain in their posts and await instructions and "never again to take independent action" after the Communists prematurely proclaimed the surrender of Japan and declared it was their right to enter and set up their own military government in any captured city. Chiang also ordered that all Chinese troops must hold themselves in readiness to execute "such terms of surrender as the Allies will decide upon." He warned the Japanese that they will be held accountable if they surrender their arms to the Chinese Communists.

In reply, the Communist radio at Yen-an today charged that Chiang was plotting "civil war" and was dealing with puppet Chinese quarters hitherto responsible to the Japanese.

Yen-an declared that Chiang's order contravened the Potsdam Declaration which said fighting would continue until resistance ceased. The broadcast attacked Chiang's order to the underground in occupied areas to be responsible for keeping order. Yen-an charged that Chiang's "underground" consists of "troops serving under the Japanese who went over to Japan" and that Chiang is "treating enemies like friends and friends like enemies," all of which is part of his policy to "exterminate his political opponents."

The author of The Battle Hymn of China comments on the political situation in China and gives her opinion on Chiang's motivation.

By AGNES SMEDLEY

PM
Exclusive

Peace in the Far East will place Chiang Kai-shek and his regime on the horns of a dilemma—and in China this dilemma has numberless horns. With the coming of peace, Chiang will no longer have the right under lend-lease to U. S. war material on which he has reckoned and which he has been accumulating for civil war against the Chinese Communist-commanded guerillas. Some U. S. weapons only recently were used in Shensi province when Fascist Gen. Hu Tsung-nan attacked 8th Route Army troops and opened a new phase in the civil war.

With peace, Chiang Kai-shek's troops will have the advantage of disarming Japanese soldiers, thus accumulating large quantities of weapons and ammunition. However, the bulk of the Japanese army is north of the Yangtze and in Manchuria. The 8th Route and New 4th Route armies are mainly north of the Yangtze, fighting the Japanese in their stronghold.

With peace, these guerillas will do a little disarming of the Japanese of their own, in which they will be ably aided by Japanese

war prisoners whom they have helped to educate and whom they have treated as brothers for so long. At last these guerillas will get war material which Chungking has refused them and which we also refused them.

There is still another horn of the dilemma: Since the end of 1938, when Chinese reaction took on a new lease of life, the Chungking Government has hidden behind "war necessity" to deny democracy to the Chinese people, to shield corruption and war profiteering and to impose high taxation and other forms of looting on peasants. This "anti-Japanese war necessity" will now vanish and unless there is a coalition democratic government, truly representative of the entire Chinese people, the Chungking Government will be stripped naked of all pretense.

Puppets a Problem

One of the most serious issues arising after the peace will be the puppet troops who have fought for the Japanese. In late June, Chiang stated in a press conference that most of the 800,000 puppet troops would "desert to the Allied cause" when U. S. troops land in China.

While some of these puppets are poor peasants conscripted by the Japanese or their quisling Nanking Government, and others are professional gangsters, the vast bulk are former Kuomintang troops who had deserted to the Japanese under the leadership of their own high officers. According to reliable reports, some 80 Kuomintang generals went over to the Japanese after Pearl Harbor when it appeared that Japan would win the war.

To the present day, Chungking has not deprived one such general of his commission nor sent one punitive expedition against such traitors. Instead, in reply to questions by foreign correspondents, Chungking spokesmen defended some of them as patriots who would later return to the fold. The Kuomintang retained contact with such traitorous generals and directed them against Chinese Communists.

Kuomintang Armies

Among these Kuomintang armies who deserted to the enemy are over 50,000 men under the command of generals Li Chungkiang and Ho Shing-chin, whose supreme commander was none other than Gen. Tai Li, head of the secret police and known as the Himmler of China, and with whom some military men have been working in China. Some of Tai Li's agents operate against Chinese students and against anti-Kuomintang Americans in the U. S. A.

Unless the Allied nations work out some democratic plan to solve the problem of the 800,000 puppet troops, as well as other focal points of conflict which could defeat the peace, there may be civil war.

A powerful and united Chinese coalition democratic government, preliminary to the national elections and responsible to and serving the interests of the entire Chinese people, could solve such problems.

Certainly the Soviet Union would welcome such a government, as would the British Labor Govern-