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THE WORLD

By Agnes Smedley:

Crisis in China: Defeat and Disunity

Invasion of the Philippines brings into sharp focus the battle for China, doorstep to Japan and final victory in the East. In recent weeks increasingly disturbing reports have come from that unhappy country. What is the real situation there? How significant are current Japanese victories in China proper? How may developments affect Allied war plans in the Pacific in terms of lives and crime before victory can be attained?

We have asked Agnes Smedley, one of the foremost American observers of the China scene, to answer these questions. She has spent 12 years in China. She has written four books on the revolutionary movement there, among them the best-selling Battle Hymn of China. She has talked with many of China's political and military leaders, and has maintained numerous contacts with them since her arrival here shortly before Pearl Harbor. And she has won the respect and confidence of many important American military men operating in the Pacific war theater.

By Agnes Smedley
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PM Exclusive

In May, shortly before the present Japanese offensive in China began this year, the League of Chinese Democratic Groups, a suppressed underground organization of democrats, issued another of its numerous manifestoes on China's military danger due to the reactionary and corrupt practices of the ruling Kuomintang regime. One statement in this document read that as the Japanese were driven from the seas by the U. S. Navy, "we may expect them to make their last desperate struggle on the continent of China." It continued:

"The history of war is not without precedent that victories won at the front can be turned into defeat by the rear."

Therefore, the League (a composite of educational and industrial groups, individuals and non-Communist progressives ranging from liberals to militant democrats, like the liberals within the ruling party, and like the Chinese Communists) demanded the "cleansing of the rear" of reactionary political and economic policies which, it said, had made the Chinese Government hated by the people. Its further demands included the immediate introduction of a democratic government representing all parties and groups, the granting of free speech, press and assembly to the people; the release of political prisoners; the reform of the demoralizing conscription system, and the cleansing of the government of proto-Fascists and concealed pro-Japanese elements.

Demands Lifting Blockade

Above all, it demanded national unity, which means the lifting of the four-year-old blockade against the Chinese Communist 18th Group and New Fourth Armies in the north and east. National unity it stated, would automatically release 1,000,000 Chinese troops today engaged in the blockade, for action against the Japanese.

But the League of Chinese Democratic Parties is illegal, has no power, is refused the right to publish anything, and its programs condemned by Kuomintang reactionaries as "red-inspired." Dr. Sun Fo, son of the late Sun Yat-sen and President of the Legislative Yuan of the Government, who holds ideas similar to those of the League, is similarly branded. Dr. Sun more or less represents many liberals inside the ruling party. But he and his colleagues, while permitted to work, have no decisive power. Power rests in the hands of such reactionaries as War Minister Gen. Yo Ying-ching and the notoriously proto-Fascist C. C. clique (so-called from its two leaders, Chen Li-fu and Chen Kuo-fu) who control all organs of education and public opinion as well as the ubiquitous Party secret political police. They also are among the most powerful elements surrounding Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

Informed Chinese in this country declare that Kuomintang propagandists sent here by the C. C. clique have for months been working among Republicans, clergymen and reactionary newspaper publishers, inducing them to brand all American democratic criticism, or even the publication of facts about the political and military facts of China, as "red-inspired." All such criticism is branded by them as interference in China's internal affairs.

Mrs. Luce vs. 'Life'

Dr. Walter Judd, Republican representative from Minnesota, has swallowed their line, and Mrs. Clare Boothe Luce, in her speech on Oct. 10 in Hartford, Conn., charged that American left-wing columnists and commentators have urged us to use our pitifully small aid to China "to blackmail the Generalissimo into turning his Government over to the Chinese Communists."

This, despite the fact that her husband's publication, *Life*, published a sensationally factual report by Theodore White, on Chinese political reaction, the contents of which Dr. Sun Fo, wiring from China, declared to be true.

The isolationist position and the predatory war profiteering of the industrialists and bankers behind the Republican Party are clear on our national records. Such men are not the natural allies, but the mortal enemies of the independence and progress of China and other Asian nations. More than any other forces in this country, they are the representatives of economic imperialism, and they would support any Chinese reactionary regime which would become their quisling. Their objectives are purely predatory, and their sudden love for the Chinese Government as it exists today is rooted in their fear of a militantly democratic China. Behind their cries of alarm about the danger of Chinese Communism loom their plans for a third world war against a rebellious and independent Asia, and against the Soviet Union. For not even the Chinese Communist Party has put forward a program for a Communist China, nor even a dominant Communist role in China.

Despite the allegations of Kuomintang propagandists and their American mouthpieces in this country to the effect that American criticism is rooted in some deep-dyed Red plot, stands the incontrovertible fact of desperate military necessity in China. Over one year ago American military representatives in China—men with no kind of leanings toward Communism—anticipated serious military consequences if the Kuomintang-Communist deadlock were not broken. These representatives are reported to have asked Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek for t right to send military observers the Communist-controlled regio behind the Japanese lines to stu Japanese installations, and perha to find new military bases fro which Manchuria and Japan cou be attacked. Their requests we refused.

American correspondents the took up the struggle and asked t be permitted to tour the guerill areas and gather first-hand informa tions, as they had done in othe parts of the country. Only afte months were our military observer and correspondents' requests grant ed. Since then their reports, ap pearing in the press of this country have painted a very different pic-

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