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 THE OTHELLO GREAT WAR
 Resistance or Surrender in China?

By Agnes Smolley

Germany's Blitzkrieg against small neutral countries and France stimulated a new Japanese drive in China in which Japan tried to emulate the Nazi war machine—and failed. In a two months' offensive in Hupeh Province, Central China, the Japanese succeeded in occupying a number of towns and cities, only to be driven out again. Simultaneously with their land forces, the Japanese sent from 100 to 150 bombers, in waves, to bomb the capital, Chungking, which also achieved nothing except the burning of some 800 houses and the killing of one or two thousand civilians.

China is not France. It remains a vast agrarian, decentralised country, with great mountain ranges in which motorised enemy columns cannot operate, a land in which, for weeks, torrential rains turn even the few roads that exist into quagmires that make tanks and trucks useless. Whatever may happen, however many evacuated, burned cities the Japanese may occupy, the Chinese still hold the countryside even within a mile or two of enemy garrison points. The countryside can always provide Chinese fighters with food, and, if further developed and properly administered, the famous mobile industrial co-operatives can provide them with clothing and many other necessities, including arms and ammunition to a certain extent. Even if Chungking and Kunming should be occupied (which would seem a disaster to the possessing classes), a truly democratic, revolutionary China could continue to exist and fight and eventually destroy the Japanese.

With their attempt to emulate the Nazi Blitzkrieg, the Japanese continued their political offensive, which included attempts to break the united front between the Communist and Kuomintang parties, internal intrigue with politicians in the Central Government, and the dropping of propaganda leaflets and newspapers filled with threats of continued terrorism against the civilian population. Simultaneously they renewed their peace offers, and Chungking today is filled with rumours and alleged reports about the peace terms. These terms are said to be "mild." Since all such terms are kept secret, the population must, unfortunately, depend on rumours. They are said to offer Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek the dubious honour of replacing Wang Ching-wei, the Nanking puppet, as leader of a Japan-controlled China, the "capital" to be in Nanking. They are also said to demand the recognition by China of Japanese-occupied "Manchukuo," Japanese occupation of Inner Mongolia, and, "over a period of two years," the withdrawal of Japanese troops "gradually" from all of China south of the Great Wall.

The "period of two years" and the "gradually" are the traps. Of course, the demand for "economic co-operation" is one of the peace terms. It is another trap. In Central and South China the Japanese have been holding out a carrot before the donkey of Chinese capitalism; they say that Chinese capitalists who "co-operate" may hold 49 per cent of the shares in industries, the Japanese to hold 51 per cent.

The main purpose of the Japanese military and political offensive at present is to "settle" with China, to force her to capitulate on Japanese terms, so that Japan shall be free to enter the world war on the side of Germany and Italy and to occupy European colonies in Asia. Japanese eyes are on the Dutch East Indies in particular, which could supply the Japanese war machine with oil and other valuable supplies. The Japanese have utilised the French capitulation and the British preoccupation in Europe to conclude an agreement with French Indo-China giving the Japanese Army the right to some control over the Haiphong-Yunnan railway, one of China's main communications with the outside world, and another agreement with British authorities to

gain similar rights over the Burma road into China. They are threatening Hong-Kong and the foreign concessions in Shanghai, and have already gained virtual control of the foreign concessions in Tientsin. Nothing deters the Japanese to-day from the occupation of foreign colonies but the United States Navy. The Japanese Navy is intact, and its highest representatives have declared more than once that they have no fear whatever of the Americans. However, the American embargo on war materials and the great economic and financial difficulties in Japan itself are making themselves seriously felt.

Everyone in China to-day is asking "Whither China?" In a recent speech in Chungking General Chiang Kai-shek declared that China will not listen to peace terms until the Japanese are driven out of the country. He said that China was on the threshold of victory, and he called the nation to rally and exert even greater effort to accomplish its "history-making mission."

Within the Chinese Government, however, there are Fifth Columnists working for the capitulation. They bemoan the future inability of China to get arms and ammunition, medical supplies, and other necessities from abroad, or to export her products, if Japan holds the south-west routes of communication with the outside world. Many of these "surrender Japanese spies" appear to sit high in the Government—high enough to

keep the Japanese informed of almost every movement of the Government and its leaders and the exact locations of their places of work. The Japanese even knew the place and date of a state funeral for the late General Chang Tze-chung, who fell fighting in May in Central China; for three days Japanese bombers bombed a small village where the funeral was to be held.

There is a Fascist tendency in the Chinese Government to-day, and many such elements would rather exist as Japanese helots—well-paid helots—than make a closer alliance with the Soviet Union and continue co-operation with the Chinese Communist party and its powerful armies, the Eighth Route and New Fourth. However, the action of these elements is held in check by Chinese armies in the field. Many of these national armies would oppose any peace with the Japanese, and if such a peace were declared would refuse to accept it and, in co-operation with the Communist-led armies, continue to struggle.