



JAPAN LOSES THE WAR

International

WESTERN observers in China are saying that whether Japan knows it or not, she has lost the war with China. When it began last August, the Japanese did not think it would take very long to bring China to her knees as a supplicant for peace on any terms. They said it would take three months. But by this summer the war will be a year old, and Japan is further from victory every day. China is immeasurably stronger now than ever, and more determined than ever to fight to the end that there will be not a single Japanese soldier on Chinese soil. China is preparing for a long struggle if necessary. She has munitions enough for two more years, and her finances are good for as long.

The Japanese obviously did not understand the Chinese when they began this war. How could they, indeed? The real reason for this war in the first place lies in the strong difference, racial and psychological, between the Japanese and the Chinese. In such difference is the root and the making of war. The actual combat of cannon and bombs is only the final phase in any war. Long ago this war in China began between minds seeing things in different ways, between hearts feeling differently and desiring different ends.

Because of ancient dislike and past misunderstandings, new hatred was inevitable when Japan began to wish in recent years

Few Americans know China as well as does the distinguished author of "The Good Earth." What she has to say about the outcome of the present war is both profound and startling.

by

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to cooperate with China in a sort of Pan-Asia. Even though such a scheme was good sense, materially, the Japanese overlooked the psychological obstacles, so much deeper than any others. They complained, surprisingly, that the Chinese did not like them; and they decided to intimidate the Chinese into realizing they had to like Japan or else—

At first the Chinese were frightened; they

knew they were not prepared, as the modern world counts preparation, for war, with a modern military force such as Japan had. China has never fought a major war with anybody. She has maintained a fairly chronic civil war among various war-lords struggling to maintain power in one part or another of her vast territory. But that, everybody told her, was a different affair from fighting the ruthlessness of bombs, cannon, tanks and armed infantry. They feared it was. And before Japan's first onslaught the Chinese fell back in overwhelming defeat.

Then something happened. In the first place, the Chinese, after desperately trying to get help from abroad with no success, realized the situation and accepted it. If one had to choose a single Chinese trait as the source of strength, it is this—the ability of the Chinese to adapt themselves to a situation. China said, in effect: "All right, it's war from now on." They took a deep breath and looked around to see what was really happening and just how bad it was. It was not as bad as they feared it was. In the first place, people could escape bombs fairly well by digging dugouts. Whole towns made dugouts and went into them. Buildings were destroyed, but the Chinese have never put much stock in buildings. The home of the average citizen can be put up almost overnight. Any building, they consider, can be replaced; and the

Chinese, not being in the least a sentimental race, do not greatly value one building over another. The essential thing is the land, and that the Japanese cannot destroy. They cannot even hold it in any large quantity. Stretched over the longest battle-line in history, the Japanese are holding only railways and railway towns, and the Chinese peasants are quietly going back to their lands and planting them, living in makeshift shelters, ready to leave if they must.

The Chinese have been greatly encouraged, then, to discover that all these much touted Western weapons of war are not nearly so bad as they thought they were really going to be. As one of them said to me: "After all, the very biggest bomb can only dig up a hole about thirty feet across and ten to twenty feet deep. They make very good fish-ponds, those holes." When I murmured something about people being killed, he said: "Famines and civil wars have taught us that nothing can really kill a people off if you keep letting them be born."

The Chinese people, then, are really settling down to a daily diet of war. They have tightened their belts, begun business anywhere they can, and made themselves dugouts. It is characteristic that the common Chinese thumbs his nose at the planes above him, just before he goes underground; and that while he is in his dugout, he goes on with his business—eating, sleeping, casting up his accounts, or playing mah-jong. War, he says, isn't so bad if you just get used to it.

AND, he will tell you cheerfully, this war has done a great deal for China. In the first place, it was perhaps the only thing which could have accomplished the political unification of China. The Chinese, being the greatest individualists in the world, have always been divided into factions. Of recent years there have been at least three chief ones—the National Government, personified by Chiang Kai-shek; the various war-lords, each fighting everybody else; and the Communists. Chiang Kai-shek fought them all, but mainly the Communists. When the Japanese came, they all united against a foreign enemy.

It has really been remarkable, this burying of old invincible enmities in a common cause. The most dramatic event has been the announcement of the Communists that they would give up their own separate program and serve under Generalissimo Chiang. Long outlived by Chiang, with high prices on their heads, Chu Teh, Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung are now part of the national army official staff. When they were offered a definite part in the government, they refused, saying that they did not want to prejudice people against the government, or lead foreign powers to imagine that the Chinese government was under Communist influence. They have accepted positions therefore only in the army. General Li Chi-sen, a Cantonese general imprisoned for rebellion once by Chiang Kai-shek, and afterward his bitter enemy, is now working closely with General Chiang, and he is to be made head of the Board of Strategy in the National Army. General Chiang's former arch-enemy, General Pai Chin-hsi, is now one of his officers, upon whom he leans most heavily. Japan counted on China's political disunity when she began this war, but that disunity is over. China is really presenting a united front at last.

In this acceptance of war, China has deliberately, then, chosen to find benefits. And besides political unification there has been another important benefit, and one which, without the stimulation of the war, it might have taken China centuries to develop. It is the opening of her great interior to modern influences.

Japan has been able to reach—and will be able to reach at best—only about half of China's territory. Even bombing-planes cannot get to the great inner provinces which stretch in acres of fertility over an area large enough for another continent. There millions of Chinese have lived a life apart from the modern world, a medieval life, continuing unchanged from centuries long gone. The modern educated Chinese has not penetrated to that inner country. He did not need to, for there were jobs and better salaries in the more or less modernized coastal provinces. He did not wish to, for like other graduates of Western universities, he liked his comforts, cars, radios and moving-pictures instead of sedan chairs, old-fashioned tea-houses and village theatricals.

But now there is a vast movement inland, where Japanese armies cannot march and bombing-planes cannot fly. Government is moving inland; universities are building plants far in the heart of such provinces as Szechuan and Yunnan; factories from the great industrial cities of the Yangtse River are moving their machinery inland. And the people of those provinces are thus coming into their first contact with modern times. China is becoming really modernized, in short. Motor roads are being built with incredible speed, and railways as well.

Nor does this new inland China feel cut off from the rest of the world. She has no access to the Pacific, it is true, but she is making new roads toward Europe. A vast highway for trade is being built through to Burma and another through Chinese Turkestan. And modern Chinese merchants are looking toward the West today along somewhat the same trade-routes that Europe took centuries ago, when Marco Polo went to China. It makes an incredibly romantic story, romantic enough to make one forget the territory where the battle-line still holds, and dream of what is to come from that new line between China and the West—the link which thousands upon thousands of coolies are forging, as they labor like ants with their old-fashioned spades and their baskets slung on poles across their shoulders. For these new roads to Europe are not being built with road-making machinery and vast modern equipment. There is no way of getting such machines in there. They are being built by thousands of human hands, bit by bit.

BUT what is really winning the war is China's unconquerable spirit. After the first panic into which the Chinese fell, when they were unsure of what Western weapons might do, the Chinese morale has steadily improved, until now I doubt there is a single Chinese who thinks, or even fears, that Japan will win. The Chinese are, of course, too intelligent and sophisticated a people to believe that there is ever so simple an end to a war as victory for one side and defeat for the other. They know

THE CHINESE FIGHT WITH ANYTHING—GUNS, KNIVES, AND OLD-FASHIONED BROADSWORDS.

that any war ends in compromise. But they are determined that in this compromise Japan shall completely withdraw from Chinese soil. They are already planning how that can be done without making Japan suffer too much loss of face. The Chinese will not make the mistake in the final treaty with Japan which the Allied Powers made in the Treaty of Versailles, when Germany was so humiliated that she had no choice but to recover herself by any means she could. China is too clever for that. She will fight doggedly on until Japan is desperate for peace, and then urbanely she will dictate the terms—not exorbitant terms, but terms which will leave Japan grateful rather than resentful. And just to show that she bears no ill-will to Japan for all that has happened, China will further save Japan's face. That Japan may not feel humiliated by having to withdraw alone, China will invite all foreign troops to withdraw. That is, the American, English and French troops, so long maintained on Chinese soil, will be asked to depart with the Japanese armies—not at once, for that would be hasty and ungraceful, but so many at such a time, the complete withdrawal to cover perhaps two years. In the thick of the present war, China is planning the end with confidence.

The Japanese never misread a people more disastrously than they misread the Chinese when they thought that terror could conquer them. The Chinese are used to terror. Death does not frighten them. They do not think individually at such times, but collectively; and they know the Japanese cannot kill them all, nor hold all their territory. There is too much of both for that. So, convinced of the only essentials to a nation, people and land, the Chinese fight on, sure of their destiny.

And they are fighting the more confidently because they are fighting in their own old ways of guerrilla warfare. The old novels of war are being re-lived in China today. Japan has her modern tools. China has a few of them too, but she is relying mainly on her extraordinarily brave men, fighting anywhere and anyhow they can, under any gen- (Please turn to page 83)

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eral who appears, or under none. But they are using the centuries-old tactics of Chinese warfare, nagging and harassing the Japanese by trickery and by surprise attacks, until it is impossible to know what the Japanese hold and what they do not. Disguised as destitute coolies, two thousand men slip one by one behind the Japanese lines and attack from within. No Japanese lines have yet proved tight enough to prevent the constant coming and going through them of Chinese. And in battle the Chinese soldiers fight with anything, guns, knives, whatever they have. Stripped to the waist, they plunge into the fray, wielding their old-fashioned, enormous broadswords. And these are not only regular armies, but men, trained or not. There is that guerrilla army led by a Peiping professor who, unable to endure the Japanese, resigned, rushed out into the countryside and gathered together a horde of angry men, and after incredible difficulty, and in an amazingly short time, began one of the most successful of the guerrilla campaigns. There were those Chinese farmers, planting their fields beside the Yellow River, who looked up one day to see a Japanese army crossing on a pontoon bridge. Without delay they cut the dikes and swept the army down the river, together with themselves and their houses and hundreds of others like them. Such people cannot be conquered.

THE Chinese are not angels, nor the Japanese devils. They are two very human peoples, each with admirable and less admirable qualities. There is often not much to choose between the things they do. War breeds atrocity anywhere. But viewing the conflict without sentiment for either side, it is obvious that Japan is not strong enough to finish what she began to do. When she withdraws, as withdraw she must, she will not be able to withdraw as strong in the world's estimate as she was before she went in. China's after-war program calls for the liberation of Korea and Formosa, and it may be that in her post-war exhaustion, Japan will lose even these territories. If so, thus curbed and clipped, she can hardly hope to maintain her first-class rating as a world power. The future is not too bright for Japan. And this is going to be a long war—as long as China can make it, for one of her plans is that Japan will exhaust herself as much as possible, China herself being, as she knows, relatively inexhaustible, since her population and territory are so vast.

And after the war China will be the ascendant nation. With the new confidence she has in herself, with the new unity into which Japan has driven her, and with her hinterlands developed as, left alone, she would not have developed them in a hundred years—if any war could be called a good thing for a country, this war has been good for China, if not for the millions of individuals who have suffered horribly from it. But China has learned the trick of outwitting time and trouble. Hers is the trick of the phoenix, rising, strong for the future, out of the ashes of the past.