

War Clouds in the Orient

By JOHN ALLEY, Director of the School of Citizenship and Public Affairs

DEMAGOGUERY is the bane of democracy.

It is difficult enough for the ordinary citizen to cope with this evil in the field of domestic politics, but in foreign politics and foreign relations, Mr. John Citizen finds himself bewildered and well nigh helpless. He lacks the necessary equipment to combat the evil. First-hand knowledge of the intricate problems affecting foreign relations is seldom available, except to those on the "inside," or to those who have the time and the inclination to acquire facts which are difficult to obtain.

Heretofore, the foreign problems affecting the peace and safety of America arose in Europe, the mother of our civilization. Naturally, one knows more about his own mother than about total strangers. It was not until the present generation that a stranger, the Orient, stepped onto the stage of our foreign relations and began to play an important role. Today the Orient means Japan, and to most of us, Japan is a bewildering enigma.

As a result, it is not difficult for the Yellow Press, the Munition-Maker Propagandist, and the "Big Navy" School to play fast and loose with our fears.

A few months ago, an article appeared in *Harpers Magazine* dealing with the coming war in the Orient. Its author seemed to be well qualified to speak with confidence on the subject and appeared to develop his case with skill and assurance. After reading his article I wrote a friend of mine who has lived and worked in the educational field in Japan continuously for two decades, asking for more direct and intimate information on the difficult problem. The inquiry brought a very illuminating reply. It seemed to me that the readers of *The Sooner Magazine* should have the opportunity of reading this letter which comes from a Sooner alumnus.

This letter is submitted almost in its entirety, only a few lines, chiefly personal, being omitted, and these omissions in no way break the continuity nor distort the content of the communication. The writer's name is withheld for the reason that some of the statements are based on private conversations with Japanese public officials. That the writer of this letter is a person of unusual per-

spicacity and distinctive ability, will be abundantly apparent to the reader.

The letter follows:

Tokyo, Japan

Dear Professor Alley:

I received your letter some weeks ago and meant to answer it once or as soon as I had read the article you mention in the *Harpers Magazine*, but failed to get hold of a copy of it. Just the other day the enclosed editorial (editorial in part follows letter) appeared in our English paper here, and that article is mentioned, and as our editor is a very sane and clear thinker on all Oriental problems and has lived here more than twenty-five years, I am enclosing his article for you to read.

As to future war between these three countries, China, Japan and Russia, no one questions the possibility, but six months ago, the danger seemed even more real than it does now. At that time, every Japanese was saying that '35 and '36 would be the critical years if war had not broken out before then. Last summer here in Tokyo, the whole city was thrown into darkness night after night and the citizens instructed as to what to do if there should be an air raid. Just yesterday I went down town and my car passed the Palace gates. In the Plaza, I saw tens of thousands of the recently organized "Defense Guards" on parade. I asked a young man, a graduate of the Imperial University, about it, and he said this society has increased until practically all old men as well as young men are in it. They were dressed in uniform.

Japan, as far as I can sense the situation, does not want war but expects it. As for the events of last year, they do not call them war but the "events or incidents of Shanghai and Manchukuo." In a sense they have a right to do so, as they were only protecting their people and trade just as England did two years or so ago at Hongkong. Yet when British gunboats fired on the Chinese, and from time to time in Shanghai, the French, Americans and others have had to do the same, it was not war. Japan has such a great many more citizens living in China, and they are not segregated in cities as the other Nationals are, so her need to defend is even greater than that of other nations at times. But I do not believe there will ever be a real

war between Japan and China. Last year, two Chinese Y. M. C. A. secretaries were studying English under me when this fighting was going on so I often talked about it with them. They both said it was a good thing for China and would help unify the country, and they did not blame Japan at all. Both had studied in the States and were very broad in their views. At present, another Chinese student is coming once a week for English, and after getting your letter, I asked him about his side of the question. He has been here in the schools for eight years and is taking post graduate work at the Imperial University at present. He said Japan and China would never fight, but he expects war any time between Russia and Japan, and in that event, China would doubtless side in with Russia.

I have English classes for University students. The Imperial University is within ten minutes walk of our house; the big Higher Normal School is also about fifteen minutes away, and for the last ten years I have gone there every Friday night for a class in the dormitory. On Monday afternoon I have had a "Day-at-Home" for these students for the past fifteen years, and in these years I have learned to know hundreds and hundreds of these students. From fifteen to twenty come every Monday afternoon. At these social meetings I get close to them and they talk very freely to me, so freely that many a one would be in prison if the police knew it. Most of them hate war, and many a young man has told me he would go to prison or be shot before he would go to war with China. These were all Christians, of course, but on the other hand Communism is taking them by the hundreds, and it is only a drop in the bucket, as it were, of those who oppose war with China or any other country.

Not long ago, I discussed this question with a young man who is a graduate of the Imperial University and has been on the City Council since. He said Japan has no desire to own Manchukuo. She wants it to stand between her and Russia. That Japan's greatest fear is Russia. Most sane Japanese know Russia is a much more formidable enemy that she was at the time of the Russia-Japanese War. But the army and navy seem the only ones who are confident and wish war. It is no secret here that much of the war talk is however, only a secret means of uniting the Japanese people and trying to avoid an internal revolution. No rich person is safe here, much less any political official of the least importance. Every person and home is guarded by police. Most people are more fearful of what may happen from within than from without. And that is why they talk and would even welcome an

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WAR CLOUDS IN THE ORIENT

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

outside war to save the country from Communism and a revolution.

But it is not wise to try to analyze the Orient. No one can say what they will do. They change so easily and have such queer ways of getting out of situations. Japan has one great characteristic: she always knows when she has gone far enough and always stops at the danger line, and can stop so suddenly and change about so completely that foreigners are often non-plused. She also has one bad characteristic, and that is: she never explains. I find that in private individuals too. I am often misjudging them just because they are so silent and never explain. For instance, members of the church, members of the Bible classes who have an office and may be very sincere and regular in attendance and faithful in every sense may suddenly fail me. Without a word they may just disappear. I may hear why and I may not. Usually the reason is a good one, even death in the home or some very serious thing. But why won't they tell it and explain? It seems they hate to tell anything bad and hide their wounds. Just recently a doctor in one of our churches lost his only child, but not a soul heard about it. I asked the pastor or I would never have known. He did not want his grief known. He said he didn't want to trouble the other members when I said he should have told us and had a Christian funeral. That is why they, as a nation, are so misjudged. But I am not, as some living here, blind to their faults and dangers. Seeing the masses with nowhere to go, no outlet, and yet so ambitious, I wish there were some place they could go and get a foothold. But I am writing too much and may not be giving you the side you wanted to hear about.

I have lived here just twenty years, within sight of the Palace, in this great city and have never been molested and feel perfectly safe.

I am glad to see by the papers things are getting better in the States. I am due to go on leave in April of next year. Perhaps by that time it will be still better. Most of us would rather stay on in our work than to go home and be among the unemployed there. Here any foreigner can easily get all the English teaching he wants. My trouble is to keep out of it. It is a temptation as the pay is good and the work easy. . . .

(Excerpt from editorial appearing in *The Japanese Advertiser* of April 17, 1934.)

MORE WAR STORIES

"In the March issue of *Harpers Magazine*, there is another article which speaks of a Russo-Japanese war as in-

evitable, but chiefly concerned with the ultimate effect thereof on America and Britain. Britain in the end, it holds, would be driven to hope for a Japanese victory, because the Russian's success would mean that Communism would sweep China and bring an immense Communistic bloc to the frontiers of India; while America would wish for a Soviet victory because the Japanese would close the important market of China to her. We return to the Japanese-American war in Mr. Henry Casseville's essay in *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, of which a summary was given in our columns on Sunday.

"All these articles, particularly the last one, are extremely well documented, while their theses are cogently on the whole soberly argued. Most of them also conclude at least with a plea for some other course of action on the part of the Powers concerned than that which would lead to the catastrophe prophesied. But when all this has been said, it is questionable whether the value of such writing either as reasoned and informative prophecies, or as warnings, outweigh the harm they do in making the situation more tense."

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Wilson State Organizer

Cleo Wilson, '32as, senior law student, Norman, has been appointed full-time field representative of the Republican party in an effort to organize new clubs in the 53 state counties where there are none.

Wilson is president of the Young Republicans' club at the University. Organization work will continue until the general election this fall.

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MaCaleb Gets Edmond Post

Back in the state with an M. A. degree from Fletcher college on Tufts campus, Harvey McCaleb, '33as, Olustee, has been elected to an assistant professorship at Central State Teachers college, Edmond, for the coming year.

McCaleb attended the school which is connected with Harvard and Tufts colleges on a scholarship and was graduated from the Fletcher school. His major work was done in political science and history. He will teach courses in history at Edmond.

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Rister Book Published

"The Greater Southwest," concerned with the social, economic and cultural development of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, is a book by Carl Coke Rister, associate professor of history at the University, and Rupel Norval Richardson, professor of history at Simmons University. It was published this fall by the Arthur H. Clark Company, Glendale, California.