

## Conflict in Asia

**T**HE Marco Polo bridge, just outside Peiping, seems destined to occupy a place in Asiatic history analogous to that of Sarajevo in the annals of Europe. Each happened to provide the fatal spark in a magazine which for decades had gradually been filled to the very doors by the explosive derivatives of greed, fear, suspicion, and hatred.

The three nations closest to this particular Asiatic magazine are Japan, China, and Russia, though the effect of its explosion may ultimately be felt by the whole world.

Japan's objectives and ambitions in the conflict now developing in the Far East are obvious and direct. They represent the next logical step toward the attainment of Japan's long-cherished dream of pan-Asiatic domination. The defeat of Russia, the annexation of Korea and Formosa, the attempted seizure of Shantung and the promulgation of the "Twenty-one Demands," the quiet accretion of power and influence through the chain of islands running from Japan to the South Seas, the swift coup in Manchuria and the more gradual extension of control throughout Jehol and Chahar—all these constitute a remarkable record of accomplishment for a nation of whose existence the world at large was scarcely aware thirty-five years ago.

Analyzed in more concrete terms, Japan's immediate objectives in the present struggle are three-fold: (1) New sources of raw materials for her industries, new markets for her finished products. (2) A firmer foothold on the Asiatic continent as a protection against the "inevitable" war with Russia which has been her national nightmare for the last three decades. (3) Protection against China's growing power and acceptance by China of Japanese hegemony in both her internal and her international affairs. Whether some or all of these objectives could not be attained much more easily and inexpensively by peaceful means is a possibility which apparently has not occurred to those responsible for present-day Japanese policies.

China's aims and desires are even more simple and direct. She wishes merely to be left alone to work out her own destiny. She wants to be permitted to carry to completion the comprehensive program of nation-wide economic, social, and political reconstruction undertaken during the last



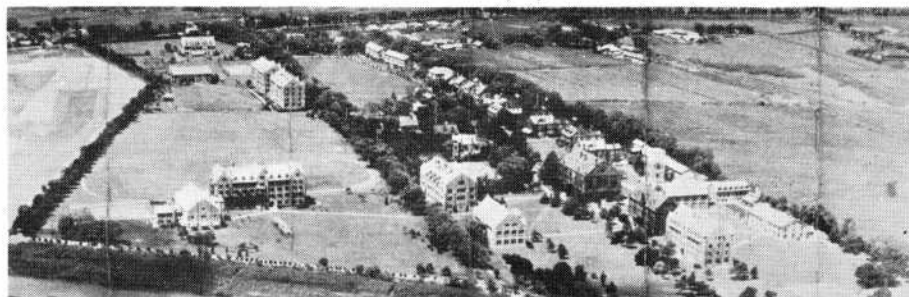
WIDE WORLD PHOTO

*Historical Marco Polo Bridge, focal point of the conflict in China.*



UNDERWOOD AND UNDERWOOD PHOTO

*B. A. Garside, '13, Secretary of Associated Boards for Christian Colleges in China.*



*Aerial view of Shanghai University which continued its work in makeshift quarters after bombs rained on the campus. (Photo by courtesy of American Baptist Foreign Mission Society).*

decade under the leadership of General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. She welcomes equitable trade relationships with her neighbors, is eager for the friendship of all nations, but is willing to accept the domination of none. Her whole history, her ethical philosophy, and the dominant characteristics of her people, all lead her to exalt reason above force, peaceful measures above conflict—yet she is now convinced the only argument which the other nations of the world will recognize or respect is that of military strength.

The position of Russia is not quite so clearly defined, yet its essentials are not difficult to understand. The comparison of Russia's relationship with Japan to that of a lethargic bear annoyed by the incessant stings of a pugnacious hornet has long ago grown trite, but has not lost its

verity. Soviet Russia may have no desire to avenge the defeat suffered by the Czar thirty-odd years ago. But she cannot ignore the threat which the rising power of Japan holds for all of her interests on the Pacific, or be insensitive to the aggressive actions of the Japanese in Manchuria, Mongolia, and Siberia. The Soviet rulers have for almost two decades been devoting themselves to the reconstruction of Russia's economic and political structure, and have been building a huge war machine in grim silence. Stalin's bloody purge has for this year thrown that machine out of alignment, though it has probably caused no irreparable injury. For the moment the bear is content to bide his time, to give such direct and indirect aid to China as may seem expedient, and meantime to watch for his opportunity to strike.

Apparently the intended strategy of the Japanese militarists was to repeat in North China during the summer of 1937 the tactics which were successful in the Man-

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By

**B. A. Garside, '13**

shadow of the Russian bear, waiting menacingly in the background until Japan should have exhausted her strength and her resources.

The Chinese were grimly announcing that they would fight on without surrender for two years, three years, five years, a decade or more if necessary. This Japan could not do, and dare not attempt. The war must be won quickly, or it could never be won at all.

Faced by these problems, the Japanese resolved upon a policy of bombing cities and towns throughout China in a desperate attempt to break down the morale of the Chinese people and bring the war to a speedy close. Day after day great fleets of bombers dropped their cargoes of destruction on the residential districts of densely packed cities and towns, scattering death and destruction on a scale never approached even at the height of the World War. Millions of dollars worth of property was daily blasted to bits or set on fire, and thousands of helpless non-combatants were killed or maimed.

This is the situation that prevails just at the beginning of October when this article is written. What developments will take place during the days when *The Sooner Magazine* is on the press it would be foolhardy to predict. Appearances indicate that the struggle may go on for many months with constantly increasing bitterness and destructiveness, but there is always a possibility that some unforeseen development may completely alter the whole situation.

Despite all this turmoil and destruction, most of the constructive forces which have so transformed China in recent years are still in operation. Prominent among these constructive forces are the schools and colleges which have played such a significant part in the reconstruction of every phase of life. The government has emphasized that education is so vital both to the present and to the future of China that it must be maintained at all costs. Yet some of the schools and colleges in the war zone have been damaged or destroyed, and others behind the lines have suffered from bombing raids.

One of the most tragic incidents thus far of the destruction of an outstanding educational institution was the bombing of Nankai University in Tientsin at the time that city was invaded by the Japanese forces. The beautiful and modern physical plant of Nankai, the most prominent of the private universities of China established through Chinese initiative, was totally destroyed. But its founder and president, Dr. Chang Po-ling, at once announced that the university would move its faculty and students into the interior of the country and would go forward with its work there.

Of special interest to the American friends of China is the group of thirteen universities and colleges deriving a substantial part of their income from Ameri-

can sources. These institutions are located at strategic points throughout the Chinese Republic from Peiping on the north to Canton on the south, and from Shanghai on the east to Chengtu in the far west, almost within sight of the Himalaya Mountains. Since the first of these colleges was established more than seventy years ago, they have had an important share in the development of Modern Christian education in China, and have produced some of the most capable Chinese leaders of the twentieth century. An indication of the importance of their influence may be found in the fact that over fifty per cent of present day Chinese leaders who received their collegiate training in China and who are listed in the Chinese Who's Who, are graduates of this group of institutions in which America is participating.

Despite the prevalence of disturbed conditions in China, nearly all of these thirteen universities and colleges have begun their regular autumn work this September, and are determined to carry on, no matter what the cost.

A typical illustration of the spirit in which these institutions are going ahead with their work is furnished by the University of Shanghai. During the Japanese attack on Shanghai in August this university was frequently in the line of fire. A number of shells and bombs struck the campus and caused substantial damage to the buildings. The Japanese landing parties occupied the campus, and made it a focus of hostilities by constructing a landing field adjacent to it.

But the Chinese president of the university, Dr. Herman C. E. Liu, holder of postgraduate degrees from the University of Chicago and Columbia University, refused to be discouraged. He sought an area in the city of Shanghai where the bombs were raining a little less frequently than in other sections, and made arrangements to use such empty houses as he could find—residences, garages, warehouses. He then issued an announcement that the University of Shanghai would open for work this autumn. "No matter what happens, we are determined to carry on," he said. "If necessary, we shall start in garages and build matsheds. I believe that the educational front is even more important than the military front."

This struggle going on in the Far East is one in which America has much more than merely an humanitarian interest. It is a battle of democracy against totalitarianism, of reason against the power of arms, of peaceful methods against reliance on brute force. It is not a war between the people of two nations, but a desperate effort to halt a frenzied militarism that is as truly the enemy of Japan as of China. It is gradually being forced upon the consciousness of the world that if civilization is to survive, that spirit of rampant militarism must speedily be checked both in the East and in the West.

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churian coup of 1931. Seemingly they hoped that the Nanking government would not yet dare to issue any serious challenge to the reputedly invincible Japanese military machine, and that they would be permitted to seize most or all of China north of the Yellow River and to set up another puppet state similar to "Manchukuo" with nothing more than nominal resistance from the Chinese forces. In order to divide further any Chinese opposition, the Japanese planned to utilize or create incidents not only in Shanghai but probably also in Tsingtao, Canton, and Foochow, which would divert the attention and the armies of China away from the north, and allow the Japanese to attain their real objectives with a minimum of effort and of publicity.

But from the beginning this projected strategy encountered unexpected difficulties. The opposition in North China was far more determined than was anticipated. The hostility of all classes of the Chinese in the occupied areas made the establishment of any puppet regime almost an impossibility. Insurrections throughout Manchuria threatened the security of their base of supplies. The minor diversion which their attack on Shanghai was intended to create immediately became a major conflict, with the humiliating spectacle of Japanese sailors, marines, and soldiers outfought day after day by Chinese troops with far less equipment and training. Apparently there was a sudden shift in plans, for a threatened attack on Tsingtao was suddenly called off, and no move was made to land troops in any of the southern ports.

In the first two months of fighting, Japan made unsatisfactory progress in the north, and only small gains in the Shanghai area. And for these very meager results she had to pay a heavy price in the number of men lost, vast quantities of munitions used, hundreds of millions of yen expended, damaged prestige of her military forces, intensified bitterness and hatred by the whole Chinese people, and mounting criticism and hostility of all nations of the world.

Moreover, the prospects for the future was far from attractive. The economic situation in Japan was increasingly precarious, with the war demanding vast sums of money at a time when the government was short of funds and its credit shaky, taxes were soaring, and industry was confronted by the almost insuperable task of going forward in the face both of mounting costs and of decreasing business. The military adventure in China was proving increasingly unpopular with the great bulk of the Japanese people, despite the intensive propaganda of the government and the presentation of distorted and often dishonest news of what was occurring. And always there was the

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