

► *The era of white domination  
in the Far East is ended.*

## ASIA FOR THE ASIATICS?

BY GEORGE E. SOKOLSKY

IT WAS in the revolutionary year of 1927 that Eugene Chen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Nationalist Government of China, asserted most effectively that the white man must give up his overlordship in China. Chen had little enough to support him against the might of Great Britain. The Chinese Army at that time was a rag-tail, rebellious force led by Chinese and Russians, a quarrelsome army of little discipline. Yet it was successful against other Chinese armies and against the white man's policy because it represented an ideal understood by the masses of Chinese people — the ideal of China for the Chinese.

That was the real power behind Eugene Chen's bold demands and the British caved in before that power. They surrendered their concessions at Hankow, Kiukiang and in other Yangtze cities. They gave up control of the Chinese court in Shanghai. They surrendered control of China's customs and other fiscal institutions. They, and the other powers, were forced to agree

to tariff autonomy for China. They began to negotiate for the abolition of extraterritoriality.

All of Asia was profoundly aware of this great movement in China. Japan had gained freedom from white domination and control by remodelling herself in the Western image and by fighting wars against China in 1894 and Russia in 1905. No other Asiatic power, except Turkey, had altogether freed itself from European dominance. Asia, the mother of civilization, seemed everlastingly doomed to be fettered by the force and speed of the white man's world. Yet, here was China, the weakest of Asiatics, freeing herself by the sheer will to be free. We who watched these events close at hand realized that new aspirations had been released to stir the whole Asiatic world.

In this hour of crisis, when new world relations are emerging, it would be bottomless folly for us to pretend to disregard those aspirations. Japan corrupts the idea, seeking to make the slogan "Asia for the Asiatics" mean the same

as "Asia for the Japanese." But the idea itself is decidedly not a Japanese invention. The explosive force behind it is stronger than armies. To ignore it, to fail to acknowledge that an epoch in Asia's history is ended, would be to play into the hands of Japanese imperialism.

The white man can point to his work in Asia with considerable pride. He has brought to that continent machines and railroads and bridges. He has raised the standard of living in every city in which he erected a factory or mill or go-down. Asiatics have been acquainted with our religions and banking and industrial systems and thousands of their sons and daughters have been educated in white men's schools, even in Europe and America, among our own children. The fierce nationalism that has gripped so many of Asia's peoples is in itself a lesson learned from the West.

But the Asiatic neverthelessresents us. For we have come into their lands and discriminated against them, racially and religiously. Thus, they are heathens, inferiors, "yellow-skins," "brown brothers," to be kept in their own countries and out of ours. Racial discrimination is a bitter poison, dimming the eye to such gifts as cot-

ton and steel mills; it makes every virtue an act of discourtesy and turns speeches of friendship into mockery. No erect, proud human being can be bribed into accepting the inferiority of his own blood.

## II

The Chinese regarded foreigners who came by the sea as barbarians who could never learn the civilized ways of the East. In a letter from the Chinese Emperor, Chien Lung, to George III of England, we read:

Supposing that your Envoy should come to our Court, his language and national dress differ from that of our people, and there would be no place in which to bestow him. It may be suggested that he might imitate the Europeans permanently resident in Peking and adopt the dress and customs of China, but, it has never been our dynasty's wish to force people to do things unseemly and inconvenient. How can our dynasty alter its whole procedure and system of etiquette, established for more than a century, in order to meet your individual views?

. . . Nevertheless, I do not forget the lonely remoteness of your island, cut off from the world by intervening wastes of sea, nor do I overlook your excusable ignorance of the usages of Our Celestial Empire.

Asiatic countries have always been in contact with each other and with Mediterranean Europe by land and sea routes, and with the vast area that is now Russia.

There was the normal trade intercourse; wars that brought Alexander the Great to India and Genghis Khan to Russia; but it was not until the "barbarian from the sea," the Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese and British came into Asia that the pressure of an utterly different civilization and attitude exerted itself upon the Asiatic people.

Consider the effects of that pressure upon the self-esteem of the Asiatic in those areas now at war: India was conquered by France and England and Portugal; Burma became British; Malaya came under British control; the Dutch East Indies were held by Spain, Holland and England and finally reverted to the Dutch; Annam, Tonkin and Cambodia became French colonies; Borneo was divided between England and Holland; the Philippines were held by Spain and then were taken over by the United States; Formosa was taken from China by the Dutch, was captured by the Spaniards and finally fell to the Japanese. China itself was forced to surrender settlements and concessions in her principal ports, cede Hongkong and Weihaiwei to the British, grant extraterritoriality even to small European and American countries, surrender her overlordship of Tibet,

concede special spheres in Turkestan and Mongolia to the Russians, and maintain a constant struggle against the partitioning of her country and the distribution of her administrative offices among the European nations. Only Japan and Siam escaped — and Siam was enslaved geographically to the British and the French. Even lands distant from the Pacific Ocean — Persia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Syria — in time came within the economic, if not political, spheres of Great Britain, France or Russia.

Asia never accepted the domination of Europe complacently. The intellectual, articulate leadership of the vast Asiatic masses resented and objected to what they regarded as Occidental arrogance; the masses remained in poverty and ignorance, despite frequent improvement of economic conditions in the actual centers of the white man's commerce and industry. While European countries enjoyed a constant rise in the standards of living of their own people, the Asiatic peoples whom they controlled or governed generally remained stationary, in poverty, without access to general education, without machinery, without roads except a very few for military purposes, without widespread hos-

pitalization. Except as the Christian missionaries, most of whom were Americans, brought along Bibles, sewing machines and aspirin to the natives, the effect of the impact of the West upon them has been of scarcely any significance. I am speaking of the masses. The intellectuals, of course, studied in European and American universities, imbibed the ideals of nationalism and liberalism and, latterly, communism and fascism, and returned to their native lands to stir the rebellion against the white man.

### III

Asia has been seething since 1905 when Japan, among the smallest of Asiatics, defeated Russia, the largest of Europeans, by force of arms. That episode gave momentum to anti-Europeanism, to Asia for the Asiatics. It was after this war that the Kuomintang, the Nationalist Party of China, under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen roused Chinese not only in China, but in Hawaii, in the Philippines, in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies to the most passionate nationalism ever known in Asia. Even a Chinese opposed to the Kuomintang, like the philosopher Liang Chi-chao, spoke of his land with a passion hardly known to Western chauvinism:

The greatest country in the greatest of the five continents of the world — which is it? My country, the Middle State, the Flowery Land! The people who number one-third of the human race — who are they? My countrymen of the Middle State, the Flowery Land! Annals which extend back without a break for over four thousand years — of what country are these? Of my country, the Middle State, the Flowery Land! . . . My country, the Middle State, the Flowery Land, stands proudly alone, having survived, in one unbroken line, ever increasing in size and brilliancy, down to the present day. And in the future it will spread into myriad branches, to be fused together in one furnace. Ah, beautiful is my country! Ah, great are my countrymen! Now, ere inditing a rough outline of their story, I must purify myself thrice with perfume and the bath; then, looking up to heaven, with many prostrations, thank God that I was born in this lovely land, as one of the sons of this great people.

What occurred in China took place everywhere. The Young Turk movement, the revolutions in Persia and among the Afghans, the rise of the Arab states, the founding of modern Iraq and the Indian revolts and uprising, culminating in the Congress Party movement of Gandhi, represent at most Asia's pulling at the fetters which bound her to Europe. During the last war, Japan came in as a full ally, sitting among the four greatest powers in the world, but China also managed, largely with American tutelage, to establish an atmos-

phere more favorable to self-rule. Iraq, the handiwork of Feisal and Lawrence of Arabia, won her independence. India was promised much, though the promises were allowed to rot in the débris of Empire politics.

Asia waited for the next war. And when it came, each Asiatic country, except the China of Chiang Kai-shek, remembered its resentment of the white man no less than its fear of Japan. We in the West speak of the fifth columns in the Asiatic countries, but in the China of Wang Ching-wei, in Malaya and Burma and even in India, forces were at work to deal first with the white man — first because it was easier and more Asiatic.

Unless Japan is beaten, those forces may lead Asia to such an enslavement as they cannot even imagine today. They are opening their gates to a conqueror who is mellowed neither by time nor by a century and a half of liberalism. In Great Britain, for instance, important segments of a liberty-loving population are critical of their own government for not serving the colonial masses better and more justly. No one in Japan will raise a voice against the most ruthless exploitation of the conquered countries, unavoidable if only to pay the costs of the conquests.

And there we have the cruel paradox of the Asiatic world at this hour. The very aspiration for national freedom leads men to help forge even more cruel chains of servitude. It is the paradox which we must understand ourselves and help Asia to resolve.

#### IV

It is worth noting that the United States never assumed the Kipling-esque "white man's burden" anywhere, nor have we oppressed any of the native peoples in Asia. This country has held no concessions or settlements on that continent. Except for the Philippines, which we promised full independence in 1946, we have taken none of these areas as colonies, nor have we exploited them for their raw materials.

I am not setting the United States up as the most moral of states. Whatever the causes may have been, the history of our relations with Asia have been utterly different from the Europeans. This gives us both the opportunity and the obligation to take the lead in bringing about that understanding between East and West without which there can be no peaceful world.

Daniel Webster, in his letter of basic instructions to Caleb Cush-

ing in 1843, laid down the American policy which has been continued consistently to this day. His instructions were:

All ideas of this kind respecting your mission must, should they arise, be immediately met by a declaration, not made ostentatiously, or in a manner reproachful toward others, that you are no tribute bearer; that your government pays tribute to none and expects tribute from none; and that even as to presents, your government neither makes nor accepts presents. . . .

You will say that the government of the United States is always controlled by a sense of religion and of honor; that nations differ in their religious opinions and observances; that you cannot do anything which the religion of your own country or the sentiments of honor forbid; that you have the most profound respect for His Majesty the Emperor; that you are ready to make to him all manifestations of homage which are consistent with your own sense. . . .

Never has the United States deviated from this policy, no matter what the provocation. Even when the Asiatic countries were being partitioned and we might have had a share of the spoils, we rejected the bait. We declared for an Open Door for trade and our missionaries always stimulated, to the consternation of the Europeans, a sense of freedom, a feeling for self-respecting independence.

The United States, therefore, enters upon the present difficult period of relations between the

white man and Asia with the fewest liabilities. Contrast the attitude of the Filipinos toward America with that of any of the peoples in the British, French or Dutch colonies. The Filipinos stood firm, Quezon and MacArthur representing one people, undivided by racial differences, while Britain was faced in the bitterest moment of the war by struggles to take advantage of the distress of the Empire. When China invites an American general to head her armies, to control her Burma Road, to head her air force, it is not only lease-lend — it is history, it is a tradition of friendship and forbearance. No one in Asia has ever had to pay America; we even returned the Boxer Indemnity — most of it.

This war in the Far East must be separated into two distinct and, at times, contrary movements, which may at certain moments coalesce only to separate again. One is the eternal struggle of human beings to free themselves from unwelcomed suzerains, the struggle for independence and equality, for distinctive national personality. The other is the imperialistic war between Japan and the United States, Great Britain and their allies.

No matter what happens to the Japanese war, the movement for Asia for the Asiatics will continue. Pre-war imperialism in Asia is ended for good.

That period in human history is ended. It ended when Eugene Chen drove the British out of Hankow; when Gandhi forced Britain to deal with him. The end was confirmed, even for those Asiatics who hate and fear Japan, when Japan marched from Hongkong to Singapore and discovered no restraining power. Territory taken by force must be held by force. Peoples kept in thrall by power and prestige revert to freedom when the power is lifted and the prestige wanes. No one has stated this conception of the relations of peoples better than Sun Yet-sen, who in the First Lecture of the San Min Chu I said:

Japan has been able to learn from Europe and, since her modernization, to catch up with Europe. . . . Japan's rise has brought prestige not only to the Yamato race, but it has raised the standing of all Asiatic peoples. We once thought we could not do what the Europeans could do; we see now that Japan has learned from Europe and that, if we follow Japan, we, too, will be learning from the West as Japan did.

And that, of course, is what Japan will face should she be enabled to hold Asia: she will face Asiatic countries, freed from the

white man, who will insist upon doing as the Japanese have done; hundreds of millions of Asiatics, who will insist upon freeing themselves from the invader and then setting up strong states of their own. The Japanese seem to realize this and with guile are recognizing certain principles of local self-rule. In Malaya, the Japanese have been encouraging the concept of Malaya for the Malaysians, and in Burma, Burma for the Burmese — dangerous propaganda for a conqueror, upon whom this intensification of nationalism may ricochet. Japanese colonial policy is likely to swing between the most brutal kind of exploitation and terror, and conciliation of local nationalisms.

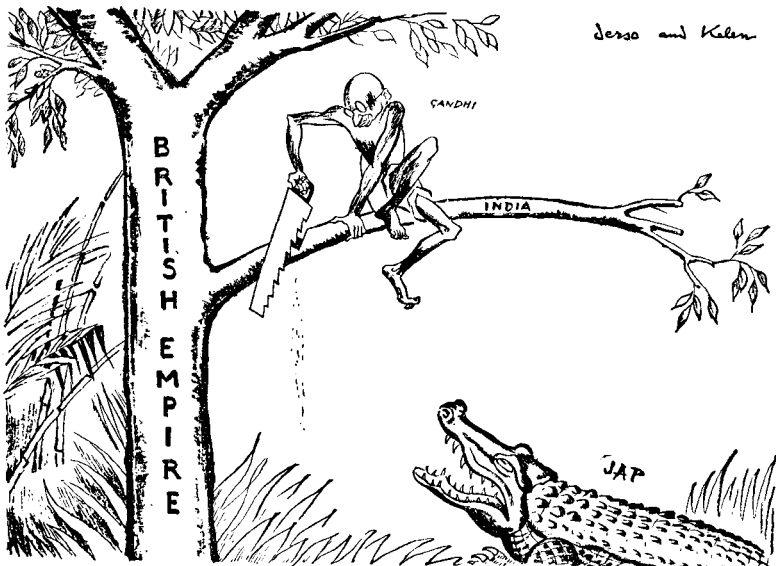
## V

When we look upon this Asiatic world, we have to have the answer to the question: Why should America be fighting in Asia? We can say that we have nothing to fight for there in the sense that we own nothing there materially indispensable to our economic life. Certainly, we are not sending our sons to Asia to restore the Viceroy of India or the Dutch rubber planter. We need to think this problem out without flabby emotionalism.

We need to be so sure of our objectives that we can make them not only understandable but believable to the Asiatics and we need to state them in terms which will influence them to fight alongside us against the Japanese. Some aspects of our relations with all eastern and southern Asiatics will henceforth be more difficult than they have been in the past. But we ought so to state our own terms and objectives that all these peoples will respect our candor while we serve them ardently in developing them for liberty and self-government. While we may have to place

restrictions upon their competition with our economy, they must realize that only in us, in the friendship of America, is there hope for them for independence and liberty. We must be honest in discussing restrictions and sincere in our advocacy of their liberty.

If Japan is victorious, this Asiatic power can and will be organized not only to dominate Asia but to challenge Europe and the Americas. Asia is rich in people and food, but poor in minerals. It will demand access to every market and will back that demand by a conqueror's power. Japan will throw



*Passive Resistance*

goods into the high-standard-of-living markets, produced by labor at ten cents an hour to compete with goods produced at from five to ten times as much. We shall only be able to compete with them even in our own markets by lowering not only our wage scale but our standard of living. The war between the United States and Japan is now essentially an economic war, but not one for exploiting areas, for mining and oil concessions and such trivia. It is a war to determine whether for us, for ourselves, our standard of life or the Japanese standard of life shall prevail.

The white man has, in the past, not only been dominant in Asia, but he has set up barriers against colonization of his world by the Asiatic. Not only the United States, but Australia, Canada and many of the Central and South American countries have established exclusion laws to keep out the Chinese, the Japanese and the Hindus. The first exclusion law here was passed in 1894 against the Chinese and in 1923 Congress extended it fully to the Japanese. Few Western attitudes have annoyed Asiatics more. They create a community of interest among Asiatics, where it is to our interest to encourage independence and separatism.

Should Japan be victorious in this war, one of the most serious problems to face the United States, Canada, Australia and the Central and South American countries would be a Japanese demand for treatment of all Asiatics equal to that meted out to Europeans in immigration and colonization. The stronger countries might succeed in resisting Japan's claims, but the weaker countries could not hold out. There would be colonies of Asiatics certainly in most of the Central American and in some of the South American countries sufficiently large to become problems not only to the defenses but to the population profile of the American continents. The United States and Canada would conceivably have to go to war again to maintain the right to determine their own racial characteristics.

But this is not all. One refers constantly to the significance of "face" in Asia. "Face" counts everywhere. It is honor, dignity. It is the mark of acceptability. In international relations, a nation that is defeated in a war has definitely lost "face." This is particularly and offensively true when a great power has been defeated by a lesser power. If the United States is defeated by Japan, there is no possibility of our ever having any

influence in Asia and the probability is that we should lose prestige and influence in Central and South America. Certainly, there would be no prospect of our ever assuming leadership in the reconstruction of an orderly world. The victor would determine the character of the next generations. The "White Man" would be the underdog — and would be treated as an underdog by peoples to whom caste and position mean everything.

Such an attitude holds dire forebodings, because Asia has in the past conquered Europe and may do so again. Attila's Huns, the Indo-Scythians, the Mongols, two nations of Turks entered upon careers of European conquest at moments when European decadence opened the doors wide open. We have built a culture and a civilization, we peoples of the West. It is neither perfect nor yet com-

plete, but it is ours. We dare not be conquered by Japan.

That is our side of the story, but there is the other side that concerns us as deeply. Proud as we are of our freedoms, we are eager to share them. The American ideal foresees the day when all of mankind may meet in the same market place on an equal standard of living. That is why Asia can place more confidence and hope in us than in such "liberation" as the Japanese will bring. Vast as our selfish interests in victory may be, they coincide with the interests of all Asia — threatened by a new and more brutal imperialism precisely at the moment when the old imperialism has run its course.

The genius of Chiang Kai-shek as a statesman is best evidenced by his understanding of this community of interest between East and West.



## *In Praise of Dictators*

BY SAMUEL ADAMS

(1722-1803)

*I* F I AM to have a master, let me have a severe one. I shall then be constantly disposed to take the first fair opportunity of ridding myself of his tyranny.



# POETRY

## NO BOUNDARY

BY LENORE G. MARSHALL

Remember this:  
                                no boundary,  
Space into space into space,  
Islands beyond the islands that I see,  
Perceived in this hour of grace  
As though sight curved with the waters flowingly.

Never forget the mobile porcelain water  
Leading  
                        and the world open and bright  
As though it flew forward on blue and outspread wings.  
Remember the heart molten with delight  
Having all hidden things.

Receive forever the imprint of hewn mountain  
Or of lithe birch tree laced with maiden leaves  
Twittering like a shower of green rain drops,  
How trepidation weaves  
Frail pattern:  
                                a virgin bewitched into a fountain.

This noon never relinquish!  
                                Into the marrow  
Let sink the seed of its gold, lighting the bone.  
Mark how sloped rocks like flanks of elephants glow  
Warmed and caressed by the invading sun;  
The earth is sun beyond where my eyes follow.

The zenith moving everywhere this day  
Hoard in the bones, deep in the blood collect.  
Clear as I see upon the luminous clay