

KEN

1 9 3 8

EYES ON CHIANG KAI-SHEK



Hemmed by traitors, Chiang weeps—and shoots

Before the war was hours old, Chiang's most secret plans were known to the Japs. Again and again Jap actions showed foreknowledge of Chiang's movements and stratagems, as discussed and decided with his most trusted leaders. This explains many mysterious incidents, and makes China's apparent "spy complex" fully understandable.

WHEN in July, 1937, the Marco Polo Bridge incident occurred (the incident from which grew the present Sino-Japanese conflict) Chiang Kai-shek dispatched provincial troops from Honan and Shensi to the North, but he hoped, actually, to settle the trouble through diplomatic channels. China, he realized, was not yet ready to fight.

So before deciding what steps should be taken in regard to the situation in the North, Chiang summoned the Governors of the Northern and Coastal Provinces to a conference.

The result of that conference was unexpected, but gratifying. They all (including Generals Han Fu Chu and Yuen Sih Shan, Governors of Shantung and Shansi Provinces who, in case of armed resistance, would have to give and take initial blows) favored war and vowed they would fight for China and defend their provinces to the best of their abilities.

In spite of this seeming unity, Chiang still hesitated.

OldMagazineArticles.com

Chang Kai-Shek



But even while Chiang hesitated, the trouble in the North grew, and Japanese demands became more unreasonable. It was then, on the fourth of August, that the "Christian General," Feng Yu Hsiang, second in popularity only to the Generalissimo, drew his gun and, handing it to Chiang, said dramatically:

"If you are not going to fight the Japanese *this time*, kill me now."

General Pei, another popular and influential figure, took a stand as definite (if not so spectacular) as that of the "Christian General," and at length it was agreed upon to resist Japan. Anticipating that the Japanese would retaliate by trying to take Shanghai, the meeting broke up with the understanding that troops would be sent to that city at once.

But, a few hours after that meeting, and before Chiang's central troops had even started to move, Japan instructed her nationals to evacuate China, and even petitioned the Chinese Government to guarantee the safety of her refugees. Why? The results of that meeting were secret; in fact orders had been given to all officials concerned to continue their negotiations with the Japanese, and endeavor to prevent further developments in the conflict. Yet Japan's action came immediately after Chiang's decision to fight was made. China, as yet, had made no move. Was this coincidence?

When Chiang Kai-shek learned of

Chang Kai-Shek

the Japanese troops pouring into Shanghai, his first step was to have a boom laid, across the Yangtze River. Anticipating the possibility of an attack on Nanking from this River, he planned his blockade at Kiangyin, halfway between the two cities.

On August 12, Chiang received word of the first clash in Shanghai, and he issued orders to speed up the work on the boom and close it at seven o'clock that same night. Such a move would cut off about 20 Japanese ships, including five gunboats, loitering in waters below Nanking. His plan was to seize these vessels and convert them to his own use.

But, in less than an hour after this decision was made, all Japanese ships in that vicinity were racing down river, and had reached safety before the boom was closed.

Was this another coincidence?

THE trouble in the North continued to grow, and hostilities in Shanghai looked ugly. Chiang finally arranged a special meeting with one of the commanding officers of the Shanghai Troops, General Tseng, and Shanghai's Mayor, O. K. Yui. Realizing that his every move was watched, he planned to make the trip to Shanghai incognito, and the meeting was scheduled to take place at one p.m., August 23, in a private room of Sincere Company's restaurant. Sincere Company is a department store located on Nanking Road, in Shanghai's International Settlement.

Because of the importance of the occasion, and the hazards connected with making such a trip at this time, Chiang let his plans be known only to a few of his intimates. Shortly before his scheduled departure from Nanking, however, he changed his mind and postponed the meeting. Pressing matters required his presence in the Capital.

He had cause, later, to be grateful to those "pressing matters" which had upset his plans. *At the very hour when the Generalissimo was to dine with Yui and General Tseng in Sincere Company, that building was blasted, repeatedly, by unidentified shells.*

The world was horrified at this, the

Chang Kai-Shek

third incident in Shanghai's International Settlement wrecking havoc and claiming hundreds of lives, but it was eventually passed off as "another regrettable accident."

Few people knew that the shells, which all but demolished Sincere Company, were, in all likelihood, intended for Chiang Kai-shek—but then, few people knew that Chiang Kai-shek had any thought of being in Shanghai at that particular time.

But Chiang Kai-shek knew! *Why* were heavy artillery shells dropped in this one spot, away from the actual fighting, if they had not been meant for him? Had his change in plans come too late to be relayed to some enemy lying in wait for him in Shanghai?

Wary now, and suspicious, Chiang waited for an opportune time to make his trip to Shanghai. On August 24th, this opportunity presented itself. He was informed that Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugessen, the British Ambassador, would start for Shanghai by car on August 26. The British Embassy had contacted both the Chinese and Japanese authorities, notifying them of Sir Hugh's intended trip in order to insure his safety.

Chiang decided to follow Sir Hugh's party through to Shanghai, but kept his plans as quiet as possible. In the wake of the British Ambassador's car, he believed he would be reasonably secure.

Everyone knows what followed. As they approached Shanghai, two Japanese planes attacked the cars in which the British Ambassador and his party were traveling, and Sir Hugh was seriously wounded.

Chiang, in the meantime, had started for Shanghai about the same time Sir Hugh started, but he went only as far as the Nanking City Gates. There he turned back, not to his official home, but to one of his suburban residences—and waited.

He did not have to wait long. Word came through, a short time later, that the Ambassador and his party, although virtually guaranteed safety, had been attacked by the Japanese, and the Ambassador himself shot.

The Generalissimo's suspicions of

OldMagazineArticles.com

Chang Kai-Shek

treachery among those nearest to him were being substantiated almost hourly. The Japanese offered, as a preliminary excuse for this outrage, that their pilots had been unable to see the Union Jack on the Ambassador's cars.

However, when it was proved that the flags were discernible from the altitude of the planes, they admitted a part of the truth. They had believed the cars to be carrying "Chinese Officials," who sought protection under a foreign flag.

That admission was enough for Chiang Kai-shek. One or more of his own men were advising the Japanese of his every move and plan. And so, with a war on his hands as desperate as any China has ever seen, the Generalissimo waged a second war against traitors!

FOREIGNERS, trapped in China at the outbreak of hostilities, are inclined to believe China is obsessed with a "spy complex," and is carrying it to extremes. Most of them are ignorant of the events leading up to it, and cannot, therefore, realize the seriousness of Chiang Kai-shek's position.

The Generalissimo, acting on his convictions after the shooting of the British Ambassador, started a widespread "clean-up," and first in that clean-up came those whom he had most trusted. It is safe to say that at least ten of his officials were shot, including his number-one secretary.

Following this, word to "look out for traitors" was issued far and wide. Hundreds of innocent Chinese were thrown into jail for reasons that, to the foreign mind, were ridiculous. The picking of teeth in public became a dangerous act. Chinese authorities asked:

"Why should a man pick his teeth, if he have no chow before him?"

It might be a way of signaling, they reasoned.

Chinese possessing large flashlights were jailed. With those flashlights it would be possible to signal Japanese planes at night.

Chinese, and even foreigners, known to have been friendly with any Japanese, prior to hostilities, were studiously watched.

Chang Kai-Shek

One foreign doctor in a provincial town was put in jail for having in his possession a new electrical machine for treatments in his office. The Chinese did not understand the workings of this machine, but suspected it might be an apparatus for communicating with the Japanese, during air-raids.

An English salesman was jailed, simply because he was traveling on Company business. The Chinese did not see why anyone would want to travel while a war was going on, and although the salesman had papers proving his identity and business, he was jailed anyway.

Perhaps they are over-doing this business of arresting and jailing people as spies, and it is likely that they realize this. Nevertheless, to Chiang Kai-shek, it is better to shoot 200 innocent people engaged in a desperate struggle involving the life and liberty of 400 million, than to leave one traitor at large. ●

