

Japan's Puppet Show

BY SELDEN C. MENEFFEE

THE Japanese have long since surpassed the Nazis in the science of manipulating Quislings. They have established some form of collaborationist government—under strict Japanese control, of course—in every country of occupied Asia. At present, however, the whole puppet show is coming unstrung.

Japan has not only been relatively successful at this hypocritical game in the past, but was the first to play it. Korea was annexed in 1910, and with considerable finesse for those times. The Japanese ambassador in Seoul hired a band of assassins to kill the Korean queen, after which the younger of the two princes royal, Yi Eum (called Gin Ri by the Japanese), was pressed into marriage with a Japanese princess. The crown prince, Yi Ewa, is still a prisoner in Korea, and Japan may try to make a puppet king of him when the war is plainly lost.

In Manchuria Henry Pu Yi, last of the Manchu dynasty, was held in Tientsin until he was made "Emperor of Manchoukuo" in 1933. Like Yi Eum, he is only window dressing; the real Japanese Quislings in Manchuria are General Chang Ching-hui, who is now Premier, and the Japanese-educated Dr. Chao Hsin-po, now president of the Legislative Yuan. There has been little news of opposition to Japan in Manchuria, although guerrilla resistance still persists in some areas.

In sections of Asia occupied since 1937 the Japanese puppets are having more trouble. As it becomes plain that Japan must lose the war sooner or later, rumblings are heard in every part of eastern Asia. Last year the task of cajoling or forcing the native peoples into line for intensified Japanese exploitation was intrusted to a "Greater East Asia Ministry" in the Tojo government. In November six of the leading puppets or their representatives were summoned to Tokyo for a "Greater East Asia Conference." But despite all Japan's efforts, its prestige has been steadily declining as a result of official arrogance, economic chaos in occupied Asia, and Allied victories in the Pacific.

In China, the Japanese have had high hopes of their puppet Premier of the Nanking government, Wang Ching-wei. He and Chiang Kai-shek, after all, are the two ranking disciples of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Apparently Wang was induced to make peace with the enemy by his jealousy or distrust of Chiang, his hatred of the Chinese Communists, and his belief in Dr. Sun's pan-Asian doctrine. After many initial blunders, such as the Nanking orgy, the Japanese have tried to rally the Chi-

nese people behind Wang by a policy of superficial appeasement. They have given him nominal control of the puppet states in North China, surrendered their extra-territorial rights in Shanghai, and turned over to the Nanking regime nearly every right save that of taxing the Japanese. Early this month they put Wang's government in control of six important public utilities which had been run by the Japanese military throughout the occupied period. Currently Tokyo claims that in the campaign to capture the Hankow-Canton railroad Japanese troops have been given strict orders not to rape or loot or to destroy crops needlessly.

All this, however, comes too late. The Chinese regulars and guerrillas fight on. And now Wang Ching-wei, who is sixty-one years old, is seriously ill. An operation to remove an assassin's bullet fired early in the war was unsuccessful, and last March Wang was moved to Tokyo for other operations. So far as is known he is still there. If he dies, it will be impossible to replace him.

In the Philippines a number of politicians have gone over to the Japanese. Chief among them is José Laurel, head of the puppet Philippine government which received paper "independence" last October. A former Yale Law School honor student, Laurel was Secretary of the Interior in the pre-war Commonwealth government. He had made pro-Japanese and anti-American statements before Pearl Harbor and had been accused of accepting bribes for facilitating the settlement of Japanese around Davao, the enemy's secret base on Mindanao. A year ago he was the target of a would-be assassin's bullet.

The most pro-Japanese of the Filipino collaborationists is Benigno Aquino, director general of the fascist Kalibapi, the single political party, and speaker of the puppet assembly. If he had not been so obviously pro-Japanese, Aquino might have been chosen for the top Quisling job. Both he and Laurel have been decorated by the Japanese, who may be trying to play one against the other. Both men have sons married to Japanese girls.

Some other prominent men collaborating with the enemy may be doing so either because they have no choice or because they want to extract concessions from the Japanese. Jorge Vargas, President Quezon's secretary, who was reported to have been left behind to keep order when the Japanese arrived, was made mayor of Manila and then chairman of the provisional government until superseded by Laurel. Later he was named "ambassador" to Japan. Manuel Roxas, a Filipino gen-

eral who held out with the guerrillas on Mindanao for more than a year after the fall of Corregidor, signed the Japanese-sponsored Philippine constitution immediately after his capture, apparently under duress. Six months later he emerged from "retirement due to ill health" to become head of the economic planning board and take charge of rice distribution in the famine-stricken areas.

Guerrilla warfare continues on all the larger islands, even reaching the suburbs of Manila on occasion—as the Japanese admit. The guerrillas find inspiration in Tomás Confessor, an intellectual leader and former associate of Quezon, who still holds out with a force of men in the southern islands. Laurel grows more desperate by the moment. In February he declared a state of national emergency and assumed dictatorial power over all government agencies and officials. In June he forbade the governors and mayors, who had apparently been getting unruly, to override the rulings of the constabulary. He also created a special Bureau of Investigation to purge his own administration and fired seventy-one members of the Manila constabulary and forty-two employees of the Food Administration. He has taken personal control of the Manila government. Laurel apparently is developing a severe case of jitters as the American forces approach the Philippines via New Guinea and Saipan.

Thailand, like Denmark, is held up as an example of how occupied countries profit by not resisting fascist aggression. The people have been bribed by the "gift" of the two Shan states that were formerly attached to Burma and of four Malay states. But Thailand remains Japan's soft underbelly in Southeast Asia. It has an organized underground movement looking to pre-war democratic figures for post-war leadership.

The unhappy Thai puppet is Premier Luang Pibul Songgram, who is pro-Axis rather than pro-Japanese. After being educated in a French military school, he visited Italy in the twenties and acquired a great admiration for Mussolini, whose picture he always kept in his room. He helped to engineer the anti-democratic coup of 1935, becoming Minister of Defense and, in 1938, Premier. On December 5, 1941, he took dictatorial power under the pretext of resisting aggression and admitted the Japanese into Thailand. Afterward he asked Hitler to be allowed to sign the Tripartite Agreement. The request was referred to Tojo, who turned it down. Pibul repaid this snub by refusing to attend last year's conference of puppet leaders in Tokyo, pleading sickness. Pibul has lately grown more and more melancholy both in his official statements and in the radio speeches he writes under the name of Sammakhai Thai. He tried to resign in 1943, but the Japanese would not let him.

Puppet Premier Ba Maw of Burma, the son of a leader in the Burmese revolt of 1886, was the first Premier under the relatively liberal Burmese constitution put into effect by the British in 1937. Two years later he

lost a vote of confidence in the parliament, the British members voting against him. In August, 1940, he was sentenced to a year in jail for preaching sedition. At the end of this period he was not released immediately. His bitterness over these events made him eminently eligible for the post of Burmese Quisling. As Premier he has outlawed all political parties except one. Despite the "independence" granted Burma last year, every branch of Ba Maw's government is controlled by his Japanese "advisers." The forces of the Allies now fighting in Burma have been actively aided by the villagers.

Japan's Indian puppet is the head of the "Free India" provisional government, Subhas Chandra Bose, a former mayor of Calcutta and former president of the Indian National Congress. His record, which includes ten jail sentences under the British regime, is a great asset to the Japanese propagandists. Bose claims to have 300,000 Indian troops, but probably has less than a tenth of this number. The Japanese defeat in India was a great blow to his prestige, and he exerts nominal control today only over the Andaman and Nicobar islands.

In the Netherlands East Indies the Japanese were hard put to find prominent Indonesians who would collaborate with them. They finally seized on Ir. Soekarno, a fiery Javanese nationalist who had been exiled to Sumatra by the Dutch for revolutionary activities, and made him head of the Poetera, or so-called "peoples' movement." But apparently Soekarno is none too reliable; he has disappeared from the radio for long periods and is known to have been under arrest at least once.

Last year a central "council" with several regional branches was instituted with great fanfare in Java to allow Indonesian "participation in the military administration," but this was a patent fraud. Only a few thousand people were allowed to vote, and the Japanese kept the councils under tight control. Now they are trying to build up the native sultans in Java, Sumatra, and Borneo as symbols of self-rule. The Japanese radio admits that guerrillas are still operating in Sumatra and Borneo.

In Malaya, too, British and Indian guerrillas aided by Chinese and Malay civilians are still fighting, or "giving themselves up," as the Japanese quaintly put it. The Sultan of Johore and other native rulers helped the Japanese in the early stages of the war, but the Japanese radio seldom mentions them today.

Indo-China is the only country where the Japanese have not made use of native puppets; there the Vichy French under Admiral Decoux have done the dirty work, under loose Japanese control. But economic chaos resulting from Japanese exploitation and loss of foreign markets has produced great unrest in Indo-China, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies alike. The Japanese now rarely refer to the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," emphasizing instead "self-sufficiency" in each area.

The whole puppet show in eastern Asia, cleverly con-

ceived as it was, is being disrupted by Japan's military defeats and its unkept promises. Unfortunately, these promises, though they were honored only in the breach, will be an unsettling factor in the situation we shall confront when the Japanese have been swept out. It will then be up to us—the United Nations—to show by our deeds that we mean to keep our own promises of self-government for colonial regions. The recent Congressional resolution reaffirming America's guaranty of independence to the Philippines as soon as the Quislings have been removed, and providing for American bases in the Islands for mutual security, is a good beginning.

Behind the Enemy Line

BY ARGUS

IT TOOK the American public a week longer than the German to grasp the real significance of the robot bomb. Not until three weeks had passed did Americans understand that this was no mechanical toy but a diabolical invention. The average German, however, realized after fourteen days that the new weapon would not decisively alter the course of the war, would never win the victory for the Reich. The violent propaganda campaign which had at first convinced him that this was precisely what it would do—as described in this column last week—had only a short-lived success, and if all signs do not deceive us, its rapid and complete collapse marks a turning-point in the history of the war.

Let us see how the situation appeared to the eyes of neutral observers. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* of Schaffhausen, Switzerland, reported on July 1:

When two weeks ago Hitler shot the first robot bombs against England and when the words "The hour of retribution has come" were spread across the front pages of German newspapers, many people thought they saw the silver lining on the horizon. Now hardly anyone talks of or believes in the miraculous new weapon. Hopes have not been fulfilled. Crude facts are speaking. The enemy is advancing in the west, east, and south. Morale is sinking again.

Another Swiss newspaper, the *Weltwoche* of Zurich, gave a more detailed description on June 30:

German propaganda referred to the "hell hounds" in almost mystical terms. . . . But in spite of Goebbels's vehemence, the help they brought to the government was of a very temporary nature. For a short time the morale of even the skeptical Wilhelmstrasse received a lift, and Hitler's prestige went up. German soldiers listening to broadcasts from Germany between battles broke into cheers. But the stimulating effect lasted only a few days. Goebbels's predictions did not materialize. Instead, accounts of disastrous defeats poured into Germany from all fronts.

Now that the phantasmagoria of a glorious change due to the new weapon has been dissipated, the common man in Germany sees for the first time the naked reality. He confronts now what, as if with an inherited instinct, he has always dreaded most—a many-front war. Until now the German public has hoped that the fresh masses of the Anglo-Americans would not actually appear on the field of battle. Even on June 6, after the successful landing, it comforted itself with the thought that the enemy would soon be thrown back into the sea and that the western front would forthwith disappear. When that did not happen, hope prevailed for some days after June 16 that Aladdin's wonder-bombs would save the Reich from a three-front war. Now that this expectation has also proved false, the dreaded, fundamentally hopeless situation has been finally—and I believe irrevocably—revealed. For a people as deeply experienced in land warfare as the Germans, no illusions can any longer veil the fact that a war against the armies not of one great power but of three is bound finally to be lost, if only from sheer attrition. As the *Sydsvenska Dagbladet-Snaelposten* of July 2 expressed it, "the war has been living on credit in Germany for a long time and has now used it all up. The bankruptcy of German propaganda has become complete." The *National-Zeitung* of Basel painted a similar picture on June 29: "The atmosphere in Berlin is extremely grave. The merciless reality of the three-front war seems for the first time to be fully comprehended. German morale seems to have crashed to a new low."

All reports agree that disillusionment about the "hell hounds" acted on German *Stimmung* like a blitz. The *St. Gall Tagblatt* for July 1 spoke of the "grosse Kotzen"—which is inadequately translated as general nausea." A wave of cynicism, it said, was sweeping over the country; one illustration was the sudden appearance of an unprintable filthy version of the song "Lilli Marlene." (This is the German song which American soldiers in Africa adopted for their own.) Of course the home front, whatever its feelings, is forced to carry on; the question is, when will its present mood spread to the army, as it surely will some day? The army is not, basically, compelled to carry on; the army can run away. In this connection a story in the Schaffhausen *Arbeiter-Zeitung* about a tank soldier from the eastern front is interesting. The soldier spoke of the "depression haunting everybody like a lingering poison." Even the officers, he said, were afflicted with it, and he repeated a conversation he had had with his battalion commander. Once when he brought this officer a paper, "the latter suddenly asked him why he looked in such ill-humor. The soldier shrugged his shoulders and did not answer. But the officer would not let him off. 'Speak out, man,' he insisted. 'You are fed up. If so, you need not be ashamed of it. It's the same with me.'"