

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



Boris Chaliapin

MADAME CHIANG

She and China know what endurance means.

(*Foreign News*)

Convinced that the Western mind cannot or will not attempt to understand the East, India's leading political figures (excluding those in jail), industrial tycoons and Europeans met at Delhi within a stone's throw of the Maharaja's palace now occupied by William Phillips, the Boston Brahman who is President Roosevelt's personal envoy to India.* Chakravarti Rajagopalachariar, who broke with Gandhi over the civil-disobedience issue, spoke eloquently of Gandhi's leadership, kindness, love of freedom. Even the two Chambers of Princes and most Moslem groups (with the exception of loud-mouthed Mohammed Ali Jinnah's Moslem League) joined the cry.

The Eleventh Hour. A message from the Viceroy reiterating that "if he (Gandhi) fasts while in detention, he does so solely . . . at his own risk" chilled all hopes for compromise. Rajagopalachariar visited Phillips but came away convinced that the Americans can do nothing.

Between Gandhi's will and that of the Viceroy the final clash had come. Like a Greek tragedy the action moved inexorably toward the climax. A frail little bag of bones had decided he would drink only fruit juice for three weeks, and the whole British Empire quivered. A world that uses and more than half believes in force watched the struggle with divided sympathies and a strange sense of shame.

CHINA

Madame

(See Cover)

The Senators watched in curious silence as Madame Chiang walked down the aisle of the Senate Chamber. They saw a still face with big dark eyes. They saw a slim, straight figure in a black Chinese gown, with here a tiny splash of jade, there a black sequin's understated sparkle. Madame Chiang stepped to the rostrum, listened as Vice President Wallace introduced her, shot a smile at the Senators, and then, after apologizing for not having a set speech, knocked their silvery blocks off extemporaneously.

She told how one of General Doolittle's flyers, forced to bail out on Chinese soil after bombing Tokyo, had seen the populace running toward him, had waved and shouted the only Chinese word he knew: "Mei-kuo, Mei-kuo"—America, America (literally, said Madame Chiang, "beautiful country"). "Our people laughed and almost hugged him and greeted him like a long-lost brother."

Then she told of a trip she had taken to the Heng-Yang Mountains to see the "Rub-the-Mirror Pavilion." There, 2,000 years ago, a young Buddhist monk had sat crossed-legged for days muttering "Amita-Buddha! Amita Buddha!" The Father Prior took a brick and rubbed it

* Japan, delighted with Britain's embarrassment, declared a "Mahatma Gandhi Week" in all occupied territories in the East.

Chee-ang v. John

"How do you pronounce your name?" a reporter asked Mme. Chiang.

Her answer: There is a Chinese way and an American way. In American, it is *chce-ang*. In Mandarin, now the official dialect of China, it is approximately John with a *g* on the end.

Other Mandarin pronunciations:

Kuomintang (the Party): *gwaw-min-dahng*.

Mei-ling: *may-ling*.

Chungking: *choong-ching*.

Ho Ying-chin (Minister of War): *hoe ying-jin*.

Chen Pu-lei (Gissimo's secretary): *chun boo-lay*.

Wei Tao-ming (Ambassador to the U.S.): *way dow-ming*.

Mei Kuo (America): *may-gwaw*.

Chung Kuo (China): *joong-gwaw*.

against a near-by stone until the acolyte asked what he was doing.

The Father Prior said: "I am trying to make a mirror out of this brick."

"It is impossible," said the acolyte.

"Yes," said the Father Prior, "it is just as impossible for you to acquire grace by doing nothing except murmur 'Amita-Buddha' all day long . . ."

"So, my friends," said Madame Chiang, "I feel that it is necessary for us not only to have ideals and to proclaim that we have them, it is necessary that we act to implement them."

The U.S. Senate is not in the habit of rising to its feet to applaud. For Madame Chiang it rose and thundered.

Proud Day. A few minutes later in the House, Speaker Sam Rayburn, a bachelor, stepped forward and said: "It is a proud day for the United States of America to receive and to do honor to one of the outstanding women of all the earth. . . ."

Madame Chiang took her time. She had made many speeches in her life, but never one quite so important as the one the words of which were spread out on the little, mahogany manuscript-stand that had been borrowed from the Senate for her. She had spent weeks thinking about this speech. China was in it. Her husband was part of it. Her life, her acquaintance with America, her identity with her own land, had gone into it. . . .

She began with a little deft flattery, for she knew that compliments would not hurt a compliment-starved Congress. Then: "*The American people have every right to be proud of their fighting men in every part of the world.*"

This was a compliment she could put to some use. With exquisite subtlety, she made the point that many of these troops are idle. She said: "*Some of your troops are stationed in isolated spots. . . . They,*

and others, have to stand the monotony of waiting, just waiting. . . ."

With even more subtlety—for this was over her audience's head—she took a crack at racial snobbery. She referred, without elaboration, to "the Gobineaus and the Houston Chamberlains"—meaning the Comte de Gobineau (1816-82), one of the first racists, who in *Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races Humaines* argued that only the white races are capable of creating culture; of Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1926), the fantastic Englishman who married Richard Wagner's daughter Eva, and wrote that Germany is the master race.

One thing Madame Chiang was determined not to do was plead. Back in 1938 she wrote a Wellesley classmate, Miss Emma Mills: "I want to go to America, but I do not want any visit of mine marked by a belief that I am coming on a begging expedition." And so she spoke as an equal.

There was embarrassed silence when she quoted the Chinese proverb: "*It takes little effort to watch the other fellow carry the load*"; and when she made her most pointed thrust: "*Midway and the Coral Sea are . . . merely steps in the right direction.*"

The high decibel mark of applause was reached when she said: "*. . . Now the prevailing opinion seems to consider the defeat of the Japanese as of relative unimportance and that Hitler is our first concern. This is not borne out by actual facts, nor is it to the interests of the United Nations as a whole to allow Japan to continue. . . .*"

Then she warned: "*Let us not forget that Japan in her occupied areas today has greater resources at her command than Germany. . . .*"

She pleaded for care in planning a post-war world. The House was silent (perhaps because it thought she meant more than she did) when she said: "*Since international interdependence is now so universally recognized, can we not also say that all nations should become members of one corporate body?*"

The audience shouted unrestrainedly when she said: "*From five and a half years of experience we in China are convinced that it is the better part of wisdom not to accept failure ignominiously, but to risk it gloriously.*"

When she finished, tough guys were melted. "Goddam it," said one grizzled Congressman, "I never saw anything like it. Madame Chiang had me on the verge of bursting into tears."

These and the other much-moved listeners probably did not stop to analyze what had pulled at their hearts. It was not the words. In any other mouth they might have sounded flat. It was the woman, the way she clutched her handkerchief and brought her tight hand down on the desk for emphasis, the flash in her eyes which reflected something deep in her experience. Madame Chiang and China know the meaning of endurance. Through this wom-

FOREIGN NEWS

an, a few Americans saw and understood China.

The U.S. Idiom. From her tenth year through her 19th, the most formative time of her life, Mei-ling Soong lived in the U.S. While one of her older sisters went to Wesleyan College (Macon, Ga.), she stayed with friends in near-by Piedmont, learning the idiom and the point of view. She bought gumdrops at Hunt's general store with the other girls, and went hazel-

member of the distinguished Soong family, she cavorted to feasts, rode in jodhpurs. But as a girl with a rigid conscience, she joined the Y.W.C.A. and the Child Labor Commission. She had a horror of untidiness: an English friend describes how she impatiently snatched a dustcloth from a shiftless amah one day and dusted a whole room, exclaiming against dirt.

Dr. Sun died, and the handsome young Chiang Kai-shek assumed at least the

casting orange peels into the gutters.)

The Generalissimo, too, was in for a change. She took him walking every morning and told him Bible stories, until he became a Christian.

Dirty Politics. In December 1936, Madame went to Shanghai for a rest; she was ill. The Generalissimo flew up to Sian in the northwestern province of Shensi to put down the Red foolishness once & for all, and to discipline some insubordinate Central Government troops who preferred fighting Japanese to fighting Communists. He was in for a surprise.

On the morning of Dec. 12 he awoke at his usual hour, 5. At 5:30 he heard shots. His bodyguard ran in to tell him there seemed to be some sort of mutiny, that he had better take to the mountain behind the house. Dressed only in his nightshirt and without his false teeth, he tried to leave by a side door. It was locked. He and two of his men had to climb a ten-foot wall. On top of it the Generalissimo slipped and fell into the moat outside, a drop of 30 feet. For three minutes he could not move. Then a number of bodyguards helped him up the mountain. The Generalissimo fell into a cave that was hidden by thorny shrubs, and lay there, exhausted. Later soldiers found him. "Let us fire a shot," said one. "Don't do that," said another.

Said Chiang: "I am the Generalissimo. Don't be disrespectful. If you regard me as your prisoner, kill me, but don't subject me to indignities." Chiang was taken to a house under guard. There he furiously reprimanded his captor, Chang Hsueh-liang, the "Young Marshal."

Wild rumors reached the outside world. Madame Chiang and the other Soongs gathered in Nanking. They sent William Henry Donald, their Australian confidant, to Sian to see what he could do.

The Generalissimo had determined to starve himself to death. "The martyrs of the former ages always defied death," he wrote in his diary. "I prefer to follow in their footsteps instead of disgracing myself."

In Nanking, Madame found herself surrounded by men apparently glad to have Chiang out of the way. When she tried to argue that the future of China was bound up with his, they taunted her: "A woman pleading for the life of her husband."

The Generalissimo wrote her a letter which never reached her: "I will never allow myself to do anything to make my wife ashamed of me, or become unworthy of being a follower of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. . . . You must never come to Shensi."

At great personal risk, she went to Shensi. At Sian she gave a revolver to Donald and made him promise to shoot her if she was seized by the rebels. The kidnappers let her see the Generalissimo. As soon as she entered the room where he lay, shockingly emaciated, he showed her a verse in the Bible he had found that very morning: "Jehovah will now do a



Carl Mydans

CHIANGS AT HOME

She tidied his quarters and tried to tidy China's.

nutting with them. She was always the one who was teased, but through the teasing she learned American gags. Later the girls went north to a summer school. A history teacher asked Mei-ling to describe Sherman's march through Georgia. "Pardon me," said Mei-ling, "I am a Southerner, and that subject is very painful to me."

Sun Yat-sen's revolution hit China before Mei-ling hit Wellesley, and her only excitement about it was what she caught from her sister Ching-ling (who later married Dr. Sun). At Wellesley her favorite course was Arthurian Romance. She joined Tau Zeta Epsilon, spoke a languid Southern accent, and was sometimes vivacious, sometimes somber, always neat. Professor Annie K. Tuell, with whom she lived, says: "She kept up an awful thinking about everything." She used to speak eloquently of China's contributions to civilization, and regretted Western neglect of them. But she wrote a friend: "The only thing Oriental about me is my face."

The Chinese Idiom. By the time she went back to Shanghai in 1917, Mei-ling knew the U.S. as few Americans do. But she hardly knew her own country. She found a Chinese teacher and learned to speak, read & write Chinese. Gradually she took on Chinese dress. As a beautiful

military tunic of the great revolutionist. Mei-ling Soong met him. At that time she did not actively concern herself with his politics; she heard how he broke with Moscow and she heard whispers of the way his secret societies killed off the Reds. She found herself being courted and liking it, and before long the soldier had followed Mei-ling's formidable mother to Japan to make her agree to a distasteful match (because he had been divorced and was not a Christian). On Dec. 1, 1927, the pair were married.

Dirty Houses. What followed changed her plenty. She left gay, comfortable, clean Shanghai and went to her husband's headquarters in shoddy Nanking. Chiang was engaged in unifying China, ruthlessly and single-mindedly. He was appeasing Japan, so that he might prepare China against Japan. Madame went with him on his campaigns. Their quarters were what they could find—thatched huts, railroad stations, farmhouses—a series of unclean places. She tidied them and wanted to tidy China. She founded the New Life Movement, dedicated to clean living. (Last week Chungking celebrated the ninth anniversary of the New Life Movement with tightened regulations against smoking, eating and spitting in the streets, against

new thing, and that is, He will make a woman protect a man." She read psalms to him until he slept.

Conferences followed. The outside world may never know exactly what was said at Sian in the next days, but apparently the Chiangs convinced the Young Marshal and the other rebels of his intention to fight Japan in proper time—when China was properly unified. He was freed.

"The Daring Young Woman." It was Japan, as it turned out, which chose the time—before China became too strong. With China at war, the demands on Madame were terrific. She was Secretary Gen-

to where Madame lay, crumpled and unconscious, her blue slacks and shirt defiled in a mud puddle. "Come on, wake up," he shouted gruffly, then sang: "She flew through the air with the greatest of ease, the daring young woman. . . ." She stirred, moaned. Donald lifted her to her feet. He walked her to a farmhouse, made her change, put her back in the car, asked her what she wanted to do. "We'll go on to Shanghai," she said.

A few minutes later she said: "I can't breathe. It hurts me to breathe." "Then don't breathe," said Donald callously. They reached Shanghai, inspected the sol-

truck to find her evacuated charges. She found the children marching along the road, the older ones leading the younger, urchins carrying infants. Madame commandeered trucks and got the miniature army to shelter.

One of her warphans wrote on a wall: "Madame is my mother."

The Three Sisters. Although she insisted she was "not one of those people who enjoy ill health," Madame became seriously run down, and in December 1939 she flew to Hong Kong for a rest which was also a reunion. For six weeks the three Soong sisters gossiped, cooked, joked, tried on each other's clothes and were, for the first time in years, truly sisters.

Al-ling (literally: "Friendly Life") Soong had married Dr. H. H. Kung, long-time Minister of Finance. In China Mme. Kung was known for her wealth. She was grave, efficient, strong-willed. Ching-ling ("Happy Life") was the idealist, the incarnation of the spirit of her late husband, Sun Yat-sen. She was in ways the most beautiful, but she was incredibly shy. Mei-Ling ("Beautiful Life") was certainly the personality of the three. At the end of their Hong Kong reunion, all three went to Chungking and much was made of the United Soong Front.

Trips to the Future. China was encircled first by disasters and then by the Japanese. In an effort to salvage all they could from the political turmoil that went with military setbacks, the Generalissimo and Madame flew to India. There they talked with Gandhi and Nehru and they urged the Indians not to let their fight against what they considered one evil invite the way to another.

Last summer Madame took another trip, of which the details and the importance have not yet filtered through China's strict censorship. It was to China's great northwest, where she apparently worked hard to restore Chinese influence in areas which for some time had been gravitating toward Russia.

Memories of the Past. All these things were in her mind as she lay sick last month, her will sapped by nervous exhaustion, in the Harkness Pavilion of the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in Manhattan. China and all these struggles weighed on her mind. But gradually she drew strength from a hope—that she would be able to give the U.S. something it had lacked, a clear look into the eyes and at the face of China.

She arranged to make speeches, not only to the Government, but around the land. She knew that what she said might not have great effect on strategies already determined. But it could have—and in her first appearance it certainly did have—more effect than anything which has yet happened, in giving one great people the kind of understanding of another great people that is the first need of a shrinking, hopeful world.



"YOUNG MARSHAL" & WIFE, MADAME & GISSIMO
A soldier's wife can sometimes disobey.

eral of the Aeronautical Commission, and that practically meant being commander in chief of the Chinese Air Force. She tried to build the New Life Movement into a vehicle for women's war work. She sat in on most of the Generalissimo's conferences, and though she was seldom a policy-maker and never a strategy-maker, she was often an adviser whose advice was taken. She wrote speeches and articles to try to educate the outside world. She went on innumerable inspection tours.

On Oct. 23, 1937 Madame Chiang and W. H. Donald were driving from Nanking to Shanghai to inspect wounded soldiers. At about 4:30 the high-powered car was running around a steeply banked curve when some Japanese bombers appeared overhead. The panicky driver stepped on the gas. The car flew off the road. The passengers were hurled out.

Donald picked himself up and went over

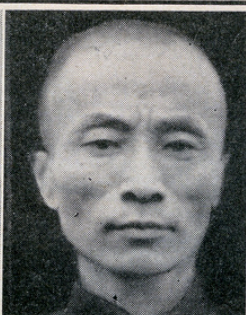
diers at 10 p.m., drove back that night. Madame had a broken rib.

Periodically, in the tough years of war since that accident, Madame has felt at the end of her rope. She has usually blamed the way the chauffeur drove that car, but she should have blamed the way she drove herself. As the Government moved from Nanking to Hankow and from Hankow to Chungking, as the Generalissimo, with Madame at his side, moved from mere Generalissimo to become China's leader and symbol, she worked harder & harder.

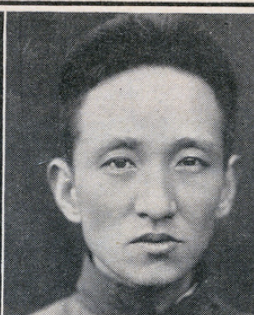
Warphans. Madame herself never had any children. When Chungking was terribly bombed in 1939, Madame took on herself the job of caring for what she called China's Warphans. After one particularly bad bombing, after she had been on her feet all night going from fire to charnel fire, she drove outside Chungking in a



WANG CHUNG-HUI



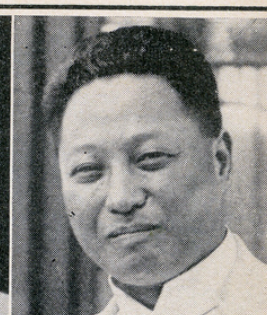
CHEN KUO-FU



CHEN PU-LEI



CHANG CHUN



HOLLINGTON TONG

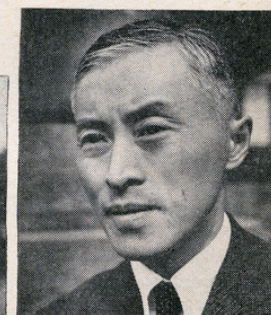
MEN AROUND CHIANG



WANG SHIH-CHIEH



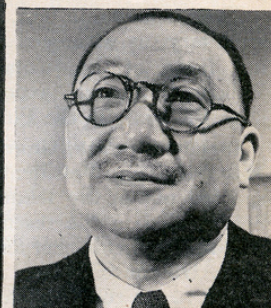
CHEN CHENG, HO YING-CHIN, CHIANG



CHEN LI-FU



TAI CHI-TAO



DR. H. H. KUNG

The men around Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek are a "gang," in the same sense that the New Deal or the Ohio Republican machine or the Cliveden set have been gangs. These are not sharp, rugged characters; these are reflections of the Generalissimo's many faces. But they are tough babies.

Chen Pu-lei, The Gissimo's thin secretary, is probably closest to him of all. Chen, 53, from the Gissimo's home province (Chekiang), was a distinguished journalist until he became Chiang's secretary in 1935. His importance rests in his determining who sees Chiang and what Chiang sees.

Ho Ying-Chin, 54, runs the Army. He joined Sun Yat-sen and Chiang in Canton as the nationalist revolution broke out, led one of the three armies in Chiang's campaign against the northern warlords in 1926. He has been Chief of Staff ever since. Ferociously anti-Communist, with several pet hates in his own Army, he holds all the strings and politically fears nothing. He works closely with **Dr. H. H. Kung**, 62, who controls Civil Administration. Brother-in-law of the Gissimo, "Daddy" Kung has for many years controlled Government finances, and is a great believer in printed currency. As Vice President of the Executive Yuan (Chiang is nominally President) he keeps his finger on all civil government.

The notoriously reactionary **Chen Brothers** control the Kuomintang Party. **Chen Kuo-fu**, 54, Chief of Personnel of the Gissimo's staff, and **Chen Li-fu**, 53, Minister of Education, who together represent the extreme right wing in

Chinese politics, control through their appointees all expression of opinion.

Stolid, stocky **Chang Chun**, 55, "the Gissimo's one-man brain trust," is Governor of Szechwan and leader of the top-notch circle of industrial planners known as the Political Science Group. An able administrator, he has done an admirable job since 1940 of breaking Chungking's province to the Government yoke. He should not be confused with **Chen Cheng**, 43, able young general commanding the central front and representative of the most influential field officers.

Tai Chi-tao, 53, and **Wang Chung-hui**, 61, are Chiang's philosophers. Tai, Kuomintang's leading theoretician and head of the Examination Yuan, has great influence on the Gissimo's thinking. Cautious, scholarly Wang is secretary general of the Supreme National Defense Council, which makes major decisions.

The liberal, pro-British representative in the Gissimo's cabal is **Wang Shih-chieh**, 52, lawyer and educator. Wang is Chief of the State Planning Department and President of the People's Political Council. Weekly he and other scholars lunch with the Gissimo, academically review China policy.

Modest **Hollington Tong**, 56, is Chiang's main official link with the English-speaking world. Officially, he is Vice Minister of Publicity, unofficially the Gissimo's interpreter (Madame sits by and interprets Tong's interpretations). Tong accompanied Madame to the U.S. last November.