

How Shall We Support China

It Is the Duty of Every Worker to Support the Struggle of the Chinese People Against Japanese Imperialism, But the War for Liberation Can Be Won Only by Placing No Confidence at All in the Chinese Bourgeoisie and Placing All Emphasis on the Independent Class Action of the Masses.

By V. R.

Every trade unionist and worker in America and throughout the world must support the struggle for national liberation in China. The defeat of Japanese imperialist aggression will be a decisive step in the struggle against world imperialism, "democratic" and fascist, and the social system from which it stems, the system of capitalist exploitation. For this reason the international working class has as its duty, not only to the Chinese workers and peasants but also to itself, to send material aid to China, to refuse to load transport war materials to Japan, to supplement and make effective the consumers' boycott against Japanese goods by refusing to load, transport, or sell any products of Japan, and to show solidarity with the workers and peasants of Japan who are being ground under the heel of the Japanese military machine.

Smash Japan

Japanese imperialism must be smashed. The question is: will it be smashed as a result of imperialist war which will only plunge the whole world into barbarism, or will it be smashed by revolutionary forces aiming to build a new Workers' World?

Those who, like the Communist Party, advocate what they call "collective security," those who gave their enthusiastic support to President Roosevelt's war speech at Chicago, those who want to invoke the Nine-Power Pact, originally drafted to safeguard the post-War division of spoils among the Powers in the Pacific, are advocating a policy which leads directly to imperialist war. They say, in effect, that Japanese imperialism will have to be fought by Britain and the United States and they go even further: they declare in advance that they will support these imperialist powers in such a war fought purely for imperialist interests. They rely on these powers, in other words on capitalist governments, to stop Japanese aggression just as they relied on the powers in the Non-intervention Committee to stop the fascist robbers from aiding Franco.

Britain and the U. S.

There is, to be sure, a chance that Britain and the United States will give more active aid to the Nanking government than they did to the loyalist government in Spain. They will do this for one reason, and one reason only: to preserve the rights of British and American imperialism to exploit Chinese markets and Chinese workers. Britain will not so easily give up her valuable investments in Central China to the upstart in the family of imperialist nations who has been so apt a pupil of imperialist methods. The strong stand taken in Washington against Japan indicates that the United States intends to preserve, by force of arms if necessary, her right to exploit the Chinese workers, (either directly through the ownership of industry or indirectly through capital investment.) To substitute for the direct exploitation of Japanese imperialism the indirect, but no less thorough, exploitation by British and American imperialism is to

deliver China from one master to another, not to fight for national liberation.

When the automobile workers are fighting against Mr. Ford, do we advocate that they call upon Mr. Knudsen of General Motors to help in that struggle? Yet that is precisely what we do when we advocate that British and American imperialism take over the task of fighting Japan. Just as in a strike we do not depend upon capitalist competitors of the particular boss we are fighting against but rely upon the militant and independent action of the workers, so in the fight against Japanese imperialism we must place our full faith in and give our full support to the workers and peasants of China, and the working class throughout the world.

No reliance on capitalist government! Independent action of the working class! These must be our slogans.

Low Living Standards

These, too, must be the slogans of the Chinese masses, for they cannot depend on their own bourgeois government to carry through to its successful conclusion the struggle for national liberation, for the struggle against all forms of exploitation. Let us not forget that in China there are native capitalists who try to compete with the foreigners by sweating their profits out of the backs of the workers. Let us not forget that the Chinese workers, living perpetually on the brink of starvation, are perhaps the most brutally exploited in the world. Let us not forget that the Chinese landlord is able to live luxuriously in the towns and cities only because he takes from 30 to 70 per cent of the peasants' produce as his rent. Let us not forget that even in good years the Chinese peasant has barely enough food to see him through from one harvest to the other.

On the other hand, because of the semi-colonial character of Chinese economy, the interests of the Chinese bourgeoisie are inextricably bound up with the interests of foreign capital. The Chinese bourgeoisie functions essentially as the agent for foreign capital in both Chinese and market industry. Economically, the Chinese ruling classes are infinitely closer to the foreign exploiters than they are to workers and peasants. Between the worker boss, between the peasant and the landlord, there is the basic conflict between those who have not and those who have, the exploited and the exploiters. Between the Chinese capitalist and landlord and the imperialist exploiters there is only the quarrel over the division of the spoils. When the Chinese bourgeoisie fights against imperialism it is in order to gain a larger share in the exploitation of the country. When the workers and peasants fight against imperialism, they fight for the possibility of a better life, for freedom from all exploitation, native and foreign alike. This has been amply demonstrated by the history of the past fifteen years.

The present government of Chiang-Kai-shek came to power on the wave of a tremendous anti-imperialist mass movement. At that time, not thousands and tens of thousands but millions

and tens of millions of workers and peasants were united in fighting against imperialism. Chiang Kai-shek was at the head of that movement. The organizations that should have expressed the demands of the workers and peasants instead gave their complete and unconditional political support to Chiang Kai-shek and to his party, the Kuomintang, on the grounds that all classes must unite and forget their special interests in order to defeat imperialism. At the point when the mass movement had swept him to a position from which he could command greater concessions from the imperialists for the Chinese bourgeoisie, Chiang Kai-shek turned without compunction and established his counter-revolutionary military dictatorship at Nanking.

That regime has been in power for ten years. During all that time, it has inflicted upon the workers and peasants the most ghastly terror. Mere membership in a trade union not certified and controlled by the gangsters of the Kuomintang, leadership of a strike or even mere participation in one, possession of radical literature, and, between the years 1931-1935, any attempt to organize resistance to the Japanese invasion, were sufficient warrant for imprisonment, torture, and execution. During these ten years, and most of all after 1931 (the year of the Japanese invasion), Chiang Kai-shek mobilized his millions of soldiers trained by the German Fascist General von Seeckt, to wage a pitiless war of extermination against the revolting peasants of Central China. Today Japanese airplanes and artillery are committing atrocities against Chinese civilians which have aroused the horror of the whole world. But only yesterday Chiang Kai-shek's airplanes, imported from the United States, Britain, and Italy, and Chiang Kai-shek's artillery, manned by German fascist military experts, were wiping out whole villages and whole districts in Central China. Beginning in 1934, Chiang organized a semi-Fascist terror squad, the Blue-shirts, to help in the suppression of all anti-Chiang tendencies in China. (Today Chen Li-fu, the organizer of these "Blue-shirts," has been placed in charge of mass propaganda for the fight against Japan!)

Why Chiang Fights

Because he succeeded in crushing the revolutionary movement by means of this ruthless terror — thus achieving the kind of "national unity" needed by the Chinese bosses and landlords — and because Japanese imperialism now threatens the very citadels of his own personal power, and, finally, because he now thinks that at long last British and American imperialism will come

actively to his aid, Chiang Kai-shek dares not take the chance of really mobilizing the masses whose strength alone could guarantee victory. By placing Chen Li-fu, the organizer of the "Blue shirts," at the head of "mass work," Chiang ensures continued rigid control over the mass movement.

The heroism of the Chinese soldiers is being exploited for the sake of showing Anglo-American imperialism that the Nanking government is worthy of its aid. But those soldiers are being sacrificed in a purely military struggle and no political steps are being taken which would swing behind the army the real organized support of the workers and peasants, whose strength in 1927 swept the Northern militarists like so much chaff from path of the Kuomintang armies.

To this day Chiang Kai-shek has left every door open to a compromise with Japan. At the very height of the battle in August, his government paid Japan its regular installment of the Boxer Indemnity fund. It would seem elementary that in the launching of a war against Japanese imperialism that was really meant to be the finish that such measures as the rupture of diplomatic relations, unilateral abrogation of all the robber treaties imposed upon China by Japan, confiscation of Japanese property, repudiation of Chinese debts to Japan, would all be taken as part of the mobilization for the war. But Chiang has done none of these things.

Coming Compromises

This tells us, more eloquently than anything else, that Chiang is burning no bridges and hopes ultimately to come to terms with Japan if aid from Britain and America is not forthcoming quickly enough. The premature revelation of secret, although inconclusive, dickerings with Hitler by Chiang Kai-shek's personal representative in Berlin, General Chang Po-li, is only a foretaste of what is likely to come in the future. At the moment, the threat to use Hitler would seem to be designed mainly to bring pressure on the other powers. There is undoubtedly a lick of flame beneath all the smoke of denials. Let us not forget that Chiang trained his army with fascist aid and is surrounded to this day by German fascist military advisers.

The struggle for China's liberation cannot rest on this thin reed. Chiang Kai-shek is fighting Japanese imperialism today. We say support that fight. But we also say to the workers and peasants in China: Watch out for tomorrow. Chiang Kai-shek betrayed you before. Until yesterday he was murdering your best brothers and sisters. You must organize your own unions, build your own party, put forward your own demands. You must demand that you be armed and you must arm yourselves. While fighting loyally and in the front ranks against the invaders, you must demand complete freedom of speech, press, organization, and assembly. You must agitate for a genuinely democratic national assembly elected by universal suffrage. By mobilizing your own forces in this way, you

will create the best guarantee that when tomorrow Chiang Kai-shek seeks to betray, he will be swept aside and the fight against Japanese and all other imperialisms will go on to its victorious conclusion!

The exact opposite of this is being done by the ex-Red Armies which have become nothing but military pawns in Chiang Kai-shek's game. Their heroic fight against the Japanese in Shansi will come to nothing so long as they remain without a political program of their own that corresponds to the real interests of the masses of the Chinese people. They had a program of confiscation of the land which for half a decade won them the active support of the peasantry and enabled them to perform legendary feats of valor in withstanding the repeated assaults of Chiang Kai-shek's armies. Now they no longer are the vanguard of the peasant revolt. They have renounced their program of land confiscation and all forms of political struggle against the ruling class. By so doing, they foredoom themselves to defeat. A victory over Japan in these circumstances would not mean the liberation of the masses but the victory of British and American imperialism.

The real victory will be won in China by the workers and peasants fighting for their own interests. Yet already those who raise their voices in defense of those interests are being denounced as "agents of Japan," just as the revolutionary workers in Spain are denounced as "agents of Franco" because they insist that the real defeat of fascism lies only in the victory of the workers' revolution. Such slanders are not new in Chinese history. In 1927, when Chiang Kai-shek sought to smash the workers' organizations, he deliberately spread the rumor that the Communist and trade union leaders were conspiring with the northern militarists and were acting as their agents to break the "united front" of the Kuomintang. The slanders of today are just as false and serve the same ends. For the sake of "unity" with the bourgeoisie, they shatter the unity of the working class.

For Independent Action

For our part, in this country, we can help the victory of the Chinese and Japanese workers through independent action by working class organizations. We will not help that victory by supporting the aims of American imperialism, by giving ourselves up in advance to its war plans which are designed not to win real national liberation for China but to substitute the American for the Japanese yoke on the shoulders of the Chinese masses. American imperialism is driving straight and evermore swiftly toward a war to ensure its domination of the Pacific. All the well-oiled machinery of war propaganda is already at work. Our future, like the future of our brothers and sisters in all countries, is bound up in our successful resistance to this new wave of jingoism, to the impending imperialist war. Our best service to ourselves and to those we support in China will be not to forget that our enemy is in our own country.

PARTY

by

ASTORIA BRANCH

Dancing, Refreshments,
Kibitzing

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Sat. Nov. 13 Adm. 20c