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China and the Imperialist Struggle

By Max Shachtman

THE rush of four imperialist powers to intervene in the strike of the Chinese workers in Shanghai, important as it is, must be considered as an incident in one of the most complicated imperialist struggles that have yet led to the making and breaking of alliances, diplomatic trickery, invasion, civil and imperialist wars, that may well characterize the conflicts in the Orient and the Pacific as a Chinese puzzle. This desperate action of a few hundred workers in a Japanese-owned cotton mill is stirring the muddled waters of the rivalry of nations in the drive to transform China into a financial colony.

The heart of the trouble lies in two primary factors: the struggles between Japan, the United States and Great Britain for the control of China's resources; and the national revolutionary aspirations of the Chinese people, most clearly crystallized by Dr. Sun Yat Sen, which draws its moral support from the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

Whose Colony Shall China Be?

Fram the time of Japan's sharp break with the feudal past, in 1871, she has made astounding strides towards development as an imperialist power. A twenty-seven-fold multiplication of foreign commerce in thirty-six years is only one indication. China's forced cession of Port Arthur, Formosa and the Pescadores, together with the virtual handing of the independence of Korea to Japan after the war of 1894; the alliance with Great Britain against Russia in 1902 which followed by the disastrous Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, established Nippon as a recognized aggressive power, having at its command all the European tricks of the imperialist trade.

Her road to power was smoothed by the calm annexation of Kiau Chow and the province of Shantung, as well as the Pacific islands belonging to Germany at the outbreak of the world war; the occupation of Manchuria without the formality of reply to China's helpless protests; and then, with a dash of salt to the wound, the presentation of the 21-pointed demand to China, coolly requesting the latter to subjugate itself to the superior Kultur of the Japanese, a demand which was never accepted but practically granted in the treaty of May, 1915, when Japan was given all she wanted in Shantung, South Manchuria, and Eastern Inner Mongolia, with but a few heavy loans being loaded on to the Chinese at eight per cent interest.



ON THE ROAD NEAR CANTON. CHINESE TURNING THEIR BACKS FROM THE REPORTER'S CAMERA.

Up to that time, relatively little opposition was encountered by Japan in its whirlwind campaign of penetration and control of its neighbor; in fact, it succeeded in dealing a telling blow to the Russian bear and securing an alliance with the powerful British lion. It seemed that her control of China would remain as unchallenged as that of Britain over India. But there were hard pebbles in the rice, as it were.

France was in control of Indo-China; Britain, alliance or no alliance, had Upper Burma and a protectorate over Tibet; Russia was moving in again through Manchuria; and the successive acquisitions of the Philippine, Hawaiian, and Guam islands by the United States, above all, presented Japan with serious difficulties.

In order to be a serious factor in world imperialism, Japan's heart must lie in China. The island is a poor one: largely unfit for agriculture because of its mountainous character, and a meager supply of mineral resources of coal and iron ore makes her dependent for foodstuffs, heavy industry, transportation, and war equipment material on China. Without it she is lost. With it she has control of coal which forms one-quarter of the world's reserves, huge iron ore, antimony, tin, lead and oil supplies, rice and raw cotton, and a superabundance of cheap labor.

But the American eagle flies swiftly to land with such potentialities. Represented first by missionaries, book in one hand and Standard Oil can in the other, then by financial consortiums, and finally by a steady flow of unemployed American capital which finds lucrative positions in all the enterprises which China has to offer the foreigner, American imperialist finance-capital has established itself as the chief rival for hegemony over China to Japan. And with the development of time the rivalry has become sharpened, intensified, and has finally assumed a belligerent form. In one shape or another, the conflicts that arise almost daily in China can be traced to the antagonisms between Japanese, American and British capital.

Chinese Servants of Imperialism.

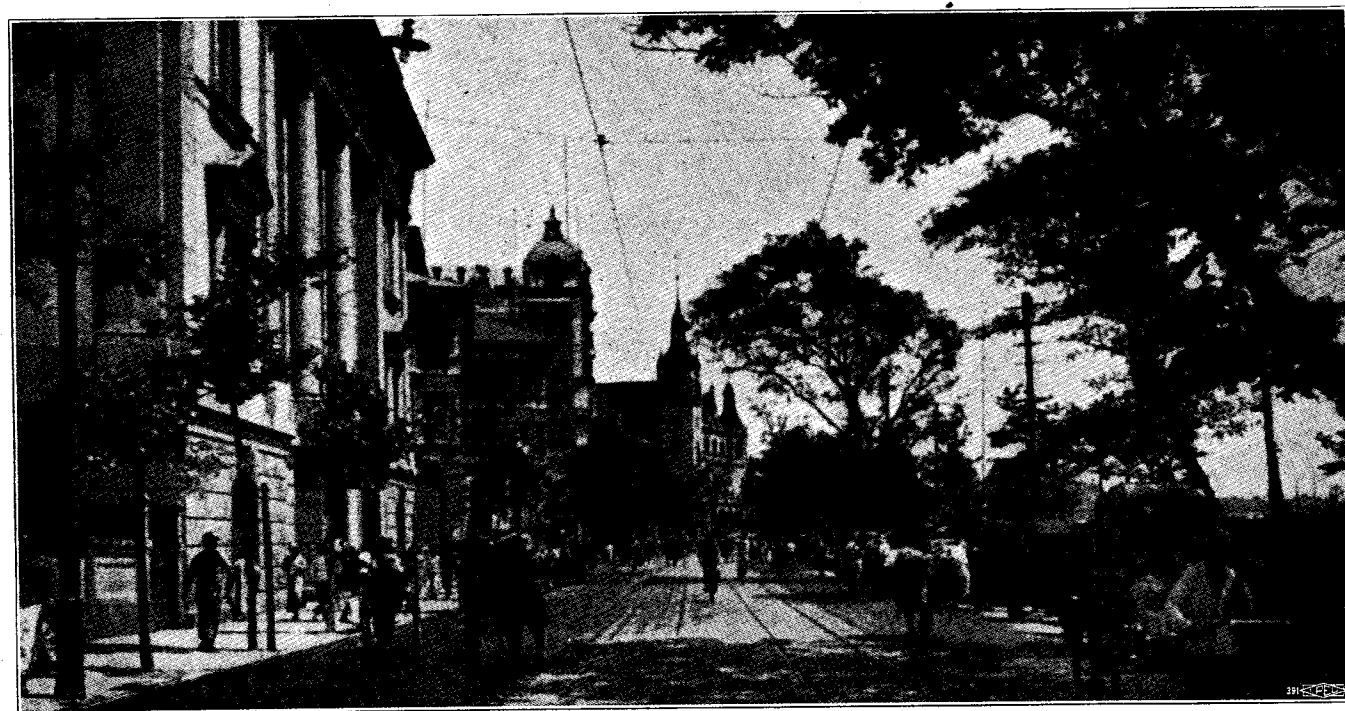
The outbreak in October, 1924, ostensibly between the two generals, Wu Pei Fu and Tchang Tso Lin, was actually a struggle between the United States and Britain on the one side and Japan on the other. The victory of Tchang Tso Lin was the defeat of America and England. But the Japanese, who had lost their alliance with the British through the growth of conflicting interests, continued the consolidation of their forces in China.

Both Wu and Tchang are now under Japanese direction. Millions of Chinese dollars have been spent by Japan to strengthen Tchang's forces, Wu has as his chief adviser a Japanese lieutenant colonel, and every other possible ally has been scraped together from such elements as Chi Schu Yuan and General Lu who was driven out of Shanghai last October.

America is not behindhand. One of the most powerful leaders in China to day, Feng Yu Hsing, is the servant of Yankee imperialism. Indebted to them in many ways, Feng has spiritual connections by reason of his conversion to christianity by American missionaries. But Feng is not the



KARAKHAN, SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO CHINA.



A STREET SCENE IN THE FOREIGN QUARTER OF SHANGHAI.

ideal servant, unfortunately for the designs of the United States. A man of independent tendencies, strong native support, and the record of having driven the Chinese emperor from his palace, is not so easily held in leash. Especially in view of the unavoidable temporary weakening of the Kuomintang party by the death of the unifying influence, Sun Yat Sen, Feng has bigger things in mind than acting as military waiting maid to American bankers and entrepreneurs. So Feng is looking even to Soviet Russia as a possible ally in a struggle against Japanese imperialism, which may eventually become a struggle against America.

This is what is worrying Wall Street, and Washington. Inspired reports are appearing in the press concerning the official admission from Washington that the situation is "grave." Feng is being charged with receiving military and financial aid from the Soviet government—a sufficient taint of odium to indicate the weakening relations between America and its closest supporter.

With no absolutely reliable agent of any power in China, America is obliged to enter more directly into the struggle for the domination of the country. The orientation of America's imperialist diplomacy to the Orient, is reflected by the naval maneuvers around Hawaii, in the strengthening of the Pearl Harbor naval base, and the talk of fortifying Guam, which would make America impregnable in the Pacific, despite the renewed efforts of Britain under Baldwin to build the Singapore naval base, and the control of a good part of the Chinese coast by Japan and her possessions. The presence in the Pacific of the greatest fleet America has yet displayed in one sea, at this moment when anti-Japanese feeling has been inflamed in America to a high degree, is a covert declaration of war against Nippon and a statement of exclusive rights in the exploitation of China.

The first manifestation of America's new anxious aggressiveness was the swiftness with which marines were landed



CHINESE WORKER TO EXPLOITERS "IF YOU DON'T LIKE THIS COUNTRY WHY THE HELL DON'T YOU GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM?"

The Economical "Defense Test"

THE week of June 20th to July 4th is ANTI-IMPERIALIST WEEK throughout the Americas. It is to be a week of mass protest against the universal menace of American imperialism.

Meantime, Wall Street and Washington have selected this very period for a renewed dedication to the purposes of imperialism. That is the essential meaning of the nationwide mobilization arranged for July 4th which President Coolidge has given the ingenuous name of "Defense Test." Militarism is to display itself on ostentatious parade. All its available resources are to be taken stock of. National Guardsmen are to take a day off from strike-breaking and

demonstrate their readiness for the next imperialist war. Men, women and even school children are to be mobilized.

Not the least important of the forces to be mobilized are the avenues of capitalist education. Newspapers, schools and churches will be expected to pour forth their poison of imperialism (under the guise of "national defense") in unprecedented volume. Every possible effort is to be made to break down the natural opposition of the workers and to whip them into line by bewildering them with an undigestible mass of propaganda. That is what capitalist education is for. The ruling class pays well for it.

It is interesting to recall President Coolidge's letter to the Acting Secretary of War regarding the date to be selected for the "Defense Test."

"I have no objection to the holding of this test this year, but I do not approve of your proposal that it be held on Armistice Day. If you consider it desirable to hold the defense test this year, I would suggest July 4th as being a more appropriate date."

Why not Armistice Day, and why July 4th? In the first place because Armistice Day is too closely associated in the minds of the workers with the horrors and sacrifices of the last "war to end war" to make them very enthusiastic about the next war. July 4th, on the other hand, is thought to be particularly suitable to imperialistic perversion because of the sentimental appeal that can be worked up.

But there is another reason—the determining one. July 4th is a "National Holiday" and Armistice Day is not. Factories and business houses are closed on July 4th but not on Armistice Day. The last "Defense Test," held on November 11th of last year, interfered too much with business. Mobilization is all right, but it shouldn't disturb business. Efficiency in all things!

When Armistice Day was again suggested for this year's mobilization (mobilization has now become an annual thing, you see), there was a storm of protest. Resolutions were passed by business men's associations and by rotary clubs. Some of them suggested that the "Defense Test" be held on a Sunday. One bright genius thought of the Fourth of July. Whereupon President Coolidge, economical in all things, sent his inspired little letter to the Acting Secretary of War.

So the needs of imperialistic aggression are reconciled with the needs of uninterrupted exploitation at home. Nothing is to be lost except the usual July 4th outings of tired workers into the country. And that doesn't cost anything.

Why Not Burn Some Witches?

THE trouble with the fundamentalists is that they are too crude. What they ought to have done is to pervert the theory of evolution, to divorce it from the conception of materialism, to confine it within the safe bounds of biological study, to isolate it from its obvious implications for the development of human society—in accordance with the more advanced bourgeois educational method. It was a mistake to deny evolution entirely. That puts capitalist science in altogether too ludicrous a position.

By abandoning all common sense and putting John T. Scopes on trial for teaching the mildly subversive doctrine of evolution—with a staunch affirmation of god and religion thrown in for security—the elders of Tennessee have suddenly exposed all the tawdryness and rotten hypocrisy of bourgeois "culture." Tennessee is fearful of progress. It is a center of reaction in all things, the root of which lies in the conditions of economic, political and ideological slavery in which the workers in the backward sections are forced to live. The Wise Men who make the laws for the state have merely taken the method of taboo which prevails everywhere where there is a ruling class and adapted it to their Seventeenth Century milieu.

There is only one thing missing from the trial, and we hope that Tarzan Jennings Bryan who has hurried from the jungles of Florida real estate to sally forth to battle against the Forces of Light, will suggest it before the news of the

trial is relegated to the back page. If Scopes is convicted, he should not only receive the ordinary "civilized" penalty, but should also get the ducking stool. And to celebrate the victory of Fundamentalism over science, a genuine witch should be caught and broiled to a turn.

The more sophisticated gentry in the advanced centers of capitalism are loud in condemnation of the Tennessee heresy hunting episode. Conservative senators and newspaper editors, who have never raised a finger for liberty where it actually counted, rush to the easy defense of a cause which has long ago been won, and subordinated after its victory. The "liberal" weeklies declare that the Scopes trial is the most important challenge to American progressivism in many years.

When the reason for these mock heroics is analyzed it reveals our "liberal" friends of the New Republic and the Nation as vulgar apologists of capitalism. The militant friends of Mr. Scopes nowhere show the connection between heresy hunting in Tennessee and the more urbane heresy hunting indulged in day in and day out throughout the United States. Their one complaint is that Tennessee is too crude. Fundamentalism in Tennessee has the dangerous tendency of popularizing the notion that the capitalist order is afraid of science. And that is something the friends of capitalism can't afford to allow. It is too close to the truth.

Warren S. Stone

AMONG those who will not mourn the death of Warren S. Stone, late head of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, we are certain to find the coal miners of West Virginia, where the Engineers' Union ran a scab mine, a situation which gave rise to a tragically humorous exchange of letters between the president of the United Mine Workers of America, John L. Lewis, and this very same Stone. The head of one of the most powerful trade union units in the United States found himself in the interesting position of, typically bosslike, defending the rights of Americans to decline to deal with workers collectively through trade union organization. Lewis, who had a few Coolidge chestnuts to burn in the heat of the controversy with the LaFolletteite Stone, rage through a number of letters and after the election completely forgot the issue.

This situation was typical. Composed of the very uppermost layer of American labor, the Locomotive Engineers' Union ran smoothly along the rut of class harmony which Stone ploughed quite thoroughly. Huge banks, impressive buildings, lukewarm adventures in "progressive" politics, investments in petty enterprises on an "open-shop" basis, disassociation from the rest of the labor movement—that was the work of Stone during the time he directed a minor spout of the profits of imperialism to the pursed lips of his aristocratic labor union.

In one respect or another, the late and unlamented Samuel Gompers can be said to have been radically tinged as compared with the still less lamented Warren S. Stone. His headstone should be set up by the National City Bank and bear the prominent legend: "He was a meek and willing servant."