

# The Japanese Mass Movement

By William Z. Foster

THE DEEP SOCIAL UPHEAVAL now going on among the toiling masses of Japan bears a distinct relationship to the tremendous upheavals that are taking place among the masses of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The characteristic of the struggle of these peoples is that they are fighting militantly to free themselves from the enslavement which they have long suffered at the hands of the imperialists of various nations. The present Japanese mass struggle is also basically anti-imperialist, being directed against Japanese imperialists and feudalists, and especially against the United States imperialists, who are trying to reduce the country to a war puppet and to a deep dependence.

The tremendous mass movement of the Japanese people is a powerful protest against the A-bombs, rockets, U-2's, military bases, and other deadly policies with which the United States has loaded Japan, greatly increasing the war danger and robbing Japan of its national sovereignty. But beyond this, it is a struggle to abolish the prevailing reactionary regime and to establish a democratic system, probably in the form of a Left-wing coalition government. This is the hope of the battling masses, and the dread of the Japanese and American imperialists.

## THE HARD PAST OF THE JAPANESE WORKING PEOPLE

Japan has some 95,000,000 people. It is heavily crowded, being somewhat smaller than California. Tokyo is the largest city in the world, with some ten million inhabitants. There are 14,000,000 industrial workers in Japan. It has been the fate of the Japanese working masses to have had a particularly difficult past, which has much to do with steeling them for their present bitter fights. For about three or four thousand years (until their incomplete revolution of 1868) they suffered the extreme hardships of peculiarly raw Japanese feudalism. One of the central features of this reactionary regime was the Emperor system. In the Japanese variety of this generally vicious type of ruler, the Emperor was the Sun-God—no less—and the common people dared not even look at him except upon pain of death. And this political monster, thanks to American interference, still sits upon the throne of Japan. Now, however, with his wings clipped, he is reduced to being "the symbol of the state." Left to themselves, the aroused Japanese people, in the early post-war period, would have given short shrift, as a war criminal, to this archaic hang-over from the worst feudalism.

Following the partial Revolution of 1868, which left the Japanese nation still loaded with feudalism, the country, nevertheless, rapidly industrialized itself. Its speed of development broke many bourgeois production records. In 1860, for example, there was not even one cotton mill in Japan, but in 1900 there were 162 such mills. Being almost entirely devoid of raw materials to build heavy industry, Japan developed itself mainly on commerce, and mostly its industries were light in character. The Japanese capitalists built up some of the proportionately biggest, strongest, and richest monopolies in the world—the Zaibatsu. Japan quickly became a full-fledged imperialist power, and highly militaristic.

The Japanese workers toiled up to twelve or more hours per day; their wages, just a few cents per hour and only a little above the level of real starvation, were but a step in advance of the abysmal wages of the armies of colonial workers in the surrounding colonial countries. Only two decades ago, the number of underpaid women workers in Japanese industry reached 71 per cent of all workers, of whom but 2% (of the women workers) were in the unions.

Japanese imperialism took an active part in the international fascist developments on the eve of World War II. It did not have far to go from its previous reactionary regimes

to become fascist. In the mid-1930's, it wiped out the few existing trade unions (the first of which had been created in the 1890's), the Socialist Party (which had been formed in 1901), the Communist Party (founded in 1922), and the few traces of liberalism, and it established the *Sampo* fascist trade unions. (*Outline History of the World Trade Union Movement*, W. Z. Foster, p. 363). Eventually, these fake unions claimed up to about 6,000,000 members. A violent system of terrorism was initiated to go with this fascist regime. The Japanese militarists were leaders in the fascist bloc (Japan, Germany and Italy) that was formed to wage World War II under the main slogans of the Anti-Comintern Pact, the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis, etc. Japanese fascist imperialism was an eager organizer of World War II. It was surrounded with colonial and semi-colonial countries—China, India, Indonesia, Burma, Korea, French Indo-China, etc.—which altogether contained about one-half of the population of the world. Japan hoped to help itself to these slimly-guarded treasures. World War II began for Japan actually in 1937, in its raid upon China, about two years before the rest of the fascist powers began their piratical attack on other countries.

Japan militarily ran far and wide in its greedy rush for colonies. But it was knocked out by the war, as a

result of the efforts of China, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Democratic China did most of the actual fighting on this front of the Anti-Fascist War; the USSR was mainly engaged in smashing Hitler, and it did a good job. Imperialist Japan took an awful beating, and had to surrender unconditionally (to the Americans) in August, 1945. People are still dying today in Japan as a result of the unnecessary and brutal atomic bombings by the United States of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan was forced to give up all the colonies that it had been so busy grabbing, including Korea and other colonies which the Japanese imperialists thought they had already completely assimilated.

#### POST-WAR RADICALIZATION AND THE PRESSURE OF U.S. IMPERIALISM

The Japanese collapse from its defeat and its unconditional surrender at the end of World War II worked out as a veritable disaster to the toiling masses. Wages were slashed to about one-third of pre-war, homes were destroyed from the bombings, farms were ruined, cities were destroyed. The ideological setup of the people, both the progressive elements and many others who were influenced for years by the rosy dreams of the Imperial war propagandists, was largely smashed. Also, the main religions—Buddhism, Shintoism, and Christianity—suffered

seriously, especially among the students. The *New York Times* of June 5, 1960, says that Shintoism, the main religion of the intellectuals, was practically destroyed in the war. Christianity is held by only one-half of one per cent of the people.

The toiling masses, in various categories, were deeply radicalized. They had a revolution in the making. Their radical sentiments may be noted from the fact of the rapid growth of the trade unions, in the early post-war period. "In Japan the trade unions leaped from practically nothing in 1945 to 6,535,954 in 1948." (*History of the Three Internationals*, Wm. Z. Foster, p. 464). In the 1946 election, also, the Socialist Party polled 9,800,000 votes, and the Communist Party got 2,135,000 votes, illustrating the radical tone of the workers. Especially on the peace issues, the Japanese masses were militant. Undoubtedly, after the war, they were in a developing revolutionary mood.

But the Japanese found themselves confronted with a new enemy—the United States occupation forces. The Americans were determined to grab control of Japan for future imperialist use, and they did it. The Chinese and Russians were excluded from the post-war management of that country, which would have protected its real democracy. The main task of the American occupation forces was to prevent the threatening Japanese Revolution. To this end

they operated under a smoke-screen of teaching the Japanese about American democracy. This slobberfest over American democracy was particularly nauseating. The Japanese hated their American overlords for their long-time rivalries in war, trade, colonies, the A-bombings, their rulership over the weaker Asian peoples, and especially for their chauvinist attitude towards all non-white peoples. The Japanese rulers are particularly a proud and stiff-necked lot, and their kow-towing to the Americans was a sure sign of the great fear they had of their own radical working people.

One of the earliest jobs of the Americans was to save the Emperor system, which they did by making some concessions to the aroused democratic Japanese people, who considered the Emperor the main war criminal. Then they were very careful to protect the powerful monopolists, the Zaibatsu, from nationalization, for which the demand was rife among the Japanese people. So well did the Americans succeed in their protective efforts that today the Zaibatsu are again entrenched in a strong monopolistic position.

The American generals were accompanied by a big group of reformist tools, from trade union leaders on down, each plying his specialty and helping to save Japanese imperialism as well as to entrench American imperialism in Japan. They were especially careful to put

the brakes on the slowly recovering standard of living of the Japanese people. Japan is a notoriously low wage country. "The average hourly wage of Japanese workers is reported to be about two-thirds of that in Italy." (Labor Research Association, June 1960). As late as 1954, real wages in Japan were only 77% of prewar. "Between 1955 and 1959 . . . productivity went up 35%, while real wages did not hold level" (U.E.W. Research Bulletin, May, 1960). At the present time, according to the *U.S. News and World Report* (June 13, 1960), "U.S. clothing workers earn about 10 times as much as the Japanese." This difference is typical of all other industries. Meanwhile, the cost of living in Japan keeps shooting up.

The American rulers were quick to fight against every sign of socialism and communism, and especially to break up or interfere with popular demonstrations, such as the First of May, which assume gigantic proportions in Japan. The grand chief of the whole occupation forces was Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who was a little American king over Japan. He was later fired from office in the Korean War, because he wanted to use the A-bomb, which would have launched a world war. Gen. MacArthur has been succeeded by his nephew, Ambassador Douglas MacArthur II, as the American Pro-Consul in Japan.

In late years, the American occu-

piers of Japan have largely unmasked themselves from pretending to be the good-natured democratic Uncle Sam, to showing themselves as hard-fisted American imperialists eager to grab all they can. "American capital has penetrated deep into Japan's every economic pore." (*International Affairs*, Moscow, May 1960, p. 42). "The rise in direct private investment in Japan was from around 19 million dollars in 1950 to 182 million dollars at the start of 1959." (Labor Research Association, June, 1960).

The American imperialists showed their real goal of using Japan as a military tool, to help America capture the surrounding colonial and semi-colonial countries, and especially to fight People's China and the Soviet Union. It was easy to re-awaken the imperialist hunger among the Japanese ruling class. Although Japanese imperialism has grown materially stronger in recent years, it nevertheless fitted nicely into playing a number two role to militant American imperialism. It all dove-tailed with the hare-brained scheme of American monopoly capital to rule the world. This spirit came to a head recently with a bill in the Diet providing for virtually a war alliance between Japan and the United States.

#### THE MUTUAL "SECURITY" PACT

The Mutual "Security" Pact is a

scheme to remilitarize Japan on a war scale. It is supposed to be an "improvement" on the preceding pact of 1951, but actually it is worse. This treaty was fathered and engineered by the American overlords in Japan. It provides in detail for the rearmament of Japan, with full utilization of the existing American bases, stationing of U.S. troops in Japan, equipping the Japanese armed forces with nuclear weapons, sending of Japanese troops abroad, etc. All this, and more, is definitely against the nation's constitution, in text and spirit. Especially after the U-2 incident, in which Eisenhower wrecked the Summit, the agitation by the reactionaries for the remarking of Japan, particularly directed against the USSR and People's China, became much more intense. On the other hand, Soviet exposure of U.S. arrogance and the war danger greatly stimulated the Japanese mass struggle.

The Japanese masses began to react swiftly and increasingly against the proposed war alliance between Japan and the United States. For six months they have been strongly demonstrating against it. They have had enough of war, and were not to be dragooned into it again by the rulers of Japan, erstwhile fascist advocates of the "Greater East-Asia Co-prosperity Sphere," and who are now masquerading as political "democrats," American imperialist variety. The principal organizations

in the anti-pact movement are the Socialist Party (headed by Inejiro Asanuma), the Communist Party (headed by Enji Miyamoto), the students (headed by the Zengakuren), the Society to Criticize the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the General Council of Trade Unions (SOHYO) (with some 3,500,000 members), the Women's Federation, and various other miscellaneous organizations. This great and rapidly growing movement functions as a sort of informal People's Front. The organizations and masses are fighting under various slogans for peace, democracy, neutralism, trade with China, etc., and especially anti-militarist slogans. Of this broad movement, the *Peking Review* says, "Prime Minister Kishi is sitting on a time bomb."

The pro-treaty reactionary forces are, first of all, the so-called Liberal Democratic Party, with Premier Kishi at the head. This misnamed organization, instead of being liberal, is in reality a notoriously conservative party. It is made up of some eight sections of political reactionaries, and is the party of the big monopolists—the Zaibatsu. It is a successor to the two biggest pre-war conservative parties—Seiyuki and Minseitō. It has a fascist spirit and tactics. Premier Kishi himself was a member of the fascist war cabinet. Another pro-treaty organization is a very recent Right-wing socialist split-off group, headed by Nishio. It is

popularly known as the second conservative party, and it is busy trying, without much success, to split the trade unions, and otherwise weaken the people's anti-war movement. The real rulers of Japan are placing great hopes in this Right-wing socialist splinter group to save it in its difficulties.

The Liberal Democratic Party, the bosses' organization, has 288 seats out of a total of 467 in the House of Representatives, and 137 seats out of 250 in the House of Councillors (the Japanese Senate). Many of these seats the Kishi-ites had to buy outright. The Socialist Party (Left group), the second most powerful party in the Diet, has some 125 seats in the House of Representatives and 84 in the House of Councillors, the upper house. The Communist Party, although powerful among the masses, has only a tiny fraction in the Diet, as it is virtually excluded from the Government. The only way that the Kishi forces could get the pact through the House of Representatives (on May 20, 1960), in the face of the powerful opposition, was by reverting back to their erstwhile fascist training by calling to their service about 500 police and bodily removing the opposition out of Parliament while they voted. The Kishi Government has not even been able to get the House of Councillors (upper house) to pass the pact, but it will probably still try to do so before Eisenhower is scheduled to arrive.

The Japanese people are not accepting this type of endorsement for this war alliance.

The popular organizations put their case before the broad masses, and they did this most militantly. For the past couple of months, Japan has witnessed a series of unparalleled mass petitions, demonstrations, and strikes. These mass movements totaled in the millions. The recent general strikes alone reached as many as 5,000,000 workers, including the transport workers. On "Joint Action Day," May 19th, over 5,000,000 people participated in the demonstrations throughout Japan. The strength of the movement may be judged from the fact that, according to news dispatches, all the newspapers in Tokyo (except one) have urged that Kishi resign.

These mass movements are noted for their extreme militancy, discipline, and courage, especially on the part of the students, who boldly fought the police bare-handed, and succeeded on various occasions in fighting their way to their goals. The great mass movement is rapidly on the upswing. It is estimated that so far, at this writing, at least 20,000,000 have participated in the various types of movements, in addition to the petitions which have over 15,000,000 names. No doubt this number will be vastly increased by June 19th, when the Mutual "Security" Pact (war alliance) is scheduled to go into effect.

### EISENHOWER AND HIROHITO TRY TO SAVE THE KISHI GOVERNMENT

The situation of the Kishi Government was already plenty difficult, faced as it was by a very powerful and militant mass opposition. It had a cold fear of a new democratic regime, which would defeat both Japanese and American imperialism. But its position was made much more precarious by the intervention of Eisenhower. Presumably, the latter was making a state visit to Japan to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the "opening" of Japan by Admiral Perry. Actually, however, the visit was an arrogant attempt to help Premier Kishi to put across the hated "security" pact, and the people clearly so understand it. The date of the Eisenhower visit was set for June 19th, precisely when the pact was scheduled to go into effect. The sellout of Japanese national interests, which sellout the august presence of Eisenhower was supposed to put across, was also to be celebrated by a grand golf match between the two great bourgeois statesmen.

The aroused Japanese workers and their allies are singularly unimpressed by the pretentious Eisenhower name. They promptly raised slogans of "WE DON'T LIKE IKE," "YANKES GO HOME!", and similar ones, and they announced that they would demonstrate and

strike vigorously against the arch-imperialist, Eisenhower. Some even declared that they would block the airport runways with their bodies to prevent his plane from landing. To save itself, the frightened Kishi Government fairly pleaded with Washington not to postpone or cancel the visit. Washington shared the same fears that the Kishi Government would collapse and be followed by a Left-wing coalition government.

In this developing crisis, someone in the Kishi camp had the "bright" idea to save the day by exploiting the prestige of the erstwhile Sun-God—Emperor Hirohito. It was announced, with great publicity, that the nature of Eisenhower's visit would be changed into a glorified state affair. Eisenhower would visit solely the Emperor, and Premier Kishi would be allowed to cool his heels on the side-lines—even his scheduled golf games with Eisenhower would be cancelled. No communique would be issued at the end of the super-state meeting.

But suddenly, this slick scheme went awry. Over night, it vanished into thin air. Perhaps Premier Kishi did not enjoy being shoved aside so unceremoniously. Or possibly the ex-Sun-God was afraid to trust his shaky position so boldly and openly to the mercy of a head-on collision with the increasingly aroused people. It would be better from the Emperor's point of view to sacrifice a few premiers or other mundane

heads of state, or at least for him to work more circumspectly. So the visit was reverted back to the original Kishi pro-fascist tactic of giving Eisenhower an army of police and other guards, to ram through the Eisenhower visit by brute force, in spite of the widespread opposition of the people.

Meanwhile, Jim Hagerty, Pres. Eisenhower's advance man, was given a fearsome taste of the mass demonstrations, and was rescued (together with Ambassador Mac Arthur) by a U.S. Marine's helicopter, while Japanese demonstrators on the top of the Americans' car sang "The International"—all to Washington's great indignation. The disciplined demonstrators were careful not to injure the Hagerty group. Two days later, Hagerty slipped secretly out of Tokyo to meet with Eisenhower in Alaska, while huge mass demonstrations continued in Japan.

#### THE WORLD IMPACT OF THE JAPANESE DEMONSTRATIONS

The Japanese peace forces are determined to put an end to the combined Japanese-American imperialist efforts to rush them into a disastrous war against the socialist world. They are showing the international labor and peace forces how to defeat the military bases, A-bombs, U-2's, etc., which the Americans have loaded them up with, and which the

U.S. imperialists are determined to use. Every big city in the world, from Moscow to Peking to New York to London, now has its eyes glued on Tokyo. The peoples of England, France, Scandinavia, and the many other countries, hypnotized by the reactionary Right Social-Democracy, that allowed the United States to arrogantly build up the most brazen militarism in history, are seeing how to negate this vast system of weapons of American imperialism. The militant peace forces of Japan are roughly shaking the slumbering peace and labor movements in many countries.

Even the United States feels the force of the great Japanese peace movement. As the tremendous series of mass demonstrations got under way in Japan, the repercussions of it in the U.S.A. involved not only workers, preachers, etc., but also various members of Congress, who advised the President against the great folly of trying to visit Japan to jam his militaristic law down the throats of the rebellious Japanese people. But these Representatives and Senators, after being heavily and secretly briefed by Secretary of State Herter, mysteriously dried up and stopped their opposition to the reactionary Eisenhower visit. The Communist Party of the U.S.A., true to its vanguard role, courageously condemned the Eisenhower trip to Japan and demanded that it be cancelled.

The Japanese masses, obviously greatly affected by the current great Communist world victories, are finding it necessary to assail basically the Kishi-Eisenhower Governments in order to defeat their warlike plans of militarism. How far they will go in this direction yet remains to be seen. They are increasingly in the mood to set up a Left-wing coalition government of some sort. Maybe they will even dare to lay bold hands on that holy of holies of the capitalist system, private property, and let the Japanese people for the first time take hold of and operate the industries and the government. Suffice it to say at this early hour that in this respect, too, they will astound the world with their political advance.

#### U.S. IMPERIALISM SEEKS TO DEFY THE JAPANESE PEOPLE

President Eisenhower, the would-be American imperialist boss of the world, during the past several months has been making global trips, giving the various countries their latest orders, and arranging air-tight military alliances. But he ran into great difficulties, that will have serious consequences for American imperialism. Manifestly, the peoples do not relish the prospect of serving as cannon fodder for the glory of the coupon clippers of American imperialism. That is the substance of Eisenhower's great ser-

ies of travels of the past few months. The trips, due to their basic failure, will eventually turn out to be a major disaster for Wall Street.

On the first leg of his long journey, which took the President as far as India, through countries led by Right Social-Democrats and other miscellaneous stooges, he did fairly well. The second part of his journey covered, aside from Puerto Rico, four leading Latin American countries—Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. Here he encountered such rough going that he could not have gotten through at all had the strong Communist Parties of the area been following as militant a line as they did after the Summit failure.

Shortly afterwards, the President, caught in the act operating spy planes attempted arrogantly to force the Soviet Union to submit to American spy planes flying over its territory. This U-2 outrage, as the climax of a long series of indignities and invasions, demonstrated clearly to the whole world that the United States imperialists had no intention of respecting the national sovereignty of any other country, nor of negotiating with the Soviet Union on the basis of equality. Thus Eisenhower torpedoed the Summit Conference before it could even get started. As a result, the President lost his chance to make his scheduled trip to the Soviet Union, the most prized of all Eisenhower's voyages. Eisenhow-

er's crass militarism was thoroughly exposed in the ensuing debate, which had much to do with the stormy opposition to his proposed visit to Japan, Okinawa and South Korea. On the last leg of his journey to the Far East, Eisenhower learned that the people of Japan were wide awake to the military schemes of American imperialism, especially to its Mutual "Security" Pact, which is designed to make a military puppet of Japan and to guarantee U.S. bases for ten years.

Eisenhower obviously wanted to give up the Japanese visit, but he was afraid to do so. American imperialism decided upon the autocratic course of forcing Eisenhower and the "Security" Pact upon the unwilling Japanese people, for a number of compelling reasons. First, both Washington and Tokyo were sure that if Eisenhower cancelled his trip, the Kishi Government would fall at once. Second, they knew that if he cancelled the trip, it would cause the United States a tremendous loss of face all through the Far East, and all over the world, and weaken the U.S. military set-up in the Far East. Third, Eisenhower received elaborate guarantees from the Kishi Government that it would muster endless police and troops to protect him, and which would use fascist violence against the people. Fourth, there were many soothsayers to assure Eisenhower that the great bulk of the Japanese people would

not actually harm him even though he was an unwelcome visitor in their country. Meanwhile, the Kishi Government assembled all possible masses of police, soldiers, civilian militia, and so-called "friendly citizens" (reactionary civilian strong-arm squads), to surround Eisenhower with a veritable wall of protection.

But the Japanese people continued to say "No" in the most stentorian tones. They did not rally to Kishi's frantic appeals. As the President, gradually making his Far East stops, drew nearer to Japan, the people's demonstrations grew more gigantic and more resolute. On June 15, 600 police and 270 students were injured in the demonstrations, and a girl student was killed by the police. These figures obviously show a decline in the morale of Kishi's armed forces. The Kishi Government could do nothing effective to defeat the demonstrations. Finally, on June 16, three days before Eisenhower was scheduled to arrive in Japan, Kishi gave up the most immediate fight, by indefinitely postponing the unwelcome visit of Eisenhower, and vaguely hinting at his own resignation somewhat later on. Japan fairly shook with the people's cry of victory.

The people's cancellation of the Eisenhower visit, in which American imperialism, with the same arrogance that it showed in the U-2 spy matter, was determined to trample in the dust Japanese sover-

eignty, equality, and will for peace, is a tremendous defeat for this system of would-be world rulers. But the Japanese people still have much to do to make their already tremendous victory more complete. They must compel the ex-fascist Kishi to resign; they must dissolve the bankrupt parliament and elect a new Diet; they must set up a democratic government worthy of the Japanese people. They must remove all American troops and bases, with their A-bombs and rockets, from Japanese soil.

The Japanese people have just fought through an historic struggle, and the end is not yet. Feudal-imperialist capitalism is receiving a shattering blow which has done it permanent injury. And also of the greatest importance, the big imperialist moguls of Wall Street have had a kick in the shins in Japan that will permanently weaken their arrogant militarism over the world. Japan is the main American base in the Far East. The gallant Japanese fighters have shown us the resolution with which the deadly militarism of the United States must be defeated. The struggle is a vital blow against the capitalist system, and exposes its rottenness. It all fits in with the "International" which was sung so lustily by the street demonstrators as they carried through this tremendous and victorious struggle. The world peace fight has taken a great stride forward.