

The Chinese Revolution and India

J. T. Murphy

THERE are more reasons than the fact that Great Britain has over sixty million pounds invested in Shanghai to make the British imperialists deadly enemies of the onward sweeping Chinese revolution. The south-western frontiers of this revolution meet the north-western frontiers of the Indian Empire. Within the frontiers of that Empire, 350 million people have been held in subjection for many generations by British imperialism which is now so scared over the prospects of the effects of a victorious Chinese revolution.

As a writer in the "Empire Review" says in an article on "The Indian Swaraj and World Politics": "Spreading as she does from the frontiers of Burma to the Pacific, a strong China might easily become a menace to Southern Asia." This is stating the case mildly, so permit Lord Meston, an ex-Indian Governor, to say his say. Spreading himself over three columns of the Tory paper, "The Sunday Express," he says—in contemplation of the passing of Shanghai into the hands of the National Revolutionary forces—"If Shanghai falls it will not be Shanghai alone that we shall have lost. Throughout the entire Eastern world one interpretation and one interpretation only will be put upon such a catastrophe, namely, that Western civilisation has been defeated by oriental nationalism." He goes on to say: "Every blunder, every hesitancy, every weakness on our part in China goes running down the whispering galleries of Asia and weakens our whole position in the East."

He is especially concerned with India, for here he goes on to say that there is a "persistent underworld of restless, fanatical hatred of the West and all that it implies in India." He concludes "That a weak or vacillating policy in China is a danger, sufficiently great in its reaction on those countries with which we are most closely allied, to reconcile all thinking Englishmen to the measures that are now being taken."

"Slaves in Burma"

In another Tory organ of the bourgeois press, Lord Birdwood protests against any possibility of the reduction of the military budget of India and warns the world against the Bolshevik menace.

Still more direct in its relation to the important events developing in China is a visit of the British Commander-in-Chief to Burma. The British have suddenly discovered that in Burma there are slaves to be liberated and expeditions are sent there to abolish slavery in this benighted country, and incidentally, to make a military inspection of the frontier of Burma which borders the frontier of the Chinese revolution.

All these facts point conclusively to the fear which reigns in the minds of British imperialists concerning this mighty revolutionary movement. And, of course, they have good reason to be alarmed. For ten years they have seen the U.S.S.R. emerging from its difficulties, growing in strength, and by its very existence inspiring the peoples of the East to gather their forces and rise for the liberation of the masses from the power of im-

perialism. To see this mighty revolutionary movement extending to the millions in China who, in the process of their struggle, realise more and more that the great friend of their liberation is the organised dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R., is driving them to a state of hysteria.

They know that a liberated China must perforce beckon to the millions of India, Egypt, Palestine and Africa. They know that the masses of these countries are watching every step forward of the Chinese National Army, and, steeped in a hundred years of experience of "how to deal with the Asiatics," they feel themselves impelled to discard even the semblance of liberalism in their policy and to attack the Chinese revolution with all their force. They regard the Asiatics as slaves and have determined that slaves they shall remain.

In the process they perpetrate blunder after blunder, and outrage upon outrage, not one of which passes unnoticed by the teeming millions of these countries. The Indian masses, for example, know full well their own experiences under British rule. They know the persecutions they have endured from their overlords and when they see the Chinese National Army marching from victory to victory, when they see that the atrocities of Shanghai, of Wanhhsien, and of Nanking are unable to deter the revolution, but on the contrary, arouse the masses to more powerful organised action, then this is at once an inspiration and a lesson conveying new perspectives for their own future.

A Warning Voice

For example, the organ of the Swaraj Party of India, "The Forward," for the 27th of January, 1927, writes: "If Japan has been spared the fate of China, India, Persia, etc., it is only because she too has taken a leaf out of the book of European imperialists, become a votary of force and has learned to pay European nations back in their own coin. . . . The first condition of a successful stand against White Imperialism in Asia is to have a strong and independent China fully trained in the modern arts of warfare." This is at once a warning to the imperialists and a portent of coming events.

But this is not an isolated voice. In response to a speech made at a banquet by the President of the European Association in Calcutta in which this gentleman said: "A continuation of British rule in India was necessary for the good of the Indians themselves," a leader of the Swaraj Party writes: "Events in China ought to have opened the eyes of the extremely high-spirited members of the European colony. The Europeans in India should not forget that they form an insignificant minority. Half-a-million desert people would be enough to cause so much disturbance that the British would realise their unusual position in the country." This is placing the finger on the pulse of British imperialism with a vengeance.

But not only is the warning sounded. On all hands the voice of protest is raised against the intervention in China and especially against the sending of Indian troops

Chinese Revolution and India—continued

to crush the Chinese revolution. It is already reported that some of these troops have revolted and they are being taken away from Shanghai to Hong-Kong. The voice of protest extends from the most extreme right of the Indian National forces to every section of the Indian National Movement. For example, the "Bombay Chronicle," the organ of the Right Wing Nationalist elements, says in a leading article of January 25th: "The Viceroy has announced that his masters installed at Downing Street and his government had agreed to co-operate by contributing a contingent including Indian troops as India happened to be the closest port from which troops could immediately be despatched to China. Is not the Viceroy aware that India has always bitterly resented the use of her soldiers in Egypt, Mesopotamia and China, whenever they have been unscrupulously used to stem the tide of patriotism and trample down the leaders of their people? Has not the Legislative Assembly voiced the uncompromising opposition, that the people of this land object to this cheap device of using now again Indian troops as helpless mercenaries for helping selfish imperialist designs, and does not the very name of the Indian stink in the nostrils of all oppressed nations because they have been employed in sanguinary conflicts in Shanghai and Cairo? The long and shameless record of British relations with China include the long-continued opium poisoning of these people, the ruthless exploitation of its cheap labour and vast resources; and the fierce and oppressive treaties forced on its governments at the point of the bayonet disclose a purpose and a policy that cannot be called defensive."

Against Troops Going

All the leading papers of the Nationalist movement have voiced their protest in more or less strong terms, and the National Assembly itself desired to vote against the sending of troops to China. There is not the least doubt that this Assembly, the majority of whom are the most constitutionally-minded of Indian politicians, would have carried a decision reflecting the great mass sympathy of the Indian people for the Chinese revolution. But the Governor-General stepped in as the representative of the nervous British imperialists and forbade discussion of any kind on this question.

This decision at once had the opposite effect. It inflamed the Indian press and great mass meetings of pro-

test were made on every hand. The following resolution adopted at great meetings in Bombay is a duplicate of the resolutions passed at many meetings in all the great cities in India: "This meeting of citizens of Bombay desires to express the sympathy of the Indian people for the great Chinese revolution in the struggle which they are waging for their political and economic freedom. The meeting strongly protests against the proposal of the Government of India to send Indian troops for intervention in China and declares India's sense of humiliation at the use of her resources for the advancement of capitalist imperialism in the East."

"The Forward," the organ of the Swaraj Party in Bengal, dismisses with strong contempt "the claim of any man, be he Viceroy of India, to offer up the blood and lives of the sons of India to the service of Britain's mission on Chinese soil. India is not at war with China. India has no quarrel with China. If the truth is to be told, the people of India have the warmest sympathy for the Chinese in their desperate struggle against the unjust aggression of the foreign devils on her soil. Every true son of India will warmly sympathise with Chinese aspirations to recover their country from the deadly grip of unjust usurpation."

Towards Mass Action

Such are the characteristic terms used with regard to this development. But a still further concrete example of the way in which the Indian masses feel in regard to the struggle of the Chinese people can be seen in the decision of the Indian workers to send three thousand Indian ambulance men to serve with the Chinese National Revolutionary Army. The Hindu "Seva Dal" has undertaken to organise the contingent but we can say with certainty that the British Government will prevent such a contingent leaving the shores of India. Nevertheless this action will only add fuel to the flames. The Indians themselves will learn from these events that until they also pass from the path of pacifism to that of organising the power of the masses and equipping them with the means of victory, their subjection will continue to endure.

This great lesson will be learned as every echo of the Chinese revolution falls upon the Indian masses. Indeed, they are learning. It is this fact which is driving the British imperialists to frantic anger. But what are anger and stupidity in face of hundreds of millions of slaves who have learned how to fight for freedom?

