

IF RUSSIA TURNS ON CHINA

BY FREDA UTLEY

THE loyal support given to Chiang Kai-shek's government by the Chinese communists has been until now one of the chief factors in holding China united in the face of invasion. Without it Chiang could not have continued fighting Japan for three years in spite of fearful military and economic handicaps. Should that support be withdrawn, the central authorities may find it impossible to maintain the present political amalgam which includes everything from reactionary village gentry and bankers to the extreme Left. A break-up of the united front against Japan would almost inevitably mean a new instalment of regional and class wars in China's tragic history. Yet it is precisely such a break-up which looms on the horizon, through the growing possibility of the defection of the organized communists. If it takes place, the Far Eastern picture will be suddenly and violently altered, the China war may merge with the European war, and the interests of the United States would be more

intimately affected than they have been by anything in Europe thus far.

The policies of the Soviet Union in the Far East, particularly as mirrored in the attitude of the Chinese communists, have received scant attention in the rest of the world. But in the long run they may overshadow all other international events.

It should be recalled that the transformation of the Chinese Communist Party into a champion of democracy and *national* salvation came as part of a similar transformation of all sections of the Communist International in 1935. It was wholly in conformity with the new "party line" then ordered by the Kremlin. That line has been completely reversed since the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pacts in August. Thousands of individual communists have rebelled against the somersault, but the organized and subsidized communist parties have accepted the change. The only exception to this general communist reversal is China, where

subordination of the Communist Party to the central government continues, and where the "democratic" slogans are still adhered to. There are growing indications, however, that everything is being made ready in China, too, for a reversal. The great question — and it is the crux of the problem — is whether the Chinese communists will obey. Are their leaders unprincipled opportunists of the same brand as communist leaders in Europe and America? Would they sacrifice Chinese unity, if ordered to do so, to advance Russian interests in the Far East?

These questions cannot and should not be answered too readily, despite the seeming subservience of General Mao Tse-tung, leader of the communist Eighth Route Army, to Moscow. In China, in contrast to Western Europe and the United States, the acceptance of "democratic" and national policies by the Communist Party in 1935 seemed logical and sincere. Having lost its working class backing in 1927, it had gradually become a party of peasant emancipation and middle-class reform. The Communist Party with which Chiang Kai-shek made his peace in Sian in December, 1936, had long ceased to be revolutionary or communist in the Marxian sense. In

1935 it had acknowledged that China needed a democratic capitalist development. The function of the Chinese communists, as defined by Mao Tse-tung in 1938, was "insistence on the war of resistance . . . insistence on the united front and on sustained warfare." Not merely the dictates of Moscow, but local necessities had brought about the united front.

Another fact to be borne in mind is that the position of the Chinese Communist Party is quite unlike that of any other section of the International. The Chinese communists are first and foremost an army and a provincial government. From one point of view they are merely one of several semi-independent provincial governments and armies. From another, they have been in recent years the focus of liberal reforming elements in China. A reversal of policy on signal from the Kremlin would thus seem more uncertain and difficult than for parties like those in the United States or England. As a political force the Chinese Communist Party would cease to exist (outside its own military region) should it receive and heed an order from Comintern headquarters to abandon the war of national liberation for a war upon the "White Guard government" of Chiang

Kai-shek. It would become simply a regional revolt and its Eighth Route Army generals would be in the same category as the warlords of the pre-Kuomintang era.

The possibility needs to be recognized and watched. If the Chinese communists are loyal to Stalin, the Soviet Union is in a position to offer Japan a temptingly high price to induce her to join up with Germany and Russia against the British and French Empires. Stalin can offer not only to cease selling arms to Chiang Kai-shek but to split China and cripple her resistance through civil conflicts. Although it is difficult to conceive of the communists openly helping the Japanese against Chiang Kai-shek (as it was difficult to conceive of communists helping Hitler in the West), the change would not need to be an avowed one. The communist leaders could achieve it indirectly by once again turning "revolutionary." They are fully aware that Chiang cannot give way to pressure from the Left without pushing the Right Wing forces in the Kuomintang into the arms of the Japanese.

It would not necessarily appear to the peasant soldiers of the Eighth Route Army as treason to the national cause should General Mao Tse-tung and other leaders

suddenly proclaim that the struggle is hopeless under Kuomintang leadership. They could revive old, now latent feelings against Chiang Kai-shek as the destroyer of trade unions and the butcher of communists. Then they could use their army to extend and strengthen their own military base in the northwest, with Moscow supplying them with the arms and advisers hitherto supplied to Chiang Kai-shek. Stalin might easily decide to "save" Communist China and adjoining provinces from the Japanese in much the same manner that he "saved" half of Poland from the Nazis.

II

Since the Russo-German rapprochement, the Kremlin's flirtations with Tokyo have scarcely been disguised, and the Chinese government has been correspondingly nervous. It had ample reason for misgivings when Premier Molotov in November offered an olive branch to Japan; when a little later the Soviet press accused Washington of trying to disturb friendly Soviet-Japanese relations; when Moscow sent an ambassador to Tokyo after a long hiatus. Even more disturbing was the fact that the whole tone of the Chinese Com-

munist Party towards the Chiang Kai-shek government began to change perceptibly.

For instance, previously the Chinese communists had not insisted on holding office in the central government, for fear of alarming conservative groups inside China and in the Western democracies. Now demands for political office are being made and become more vehement. In an interview with Edgar Snow, an American writer (published in the *China Weekly Review*, January 13 and 20), General Mao Tse-tung suddenly warned that the middle class and the peasantry must have more representation and that the communists would gladly participate in the central government. While still asserting that "in the present stage of the revolution the problem of primary importance is resistance to Japan," General Mao denied that there is any progress toward democracy in China and charged that the Kuomintang government "represents the same class interests as before the war." As harbinger of the end of the united front, this new attitude is significantly parallel to the changed communist tone in the rest of the world after the Soviet line-up with Hitler.

Previously the Chinese com-

munists had been vociferously anti-Nazi and anti-fascist. Now General Mao presented a new thesis. After the Russo-German pacts, he indicated, there was no longer any need to distinguish between democratic and fascist capitalist countries. The center of the anti-Soviet movement today, he said, is no longer in Germany but among "the so-called democratic countries"; Chamberlain and not Hitler is now Public Enemy Number One. By implication, thereafter, Mao in China, like the Browders and Cachins elsewhere, claimed that Hitler has now become the defender of the Soviet Union against "reactionary democratic capitalism." President Roosevelt, the communist Chinese leader said, is hoping "to win the leadership of the capitalist world and wants Chamberlain for a secretary and Japan as his rearguard, with Hitler and Mussolini as his vanguard." One needs only open any communist newspaper in any neutral nation to recognize that Mao is repeating the new Moscow catechism by rote.

His most significant words to Mr. Snow concerned the status and policy of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1938 he had stated clearly that the Border Region under control of his Eighth Route Army

"is an integral part of China and under the guidance of the central government." Now he stated that his Party is "entirely independent" and "has never submitted to any party or any group or any person." In 1938 he had told a World Student Delegation that the aim of the communists was the establishment of a democratic capitalist Chinese Republic which "would not persecute private property." Now he said that the Chinese communists "are always social revolutionaries, never reformists," and that although "for the present the revolution is national and democratic in the character of its aims, it will after a certain stage be transformed into social revolution."

While still awaiting Moscow's decision — which in turn awaits Tokyo's decision — Mao Tse-tung is obviously preparing the minds of his followers for the possibility of a Russo-Japanese rapprochement and for the abandonment of the war against Japan by the Eighth Route Army. Edgar Snow seems to have found all this hard to believe and to have been uneasy about Moscow's future action in the Far East. Mao had said that Soviet aid to China would necessarily depend upon whether China "continued determinedly to resist," and upon whether she "cooperates closely

with the Soviet Union." Snow thereupon asked: "Is it possible that this greater Soviet aid to China's liberation movement may take a form somewhat similar to what you call Soviet aid to Byelo Russian and Ukrainian liberation movements?" Mao replied ominously that such a possibility exists "according to Leninism." He said that the Soviet Union would "never sign a pact harmful to the national semi-colonial and colonial revolution," but this statement was meaningless taken in conjunction with his defense of Russia's invasion of Poland.

The Polish government, said Mao, was semi-fascist, oppressive to workers, "incompetent and wicked," had fought the communists for twenty years and, worst of all, was allied to imperialist Britain and France. Obviously such arguments can be applied with even greater force to Chiang Kai-shek's government if and when Moscow gives the order. It will be no trick at all for the communists the world over to discover that Chiang Kai-shek's government is counter-revolutionary and, like Poland's, "strategically a part of the Anglo-French imperialist front." It will be harder for Chinese communists to make this discovery, but already they are moving in that direction.

III

The territorial basis of the Chinese communists is in Shensi, Kansu and Ninghsia, the regions occupied by the Red Army in 1934-5 after its long march from Kiangsi. That area has been extended as a result of the Japanese war and now can be said to include large parts of North China nominally occupied by the Japanese but where guerrilla forces led by men trained in the Eighth Route military school actually control the countryside. In Central China, also, the communists have acquired a new base. The Fourth Route Army, operating south of Nanking in so-called occupied territory, was formed in 1938 from a nucleus of old Red Army fighters, and it is more or less under communist domination. The northwestern region, once known as Soviet China, has since been called the Special Area, or the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region Government. The Eighth Route Army is composed of about 100,000 regular troops, but also commands thousands of partisans (armed peasants). Although we need not credit fully the idealized pictures of conditions in the northwest painted by Western communists and sympathizers, the reforms enforced by the Eighth Route Army have un-

doubtedly brought more social justice than exists elsewhere in China, except perhaps in Kwangsi.

In addition to the Border Government, one must take into account Sinkiang or Chinese Turkestan in the far west, which is now practically a Russian protectorate. In 1934 Russia set up in Sinkiang its own puppet ruler, General Sheng Shih-tsai, supported by refugee Chinese troops from Manchuria. Since the Japanese invasion of China, the USSR has quietly consolidated its position and converted Sinkiang for all practical purposes into a province of the Russian empire. The provincial army is officered by Russians and equipped with Russian arms. The air force is composed of Russian planes and its pilots are Russian-trained. There are said to be Russian garrisons in the strategic cities. So closely is the region linked with Russia that political purges in Moscow have their counterparts in Sinkiang; the fall of GPU chief Yagoda, for instance, was followed by the execution of the head of the Sinkiang Bureau of Public Safety.

If one considers Sinkiang and the communist northwest together, they have a population of twenty to twenty-five millions. It would be a mistake, however, to consider

Russian control and Chinese communist control as necessarily the same thing. Sinkiang is independent of Chiang Kai-shek and its population is not primarily Chinese. The northwest, on the other hand, is entirely Chinese and administered by communists who are Chinese, and has been until recently acknowledged by its military bosses as an integral part of China; the Eighth Route Army gets arms and money from Chiang Kai-shek, not from Moscow.

Until recently no alarm was felt in China concerning the presence of Soviet agencies and specialists along the new northwest road leading to Russia, in close proximity to the base of the Eighth Route Army at Yennan. In general, it was not done in China to mention the presence of Soviet military specialists, as I found when I questioned my interpreter at the main Yangtze front after I had run across five Russians in uniform in one day. But since the Nazi-Soviet get-together all this has changed. Moscow's behavior is being closely watched, and the central authorities are wondering whether the communists — which comes down to the Eighth Route Army and the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Government — will follow China or follow Russia in a possible showdown.

Mao's statements have undermined such hopes as persisted among liberal friends of China that the Chinese communists would prove to be radically different from the stooge-variety in other countries. Whether Mao speaks for all the communist leaders and the whole of the Eighth Route Army probably will not be known until Stalin forces a test, if he ever does. It may be that Mao himself does not grasp the implications of the new Moscow line and may be convinced that Moscow, and Moscow alone, can and will save China. His good intentions, however, will not help the Chinese people if they should be delivered by Stalin to a renewal of civil warfare, and then carved into spheres of domination between Japan and China. Whether the Chinese communists are Moscow's stooges or its dupes will make small practical difference.

Continuance of the united front is also being menaced, of course, from the other end, by Kuomintang leaders fearful of the expansion of communist control. Already there has been enough friction, and enough actual armed conflict in Kansu and Shensi to enable the Stalinists to blame the break, should it come, on the Kuomintang. But the central government is so dependent on Soviet arms and

so scared of open or secret Russo-Japanese collaboration, that it will certainly not take the initiative in wrecking the balance. This balance has hitherto been maintained by British and American support of China and, in recent months, by the threat of an American embargo on war materials to Japan. Without such support, some of the Right Wing leaders would surely follow the example of Wang Ching-wei and go over to the Japanese rather than submit to a high degree of Russian control.

There is not much consolation in apportioning blame. China has long been treated as a colonial area and yet left unprotected by any imperialist power when attacked. It has for years faced a Japan armed by British and Americans. The democracies have given it a few medical supplies, some meagre credits and a lot of sympathy, but Germany and Russia have supplied it with military experts and arms. To a Chinese there must seem little virtue in the Western democracies and little hope from that quarter. Unless and until his position is strengthened by substantial aid from Britain or the United States, Chiang Kai-shek, whether willing

or not, is powerless to make the economic reforms required by the masses of his people. If Moscow, for purposes of its own, should order the anti-Japanese war transformed into a civil anti-capitalist war, he may find willing and idealistic Chinese support. But such civil war, while it may break Chiang Kai-shek, certainly will not create a revolutionary China. It would only help rivet Japanese and Russian control in their respective areas.

Stalin may well calculate that he has nothing to lose and much to gain by preventing the development of a free China along "bourgeois democratic" lines with the friendly support of European and American democracies. It is no accident that *Pravda* in January inveighed against "American imperialism's stubborn adherence to the Open Door" principle in China. The Kremlin may decide to turn the Chinese communists against the Kuomintang government, to have them proclaim the independence of the Border Government and set about extending its territory. A get-together with Japan, open or secret, would be the logical precursor of such a decision.

HOW TO WRITE A SONG HIT

BY DORON K. ANTRIM

NEITHER age nor experience is a specific against the itch to write popular songs. Over 21,000 are copyrighted yearly in the United States, most of them in manuscript, 9000 achieve publication, only a bare 100 emerge as hits. And hits are the only kind today that mean money in the till. Consistent hit writers are about as rare as Babe Ruths in baseball. Of the 1400 who write music for a living in the United States, only 130 write hits. Batting average of the repeaters is around five hits a year, thirteen is a high and one will keep you in the running.

Upon its top flight artists ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) confers its blessing and an average of \$20,000 a year each for performing rights. This select group includes men like Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, Sigmund Romberg, Irving Caesar, Harry Warren, Gordon and Revel. Other writer members of ASCAP are graded down to Class Four and paid accordingly. To the ASCAP ante is added a three-cent

royalty on sheet sales, one cent on records and around \$1500 a week if the writer works on contract for picture companies.

The small coterie of men who set the song styles follow a curious calling. Campus curricula offer no preparation for it. It is neither a business nor a profession since there are no office hours. Work, if you call it that, is done as the spirit moves — at home, in a hotel room, on the beach, the golf course — and most often in the deep of night. A seeming sinecure, it is really a full-time job calling for highly specialized skills. Money it offers, but not fame. Names mean almost nothing in song writing. A song may be sung around the world but no one will clamor for the writer's autograph or even know who he is. The performers get all the applause.

It's a strange world they live in, the song scribes, grouped together in little colonies in New York and Beverly Hills; a world of hope, fear and fantasy. They hope they will write another hit and fear they will not. The Alley is dotted with the