

CHINA

On the Eve of Chiang Kai-Shek's Return.

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To save one's face is a very important consideration in the political life of China. Chiang Kai-Shek's dramatic resignation just at the moment, when the Wuhan "left" capitulated before Nanking puzzled the world. There was doubt as regards who won. Chiang Kai-Shek's resignation was interpreted by many as indicating the victory of Wuhan over Nanking — not vice versa, as was really the case. As a matter of fact, Chiang Kai-Shek's resignation was a carefully calculated act to make it easier for Wuhan to capitulate — to make it possible for Wang Chin-Wei to betray the revolution without losing face before his followers.

The reconciliation between the two fractions of the Kuomintang signifies more than the formation of a feudal-bourgeois bloc against the workers and peasants. It also signifies the bankruptcy of the petty bourgeois democratic radicalism represented by the "left" Kuomintang led by Wang Chin-Wei. The essentially reactionary nature of petty bourgeois radicalism was exposed by the tidal wave of revolution. As soon as the class struggle became fierce, the "left" leaders hastened to join hands with the feudal-bourgeois right in the struggle against the revolutionary masses. The right reactionaries would welcome the left leaders, particularly Wang Chin-Wei, not in order to swell their ranks by so many individuals, but to win over the entire upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie to the side of counter-revolution. Wang Chin-wei would be a valuable asset to counter-revolution only if he could bring with him a considerable section of his petty bourgeois following. Should it be necessary for him to go to Nanking as the

vanquished, then Wang Chin-Wei could not be expected to do that. In that case the petty bourgeois masses would desert him as the traitor that he is.

For the petty bourgeois "left" politicians the vital class-issues involved in the Nanchang split were not of much importance. The political significance of this split was not explained to the petty bourgeois masses. To them it was more a question of party democracy and personality. Therefore, Wang Chin-Wei could not lead his bloc out of the bankruptcy of Wuhan "leftism" to be the camp followers of the feudal-bourgeois bloc, should this insist on having the hated Chiang Kai-Shek at its head. Chiang Kai-Shek had rendered his services to the counter-revolution, for the further strengthening of which the services of Wang Chin-Wei is now necessary. The doors of the temple of counter-revolution should be so thrown open to him that he could enter without losing face. As an act of staunch loyalty to counter-revolution Chiang Kai-Shek resigned.

The comic character of this resignation was evident from the very beginning. Immediately after his resignation there began the obviously inspired movement demanding his return. When Wang Chin-Wei went abroad to make room for Chiang Kai-Shek, the petty bourgeois left clamoured for his return to the leadership of the Kuomintang. Now Chiang Kai-Shek's return to the head of the nationalist army is demanded by the bourgeois right. The services of both are needed for the counter-revolutionary bloc from the feudal militarists to the petty bourgeois democrats. Chiang resigned only to return as a saviour, as an idealist who could sacrifice personal considerations for the unity of the party.

According to the latest news, Tan Yen-Kai and Sun Fo, two outstanding leaders of the ex-left Wuhan group, have gone to Nimpo, where Chiang Kai-Shek is resting from his counter-revolutionary activities, to persuade him to resume the command of the united nationalist armies. It is very significant that Tan Yen-Kai and Sun-Fo are chosen to carry the olive branch. In spite of their compromising association with the Wuhan "left", these two are the typical representatives of the classes that supported Chiang Kai-Shek and in whose interests he split the Kuomintang. Tan Yen-Kai is a feudal militarist of the classical type. He had been a Tupan*) for 15 years. He consciously represents the landlords and gentry. While, in June last, the agrarian question was sitting on the troubled breast of the Wuhan "left" as a dreadful nightmare, Tan Yen-Kai declared in a meeting of the Kuomintang Political Council: "I am prepared to give away my lands, but I cannot betray my own class". Sun-Fo represents the comprador bourgeoisie. As mayor of Canton he bought up a number of large cinema theatres and several thousand mos of homestead land in the suburbs. Previously he belonged to the extreme right of the Kuomintang. He politically fought his father Sun Yat-Sen when the latter was alive.

These two and more were inside the Wuhan group as agents of the feudal-bourgeois right wing after it had split the nationalist front and turned against revolution. The existence of such elements prevented the development of the Wuhan government in the direction of democratic dictatorship. The petty bourgeois left did not carry on a struggle to drive these elements away, thus completing the split of the Kuomintang along the ever-sharpening line of class differentiation. Finally, the petty bourgeois democrats headed by Wang Chin-Wei capitulated before the agents of the feudal-bourgeois right wing, and the way to reconciliation between Wuhan and Nanking was clear.

Now Tan Yen-Kai and Sun-Fo go to Chiang Kai-Shek to say: look, comrade, how successfully we have accomplished our job; we have destroyed the Wuhan left from within, though you could not do that from without; we have prevented the petty bourgeoisie from travelling on the road to revolution with the proletariat; and we have won Wang Chin-Wei for the counter-revolution. When invited by two such illustrious representatives of the feudal-bourgeoisie, who have so successfully combated the growth of a revolutionary left Kuomintang, Chiang Kai-Shek will certainly return to his post and grasp the hand of his ex-enemy Wang Chin-Wei, nearly as soiled as his own with the blood of the working class.

*) Tupan — military governor of a province.

The bourgeoisie, however, is playing the game too cleverly. All these stage-managings will only defeat their own end. Wang Chin-Wei is not only the idol of the nationalist petty bourgeoisie. He had a big influence upon the masses. The debacle of the most faithful follower of Sun Yat-Sen frees the masses from the lingering influence of petty bourgeois radicalism. It frees the Chinese revolution from the fetters of the "three peoples' principles". Counter-revolution, led jointly by Wang Chin-Wei and Chiang Kai-Shek, will only quicken the development of the revolution.