

# THE GROWTH OF THE SOVIET POWER IN CHINA

By CYRIL BRIGGS.

In the province of Hupeh, Central China, the Chinese Red Army is carrying out a successful campaign against the Kuomintang betrayers of China. The frontiers of the Honan-Hupeh-Anhwei border Soviet districts have been considerably extended within the past five months. New sections of the worker-peasant masses have been liberated from the bloody feudal-capitalist rule of the Kuomintang tools of the imperialist powers. A Red iron ring is being steadily forged around the important industrial and strategic city of Hankow.

So serious is the threat to the Kuomintang and its imperialist masters that the League of Nations Commission has been forced recently to expose the true role of the League as organizer of the robber war against China. The Commission, ostensibly sent to the Far East to "investigate" Japanese military activities in Shanghai and Manchuria is now instead investigating the international conditions in Central China, where the rapid growth of the power of the Chinese Soviets is threatening with destruction the last vestige of Kuomintang control and influence in Central China.

In addition to the second Red Army Corps under Ho Lung, whose victories were related in the previous article, a large Red Army force of 65,000 men, under Kwang Chi-sun, is also converging on Hankow from the northeast. This force has captured Hwangan and Hwangpei. On January 18, an advance guard of 1,000 Red troops occupied the railway line near Hongtien, a small town ten miles north of Hankow.

From the South, Tuan Ssh-cheng with a Red Army group of over 6,000 men is advancing. He has lately captured Paichow, a town about 50 miles from Wuchang. Kung Ho-chung with a force of 6,000 is operating in southeastern Hupeh, on the Wuchang-Changsha Railway.

The Red Army in the Honan-Hupeh-Anhwei border Soviet districts now totals over 80,000. Comrade Kwong in an article in the China Forum reports that they are well organized and equipped. They have an arsenal manufacturing rifles and ammunition. They are the largest and strongest Red force in Hupeh, and no Nanking troops in recent times have dared to attack them. The civil Soviet administration is firmly

established in 200 districts cutting across the border lines of the three provinces.

The "Red suppression" campaign is making little headway, both by reason of the strength of the Red Army and the fact that the Nanking officers cannot trust their suppressing troops to fight against the Red Army. Tens of thousands of Nanking troops have deserted to the Red Army.

Units of the Nanking 69th and 13th divisions sent against the Soviet districts, turned their arms against the Kuomintang and imperialists and joined the Red Army. The Kuomintang then sent another group of the 69th Division against the Red Army, but these also joined the Red Army. A part of the 13th Division followed their example.

When the Red Army group of Kwang Chi-sun was besieging Hwangpei, then held by the Nanking 30th Division, two brigades of the 30th Division went over to the Red Army. One of the brigades of the 13th Division also joined the Red Army, while Sun Lien-chung's 26th Division of 20,000 men went over wholesale to the Red Army. In addition, there have been a growing number of revolts among the Nanking troops. And the unrest is growing. On April 1, a Peiping dispatch admitted:

**"Unrest in army ranks is spreading rapidly, and a complete breakdown of some of the best known army corps in China is expected."**

Less and less can the Kuomintang rely on its main support, its armed troops.

In addition to the Red Army operations around Hankow, there is a Red Army drive to the eastward from the Anhwei border. A Red Army group of 10,000 is now in the vicinity of Luan, and threatening Kuomintang communications on the Tientsin-Pukow Railway. This group is reported using Chiang Chia-stai as a base of operations. The "suppression" troops of Gen. Sung Shih-kó is planning to evacuate Hochu, leaving only two regiments to oppose the advancing Red troops. Evidently Gen. Sung Shih-kó has no faith in his ability to hold his troops against a Red Army advance. The Shanghai press fears that with the fall of Hochu to the Red troops, the districts of northern Anhwei would be affected, with the masses rising in revolt against the Nanking butcher government.