

Youth and the War of Resistance in Hong Kong

Young comrades, I feel both ashamed and unusually moved in accepting the appointment of the Central Headquarters to speak intimately to our young people at home and abroad. My subject is "Youth and the War of Resistance in Hong Kong". I am going to relate the story of how we assisted the British troops in Hong Kong to fight the war of resistance and of how the Hong Kong youth in general did their best in the battle.

1) How we assisted the British troops in Hong Kong in war service.

Upon the outbreak of the war on December 8th of last year, the Kuomintang Headquarters for Hong Kong and Australia and the Hong Kong Youth Corps called up all the Central Government organisations in Hong Kong to form a joint office, called "*Chinese War Assistance Corps of Hong Kong*", of which I was concurrently the head. Thus 15,000 countrymen, brave and faithful, were mobilized. A headquarters was established with the leaders and young men of all associations and groups who were believers in the Three Peoples Doctrine' as the trunk of the organisation. The entire Hong Kong was divided into the upper, middle, and lower section, as three separate Direction Zones. The corpse was to be in close co-operation with the British Authorities assisting the Police to maintain the order in the rear, putting down every attempt to disturb the order by fifth columnists of the enemy, and to prevent the enemy spies from performing their functions so that the British troops could fight at the front, free from the worry. The result was that during the eighteen days of fighting, there was not a single case of looting. With the progress of the war and at the request of our friendly troops, we did our best to provide them with manpower. Chinese workers and volunteers joined the active service in the front; others participated in air defence, red cross work and army transportation. Besides this, the Chinese assisted the British authorities in distributing food, stabilizing the prices of commodities, and setting up public dining houses giving free food to people so as to free them from want of food supplies. Much assistance was also rendered to the British Army by printing and publishing war news urging our people to be quiet and steady, with the result that the order in the rear was kept without any disturbance or tumult. In the end, when the enemy troops landed in Hong Kong after a successful penetration through the British coast defence line, the Corpse selected brave comrades to form a "dare-to-die" unit and asked the British troops to hasten to arm them for active service in the front to fight deadly with the enemy. Unfortunately, the battle had progressed to a hopeless condition and our wish was therefore not fulfilled. Nevertheless, our loyal and brave countrymen were still doing their best to assist the British troops in an unflinching spirit. They had carried on their work in their respective positions until it became impossible after the British troops were forced to surrender.

2) The British defenders were taken by surprise when the Japanese launched their attack on Hong Kong with enormous forces on land, at sea and in the air.

Despite the military unpreparedness, the British troops fought gallantly and steadily against odds. When the decision of abandoning Kowloon was taken, as a result of the destruction of the fortress by the enemy, maximum destruction was carried out of goods and military equipment. For instance, the Texaco oil tanks, the oil tanks of the navy, running water and

power plant were all destroyed. Encircled by the enemy attacking on all three sides, Hong Kong inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. Twice the enemy offered peace terms, but they were all flatly rejected by the Governor. Then the Japanese succeeded in breaking through the British coast defence line at the Taiku wharf, but the British troops persisted to defend the hills. From north Shaochiwen to the area of Huangnihuan and Chahawentze, bitter fighting took place without relaxation. The power plant was hit by enemy artillery and all lights in the city went out. Meantime, the water reservoir was also destroyed by the enemy, so the whole city was cut from water supply. On the other hand, further reinforcements of the enemy landed in Hong Kong; they were all well-equipped and possessed guns of all calibre and many trench mortars. Fierce artillery fighting ensued, and the exhausted British troops still held on. General Lawson (?) Commander of the Canadian troops was killed and General Badopuse (?), member of the staff, and the rest were either killed or wounded. The spirit of the British troops to fight for weeks, despite their utmost exhaustion and isolated position deserves admiration. The reasons that they could no longer hold on were manifold. Firstly the equipment of the British troops did not meet the necessity of modern warfare. For instance, the infantry units had not been equipped with infantry guns, armoured-car-guns and trench mortars. The co-operation of the infantry and artillery had not been fully carried out. Furthermore the paraphernalia and equipment of the individual soldier did not meet with the principle of the "light equipment" in modern warfare. The direct causes of the defeat of the Hong Kong battle are:-

- i) Hong Kong was an isolated Island and a trading port. Being not a military base, its military defences were naturally not very complete.
- ii) The number of the defenders were too small (only 15,000) while the coast line to defend was long. Moreover, Hong Kong lacked naval protection.
- iii) The proximity of Hong Kong to the enemy air base made it impossible for the defenders to have their own air force set up its position before the war broke out and to get reinforcement afterwards.
- iv) Electricity and water supply were cut by enemy bombing and bombardment.

3) The story of my escape.

The situation became very critical on December 24th, when the enemy troops had penetrated the line of Uchinwen and Huangniyung and had come to Wantze. It was then very difficult for the British troops to launch an offensive as they were both exhausted and cut off from external assistance. On the morning of December 25th, the Governor and the Commander of the Army and Navy informed me of their determination to declare a truce. Based on my initial determination of "either victory or death", I started to discuss with the Governor, asking him for a final decision. I asked him if he still had a fleet left to hand over to me direct. Thereupon, the Governor decided to offer me the only five torpedo boats remaining, their numbers being 7, 9, 10, 11, and 27, for a desperate thrust through the enemy blockading line with party consisting of the high officers of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. They were Major Goring, Commander Montague, Wing Commander Oxford, Mr Worthfort, staff member of the Air Force, Mr MacDougall, Hong Kong representative of the British Ministry of Information, Mr Robinson, Inspector-General of the Police and twenty

other able lieutenants. For this, I am very grateful to the Governor and the Commander of the Land and Navy forces, for they, as well as their rank and file, had been most co-operative in spirit, even in times of utter difficulties, in the common war effort. It was 4.30 pm that we sailed to Tzehaping from Hong Kong. The weather was clear. Enemy forces in speed boats immediately fired on us with machine guns and trench mortars when we were sighted. For ten minutes, they concentrated firing on us. At last the boat in which I was hit and damaged and the captain of the boat was killed. So the boat could not move further. It was then that my left wrist was struck with a bullet and a number of British officers were either killed or wounded. We abandoned the boat and swam towards an Island one li distant. With only one leg and a wounded wrist, I succeeded in reaching the shore under the fire of the enemy, only by the Divine assistance of our National Father (i.e. Dr Sun Yat-sen) in the Heaven and the inspiration of the spirit of our leader (Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek). At night, the torpedo boat which went ahead of us came back to take us aboard. Under dim moonlight, we penetrated through the enemy blockading line. Only an enemy cruiser discovered us on the way by directing its searchlight upon us. Four shots were fired by the cruiser, but fortunately none of them hit us. Before dawn, our boats arrived in our fatherland. Mr Liang Yung-yuan, a guerrilla leader and his men were already there to meet us. After having a rest, I ordered Liang and his men to be our vanguard, escorting us through the Japanese line and occupied areas. I took the opportunity to comfort the people on our way and convey them on behalf of the Government the concern that the Central Government had for them. The journey was a safe one. Finally we got to Shaokwan. There I had the bullet in my wrist extracted and had a short stay for recuperation. Afterwards I left for Chungking to make my report to the Government.

4) Hong Kong Youth in the War of Resistance.

I was very much heartened on seeing the spirit of our Chinese youth from their enthusiasm and voluntary will to assist the British troops in war service. Those who took part in the fighting service in the front were the Chinese Volunteer Corps, Chinese Infantry Corps and Chinese Engineers Unit. Those in the rear participated in the Air Raid Relief Corps, army transportation and the distribution of food at food stations. Special mention should be made of the brave young men of the guilds who maintained order by assisting in policing functions. In short, during the eighteen days, not a single young man failed to work hard, to be free from the fear of death and difficulties and to show no flinching from hardships. They had only one conviction, and that was to fight the war of resistance. Their enthusiasm and intense feelings, active and true actions, undaunted and un-submissive spirit are indeed admirable. Our Leader has told us: *"the youth of the nation are all the successors to our great national culture, and the creators of the bright future of the nation. The heavy burden of revolution and reconstruction lies on the shoulder of our youth"*. From this, we see the importance of the task of the youth in the war of resistance and national reconstruction. That is why I should like to mention what the Hong Kong youth had done in the battle of Hong Kong and Kowloon. I hope that our young men will always observe the instructions of our leader.

In passing I should also like to mention the recent war situation in the Pacific. Maybe some of you are now feeling anxious and disappointed over the reverse suffered by the Allies. If so it is entirely because of the ignorance of the real circumstances and conditions and of the

nervous fear of Japan. The outbreak of the Pacific war this time was accompanied by a planned intrigue by the enemy. The allies were taken by surprise and were therefore in a state of unpreparedness. The successive lightning attacks of the enemy made it difficult for the allies to devise for a means to meet the situation satisfactorily. From the military point of view, the initial reverse of the allies in the south Pacific are rather within our expectations and do not warrant worry in the least and still less pessimism. Young comrades should bear in mind that the Tsunli (Dr Sun) had had innumerable failures before he finally succeeded in overthrowing the Manchu Dynasty and establishing the Republic. The work of national reconstruction is an extremely hard one and can hardly succeed in a simple manner. We hope, therefore, that we will all continue doing our best to fight for victory in the same fighting spirit with which we have been fighting for the past five years. An ancient saying "*doing our best till the hour of death*" should be the firm conviction of those of us who are living in a grand age like this. Victory ahead, young comrades. Let us exert our utmost concerted and redouble efforts under the direction of our Leader. The God of Victory is beckoning to us. Good night everybody.