

WHAT ABOUT CHINA



Pertinent Facts Concerning the Present Situation in That Country

(Questions & Answers)

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CHINESE STUDENTS' CLUB PITTSBURGH, PA.

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Copies may be obtained by addressing the Chinese Students' Club, Carnegie Institute of Technology) Pittsburgh, Pa.

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Ques. Why Do The Chinese Fight? What Are the Aims and Purposes of the Opposing Forces?

Ans. China is at present in a situation not unlike that of the United States during its Civil War. Chang Tso Lin, Wu Pei Fu, and Sun Chuang Fang, "War Lords" of North China, represent the forces opposed by the Cantonese, under Chiang Kai Shek. The former group is conservative, reactionary; the latter represents the move towards nationalism and progress. The three "War Lords" before mentioned-Plunderers would be a better name-wish to hold their territory as a personal domain, for their own selfish interests. These Plunderers are doing their best to keep China in a state of feudalism. The laws of China are null and void within their domains, for no court dares render a verdict against them. The Cantonese oppose such a medieval state of affairs. They are the torch-bearers of liberty and democracy, and all the educated, patriotic, and progressive elements in China stand solidly with them. Among the active supporters worthy of particular mention are the students, many of whom received their education in America. They hope to establish in China, a strong national government, one which will reflect the will of the people, with power enough to enforce law and order as well as suppress adventurers and tyrants of the Plunderer or War Lord type. Though many of these students are from North China, yet they are with the Cantonese, for this is in no sense a sectional war,* but a war of ideas. It is modernism versus feudalism.

^{*}It must be always kept in mind that the terms "Cantonese" or "Nationalist" do not refer to any particular section of China—they represent the people of ALL China.

- Q. Is the Present Situation a Natural Evolutionary Condition, or is it the Product of External Forces?
- A. It is both. A nation governed by emperors for thousands of years can hardly hope to become a republic without internal disturbances. All nations in such cases go through a period of adjustment, and China is now in a state of transition. The United States, after three quarters of a century of republican government, had not completed this adjusting process, for the Civil War caused the same kind of "internal disturbances" with four long years of bloodshed. But when it was over, slavery had been abolished, the right of individual states to secede was settled forever in the negative, and the "Union" was saved. (Sentiment in England was strong for intervention: suppose England had sent thousands of marines to New York, in order to "protect" her nationals there?)

On the other hand, external forces have intensified and prolonged civil strife in China. It is always to the interest of exploiting nations such as Japan or Great Britain, to keep China divided and weak. Most Chinese believe that Chang Tso Lin, for instance, received something more substantial than mere passive encouragement from the Japanese.

Furthermore, foreign imperialism, in the form of unequal treaties, extraterritoriality, foreign controlled tariff, etc., has so much to do with the political, social, and economic conditions in China. It is surely justifiable for the people of a nation to demand their sovereign rights, and China is at present fighting to rid herself of all abuses and evils, regardless whether caused by external or by internal forces. Only by so doing can China become a sovereign nation, with a citizenry freed from the oppression of foreign powers or of native "War Lords."

Q. Are the Great Powers on the side of Peking or of Canton, and Why? Which Side's Victory Will be Best for China Itself? Which for the Occidental World?

A. The Great Powers' policy has always been largely governed by trade interests, and anyone willing to further those interests would gain their favor. The Cantonese* would always be willing to advance any legitimate trade interests of foreign powers, so long as this did not impair the sovereignty of China, nor react to China's disadvantage. Chang Tso Lin would undoubtedly have less scruples in sacrificing China's welfare for the benefit of foreign exploiters, so long .as he shared in the "profits". He would undoubtedly make greater concessions to foreign exploiters than would the Cantonese, who have the best interests of China at heart. Peking demands revision of unequal treaties only after the Cantonese have "set the pace," when they find it is expedient to be "patriotic". Yet, though most of the Great Powers favor Pekin or Chang Tso Lin, for selfish reasons, still there can be no doubt that a strong and united China will be the best in the end for all concerned. Law and order, plus education for the masses (a program now being carried out by the Cantonese), by raising the standard of living, must result in a demand for luxuries on the part of the common man in China, that the Occidental World, and particularly the United States, can supply. A united and progressive China is certainly not only in keeping with American tradition, but will be far better for the United States at least, than a China kept in subjection and turmoil by selfish War Lords or foreign exploiters.

^{*}The terms "Cantonese" or "Nationalist" do not refer to any particular section of China—they represent the people of ALL China.

Q. What is the Kuomintang?

A. "Kuomintang" means literally "The People's Party". Its doctrine is based solely on the three principles of its founder, Sun Yat Sen, corresponding more or less to "a government of the people, by the people and for the people".

These three principles, made in the name of the Chinese people, are:

- 1. Emancipation from imperialism, both within and without.
- 2. Universal suffrage, with initiative, referendum, and recall.
- 3. Reorganization of the social-economic system.

The Kuomintang is in control of the Nationalist Government and has supporters all over China and among the Chinese over-seas. It is well organized and has a real program covering social reform, public finance, education, and foreign policies. The most impressive thing about the Nationalist Government is that it is not militaristic, nor is it controlled by one dictator. The army is under the direction of the civil authorities, who in turn are subordinate to the Central Committee, which runs the whole Nationalist Government.

Q. Are the Chinese Anti-Foreign, Anti-Christian?

A. From time to time, the newspapers have reported that "Christian missions in China are being abandoned, resulting in the loss of millions of dollars worth of property"; or these papers say "Thousands of American missionaries were forced to flee for life", etc. Let us examine the facts.

In the first place, civil war always creates unrest. History indicates that whenever a normal state of affairs is disturbed, turmoil in some degree is bound to follow as a natural consequence. The French Revolution, the American Revolution, the American Civil War, all attest to this. We must not forget that China at present is divided into two factions, Nationalist and "Reactionary," and that war exists between these two groups. Yet, in spite of turbulent conditions in the war-zone, there has not been a single foreign life lost nor any property confiscated. Reports from missionaries in the different districts of China contrast greatly with the grossly exaggerated and sensational headlines in some of the newspapers. Mr. Henry S. Leiper, associate secretary of the Commission on Missions, in the New York Times of February 7, 1927, called attention to the fact that only a few missionaries have left their posts as a precautionary measure. He made it clear, however, that, so far as is known, not a single missionary in China has been killed in the present fighting and that practically all of the missions are continuing their normal routine, without interruption. Again, in the New York Times of February 8, 1927, the Foreign Missions Conference of New York City declared that reports received by cable and letters from widely scattered Mission posts in China indicate that there has been no general breakdown of mission work there.

Those familiar with the Chinese temperament and with China's history, know that the Chinese have been taught for twenty-five centuries at least, that "Within the four seas all are brothers" (from the teachings of the great philosopher, Confucius), and that the Chinese are a people fond of peace, law, and order. So far as religious freedom is concerned, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Taoism, etc., have existed side by side for centuries with no case of burning at the stake because of differences of creed. The Chinese are conspicuously tolerant towards all religions and have always been so.

Q. What Does "May 30" Signify?

A. The Chinese employees in the Japanese-owned cotton mills at Shanghai worked under unspeakable conditions. They toiled fourteen hours a day for a wage of forty cents, Chinese money, which is twenty cents American. They were beaten, tortured, or killed, for trivial annoyances, by the Japanese managers. Recently the workers awoke to the situation, and, realizing that they were being exploited inhumanly, they demanded reform, asking for ten hours, an increase of five cents in the daily wage, and abolition of all corporal punishment. These demands were all refused. The workers then answered with a strike. Here the Shanghai Foreign Court stepped in and ordered the arrest of some twenty of the strikers who were indiscriminately seized on the pretext that they were "agitators". Students of Shanghai organized orderly and peaceful demonstrations to protest against this outrage and spread the truth of the situation. It resulted in the arrest and torture of many students by the British police in the International Settlement on May 30, 1925. While the students were seized and sent to the police station, the crowd followed. In front of Lowza Police station, the Indian police, by order of British Sergeant Everson and with only ten seconds' warning, fired on the entirely unarmed crowd of two or three thousand civilians. Within such short warning how could they expect to disperse the crowd at once? As a result, more than twenty were killed outright and a great number seriously wounded. Does this not remind Americans of the famous (or infamous!) Boston Massacre? Yet the May 30th occurrence was surely murder on a much larger scale.

More victims were shot on June 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. This state of affairs naturally aroused the entire country. Parades followed in other cities in demonstration against the Shanghai Massacre, which again resulted in the killing of fourteen Chinese by the British volunteers and Marines at Hankow on June 10, and the massacre of 53 Chinese at Canton by the British Marines on June 23. A number of Chinese laborers were also killed and wounded by the British employers in a British Company at Nanking.

Q. What was the Wanhsien Massacre?

A. On August 29, 1926, while the S. S. Wanliu, a British merchant ship, was stopping at Yun Yang on her voyage upward to Wanhsien, three sampans containing a party of Chinese soldiers approached her for the purpose of seeking accommodation for the transportation of public funds under their custody. Suddenly, and without warning, the British ship started to move away, the abruptness of the move causing the sampans to capsize at once. As a result, sixtyfour lives, and \$85,000 in silver were lost. On her arrival at Wanhsien, General Yang Sen sent an officer aboard the Wanliu with his retinue to investigate the matter. The British gun-boat "Cockchafer", then lying at the same port, suddenly intervened by despatching a body of marines, who disarmed the Chinese soldiers on their official duty, fired at them and wounded two. In less than three months previous, three cases of sinking of the Chinese sampans had already occurred, resulting in the loss of more than forty lives without giving any redress. So under these circumstances, General Yang Sen detained two other British steamers of the same company for the purpose of hastening an equitable settlement of the caste. Suddenly, on September 5th, while negotiations were being opened both at Wanhsien and at Peking, a British armoured vessel from I-chang, with the aid of two other gun-boats, attempting to effect the release of the detained steamers by force, opened volleys of rifle fire, resulting in the death of more than one hundred Chinese guards. The gun-boats then directed a murderous machine gun fire toward the city, and the Chinese troops returned the fire in self defense. Nearly one thousand of innocent civilians in the city were killed and wounded, and over one thousand houses and buildings were destroyed.

Such brutality and inhumanity at the hands of a so-called "civilized" and Christian nation could only be endured by a defenceless people. If a similar massacre were to occur in any other part of the world, retaliation would swiftly follow.

2. What do the Chinese demand?

A. China is asking for only one thing—namely, the abolition of the unequal treaties, which at present cover three essentials: tariff autonomy, cancellation of extraterritoriality and restoration of concession areas. China's custom tariff must no longer be controlled by the Treaty Powers because, as a sovereign state, she should have her own economic freedom. The Powers must also give up their extraterritorial rights because the consular jurisdiction, which international law does not sanction, has greatly impaired China's administrative entity. Nothing has more seriously violated China's territorial integrity than the foreign concessions and settlements; China has every reason to demand the restoration of her lawful territory.

If the diplomats of the Powers really meant to carry out what they promised, the difficulties between China and the foreign powers would have been solved nearly thirty years ago, when John Hay, the famous American statesman, advocated a policy for the guarantee of China's "sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity". The Powers now have already declared that they recognize China's legitimate aspirations, and are prepared to meet her demands by peaceful settlement; yet, simultaneously, they keep rushing warships and troops to China to protect their so-called "interests." The Chinese have now come to realize that the question "is not what Great Britain and other powers may wish to grant China toward legitimate aspirations in the Chinese nation, but what Nationalist China may justly grant Great Britain and other powers." China does not want to beg anything from the powers. She is now asserting her inherent right by denouncing all the admittedly unequal treaties. She will not ask for more, but she shall not be contented with less.

Q. What About the Unequal Treaties?

A. From as far back as 1842, China has been compelled, at the point of a pistol, to sign treaties granting to foreign Powers extraordinary political and economic privileges and immunities. They were made wholly for the benefit of one side at the expense of the other. Among the "rights" snatched by "might", the principle ones are extraterritorial courts, foreign concessions, leased territories, and control over customs tariff and administration. Under the yoke of these treaties, China has been struggling with less rights than the Treaty Powers have within her own territory.

It need not be said that no government will ever voluntarily and knowingly sign such suicidal agreements which are so detrimental to her own sovereignty and national interests, and that no international law will ever sanction the existence and validity of any treaty entered into as a result of force or fraud. As the French premier, M. Painleve said: "Without a new international morality, the most perfect law in the world must remain a dead letter". China attempted first at Versailles and later at Washington, to secure a readjustment of her relations through the usual diplomatic channels. But the supplication only produced increased violence. It must take a people of extraordinary patience to allow such intolerable treaties to remain in force for so many decades, but China's patience is at last exhausted. If the foreign Powers do not voluntarily abrogate these treaties, then China will be compelled, as a self-respecting sovereign nation, to denounce them by an unilateral act, as Turkey did a short time ago.

Q. What About Extraterritoriality? Can China be Trusted to Deal Justice Impartially if Extraterritoriality be Abolished?

A. By Extraterritoriality or Consular Jurisdiction is meant that the foreigners in China are not subjected to Chinese jurisdiction, but maintain in China judicial tribunals of their own which apply not Chinese laws, but their own laws in cases in which their own nationals are sued whether civilly or criminally. These extraterritorial rights were granted at a time when there were only five Treaty Ports—that is, places where foreigners could trade and reside. Now there are over fifty such places. This means an ever increasing number of persons within China's territory over whom she is almost powerless. It has undoubtedly caused great obstacles to the governmental machinery and interfered with the sovereignty and integrity of the country. In fact, it is nothing but a national humiliation.*

The China of today is not the China of yesterday. It is impossible to deny that China has made great progress in the path of legal reform. Old laws have been revised and new laws compiled, all being based on the principles of modern jurisprudence. Since 1910, a new system of law courts have been established. Chinese are well known as law-abiding people; and law is but another interpretation of ethics and morality. "Within the four seas, all are brothers"—(Confucius). With such a spirit of friendliness, which is but one of the Chinese characteristics, there is absolutely no reason why any foreigner should not feel as safe in China as at home. While the existence of extraterritoriality in China has shown decided disadvantages and will lead to serious consequences if continued, its abolition will undoubtedly do much towards creating a spirit of good will and a better understanding between Chinese and foreigners. (Germany, Austria, and Russia seem satisfied to be under the jurisdiction of Chinese courts.)

^{*}Extraterritorialty encourages lawlessness. A Chinese evil-doer may take refuge in a Concession area, thus eluding punishment.

Q. How is China's Tariff Controlled by the Treaty Powers, and What Would China do With Tariff Autonomy?

A. China is the only country in the world that has been deprived of the freedom of fixing a tariff for herself. The unequal treaties, signed over eighty years ago, limited both her export and import duties to not more than five per cent.—luxuries and necessities alike, which rate cannot be altered without the unanimous consent of some fifteen to sixteen Treaty Powers. This very low rate of five per cent. as compared with the average rate of from sixteen to sixty per cent., levied by other countries, has been in effect for the last eighty odd years in spite of the great changes in financial conditions and economic standards. It is absolutely at variance with the fundamental principles of public finance. Moveover, the power of taxation is a very important part of the sovereignty of a nation and there is no independent and sovereign nation that can afford to be deprived of the right of fixing her own tariff.

But the question is often raised: "What will China do when she gets tariff autonomy?" It is feared that she might raise the duties so high as to be prohibitory to international trade. This fear is entirely unwarranted. China is not so foolish as to kill the goose that lays the golden egg, and like all other nations in the world, she is far-sighted enough not to kill her foreign commerce by a high tariff. Of course the rate of five per cent. has to be raised to a more reasonable level; but with her own autonomous tariff, China can at least fix the import and export duties in accordance with the fluctuation of the market prices and the distinction between luxuries and necessities.

Q. What is Congressman Porter's Resolution?

A. Mr. Porter, a member of the committee on Foreign Affairs, submitted the following report:

(H. Con. Res. 46, 69th Congress, 2nd Session).

"Whereas the United States in its relations with China has always endeavored to act in a spirit of mutual fairness and equity, and with due regard for the conditions prevailing from time to time in the two countries, and since the development of conditions in China makes it desirable, then the United States at the present time, in accordance with its traditional policy, should take the initiative in bringing about a readjustment of its treaty relations with China: Therefore be it"*

"Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring) That the President of the United States be, and he hereby is, respectfully requested (forthwith)* to enter into negotiations with duly accredited agents of the Republic of China, authorized to speak for the people of China, with a view to the negotiation and the drafting of a treaty or of treaties between the United States of America and the Republic of China which shall take the place of the treaties now in force between the two countries, which provide for the exercise in China of American extraterritorial or jurisdictional rights, or limit her full autonomy with reference to the levving of customs dues or other taxes, or of such other treaty provisions as may be found to be unequal or non-reciprocal in character, to the end that henceforth the treaty relations between the two countries shall be upon an equitable (equal)* and reciprocal basis and will be such as will in no way offend the sovereign dignity of either of the parties or place obstacles in the way of realization by either of them of their several national aspirations or the maintenance by them of their several legitimate domestic policies".

^{*&}quot;...with the striking out of its preamble, the omission of "forthwith" and the substitution of the word "equitable" for "equal" in the resolution, as the result of opposition of certain conservative members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and a certain powerful business organization (reported to be the American Asiatic Association), little "MEAT" is left in Porter's resolution."

⁽Quoted from the article by Seymour C. Y. Cheng in the Baltimore Sun of February 9, 1927).