

## CHAPTER XV

### THE OUTLOOK FOR CHINA

In this chapter I propose to take, as far as I am able, the standpoint of a progressive and public-spirited Chinese, and consider what reforms, in what order, I should advocate in that case.

To begin with, it is clear that China must be saved by her own efforts, and cannot rely upon outside help. In the international situation, China has had both good and bad fortune. The Great War was unfortunate, because it gave Japan temporarily a free hand; the collapse of Tsarist Russia was fortunate, because it put an end to the secret alliance of Russians and Japanese; the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was unfortunate, because it compelled us to abet Japanese aggression even against our own economic interests; the friction between Japan and America was fortunate; but the agreement arrived at by the Washington Conference, though momentarily advantageous as regards Shantung, is likely, in the long run, to prove unfortunate, since it will make America less willing to oppose Japan. For reasons which I set forth in Chap. X., unless China becomes strong, either the collapse of Japan or her unquestioned ascendancy in the Far East is almost certain to prove disastrous to China; and one or other of these is very likely to come about. All the Great Powers, without exception, have interests which are incompatible, in the long run, with China's welfare and with the best development of

Chinese civilization. Therefore the Chinese must seek salvation in their own energy, not in the benevolence of any outside Power.

The problem is not merely one of political independence; a certain cultural independence is at least as important. I have tried to show in this book that the Chinese are, in certain ways, superior to us, and it would not be good either for them or for us if, in these ways, they had to descend to our level in order to preserve their existence as a nation. In this matter, however, a compromise is necessary. Unless they adopt some of our vices to some extent, we shall not respect them, and they will be increasingly oppressed by foreign nations. The object must be to keep this process within the narrowest limits compatible with safety.

First of all, a patriotic spirit is necessary--not, of course, the bigoted anti-foreign spirit of the Boxers, but the enlightened attitude which is willing to learn from other nations while not willing to allow them to dominate. This attitude has been generated among educated Chinese, and to a great extent in the merchant class, by the brutal tuition of Japan. The danger of patriotism is that, as soon as it has proved strong enough for successful defence, it is apt to turn to foreign aggression. China, by her resources and her population, is capable of being the greatest Power in the world after the United States. It is much to be feared that, in the process of becoming strong enough to preserve their independence, the Chinese may become strong enough to embark upon a career of imperialism. It cannot be too

strongly urged that patriotism should be only defensive, not aggressive. But with this proviso, I think a spirit of patriotism is absolutely necessary to the regeneration of China. Independence is to be sought, not as an end in itself, but as a means towards a new blend of Western skill with the traditional Chinese virtues. If this end is not achieved, political independence will have little value.

The three chief requisites, I should say, are: (1) The establishment of an orderly Government; (2) industrial development under Chinese control; (3) The spread of education. All these aims will have to be pursued concurrently, but on the whole their urgency seems to me to come in the above order. We have already seen how large a part the State will have to take in building up industry, and how impossible this is while the political anarchy continues. Funds for education on a large scale are also unobtainable until there is good government. Therefore good government is the prerequisite of all other reforms. Industrialism and education are closely connected, and it would be difficult to decide the priority between them; but I have put industrialism first, because, unless it is developed very soon by the Chinese, foreigners will have acquired such a strong hold that it will be very difficult indeed to oust them. These reasons have decided me that our three problems ought to be taken in the above order.

1. The establishment of an orderly government.--At the moment of writing, the condition of China is as anarchic as it has ever been. A battle between Chang-tso-lin and Wu-Pei-Fu is imminent; the former is

usually considered, though falsely according to some good authorities, the most reactionary force in China; Wu-Pei-Fu, though The Times calls him "the Liberal leader," may well prove no more satisfactory than "Liberal" leaders nearer home. It is of course possible that, if he wins, he may be true to his promises and convoke a Parliament for all China; but it is at least equally possible that he may not. In any case, to depend upon the favour of a successful general is as precarious as to depend upon the benevolence of a foreign Power. If the progressive elements are to win, they must become a strong organized force.

So far as I can discover, Chinese Constitutionals are doing the best thing that is possible at the moment, namely, concerting a joint programme, involving the convoking of a Parliament and the cessation of military usurpation. Union is essential, even if it involves sacrifice of cherished beliefs on the part of some. Given a programme upon which all the Constitutionals are united, they will acquire great weight in public opinion, which is very powerful in China. They may then be able, sooner or later, to offer a high constitutional position to some powerful general, on condition of his ceasing to depend upon mere military force. By this means they may be able to turn the scales in favour of the man they select, as the student agitation turned the scales in July 1920 in favour of Wu-Pei-Fu against the An Fu party. Such a policy can only be successful if it is combined with vigorous propaganda, both among the civilian population and among the soldiers, and if, as soon as peace is restored, work is found for disbanded soldiers and pay for those who are not disbanded. This raises the

financial problem, which is very difficult, because foreign Powers will not lend except in return for some further sacrifice of the remnants of Chinese independence. (For reasons explained in Chap. X., I do not accept the statement by the American consortium bankers that a loan from them would not involve control over China's internal affairs. They may not mean control to be involved, but I am convinced that in fact it would be.) The only way out of this difficulty that I can see is to raise an internal loan by appealing to the patriotism of Chinese merchants. There is plenty of money in China, but, very naturally, rich Chinese will not lend to any of the brigands who now control the Government.

When the time comes to draft a permanent Constitution, I have no doubt that it will have to be federal, allowing a very large measure of autonomy to the provinces, and reserving for the Central Government few things except customs, army and navy, foreign relations and railways. Provincial feeling is strong, and it is now, I think, generally recognized that a mistake was made in 1912 in not allowing it more scope.

While a Constitution is being drafted, and even after it has been agreed upon, it will not be possible to rely upon the inherent prestige of Constitutionalism, or to leave public opinion without guidance. It will be necessary for the genuinely progressive people throughout the country to unite in a strongly disciplined society, arriving at collective decisions and enforcing support of those decisions upon all its members.

This society will have to win the confidence of public opinion by a very rigid avoidance of corruption and political profiteering; the slightest failure of a member in this respect must be visited by expulsion. The society must make itself obviously the champion of the national interests as against all self-seekers, speculators and toadies to foreign Powers. It will thus become able authoritatively to commend or condemn politicians and to wield great influence over opinion, even in the army. There exists in Young China enough energy, patriotism and honesty to create such a society and to make it strong through the respect which it will command. But unless enlightened patriotism is organized in some such way, its power will not be equal to the political problems with which China is faced.

Sooner or later, the encroachments of foreign Powers upon the sovereign rights of China must be swept away. The Chinese must recover the Treaty Ports, control of the tariff, and so on; they must also free themselves from extra-territoriality. But all this can probably be done, as it was in Japan, without offending foreign Powers (except perhaps the Japanese). It would be a mistake to complicate the early stages of Chinese recovery by measures which would antagonize foreign Powers in general. Russia was in a stronger position for defence than China, yet Russia has suffered terribly from the universal hostility provoked by the Bolsheviki. Given good government and a development of China's resources, it will be possible to obtain most of the needed concessions by purely diplomatic means; the rest can wait for a suitable opportunity.

2. Industrial development.--On this subject I have already written in Chap. XIV.; it is certain general aspects of the subject that I wish to consider now. For reasons already given, I hold that all railways ought to be in the hands of the State, and that all successful mines ought to be purchased by the State at a fair valuation, even if they are not State-owned from the first. Contracts with foreigners for loans ought to be carefully drawn so as to leave the control to China. There would not be much difficulty about this if China had a stable and orderly government; in that case, many foreign capitalists would be willing to lend on good security, without exacting any part in the management. Every possible diplomatic method should be employed to break down such a monopoly as the consortium seeks to acquire in the matter of loans.

Given good government, a large amount of State enterprise would be desirable in Chinese industry. There are many arguments for State Socialism, or rather what Lenin calls State Capitalism, in any country which is economically but not culturally backward. In the first place, it is easier for the State to borrow than for a private person; in the second place, it is easier for the State to engage and employ the foreign experts who are likely to be needed for some time to come; in the third place, it is easier for the State to make sure that vital industries do not come under the control of foreign Powers. What is perhaps more important than any of these considerations is that, by undertaking industrial enterprise from the first, the State can prevent the growth of many of the evils of private capitalism. If China can

acquire a vigorous and honest State, it will be possible to develop Chinese industry without, at the same time, developing the overweening power of private capitalists by which the Western nations are now both oppressed and misled.

But if this is to be done successfully, it will require a great change in Chinese morals, a development of public spirit in place of the family ethic, a transference to the public service of that honesty which already exists in private business, and a degree of energy which is at present rare. I believe that Young China is capable of fulfilling these requisites, spurred on by patriotism; but it is important to realize that they are requisites, and that, without them, any system of State Socialism must fail.

For industrial development, it is important that the Chinese should learn to become technical experts and also to become skilled workers. I think more has been done towards the former of these needs than towards the latter. For the latter purpose, it would probably be wise to import skilled workmen--say from Germany--and cause them to give instruction to Chinese workmen in any new branch of industrial work that it might be desired to develop.

3. Education.--If China is to become a democracy, as most progressive Chinese hope, universal education is imperative. Where the bulk of the population cannot read, true democracy is impossible. Education is a good in itself, but is also essential for developing political



consciousness, of which at present there is almost none in rural China. The Chinese themselves are well aware of this, but in the present state of the finances it is impossible to establish universal elementary education. Until it has been established for some time, China must be, in fact, if not in form, an oligarchy, because the uneducated masses cannot have any effective political opinion. Even given good government, it is doubtful whether the immense expense of educating such a vast population could be borne by the nation without a considerable industrial development. Such industrial development as already exists is mainly in the hands of foreigners, and its profits provide warships for the Japanese, or mansions and dinners for British and American millionaires. If its profits are to provide the funds for Chinese education, industry must be in Chinese hands. This is another reason why industrial development must probably precede any complete scheme of education.

For the present, even if the funds existed, there would not be sufficient teachers to provide a schoolmaster in every village. There is, however, such an enthusiasm for education in China that teachers are being trained as fast as is possible with such limited resources; indeed a great deal of devotion and public spirit is being shown by Chinese educators, whose salaries are usually many months in arrears.

Chinese control is, to my mind, as important in the matter of education as in the matter of industry. For the present, it is still necessary to have foreign instructors in some subjects, though this necessity will

soon cease. Foreign instructors, however, provided they are not too numerous, do no harm, any more than foreign experts in railways and mines. What does harm is foreign management. Chinese educated in mission schools, or in lay establishments controlled by foreigners, tend to become de-nationalized, and to have a slavish attitude towards Western civilization. This unfits them for taking a useful part in the national life, and tends to undermine their morals. Also, oddly enough, it makes them more conservative in purely Chinese matters than the young men and women who have had a modern education under Chinese auspices. Europeans in general are more conservative about China than the modern Chinese are, and they tend to convey their conservatism to their pupils. And of course their whole influence, unavoidably if involuntarily, militates against national self-respect in those whom they teach.

Those who desire to do research in some academic subject will, for some time to come, need a period of residence in some European or American university. But for the great majority of university students it is far better, if possible, to acquire their education in China. Returned students have, to a remarkable extent, the stamp of the country from which they have returned, particularly when that country is America. A society such as was foreshadowed earlier in this chapter, in which all really progressive Chinese should combine, would encounter difficulties, as things stand, from the divergencies in national bias between students returned from (say) Japan, America and Germany. Given time, this difficulty can be overcome by the increase in purely Chinese university education, but at present the difficulty would be serious.

To overcome this difficulty, two things are needed: inspiring leadership, and a clear conception of the kind of civilization to be aimed at. Leadership will have to be both intellectual and practical. As regards intellectual leadership, China is a country where writers have enormous influence, and a vigorous reformer possessed of literary skill could carry with him the great majority of Young China. Men with the requisite gifts exist in China; I might mention, as an example personally known to me, Dr. Hu Suh.[110] He has great learning, wide culture, remarkable energy, and a fearless passion for reform; his writings in the vernacular inspire enthusiasm among progressive Chinese. He is in favour of assimilating all that is good in Western culture, but by no means a slavish admirer of our ways.

The practical political leadership of such a society as I conceive to be needed would probably demand different gifts from those required in an intellectual leader. It is therefore likely that the two could not be combined in one man, but would need men as different as Lenin and Karl Marx.

The aim to be pursued is of importance, not only to China, but to the world. Out of the renaissance spirit now existing in China, it is possible, if foreign nations can be prevented from working havoc, to develop a new civilization better than any that the world has yet known. This is the aim which Young China should set before itself: the preservation of the urbanity and courtesy, the candour and the pacific

temper, which are characteristic of the Chinese nation, together with a knowledge of Western science and an application of it to the practical problems of China. Of such practical problems there are two kinds: one due to the internal condition of China, and the other to its international situation. In the former class come education, democracy, the diminution of poverty, hygiene and sanitation, and the prevention of famines. In the latter class come the establishment of a strong government, the development of industrialism, the revision of treaties and the recovery of the Treaty Ports (as to which Japan may serve as a model), and finally, the creation of an army sufficiently strong to defend the country against Japan. Both classes of problems demand Western science. But they do not demand the adoption of the Western philosophy of life.

If the Chinese were to adopt the Western philosophy of life, they would, as soon as they had made themselves safe against foreign aggression, embark upon aggression on their own account. They would repeat the campaigns of the Han and Tang dynasties in Central Asia, and perhaps emulate Kublai by the invasion of Japan. They would exploit their material resources with a view to producing a few bloated plutocrats at home and millions dying of hunger abroad. Such are the results which the West achieves by the application of science. If China were led astray by the lure of brutal power, she might repel her enemies outwardly, but would have yielded to them inwardly. It is not unlikely that the great military nations of the modern world will bring about their own destruction by their inability to abstain from war, which will become,

with every year that passes, more scientific and more devastating. If China joins in this madness, China will perish like the rest. But if Chinese reformers can have the moderation to stop when they have made China capable of self-defence, and to abstain from the further step of foreign conquest; if, when they have become safe at home, they can turn aside from the materialistic activities imposed by the Powers, and devote their freedom to science and art and the inauguration of a better economic system--then China will have played the part in the world for which she is fitted, and will have given to mankind as a whole new hope in the moment of greatest need. It is this hope that I wish to see inspiring Young China. This hope is realizable; and because it is realizable, China deserves a foremost place in the esteem of every lover of mankind.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 110: An account of a portion of his work will be found in Tyau, *op. cit.* pp. 40 ff.]

## APPENDIX

While the above pages were going through the Press, some important developments have taken place in China. Wu-Pei-Fu has defeated Chang-tso-lin and made himself master of Peking. Chang has retreated towards Manchuria with a broken army, and proclaimed the independence of Manchuria. This might suit the Japanese very well, but it is hardly to be supposed that the other Powers would acquiesce. It is, therefore, not unlikely that Chang may lose Manchuria also, and cease to be a factor in Chinese politics.

For the moment, Wu-Pei-Fu controls the greater part of China, and his intentions become important. The British in China have, for some years, befriended him, and this fact colours all Press telegrams appearing in our newspapers. According to The Times, he has pronounced in favour of the reassembling of the old all-China Parliament, with a view to the restoration of constitutional government. This is a measure in which the South could concur, and if he really adheres to this intention he has it in his power to put an end to Chinese anarchy. The Times Peking correspondent, telegraphing on May 30, reports that "Wu-Pei-Fu declares that if the old Parliament will reassemble and work in national interests he will support it up to the limit, and fight any obstructionists."

On May 18, the same correspondent telegraphed that "Wu-Pei-Fu is lending

his support to the unification movements, and has found common ground for action with Chen Chiung Ming," who is Sun's colleague at Canton and is engaged in civil war with Sun, who is imperialistic and wants to conquer all China for his government, said to be alone constitutional.

The programme agreed upon between Wu and Chen Chiung Ming is given in the same telegram as follows:

Local self-government shall be established and magistrates shall be elected by the people; District police shall be created under District Boards subject to Central Provincial Boards; Civil governors shall be responsible to the Central Government, not to the Tuchuns; a national army shall be created, controlled and paid by the Central Government; Provincial police and gendarmerie, not the Tuchuns or the army, shall be responsible for peace and order in the provinces; the whole nation shall agree to recall the old Parliament and the restoration of the Provisional Constitution of the first year of the Republic; Taxes shall be collected by the Central Government, and only a stipulated sum shall be granted to each province for expenses, the balance to be forwarded to the Central Government as under the Ching dynasty; Afforestation shall be undertaken, industries established, highways built, and other measures taken to keep the people on the land.

This is an admirable programme, but it is impossible to know how much of it will ever be carried out.

Meanwhile, Sun Yat Sen is still at war with Wu-Pei-Fu. It has been stated in the British Press that there was an alliance between Sun and Chang, but it seems there was little more than a common hostility to Wu. Sun's friends maintain that he is a genuine Constitutionalist, and that Wu is not to be trusted, but Chen Chiung Ming has a better reputation than Sun among reformers. The British in China all praise Wu and hate Sun; the Americans all praise Sun and decry Wu. Sun undoubtedly has a past record of genuine patriotism, and there can be no doubt that the Canton Government has been the best in China. What appears in our newspapers on the subject is certainly designed to give a falsely unfavourable impression of Canton. For example, in The Times of May 15, a telegram appeared from Hong-Kong to the following effect:

I learn that the troops of Sun Yat Sen, President of South China, which are stated to be marching north from Canton, are a rabble. Many are without weapons and a large percentage of the uniforms are merely rags. There is no discipline, and gambling and opium-smoking are rife.

Nevertheless, on May 30, The Times had to confess that this army had won a brilliant victory, capturing "the most important stronghold in Kiangsi," together with 40 field guns and large quantities of munitions.

The situation must remain obscure until more detailed news has arrived by mail. It is to be hoped that the Canton Government, through the



victory of Chen Chiung Ming, will come to terms with Wu-Pei-Fu, and will be strong enough to compel him to adhere to the terms. It is to be hoped also that Chang's proclamation of the independence of Manchuria will not be seized upon by Japan as an excuse for a more complete absorption of that country. If Wu-Pei-Fu adheres to the declaration quoted above, there can be no patriotic reason why Canton should not co-operate with him; on the other hand, the military strength of Canton makes it more likely that Wu will find it prudent to adhere to his declaration. There is certainly a better chance than there was before the defeat of Chang for the unification of China and the ending of the Tutchuns' tyranny. But it is as yet no more than a chance, and the future is still problematical.

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