

The Future of China

By Sen Katayama

FOUR hundred years ago the Manchus invaded and conquered China and ever since the country has been ruled by the Manchu Dynasty. The conquerors imposed repressive measures upon the people and even dictated the style of their clothes and the way in which they should dress their hair. All official positions were the booty of the conquerors but in the course of time many Chinese were picked to serve the interests of the Manchu rulers. In this way a powerful bureaucracy was established.

The Chinese fatalistically accepted the Manchus as born rulers and tamely submitted to oppression and exploitation at their hands. They never questioned the right of the rulers, though they hated the Manchus as foreign conquerors, and year after year, generation after generation they continued to serve as slaves. In time they became almost indifferent to the government. They, of course, did not like to pay taxes to the Manchus but the government devised many ways of getting money and continued to live luxuriously in Peking.

Local or provincial governors to the number of 18 were given great powers and each governed after his own autocratic fashion, each imposing the taxes he saw fit within his own territory. Thus the Chinese people and the rulers were separated entirely, there existed no sympathy between them, but in the lesser official positions the occupants were recruited from the people by competitive examinations and formed a link between the governing and the governed. In this manner the Manchus secured the more intelligent elements of the people and used them for their own ends. Any ambitious youth was provided with a government position and thus prevented from stirring up discontent among the people. And the masses, deprived of those who would otherwise have been their leaders, gave up hope of ever ridding themselves of the Manchu yoke and submitted to it as the preordained fate of life.

The spell of this fatalism was broken by the war of 1804 with Japan. The all-powerful, divine Emperor and his army were miserably defeated by the despised Japs in battle after battle. Finally China begged for peace, paying a huge indemnity to Japan and only recovering the conquered territory with the aid of Russia and Germany. Pretty soon, however, these two powers established a sphere of influence in China.

The complete defeat in the war with Japan and the subsequent foreign domination of Russia and Germany awakened the long slumbering Chinese and at the same time crumbled the Manchu rulers to pieces.

The Chinese, hitherto, held an almost religious faith in the power of the government, but it was beaten and their faith was shaken. They began to question its power and to study the real situation and finally to plan a revolution to overthrow the Manchu Dynasty. Soon the revolutionary movement split in two parties: the Defenders of the Nation and the Young China Association. Both parties were heartily supported in Southern China. The first were Constitutional Monarchists while the latter partook of a more revolutionary character.

The Peking government, seeing the awakening of the masses, attempted to forestall the new movements by taking some of the liberal leaders into the cabinet and by inaugurating various reforms. The old civil service examination system was abolished, a university was established at Peking, hundreds of students were sent to Western countries and a national parliament was promised to the people. The reactionaries, however, captured the movement and attempted to crush the reforms. Yuan Shi Kai became the leader of the reactionaries and the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 was fomented to incite the people against the foreigners.

The number of foreigners in China is small and consists of two classes—missionaries and businessmen, including experts of various kinds. The missionaries are the "advance agents of Capitalism" and are hated by the Chinese. The Boxer Rebellion was a great misfortune for China inasmuch as it enabled foreign powers to invade the country and squeeze big sums in indemnities out of the people.

After peace was established the Constitutionalist Party rose to power and with it many radical parties developed throughout the country until finally in 1911 the first revolution broke and overthrew the Manchu Dynasty. But the revolution did not succeed in its main object. Revolutionary leaders formed a republican government at Nang King and at its first parliament Sun Yat Sen was elected President. But the revolutionists were unable to conquer Peking and finally they compromised on a peace with the Peking government. In a short time they lost everything they had gained in Southern China through the intriguing of Yuan Shi Kai, the reactionary leader, who was enabled to suppress every liberal movement through the foreign loans he negotiated.

Southern China is very different from the Northern part of the country. Northern China is aristocratic and has an ideal seat of government in Peking. Southern China is a much more democratic country. The Southern Chinese are industrious and progressive, their sons emigrate to wherever they are allowed to enter and to a certain extent they bring back money and ideas from all over the world. The merchants of Southern China have world wide business connections and know something of the character of the Western governments, while those who had experience as immigrants in foreign countries, where they were despised and persecuted, have become more nationalistic than the Northern Chinese in the sense that they desire to free the country from the domination of foreign money. It was the merchants of Southern China and the Chinese living abroad who were the most enthusiastic supporters of the revolution, financing and even returning to partake in the movement. Thus the first and second revolutions were started in the South and the third, or present revolution has established a separate government in Southern China.

The Southern Chinese are Socialistic in policy, or, at least, the majority of the revolutionary leaders are Socialistically inclined insofar as they want the mines, the railways and big industries owned by the government rather than by foreign concerns. This being the case Southern China gets little sympathy from foreign capitalists or their governments, while the Peking government, which for many decades has sustained the influence of the foreign capitalists by borrowing money, is supported and financed by foreign governments in its attempts to quell the southern rebels. Thus the present situation in China lies in the conflicting interests of the North and the South.

Northern China has a commanding position in many ways; long usage and time honored establishment as the ruling power, but the country is poor in natural

resources so that without the South, Northern China has difficulty in sustaining a government and satisfying the foreign creditors. Southern China, on the other hand, has a vast population and rich natural deposits as yet unexploited. The Southern Chinese want a separate government of their own if they cannot subjugate the Peking government, but the foreign powers will not easily consent to this, they have loaned much money to Peking and without Southern China they cannot collect the debts and moreover they lose the rich fields of investment in the future, Southern China being opposed to the domination of foreign money power.

The Chinese revolution will not be easily completed for it needs not a nationalist but an international solution. Japan wants political, as well as financial, domination over China. The Japanese masses are, however, in sympathy with Southern China and the small businessmen of Japan have many connections there, but the Japanese government and imperialists are in sympathy with the Peking government as it brings Manchuria within their influence, and Manchuria is next to Korea. For this reason the Japanese government will support Peking for some time to come. But in the end Southern China will triumph and Japan will have to recognize and make treaties with her otherwise Japan will be crushed in the future by awakened China.

Japan has a tremendous problem to face in Korea and Formosa. The peoples of these countries naturally look towards China to save them from Japanese domination and unless Japan changes her rule radically, and changes it soon, they will revolt. Especially is this true in the case of Korea. Koreans now recognize that they cannot gain their independence by the grace of Japan or by manipulation in foreign countries and even today conditions in Korea are ripe for Bolshevism. The Korea of the immediate future will look toward the Siberian Soviets for sympathy and aid and before long will advance towards its goal of independence by the aid of the fast awakening Chinese who are also under influence of the Russian revolution.

The future of China will be a most interesting field in many ways. All the undertakings and plans between the Peking government and foreign capitalists that are already under way or are contemplated in the near future will be swept away by the incoming tide of the Russian Socialist Revolution. The entire Far East will become Socialists in spite of the giant schemes of the Great Powers. This is an inevitable development of present conditions and of the mighty movement of the proletariat of all nations that will establish a great Federated Socialist Republic of the entire world.

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