

The New Cycle of Cathay and America's Part in It

By JOHN STEWART BURGESS

With what seems to a casual newspaper reader like the crazy sequences of the cinema, the generals drift across the screen, parties rise and fall, and the Chinese plot, whatever it may be, unrolls interminably. But to Professor Burgess many years of service at Princeton-in-Peking have brought an insight which enables him, if not to predict the next reel, at least to make intelligible the one now before us. In his October article, Christians at the Crossroads, he put in perspective the student crisis of Shanghai; in these pages he sketches the cast of characters on the broader stage, and points out, among the forces making or marring the new national life, the part which America may play in the diplomacy of the East.

—PEKING

WHAT does the immediate future hold for China? One can hardly answer so sweeping a question. It seems clear, that although old social organization and old habits still play a big part, they are a passing phase of the present situation. The future is with the forces creating a new national life. The disorganization and destruction resultant from the military debauch of the last decade in China will hinder progress for some time to come. In some respects, as many Chinese claim, things undoubtedly will get much worse before they get better. The roof may first have to fall in before substantial reconstruction takes place. The very real problem of the warring military satraps and the incubus of some two million men under arms create questions that cannot be worked out in a day.

But in spite of these great obstacles, one is able with some confidence to believe that China in the not too distant future somehow will get out of her tangle, for she is fast becoming a united nation welded together in a common crusade.

The question of most concern to America, and for that matter, to all the world, is this: What sort of a nation will this independent China be? What group will be her leaders? What policy will she adopt towards the rest of the world? Here are questions which in some ways can be answered better in London, Tokyo and Washington than in Peking. Sympathetic understanding of China's aspirations and her new consciousness and resultant changes in diplomatic policy are factors supremely important in determining what kind of a nation will crystallize here in the next decade.

AS I see the old China, it was composed of a number of related, self-sufficient groupings, very loosely tied together. The family, village, secret society, guild, were the principal units. In more recent years the chambers of commerce, the agriculture societies, the editors' societies, the educational societies and other vital interest groups have come into some prominence. These were greatly stimulated by Kang Yi Wei, the early reformer of 1898.

In all these groups the mysterious qualities called *tse ke* or "standing" seemed to have been the principal characteristic of leadership. This conception is a peculiar combination

of age, learning, experience, plus a certain amount of actual ability in leadership. For instance, at present Wu Pei Fu has what is known as *tse ke*. He has maintained it even though he was thoroughly defeated in battle by his adversaries last year, primarily because of his seniority in military rank and his classical learning. His actual ability as a fighter previously and his refusal to run away to the Foreign Concessions in time of trouble are also factors, but of a minor nature.*

The heads of various guilds in Peking are chosen not primarily for their ability. A man naturally becomes the head man, at the time of the meeting of the guild, because of his *tse ke* or general prominence and standing in the organization. Theoretically, positions of this kind are not sought but are thrust upon a person when he arrives at a certain stage.

When all the different organizations of China were conducted on this order, things managed to go along with a fair amount of harmony. Everyone knew his place and there was no great discord. Leadership naturally came to those who had met certain requirements and there was little rivalry for places. The trouble with the present situation in China is that with the old political system broken down, there is no group on the horizon that has the *tse ke* to take the lead in China's affairs. Accustomed to the old ways of group system and without a relationship to the former governmental ruling group, now twelve years abolished, China is floundering to find some source of political authority which will have sufficient moral sanction to reawake the loyalty of the various groupings of this nation—or to put it more truly, for a person or group whom the other groupings of China would be content to permit to rule. Until such an authority is found we cannot expect to have a peaceable time in this country.

There seem to be two possible ways that such an authority may be established, the first way depending upon the old group cohesion and the second by way of new and revolutionary ideas.

There are many in China, both foreign and Chinese of long experience, who expect chaos to continue until one of

* In April he was offered control of Peking and command of the Kuominchun, or national armies, which previously supported Feng.—EDITOR.



Hartung's

Hu Shih, Ph.D. Columbia, National Government University, educational leader.



H. E. Shen Ju Lin, foreign minister, chief delegate to tariff conference.



Admiral Tsai Ting Kan, head of customs service, delegate to tariff conference.



C. T. Wang, ex-premier, head of Bureau of Russian Relations, a tariff delegate.

the military factions led by some outstanding leader proves itself superior to all others. The feeling is that the standing which would be given such a military leader would be sufficient to re-establish a central government with sufficient power to receive recognition of all of the outstanding groups of the country. There are obvious difficulties with this solution. In the first place, various military leaders have been trying this out for some years and there never was more chaos than at present. Instead of two outstanding parties, we now have four or five and the task of military domination by any one group is becoming increasingly more difficult. Furthermore, it is by no means sure that mere military victory would give any one leader sufficient standing to control the government. If we are to assume the restoration of the old regime, and the establishment of a monarchy, this might be possible, but there are few thinking people in this country who believe there is any possibility of that. The people of China don't want a monarchy. Mere military success would not give sufficient respect and honor to the victorious military hero to weld together the nation. In spite of having the largest number of men under arms of any nation in the world, variously estimated from two to three million, China is in no sense a militaristic nation. The thinking people have little respect for militarists, at least on the score of their fighting ability. The traditions of the nation rank the soldier as one of the most ignoble among the various occupations.

Those who advocate the strong hand policy also overlook the fact that the old group system which formerly permitted the official and governmental class to rule is itself breaking up. One could give numerous illustrations of the disintegration of the old family system; of the guilds losing their functions to the police and civil authorities, and of the general breaking down of the old respect for the authoritative heads of any of the groups above mentioned.

The other possible solution is that with the breaking down of the old group system and the coming in, on the one hand, of a new individualism and on the other hand, of a new nationalism, a solution of the question will eventually be worked out along the lines of the modern democracies of the West. The only one of the military leaders who seems to feel the importance of the new spirit is Marshal Feng Yu Hsiang. The military men in general are counting

on a solution of the first kind mentioned and are fighting for position, each hoping that some day, by a favorable turn of the wheel, he will be the supreme military dictator of the country. For the next few years the mass of people will probably think in the old group terms and will leave the militarists to fight it out—as the government is not the affair of the ordinary man in the street, but of the people who are supposed to look after those things. Officialdom appears to have gotten somewhat confused but as military men have taken it upon themselves to take hold of the machinery of government, let them fight it out as quickly as possible and set up some sort of government!

There are abundant signs, however, that the new nationalism is here. The chambers of commerce throughout the country are getting desperate over the situation and are demanding that the militarists reform their policy. Very recently in Shantung the people of the town rose up and destroyed the yamen of the local official who had been squeezing money from them for military purposes. They killed a lot of the soldiers and drove the official out.

That the beginnings of democracy have brought the signs of individualism has also become a truism. During the first years after the revolution, the contrast with old China was most marked. For the first time in her history here in Peking very young men came into prominence in government positions. Women also, for the first time, took the public platform and made addresses. A friend of mine who was on the station platform at the time the first parliament members were coming to Peking, aroused great indignation in a certain parliamentarian by asking him what school he was going to attend in Peking! Many of the members of the new Parliament looked like school boys. With the various waves of democratic feeling that have swept over the country during the last fourteen years, young men less hampered by the traditions of the past have been recurrently prominent in government affairs in the capital and departures have been made from the age-long customs of governmental administration, though the tide has repeatedly swung.

With over four million young men and women in schools and colleges, and hundreds of thousands turned out every year, and an increasing number going abroad; and with the spread of mass education and the beginnings of a genuine public opinion, we may expect gradually that the time will



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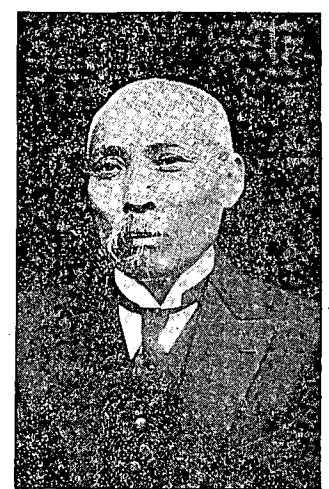
General Feng Yu Hsiang, in control of the Northwest, but losing ground.



Marshal Wu Pei Fu, who is apparently succeeding Feng in control of Peking.



Liang Shih Yi, minister of finance under Yuan, in the "communication clique."



Tuan Chi Jui, national general executive at Peking until last month.

come when a truly democratic leader or a group interested in a new type of national life will be welcomed. The orientation from group interest to national interest has been taking place rapidly since May 30, 1925.

Who will be the leaders in the social order which will be produced by this new national consciousness? No one who has lived in China for any length of time and who knows the Chinese people has any doubt of their mental ability to look after themselves. The practical problem is this: how, in so complicated an international and internal situation, can any forward-looking group so control national policy that order can be restored and progress begun? Is it possible for an intelligent minority with the highest patriotic aims, to bring about the development of a wholesome democratic life? There are a number of modern groups already established in China, with some degree of unity, any one of which may play a prominent part in the future development of this country.

Of the older groups which have a constructive program, one should mention the Chiao Tung Hsi or "communication clique," led by Yeh Kung Ch'oo, at present the minister of communications. This group has a well worked out program of economic salvation for China, by means of better roads, increased railroads and development of natural resources. At present this clique holds great power, controlling not only the Board of Communications, but the Bank of Communication and the Bank of China as well, and having a large following among the financial leaders. Li Shih Hao, minister of finance, belongs to this group—also Liang Shih Yi, the finance minister under Yuan Shih Kai, known as the "God of Wealth." It seems improbable that in the future this group, which has been closely identified with Chang Tso Lin and his military party, will play a leading role.

The second group is known as the Yen Chiu She or "discussion group," which includes many of the most prominent educators of modern China, and other leaders of a non-political nature, which look to education as the means of national salvation. Among these are Tao Chih Hsing, head of the National Society for the Promotion of Education, and a group of prominent and able returned students. Under his leadership important educational experiments have been made and considerable improvement has been

accomplished in the educational system in spite of the political upheavals of the last few years. Paul Monroe and other prominent educators have lectured in China under the auspices of this association and have guided the development of this educational movement. Another prominent member of this group is Yen Yang Chu, properly known as "Jimmie Yen of Yale," formerly secretary of the National Committee of the Y.M.C.A., and now head of the mass educational movement, which Ray Lyman Wilbur at the Honolulu Conference called the most significant social movement in the world today. This has as its aim nothing short of producing, by the use of the Thousand Character Readers, a literate China within a generation. The story of the advance and the development of this movement reads like a modern romance. It has now close on to a million students. The policy of this movement is not only to teach the thousand characters and elements of reading, but to develop citizenship training. Other prominent educators such as Kuo Ping Wen, former head of the Southeastern University, Fan Yuan Lien, formerly minister of education, and Hu Shih, of the National Government University, founder of the Renaissance Movement, are associated with this general movement. Prominent men who were formerly leaders in politics are backing this educational advance, especially Liang Chi Chao, the sage of China, with Kang Yi Wei, one of the two foremost revolutionists in the years just preceding 1900. It is improbable that this group will develop into a political movement of great power but its influence will be very great in the new life of China under any form of political organization. On the whole, this group stands for conservative democracy and constructive building by means of education and citizenship training.

A third prominent group which may prove the force to mould a new China is composed of General Feng Yu Hsiang, his military officials and a growing number of his followers. Recent military movements have all made it apparent that his power is to extend beyond the northwest provinces, probably to include the whole of the metropolitan province of Chihli and possibly others further south.* General Feng is the one militarist (Continued on page 199)

* Since this article was written changes in the Chinese military situation have, at least for the time being, greatly restricted the area of General Feng's influence.—EDITOR.

Next Steps in a Pacific Policy

A Sketch-Map of America's Position Today

By RAYMOND T. RICH

AMERICAN-ORIENTAL contacts and relationships are today a matter of urgent and immediate concern. The contemporary diplomatic negotiations in Peking—of major significance and extraordinary complexity, the current sessions of the commission of inquiry into matters of extraterritoriality, the more localized problems of Shanghai, the questions of concessions and leases, all these and a thousand other perplexities in China hold more of fate for men everywhere than this country dreams of or would willingly realize. Nor may we forget the consequences—by no means ended—of our recent Exclusion Act directed against Japan, which, although at present not so prominent, is as much an issue in the problem of the Pacific as the more striking developments in China. And upon the solution of this entire oriental problem, with not a single factor slighted, depends our hope of preventing the darkest features of Mediterranean and Atlantic history from having eventually their calamitous counterparts on the Pacific.

Fortunately, many of the latest dispatches from China have indicated a growing comprehension that, whatever else it may be, the problem of the Pacific is before all a problem of attitudes—of attitudes arising from wholly inadequate and generally faulty contacts. For decades, even for generations, the “old China hand” has vigorously insisted that it is steel and shot the Chinese heed—force and nothing else. By threats and bluster, with gunboats in the offing, he has elbowed his way to “fame” and fortune. Today, however, even many of the densest die-hards have come to realize that a new temper must be dealt with in old China.

Since the thirtieth of last May, through evil days and sorrier profits, foreign business leaders and diplomatic staffs have come to learn the lesson that even in China good will is the greatest asset. Investors and commercial men of small affairs (and commensurate horizon) have yet to master this elemental truth. But by and large, there has been notable improvement; the foreigners in China have begun to turn towards a policy of patient conciliation. Where this friendly foreign attitude has been the strongest the rewards are already much in evidence: boycotts ended, better business, fewer rabid demonstrations organized by fevered student leaders and a much greater reasonableness and readiness to negotiate. To continue along this course of reconciliation is of incalculable importance. It is the sine qua non of any solution whatsoever.

But let the foreign powers resume their well-nigh fatal apathy, let the revision of unequal treaties be retarded or not pushed to the last logical conclusion, or above all, let the far-too-novel phenomenon of a better foreign attitude disappear, and there will be grave consequences. A stalwart and persistent policy of continued generosity and unquench-

able good will is the first requisite not only of American statesmanship, but also of American public opinion, upon which the quality of our statesmanship is fundamentally dependent.

THIS is not, however, a simple path. While major American interests remain untouched, all will be smooth and happy, and the generosity of the American public will be unstinted. But what in the event of some really trying circumstance? Let us say—not to be gloomy but merely realistic—the massacre of several Americans by an inflamed Chinese mob? Could American popular good will be relied upon? Our diplomats in the Orient are not sure of it. They feel that popular sympathy for China is largely sentimental and therefore superficial and probably unreliable in an emergency. The sweeping assertions of liberal groups and speakers have so often utterly ignored the seamy side of the Chinese situation that they are enormously discredited and proportionately ineffective. If liberals in America desire to shape our foreign policy, there must be a much larger quota of scholarship and investigation behind each fluent resolution.

Obviously, this does not mean that a liberal policy is not desirable. A liberal policy is indispensable. But the advocates of liberalism must show a greater comprehension of unpalatable as well as savory facts, and also of the difficulties confronting the diplomats. This done, they will hold an incomparably better position to exert real influence in time of need.

Recognition of the mad chaos of Chinese militarism is a case in point. China is rotten with corruption, seething with selfish, senseless civil strife, and lacking in deep-lying principles, plans or policies. We must face these truths and deal with them. Yet more, we must recognize their repercussion upon international negotiations. The Peking Central Government is little more than a clearing house for paper government, which, as this article is written, apparently has no cabinet, no ministers, no power, no money—little more indeed, than a thoroughly discredited “provisional chief executive.” Negotiation with nonentities is difficult, and we cannot blink the fact.

Again, to be realistic, we must try to comprehend how such persistent chaos harries the nerves of foreign diplomats. Is it any wonder they are tempted to cease talk and let the gunboats act? It is so distinctly human to do so that we see precisely why public opinion at home must be on guard. Every foreign chancellery in China knows at bottom that a policy of coercion would be futile and probably disastrous. But in the heat of exasperation this truth may be forgotten.

Take for example the recent incident at Taku, although it is somewhat dangerous to do so while only scattering reports are yet available. Chinese forces armed the forts,