

CHINA SURVEYED—By Geraldine T. Fitch

Role of the Communists viewed as a threat to Independence

China has had fifteen years of almost continuous war since Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. Dr. Geo. Fitch, after a lifetime spent in many parts of China, speaking within a week or two of his arrival in America by air this spring, reports. "It is true that the situation is bad. . . . No country could go through fifteen years of invasion, blockade, famine, inflation, mass migration, without suffering moral deterioration. The amazing fact is that the situation is not worse. . . . I see no cause for discouragement, certainly not for washing our hands of China. We should remember with undying gratitude that in spite of tremendous pressure put upon her, China never gave in. Had she done so, the whole course of history might have been different. . . . The republic is only thirty-five years old."

In this situation it is well to try to understand China's Nationalist-Communist puzzle, particularly as America was until recently pressing Chiang-Kai-Shek to take into a Coalition Government those who are dedicated to a totalitarian dictatorship. We may thus be enabled to recognize and avoid the Communist propaganda which floods the world.

Those who favour the Chinese Communists have two major arguments; that the Communists of China are agrarian reformers; and that they are not like Russian Communists. We have been swamped by these two arguments. Are the Chinese Communists agrarian reformers? Do they help the farmer of China more than his Government does?

Because during twenty years' residence in China I had never heard of huge landholdings of absentee landlords, I carried out some research on this matter recently. I find that in Dr. J. Lossing Buck's *Land Utilization in China* that "owner farms are larger than tenant farms, averaging 4.22 acres, as compared with 3.56 acres. Over one-half of the farmers are full owners, slightly less than one-third are part owners, and 17 per cent. are tenants."

In the *Far Eastern Quarterly* for August, 1945, Dr. Sidney Gamble, writing of another part of China, states that on "Four hundred farms" in a typical North China county surveyed, "61 per cent. of this group were listed as owners, owning all the land they operated; 38.8 per cent. as part owners, renting part of the land they farmed; and 5.2 per cent. were tenants, who rented all the land they operated."

The very wide diffusion of ownership compared with Britain or America is obvious and is perhaps similar to that of France.

The Chinese Communists claim to be "agrarian reformers." According to the Rev. John A. Abernathy, well known missionary of Shantung Province, "In one year the Communists have destroyed more property and terrorized more people than the Japanese did in eight war years. . . . Any person having over two acres is considered a capitalist, is arrested, publicly humiliated, everything taken from him and he is driven out TO BEG."

My own conversations with Chinese from Shantung Province last winter corroborate this.

Contrast this with the Nationalist Government's methods of importing experts to teach the farmers to use better seed, to manure more scientifically, to use better tools and machines and in association with U.N.N.R.A. and C.N.N.R.A. to reclaim vast areas such as the two million acres, recently, in Honan.

The Communists have energetically disrupted this programme since the end of the war with Japan, by tearing up the railroads and waging war, really rebellion, against the Government.

The second argument used by friends of the Chinese Communists is that they are not like the Russian Communists and have no connection with Moscow. This is not a matter of opinion. It can be fully determined in two ways; by reading the documents, books and pamphlets, many of them translated into English, of the Chinese Communists themselves and by the history of the Communist party in China. For those interested in the former course it would be useful to read some works by Mao Tze-Tung, unquestioned leader of the party, viz., *On the new Stage, We oppose Party, Eight-legged Essay*, and *China's New Democracy*, with an introduction by the American Communist leader, Earl Browder, in which he says: "The world now depends on Communism for its salvation and so does China." Read also No. 16 of the Central Political Bureau of the C.C.P., with instructions to members to "estrangle relations between the United States and Chiang Kai-Shek" and "to continue civil war to overthrow the National Government even while negotiating" (with General Marshall).

In 1920 the Russian, Vitinsk, arrived to form Societies and publish a *Communist Monthly*.

Following are incidents in the history of the Chinese Communist party:—

In 1921 the C.C.P. was formed. Litnovsky and Malin were sent to organize branches. The third international instructed the C.C.P. to follow a policy of parasitism and join the Kuomintang. When the chairman objected he was informed by Malin that instructions could not be ignored or disobeyed.

The sixth national congress of the C.C.P. was held in Moscow and not in China.

In 1927 the Communists usurped the power of government in Hankow and tried to discredit Chiang Kai-Shek in the eyes of the world by the "Nanking incident" in which several American and British were ill-treated and killed, male and female.

In 1931 the Communists chose the moment when Japan invaded Manchuria to organize a Soviet Republic in the heart of China with its own army, government, currency and laws.

It took five campaigns of the Nationalist government to break up the Soviet Republic entrenched in the mountains; but breaking encirclement, the Communists made what Edgar Snow describes as their courageous trek to the north-west, or what missionaries in west China describe as a swathe of devastation and depredation so ruinous as to be easily traced four years after.

In 1937, when Stalin called for a united front against the Axis, the Chinese Communists co-operated with the National Government against Japan and termed Chiang Kai-Shek the "George Washington of China."

When Stalin signed his non-aggression pact with Hitler the united front broke up and the Communists began to call Chiang "Fascist," "Dictator," "Gangster."

When Russia recognised Japan's puppet state of "Manchukuo" the Communists followed suit. No patriotic Chinese ever did so.

In August, 1945, Russia pledged her "moral support and assistance with military equipment" to the same

National Government. Time will show how far Russia keeps her word. So far the most important Russian action has been to denude the most developed Chinese province of all the industrial machinery and plant it could carry away, both Chinese and Japanese.

Both the British and American Governments are pledged to support the National Government of China. A free and independent China is essential to the peace of the world.

REVIEW

Mr. Wilfrid Harrison, who has summarized the foregoing article, comments on it. He suggests that Mrs. Geraldine Fitch has done excellent service in giving facts regarding the Chinese Communists and their relation to the Chinese Government. Her moderation is commendable when (as Mr. Harrison knows) she might have mentioned that at about the time Lady Cripps was being entertained at the headquarters of the Communists in Yen-an, other Communists in an off-the-beaten-track area under Communist control were engaged in parading the women and school children to witness the trial and execution, under most brutal conditions, of half-a-dozen people, including a pregnant woman. Such brutality and duplicity cannot bring any permanent improvement of an agrarian situation (land situation), however bad.

It is of note that Mrs. Fitch has overlooked that a statement of "average" land holdings, cannot disprove the existence of *some* large and many small holdings. It is also probable that the land farmed by part owners and tenants is actually owned by some of the people who are farming their own farms. Readers of this paper who desire to know the land situation of China will also need to be told what percentage of the people own no land at all, and also who owns the really valuable land which is to be found in the towns or which contains valuable minerals or has water powers or such qualities.

In the towns and cities of China there are many who can be termed landless proletariat. How many? The land problem of a nation (of the world) is not merely or mainly an agricultural one, but as a country becomes industrialized the urban land values become both actually and relatively more and more important.

Many good people propose to remedy the "agrarian" problem of uneconomic agricultural land holdings by teaching more scientific cultivation and by increasing the size of the smaller units. The people who are driven off the land are to be dealt with by rapid industrialization. Such well-meaning people do not realize that this will ultimately merely result in greater land values (rents) accruing to the owners of land both in town and country. In cities like Shanghai and Hongkong such values arise as make a square inch of land at the centre of the city as valuable as an acre of land in the country. Almost all the increased wealth production is absorbed in this way and is ultimately collected as rent except for a subsistence wage for the landless proletariat.

Sun Yat Sen realized this. He had been greatly influenced by Henry George. His proposals in this matter, somewhat crude but on the right lines, have been ignored or misunderstood by the Soongs and the Kuomintang. *It is the unjust wealth distribution arising from this omission which, in China as elsewhere, leaves the proletariat so wide open to Communist influence.* The Communist remedy, of nationalization of the land by force, and direction from the centre, is no real reform because it produces serfs instead of free men, and secondly, because

it prevents a free market in land which alone can test whether it is being put to its best economic use.

The true remedy is to collect the economic rent of ALL land, apart from improvements, for the State. This can easily, entirely and accurately, be done by the valuation of the unimproved value of land and its taxation into the communal pocket. The subsidiary effect of this method, on employment, stability and just distribution of wealth, is even more important than the revenue obtained.

That is what TRUE Communism ought to be. Peaceful, just and beneficial. Men are left free to develop their individual talents with none to coerce and with assurance of their equal share in the common wealth—Rent.

It was a great matter that the founder of the Chinese republic saw this and one day perhaps his successors will see its importance.

THE MONTREAL LAND GRANT

All title deeds to Montreal property stem from the original deed signed by Louis XIV of France. In 1627, his Minister, Cardinal Richelieu, organized "The Company of One Hundred Associates," to convert and colonize New France. The Island of Montreal, or Ville Marie, was one of their chief possessions. The Island passed through several owners until December 17, 1640, when "La Compagnie de Montreal" acquired the rights of the various owners or claimants. Their rights were definitely sanctioned by letters patent of Louis XIV, on February 13, 1644.

Twenty-two years later, the Gentlemen Ecclesiastics of the Seminary of St. Sulpice of Montreal acquired the whole island in virtue of a Deed of Donation by La Compagnie des Associes de Montreal et de la Nouvelle France before Lefranc et Levasseur, Notaries, on March 9, 1663. This deed was registered in the Châlet et in Paris, and confirmed by letters patent by the King of France in May, 1673. In 1840, these titles were again confirmed by the Legislature of Lower Canada 3 and 4 Victoria, Chapter 30. Thus all titles of properties on the Island of Montreal trace their descent to the deed of donation to the Gentlemen Ecclesiastics of the Seminary of St. Sulpice.

Over the years the Gentlemen Ecclesiastics of the Seminary of St. Sulpice have disposed of the vast majority of their land; but some sales are still being made direct from the Seminary, the deeds of which constitute the first generation from the original manuscript document shown above. In 1870, the Cadaster System came into force in the Province of Quebec, and farms and tracts of land were given cadastral numbers. As the population of the Island increased, the original tracts of land, or cadastral lots, were sub-divided into smaller lots and given sub-division numbers. These cadastral and sub-division numbers are now used to identify properties.

(Culled from a folder issued October, 1946, by Westmount Realities Company, 1367 Greens Ave., Westmount-Montreal.)

The original deed donating the Island of Montreal to the Seminary of St. Sulpice has been kept in perfect state of preservation in the local archives. Among the signatures on it are those of Paul de Chomedey, de Maisonneuve, Gouverneur, C. Nobutel, de Bate and two others undecipherable, and the date is shown as Aout 16.

APT DESCRIPTION. A Hampshire correspondent writes: "I often get some amusement in the 'unintentional' errors made by a B.B.C. announcer in the news-bulletin. The latest—and I think the best—was uttered in the 6.0 p.m. news last night (12th May), when he said: 'The Clown—I beg your pardon—the Town and Country Planning —'"