

Half the World in Revolution Today



Chinese President Chiang Kai-shek . . . staked his head against the abolition of one-sided treaties.

By HENRY W. LAWRENCE
Professor of Political Science, Connecticut College

YOU who live in a quiet, sleepy, slow-moving country like the United States do not realize what a lively time the rest of the world is having. By "the rest of the world" is meant not those calm and peaceful regions like Europe and South America, but rather the places where real revolutions are now going on, like China, Russia, India, Turkey, and Mexico. And by "revolutions" we do not mean petty civil wars, but sudden and fundamental transformations, in which several hundreds of millions of people are rapidly changing the habits of several thousand years, and backward nations are hastily trying to rush into the newest and wildest experiments in government and business, morals and religion.

If you would add up the populations of the principal countries now actually engaged in these fundamental revolutions, the total will be almost half the number of human beings in the world today. The population of the earth is estimated at 1,900,000,000, and of this number Mexico claims 14,000,000, Russia 147,000,000, Turkey 14,000,000, India 318,000,000, and China 400,000,000; total, 893,000,000.

Figuring by continents, you find that there is not much doing in the revolutionary line in the Americas; and while Europe has, in Russia, the best advertised revolution on earth, it is really in Asia that the bigger and better world revolutions of today are going on. Asia has a total of over 900,000,000 inhabitants, and more than 700,000,000 of them are right now turning their backs on their ancient past and stepping boldly forward into a very uncertain future.

Perhaps the most astonishing of these adventures into radicalism is that of China. When you consider the leaps and bounds by which little Japan, less than one-sixth as populous as China, has entered into world prominence since the later years of the nineteenth century, we have every reason to keep an eye on what China is doing. She seems to be trying to do everything at once; to make herself over intellectually, industrially, religiously, and politically, all at the same time. Japan succeeded. Can China do it too? Highly competent observers feel highly uncertain about the outcome.

A typical statement, recently made, suggests that the betting is about 50-50. "No one knows," says this Sinologist (which is the highbrow name for a fellow who is supposed to know a lot about China). "No one knows what the future of China is to be, whether the nation is to disintegrate, with disaster to its millions and to the world, or whether it is to produce a new and richer culture—whether the present distresses are death throes or birth pangs. . . . It may be a hundred years or more before stability and order return in China."

IT took Europe 500 years to accomplish the task that China has set for herself. A highly educated Chinese doctor in Peking views the present struggle as an effort to leap over these 500 years of western progress.

"China today is faced with a situation," he says, "created, if you can imagine it, by a combination of the most important historical events similar to what the nations of the west have gone through in the last five centuries: the French Revolution; the industrialization of Great Britain in the eighteenth century; the political unification of Italy and of Germany and the Renaissance of Europe, when the nations of Europe learned for the first time what nationality really means."

"If you could combine all these historical facts and imagine the problems that the various European nations faced individually and separately and at different times, and then think of China having to face all these problems, put together and simultaneously, each vastly magnified and intensified, on account of the fact that we have 400,000,000 people to deal with, then you will realize the task before us in adjusting our national life to the requirements of the modern world."

That sounds like a fairly tough problem to solve. It seemed possible, however, to Dr. Sun Yat-sen (the George Washington-and-then-some, of the present undertaking), and the Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party, which



Mustapha Kemal Pasha. . . Threw out the Caliph, banned the fez, brought in the western world's ABC's.

While America, Its War of Independence
A Century and a Half in the Background,
Celebrates Fourth of July, 890 Millions
Of People Are Trying to Gain 500 Years
Of Progress by Sudden Awakening . . .
This Is a Historian's Eye View of Just What
Is Going on in This Planet's Sore Spots



India's Gandhi. . . Thin, spindly, he commanded 319,000,000 people in their bloodless war against British rule.

he established, has been working at it since about 1895. Under one name or another, these young and western-educated revolutionaries managed to upset the old monarchy in 1911.

All they had to do after that was to teach 400,000,000 illiterate Chinese, with a background of several thousand years of despotic monarchy, how to run an up-to-date republic; also to conquer, catch, and hang or otherwise dispose of several thousand bandits and war lords; also to relieve yearly, monthly, weekly and daily famines; and to prevent friendly foreign nations from running off with most of the country's natural resources, through "spheres of influence," one-way tariffs, and "Open Door" exits.

Lacking sufficient military strength to cope with China's war lords, the Kuomintang leaders resorted to propaganda against them, learning the fine points of that subtle game from the world's foremost experts, the Russian Bolsheviks.

THEY borrowed from the Soviet government one of their ablest propagandists, Michael Borodin—the man described by U. S. Senator Hiram Bingham as "the cleverest revolutionist in the world today." Borodin was appointed high adviser to the Kuomintang, and was undoubtedly largely responsible for its success. Russian arms were promised to China on easy terms and a corps of civil and military experts was speedily provided. Henceforth, instead of fighting the war lords' troops they persuaded them to desert. It soon became evident, however, that the aims of Chinese Kuomintang and Russian Bolshevism could not be harmonized, and after much bitterness and bloodshed the Communists were thrown out, by a so-called "Purification of the Party Movement."

Meanwhile, China is nominally ruled by the successful reformers, though their real control does not extend very far from the chief cities and the seacoast.

The desperate situation in which the country and its newest government still find themselves often give rise to heroic measures of relief. Thus, a prohibition law has just been passed, differing from that in the United States in that it is the smoking of opium which is forbidden.

The president of the Chinese Republic, Chiang Kai-shek, recently showed a like boldness, in promising to group off his troops, in promising to a crowd of rioters that he would allow them to chop off his head if he did not succeed within three years in abolishing the unfair treaties which the great powers have forced upon China in the past.

Again, when word came in of desperate need for famine relief, the new government ordered all officials, civil and military, who received at least \$200 a month to contribute a month's salary, and those who received between \$100 and \$200, a half month's salary.

CHINA'S problems are little, if any, more stupendous than those of India, though the latter have not as yet included the overthrow of established authority.

There are two rather unlike parts of India: (1) British India, the areas directly under British law, containing more than 250,000,000 people, and (2) the native states, of which there are more than 500 with an aggregate population of about 70,000,000, which have their own rulers but



Bolshevik Borodin. . . China tried his system, threw it out.

democracy, hence they are inclined to dicker with the British government and to draw back a little from the great nationalist movement.

BRITAIN, in 1917, promised home rule to India as soon as she was fit to have it, and that promise was solemnly reiterated by the viceroy last January.

Many of the Indian nationalists have their doubts, however, as to whether so rich a trade asset as India has long been to British merchants will ever be turned loose to pursue her own economic course, regardless of British profits. Moreover, the native Indians resent the high and mighty attitude of racial superiority shown by Englishmen in so many ways, and they are not convinced that the greedy materialism of the west is any better for India than the poverty-stricken fatalism of the east.

The most striking thing about India's revolutionary movement is the way it has been carried on during the past 10 years or so, under the leadership of that incomprehensible man, Gandhi. Non-violent non-cooperation was his grand scheme. Don't kill anybody; don't resist arrest; but steadfastly refuse to play the British game. Refuse to trade with Englishmen and to use their manufactures; refuse to pay taxes or to do any of the countless services without which business and government must stop.

This strange, non-violent kind of warfare, carried on by Gandhi, landed 25,000 of his followers in jail, but that was about all the jails would hold, and there were several million more followers ready to get themselves arrested.

Sir George Lloyd, then governor of Bombay, describes the situation thus, in a recent interview:

"Just a thin, spindly, shrimp of a fellow was Gandhi! But he swayed 319,000,000 people and held them at his beck and call. His program filled our jails. You can't go on arresting people forever, you know—not when there are 319,000,000 of them. And if they had taken his next step and refused to pay taxes! God knows where we would have been. Gandhi was the most colossal experiment in world history; and it came within an inch of succeeding. But he couldn't control men's passions. They became violent, and he called off his program. You know the rest. We jailed him."

(Copyright, 1929, NEA Magazine—Printed in U. S. A.)



GANDHI was soon released, however, and last December, at a meeting of the All India National Congress in Calcutta, he promised to lead the Indian people into another non-violent struggle against the rule of Britain, unless self-government is granted before December 31, 1929.

Shortly after making this statement, he was jailed again. It would almost seem that the astute British rulers were trying to turn the nationalist revolution from a non-violent into a violent movement. They certainly could not arrest 319,000,000 people, but they might be able to defeat this people's mobs and mob-like armies, if it came to military violence.

Asia offers at least one more present-day revolution, in the case of the new Turkey.

Although this movement is being carried on by a mere 14,000,000 people, they have, under the forceful and shrewd leadership of their president, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, thrown overboard as much ballast as a ship of state can spare without tipping over in the turbulent waters of world politics. For instance, the Turkish Republic has lost or gotten rid of most of the non-Turkish peoples and regions which used to clutter up the progress of the old Turkish Empire.

They have also unloaded the Caliph, supreme head of old-fashioned Mohammedanism, and with him has largely gone the interference of the Mohammedan priesthood in Turkish politics.

One of the boldest reforms attempted was a seemingly innocent and simple matter, namely, the changing of the kind of headgear that people should wear. For men, the order went forth that they should no longer wear the fez, that brilliant felt cap which was so convenient for the Mohammedan manner of prayer. Prayer, according to the Moslem notion, should be engaged in with the head covered and the forehead touching the ground; but just try that with a derby on!

The new Turkish president even ventured to make a polite suggestion to the ladies about what they should wear, or rather that they should wear nothing over a part of their body that had always been carefully concealed from the public gaze, namely, the face.

This innovation seemed about as shockingly improper to the old-fashioned Turks as would seem to us Americans an order from the White House that ladies appearing in public should wear nothing but jewelry; yet in the more progressive and urban parts of Turkey most of the women showed their patriotic loyalty, and their good looks, by obeying promptly.

Even the old Turkish alphabet, which is of an Arabic-Persian sort, is being abandoned, and the one in use throughout the western world substituted by compulsion.

ANOTHER 14,000,000 people are in a state of revolution in Mexico, and they have been since about 1910, when the downfall of the Diaz regime brought the first important efforts at fundamental reform in Mexico.

The aim of the Diaz government was to induce foreign capital to exploit Mexico's resources and enrich its governing classes. If some of this prosperity trickled down to the desperate peons, or serfs, it was more than they deserved.

The governments since the revolution began, in 1910, have aimed more directly at benefiting the lowest class. Conspicuously, the famous Constitution of 1917 freed more slaves than Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment, although nominally the slaves had been freed in Mexico many years earlier.

These new kinds of slaves, called "peons," were debt-slaves; workers on large estates who were kept continually in debt to their masters, even passing on their debts to their children, and all being forbidden to move away from the estate until the debts were paid. Thus peons seldom moved.

The Constitution of 1917 voided these debts and gave the peons freedom to move about, but they turn more readily to military adventures than to real citizenship.

What the Russian Bolsheviks are trying to accomplish has recently been summed up by the widow of the late lamented Lenin, herself the head of one branch of the educational system. The economic and political revolution which has taken place was not the end, she said, but merely the means and basis of a cultural development still to be realized. The economic change was for the sake of enabling every human being to share to the full in all the things that give value to human life.

After all, has not the Widow Lenin expressed here the fundamental motive behind all the revolutions going on in the changeful world today?



President Gil, Strong Man Calles . . . hold the whip hand in turbulent Mexico.