

The thought of capitulating, of renouncing the whole enterprise, disbanding the European members and going home myself was unbearable, I refused to consider it for a moment. The whole of the scientific world knew that we were about to set out. Both Chinese and English, French and German newspapers had paid much attention to our enterprise. In Germany and Sweden and perhaps also in other countries something was expected of us. In certain legations we were still regarded with suspicion — and now, to the delight of such observers and the Chinese academic world, all our plans were to be wrecked.

No, this thought was abhorrent to me. I resolved to fight against the Chinese intolerance to the utmost, and not to yield until absolutely insurmountable obstacles were raised in my path. My honour and my reputation were at stake, and I could not go home, condemned for the rest of my life to suffer the memory of such a crushing defeat. The conflict should be fought to the end. Nevertheless, caution dictated a wire to LARSON, with instructions to postpone the purchase of the camels until further orders.

The following weeks were a time full of excitement. We discussed the situation the whole day and far into the night. If our freedom of movement was to be paralyzed in Peking we would try to enter China either with Russian permission via Verkhne Udinsk to Ulan Bator Khoto (Urga) or via Novo Sibirsk and Semipalatinsk to Urumchi.

MALICIOUS RUMOURS

On March 7th I received a visit of our friend Mr YUNG of the Foreign Office, who had talked over the changed situation with WELLINGTON KOO. Dr KOO, however, had taken the matter calmly. He had advised me to try to get into touch with the opposition and to publish my contract with Dr WONG WEN-HAO in the Chinese press. The most fantastically garbled accounts of our plans had already appeared in the newspapers of the opposition. It was claimed that we had come to China with a number of aeroplanes, in which without any possibility of control we intended to take away large quantities of valuable archaeological finds; it was up to the Foreign Office to prohibit all such traffic. I preferred, however, not to have anything to do with the speculations of the Chinese press. The most wildly impossible rumours were launched from the very outset. If we defied the resistance of the opposition and dared to take the expedition and its formidable equipment by rail to Pao-t'ou, crowds of students would attack us, pour oil on our luggage-vans and destroy everything. We should be prepared for obstruction with violence. In the meantime our opponents contented themselves with collecting signatures for a giant petition that was to be submitted to the Government, demanding that the expedition be absolutely prohibited. I