

LIU FU: «No, no, you must not go home, we must understand each other and come to an agreement. At the meeting this afternoon I will put forward your point of view».

After this I adopted a more conciliatory tone. I told him that I sympathized with their nationalistic attitude, as in my own country I was just as good a nationalist as they were here. I thought they were quite right in wishing to keep all their archaeological and art treasures in China, and that Europe had committed a series of wrongs against the Chinese people ever since the days of the opium war.

THE CHINESE OFFER

The following day LIU FU returned, bringing with him the minutes of the previous day's meeting. This protocol consisted of fifteen paragraphs. He read them out to me and I took down their contents.

The expedition was to bear the following title:

«The Scientific Mission to Sinkiang organized by the Union organized by the Chinese Scientific Organizations».

The word «expedition» was disallowed; the enterprise was to be referred to as a mission. It is superfluous to waste words on the expression «organized by»; if it had been replaced by the phrase «disorganized by» it would have been nearer the truth. That the opposition wanted to make out to the Chinese people and those abroad that the expedition was a purely Chinese affair could certainly not redound to the credit of the academic world in Peking.

«The Union will organize an honorary committee, comprising the heads of the interested institutions. The mission will be placed under the permanent control of this committee».

«The mission will add to its staff, as members of the mission, five scientists, representing geology, meteorology, archaeology, astronomy and biology, as well as ten students, who are to be trained as meteorological observers».

«The leaders of the mission are to be, two directors, one Chinese and the other Swedish. The Chinese is to be one of the five above-mentioned scientists, the Swede is Dr SVEN HEDIN. The two directors shall be appointed by the honorary committee. All the members of the mission, both Chinese and foreigners, are to be appointed by the committee. These appointments are to be published in the press. The old passports are to be annulled. In case of negotiations with local authorities all papers, letters and documents are to be signed by the two directors. Both the directors have the same rank and dignity.»

The clause to the effect that all the members, including Germans and Swedes, were to be appointed by the honorary committee was only a face-saving invention by the Chinese, inserted for the benefit of the newspaper-reading public.