

were in conformity with the modern liberal and progressive spirit, while CHIN, who had never been in contact with the claims of the new epoch, was still the slave of the ossified forms of the old régime. This was thus a struggle between the old and the new epochs; and on the issue of this struggle between two prominent Chinese depended the fate of our expedition.

In our reply, composed by SRU, it was pointed out that according to contract we had the right to travel and work in Sinkiang until May 1929. Before the expiration of this date none of our members could rightfully be hindered in his activities. And if obstacles were put in our way, we required an explanation of *why* this was done. For we could not stand by passively while one member after the other was summoned to Urumchi, to remain there idle instead of working. Neither our money nor our time was intended for such a dispensation.

On December 12th we had a new letter from CHIN, explaining that TING must be recalled to Urumchi »for reasons that are connected with the national defence and with conditions on the frontier«.

In this letter CHIN exceeded the limits of the authority that may properly be vested in a Governor-General. Even under the old régime, such an accusation against fellow-countrymen would have been considered drastic enough; and by holding it up against nationalists of the Kuomintang Party the Governor was venturing upon a very hazardous policy. Professor SRU, who was indignant at CHIN's seeming to regard his own countrymen as spies, jeopardizing the security of the country, drafted a reply containing the following passage:

»We have carefully read through all your reports, and we are convinced that you have gone thoroughly into the matter in question and that the civil and military authorities have obeyed your orders implicitly. You want to stop TING in the middle of his work; and it is a simple enough matter to order his return. But *we* stand under our Federation and under the Minister for Education in the Central Government, and all the members of our expedition have been commissioned to come here to Sinkiang for the purpose of carrying out purely scientific work. All our members are now busy with their work, and the Central Government has not ordered us to return. We have therefore no right whatsoever to instruct TING and KUNG to come back here. Nor are we able to comply with your request that we send them money for the journey. As regards the conditions on the frontier you have the power in your hand, and we hold ourselves completely aloof from these matters. The question as to whether our members are to return or not is for you to decide, and we cannot make it our responsibility. When you say that this matter is connected with the national defence, we must reply that we are altogether too ignorant to understand such questions.

It would probably be difficult to find a precedent for the case of a scholar who is forbidden to carry on exploration in his own country. Formerly, even foreigners were permitted to travel here, but now we find that you wish to prevent us from so doing. Again and again we have tried to find an explanation for your policy of putting difficulties in the way of a Chinese scientific institution. Fortunately, the Central Government in China is beginning to grow in power; and Sinkiang still belongs to China. We intend to ask the Central Government for its decision. If it demands that the members of our expedition discontinue their work half way to its completion we shall be obliged to obey. But if it decides that we are to continue, then we must also obey.»

The reply came the very next day. TING's recall was withdrawn, and he was to be permitted to go on with his work. HASLUND was also to be allowed to join NORIN's caravan. Our sharp note had evidently taken effect; though one could never know for how long a period a given reply might stand.