

Peking, China

September 15, 1925.

My dear Gertrude:

Your letter of July 20th came while we were at Peitaiho, where we spent more than two months. It was the first long vacation I have ever had in my life and I enjoyed it to the limit. After the investigating committees had reported on the Shanghai incident of May 30th and I had made my own reports to the government, I felt sure that several months would pass before any definite action. At the same time the military forces of Chang Tso-lin and Feng Yu-hsiang were so evenly balanced that there were no prospects of any fighting during the summer. This forecast of conditions allowed me to go to Peitaiho on the understanding that if I was needed at any time I would come back at once. Fortunately my judgments in this instance proved correct; nothing happened and I had my long vacation.

The outbreaks which have taken place in China since May have been part of the political struggle for supremacy which has been going on continuously since Sun Yat-sen set himself up against President Yüan Shih-k'ai. After the death of Sun Yat-sen last March, a large portion of Kuomintang Party adopted his communistic ideas. In this action they were strongly supported by the Soviet Ambassador Karakhan and by the agents of the Third International [Borodin, Sneevliet, Roy]. The Russians spent large sums of money in stirring up trouble among the workmen, in subsidizing teachers and students, in corrupting the press and in maintaining all forms of propaganda. All of this fanned into flame the slow-burning embers of discontent which have been a constant factor in the situation in China for the last one hundred years. It was only an accident that the trouble broke out in Shanghai and there it was caused by the ill-advised action of the Municipal police. If this occurrence had not happened in Shanghai advantage would have been taken of some trifling incidents somewhere else. The outbreak was bound to come for the internal pressure need some channel of escape. It is idle to talk of a revival of Boxerism or of China coming under the control of the Soviets. One must not confuse the alarming symptoms with the real disease. There is no doubt that China is sick, but her sickness is caused by misgovernment and by some means or other the younger generation in China intend to have a better government for themselves than their fathers or grandfathers had. They may undertake the job in a very unintelligent and foolhardy way, but the principle underlying their actions is right; they want to make China a better country to live in.

Mary arrived from home ten days ago and will be here with us this winter. My wife has enjoyed the summer at Peitaiho and is now not only very healthy but vigorous. We all join in much love to you and in kind regards to Sam and his wife.

Yours as ever,
John

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