
Labor Conditions in China

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vessel, being 1 cent for each net registered ton and \$1.50 per foot of draft.

Individual earnings are pooled, the operating expenses are paid, and the remainder is divided equally among the six pilots. No data are available as to the actual earnings per man.

Seattle ²¹

Pilotage on Puget Sound is not compulsory and there is no legal provision for administration of pilotage matters by commission or otherwise. The legislation is scanty and the provisions very general. Neither are the pilotage fees set, these being apparently left to individual bargaining. Practically the only legal provisions, for present purposes, are that in order to qualify as a pilot on Puget Sound waters a person must hold a United States Government pilot license for Puget Sound, must not pilot a vessel of greater tonnage than so authorized, and must have had at least one year's experience as pilot of oversea or coasting vessels of at least 1,500 gross tons.

The pilotage situation in Seattle is about that existing 30 years ago in the other ports studied. There is no association of pilots in Seattle; each pilot is absolutely independent of the others and collects his own fees. Thirteen of the pilots have a common telephone and these have agreed on common rates for their services. Each, however, carries on his business independently.

Labor Conditions in China

By TA CHEN, PH. D., TSING HUA COLLEGE, PEKING

CHINA has been undergoing various economic and social changes since the World War, indications of which are seen in the present labor situation. In the cities the evils of industrialism are already in evidence, while in the rural communities, the farm workers are laboring under the disabilities of usury and long hours. The rising cost of living and the changing standards are causing maladjustments of various sorts to be felt by the Chinese workmen. To ameliorate their general condition, efforts are now being made to promulgate and enforce protective labor laws. On the part of the workers themselves, means of adjustment are also sought in the reorganization of the ancient guild system and in the adoption of western practices such as the labor union, consumers' cooperation, and industrial hygiene. The labor movement in China to-day is opening up hopes for a new social order whose advent is earnestly awaited by all classes of people.

Urban Labor

AS INDICATIVE of the general labor situation in Chinese cities, the conditions in certain of the industries will be described, first of all the rug industry of Peking. Tientsin is China's largest rug-producing center, while Peking ranks second. In 1912, rugs

²¹ Legal provisions cited in this section are from Remington & Ballinger's Code, secs. 8241-8245.

exported from Peking were valued at 57,109 Haikwan taels.¹ By 1922 exports had increased to 3,299,729 Haikwan taels. Tientsin has over 400 rug factories while Peking has 206, with employees ranging in number from 20 to 300 each. While the small workshops have only one weaving frame each, the larger ones have as many as 24 or 36 frames per shop. According to the latest figures² there are now 6,834 workmen in the rug industry of Peking, of whom 1,768 are masters and journeymen and 5,066 are apprentices. In all but three establishments, which work 10 hours per day, the working hours range from 12 to 14 hours. All but two establishments give their workers one holiday in each month, and seven shops suspend operations on Sundays. All the employers give holidays at the Chinese New Year and at festivals in various seasons, the total of such holidays not exceeding three weeks in the year.

The apprentices are usually bound children from 10 to 17 years of age, from the poor families in the vicinity of Peking. Their term of indenture is ordinarily three years and six months. During apprenticeship, the child usually receives board, lodging, instruction, and medical care, but no wages. In a few cases, he receives a nominal wage towards the closing days of his apprenticeship.

The monthly wages of the masters range from \$15 to \$25³ with board and lodging and those of the journeymen from \$6 to \$12 with board and lodging. But 1,058 craftsmen, some being masters and many being journeymen, receive less than \$9 a month with board and lodging. Many workers not only receive wages too low to cover the rising cost of living but also are working under insanitary conditions. About two-thirds of the establishments have 10 rooms each and the remainder 5 rooms each. On the average, four persons herd together in one small room which is poorly ventilated and lighted, and in which they work, eat, and sleep. On account of these unsatisfactory conditions, the workers declared a strike last year which was the first one in the history of the industry in Peking.

The cotton mills of China also illustrate the situation of city labor. The Chinese Republic is the third greatest cotton-producing country in the world, yielding 7,000,000 to 10,000,000 piculs⁴ of cotton per year. Yet China has been importing cotton goods every year, and for the last decade these imports amounted to \$150,000,000, or about 30 per cent of her total imports from all foreign countries for that period. Chiefly because of this financial importance to the nation, enterprising business men have recently tried their utmost to develop the industry. During the World War, cotton manufacturing boomed and enormous profits were made by a few Chinese-owned mills, some declaring annual dividends of over 100 per cent. Now, however, due to low rates of exchange, the inexperience of Chinese engineers, the low price of cotton yarn, and the relatively higher cost of raw cotton, many Chinese cotton corporations are on the verge of dissolution. Still, if the Chinese mills can pass through this stormy season, they will soon see a bright day in the life of the industry. For this is the first time in the development of cotton manufacturing that

¹ Haikwan tael, at par=82.99 cents; exchange rate varies.

² The Life Monthly, Peking, March, 1924, pp. 1-60: "A study of the rug industry in Peking."

³ The Mexican dollar used in China, at par=54.04 cents; exchange rate varies.

⁴ Picul=133½ pounds.

the Chinese have shown initiative and independent management. In 1888, when Marquis Li Hung Chang established the "foreign cloth factory" in Shanghai, he and those who followed his example by erecting mills elsewhere relied upon foreign assistance in technique and administration, and bought most of their machinery from English manufacturers. To-day the situation is materially different. Chinese technically trained experts are managing factories. American machinery is rapidly replacing the British, but most of it is run by Chinese engineers without foreign help. What the Chinese lack to-day is practical experience in factory management and labor administration.

The keen competition among the cotton-mill owners to-day is bound to stimulate the Chinese proprietors to improve their business methods. At present, the British have five mills in Shanghai with 260,000 spindles, the Japanese have 32 mills with 630,000 spindles, and the Chinese have 76 mills with 1,600,000 spindles. The British were among the first in the field, beginning in 1895. They employ the contract-labor system. Their general policy is conservative and their reputation in the business is undisputed. The Japanese cotton manufacturers have had considerable experience in cotton spinning and weaving, but have had the disadvantage of having just gone through a business depression in Japan. They have recently transferred some of their mills to Chinese cities in order to compete with Chinese owners by employing cheap labor. The Japanese have invested a considerable amount of money in the vicinity of Tsingtao, Shantung Province, and they have established seven mills there, with 140,000 spindles and 14,000 workmen. About 40 per cent of the workers are Chinese children between 13 and 16 years of age, earning from 12 to 28 cents a day.

Facing international competition like this, the Chinese employers must work hard in order to maintain their present status and expand their influence in the industry. One experienced mill owner makes a plea for the production of more raw cotton in China. This is a move in the right direction, for in the year 1922 only 65 per cent of the raw cotton was produced from Chinese soil; the remainder, totaling 1,632,000 piculs, came from foreign countries.⁵ Another Chinese mill owner is making an experiment in scientific management in his factories which will probably result in improved relations with the employees. Furthermore, the cotton-seed improvement work done by the Southeastern University, Nanking University, and the Cotton-mill Owners' Association is progressing. American as well as the native cotton has been improved, and the former is said to have gone through a successful stage of acclimatization.

The attitude and treatment of the employees in the cotton industry also deserves attention. Cotton manufacturing is a modernized industry, and many employers have certain conceptions of humane treatment of labor. Although the general situation of the workers in general and of the woman and child workers in particular is still unsatisfactory, working conditions in this industry are relatively better than those in many other trades in the country. Several mills in Shanghai have a bonus system, with certain benefit features, and some factories

⁵ Chinese Economic Bulletin, Peking, Nov. 3, 1923, pp. 3-4.

provide for elementary education both for employees and their children. Evening schools of some of the mills provide instruction in the simplified Chinese language, sanitation, social ethics, and letter writing, and elementary courses in natural sciences.

Some cotton factories in Shanghai have rather modern lodging houses for their workmen. These houses are fairly well lighted and ventilated. A few are equipped with crude shower bath, reading room, and recreation grounds. The unmarried and the married workmen usually have separate quarters. Merely a nominal rent is paid for the use of the rooms. The houses erected for the employees of three cotton factories which the writer recently visited are arranged in rows, and all are built in the same style. The sight must be familiar to those who have seen the "compound" of Chinese contract laborers in British or Dutch colonies in the Orient, except that the houses in Shanghai are somewhat better as regards light, ventilation, and sanitation. A number of houses, similarly arranged, have just been built by the Dah Shing Cotton Mills in Shih Kia Chuang, Chihli Province, for its employees.

In the cotton mills, the working conditions are generally unsatisfactory. The temperature is considerably above the normal, a great deal of dust and raw cotton flies freely in the air, sanitary equipment is defective, and the working hours are too long.

The employment of children in the cotton mills and other work places of Shanghai has recently been investigated by the Child Labor Commission of that city, whose findings and recommendations are summarized on pages 132 to 135 of this issue of the MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW.

Movement for Labor Legislation

ALTHOUGH much agitation has been going on in recent years for the workers' health and protection, the first vigorous protest against the existing conditions seems to have been the resolution of the China Continuation Committee adopted at its annual meeting in 1919. Soon the Christian Church in China took a sympathetic interest in the matter, and appointed the Commission on the Relations of the Church to China's Economic and Industrial Problems. In 1922, a joint committee of women's clubs of British, American, Japanese, and Chinese nationalities in Shanghai publicly declared their opposition to the employment of the very young children in the factories. In May of the following year, when the National Christian Conference met, three resolutions relating to labor were passed in the hope of conforming to the standard set up at the International Congress of Labor held in Washington, D. C., in October, 1919. These resolutions advocated (1) the prohibition of employment of children under 12 years of age, (2) one day of rest in seven, and (3) the safeguarding of the health of the workers, i. e., limitation of working hours, employment of sanitary conditions, and the installation of safety devices.

The laborers themselves have also been working for the improvement of labor conditions. Throughout the rank and file of labor, heated discussions on matters have been going on. On September 4, 1922, the labor unions of Wuhan, in the Province of Hupeh, sent a

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petition to the National Parliament in Peking setting forth 19 demands, which were afterwards indorsed by the labor unions throughout the nation. Although some demands were, under present conditions, too idealistic for immediate realization, labor's earnest desire for protection is obvious. The workers' demands include freedom to hold meetings and to declare strikes, an 8-hour day and a 42-hour week, Government regulation of farm products, abolition of usury and high rent in rural communities, prohibition of night work of women and children in the factories, a minimum wage law, the establishment of labor adjustment boards, Government insurance, and Government education.

In February, 1923, when the Peking Hankow Railway Union declared a strike which was suppressed by the Government troops, the union pointed out that the right to organize and hold meetings was stipulated in the provisional constitution of the Republic and was inviolable.

The Government also has aided in the promotion of labor legislation in China. The Government of Hongkong is credited with having promulgated the first child labor act in China. Its ordinance governing the industrial employment of children, which was promulgated January 1, 1923, is in effect in the British colony of Hongkong. On March 29, 1923, the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce of the Chinese Government promulgated provisional factory regulations⁶ and, later, draft regulations governing labor unions.⁷ The factory regulations are only tentative and have not the force of law. Their scope is national. On July 9, 1924, the Child Labor Commission of Shanghai made a report to the municipal council of Shanghai on its study of the child-labor situation in the foreign settlement of Shanghai, containing its recommendations.

A comparative statement of the provisions of the Government regulations and of the Hongkong ordinance and of the recommendations of the Shanghai Child Labor Committee is shown below:

PROVISIONS OF GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS, HONGKONG ORDINANCE, AND SHANGHAI RECOMMENDATIONS

Item	Government factory regulations	Hongkong ordinance	Recommendations of Shanghai Commission
Minimum age.....	Boys, 10 years; girls, 12 years.	10 years; but no child of 12 years allowed to carry coal, building material, or debris.	10 years, rising to 12 four years after promulgation of regulations.
Proof of age.....	No provision.....	Child assumed to be under age if so appears to the judge.	Some measure for proof should be adopted.
Hours of labor.....	8, exclusive of recess.....	9, but no child to work more than 5 hours continuously.	Children 14 years and over: 12 including rest of 1 hour.
Night work.....	None between 8 p. m. and 4 a. m.	None between 7 p. m. and 7 a. m.	Night work permitted now; to be reconsidered after 4 years.
Rest days.....	Not less than 3 full days per month.	1 day in every 7.....	1 day in every 14 days.

⁶ MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW, March, 1924, pp. 185-186.

⁷ *Idem*, pp. 186-187. But these rules are not yet passed by the Chinese Parliament. At this writing, the Kuomintang in Canton is just in the process of drafting regulations to govern the local unions.

PROVISIONS OF GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS, HONGKONG ORDINANCE, AND SHANGHAI RECOMMENDATIONS—Concluded

Item	Government factory regulations	Hongkong ordinance	Recommendations of Shanghai Commission
Prohibition of certain work.	Women and children: Scavenging, oiling, or repairing in engine rooms, or places having moving machinery. Children: Work in connection with handling of explosives or obnoxious drugs, or in unhealthy or dusty places.	Carrying weight exceeding 40 catties and at dangerous trades, i. e., boiler chipping, and fireworks, and glass manufacturing.	Children 14 years: Work at dangerous, unguarded machines, hazardous places, or places likely to injure body or health.
Compulsory education.	At employer's expense.....	No provision.....	Outside commission's power, but commission favors it.
Record keeping.....	No provision.....	Employer to keep current record of children employed.	No provision.
Inspection and penalties.	Inspection, but no provision for penalties.	Inspection; also imposition of fines or imprisonment for violation.	Inspection and penalties.

Rural Labor

THE industrial age in China, however, is just beginning and rural labor far outranks urban labor both in importance and in magnitude. In Japan, the farmers are already organizing to carry on a campaign for the reduction of rent and interest, for agricultural cooperative buying and selling, for social and educational improvement, and for the redistribution of land. In China the farmers are not at all organized, and consequently their voice is not yet heard and their misery not generally known. But judging from the bits of information gathered here and there, the small farmer and the farm worker are living under extremely unsatisfactory conditions. If the socioeconomic situation in the rural communities is not immediately improved, there will soon be signs of an agricultural revolt in China.

As local conditions show considerable variation, no general statements can be made, but certain rural districts about which there is fairly reliable information will be discussed.

With a view to ascertaining certain agricultural conditions, the China International Famine Relief Commission in 1922 undertook an investigation of 248 villages, comprising 6,482 families, mostly in the Province of Chihli and the remainder in the Provinces of Shantung, Kiangsu, and Chekiang. This investigation disclosed that (1) the average size of these families is 5.2 persons, (2) the average size of the land holdings is 19.5 mow⁸ in Kiangso, and 23 mow in Chihli, (3) 11.11 per cent of the families in Chihli hold no land whatever, (4) the monthly rate of interest ranges from 2 to 5 or 6 per cent, and (5) more than half of the population in the Kiangsu villages and more than 80 per cent in the Chihli villages are below the "poverty line," the investigators having here fixed a standard of poverty to suit local conditions.⁹ It is of course not claimed that an absolutely accurate portrayal of Chinese rural economy is here presented, but if the findings indicate even roughly the real conditions in these villages, the farmers and the farm workers must be laboring under

⁸ Mow = $\frac{1}{4}$ acre.

⁹ Chinese Social and Political Science Review, Peking, January, 1924, pp. 196-226: "The study of Chinese Rural Economy," by J. B. Taylor.

almost insuperable difficulties. Apparently, they have rather large families, yet many of them own no land and have to depend upon their labor, unskilled or semiskilled, to support their wives and children. That they have a low plane of living is evident. Even the small farmer who supplements by outside work the income from his farming is not making ends meet, chiefly because of high interest rates and the high cost of production due to the small acreage of his farm. It is estimated¹⁰ that tools and equipment cost the Chinese farmer in Wuhu, Anhwei Province, \$2.42 per mow. This greatly reduces the income of the Chinese farmer. Fortunately, the farmer does not always have to pay for the labor he needs. He employs a system of labor exchange whereby he gets help from his neighbors and returns the service when his neighbor needs it. Thus, among 102 farms near Wuhu, Anhwei Province, 42 farmers exchange labor on an average of 10 days per farm, and 49 farms exchange animals and implements for an average period of 11 days.

Agricultural Wages

In 1922 the civil governor of Kiangsu Province made an appropriation for the study of the agricultural situation in the Province, the work being intrusted to the Department of Agriculture of the Southeastern University, Nanking. In January, 1923, the first report¹¹ was published, covering the circuit of Chin Ling, which comprises 11 districts (*hsien*) and 99 villages (*hsiang*). The second report¹² came out in August, 1923, covering the circuit of Soo Ch'ang, which comprises 12 districts and 111 villages. In January, 1924, the university published its third report,¹³ on the circuit of Woo Hai, which comprises 12 districts and 75 villages. In each of these reports there is a section on wages in the farming communities from which the figures in the table following are taken:

AVERAGE DAILY WAGES OF MALE WORKERS IN SPECIFIED CIRCUITS OF KIANGSU PROVINCE, BY DISTRICTS

Circuit and district	Average daily wage 1923	Circuit and district	Average daily wage 1923	Circuit and district	Average daily wage 1924
Chin Ling Circuit:	<i>Cents</i>	Soo Chang Circuit:	<i>Cents</i>	Woo Hai Circuit:	<i>Cents</i>
Chiang-ning	18.0	Ch'ang-su	17.5	Chia-ting	12.0
Chiang-pu	20.8	Chiang-ying	17.1	Chin-shan	15.6
Chin-t'an	16.6	Kun-shan	22.5	Chuan-sha	29.5
Cu-yung	20.5	Nan-tung	13.1	Feng-hsien	14.3
Kao-shun	15.4	Nee-hsien	21.8	Hai-meng	10.6
Li-sui	21.2	T'ai-hsien	11.4	Nan-hwei	18.5
Li-yang	19.6	Tsing-chiang	11.4	Pao-shan	11.2
Liu-huh	38.2	Wu-chiang	18.5	Shanghai	28.5
Tan-to	16.0	Wu-chin	19.0	Soong-chiang	14.8
Tan-yang	10.0	Wu-hsien	19.5	T'ai-ch'iang	13.6
Yang-chung	13.0	Wu-si	25.8	Ts'ing-pu	21.4
		Yu-kao	10.3	Ts'ung-ming	10.3
Total	209.3	Total	207.9	Total	200.3
Average	19.0	Average	17.3	Average	16.7

¹⁰ University of Nanking. Agriculture and forestry series, vol. 1, No. 7, December, 1923: An economic and social survey of 102 farms near Wuhu, Anhwei Province, by J. Lossing Buck.

¹¹ Southeastern University. Department of Agriculture. An agricultural survey of Chin Ling Circuit, Kiangsu Province, Nanking, January, 1923. (In Chinese.)

¹² Idem. An agricultural survey of Soo Ch'ang Circuit, Kiangsu Province, Nanking, August, 1923. (In Chinese.)

¹³ Idem. An agricultural survey of Woo Hai Circuit, Kiangsu Province, Nanking, January, 1924. (In Chinese.)

The reports do not specify whether the above wages include board and lodging. Judging from the usual custom in the farming districts in those Provinces, it may be assumed that in many cases the worker gets board and lodging in addition to his pay. The population of the district of Liu-huh in Chin Ling circuit is said to be sparse. The district has been free from flood for about 20 years. About 100,000 mow of new land are now under cultivation. These facts may partially explain the relatively high wage of 38.2 cents per day. As regards Chuan-sha in Woo Hai circuit, 60 per cent of its land is reported to be devoted to the cultivation of cotton, 34 per cent to rice, and the remainder to wheat, barley, and maize. The cost of living is generally high in this district. Since it is near Shanghai district, the farm wages in both districts are approximately the same.

Although the above figures are probably only rough approximations they, together with the results of the famine commission's investigation above outlined, present a pretty dark picture of the farming situation and of farm labor in parts of China.

Labor Problems

TO SKETCH the situation of urban and rural labor in China is really to indicate certain problems and efforts at improving working conditions. Chief among the problems is probably the rising cost of living and the inability on the part of the workers to meet it. In recent years the cost of the necessaries of life has increased steadily, but the wages have not increased in proportion. For instance, the unskilled laborer in Shanghai to-day gets between \$10 and \$15 a month, yet the cost of living for him and his wife is generally estimated at \$16 per month. So he suffers a deficit. In Peking the cost of living is slightly lower. But the prices have gone up so much that it is difficult for most laborers to make ends meet.¹⁴ Thus, flour, which is their staple food, was sold at 13 copper coins per catty¹⁵ last year, but this year it is increased to 17 copper coins. Coal was sold at \$4.80 per 1,000 catties in 1923, but this year it is increased to \$5.20. The best grade of cotton was sold at 65 cents per catty a year ago, but to-day it costs about 80 cents. Both in Peking and Shanghai retail stores sell many of their commodities in copper coins, and the recent depreciation of copper currency works further hardship upon the workingmen. In August, 1923, it took 180 coppers to change a dollar in Shanghai; in August, 1924, it was increased to 200, or an increase of 20 coppers. For the same period in Peking the increase has been from 195 to 229, or an increase of 34 coppers on the dollar.¹⁶

Accidents, Industrial Hazards, and Sweating

IN SEPTEMBER, 1919, the foreign cotton-mill owners of the Yangtzepoo district, Shanghai, established an industrial hospital and dispensary for the benefit of their employees. These mills employ about 15,000 workers, 55 per cent being women, 25 per cent

¹⁴ Chinese Economic Bulletin, Peking, May 17, 1924, p. 3.

¹⁵ Catty = 1½ pounds.

¹⁶ The October, 1924, issue of the MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW contains (pp. 66, 67) a table showing the increase in certain commodities as compared with 1913.

men, and 20 per cent children. According to a recent report¹⁷ the hospital has treated 880 cases, of which 374, or 42 per cent, were due to industrial accidents. Of the injured, 231 were men, 43 were women, and 100 were children. Although twice as many women as children are employed, accidents among the children are much more frequent than among the women, since they are inexperienced, ignorant of the dangers of machinery, and tire easily at continuous employment. Owing to the nature of the cotton industry, most wounds are lacerations, about 75 per cent of which become infected. The lacerations constitute about 59 per cent of the total number of accidents, compound fractures 18 per cent, burns 8 per cent, and simple fractures 5 per cent. The burns are said to be due to the high inflammability of cotton and the large number of steam pipes in the mills. The following statement shows the percentage of cases resulting in permanent disability or death:

	Permanent disability	Death
Men.....	20	1.7
Women.....	44	-----
Children.....	29	3.0
Average	25	1.8

The absence of fatal cases among the women is largely due to the fact that their injuries are usually received from a sharp-pointed instrument used in the weaving room. This instrument sometimes pierces the eye of the woman worker, resulting in the partial or total loss of her sight, but not in death.

Another problem of industrial hazard is the free use of yellow and white phosphorus in the match factories. There are 51 large match companies in the country, with a capital of more than \$6,000,000, transacting an annual business of over \$12,000,000. Yellow phosphorus and sometimes white phosphorus is said to be in common use in these factories. Although the Chinese Government is contemplating the prohibition of this practice, such legislation has not yet appeared.

Sweating is a third industrial evil, common in such industrial cities as Tientsin, Hankow, and Shanghai. The practice is reported to be rather prevalent in the printing, textile, knitting, silk filatures, match-box, and other industries where subcontracting is of some importance. In many cases the women and children employed by the subcontractors are members of the workingmen's families who live in the neighborhood of factories. Sometimes young children are recruited from farming districts and brought to the factories as apprentices, the subcontractor paying the children's parents a much smaller sum than he receives for this service. These children occasionally do "out-work" for the factory, and the contractor also makes profit from their extra labor.

Trade-Unionism

FACING an industrial situation like this, the workers gradually become class-conscious, and are thinking of getting together for general well-being. Sporadically, the unionization movement is

¹⁷ China Medical Journal, Shanghai, March, 1924: "Review of 880 cases from the cotton mills," by H. W. Decker.

going on. In some industries where primitive industrial conditions still exist, the workers are satisfied with the old guild system for the regulation of wages, output of commodities, prices, and hours of labor. In some instances the guild is undergoing a process of modernization either by the adoption of the labor union rules or by differentiating the guild into the employers' associations on the one hand and the workers' unions on the other. Thus, in the Incense and Toilet Articles Guild of Peking the employers and employees, though belonging to the same organization, hold separate meetings. In the same city, the Shoemakers' Guild has entirely separate organizations for the employers and employees. The chamber of commerce which is an organization common to most cities and towns in China, is really an outgrowth of the old-fashioned guild with features resembling the employers' association in the Occident.

The gradual differentiation of organization between the employers and employees tends to aggravate the struggle between capital and labor. In some strikes, the employers conciliated the workers by inviting some of them to join the organization of the employers, which was bitterly resented by the other workers who did not join. In other cases where the organization of the laborers has considerable influence, the employers have sought the power of the police authorities or even of the army to suppress the workers' activities. These high-handed methods have intensified the industrial unrest and hastened the movement of trade-unionism in the country.

Owing to outside pressure, such as competition with foreigners, some guilds have been reorganized along modern lines. For instance, the Lu Pan Industrial Union of Peking is an amalgamated organization of several crafts formerly organized in independent guilds, including carpenters, bricklayers, blacksmiths, masons, and painters. Before the reorganization, the craft line between the guilds was very rigid, so that members of one guild could not handle the jobs of those of another guild. To-day these distinctions are gradually disappearing and better cooperation is secured among the craftsmen. As in the old days, this industrial union regulates wages and working hours, has established a school, gives charity and financial aid to the poor, sick, aged, and unemployed. In addition it strives to secure building contracts from the Government and distributes these to various members by lot. If a member loses money on the contract so secured, he may be reimbursed by the union by showing good cause. If a member has difficulty in collecting debts or is involved in lawsuits, he may appeal to the union for assistance. If he is in need of money, the union may advance him a certain amount for a nominal rate of interest. But the most important function of the union is to secure the building contracts for the members, although in recent years this has been made difficult by the keen competition of foreign builders in the capital.¹⁸

The unionist movement of a really national character dates from the first National Labor Conference held at Canton, May 1-6, 1922. During that conference 162 delegates from 200 unions in 12 cities, representing about 400,000 workers, were present. They passed a number of resolutions, including those favoring an eight-hour day,

¹⁸ Gamble, Sydney: Peking—A social survey. New York, Doran, 1921, pp. 202-204; 447-448.

mutual aid to strikers, a permanent national organization of trade-unions, and the organization of unions on an industrial rather than craft basis. The conference adopted the general policy of promoting the economic and industrial welfare of the workers, and of refraining from political activity.

As an example of the industrial union, the Metal Workers' Union of Canton may be cited. Its membership, of about 160,000, includes all the metal workers of Canton and the neighboring towns. The organization has 10 departments, i. e., those for machinists, electricians, stokers, founders, turners, draftsmen, molders, steel workers, modelers, and copper workers. The program of the organization is very broad, aiming at the industrial, economic, social, and educational improvement of the members. Among other things, it provides for the publication of a monthly and a weekly paper, the erection of a technical school, a sanitarium for tubercular workers, a convalescent home for the aged workmen, a general hospital, a savings bank, a model factory for mechanics, and a kindergarten for the children of the workers. Owing to unsettled conditions in Canton and vicinity, part of the program is now held in abeyance.

Strikes

IN SOME industries where the workers are fairly well organized they employ direct means to obtain social justice, by declaring strikes. The Peking Hankow Railway Union chose February 1, 1923, for the official opening of the union and the adoption of its constitution and by-laws, and 130 representatives from 35 local unions were to attend the meeting in Chengchow, Honan Province, in addition to 65 representatives of the unions of other railways, and 30 representatives from newspapers and schools in other cities. But on February 1 martial law was suddenly declared in Chengchow. The union's headquarters were guarded by the armed police, and the hotels and restaurants in the city were forbidden to accommodate the union delegates. In protest the union men in the city walked out on February 4 and were soon joined by the railway workers on other sections of the same railway. Since this interfered with the operation of the railway, the police authorities forced the strikers to resume their work, killing 3 and wounding 40 in so doing. Indignation was aroused among the rank and file of labor, and telegrams of sympathy were received from about 100 unions throughout the nation. The National Parliament in Peking moved to impeach the military authorities, and at a session on "labor unrest" held in the house of representatives four resolutions were adopted stating (1) that in accordance with the provisional constitution of the Republic, the Government now recognize the right to hold meetings by the workers, (2) that the Government release those laborers who were under arrest, (3) that the Government give money to the families of the deceased or wounded, (4) that the Government remove troops and police from railway stations.

In Shameen a strike was called in protest against foreign aggressions and oppression. Shameen is a little island on the Pearl River, on the southwestern side of the city of Canton. On it is a foreign settle-

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ment, although the island is still under the jurisdiction of Canton. Much commercial and industrial activity is carried on there, as Canton has been a treaty port since the treaty of Nanking in 1842. Recently, the British and French consulates in Shameen passed some new police regulations requiring every Chinese in the settlement to secure a pass with his photograph on it, and prohibiting the Chinese from leaving or entering Shameen later than 9 a. m. without a pass. The Chinese resented these regulations, mainly on two grounds: (1) That these are regulations by foreigners who are living in Chinese territory, and (2) that they are discriminatory, as no such restrictions are imposed upon the other nationals in the settlement. On July 15, the day on which the regulations were supposed to take effect, all the Chinese workmen in Shameen declared a strike, which affected the office workers, secretaries, servants, nurses, cooks, dock hands, seamen, laborers, etc. At present about 5,000 men are involved in the strike, exclusive of sympathetic strikers in other cities, and no settlement has been reached.

The Cooperative Movement

ANOTHER way of improving the workers' conditions is through the cooperative movement. The idea of cooperation, particularly cooperative credit, is an old one among the middle-class Chinese. When a man is in financial difficulties, or if he needs money for a wedding ceremony, he usually invites 8, 10, or 12 of his relatives and friends to make him a loan, each contributing a small sum. Suppose 10 persons contribute toward a cooperative loan of \$100, and suppose the loan is to be paid in 5 years. The contributors and the borrower will constitute an informal cooperative credit society which will ordinarily have 10 meetings, held semiannually. At each meeting, 1 of the 10 persons will receive the sum of \$100 and the remaining 9 will each contribute a sum of money. Theoretically, this sum will be about \$11.11 per person. But allowing a nominal interest for those who by lot will receive the amount of \$100 on some late date in the 5-year period, the individual semiannual contributions show some variation. This is a very satisfactory practice, because of the ease of raising a loan and of the avoidance of excessive rates of interest. It prevails generally in the farming districts to-day.

Recently, cooperative societies of the western type have been introduced into certain sections of the country. The China International Famine Relief Commission has drawn up rules for the use of cooperative societies. Farming villages near Peking welcome this sort of organization and 9 societies, with 449 members, have already been organized. These societies have been indorsed by the famine commission and have received from the commission loans totaling \$1,815.

Cooperative banking on a modern basis is carried on in several centers but without much success as yet. In 1922 teachers, students, and residents in the immediate neighborhood of Fu Tan University, Shanghai, started a cooperative bank which soon became successful. They began to publish a weekly magazine to popularize the idea of cooperation. A series of cooperative stores were gradually organized

in the suburbs of Shanghai, and some of them had some connections with the cooperative bank. Similar instances exist in a few other cities.

Consumers' cooperation seems to have taken root in and near Canton. Cantonese farmers, especially, find it to their advantage to buy goods at the cooperative stores instead of at the city stores, whose rent is high and where commodities are usually sold at higher prices.

Present Social Conditions

LABOR'S most serious problem is to strive with other classes for a new social order. There is a general revolt against the oppression of politics, militarism, and the landed aristocracy. The courage with which the fight is carried on is commendable, but the mistakes have been many.

Economically many farmers and workmen in the country favor an experiment in socialism, holding that such ideas can be applied in the Chinese rural life, the village community being small and its population homogeneous. They favor the single tax and the reduction of taxation, whose burden they have largely borne up to the present. In Canton certain features of guild socialism are now being experimented on with some success. In Peking these ideas receive some support from the intelligentsia, as the teachers and students of certain educational institutions have recently formed the Marxian Society and the New Thought Club.

The main hope of this general movement lies in the attempt to rejuvenate the nation through economic improvement. For centuries the pressure of population has tended to outstrip the food supply of the country, and the people have found it difficult to maintain a decent standard of living. To millions the struggle for existence is too severe. Under these circumstances the Chinese mind to-day is quite receptive to advanced ideas.

In carrying on the fight the Chinese liberals have not always shown sound judgment, but their faith is unswerving and their motives pure. At times they are overenthusiastic, and their enthusiasm has caused them to advocate measures too advanced for existing conditions. Mainly for this reason a reaction has now set in and attempts are made to discredit their views by citing, among other things, the failure of socialism in Wang An-shih's time in the eleventh century, when phases of state socialism were in practice. The Government undertook to manage commerce, industry, and agriculture, so as to prevent the rich from crushing the poor. It measured the land, divided it into equal areas to be cultivated by the farmers, and taxed the land according to fertility. The farmers could borrow money from the Government in the spring but must return it at harvest time, in money or in kind, with a reasonable amount of interest. Agricultural, commercial, and manufactured goods were purchased and distributed by Government agents at fixed rates. The unsold commodities were stored in the Government treasury for such emergencies as famine and war. Owing to strong opposition from many sides, however, the whole scheme was abandoned within a space of 10 or more years.

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Politically the liberal movement has made little headway. Efforts to form a national labor party have failed. Except in Canton, where several officials of the Government are wholeheartedly in sympathy with labor, the labor element in the politics of other sections of the country is negligible. As has been stated, the general policy of the trade-unions is to keep labor out of politics. It is not too much to say that Chinese labor to-day has very limited influence in political circles.

The social phase presents a more complicated situation. Under the influence of the present-day revolution in literature a considerable amount of the current literature is written in the vulgate, which makes it easily accessible to and understandable by many workers. Many a laborer to-day can carry on a conversation on current topics with some intelligence, which could not be generally expected of the common laborer two decades ago. Then, too, the worker is usually free from certain social discriminations. For instance, under the Manchu régime the children of artisan and servant classes generally suffered civil and educational disabilities. To-day such bias is not commonly tolerated. The family bond is also loosening. A farmer's daughter may leave the home in a wayside village to enter a trade school, a hair-net factory, or a silk filature. When the family has set the date of her wedding, she may pay no attention to such arrangement and insist upon her own choice of the husband. Workingmen's luxuries have also increased. It is not uncommon to see a railway fireman smoke a "Chesterfield" cigarette or a dock stevedore drink "Liverpool" cocoa. All these help to increase the worker's expenditures, and the slow rise of their wages is responsible for various kinds of social maladjustment among them.

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