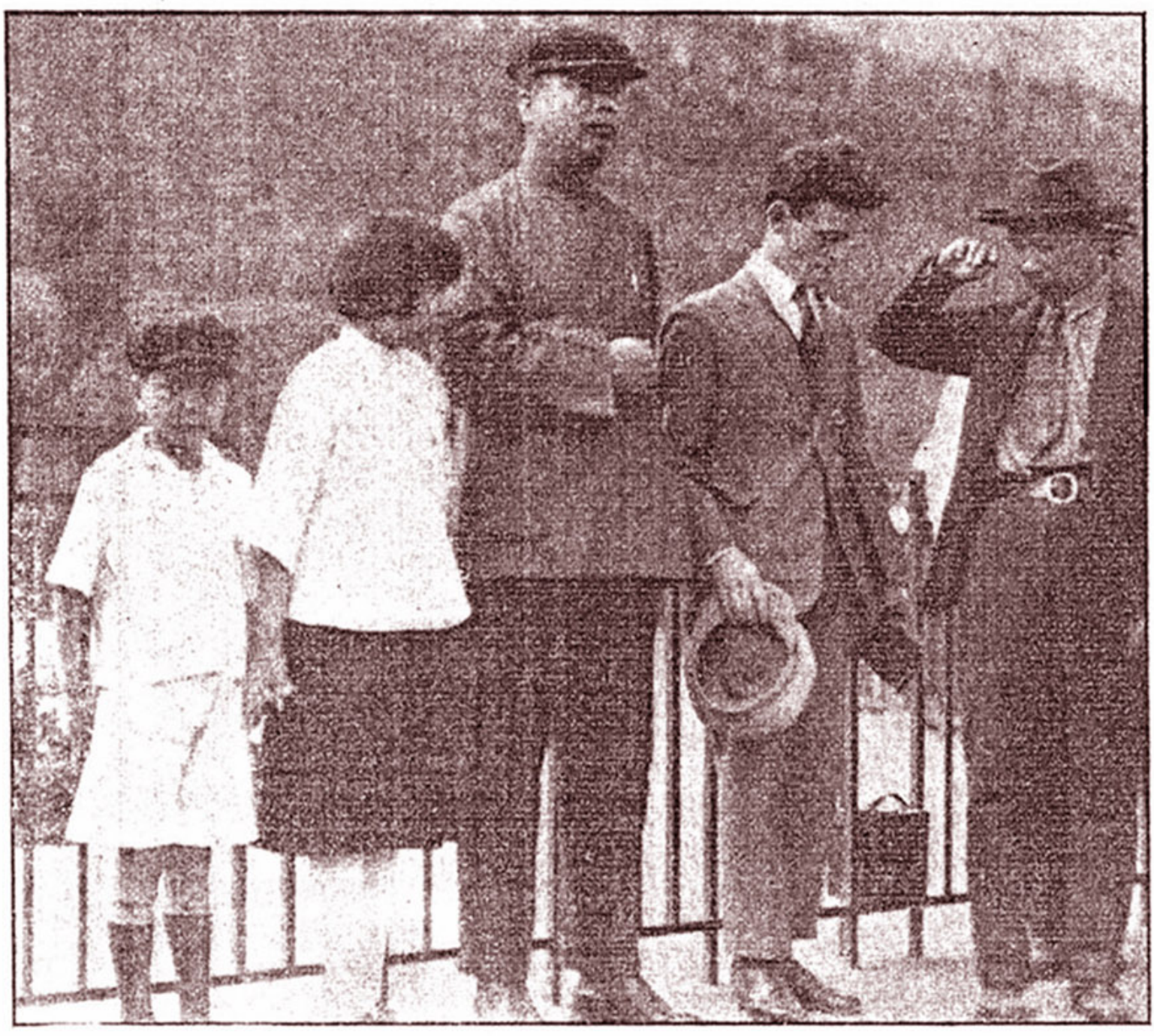
THE LITERARY DIGEST
for June 11, 1927

WHERE MOSCOW IS TEACHING YOUNG CHINA TO SEE RED



THE "CHRISTIAN GENERAL" IN MOSCOW, NEAR LENIN'S TOMB

This impromptu group was taken, *Asia* informs us, in July last year, "on the occasion of Dzerzhinsky's funeral." Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang is in the center. The two children are his daughter, "now in the Moscow Sun Yat Sen University," and his youngest son.

A SWARM OF COOLIES is squatting near the river bank in a Chinese village on the upper Yangtze. Just beyond, swinging in the river's current, stands a British gunboat, with its turret and six-inch guns threatening the village. This man in daring sport clothes, who has just rushed in among the coolies, is an American oil merchant. He is ordering them to unload his cargo. They are haggling over the pay, but with the aid of an officious middleman they come to terms. Now the coolies are hurrying through the job, and at last they have gathered, a panting, sweating crowd, to receive their wages. But the merchant has changed his mind. He offers them a sum much less than had been agreed upon. A howl goes up, but the officious middleman beats up several of the howlers. The American withdraws in lofty contempt, and the coolies, all except one or two, sulkily accept their few cents apiece.

Two foreign tourists—father and daughter—arrive, and the father holds out a shining dollar to induce a kindly old Chinese to face the daughter's outstretched camera. The gray-haired laborer raises wondering eyes toward the biggest sum of money he has ever seen. The camera clicks, the dollar is slipt back into the rich tourist's pocket, and the foreigners depart in high glee.

No, you are not looking at a scene of real life in China. These hateful Americans and Britishers are characters in a Soviet propaganda play called "Roar, China," and you have been seeing it enacted on the stage of Meyerhold's famous Revolution-Theater in Moscow, thanks to an eye-witness article by John McCook Roots in *Asia* Magazine. The play, Mr. Roots tells us, is an amazingly clever bit of art intended to arouse Chinese hatred of Western "capitalism" and to forge a link binding Red Russia and China together. Just before the lights come on, a terse sentence in Russian is flashed over the stage: "Canton, Hankow, Shanghai, we are with you—Moscow!"

The play was written long before the British gunboat *Cockchafer* had shelled Wanhsien, but by some weird coincidence the stage gunboat is named *Cockchafer*. Reading on:

After a night of dancing and carouse with British officers and their wives aboard the *Cockchafer*, the American hails a sampan to take him ashore. Half-way across a dispute starts over the fare. The American rises to strike the boatman and in so doing loses his balance, topples into the muddy current and is drowned. Terror-stricken, the sampan man tells the awful news to his comrades, and escapes into the hills.

Meanwhile the *Cockchafer* bears down on the village with decks cleared for action. "One American is worth at least two Chinese," the British commander has reflected. An ultimatum! For default in finding the guilty man, the village must surrender two members to the naval authorities before sundown as reprisal for the foreign life lost. In what struck me as probably one of


Chiang-Kai-Shek
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the most pathetic scenes in modern drama, the villagers discuss their plight. Finally the old man who had been deprived of the dollar offers himself as one of the victims. "I am old," he sobs, "and of no more use in the world. Besides, I have a son to carry on the family name. I will give myself to satisfy the foreigner." His son tries to dissuade him, but to no purpose. Aboard the *Cockchafer* the city magistrate, a proud mandarin of the old order, kneels before the British commander to ask a commutation of sentence. With him kneels the interpreter, a young American-trained Chinese. "One is enough," they beg. "The old man had volunteered. Let it be life for life!" The Englishman smiles sardonically and turns his back. The young Chinese springs up and shakes a trembling fist. Bluejackets jump forward, and the two are hustled off the ship.

That afternoon lots are drawn for the one who must accompany the old man to death, and the lot falls on his son. Armed British sailors guard the place of execution and the officers of the *Cockchafer*, who attend in a body. A foreign priest supports a towering cross with the inscription "Peace on Earth, Good-Will to Men," and by his side an American reporter crouches with his camera stript for action. The prisoners, pinioned together with a great wooden yoke, arrive under escort.

Frantic, the mother and child of the young man throw themselves at the feet of the British commander, imploring mercy. The gold-braided figure shakes his head. A woman missionary steps forward to remind the mother and child of their Christianity. They must be reconciled to God's will, she says.

The coolies rush the British, but a row of gleaming bayonets quells the outburst, and the executioner makes ready. The victims are strapt, each to a post, and blindfolded. Strangle-cords are looped round their throats. When all is ready and the cameraman is in position to catch the fatal moment, an order is shouted. The cords are tightened, the camera clicks and two limp yellow figures tell the tale of "British justice," according to Moscow.

"How are we to save ourselves from these imperialist cutthroats?" shouts a ragged coolie as the *Cockchafer* steams away. The young student who served as interpreter for the city magistrate the day before leaps upon a bench, arms raised in fierce denunciation. "There is only one way. Follow the example of the laborers in Canton and Hankow. Organize! You can not beg justice. You must force it!"

I glanced over the audience as the lights came on, declaring the play at an end. For several seconds no one moved. Not even under the red kerchiefs of the girl members of the Leaguo of Communist Youth was there a suggestion of a smile. Every face was tense and stern. Altho it had been a superb piece of acting, there was no applause.

The writer of this article had just made the long journey across Asia on the Trans-Siberian Railway, and when he arrived in Moscow his passports were promptly taken from him—whether by robbery or by official order, he could not tell. At any rate the lack of papers gave him a chance to stay in Moscow for a longer period than is permitted to most Americans, and as he spoke both Russian and Chinese, he was able to learn a good deal. Most of all, he was interested in the Sun Yat Sen University, where Russia is teaching Chinese students to "see red." Hear the *Asia* contributor further:

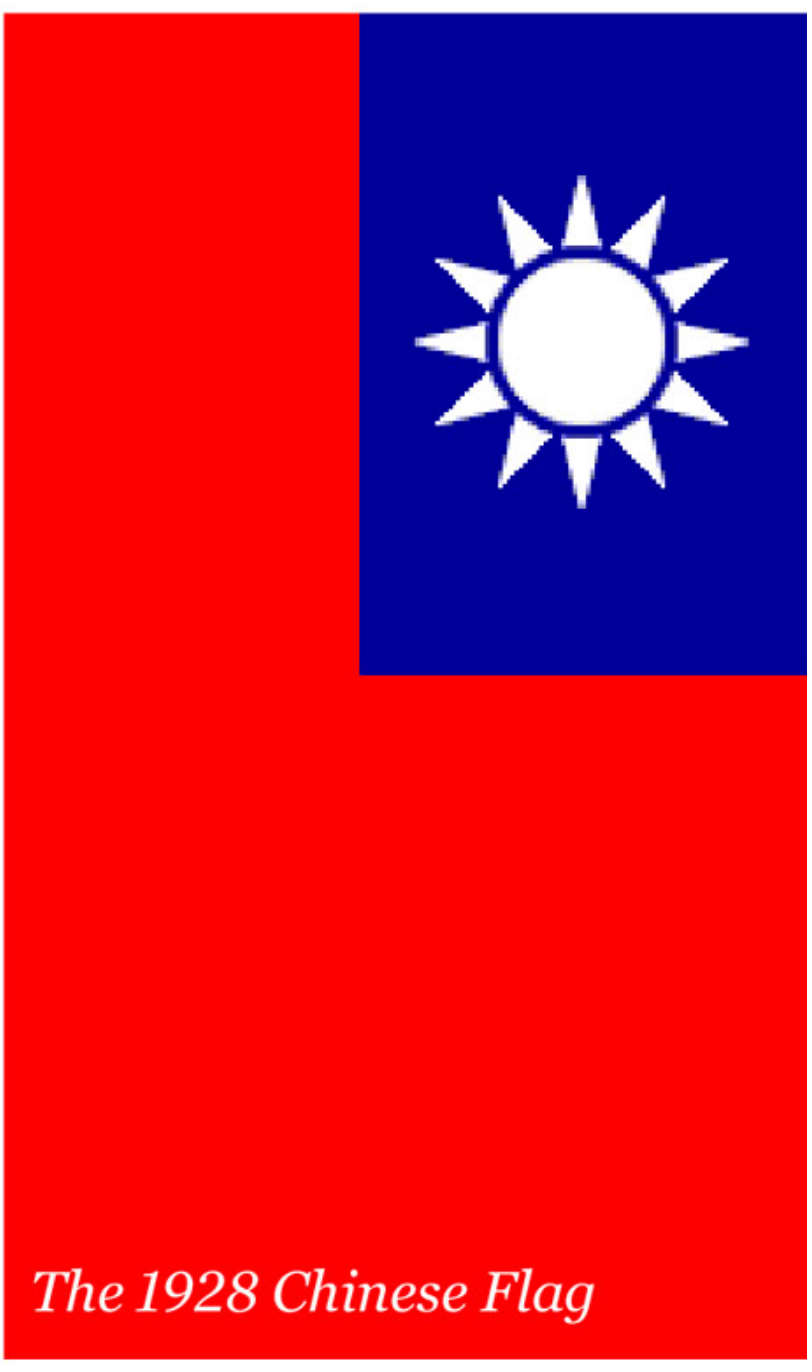

HE MAKES 'EM SEE RED

Karl Radek, head of the Sun Yat-Sen University for Chinese students in Moscow, is an Austrian, and "has played a prominent rôle in Soviet Russia."

A few days before the small slip of paper from the Mossoviet informed me that I had just one week in which to leave Russia, I dined alone with one of the older students of the Sun Yat Sen University. He knew just as well as I did that the play "Roar, China" was a distortion of the truth. And, having the interest of his country at heart, he was desirous of friendly cooperation between China and the West. Hence it worried him that there should be even an element of truth in such a picture; and elements of truth there certainly were. He said: "Until the treaties that allow foreign war-vessels in Chinese waters, that

permit such a situation to arise—until these are removed, how can there be peace between East and West?"

As to the Sun Yat Sen University, he felt that it was making a real contribution to Chinese education in emphasizing the practical side of the curriculum. "One of the chief defects of the mission schools," he said, "is that they tend to turn out young men fitted only to enter a foreign business firm. Here they train us to take part in the political and social revolution of our country." He later admitted, however, that the absence of science and literature courses made the curriculum narrow.



The 1928 Chinese Flag

It would be idle, of course, to minimize the influence of this Russian-managed enterprise on the minds of the Chinese youth who flock to Moscow to attend its sessions. The members of the teaching staff do not "preach Communism" in the blatant way many imagine every Russian to do. A strict faculty regulation prohibits direct proselytizing among the students. But the spirit there, permeating the whole curriculum, seeks by every indirect means available to impress on these young Chinese the inevitability of the class struggle—the evolutionary necessity of rule by the working masses.

And it must be said that the revolutionary seed falls in most cases on good ground. Already intensely nationalistic, smarting under a sense of the humiliation of their country at the hands of foreign Powers, these students, most of them without a very thorough education, are in just the mood to accept any political or economic theory that will suit their emotional state. Western democracy has failed dismally in China since 1911. The economic doctrine of Communism has an idealistic appeal. Even my young Chinese acquaintance, who was one of the more mature members of the student body, said he thought that "in China, as in every country, there are rich and poor, and the poor will never have a proper chance until they have won a dominant share in the government."

Only a few of these students, however, are Communists, altho all of them belong to the Kuomintang, and most of them to the Left or radical wing of that party. Mr. Roots reminds us that—

Russia has been the only country to assist the Nationalist movement to which they all hope to devote their lives. Men who believe in the "dictatorship of the proletariat" have furnished much of the brain-power that has organized, directed and articulated the Chinese popular uprising in its successful northern drive. Representatives of other political creeds not only have given no direct assistance to the revolutionary movement, but in the students' view, they continue to render themselves unacceptable and their tenets unavailable by living in China under treaties derogatory to China's self-respect. Russia, in short, is the only country assisting them to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1927 Nankina

1927 Yuan

set their house in order. In the circumstances it is hardly surprizing that they should want to learn how Russia runs its own.

As far as foreign culture is concerned, China is still much more deeply steeped in American and English ideas than in those of modern Russia. Its century-old heritage may be depended upon to make it rebel ultimately at any régime based on the doctrines of Karl Marx. Whether these students from Moscow, who are now returning in ever-increasing numbers, will succeed in robbing the West of its cultural advantage among educated Chinese is not yet apparent. The probability seems to be that they will not, tho they will doubtless provide spirited competition. Whether they will succeed in spreading among the Chinese masses anything so hostile to Sun Yat Sen's true teaching as the class war remains to be seen. They are certain, at least, to further what was at once the dying wish of Dr. Sun and one of the chief aims of the enterprise founded in his honor—namely, the strengthening of those bonds of friendship and mutual serviceableness which for four years past have linked Soviet Russia with Nationalist China.

If, then, there is such a thing as a "Red hand" in the Far East, we are told, we may properly seek the corresponding brain in Moscow. It was last September that Mr. Roots found himself obliged to spend some weeks in that city. There he studied the Sun Yat Sen University, of which he tells us:

The main university building, situated near the Moscow River and just across from the great gold-domed cathedral which still commemorates Napoleon's defeat of 1812, is easily accessible. I was not noticed as I approached, through a long avenue of trees, the drab yellow front with its Russian sign over the third story. The main stairway was crowded with Chinese students coming from classes. Several girls were among them. There were dialects from every part of China. Above the stairway were posters of welcome in Chinese and Russian, and along the wall, lists of regulations in close-written characters.

The "Rector," or President, of the Sun Yat Sen University, is Karl Radek, Soviet Ambassador to Germany until, so I understand, his propagandist activities made him unwelcome to the German Government. It was largely due to his work that the German morale on the Eastern Front was so low in 1917. I knew I should have to meet Radek before I could hope to see anything of the institution or of the students. He was out, but even the bare waiting-room was not without interest. The chief mural decoration was a large framed picture-mount including individual photographs of the Cantonese General, Chiang Kai-shek, the radical Wang Ching-wei, now chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang, the radical Hsu Chien, now Nationalist minister of justice, Mrs. Sun Yat Sen and, in the center, Sun Yat Sen himself. Outside, in the courtyard, volley-ball was in progress between two teams of Chinese students. The son of General Feng Yu-hsiang, a strong, upstanding youth of sixteen, was one of the players. Soon a group of young Russian instructors appeared. They

were greeted hilariously, and a new game started—Russians on one side, Chinese on the other.

Radek arrived at last—a short, youngish-looking man with black leather top-coat, pipe and burnsides. While he was closeted within, the group outside fell to talking excitedly in Russian. Several Chinese were there, all of whom had been in Moscow a year or more and spoke the language. There was no lack of familiarity between pupils and instructors, and finally a Russian and a Chinese came up behind one of the students and stood him on his head, to the amusement of all concerned. "There is no gulf here between students and teacher," said a pleasant Communist woman instructor to me afterward. "We treat them as friends and equals."

The political situation within the Communist party was at that time very tense, and, since Radek had been identified with Trotzky and Zinoviev in the radical group, who were in disfavor, the American visitor had to wait some days before the President of the university thought it wise to receive him. We read on:

Karl Radek, when run to earth in the course of several days, was hospitable but, being a diplomat, not entirely satisfying in regard to matters of fact. When I entered, he was sorting the English newspapers from China, and the various German dailies, and clipping everything about political conditions in the Far East. He turned from his work long enough to point out the place in southern Mongolia which was mentioned in the latest dispatches on account of the presence of Feng, recently returned from Moscow and about to join his Kuominchun, supposedly for a drive down from northwestern China in cooperation with the northward thrust of the Cantonese. Radek took for granted the eventual success of the National Revolutionary Army, but he envisaged a preliminary division of spoils, with Chang Tso-lin holding Shanghai and North China and with the Cantonese along the central Yangtze Valley and the South. He looked, too, for cooperation from Japan.

But his chief interest was the institution of which he is at the head. At last, he thought, Soviet Russia had something with which to counteract the bourgeois educational propaganda of American mission schools in China. New buildings, to cost three million rubles ($1,500,000), were planned and would be started in the spring. Already more than half the total had been subscribed, largely by wealthy Kuomintang sympathizers, Radek said, and overseas Chinese. As we walked outside, where church bells were droning all over the city, and turned toward the Kremlin, he spoke of his hopes that these young people—then three hundred strong and to number one thousand the next year—would go back to be leaders in the Chinese Revolution. His conception of a revolution was very different from mine. Moreover, I could see only humor in the term "toilers" sometimes applied to these specially favored students by their Russian hosts. But Radek had faith in the South, and at least we could agree that China's best political hope seemed to lie in that direction.

Students for the university, it seems, are chosen by the various Kuomintang branches from all over China. There is much competition for the limited number of places available, and examinations weed out the unfit. Most of the students appeared to be exceptionally self-reliant

and alert, and the few that Mr. Roots talked to were at least graduates of secondary schools in China. We read further:

The question of expense, like the matter of Russian financial aid to the Canton Nationalists, is a delicate subject and one on which, needless to say, I could get no documentary evidence. The consensus, so far as I could gather an opinion, was that the appropriations necessary to transport several hundred students a year from China to Russia, and to maintain them in Moscow for the regular two-year course, are shared between the Third (Communist) International and the Chinese Kuomintang. It would take more information than any Western journalist has yet succeeded in acquiring to define the exact responsibility of the Soviet Government. Whatever the Russian financial outlay, it seems fairly certain that the total Chinese contribution to this joint enterprise is substantial.

The students themselves have no expenses to meet. Everything is paid for them, and they are given in addition twenty rubles ($10) a month for spending money. I was hardly surprized to hear that the Chinese are envied and somewhat disliked by many youths in the Soviet State universities, who get their tuition free, but have to pay for other things.

My guide kindly took me over the building. It was a three-story affair, with refectory on the ground floor, where three hundred Chinese gathered three times daily to eat Russian food, classrooms and offices one flight up, and on the top floor a dormitory for the girl students. The young men occupy temporary quarters scattered over the city. There was a common room, notably lacking in couches and cushions, but otherwise well furnished. Little groups of students in their plain blue-wool uniforms sat around playing checkers or Chinese chess. Several greeted us—in English. Over the front wall hung a crimson banner with inscriptions in both gilt Russian letters and black Chinese characters. The one on the left read:

"Young Asia, with its hundreds of millions of laboring masses, has its faithful ally in the proletariat of all the civilized countries. No force in the world will be able to prevent its victories, which are destined to liberate all the peoples of Europe and of Asia.—Lenin."

And on the right:

"Very soon will come the day when the U. S. S. R. will be able to greet in a powerful and free China a friend and ally; and both these allies, in the great struggle for the liberation of the opprest peoples of the world, will go forward hand in hand.—Sun Yat Sen."

The visitor was surprized to see Chinese girls and boys here mingling with a freedom undreamed of in the China of ten years ago and generally absent to-day outside Nationalist territory. Feng Yu-hsiang's fifteen-year-old daughter was among them.