

The Fourth of May Movement in 1919 in China

By

Karam Abed Ali

Department of Samarra Education, General Directorate of Salah al-Din Education, Ministry of Education, Iraq.

E.mail: mohammed.k@uosamarra.edu.iq

Abstract

During the First World War (1914-1918), China experienced colonial conflicts by Japan and some European countries that wished to have a foothold in China that had lived in long isolation, so the Japanese threat emerged clearly after the withdrawal of German troops from the Shandong Territory and some of the leased islands captured by Japan and disembarked in 1914. Japan exploited the conditions of World War I and imposed on China the 21st demands in 1915, which were rejected by the Chinese people. After the war ended, China sought to recover what China had previously lost through the Paris Reconciliation Conference in 1919. After intensive efforts by the Chinese negotiating delegation, it was unable to restore Shandong territory and other regions and failed to convince all members about their claims. In the aftermath, massive protests broke out in China, which then spread to most parts of the country, called the Fourth of May Movement, which denounced the conference's decisions, which were described as humiliating. Many thinkers, traders and crafts were organized into that movement, through which the Communist Party was able to entrench its roots in the Chinese middle after being welcomed by most segments of society.

Keywords: China, Fourth of May Movement,

Introduction

The Fourth of May 1919 Movement in China is one of the most important movements in the Asian continent that sought to liberate the individual intellectually, so we will find in this research that many classes and groups of society have supported or supported this movement. This movement emerged because of the political accumulations, the dominance of warlords and the change of the political system to a republican one, all the more prompting the intervention of the major Powers, particularly Japan, in some important strategic areas of China. The Shandong province was the focus of the Japanese people who seized it after they expelled the Germans from it during the First World War. The fact that it has not received sufficient support from the major Powers towards Japanese ambition but has abandoned them in several positions as well as the deteriorating internal conditions in China. We will therefore clarify in this research the reasons and details that China went through during the First World War and the events that took place right up to the Conference of Peace and the outbreak of the Fourth of May Movement and the results of this movement.

The research was divided into an introduction, four axes and a conclusion as the first axis included China's strategic importance in terms of location and space. China is one of the largest countries in the area and population and is third only to Russia and Canada in terms of area as well as its human resources, which is one of the highest in the Asian continent, making it the focus of many colonial powers. The second axis deals with the events of the First World War and its impact on China. Through which Japan managed to capture the Shandong province and expel the Germans from it, as well as imposing on China the 21st

demands, China was forced to agree to the majority of those demands because it was in precarious political situations because of the change in the political system to the 1911 Republic and the attendant repercussions of China's internal situation. There was also no clear international support for China during those events. The third theme is on the Paris Peace Conference and the role of the Chinese negotiating delegation. China has formed a group of members headed by veteran politician Wellington Kwu. This delegation sought to obtain China's rights from the restoration of the Shandong territory controlled by Japan during World War I, to eliminate all unequal treaties with China and to abolish the 21 demands with Japan. But the Chinese delegation's demands were not heeded by the major powers despite China entering the war alongside the Allies. This was adversely reflected in China's internal disruption of the situation and the outbreak of anti-Conference movements, most notably the Fourth of May 1919 movement.

First: China's Strategic Importance

Location and space

China is one of the largest countries and China has occupied 9.6 million km², making China third in the area after Russia and Canada (1). China is located in the eastern part of Asia and has been assisted by its coastline on the western coast of the Pacific Ocean, which is about 5.500 km as well as enjoying natural barriers that have enabled them to isolate from the outside world for a long period of time (2).

as well as its human resources, which are the Asian continent's highest census (3) China's rulers have long been able to shape the special system in the development of Chinese society and to isolate it from contact with the West for a long time, so China has not been attracted to the Western democratic system but has refused to be part of it 4 This is due to the different customs and traditions between China and the West, and its location on the western coast of the Pacific Ocean bordered by the East of Korea, the Sea of China, the South of Indochina, India, Nepal, the West of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the North of Russia and Mongolia, 5 have enabled it to be in natural isolation from the outside world. However, due to the evolution of the world, China could not have withstood its isolation and was the focus of the colonial Power's attention, foremost among them was Japan, which saw from the densely populated Chinese market a market for the disposal of its products as well as coal and iron mines and other resources, so it found from Britain the right ally to implement its schemes (6).

Agriculture is one of China's most important resources, with land cultivated in Beijing (4) Alone, estimated at 6.34 thousand km², Beijing's suburbs produced tons of vegetables, coal, fruits, meat, eggs, milk, cotton, fig, chestnuts and other crops all year round. (6) In addition to the productive crafts practised by the population, agriculture topped other industries with agricultural land accounting for about 11% of the country's total area employing about 80% of the total population and rice production in China estimated at about one third of the world's production. and its cultivation has been concentrated in the southern parts of China as well as the wheat crop, of which China is one of the leading producers (7).

China's population is among the most densely populated of many nationalities and has been assessed by a national 56, notably Manchu, Mongol Turks, Myau, Haka, Arabs (8) as well as Han nationalism, which has been one of the largest in China (2).

China's ancient religion was pagan, Kadian and Confucian, which counted the official doctrine and the ruling class at the time and formed the important pillar of China's feudal

regime and subsequently was sent to it by Christianity and Islam through Christian missionary campaigns and Muslim trades (3).

As for the importance of China to the West, it has prepared a market for the disposal of their products, as well as China's possession of raw materials, which have become urgently needed after the growing industrial revolution. China has tightened its isolation from the world, with the exception of Korea and its neighboring Vietnam, for fear of an influx of Western ideas that are contrary to the customs and traditions of the imperial regime in China. (8) Therefore, interest in establishing a commercial relationship in any way has been increased and they have been able to do so through the opium trade that resulted in the first and second opium wars, which continued until 1860, following which Chinese ports were opened to British vessels under the Treaty of Nanking 1842 between Britain and China (9).

Before we go into the midst of the First World War and its impact on China, we must address an important event: the 1911 Revolution, which ended the Manchu Family's rule in China and which continued 1644-1911 and may be claimed by Sun Yat Sun, who became China's President on 29 December 1911 (10).

Second: Impact of World War I in China

World War I broke out on 28 June 1914 after the assassination of the Crown Prince of Austria, Hungary, and his wife during their visit to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by Serbian student Gavrilo Princep, a month after the crisis Austria declared war on Serbia on 28 July 1914. Consequently, Japan found that there was an opportunity to acquire and acquire certain concessions in China (12). Therefore, Japan's first objective was to acquire the German colonies in China after exploiting the Chinese market and its coal and iron resources, which the Chinese had been unable to invest as a focus of Japanese attention. The most prominent of those colonies was Shantung Province (13) It is in the eastern part of China and was acquired by Germany in 1898 (14).

As a result of Japan's expansionist aspirations, the war against Germany was declared on 23 August 1914 and several months later Japan was able to capture German colonies in East Asia, including China's Shandong Province (14) Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, China demanded that Japan withdraw from Shandong Province and return the Quichao region to Chinese administration and that Japan pay compensation for all damage suffered by China as a result of Japan's military operations on Chinese territory. Those demands were rejected by the Japanese Government and announced in January 1915 the establishment of a military base in Shandong Province 15 Civil administration has also been established in various parts of Shandong and created as a Japanese mark replacing Chinese customs in Kyaw Zhao Bay (16) In the midst of the war events and the preoccupation of the States of reconciliation on the fronts, China held a unilateral contract aimed at consolidating its influence over the German colonies in China. Japan's Foreign Minister, Hyoki, handed in an 18-month memorandum containing 1915 demands, which sank 21 (with 21 demands) (17) of Japan to transform southern Manchuria and eastern Mongolia into Japanese colonies and even subjugate the whole of China to Japanese colonialism, military and civilian privileges in China and the appointment of Japanese advisers in various military and civilian State affairs (18) In the face of those events, China had tried hard to reach a political solution to end the crisis between itself and Japan. It had continued with Britain and the United States but had not found sufficient support from them. The former had been preoccupied in the war. The latter had preferred not to interfere with international problems that adversely affected its

safety. In view of those positions, the Chinese Government had agreed to the twenty-first claimant's clauses except cluster V in the 8 of Ayar 1915 which had been signed in 25 Ayar 1915 the day of the signing of the Treaty between China and Central China was known as National Humiliation Day (19).

The Chinese people boasted of these events and anti-republic movements emerged, most notably the movement led by Yuan Xi Kai, to return to the imperial regime in China in 1916. Despite popular and international opposition, Yuan Xi Kai declared himself an emperor of China on 1 January 1916, leading to many uprisings in Chinese provinces and as a result of popular and international pressure from Japan and Western countries. (20) As a result of China's accelerated internal and external events and turmoil, it must demonstrate its attitude towards war in order to preserve its international standing and the stability of its internal provinces, which were experiencing turmoil and instability, the policy of war neutrality has become fateful for the Chinese (21).

The President of the Republic of China, Tuan Chi Jui (22), declared war on Germany, formally entering the First World War with the States of Accord on August 14, 1917, Chinese Prime Minister Duane Kirui took over the process of introducing Chinese troops into the war and merging them with the Allied armies (23). In contrast, Japan had consolidated its presence in the Shandonkh region by concluding a series of agreements whereby Russia, Britain, Italy and France had recognized Japan's entitlement to the Shandong Territory and the German islands in the Pacific Ocean (24).

But this was rejected by the United States of America and the dispute was settled after negotiations on September 6, 1917, between U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing and Japanese Ambassador Aichi. The exchange of views and negotiations continued until November 1917, emphasizing that China is an independent and sovereign country, respecting the open-door policy and ensuring China's safety. (25).

Despite China's entry into war with the Allied States, its participation was limited in the form of war and was not effective and its functions were limited to forced labour, labour on French and British fronts, the transport of materiel, the burial of bodies and the transportation of supplies. Consequently, the French and British Governments submitted a protest note to China because of their limited participation (26).

Lenin's Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917 had a clear impact on the events taking place as the Plaza signed a peace (Brest Lenovsk) with Germany led to Russia's exit from war (27) Japan thus exploited the events of war as well as the internal unrest in Russia during the revolution to consolidate its control over China and its attempt to control Siberia (28) In the midst of these events, Germany's strength declined and the Allied armies appeared to have won and the war came to an end, which was declared over on 11 November 1918 after Germany and its allied nations surrendered after suffering material and human losses of nearly 10 million dead and twenty-one million wounded (29).

It seems that every end of a war there is a division of the spoils for the victorious countries, and this is what we will address in the subsequent transformation of the Paris Conference and the Peace Conference, which negatively reflected the Chinese delegation's demands for the restoration of the Shantong Territory, which was acquired by Japan.

Third: The Paris Peace Conference and the Chinese delegation's negotiating role

After four years of bloody events, the victors of the war chose the city of Paris to convene the Peace Conference as the worst affected region in the war to reach a settlement to consolidate peace and stability in the world.

The victorious States sought to reconcile all parties and to distribute the gains of war, including the German colonies in China, which Japan acquired during the war and which were at the heart of the Chinese delegation's negotiations at the Conference on Peace, specifically the Shandong Province, which was also at the heart of Japanese claims, as well as their claim to the German islands in the South Pacific. Initially China faced a problem of diplomatic representation at the Peace Conference. China was divided into two parts during the First World War, the first in Beijing led by Li Yuan Hong in the North and the second in the Sun Yan Sun's canton in the South (31). Canton identified a group of personalities represented at the Paris Peace Conference headed by Sun Yan Sun but failed to obtain preliminary recognition. The Canton Government sent its position to Beijing to develop a mutually satisfactory solution. It was agreed to appoint three delegates from the North (Beijing) and two South (Canton) (32), thus the Chinese delegation was formed in a consensual North-South manner under the chairmanship of Wellington Coe (33) to participate in the Peace Conference:

Which they are:

1. Lu Zheng Qiang
2. Qintg Wang
3. Sauke Unique Age
4. CY Wei as well as their president Wellington Coe

Their demands were based on US President Wilson's 14 principles.

1. Return the unconditionally rented Shandong province from Germany.
2. Abolition of treaties signed by Japan by force with China in 1915.
3. Call upon the major States to abolish the unequal treaties with China that have been imposed on them at different times.
4. Emphasize the principle of equality in dealing with China by other States (34).

On the other hand, the head of the Chinese delegation, Wellington Kuo, held several meetings, including his meeting with US Secretary of State Robert Lansing in support of China's demands and presentation to US President Wilson, who proposed in April 1919 that Japan hand over all sovereign rights in the Shandong region to China (35). Wilson also stressed during his meeting with Wellington Coe that "there will be nothing for China to fear from the discussions at this conference". (36) However, the dilemma between the Japanese delegations headed by the representative of the Japanese Emperor Kimongi Sayongi and the Chinese delegation during the Conference is the way in which German rights and interests in Shandong will be returned to China directly and indirectly. If the Conference decides to return it directly, China will recover without any conditions of the leased territory as provided for in article V of the Sino-German Agreement of 1898. If, indirectly, all German rights and interests are given to Japan with a promise to return it to China later on, it means that Japan can impose its conditions on China (37).

The Japanese delegation insisted on the recognition of Japan's rights acquired in the Shandong region and other German property in China and the Pacific, and of the argument (Ask for more than you want to get what you want) Japan demanded the adoption of the principle of racial equality, which was not acceptable to most Western States participating in the Conference, so that the Conference had to achieve at least one of Japan's demands. (34) The Japanese delegation thus insisted that China had agreed in 1915 to indirectly return Shandong. The Chinese delegation's response was that the situation had changed since 1915. China had entered the war with the Allies and must return all its property. The Japanese delegation had replied that it was Japan that had taken the Germans out of the Shandong territory, and it was therefore unfair to waive the gains without pay. The Japanese delegation threatened not to sign the treaty if necessary (36).

As a result of the pressure placed on the United States President by the Japanese delegation and his fear that Japan would move towards Bolshevik Russia and establish relations with it, 33 Wilson decided to abandon the Chinese delegation's demands and stated that the pledges made during the war could not be regarded as cancelled - referring to the 21 demands between China and Japan in 1915 - but would support the Chinese demands of the League of Nations in the future. On 30 April 1919, the Versailles Magistrate's Council approved the article. (156), (157) and (158) of the Treaty, which provided for Japan's seizure of the Shandong Territory as well as the Marshall Islands and the Carolinas north of the Equator which were part of German property and thus the Treaty was signed in final form on 28 June 1919 (37).

Fourth: Implications of the decisions of the Peace Conference and the outbreak of the Movement of May 4, 1919

No sooner had the news reached China and the decisions of the Peace Conference, at which China was the biggest loser than the victorious countries, China was swept by broad popular opposition led by students in Beijing and organized a major demonstration against Japan and the countries with which it stood (28) On the morning of May 4 1919 there were major demonstrations involving some 5,000 students from thirteen universities and colleges in Beijing who announced that they would defend Shandong with blood, attacked a group of pro-Japanese politicians and burned down their homes. Several students were arrested and later released. (16) That movement was thus called the Fourth of May Movement and was not limited to students, but was attended by trade unions in China, especially railway workers. (32) Many intellectuals, traders and war owners participated in this movement. ((Restore us our rights in Shandong, punish traitors and drop 21 claims) After heightened tensions, the Ministry was compelled to resign on 12 June 1919 and following those serious repercussions in the country, the Chinese delegation in Versailles announced its refusal to sign the Treaty on 28 June 1919 (36).

The movement was not limited to China, but extended to students and the Chinese community in Paris to the point where the American delegation received death threats and the possibility that the life of President Wilson of the United States who was there would be in danger (37) The Movement has thus been a source of significant events in China's contemporary history and the beginning of the end of ancient traditional Chinese thought, influenced by Marxist and Leninist ideas and widely invested in China (31). On the economic front, the bourgeois class participated in the movement to protect its interests when the movement declared the Japanese cargo boycott and the chambers of commerce in Shanghai and Canton solidarity. Conversely, China's economy was revitalized, and Chinese goods promoted at the expense of Japanese goods It could thus be argued that the Movement was a

sociocultural political revolution aimed at emancipation and the creation of a new culture in keeping with the Chinese people's aspirations (38).

The movement also has intellectual and political manifestations. (Save the country) To create a society that believes in modern political and national ideas against Confucianism, as well as to stand up to the colonial movement and discontinue all unequal treaties (29) The Movement also combined the struggle for the rights of the Chinese nation with the struggle against ancient traditional ideas, which were one of the main reasons for the deterioration of Chinese society according to their belief _ and called on the Movement to democracy and the sovereignty of science to curb old traditional ideas, thus contributing to those views and ideas by shaping China's intellectual and cultural policy to the present (38) Prominent thinkers who led the movement were Chen de Xio. Which leaders of the movement intellectually and politically, has severely attacked the old traditional Chinese system and stressed the need to quote and crystallize Western ideas in line with the Chinese individual (39)

Results of the May 4 Movement

1. Not only did it demand the overthrow of the then existing regime (warlords) (41), as it sought to dislodge Confucian thought, which was considered obstructive in the development of China's Government and people.
2. The influx of socialist ideas, particularly after the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917, brought about a radical change in the Chinese popular middle after being adopted by many leading politicians and intellectuals.
3. It also called for Chinese-language teaching and freedom of education, particularly after the influx of Western ideas over the past decades.

The Movement was thus a comprehensive revolution aimed at independence, liberation of the Chinese individual and the creation of a new culture as well as interest in China's heritage (42).

Conclusions

- 1- Japan exploited the circumstances of World War I to expand its spheres of influence at the expense of Chinese territory after it imposed the 21st demands.
- 2- The Chinese delegation to the Peace Conference did not enjoy genuine support in its issues by the major Powers towards Japan.
- 3- Changing China's political system to a republican created internal turmoil that led to China's weakness in demanding in Japan's controlled territories.
- 4- The outbreak of a movement such as the Fourth of May was natural as a result of political conditions and the resulting decisions of the Peace Conference, which supported Japanese control of the Shandong province and some other regions.
- 5- The Fourth of May's movement paved the way for the growing and proliferation of the Chinese Communist Party in most parts of China.
- 6- The Fourth of May was a socio-economic political movement aimed at freeing the Chinese individual from intellectual constraints, rejecting that old Confucian thought.

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