

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

SHANGHAI COMMITTEE.

SECOND REPORT.

SHANGHAI, 12th, February, 1932.

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By 8.00 p.m. on January 29th., i.e., after the beginning of the arranged truce, firing had died down but on the following day the Japanese Admiral protested to American and British Consul-General that the Chinese armoured train in the railway station had reopened fire. This the Chinese denied, alleging, on the other hand, that it was the Japanese who had fired.

During the morning of January 31st. seventeen Japanese aeroplanes flew over Shanghai and the Chinese positions, but without any bombardment. The Japanese naval authorities contended that this demonstration was effected as a result of a fresh breach of the truce by the Chinese. This was hotly denied by the Chinese. On this day took place the meetings referred to in the last paragraph of our first Report, at which suggestions for a neutral zone were made, and it was agreed that the truce should continue pending final replies from both sides.

On February 1st. the truce was more or less observed, though there was again some desultory firing.

On February 2nd. the Japanese Commander again alleged breaches of truce by the Chinese on the previous day, adding that as it seemed clear that Chinese

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were massing their forces with a view to surrounding the Japanese, he was going to send up aeroplanes to reconnoitre.

About midday Japanese aeroplanes flew over Shanghai and the Chinese positions. They were fired upon by the Chinese, whereon aeroplanes dropped bombs in Chapei, and in a short while general firing from both sides recommenced. At about 3.00 p.m. - i.e., after the fighting had reopened - the Japanese Consul-General informed the Consular authorities that the Japanese Government had rejected the proposal for a neutral zone referred to above.

The same day the Mayor of Greater Shanghai sent to the Consular authorities a letter, received by them on February 3rd., referring to the agreement for an armistice reached at the meeting of 31st. January, and stating that the Japanese had repeatedly broken this agreement by attacking the Chinese troops and in particular by bombing them from the air as described in the preceding paragraph.

On February 3rd. the Japanese naval authorities announced that, as the Chinese authorities had consistently failed to display sincerity in carrying out

of their engagements, Chinese troops must be withdrawn a sufficient distance from Chapei, and to effect that object Japanese aeroplanes might be forced to bombard Chinese positions. Later in the day the Japanese Consulate-General informed the Consular authorities that three Japanese destroyers had been fired upon from the Woosung Forts, and that the Japanese therefore intended to occupy the Forts. This firing was again denied by the Chinese.

Since February 3rd, a state of open warfare exists, any pretence of truce being abandoned. Firing continues intermittently, both in Chapei and Woosung areas, with the use of artillery, and, on the Japanese side, of aerial bombardments. The offensive is entirely in the hands of the Japanese, whose avowed object is to capture Woosung Forts and drive all Chinese troops a considerable distance from Shanghai.

It must be noted, in relation to the question of the breaches of the truce, that a complete truce never really existed, and also that, in the absence of foreign observers in the fighting lines, it is impossible to establish which side should be held responsible for

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the breaking of the truce. Individual units on either side, or even "agents provocateurs", may have been responsible.

Apart from the question of the resumption of hostilities between regular troops on the fighting lines, it is necessary to recall briefly the events, internationally important from the point of view of the status of the Settlement, which during this period were occurring inside the Japanese sector.

From the beginning of the Japanese movement on the night of January 28th., the Japanese sector was invaded by Chinese plain-clothes troops, who concealed themselves inside, or on the roofs of, houses, whence they fired on the Japanese patrols in the streets with automatic pistols. It should be mentioned that the Japanese, who seem to have had insufficient regular forces for the defence of the area they occupied, had mobilised and armed all their so-called reservists, who wore civilian clothes distinguished by a brassard.

The marines and reservists responded to the sniping of the Chinese plain-clothes soldiers by machine-gun fire, and also by house-to-house searches to locate the snipers, in the course of which very considerable

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able damage was done, houses even being set on fire to dislodge the snipers. The Japanese naval authorities took complete control of the Hongkew district inside the Settlement, barricading streets, disarming police, and paralysing all other municipal activities of the Settlement authorities, including the fire brigade. Police posts were prevented from any communication with their headquarters. The Shanghai Municipal Council was forced to evacuate schools and hospitals. Numerous excesses, including summary execution, were committed by marines, reservists, and roughts, the lastmentioned, who had no official standing, being actuated probably by a mere spirit of revenge against the Chinese for earlier anti-Japanese activities. A reign of terror resulted, and almost the entire non-Japanese population of the area ran away.

Owing to the large number of Chinese who were believed to have been arrested or put to death by Japanese, and of whom no trace could be found, the Municipal Council on February 5th, asked the Consular Body to approach the Japanese authorities with a view to inquiry. The Japanese Consul General admitted that excesses had been committed by his nationals at a time

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when feeling was running high and chaotic conditions prevailed, but the situation was much improved and he agreed that all persons arrested as suspects by the naval authorities within the Settlement should be handed over to the Municipal police. This was accordingly done, but the number of Chinese still unaccounted for is very large. The Municipal police has already collected details of about 300 cases.

Sniping has now been much reduced, but Japanese control is still severe, and police and other municipal functions can only slowly reassert themselves. The Japanese authorities were much concerned at the excesses committed by their nationals, and a number of undesirables have been deported to Japan.

The Committee does not propose, for the time being, to send any further report unless it comes into possession of some fresh information which would necessitate correction of previous statement of until it is required to amplify or supplement any particular point in statements made in its first and second reports.

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