

## The National Christian Council in China during the 1920s between Nationalism and Internationalism

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In November 1926, a representative of Chinese Protestant Christianity gave a speech before the Rotary Club of Shanghai addressing exactly the topic of our current conference:

“Nationalism and Internationalism”.<sup>1</sup>

The speaker was David Z. T. Yui (1882 – 1936) or in Chinese 余日章 (Yú Rizhāng). He was at that time the secretary general of the national committee of the YMCA in China and the chairperson of the National Christian Council in China.<sup>2</sup> He had graduated from Harvard University in 1910 and therefore knew the Western perspective from within.<sup>3</sup>

In his address Yui argues that nationalism and internationalism are not opposed to each other: “Every man can, and should, be a loyal nationalist and a staunch internationalist, at the same time. If he finds this impossible, there must be something wrong either in his nationalism or in his internationalism, or in both.”<sup>4</sup>

Nationalism “should not mean a biased love of one’s own country at the expense of another country”, but “should clearly and definitely point to a man’s national duty to help develop to the fullest extent the special gifts with which his own people are endowed and the natural resources which they have inherited, and this not simply for their own use and enjoyment but as their national contribution to the sum total of the world’s civilization.”<sup>5</sup>

Yui defines internationalism as “world-brotherhood or the consummation of the family of nations”,<sup>6</sup> and in his further explanation, a contextual Chinese idea of what it means to be a family may be identified:

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<sup>1</sup> David Z. T. Yui, Nationalism and Internationalism. An address before the Rotary Club of Shanghai, November 26, 1926 (no year and place of publication), online available at Trinity College Digital Repository <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/moore/61> (accessed 2020-09-25)

<sup>2</sup> Bays, Daniel H., Article “Yui, David Z.T. (or Yu Jih-Chang; Yu Rizhang),” in: Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions, ed. Gerald H. Anderson, New York 1998, p. 757, online via Boston University School of Theology, <http://www.bu.edu/missiology/missionary-biography/w-x-y-z/yui-david-z-t-yu-jih-chang-yu-rizhang-1882-1936> (accessed 2020-09-25).

<sup>3</sup> Holcombe, Arthur N., Harvard Graduates in the Chinese Revolution, in: Harvard Alumni Bulletin 1930, p. 983–988 mentions Yui with the statement: “Of those who have achieved distinction outside of politics, probably the most widely known is Yü Jih-chang (A.M. 1910) commonly called David Yui, the present head of the Chinese Y. M. C. A.”; quotation p. 984.

<sup>4</sup> Yui 1926, p. 9

<sup>5</sup> Yui 1926, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Yui 1926, p. 7

“Like the members of a family, they [the brother-nations] differ in their endowments, heritage, appearance, education, abilities, experience, outlook-on-life, and condition-in-life. These differences do not make them lose their membership in the family, but rather obligate each member to lay his best offering on the family altar, and to assist the other members in whatever way he can.”<sup>7</sup>

Yui claims that Chinese learning has a long tradition of not considering “nationalism and internationalism... two opposing or mutually exclusive principles.”<sup>8</sup> Her refers to “The Great Learning” (大學 – Dà Xué), one of the four canonical books of Neoconfucianism, and he quotes from that book: “The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the world, first ordered well their own countries;... their countries being rightly governed, the whole world was made tranquil and happy.”<sup>9</sup>

What is the context, in which such a concept about the interrelation between nationalism and internationalism was expressed?

First of all, the context was one of continuing colonization by Western powers and of neglect for parts of the Chinese rights for self-governance.

China had entered a phase of modernization when in 1905 the system of education for civil servants was disentangled from the (Neo-)Confucian canon of scriptures as its sole basis and it became possible, that also other curricula at school and university could lead to a career in the service of the empire.<sup>10</sup> Only a few years later, in 1911/12, China underwent the transition from the reign of the last dynasty of emperors to a republic. Yet the Republic of China was only partly successful in establishing democratic control all over the territory of China. During its first years, it saw an attempt to lay the foundation for a new imperial dynasty, and after the failure of this attempt in 1916, the central government had only limited control.<sup>11</sup>

Chinese intellectuals and political leaders would attribute the weakness of the new system to the economic and political influence of foreign powers, whereas many Europeans would argue that China was not yet ready to become a democracy.

The Republic of China continued to suffer from the consequences of the so called “Unequal Treaties”, which had begun in the 1840s with Britain enforcing its interest to sell opium on

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<sup>7</sup> Yui 1926, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Yui 1926, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Webster, James B., *Christian Education and the National Consciousness in China*, New York 1923, p. 287.

<sup>11</sup> Schmidt-Glintzer, Helwig, *Das Neue China. Vom Untergang des Kaiserreichs bis zur Gegenwart*, München 2020, p. 45-47.

the Chinese market by the military superiority of its warships, and other European powers subsequently pressing China for similar privileges of possessing territory along the coastal regions and having access to the Chinese market and labor force.

On the side of Chinese intellectuals, the sense of being betrayed by Western powers deepened after the results of the Versailles conference in 1919. Despite the perspective outlined by American President Woodrow Wilson in his fourteen points of 1917 – the year by which both the USA and China entered World War I siding with Britain, France and Japan – China did not see its full sovereignty restored after the end of the war. The Conference of Versailles left the Unequal Treaties unaltered, and Japan was allowed to hold on to the Chinese territories it had taken after the surrender of the German colonial rule in 1914.<sup>12</sup>

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1919, students in Beijing protested the weak response of the Chinese government to the terms of Versailles, and the student protests sparked a nation-wide movement of political mobilization which was later referred to as the “May Fourth Movement”.<sup>13</sup>

Like it is true for any country under direct or indirect colonial rule, the concept of being a “nation” and striving for the wellbeing of that nation in China at that time does not necessarily include a claim of superiority over other “nations”, peoples or countries. Therefore, the meaning of the term “nationalism” in its application by and to the May Fourth Movement is ambiguous. For many people in China, “nationalism” was no more than the firm appeal to be accepted as a nation among nations with full sovereignty over its own affairs.

David Z. T. Lui in his speech of 1926 cautiously tried to make that point clear towards his audience from European countries and from North America:

“What is wrong in a people resisting outside aggression and domination which unchecked will ultimately destroy them and their national life? ... One people may be more advanced than another in what is called civilization. What do these differences or inequalities mean? And what do we make of them? Do they confer upon the stronger and more advanced nation the freedom or right to trample down and gradually to extirpate the weaker and less advanced nation or nations? This seems to have been the philosophy underlying much of national and international relations. Do we still cling to this type of nationalism today?”<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, it has to be stated that within the Chinese national movement, there existed almost from the beginning also a more extended notion of “nationalism” which had more in

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<sup>12</sup> Richter, Julius, *Allgemeine Evangelische Missionsgeschichte*, Vol. IV: Das Werden der christlichen Kirche in China, Gütersloh 1928, p. 537.

<sup>13</sup> Schmidt-Glintzer 2020, p. 50–51.

<sup>14</sup> Yui 1926, p. 3.

common with the nationalisms in Central and Western Europe at the same time. The basis for this notion was the concept of the ethnicity of the Hàn (漢族 – *Hànzú*) forming a “nation” of its own and in distinction from other “nations” on the territory of the Chinese Empire before the beginning of Western colonialism.<sup>15</sup> Chinese nationalism became more exclusive and oriented towards national supremacy whenever it was linked to the claim that the nation of the Hàn should rule over other nations on Chinese territory instead of either including them in one equal Chinese nationality for all or granting them self-rule as additional nations among equal nations.

A second aspect of the context interwoven with the first one was a discourse on the position of Christianity in China within the colonial situation. Both Christian missionaries and Chinese Christians in the 1920s were increasingly under pressure to take a stance towards the national movement, because part and parcel of the “Unequal Treaties” were guarantees for Christian missionaries which gave them a status of extraterritoriality under the protection of the diplomats and the military of their respective home country.<sup>16</sup>

From 1922 onwards, anti-Christian sentiments existed not only as an opinion within the national movement but were organized in the formation of anti-Christian associations. A meeting of the World’s Student Christian Federation under the presidency of John Mott (1865–1955) at Qinghua University in Beijing in April 1922 which was widely advertised in Christian periodicals provoked the founding of an Anti-Christian Student Federation by students in Shanghai. The circulation of a public statement by this association led to the formation of similar groups in other Chinese cities.<sup>17</sup> In 1924, the “Educational Rights Recovery Movement” was established to counter the protection of Christian schools and Christian education by the Unequal Treaties.<sup>18</sup>

The formation of the National Christian Council in China - of which David Z. T. Yui then was elected the chairperson – happened in May 1922, only a few weeks after the conference of the World’s Student Christian Federation and the launch of the first formal anti-Christian association – still during the same visit of John Mott to China.<sup>19</sup>

The council was an indirect outcome of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh 1910. The Continuation Committee of the Edinburgh Conference commissioned John Mott to

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<sup>15</sup> Schmidt-Glintzer 2020, p. 49–50.

<sup>16</sup> Philip Clart, *Die Religionen Chinas*, Göttingen 2009, p. 137; Richter 1928, p. 533.

<sup>17</sup> Wang, Peter Chen-main, *Contextualizing Protestant Publishing in China. The Wenshe, 1924–1928*, in: Daniel H. Bays (Ed.), *Christianity in China. From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Stanford 1996, p. 292-306, reference p. 293; Richter 1928, p. 539s.

<sup>18</sup> Wang 1996, p. 294

<sup>19</sup> Richter 1928, p. 308.

organize a series of conferences with Protestant Christians in Ceylon, India, Burma, Malaya, China, Korea and Japan between October 1912 and May 1913. Several of these conferences took place in China, including one final nationwide conference in Shanghai. This Shanghai conference of 1913 inaugurated the “China Continuation Committee”, a board comprising of 50 members both Chinese and foreign.<sup>20</sup>

During the years to follow, the China Continuation Committee worked towards bringing together representatives of the various Protestant denominations in China and towards indigenizing Chinese Christianity.<sup>21</sup>

The National Christian Conference in Shanghai 1922 was organized by the China Continuation Council as a follow-up to the Shanghai conference of 1913. It had 1189 Participants in total – 570 Chinese and 619 foreign.<sup>22</sup>

Several Chinese speakers during the conference rejected the Western denominational distinctions of Protestant Christianity.<sup>23</sup> Among others, David Z. T. Yui argued along that line in his speech, saying that Western dogma and rite was not useful in China, but China had to find its own forms of practicing Christianity.<sup>24</sup>

Many Chinese participants had joined the conference with the expectation that the result of it would be a united Protestant church all over China. Already in 1918, first steps in that direction had been taken during a meeting of the Federal Council of the Presbyterian Churches in China, in which representatives of the London Missionary Society and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions participated.<sup>25</sup> The result of these efforts was the formation of the “Church of Christ in China”, which became the biggest Protestant church, comprising one third of Protestant Christianity in China and held its first general assembly in Shanghai in 1927.<sup>26</sup>

In the Shanghai conference of 1922, representatives of other missionary societies firmly resisted the idea of their respective congregations joining such kind of non-denominational Protestant church, and they used the influence of John Mott and Joseph Houldsworth Oldham (1874–1969) to direct the conference towards a more modest goal: the transformation of the China Continuation Committee to the National Christian Council (NCC). Still part of the responsibilities that so far had been with the home basis of the mission societies were transferred to the NCC. The purpose of the Council was defined as

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<sup>20</sup> Richter 1928, p. 279-280.

<sup>21</sup> Richter 1928, p. 281.

<sup>22</sup> Richter 1928, p. 305.

<sup>23</sup> Webster 1923, p. 297.

<sup>24</sup> Richter 1928, p. 307.

<sup>25</sup> Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats. The American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890 – 1952*, Princeton N. J. 1958, p. 206.

<sup>26</sup> Varg 1958, p. 206.

follows: “The main functions of this Council are to foster unity and bring the Church into a central position; to state the needs and opportunities lying before the churches and missions; to keep the ‘Survey’ up to date; to develop Chinese leadership; to arrange for evangelization, periods of prayer, and conventions for the deepening of spiritual life on a nation wide basis; to provide a platform upon which the various sections of the Christian forces may meet, discuss differences and seek closer fellowship; to speak for the whole of the Christian forces on great moral questions; to undertake such special work as may be committed to the Council by the Conference, or in other suitable ways on behalf of the Christian forces; to make arrangements for the holding of National Conferences.”<sup>27</sup>

When David Z. T. Yui was elected the council’s initial chairperson after its establishment, he had already served as the secretary general of the national committee of the YMCA for six years since 1916,<sup>28</sup> and he could be known to the delegates of the National Christian Conference as a person whose agenda included not only the indigenization of Christianity in China, but also the uplifting of the Chinese nation.

For example, in 1920 at the occasion of the Eighth Convention of the Chinese YMCA, Yui said in his address:

“... A strong nation can only be achieved by building its people with a hearth of justice, kindness, peace, service, sacrifice and resolution. The purpose of the YMCA is to cultivate the above virtues. If we want to find a way of saving our nation, we must urgently promote the ideas and programs for the YMCA. We should strive together and make China become a nation of justice, of devotion, of Jesus Christ. That is China of Heaven.”<sup>29</sup>

Under the leadership of David Z. T. Yui, the YMCA organized a campaign against illiteracy, which attracted the interest of Chinese scholars. A National Mass Education Association was established in 1923 with a teacher as its general secretary who had worked for the YMCA program before.<sup>30</sup>

During the national convention of the YMCA in 1923, the assembly gave Yui’s position its backing by deciding that the YMCA should devote itself to the national cause.<sup>31</sup> The idea behind this decision was not to make the YMCA in China something else than it was

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<sup>27</sup> Summaries of Commission Reports to the National Christian Conference, Commission V: co-ordination and co-operation, in: *The China Mission Year Book 11* (Shanghai 1923), p. 51–53, quotation p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> Yui, David Z. T., *The Indigenization of the Y. M. C. A. in China*, in: *The China Mission Year Book 13*, Shanghai 1925, p. 154–166; reference p. 164.

<sup>29</sup> Translation from Wang, Peter Chen-main: *A Patriotic Christian Leader in Changing China. Yu Rizhang in the Turbulent 1920s*, in: C. X. George Wei; Xiaoyuan Liu (eds.), *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective. Historical and Recent Cases*, Westport 2001, p. 33–51, quotation p. 38.

<sup>30</sup> Wang 2001, p. 39.

<sup>31</sup> Wang 2001, p. 38.

internationally, but to assume that the YMCA with its essence as a character building movement could give the Chinese nation what it needed most in the current situation.

Besides, the convention of 1923 decided to set up a citizenship training program by the YMCA, which was launched in 1924. The citizenship training program gained the approval of many non-Christians and was an important factor for the YMCA to be accepted as part of the national movement during the years to come.<sup>32</sup>

Two events in the spring of 1925 altered the course of the national movement in a way that it became even more challenging for Christians in China. This brings us to the third aspect of the context, in which the question of nationalism and internationalism had to be discussed during the narrower period of time in which David Z. T. Yui gave his speech in front of the Rotary Club of Shanghai.

The first of these two events was the death of Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙 – Sūn Yìxiān) on March 12, 1925.<sup>33</sup> Sun had been the first elected president of the Republic of China for a short period in 1912 and he was the founder of the Kuomintang (國民黨 – Guómíndǎng), the National People's Party. He was a baptized Christian himself. As long as Sun had been alive, the alliance between socialist and conservative forces within the republican national movement could be held together and the party as a whole did not identify with the anti-Christian movement.

The second event was the so-called "May Thirtieth Incident" in Shanghai only a few weeks later: Protests against the exploitation of workers – many of them women and children – in foreign-owned factories of Shanghai led to the arrest of several leaders. Their trial was set to May 30<sup>th</sup>. In reaction to the arrests and the pending convictions, much more people marched against the international concession of Shanghai in an attempt to free the detainees. British police officers shot towards the protesters, and many people were killed or wounded.<sup>34</sup>

The British now became the main target of the nationalistic movement and British troops were rushed to the scene.<sup>35</sup> Violent clashes spread to other Chinese cities.<sup>36</sup> Protesters demanded an end to the extraterritoriality of foreigners, to the foreign concessions, and also to

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<sup>32</sup> Wang 2001, p. 40.

<sup>33</sup> Richter 1928, p. 546.

<sup>34</sup> Richter 1928, p. 540.

<sup>35</sup> Wang 2001, p. 41.

<sup>36</sup> Richter 1928, p. 540, Varg 1958, p. 187.

the privileges of missionaries.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, relationships between the church and the state became a hot issue after the May Thirtieth Incident.<sup>38</sup>

The vast majority of Protestant Christians in China supported the demands of the national movement and asked for the abolishment of missionary privileges, pointing to the freedom of religion as guaranteed by the constitution of 1923 (which referred only to citizens of China and not to missionaries).<sup>39</sup>

Immediately after the May Thirtieth Incident, the NCC became a leading force in expressing solidarity towards the national movement. A “Message of the National Christian Council to the Christians in China”, drafted by David Z. T. Yu, was adopted by the Executive Committee on July 16, 1925. The letter called all Christians in the country to study and remove the causes of the incident. It pointed out some internal causes, but also many external causes like foreign aggression and domination, the Unequal Treaties, the smuggling of opium and other narcotics and the lack of understanding Chinese aspirations by the representatives of foreign powers.<sup>40</sup> It stated that “a Christian should be the highest type of patriot and the noblest example of citizenship.”<sup>41</sup>

As the NCC chairperson, Yui already prior to the incident had rejected the idea to strictly separate religion from politics. He had urged both foreign and Chinese Christians to address the political situation of China and to oppose all wars.<sup>42</sup> In line with Yu’s position, the message of the Executive Committee questions the principle that the Church should not meddle in politics: “If political powers violate any or all of the Christian principles of life, should the Church remain silent and passive?”<sup>43</sup>

The message met strong opposition in part of the missionary circles. They attacked the Executive Committee for “exceeding its constitutional power as an agency representing Christian forces.”<sup>44</sup> It now became disputed what was implicated in the mandate of the Council “to speak for the whole of the Christian forces on great moral questions.”<sup>45</sup>

Some missionaries communicated their critique against the NCC towards the conservative press in Europe and North America, which depicted the NCC as a means of Chinese propaganda, especially in its insistence on the Unequal Treaties.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Richter 1928, p. 540.

<sup>38</sup> Wang 2001, p. 41; Richter 1928, p. 541.

<sup>39</sup> Richter 1928, p. 541s.

<sup>40</sup> Wang 2001, p. 42.

<sup>41</sup> Translation from Wang 2001, p. 42.

<sup>42</sup> Wang 2001, p. 41.

<sup>43</sup> Translation from Wang 2001, p. 42.

<sup>44</sup> Translation from Wang 2001, p. 43.

<sup>45</sup> Summaries of Commission Reports 1923, p. 52.

<sup>46</sup> Wang 2001, p. 43.

Bishop F. R. Graves of the Episcopal Church, to which Yui belonged, accused him of being disloyal and ungrateful for all the support that he had received from the mission for his education, stating he should not utter criticism against missions and missionaries.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, the NCC received a lot of support from missionary societies abroad expressing their sympathy and asking their governments to revise their treaty relations with China.<sup>48</sup>

As Paul A. Varg points out in an analysis done in the 1950s, the 1920s saw a shift in the attitude of Western missionaries in China towards the Unequal Treaties. Whereas many missionaries of the older generation obviously felt no sense of injustice in the relation between Western powers and China as expressed in the Unequal Treaties and saw their privileges as an unalienable right, a younger generation saw the reliance on force as unchristian and would have rather done their work without the privileges of extraterritoriality.<sup>49</sup>

Some missionaries already before 1925 were sensitive to the injustices done to the Chinese people by foreign powers. An example for them is James B. Webster, an American scholar teaching at the department of education at Shanghai College, who called for an affirmative approach of Christian education towards the national consciousness of the Chinese people:

“Christian education must have a distinctive value in the national development of the Chinese, if it is to continue to exist. The rapid development of nationalism in China, as in Japan and India, carries with it the consciousness that there is a national cultural heritage to preserve and that education is the means of preserving that inheritance. Christian education must merge itself with this spirit of nationalism so as to avoid creating a hostile reaction from the leaders of national education, and still make a contribution of such distinctness and value that these leaders will recognize it, welcome it, and leave it free to work.”<sup>50</sup>

David Z. T. Yui during the time of the crisis not only supported the demands of the national movement, but he also tried to mediate between Chinese and foreign interests and to enable better understanding between the two sides. For example, he asked the British YMCA to appoint a British member to the YMCA staff in China and he undertook substantial efforts to bring together British representatives and Chinese leaders to discuss solutions to the crisis.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Wang 2001, p. 43.

<sup>48</sup> Wang 2001, p. 44.

<sup>49</sup> Varg 1958, p. 195, cf. Richter 1928, p. 542.

<sup>50</sup> Webster 1923, p. 130–131.

<sup>51</sup> Wang 2001, p. 45-46.

In a telegram to John Mott which he wrote together with Fletcher Brockman (1867–1944, at that time administrative secretary of the YMCA for the Far East) on June 19, 1925, he asked Mott to inform the highest authorities about the incident and about adopting equal treatment and justice toward China. Mott forwarded the message to the president of the United States.<sup>52</sup> In January 1926, John Mott came for a visit to China in person again. He held an informal conference, to which many missionaries and Chinese Christian leaders were invited. At this meeting, David Z. T. Yui expressed the opinion that Chinese Christians living in the interior of the country should not depend on the toleration clauses of the Unequal Treaties and therefore the concept of extraterritoriality should be abolished at all.<sup>53</sup>

In October 1926, the executive committee of the NCC adopted this position stating that “the present treaties between China and foreign Powers should be revised on a basis of freedom and equality.”<sup>54</sup> During the course of these discussions, the China Inland Mission and the Christian and Missionary Alliance resigned from their membership in the council. They perceived the NCC as a “liberal” body meddling too much in politics,<sup>55</sup> and the China Inland Mission positioned itself against abolishing the missionary privileges.<sup>56</sup> By 1928, when David Z. T. Yui ended his term as the chairperson, the NCC spoke for approximately 70 per cent of the membership of the Protestant churches in China. The Council changed its constitution and took provision that it should be made up of representatives of the Chinese churches only.<sup>57</sup>

Parallel to these internal developments, the Anti-Christian movement in China reached its peak and resorted to violence. Partly, this was a result of the breaking apart of the national movement after the death of Sun, Yat-sen. Both the Communist Party and the right wing of the Guomindang subscribed to action against the Christian influence and especially the military forces of the Guomindang resorted to violence against Christian schools, churches and hospitals.<sup>58</sup>

Anti-Christian violence of a new quality started on January 21, 1926 with an attack on a Christian hospital on the island of Hainan, during which Chinese attendants were beaten.<sup>59</sup> The level of violence increased during the sack of Nanjing in March 1927. Several missionaries were killed,<sup>60</sup> and more foreigners were attacked and robbed, women were

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<sup>52</sup> Wang 2001, p. 46.

<sup>53</sup> Wang 2001, p. 44.

<sup>54</sup> The National Christian Council: A Five Years' Review, 1922-1927, Shanghai 1927, pp. 29-30, quoted according to Wang 2001, p. 44.

<sup>55</sup> Varg 1958, p. 206.

<sup>56</sup> Richter 1928, p. 542.

<sup>57</sup> Varg 1958, p. 205

<sup>58</sup> Wang 1996, p. 294; Varg 1958, p. 187–193.

<sup>59</sup> Varg 1958, p. 188.

<sup>60</sup> Wang 1996, p. 294.

threatened with rape, and captives with murder.<sup>61</sup> There were different interpretations whether the violence was to be attributed to “the extremist wing of the Kuomintang”<sup>62</sup> or to Communists.<sup>63</sup>

Three weeks later, from April 12 onwards, bloody violence by the right-wing national movement was directed in an even much greater scale against representatives of labor unions in Shanghai and against people accused of being communists. A layoff organized by the unions in reaction to the violence was met with outmost terror.<sup>64</sup>

Taking all this into consideration, it becomes clear that the speech of David Z. T. Yui on “nationalism and internationalism” in November 1926 was given at a delicate moment in the history of modern China. The unity of the political forces that had worked together for the full independence of China from foreign influence had started to break apart. Violence had begun to happen also between Chinese citizens of different worldviews: violence against Chinese Christians had already taken place since January 1926, and the tensions between left-wing and right-wing forces within Chinese society were about to erupt in violence during the months to come.

Therefore, it is likely that Yui did not only have European colonialism in mind when he warned against a narrow-minded understanding of nationalism. For example, the following passage in his speech may address a mindset of isolationism within Chinese nationalism:

“Not long ago, we were separated from each other by mountains and seas, and mostly we lived sufficient unto ourselves. Later discoveries and scientific inventions have succeeded in annihilating distance, and this world of ours has been much reduced in size. We are forced to live side by side, and our interests have become inextricably inter-woven. Moreover, our physical, intellectual and spiritual needs have greatly multiplied and our dependence upon each other has become greater. Isolated national life is now impractical and unwholesome. Unfortunately, these discoveries and inventions have gotten the better of us in that the human race has failed to keep pace with them in progress. We are now caught not only lacking in the spirit of neighborliness but also sadly deficient in ability to understand and to live internationally.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Varg 1958, p. 190

<sup>62</sup> Varg 1958, p. 190.

<sup>63</sup> Yui, David Z. T., *Cooperation from the West*, in: Milton Stauffer (ed.), *China Her Own Interpreter*. Chapters by a Group of Nationals Interpreting the Christian Movement, New York 1927, p. 115–142, reference p. 125.

<sup>64</sup> Schmidt-Glintzer 2020, p. 58-59.

<sup>65</sup> Yui 1926, p. 6–7.

In his contribution to a publication dated 1927 – subsequent to the sack of Nanjing –, David Z. T. Yui further expresses his gratitude towards the cooperation with Western Christianity, and he explicitly criticises attacks against Christian institutions:

“Despite the attacks of the anti-Christian movement in China, we deem it proper and important at the very outset to express our profound and sincere to our friends in the West because, through their vision of God’s purpose of bringing the nations into his fold, through their eagerness to fulfil this purpose, and through their self-sacrificial gifts year after year, Christian propaganda in China has been made possible... Certain phases of our present revolutionary movement, particularly the wanton activities of the radical elements, seem to indicate the dire possibility that all Christian work of the past century in China may be uprooted, and that there may be no future for it at all. Mission or church properties have been occupied, confiscated, or destroyed. Missionaries by the hundreds are returning to their native lands in not very hopeful spirits. Chinese Christians may be unable to weather the storm successfully... In fact, no Christian movement in the East or West will ever be sufficient unto itself; we shall always need one another.”<sup>66</sup>

Yui then goes on to elaborate how the support of Western Christianity towards Chinese Christianity will have to change from institutional support to spiritual support, and how he still upholds his position that all privileges of foreign institutions in China have to end in order to render Chinese Christianity independent from them. In this text it becomes obvious that David Z. T. Yui upheld his conviction of being nationalist and internationalist at the same time also under conditions of outmost challenge.

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<sup>66</sup> Yui 1927, p. 115–116.