

中国天主教会与新文化运动

China's Catholic Society and the May Fourth Movement

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[英文提要]

China's Catholic Society was one of the many forces that contributed to the success of the May Fourth Movement in 1919. The Catholic Society played the role of pioneer in the many anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, and pro-democracy platforms of the day. However, little was written or documented by the Society with regards to its contributions in modern Chinese missionary history. Much of what was written was done in foreign languages, making it even less accessible to the Chinese public. As a result, the Catholic Society of China continues to be overlooked as a constructive social and moral force.

The ten years from the Boxer Rebellion to the May Fourth Movement were turbulent years, witnessing waves of unrest as one movement followed another. The Catholic Society departed from its isolation stance to become increasingly energized as it took initiative to promote progress and modernization for Chinese society. This change could be attributed to the numerical growth within the Chinese Catholic Church and the increasing number of educated members within its congregations. The intellectuals and the affluent brought with them creative resources to express the Society's new agenda of compassion and progressiveness. The Catholic Society

chose not to take advantage of the special privileges accorded to Western missionaries by the Chinese government. They treated the Chinese clergy with equality. They promoted education, building many secondary schools to equip local clergymen and parishioners, enabling them to take responsibility for their own religious faith and practice.

The Fujen Association and the publications by Lebbe Vincent in Tianjin are examples of the patriotism of the Catholic Society. The Society stood with the Chinese in unflinching resistance against the unreasonable demands and aggression of Japanese imperialists, taking an active part in street demonstrations and protests of the day. The Society also criticized the corrupt and debilitating effects of feudalistic Confucianism, proactively working to address the issues of political reform, science and culture. In many and various ways, it contributed to the promotion of freedom and democracy, egalitarianism and social progress. However, after the May Fourth Movement, the rise of anarchist, communist, and atheistic propaganda greatly compromised the position of the Catholic Society, making what was once a progressive force weak and vulnerable. It reverted back to a survival mode, no longer able to be an effective voice of conscience in society or sway public opinion.

1919年5月4日,大学生在天安门广场上抗议集会,国内各地随即纷起响应举行爱国示威。这些抗议和示威是1919年之前数年以及其后由于中国知识分子的提倡而发展起来的波澜壮阔的思想和社会的变革运动的明确表达,这一变革运动在当时被称为新文化运动。五四运动,就其广义而言,可以等同之于新文化运动。但