

LETTERS

## A REPORT FROM JACK WILLS

I have three brief and varied reports to our readers.

I. In July of 1982 I attended a conference organized by cultural organizations of Fujian Province on Zheng Chenggong or Coxinga (1624-1662). The conference was held at Xiamen University in the city of the same name, the old treaty port of Amoy. Zheng of course was much involved with Europeans, and to this degree the conference is of obvious interest to students of "European Expansion". If we can begin to think of our subject as not simply European expansion but maritime history of early modern and modern times, in which Chinese, Japanese, Muslims and others were active participants, not just "responders" to European impact, Zheng's career and the power structure built up by his family are of even greater interest. In a brief report to the conference and in conversations with individuals I stressed the importance of European-language records for the documentation of Zheng's career and the variety of types and locations of such records. Much of this information was new to the Chinese, and was received with great interest. I would urge any student of European expansion visiting China to go prepared with summaries and examples of what can be learned about relations with China from the Western sources he knows best; there is quite a scattering of scholars who will be interested in such information, especially in Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, and Shanghai. The museums and remains of treaty-port days in these cities also have much to interest the maritime historian, as does the well-known Maritime Trade Museum in Quanzhou. I have submitted a slightly more detailed report on the conference to the American journal *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, and will be glad to answer individual requests for more information, including the names of interested Chinese scholars.

II. The four-hundredth anniversary of the entry into China of Matteo Ricci S.J. has aroused a good deal of interest and commemorative activity. An important conference focussed on him was held at Loyola University in Chicago on October 7-9, 1982. The keynote address was given by Jonathan Spence (Yale). Lecturers and panel members included W.T. de Bary

(Columbia), Donald F. Lach (U. of Chicago), Willard Peterson (Princeton), Julia Ching (Toronto), Joseph Sebes S.J. (Georgetown), John W. Witek S.J. (Georgetown), Piero Corradini (Macerata), Joseph Dehergne S.J. (Chantilly), Albert Chan S.J. (Hong Kong), Theodore Foss (Chicago), Peter Hu S.J. (Fu-jen University, Taipei), David Mungello (Coe College, Iowa), Yming Shaw (U. of Notre Dame), Harrie Vanderstappen S.V.D. (U. of Chicago), and Edwin Van Kley (Calvin College, Michigan). Publication of the conference papers is planned. It is especially encouraging to see major historians of Ming-Ch'ing China not previously associated with mission studies becoming involved in discussions of the early Jesuit mission, which sometimes have suffered from inadequate understanding of or interest in the complex realities of late Ming and early Ch'ing China. Now if only we could persuade students of European Expansion that their courses and their surveys of relations with various areas must not neglect the missionary side of these relations .....

III. There is an organization in the United States and Canada called the French Colonial Historical Society. It holds an annual meeting, publishes the *Proceedings* of these meetings, and publishes a journal entitled *French Colonial Studies / Études Coloniales Françaises*. Its next annual meeting will be held in Ottawa on May 19-21, 1983. Seventy-three people attended its 1982 meeting in Evanston, Illinois, where topics under discussion included aspects of the French in North Africa and in North America, geography, colonial novels, colonial education, tropical diseases, and source materials. Inquiries should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer, Prof. J. Dean O'Donnell, Department of History, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg VA 24061, U.S.A.

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