Civic Liberties Union

ELSEWHERE in this issue, we are publishing a statement by Madame Sun Yat-sen, which is an appeal to the intellectuals and all friends of China to associate themselves with the movement for the defense of all political prisoners. The difference of viewpoint between Madame Sun and our editorial of the last issue was perhaps real, but we nevertheless endorse her proposal for the formation of a general committee in defense of victims of justice. It is our conviction that such a committee, when formed, should be established on entirely non-partisan lines, and its object should be the defense of the people's civic rights as such, without respect to any particular political faction, and even without limitation to "political" prisoners only. Only by such a definition can the committee do its work effectively, for with a great number of young people arrested and put in prison, it is highly probable that the reason is not "political," but simple abuse of official power in the satisfaction of personal squabbles. The committee should regard as its principal task the defense of all people arrested without warrant, or detained without trial, and should further furnish legal counsel to the defenseless. Some of the most frequent flagrant cases of officials violating the law will be the closing of newspaper plants and imprisonment of editors. The case only happened a week ago when eight small papers were closed down in one day in Changshu, for criticism of the local administration, and there is a case being brought up for trial of an editor in Nanxiang district arrested by the magistrate and sentenced to prison. Owing to the Japanese invasion last spring, the National Government promised the people of Nanxiang exemption from farm tax, but the magistrate, who was criticized by the editor for collecting this tax, took upon himself the duties of a judge, and had no difficulty in finding the accused guilty. Such abuses of civic rights are practically to be found everywhere in China, and the committee will in all probability have more than they can handle.

The value of its work, however, consists in teaching our people a new attitude of self-defense and, may we say, of active resistance, against injustice. Unless the people of China change their political philosophy and take a new attitude of self-defense, the so-called government by law will not fall down from heaven like so much manna in a desert for the Israelites.

Increasing Unrest in Japan

TOKYO reports state that the police have unearthed a plot to assassinate two high officials at the forthcoming grand maneuvers. The intended victims are believed to be Count Makino, lord privy seal, and General Ugaki, former minister of war. In addition, the police have arrested a young man who sent a threatening letter to Mr. Takahashi, the finance minister. Why these gentlemen should be singled out still remains a matter for conjecture. The plot, however, confirms the general belief that Japan's internal unrest is increasing,