

Imperialism Vs. Nationalism In Formosa

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IN AREA and population one of the smallest provinces of China though she is, Formosa in natural resources and industrial equipment, in manpower and working efficiency, forms the largest the nation has ever had. Early last spring, when the Central Bank, the Bank of China, the Bank of Communications, and the Farmers' Bank sent men there to establish branches with a view to nationalizing the Formosans financially, these unlucky envoys were mercilessly spurned by the ruling caste under Governor-General Chen Yi, which in its turn has imperialized itself by proclaiming the province a specified area and by declaring its powers, political and military, judicial and financial, its own *in toto*. Hence has followed the case of factional imperialism against nation-wide nationalism.

In the beginning of December, 1945, when interviewed by newspaper men in Shanghai upon his first return from Formosa, Secretary-General Ko Ching-en emphatically asserted that as the Formosans had been enslaved by the Japanese for 50 years and deprived of every chance to participate in politics, they must wait a number of years before they could be entrusted with administrative responsibilities.

Towards the end of August, 1946, when some of the 26 foreign correspondents asked General Chen Yi why of the first-class incumbents none was a Formosan native, the aged Governor frankly replied, "Because they are far less well-qualified."

Formosans Antagonized

So long as the self-assuming liberators disqualify everyone who happens to have been born in this beautiful island—the very island Koxinga and his followers had intended to be the Sardinia of the already fallen Ming Dynasty three centuries ago—really qualified Formosans will refuse to cooperate with them any more than the Irish with the British.

Meanwhile, the *Washington Post* on March 29 said that the Chinese in Formosa were "behaving exactly as they accuse the Russians, no doubt justly, of having behaved in Manchuria" for they had "instituted a regime of terror, wholesale looting and even downright highway robbery." It hoped that Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, "who has sent a delegation of riff-raff among his officialdom to these important duties, will take steps to clean up the Formosan situation."

From the end of August, 1945 up to my first return in nine years at the end of September, 1946, I read almost every day unfavorable reports in Shanghai papers about the new arrivals, both official and civilian, as well as about their unpleasant relations with the Formosan natives. So also did I hear, almost every day, from my native folks similar sad stories.

Formosa—restored to China—in-

stead of enjoying liberty, equality and fraternity as the people of Alsace-Lorraine have done, rights which the Kuomintang Bible upholds, instead is suffering oppression, discrimination and exploitation, they affirmed. I was greatly puzzled; for I had for two decades enjoyed pleasant contact with the mainlanders, whether students in school or colleagues in society, and found them extremely benign and sociable, magnanimous and chivalrous. So much so that I became intensely anxious to see everything and hear every word I could during my two full months' tour and stay in this newly restored maritime possession of China.

Imperialism Reappears

Ironically enough, just when the Chinese have eradicated the last vestige of foreign imperialism from their own soil, their liberators of Formosa have gone imperialist, worst of all towards a people of their own race and culture! Under the newly instituted "unequal treaties," the ruling caste seems to grant its own kinsmen and henchmen "extraterritorial rights" by exercising "consular jurisdiction." Any incumbent from the mainland when under suspicion of criminal offense or subject to court investigation must be shielded, while any native, if too obtrusive, will be nipped in the bud. Yet how to keep up the prestige and dignity of a privileged class?

Ever since the retrocession new arrivals have often bought without paying, assuming the air of conquerors which always provokes the natives. By tradition the Formosans are far less willing to oil incumbents' hands than the mainlanders. When the Formosan procurator of the Chiayi Local Court indicted the head of the Chiayi Bureau of Monopolies, a man named Chou Pi-chang, on a charge of graft, with sufficient evidence last spring, the local ruling authorities interfered for face's sake; but the Formosan Justice challenged them to cut off his own head rather than twist the law of the state. Suddenly the Taipeh High Court demanded Chou's extradition for "purposes of re-examination." What happened to the culprit later, nobody knows.

Yet, owing to such ways of thinking and courses of action, the Formosans have been dubbed "narrow-minded" (*liang siao*)!

Both Bureaus of Monopolies and of Trades have been so devised as to increase governmental revenue in order to lessen the people's burden—in name. But in effect they have served only to facilitate the officials' graft and to chastise private manufacturers and businessmen. As a result of Liu Wen-tao's recent drastic purge, both bureaus had their inner layers exposed and their heads accused of embezzlement. What happened subsequently to these two, both being so dear and near to the Governor, nobody knows. During the Generalissimo's visit no chance was

given the people either to petition re-emancipation or to appeal for justice. Otherwise, only God knows what would have happened.

Through the Custom Houses somehow or other, Shanghai and foreign cigarettes and numerous commodities of mysterious origin seem to have worked their way in despite the monopoly law and have appeared in the stalls on the sidewalks in Taipeh and other cities, as in Shanghai. I still feel sad, however, whenever I recall the scenes in which uniformed men, condemning such cigarettes as illicit, snatched all the packages away from children peddlers whose poor parents had entrusted them with a few thousand Yen as capital.

These conquerors often refuse to buy bus tickets—for, at home, they rode free, they would argue. None the less the Formosan inspectors push them out by force if they insist on riding free. In most cases the disputes end in a fist fight and police arbitration.

For such reasons the Formosans have been called "quick-tempered" (*ch'i tuan*)!

An imperialist would take a foot when given an inch and throw away a nut that is hard to crack.

First Enthusiasm Gone

During the first three or four months following the retrocession, the Formosans enthusiastically greeted any new arrival from the mainland. This was the Golden Age for peace profiteers and war victors. Soon lambskins became worn out, and the wolves within emerged. Thereafter the bridge across the Formosa Strait began to crack day by day.

The only two items of progress for which these "liberators" deserve specific credit are (1) the teaching of knowledge of Chinese and (2) wining and feasting. The first success has been due not so much to the presence of able mandarin teachers as to the Formosans' diligence. Good teachers from Central and North China being few and far between but literacy being very high, many Formosans make the best use of the phonetics, listen to the radio, or engage private tutors, and practise conversation and read on every possible occasion.

As to the latter, the take-over officials and peace-profiteers should be commended. Feasting and feasted day and night, but not accustomed to Formosan (really Amoy) and Japanese food, they had to welcome from the mainland cooks able to prepare and serve dishes in the continental fashion; so much so that nowadays there can be ordered in Taipeh not only Shanghai and Canton, but even Tientsin and Szechuen food. The importation of liquors is against the monopoly law, but Shao-hsing, being the native place of the Governor and many other incumbents, the aroma of its delicious wine can be savored almost in every restaurant.

Parallel with this dilemma, Formosans in the rural districts, by defying the monopoly law, manufacture their own wine, which may be less fragrant but is handier than Shaohsing and official sake and beer. Moreover, the island coastline is too long for the small number of customs officers and armed forces to guard, which is why landing points for "duty free commodities" not only from Shanghai and Amoy but even from Hongkong and Okinawa have sprouted fast. As the ranking incumbents are concentrated only in the cities along the insular railways, their poorly paid subordinates dare not go alone and unarmed to the country, least of all to any isolated spot in the mountains or on the seashore, unless they can organize a well-armed company. For this reason the Water Utilization Association has never been taken over. Not that it yields no oil, but because it has to deal with "quick-tempered" peasants in open fields and "narrow-minded" landlords in remote villages.

Sugar Growing Boycotted

The same is true of the sugar industry. Since sugar mills have often broken their promise to pay farmers in cash and to supply them with fertilizer regularly, most farmers have discontinued the planting of sugar-cane. Thus, along the six-mile bus road from my native town, Silo, the greatest agricultural center of Formosa, to the Tiger Tail Factory Town, I could count only seven farms growing sugar-cane—each about one acre!

Whereas in 1940 the Formosan sugar industry reached its maximum production of 1,400,000 tons, in 1946 the output could hardly go beyond 30,000 tons at most, according to reliable sources. When I asked, "Why so little?" I was told, "Because sugar cane is scarce." Asked, "Why not plant sugar cane?" the farmers answered, "Because any crop other than sugar cane can yield surer and quicker returns."

As a matter of fact in industry alone Formosa, in my opinion, is too big for the rest of China to run. To resume operation of all Formosan factories China must mobilize all her well-trained technicians to be exclusive. On the other hand, Formosa has turned out as many technicians as all the rest of China just as the number of her medical doctors—about 3,200—equals that of the rest of China. Nevertheless, native doctors and engineers have been always and everywhere unfairly treated.

At the time of the retrocession many Szechuen sugar experts were considered competent to take over and operate Formosan mills. Now Szechuen men are being sent to Formosa to study. Aside from this and the various activities of the National Resources Commission nothing concrete has been done to revive Formosan industry—sugar, in particular. Yet the 500,000 tons of sugar confiscated from the Japanese would support for a couple of years hundreds of thousands of mainlanders—take-over officials, their kinsmen and henchmen included.

Characteristic of many a take-over official are (1) his main interest in consumption rather than in production and (2) his beaten track of speculation, and embezzlement. On stepping into any Japanese factory or institution, his first question would be, "How much cash on hand?" Secondly, "Any motor car for use?" And finally, "Any residence for occupation?"

Meanwhile, the Formosan staff members would be either dismissed or starved. He might give a new test, frequently testing not the technical knowledge required but the natives' knowledge of Chinese literature and history and San Min Chu I. Thus he can easily flunk almost everyone of them till his own men can form a junta. This is one of the commonest ways in which the mainlanders disqualify islanders. In consequence an errand boy from a Shanghai drugstore actually has been commissioned to take over a drug factory in Formosa!

Inasmuch as UNRRA fertilizer had to be escorted by American soldiers to the village entrances and distributed by them among Formosan farmers, the conquerors' dignity went to the dogs: the people lost confidence in the government. When the judicial police sent out by the Taichung Local Court on Nov. 11, 1946 to take custody of a culprit from the police station of the Taichung District Government, the latter not only refused to surrender the man but even opened fire and mortally wounded one of the court officials. As the friction worsened, General Chen Yi instructed the Taipei High Court to settle the dispute. The warring parties heeded no immediate order. On my departure on Nov. 30 the case remained unsettled. What has happened since, I do not know. In view of many such occurrences and recurrences the people cannot but lose all respect for the government.

Face All-Important

As usual, face counts first. Time and again the Provincial Government has claimed the percentage of Formosan employees in public service to exceed 61 percent. In fact, most of these men are either errand boys or clerks, performing every toil and receiving no spoil. All the first-class officials have been—all in all—mainlanders. Hence followed the challenging remark in an editorial of the *Popular Daily* (Min Pao) in November: "To uphold the Three Principles of the People in word, but to practise the doctrines of imperialists in deed is not the right way to appease Formosan critics."

Likewise, the Bureau of Education often boasts that the present number of teachers and students exceeds that under Japanese rule. In fact, underpaid teachers have no stomach for earnest work; dissatisfied students strike now and then; and impoverished parents often absent their children from school so as to avoid mysterious donations demanded by the authorities through schools. Text and reference books and dictionaries printed in Shanghai are few; wherefore the Bureau has compiled and published huge quantities of jazz literature for local consumption and for extra

revenue as well. Consequently the standard has been seriously lowered, especially in science. In the curriculum Chinese falls short of the national level; English is little favored, and Japanese is ruled out.

Where to pursue higher studies in the future? Ambitious youngsters have been wondering. To promote mass education in word, but practise mass-stupefaction in deed is not the right way to suppress Formosan malcontents, either.

"Popular Elections"

During my two months' stay, the headmen of towns and villages were popularly elected, as ordered by the authorities. To be sure, every mainlanders wanting to be a bigwig refuses to head any town or village or primary school. Now the ruling authorities might pride themselves on promising the people local self-government. In reality they claim all levies except the household tax, which amounts to less than 20 percent of the total and is the hardest to collect, but has been assigned to each locality for the upkeep of government offices, schools, roads, bridges, public health and order. In other words, the new deal is self-government in word but wholesale exploitation in deed. When the confiscated commodities and enemy property are gone, then what to live on? More and more taxation, or what?

In the meantime, 17 delegates to the National Assembly were allegedly popularly elected. The candidates nominated by each unit, however, were not submitted to the people for final election, but to the Provincial Council, which when in session last May was not even allowed to discuss fiscal issues. But now 13 out of its 30 members were allowed to be candidates from different units. These chosen people voted for one another, so that the majority of the Formosan delegates now are concurrently members of the Provincial Council. What could the government-sponsored delegates do in Nanking since only three of them can make simple speeches in intelligible mandarin? At a press meeting they offered Formosa as the model province for experiment in local self-government; in earnest they petitioned the Central Government for mitigation of penalty on Formosan war criminals. Why not ask for re-emancipation of their 6,000,000 fellow men?

So amazing is the incumbents' proficiency in recruiting new henchmen from among the natives that many an opportunist who used to ingratiate himself with the Japanese has also quickly picked up Chinese confidence! For instance, many a war profiteer, fearing prosecution and persecution, volunteered after the Generalissimo's visit to make donations for building the so-called Chiai (Kai-shek) Shou (birthday) Hall, though the Generalissimo refused to have his birthday celebrated anywhere by the people.

To push the campaign for Yen 1,000,000,000 throughout the whole of Formosa they organized a semi-official committee to raise funds—by coercion, if necessary. In consequence donations and exactions can hardly be distinguished. Why not

dispose of some enemy property and build 10 or 20 halls?

Many an anti-Japanese leader imprisoned by the enemy during the war has become a critic of Chinese rule and misrule. A Chinese and American-educated engineer, whom the Japanese had put in jail for his pro-Chinese inclinations and knowledge of English and radio, ran for member of the People's Political Council last August by bitterly denouncing bureaucratic capital, the monopoly system, nepotism and despotism, and by advocating home rule for the Formosans. He got elected legitimately, defeating by one vote five contestants, who had to draw lots. On the ground that his surname on one vote was blurred by inkstains, the head of the Bureau of Civil Affairs annulled his election and subsequently compelled him to draw lots with the others and, by prearranging the names and the lots after a certain fashion and by instructing a neutral member of the Provincial Council to draw them, he craftily forced the successful candidate out. Such has been Chinese rule imposed upon Formosa. Naturally, that budding statesman ever since has been an even more severe and bitter critic of the present Chinese regime in the island.

Many sympathizers of the Formosans, not recalling that for three centuries the latter have had a different geography and a different history, wonder why they are less patient than the mainlanders. Instead, the gap of feeling between government and people, between mainlanders and islanders, is becoming wider day by day. Friction between officials and civilians being an almost daily occurrence, the struggle between imperialism and nationalism will continue. It must come to an end, however, before Chinese nationalism dwindles into Formosan nationalism, when it will be too late to regret the consequences. Let the present officialdom run Formosa for five more years. Be sure the beautiful island will become a hell worse than Hainan. Yet grant the natives home rule—and within a year it will become better, but never worse than the present.

Now that the Constitution adopted on Christmas Day has promised the whole nation its enforcement in a year, the Formosans may look up to the only ray of hope,—the hope that in the new year of 1947 their native land will see imperialism stamped by nationalism, autocracy replaced by democracy, and misrule surmounted by home rule.

LT. GEN. ALLEN H. TURNAGE, commanding general of the U.S. Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, arrived in Tientsin from Tsingtao on January 12. He was accompanied by Maj. Gen. Samuel L. Howard, commanding general of the First Marine Division.

PREMIER ALCIDE DE GASPERI of Italy has laid the groundwork for a loan to Italy from the Export-Import Bank in his talks with high United States officials. The bank is said to be studying Italy's revised application for a loan, somewhat reassured by Gasperi's statement that the money is to be used to revive Italy's export trade which should make it easier to repay.