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WHAT NEXT IN CHINA?

by **BERTRAM D. WOLFE**

"On the international scale," William Z. Foster told the Politburo of the American Communist Party in 1945, "the key task is to stop American intervention in China. . . . The war in China is the key to all problems on the international front. . . ." (*Daily Worker*, Dec. 2, 1945.)

MR. FOSTER had not thought that up by himself. The order had gone out to all the Communist Parties of the world to stop United States aid to the government and people of China. Substantially the same point of view was advocated by many other people. In our State Department, John Carter Vincent, Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, was publicly urging that "neither private nor public capital" should aid China in its civil-war and invasion-bred miseries, because it was "unsound to invest . . . where a government is wasting its substance on excessive armament, where the threat or fact of civil war

exists. . . ." (Address to the National Foreign Trade Council.) When General Marshall, unversed in Oriental affairs, set out to visit our harassed Chinese ally, Mr. Vincent was the most experienced and determined member of the subcommittee which helped draft the directives to guide our emissary. The main object of those directives was to force Chiang Kai-shek into a suicidal coalition government with the Communists.

Having watched the fate of coalition in Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, by now ex-Secretary Marshall knows how false those directives were. Yet, following those evil instructions and trying to save face (not Chinese face this time, to be sure, but Marshall's own), our State Department clamped down a boycott on Chinese aid from 1946 to 1948. For two years, while the Soviet Union was providing strategic and tactical direction, was turning over Japanese equipment to the Chinese Communists, was creating a powerful armed Communist force

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in Manchuria where previously there had been no Communist movement — not a cartridge was going from us to China, not even to service the equipment which we had delivered during the war with Japan. The Russians stripped the large Japanese arsenal machinery from Mukden and set it up in Khabarovsk, where it has continued to go full blast manufacturing new “Japanese” artillery, large and small arms and munitions to equip an ever greater conscript Chinese Red Army. Our first trickle of counterbalancing supplies did not reach Tsingtao until November 13, 1948, when the war-weary Chinese government forces were already cracking under the strain of a fresh onslaught by freshly created and freshly armed troops.

Now there is self-questioning and chilling fear in Washington, and in the hearts of all thoughtful Americans. A third world war has been moved immeasurably closer. The unexpected folly and treachery of our policy, and the unexpected sweep and speed of its own victories, is shoving the Kremlin, half fearful, half hopeful, into new adventures. It has not the resources for reconstructing bleeding, broken China into a modern totalitarian State. But it is speculating on linking up the manpower of China (its population of 450,000,000 is more than that of all Europe, plus America, plus the Soviet Union put together!) with the political-police-military know-how of Soviet Russia. If it does not mind the spread of famine in China, it can con-

script countless millions for military purposes or, like the war prisoners, for forced labor. Its rear thus “secured” and its war potential enormously increased, there is danger that the men in the Kremlin will now ask themselves whether a single mighty shove to the Atlantic Coast by Russia’s Western armies will not suffice to add the huge industrial potential of Western Europe for “the final conflict.”

II

At this moment of soul-searching, a fine book has appeared to aid the American people in taking stock. It is *China: The Land and the People*, by Gerald F. Winfield [\$5.00, Sloane]. It is not a political book. It was sixteen years in the making, thirteen of which (1932-45) were spent in research on health in China. Underlying the struggles for political modernization (democracy or totalitarianism), and for technological modernization (the shift from hand industry and agriculture and hand irrigation to mechanization), it rightly perceives the deeper struggle against hunger and death, in a land which has the greatest population, the second highest birth rate and the highest death rate in the world. Three quarters of those who die, die without ever having seen a physician. One quarter of all deaths are due to fecal-borne diseases. From 1937-45 the war killed an estimated 5 to 10 million but fecal-borne diseases alone killed 35 million. “Seventy-five per cent of all deaths

in China are due to preventable diseases, that are under control in the West."

Dr. Winfield reminds us that during the American Revolution our own death rate, despite the free soil of America, was about what China's is now, and that London installed its first sewer little more than a century ago. But it is not the lack of sewage disposal alone, so much as the need of every drop of human and animal urine and feces for soil fertilization. The Chinese dare not for a moment relax this method of fertilization without having an alternative method ready. More than 80 per cent of this population is so close to the soil, and the whole land is so dependent upon this type of agriculture, that they dare not pause to look up from the earth over which their backs are bent in such patient, meticulous labor. They dare not straighten up to see beyond their families and their bit of ground, to the fate of China as a whole — to see whether they have an Emperor or President, a Japanese government or Chinese, would-be democratic tutelage or would-be totalitarian, government striving for independence and territorial integrity or puppet government acquiescing in partition and seeking to subordinate China to the will of a power-hungry foreign government. That is what has made it so difficult for Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, and their national people's party, the Kuomintang, to awaken in this ancient people a sense of concern for the fate of their nation. That is

the meaning of the first of Dr. Sun's famous Three Principles: Nationalism.

Approximately 1500 persons live on every square mile of arable land in China, as against 53 to the square mile in the United States. The increasing pressure of population through the decade of centuries in which this land has maintained a continuous culture (its civilization is the oldest extant!), has taught the Chinese how to use every bit of land, how to terrace every hill, how to direct every rivulet and tap every underground stream, how to conserve and use every bit of moisture, every stalk and blade of grass, every drop of urine or feces. This is the greatest pre-industrial culture in the world. With a capacity for hard, skillful and patient work that has no equal, this nation of farmers puts in 26 man-days an acre to our 1.2, but by that patient, man-power, back-breaking toil, they actually produce more wheat per acre and more rice per acre than we do with all our tools and machines and selected stocks.

Only if these labors can be unceasingly maintained while foreign invaders are driven off and foreign puppets overthrown, can the resources of China be devoted to the difficult, long-term tasks of re-education, reconstruction, and technological modernization — the program summed up in the second of Dr. Sun's Three Principles: People's Livelihood. And only if national independence and popular well-being are thus assured, can China really move towards the realization of the Third Principle: Democracy.

III

The major misconception that has been thrust upon the vulnerable reader of misleading books on China (there has been a planned flood of such books), is the notion that all China really needs is a "division of its large estates" and a "redistribution of the land." As a corollary to this fraudulent thesis, the Chinese Communists have been pictured not as power-hungry puppets of a power-hungry police State, but as a mere "agrarian reformers" fighting "feudalism." How easy it is for the mentally lazy to swallow this myth, and to think of this so different land, and this so different pattern of revolution, in the familiar terms of European revolution against feudalism!

In my article on "China's Fate" (AMERICAN MERCURY, January 1947), I wrote:

Not large estates, but little pocket-handkerchief farms too small to sustain a population which is denser in many rural areas than in the thickly populated cities of other lands — that is the basic agrarian problem of China.

This is confirmed by Dr. Winfield, as it is by every objective and honest study that has concerned itself with land distribution in China and the fate of the Chinese people. "The average farm size for the entire country," writes Dr. Winfield, "is 4.18 acres." Less than five acres! Compare this with our own average of 157 acres per farm.

What, then, about the "great feudal

landlords"? Dr. Winfield quotes from John L. Buck's scholarly study of *Land Utilization in China*. What Dr. Buck in his survey calls "very large farms" average only thirteen acres! For American farming these, too, would be dwarfs. They yield twice as much per acre as the small farms, but both Winfield and Buck find that even they are too small for proper farming. Before China can be quit of hunger and malnutrition, she must move at least 180 million of her people (more than the entire population of the United States) from farms to cities. She must develop new industries for them. She must extend the size of each individual, family farm, including the "average very large farm." She must build a network of roads and railroads; set up one or more huge power dams for mechanized irrigation and hydroelectric power in the gorges of the Yangtze and other rivers. These are needed to substitute electric power for arm and shoulder and back, and for new industries, and above all, to provide airfixed nitrates as fertilizers to take the place of fecal matter. For this, Dr. Winfield calculates that China needs not less than 20 million tons of chemical fertilizer per year. The total world production of chemical fertilizer in 1946-47 amounted to only 24 million tons! Still, a modern hydroelectric dam system on the Yangtze would go far to provide this nitrate lack. Thus the whole basic program for the reconstruction of China is carefully worked out in Dr. Winfield's book,

for President Truman and Secretary Acheson to see if they really mean to implement the Fourth Point in the President's Inaugural Address.

IV

Dr. Winfield is not a politically sophisticated person, and the political observations in his book come as mere side remarks. Yet they serve to clear the fog that has deliberately been spread between the American people and China, and to render the reader immune to the effects of the greatest piece of Soviet psychological warfare so far perpetrated.

"The land issue," writes Dr. Winfield in one of his characteristic political *obiter dicta*, "has been skilfully used to confuse American thinking about China. . . . Out of this uncritical writing and fallacious thinking comes confusion as to what American policy should be in the present complex situation . . . and resistance to doing anything at all."

That, in a nutshell, is precisely the purpose of the psychological warfare. When William Z. Foster pronounced the "end of American intervention in China the key task on which our Party must use every ounce of its strength and skill and organizational ability," that was what he was driving at. When John Carter Vincent urged that no "capital, public or private," be invested to help the Chinese government, his words had the same effect. When Shanghai businessmen who did business with the Japanese and believe they can do business with

the Communists, urge that we switch from aiding the Central Government to aiding the Soviet puppet régime, and this finds an immediate echo in the words and writings of "old China hands," the proposal is to move from "non-intervention" to the giving of aid to totalitarianism in China. And there are not lacking big American oil companies with branches in Shanghai to second the proposal, thereby evincing a strange concurrence of an unconscious death wish with a conscious desire to continue for a few more years to turn a quick profit. Thus do "Freud and Marx" make an incredible combination!

Dr. Winfield is no partisan of the Central Government against the Communists, or of the Communists against the Central Government. In one of his political side remarks he rightly points out that both were trained in Moscow: Chiang Kai-shek having studied there as well as Mao Tse-tung, Li Li-san, and Chou En-lai. The only difference, the significance of which escapes Dr. Winfield, is that Chiang broke with Moscow in 1927, when Stalin had not yet succeeded in setting up his one-man dictatorship, and the Russian State had not yet perfected its totalitarian setup complete with blood purges, slave labor, concentration camps and police dictatorship over the Party. On the other hand, the Mao Tse-tungs, Chou En-lais and Li Li-sans are men hand-picked by Stalin and trained to admire and serve the full-blown totalitarian State of the Stalinist era. What Chiang

gradually rejected in the course of his break and gradually modified under the influence of Sun Yat-sen's original doctrine and the counsel of American advisers, the Communists accept, glorify, and regard as the ideal they serve and strive to realize.

"The world hears little about the Communist secret police in China," Dr. Winfield observes in another side remark, "for the same reason that it hears little about it in Yugoslavia and Russia. [While his book was on the press, however, we suddenly heard a lot about Tito's secret police because the Cominform and the Kremlin chose to publicize it!] More is heard about the Kuomintang secret police because, in spite of all said and written to the contrary, the Central Government of China still permits more foreign correspondents to see and write more about it than do the Communists."

Other side remarks deal with that favorite weapon of psychological warfare, the claim of the Communists that they are "people's democracies" and that those they attack are "fascists":

Although the Central Government is not democratic, it is also not fascist. Both Kuomintang party and Central Government are clearly on record as moving towards democracy. By drafting and promulgating the constitution, and by holding the first national elections, they have taken important steps towards setting up that democracy, even in the midst of a continuing war situation.

And, since these lines were written,

the Communists have made the abrogation of that constitution one of their "eight peace demands."

Another casual side remark which will astonish American victims of Soviet psychological warfare deals with the question of China's centuries-old tradition of a rake-off or commission by poorly paid government officials on all government deals. Like everything else in this ancient land, this has been changing slowly, but the government has actually made great strides toward changing it:

Although a great majority of the officials of the Central Government are honest men who carry on their work against constantly mounting financial difficulties, the small, corrupt minority are spotlighted and, by implication, destroy the reputation of the honest majority.

Still more startling to the average reader will come the news reported by Dr. Winfield, after wandering over much of the land, that "the Kuomintang, in spite of inflation, is accomplishing much in the fields of education, agriculture and public health to help the common people." His accounts of the reform of the ancient printed and written language, of the spread of education and literacy even during the period of flight from the Japanese invader, of the actual increase of schools in wartime, of the pitiful attempts to tackle with broken resources and a war-exhausted people all the colossal tasks of reconstruction which would tax the richest and most peaceful nation — these are all moving things, even though they too are

but marginal notes to his central story. Even this reviewer was surprised to learn that whereas the number of Russian schools and the level of education contracted drastically during the German invasion, the number of Chinese schools was actually increased, though the level of instruction sank, during the much longer and farther-reaching Japanese invasion of China.

v

In one regard, Dr. Winfield's book is already out of date. "China," he writes,

has apparently passed beyond the danger of being reduced to colonial status by other powers, and is free to develop her resources for the benefit of her own citizens. . . . The greatest achievement of World War II was the abrogation of the unequal treaties. . . . A ruthless struggle for power is being fought by two groups, neither of which is capable of a quick or decisive victory. . . . In spite of the immediate difficulties, the long-term prospects of working out a basis for effective operation (for American aid) seem to be good, provided the country does not become Communist, or break up into a number of more or less independent regions.

But, alas, at the very moment when Dr. Winfield was rejoicing at the freeing of China from her colonial status, our late President was bribing Stalin to enter a war with Japan which he had better been kept out of. The bribe was that which was not ours to give, the right to occupy northern Korea, to seize Port Arthur and Dairen, to occupy Manchuria. It was this

great outflanking operation which made it inevitable that the Central Government should lose the whole of North China. China is once more being partitioned, broken up into fragments, reduced to colonial status. If the reader doubts that, let him remember that the Chinese Communists, under Stalin's orders, have endorsed the Russian annexation of Mongolia, the imperialist penetration of Sinkiang, the stripping of China's only center of heavy industry, Manchuria, the seizure of Port Arthur and Dairen, the new extraterritorial, imperialist treaties. When Stalin needed it in 1941 for his pact with Japan, the Chinese Communists even endorsed Japan's annexation of Manchuria!

What next? Here, Dr. Winfield, having unjustifiably underestimated the tempo of events, has no answers. Yet the underlying picture he painted is there to guide us. Still, as when he wrote, there are only two viable forces in China, and no "third force" can be plucked like a rabbit out of a silk or brass hat. Though the Kuomintang is now much weaker and the Communists much stronger, both will continue with their rival programs. The program of the Kuomintang remains, as in the past, the only force for the defense of the territorial integrity and independence, and for the eventual democratization and reconstruction of China. The program of the Communist Party remains, as in the past, a program for Russian penetration, Russian partition, for the tying of China to a world drive for

power, for the ultimate introduction of a police-state totalitarianism. Unlike America, Russia has not the resources to reconstruct China, but can only use China as a mighty force in its bid for world power. It can use China, as it is using the countries behind the iron curtain, to bolster its own economy, and, since China is too poor to yield much in materials or machines (Manchuria having already been stripped), Russia will use it chiefly as a source of man-power, for forced labor and for future armies.

Yet I cannot believe that China's struggle for territorial integrity and independence is at an end. Thrice did Sun Yat-sen resign or flee his land, but he never gave up. This is the third time that Chiang Kai-shek has done the same. Yet the Kuomintang, under his leadership, as seems most likely, or under whatever leadership, will retain some areas and will continue their struggle. Wherever, in South China, or in Western China, or in Formosa, or in exile, a center of resistance forms which continues the

fight for the three principles of Sun Yat-sen, to them should go the support of men and governments who believe in China's right to independence, to territorial integrity, to freedom from unequal treaties and foreign domination. We in America, though we claimed no extraterritorial privileges for ourselves, have the deepest moral responsibility for bringing the Kremlin's forces into Port Arthur, Dairen, Manchuria and Northern Korea. In the subsequent boycott of the Central Government when it most needed our aid and had the greatest right to claim it, we must now see the greatest victory ever won by Soviet psychological warfare. Here, in China, the tide must be turned if we wish to stop the spread of totalitarianism and aggressive imperialism, and if we wish to delay, and if possible prevent, the outbreak of yet another world war, in which the captive masses of Asia are joined to the captive masses of Europe in a "final" effort to overwhelm what is left of the non-totalitarian and democratic world.

PHRASE ORIGINS—47

TO HAVE AN AXE TO GRIND: *This phrase is believed to have originated with Benjamin Franklin. On one occasion, when he was a boy, Franklin permitted a total stranger to wheedle him through flattery into turning his grindstone so that he could sharpen his axe. The job completed, young Franklin's only reward for an hour's labor was a brusque order to be off. Ever after, he relates in his autobiography, whenever someone approached him with honeyed words, he recalled this boyhood incident and wondered whether the person in question might not also have an axe to grind.*

LOUIS JAY HERMAN