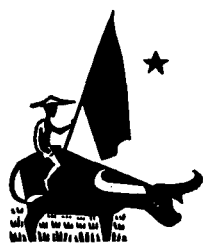


In Search of a China Policy



When Mr. Acheson told the world last August, in the State Department's White Paper on China, that we look forward to a reassertion of "the democratic individualism of China," he was using our best political vocabulary. But his good phrase was unexpectedly seized upon by the propagandists of Communist Peking and turned against us with devastating effect; for "individualism," translated into Chinese, has become a garbage word, meaning everyone-for-himself-and-devil-take-the-hindmost. The Chinese Communists neatly identified it with the disruptive antisocial selfishness that disgraced the last days of the Kuomintang.

The misunderstanding between Washington and Peking is more than verbal. The plain fact is that Asia is very different from America, socially, culturally, ideologically—in all the institutions and values of everyday life. We speak in different language systems, with only part of our vocabularies translatable with any accuracy. Our legal conceptions were so different a century ago that westerners demanded the right to be tried in China by western law under extraterritoriality, a system only recently ended. It is not surprising that neither Sun Yat-sen nor Chiang Kai-shek was ever able to put up a reasonable semblance of Anglo-Saxon parliamentary democracy.

So now that a new order has come to China, the American mind is ill-equipped to deal with it. As the world's oldest surviving revolutionaries and youngest defenders of the

established order, we fail to appreciate the attitudes and feelings of revolutionary Asia. We assume that the American ideals of political freedom and economic development, having been good enough for us, are good enough for the Chinese, Indonesians, Japanese, and Filipinos. With our instinctive horror of the totalitarian police state and the evil deeds of Russian imperialism, we assume that no intelligent Asiatic could really desire Communism or, having been duped into it, could avoid eventual disenchantment.

If we approach Asia on these terms we will be defeated. This has just happened in China, where we backed a decadent régime in the effort to secure a "strong, united, and democratic" China, independent of Russia and friendly to ourselves. Had China been an industrialized democracy of western Europe, a revived Kuomintang might be in power today. But China is uniquely different and Asiatic, densely populated but thinly industrialized, intensely self-conscious but noncohesive, one of the oldest civilized states in the world, convulsed by the newest revolution.

In forming a new policy toward China we must face several very tough and unpleasant realities. If we want to maintain any contact with China at all we have to recognize the new Chinese Communist régime. Yet recognition will not necessarily preserve for our one thousand or more missionaries, our trading firms, our students, professors, and our journalists the position and influence which they have had in modern China heretofore. We have to fit our China policy into a larger over-all policy toward Asia. Yet our effort to put the Japanese economy on

its feet (so as to take it off our necks) will continue to provoke the bitter enmity of patriotic Chinese.

In tackling all these problems, our freedom of choice is narrower than we may think. If we do not recognize the Chinese Communist government, Russia will have even greater influence in China. If we do not encourage Japanese trade with China, Japan will become an even greater financial burden and a more dangerous political powder keg. We are the losers and cannot expect to be the choosers as much as we were before. What we have to offer may interest Asia less than we expect. We must assess wherein our real contribution can be—mainly in material goods and technology, or in the realm of ideas and values?

Our first need is therefore to face the truth. No amount of bluster, nor the sending of Marines (or even Legionnaires) can keep the Chinese Communists from putting consuls like Angus Ward in jail if they choose to. We may feel certain there are Russian machinations behind the scenes, but we have to deal with China as though it were an independent foreign state. Chinese patriotic sentiment demands this with complete sincerity. If the Chinese people are in reality falling victim to police terror and the Russian squeeze, we have to let them find it out for themselves.

Meanwhile, as advisers and foreign friends, our influence is at a low ebb. It falls steadily lower as Nationalist planes, gifts of the United States, continue to drop American-made bombs on open Chinese cities. The American public forgets that since V-J Day our aid to Chiang has contributed to the killing and maiming of many thousands of Chinese civilians. More than

a thousand bombing casualties have been reported from Shanghai since the Communist take-over—enough to blacken our name and strengthen the Communists' moral position.

The hardest idea for us to accept about China today is the seeming paradox that the new Peking régime is both Communist and popular: It is definitely a Communist régime and in the Russian camp, yet it shows promise, on its record thus far, of being the best government that modern China has had. This proposition is hard to take. In recent years some Americans have preferred to think that the Chinese Communists were mere "agrarian reformers," do-gooders in the countryside, and not real Communists committed to the police state and allegiance to Moscow. Many Americans have chosen, on the other hand, to deny altogether the record of Chinese Communist good works and reforms for the peasant masses. Either of these beliefs—that the Communists weren't real Communists, or that they weren't real reformers—was a way out. But now we are up against it. Mao Tse-tung has taken over China with a minimum of slaughter and is making some initial progress in solving China's gigantic problems, while proclaiming his allegiance to Moscow.

Revolutionary Asia seems a paradox to us partly because we don't understand its degrees of social and economic difference from the West. The old order of personal government (landlord rule in the countryside and official corruption in the towns) is so far below our own modern standards that a party dictatorship, which seems a backward tyranny to us, may seem a forward step in Asia. The Chinese people are not yet accustomed to the protection of a legal system which is independent of the government in power, nor do they take the rights of free assembly and political self-expression as matters of course. The mere preservation of order, the lessened fear of arbitrary seizure by the police, have been a relief to Chinese intellectuals after their experiences under the Kuo-mintang. The fact that the new régime may at any time resort in its turn to arbitrary arrest and coercion makes it no worse than its predecessors. It will be judged by the Chinese masses according to their traditional touchstone

—whether there is enough rice to eat.

Our ignorance of China leads to sad miscalculations. We overestimated the Nationalist armies' will to fight and oversupplied them with American arms. We sent them field-artillery pieces, key tools for capturing walled cities. But the Nationalists held the walled cities and the Communists remained dispersed in the countryside, where artillery could not reach them. When the besieged Nationalists grew demoralized, the artillery began to change hands, and soon the cities did, too. Since our armament of Chiang outran his troops' desire to use it, the Communists today have the best-armed forces in Chinese history, American-equipped.

We can make similar mistakes in other parts of Asia. Suppose, for example, that our economic-development plans overlook the social effects of industrialization. Done our way, industrialization will create big cities in Asia, which will draw their cheap labor from the farms of the countryside. But this will disrupt the old family relationships, upset the traditional amenities of the individual's life within his community of kin and neighbors, and make him the more ready to give his allegiance to revolutionary causes. American-style industrialization in the crowded East may increase the material satisfactions of the Indonesian

or the Indian, and yet also increase his psychological frustration and spiritual dissatisfaction. All these things are interrelated, and our technological aid cannot help having deep social repercussions. Our well-meant injections of technology into underdeveloped economies under Point Four can be misused to entrench backward régimes in power, and so lead us into a whole series of disasters like the one we have suffered in China.

These unhappy facts suggest that American policy can no longer afford to project American ideals into Asia unless they are translated into Asiatic terms. The freedom of the individual, the democratic process, the good life we seek to defend, seem to most Asiatics to be all right for Americans, but beyond their own reach. They must settle for what they can achieve in their own countries, with the meager resources at hand and the historical traditions they have inherited—through Communism, if no better means presents itself. Can America offer an alternative, not in New York or Washington, but in Batangas Province and the paddy fields outside Bangkok?

Our forebears, as traders, missionaries, and educators, began the revolutionary process in Asia. It is high time that we took a hand in helping it along. Containment of Communism, to keep it out of countries undergoing social metamorphosis, is like containing a forest fire. It is better to build a back-fire.

It is not beyond our capabilities to work closely with the native non-Communist leadership of Asia, once we acquire the will and the vision. Asia is still our farthest West, the final frontier to which our westward expansion has brought us. It is now also our strategic frontier, where American ways and ideals are on trial, a border area of cultural ferment and change where modern science can either remake the ancient East or else enslave it. We will bear some responsibility for the outcome.

Our policy must be cast in a new pattern of relations between the American people and peoples of Asia. Elements of this new pattern may be suggested as a series of operating principles.

First, American private citizens and private agencies must be enlisted and



Shanghai: anti-inflation posters



The work of an American-made Nationalist bomb

given opportunity to work in Asia: business corporations and private enterprisers, missionary and student workers, teachers and technicians of all kinds. They should not be dominated by government, but advised and helped. We must avoid our recent error in China, where we funneled enormous amounts of aid into the government channels of China and overloaded them. We should not place our bets on governments but on the long-term interests of peoples, and we should seek to work with the peoples of Asia at all possible levels of planning and technical development. Naturally, the governments of the new Asia will be largely "socialist" in their plans for the future, since *their countries generally lack a strong middle class*.

Second, our new contact with Asia, both private and governmental, must be on a basis of equality and reciprocity. First of all, Asia's independent sovereignty and freedom of action must be fully acknowledged. This means the full recognition of nationalist aspirations in Indonesia, Viet-Nam, and other areas, even when we know that the new leadership is weak and untried. Colonialism and the old Anglo-Dutch imperium in Southeast Asia are finished, and we cannot fill the vacuum with a new American imperialism of our own invention. Our only recourse, as a trading power at a great distance, is to nurture nationalist movements and

try to treat them as independent even while they are weak.

Finally, insofar as we can plan our part of this relationship with the new nations of India and Southeast Asia, we must seek to keep it balanced and integrated within an over-all program, so that military armament does not outrun social reform, and industrial development does not overshadow the welfare of peasants. Trade among Far Eastern countries, for instance, is quite as necessary as trade with us.

If we regard China with these considerations in mind, several principles emerge: First, we must help the various new nations of the Far East to work their way toward political independence and economic development, so that increasingly they form a local international community, a segment of the world order. Japan is an integral part of this community and must trade with it. Such a growth must inevitably attract Chinese participation. Yet China is not likely, in our lifetime, to be in a position, economically or strategically, to dominate this community.

Second, our interest is to maintain as best we can our contact with the Chinese people, rather than to push them behind a Russian-type iron curtain. Their new government, having ridden to power on a wave of nationalism, is in no mood to accept Russian dictation and police surveillance in its

domestic affairs. It is by no means certain yet that the Chinese Communists want to subordinate themselves fundamentally to Russia, or that they wish to eliminate American contact, or that, if they do, they can succeed soon. No matter what the Chinese Communists want, China is still oriented toward the West in many ways. We should try to keep it so, neither by hostility nor by appeasement, but by standing on solid American principles: national independence, economic welfare, personal freedom. These are positive things we are for, not against, and in our relations with Communist China we should mainly talk about them, rather than about "anti-Communism."

In this context, diplomatic recognition is only a first step. Since Russian aid to the Chinese Communists during the civil war has been relatively meager, we have little basis for applying the Stimson doctrine. The change of government in China has followed a genuine civil war, not military aggression from outside. Diplomatic relations, so necessary in our dealing with Communist Russia, are equally necessary now that the cold war extends to Communist China.

Recognition is not moral approval, only realism. A Chinese veto in the United Nations can have only a little more nuisance value than the present Russian veto. Meanwhile, persistent nonrecognition would constitute desertion of the century-old American interest in the Chinese people—a denial of American principles of humanitarianism, and friendship for the four hundred millions of China. Recognition is a necessary first step in our continuing competition with Russian influence in China. To withhold recognition beyond the time when the State Department can work out the details would be defeatist and essentially isolationist. It would be playing into Russia's hands. Our aim must be to follow a middle course, free of the illusory hopes and fears that have dogged our China policy in the past, ready to deal with the Communists in China but under no compulsion to take their terms, without expecting either that their régime could be destroyed by our hostility or that it could be enticed out of the Russian orbit by appeasement.

—JOHN K. FAIRBANK



To Man's Measure

Happy New Year, Mr. Gorer

Observing, measuring, sniffing at us as if we were a recently discovered tribe in some dark Amazonian forest, Geoffrey Gorer, a young, alert, bright-eyed-and-bushy-tailed British anthropologist wrote a witty book entitled *The American People*. We have just taken a look at it. Mr. Gorer has a theory that Americans are what they are because they revolted against Father. Father was King George the Third. Once the colonies had rid themselves of Father they formed the system of checks and balances to prevent anyone else's ever looking at all like a Father, and from then on, it was only the Indians who talked about the Great White Father in Washington, or the *Daily News* that used the term derisively about Roosevelt. If the schoolboys were taught that George Washington was the Father of his Country, that was just an error of rhetoric.

The revolt against Father led to Uncle Sam and to Mother's Day. It led Mr. Gorer to draw a picture of the United States as a nation of discontented and bewildered children, uncertain of their sex—a picture which is dreary, facile, and vulgarized Freud.

The little star on top of the Christmas tree is still there, lighted every evening for a few more days. Soon that strange and ageless excitement will be at hand when men everywhere greet a new year as if it meant a new life. What has Mr. Gorer to do with this Holiday Season? Well, there were British peri-

odicals on the table the other day, and looking at them, we found that, though we are rather angry at Mr. Gorer, we are not at all angry at Father any more.

We were sitting in front of an open wood fire. For a city dweller, this sounds like boasting. It sounds as if we were pretending that we were the late John Pierpont Morgan in his library. But we have to tell it the way it was. The fact is that the noise of the city traffic entered the room as gently as if it were the wind sighing through forests the city does not know. The fact is that the logs in the open fireplace had burned down so that, with John Masefield, we could recall "beauty of fire from beauty of embers." The room was an ante-room to no doctor or dentist but only to silence and the dusk. When the lights were turned up there were the British periodicals on the table.

"In the first half the Oppidans, kicking to Good, were pressing fiercely; the ball was actually in Calx and over the furrow, but the College Goals, perceiving that it might come spinning back into play, did not touch it but waited in hope. Sure enough, the ball screwed back over the furrow and he duly kicked it to safety. Here was a piece of coolness and wisdom in agitating circumstances hard to overpraise . . . Muffled cries of 'Got it' now came thick and fast; shy followed shy and one was very nearly converted into a goal, the ball hitting the outskirts of the door but not the door itself . . . an incident worthy of record was the spirited conduct of the new Provost, who

was looking on. He, remembering the duties of youth rather than of age, instinctively stopped the ball as it came towards him and returned it to the bully." This is from the *Times's* account of the Wall Game as played at Eton (at Eton only) on St. Andrew's Day.

Country Life's cover story was bannered "Our English Warming-Pans." It also contained (1) a piece on "Little Bulbs of Early Spring" picturing the Narcissus Cyclamineous growing in a rock garden, "with its golden petals laid back like the ears of an angry cat"; (2) a piece headed "A Fine Old English Breed in Danger of Extinction in Britain: The Bloodhound," with photographs of "Dusk of West Summerland," daughter of Blanche of Brighton, owned by Lady Anderson; (These sad, slobbering, and gentle hounds employed in America mainly as accessories to melodrama, were introduced into Britain at about the time of the Norman Conquest.); (3) "Insects and Insecticides"—"Beekeepers in this country have every right to feel anxious!"

The *Illustrated London News* told of Tower Farm, Longthorpe, Northants. During the war the Home Guard occupied this fourteenth-century tower, damaging the interior as soldiers are wont to do, in this case by playing the game of darts. Entering upon the task of restoring the walls, the tenant, Mr. Hugh Horrell, found coloring beneath the plaster surface. "He most wisely stopped this vigorous stripping and began to explore carefully with a pen knife. In this way he exposed evidence