

1/14/49

MEMORANDUM

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Dr. Y. C. James Yen Letters, June-October 1948, to
Miss T'ang and Justice William O. Douglas (Dear Bill)

These letters, boiled down, relate to

- I. Political trends bearing upon the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction
- II. Progress of the Mass Education Movement in China.

I. Political Trends

No Chinese has the slightest hope for the nation. All hate the present government. But Yen still sees hope for rural reconstruction and mass education, given the right men on the Joint Commission, i.e., statesmen, not party men or specialists. The Nationalist Army is losing steadily to the Reds. A strong student movement agitates against U. S. Policy of strengthening Japan, suspects any kind of American assistance. Wong, new Premier, seemingly favors having the Commission made independent of a government which cares only for fighting the Communists and for more money and power. The 'Gissimo possibly wants sincerely to allow the Commission a free hand while he promises to handle the reactionaries in his own party; and to see Yen a member of the Commission. Also, the popular new Vice President, Marshall Li-Tsung-jen, elected over reactionary opposition, offers to assist Yen though wanting his Kwangsi province included in the nation-wide program. But Yen is distressed to learn from Douglas and Miss T'ang about the State Department schemers against him, *their efforts to dominate the Commission by sending Moyer and others to* recommend about administering program funds and their insistence on including proposals which the Sino-American Agricultural Mission made two years ago, initiated by the State Department. Yen saw this as sabotage.

He tackled Moyer. Moyer thought the State Department's idea was for the Commission to be agricultural and rural industrial, little concerned with education or health. Yen was now thoroughly convinced that a few State Department juniors, not ECA, were out to dominate the Commission, with Marshall in Europe. He reminded Moyer that the Commission is empowered to formulate and carry out Chinese rural reconstruction and to operate that line as it pleased. He said agriculture is important but is only one of four main rural considerations; that what most appealed to Congress was the indigenous in Yen's concept; that we want no State Department subordinates dictating to the Commission. Moreover, American dollars and techniques alone wouldn't do the job. Moyer seemed impressed but insisted that Chiang and high government officials should participate. That, Yen replied, calls for delicate treatment, again not dollars alone, certainly not with all this student anti-American feeling throughout China. To Miss T'ang Yen confides that the State Department policy is to put technicians and specialists like Moyer on the Commission, directly under the Department's control, though nominally under the Administrator (actually Lapham, Hoffman's representative). This would be ruinous. To counteract such control, Yen and Dr. Ch'u wanted men so prominent in China and abroad on the Commission that the Department under

cloak of ECA would hesitate to impose its will. For example, the past and present Premiers, Chang Chun and Wong. Maurice Moore and Hoffman approved. But now along comes the American Embassy with a formal proposal to put the whole Commission directly under the Administrator. There it is again! The Chinese Foreign Ministry, furious, insists it be under the Chinese Government, the program being for Chinese people in Chinese territory. And Leighton Stuart reconsidered a consent to serve because legally and technically Lapham should be under him. Chang Chun too declined - how could a Premier of China serve under Lapham? What, Yen asks, is the State Department doing, trying to reduce the Commission to a mere coordinating agency without a program of its own or any power to use any money, and an American supervisor in every Section of the Commission? Yen was between the devil and the deep blue sea - Department dictation and Chinese interference from greedy cliques. Trouble is, neither the American nor the Chinese president can appoint a chairman, who has to be elected by the Commission members.

(Swope, shown this outpouring in June 1948 called it dynamite, guard carefully)

Meanwhile in June, Yen among others was nominated at Paris for Director-General of Unesco and by a Frenchman, not a Chinese. He wanted Swope and Douglas to ponder that. The American Government delayed until the end of September sending the two American members of the Commission, Moyer and Baker, both of them opposed to Yen and under State Department instruction to do everything to keep him down, obviously so as to make the Commission agricultural, not reconstructive, and have it carry out the Sino-American Agricultural Commission's old proposals. The 'Gissimo's expressed desire ^{was} for Chiang Mon-lin as Commission chairman with Yen chief executive. As lately as October 11 the fight was still on, "terribly distasteful" to Yen. Mon-lin was chairman - the only officer. No employees. At December 2 Miss T'ang had heard nothing recent from Yen. He was still trying to get the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction going somehow, with the work in Szechuan and Hunan to be carried out, whatever happened. Four regional offices were decided on: Chungking for Western China, Changsha for Central China, Canton for Kwangtung, Kweilin for Kwangsi and Kweichow.

II. Progress of Mass Education Movement in China

At the College in Szechuan 51 received degrees in Education, Arts, Agriculture, in July 1948 at first commencement for four-year students. All voluntarily joined the Experimental Center despite the usual aversion of educated young Chinese for rural work. Leighton Stuart called this "a great victory for the Movement". College will accept only 200 new students out of 3,350 candidates. There is a new auditorium seating 700, built entirely out of savings. Campus is in beautiful setting. Yen's request has been granted - US \$15,500 for a library, faculty residences and adult psychology laboratory. Community work begun nearby stimulated local people to contribute land and labor for a road between market village and College. Local leaders at own expense want College to direct Village Center Primary School. Thus local attitudes are changing. Experimental Center at Bi-Shan and Peipei has about 1,000 looms working; enough money would mean 7,000. Cooperative members making splendid profit and putting some of it into community education and health. The NEA's first instalment of US \$15,000 sent to Dr. Ch'u for the

Center for primary teachers' salaries, etc. sparked the local gentry to sell farm products to the amount of eight times as much more for similar use. That, says Yen, shows magnificently that China needs release more than relief. Its wealth, material and spiritual, and its potential are tremendous. The so-called Farmer's Bank, a government concern, has been loaning to the farmers' Cooperative Farm. Most cooperatives are in hands of unscrupulous gentry who borrow at low rates, then loan to poor farmers at 30%-40%. Not so at the Cooperative Farm, sometimes called "Agricultural Productive Cooperative" which only dirt farmers and tillers of the soil who are literate or attend school may join. The Cooperative Farm guarantees reasonable rent to landlord and absolute security for the tenant, until the people can assert their own right. Any land sold in community is sold to it, keeping out any new landlord. So for the first time the real dirt farmers have an organization of their own. Peipei has 40 such Farms and Pa-hsieh another 40. There was only one a year before. The 51 new college graduates have already helped some at a month-long Training Institute for 300 primary school teachers. What the Experimental Center needs more than money is trained leadership. Faculty members are improving in quality and number. Education Department will soon have foundation personnel. Sociology Department has two good men. Four men of the Agricultural Department are going to California on Rosenberg Foundation fellowships. Prospects are good for the Department of Hydraulic Engineering. A People's Films program for the Mass Education Movement was under way, then in October NAR cabled withdrawal of his pledge toward it. Yen wanted Miss T'ang to see what Swope or Douglas could do about it.

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