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"New Force" II - The People

15 Peak Road (Small House)
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522 Fifth Avenue
New York 36, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

The "new force" in Hong Kong - a collection of Chinese individuals and small groups who oppose the Communists but are unwilling to join forces with the Kuomintang - is still more of a hope than a reality. Many factors, including British disapproval of all political agitation in the Colony, have precluded attempts to actively organize among the general public. The lack of unity among the groups themselves has also prevented the emergence of an organized movement. There have been constant efforts by a few leaders to bring the thirty or forty "new force" groups and cliques together, and many of the groups are linked in a variety of ways, but they have not reached any common agreement on aims, leadership, or organization.

A major effort was made during 1951 by a handful of leading personalities associated with the "new force" to consolidate the main groupings into a loose organization. But it was unsuccessful. This effort, which was made without publicity because of the unsympathetic attitude of the local authorities, began when Ku Meng-yu, a leading Chinese intellectual leader, and Chang Fa-k'uei, a well-known South China general, organized an informal "Committee of Five" to exchange ideas. The "Committee of Five" is reported to have included Li Huang and Tso Shun-sheng, both former leaders of the Young China Party, and either Chang Kuo-t'ao, one time Chinese Communist Politburo member, or P'eng Chiao-hsien, last Minister of Interior under the Nationalists on the mainland. From the start, the committee had difficulty attracting leaders of other groups, however. For example, Hsieh Ch'en-p'ing, a former Young China Party leader whose Freedom Publishing Co. advocating a "third force" was the most active group in the "new force" propaganda field at that time, held aloof. Eventually, the committee itself began to break up; Tso, who was Chinese Minister of Agriculture from 1947-49 when Hsieh was his political Vice-Minister, dissociated himself from the committee. And the committee declined offers of cooperation from a few groups which it considered undesirable to include at the moment. For example, it is reported that Hsu Ch'ung-chih, one-time commander-in-chief of Sun Yat-sen's military forces, was willing to come together with the committee in 1951 but was

not invited.

After their unsuccessful first step, Ku Meng-yu and Chang Fa-k'uei decided to organize a new, enlarged committee. An informal "Committee of Twenty-Five" was established, with representatives of a greater number of groups and cliques than had been associated with the first committee. This attempt also failed, however; the new committee soon started to break up, and the individual groups again began acting independently. At present, only about 7 to 10 of the original members, primarily those willing to accept Ku and Chang as leaders, are still linked to the remnants of the committee.

During this period, however, an important liaison was formed. Ku Meng-yu established contact through correspondence with Carson Chang (Chang Chun-mai), founder of the Chinese Democratic Socialist Party, who was lecturing on politics and government in Indian universities. A close tie was formed between them. At the same time, Chang Kuo-t'ao began to cooperate more closely with Ku and Chang Fa-k'uei, and in effect joined their group. Consequently, when the attempts to consolidate on a broader basis failed, this quadrumvirate - Ku Meng-yu, Chang Fa-k'uei, Carson Chang, and Chang Kuo-t'ao (I will henceforth refer to them as the Ku-Chang group) - remained as the most significant association of leading personalities among the "new force" people.

It is reliably reported that the Chang-ku group now believes they should temporarily abandon attempts to bring together all the many individualistic cliques of "big names" in Hong Kong and should proceed on their own, in the hope that the other groups will accept their leadership and join forces at some future date.

Until recently the group has been concentrating on writing and publication, and three of the leading "new force" magazines in the Colony - China's Voice, Independent Forum, and National Renaissance - are under their guidance. But they now feel, in the words of one of the leaders, that "the time is long overdue for an organization to crystallize". Since organization appears to be impractical in Hong Kong, they are planning to make their base in Japan. Ku Meng-yu has already gone to Tokyo. Carson Chang is now in the U.S. but may return to Japan. And there are rumors that Chang Kuo-t'ao is preparing to go to Tokyo.

According to some reports, the Ku-Chang group hopes, before the end of this year, to form a small but definite organization, based in Japan, and to make a public declaration of principles and appeal for support. They believe that if this can be done, it will be a step of symbolic importance, the first concrete step toward forming a loose league which can ultimately include most of the potential individual and group supporters of the "new force" idea.

At present, therefore, the four men in the Ku-Chang group are the main contenders among the "big name" personalities in Hong Kong for leadership of an organized "new force". What sort of men are they?

Of the four, Ku Meng-yu is the most deeply respected among Chinese intellectuals and the least known among ordinary Chinese. Born in Hopei province in 1888, Ku was educated in Germany at Berlin University; he started studying engineering and later turned to economics. After his return to China he became dean of National Peking University and was one of the leading intellectual leaders there during the now-famous May 4th movement in 1919. Like so many intellectuals of the time, he joined the Kuomintang and became one of its active leaders.

During the critical period in China just prior to the Kuomintang's 1926 Northern Expedition, Ku Meng-yu was head of the Kuomintang's Propaganda Department. He then became right-hand man to Wang Ching-wei who during this period was leader of the Kuomintang left-wing. Subsequently from 1932 until 1935, Ku was Minister of Railways in the Central Government during a period of active transportation expansion, and he acquired at that time a solid reputation as a good administrator.

Perhaps the major decision of Ku's life was made during the Sino-Japanese War, when Wang Ching-wei accepted the Japanese bid for him to become a puppet in North China. Ku repudiated Wang and flew from Hong Kong to Chungking where he received a royal welcome. In Chungking he became Chancellor of the National Central University, a post he held from 1941 to 1943, finally resigning because of what he felt to be unwarranted interference in university affairs by the Kuomintang "CC" clique.

Ku was a member of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee from 1931 on, and in 1948 he was offered the Vice-Premiership of China by Premier Wong Wen-hao, but he turned it down. Shortly thereafter he came to Hong Kong where he went into retirement, rarely exposing himself to the public eye. He did some writing, and during 1950-51 published several irregular issues of a high-level intellectual magazine called Ta Tao (The Right Path), but he remained unknown to the general public.

Ku's record of public life is a clean one, and he is respected by Chinese intellectuals as a thoughtful man of integrity and real intelligence. He is a scholar rather than a public leader, however, and has been criticised for being too retiring and timid.

This summer Ku left Hong Kong to go to Japan, where he is said to be continuing his planning, writing, and organizing. If a platform, or public declaration, is ultimately issued by the Ku-Chang group, Ku will probably do much of the work of drafting it.

Chang Fa-k'uei, a 56 year old native of Kwangtung, is the military man in the group and is probably the only one of the four who has a popular reputation among large numbers of ordinary Chinese. Although from humble origin, Chang graduated from Hupei Military Academy, worked his way up in the army, and finally became, in 1927, Commander of the Fourth Army ("Old Ironsides") which was perhaps the most distinguished military unit in the Kuomintang's Northern Expedition. However, this was the peak of his career, never again equalled.

When the Northern Expedition reached the Yangtze, Chang became associated with Wang Ching-wei in the latter's opposition to Chang K'ai-shek, and consequently Chang Fa-k'uei never enjoyed Chiang's confidence. He did not go over to the Communists, however, and he was the man who suppressed the August 1, 1927, Nanchang Uprising, now celebrated by the Chinese Communists as the birth date of their army. Later in the same year, together with Li Chi-shen, he helped suppress the Chinese Communists' "Canton Soviet".

Chang Fa-k'uei failed to become a member of Chiang K'ai-shek's inner circle, even though he held a number of important posts over the years. He was a member of the Kuomintang Central Supervisory Committee from 1931 on, and his military posts included those of Commander of the Chekiang-Fukien-Anhwei-Kwangsi Border Area in 1936, Commander of the 4th War Area from 1939 to 1944, and Head of the 2nd Regional Command in 1945. During the wartime period he was close to Ch'en Ch'eng, now Nationalist Premier on Taiwan. Chang accepted Hong Kong's surrender from the Japanese, and for a period after the war he was the Generalissimo's personal representative in Canton.

During his long career Chang Fa-k'uei has been generally regarded as an honest, energetic, revolutionary general and, of course, during his career he has known a large percentage of the important Chinese military figures in the Nationalist camp. He is a trim-looking, dynamic man, who gesticulates rapidly when he talks.

At present he is living quietly in Hong Kong, in an elegant and expensively-furnished house, out of the public eye, but active in behind-the-scenes discussions.

The political scientist and diplomat of the group is Carson Chang, who is still listed as a Senior Advisor to Chiang K'ai-shek in official Taiwan publications. Carson Chang is a Kiangsu native, born in 1886. Educated in Japan, Germany and England, he is a man who has struggled for many years, ineffectively, for constitutional, multi-party government in China. In the words of a friend, "he is obsessed by the idea of constitutional government but doesn't have a practical program to achieve it". Although he has been active in politics, Chang is really more of an idealist than a politician.

Some years ago Carson Chang organized in Shanghai a College of Self-Government, subsequently called the Political University. Later he was head of the Comparative Law College of Soochow University. He was also organizer of the Chinese Democratic Socialist Party (first labelled the National Socialist Party in 1935), one of the few minor parties permitted to function by the Nationalists. From 1938 to 1948 he was a member of the People's Political Council.

An early follower of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Carson Chang has always been a critic of the Kuomintang, but his opposition has consistently been within legal bounds. He probably is one of

the few "new force" leaders who could still go to Taiwan with impunity.

At present, Chang is in the U.S. attempting to organize support for the Ku-Chang group. He has a magnetic personality, and considerable personal warmth, and undoubtedly he is the best qualified of the group to work for the support of Overseas Chinese leaders and others.

In many respects the most interesting of the four is Chang Kuo-t'ao, a man who might have occupied the seat Mao Tse-tung now fills in Peking, if the twists and turns of history had been only slightly different. Chang, a 55 year old Kiangsi native, was chairman of the First Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and remained a top leader of the party until he broke with Mao in 1938.

Chang Kuo-t'ao first became politically active when he was a student at Peking National University. He was one of the student leaders in the May 4th movement in 1919 and shortly thereafter was drawn into a Marxist study group, led by Li Ta-chao and Ch'en Tu-hsiu, which included Mao Tse-tung, then an assistant librarian at the university. He turned to Communism, he now says, due to his disillusionment with the West caused by the Versailles Treaty's compromise of China's rights.

After taking part in the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, Chang was one of its principal leaders. He was active in labor agitation and directed the notorious Hankow railway strike. From 1928 to 1931 he was in Moscow. Then, when the Communists had to take to the hills, he became Chairman of the Ouyuwang Soviet on the Szechwan border, which was linked to the Kiangsi Soviet but operated pretty much on its own. He was leader of one segment of the forces which made the Long March to the Northwest, and for a while was acting chairman of the Yen-an Border Region Government. He was on the Politburo until his break with the Communist Party in 1938.

Chang's decision to leave the Communists resulted from long-standing differences with Mao, which dated from 1932 and became intensified after 1935. Both doctrinal and tactical questions were involved, but one cannot help but suspect that the question of personal influence and predominance within the party was of basic importance too. Chang decided to leave the Communist Party after Mao had definitely established his supremacy.

"I am now a democrat believing in socialism" is the way Chang Kuo-t'ao currently describes his political philosophy; it is difficult to obtain any clearer or more complete elaboration. There is no doubt that he is anti-Stalinist, but he is still a Marxist, and little is known of the exact formula according to which he now mixes his "socialism" and "democracy". His principal activity in Hong Kong has been direction of the magazine China's Voice.

One thing is clear: Chang Kuo-t'ao is the only one of the

Ku-Chang group who has had real success, in the past, in China's rough-and-tumble politics. He knows something of practical organization and propaganda from his own experience, and this knowledge will probably be his main contribution to the quadrumvirate.

If any consolidation of "new force" groups and cliques clustered around the leading "big names" is to take place in the near future, it is likely to be led by the Chang-Ku group, which at present seems to be the only one with even a potential for general leadership. There is less reason, therefore, to describe the other groups in detail, although a few should at least be mentioned.

Actually, some of them might better be described as "categories of persons" rather than as organized groups, but the distinction is often difficult to make, so I will treat them all as groups.

Former leaders of the Young China Party constitute one group, although they do not act in unison, and many of them are connected with other identifiable "new force" groups.

The Young China Party was founded in Paris in 1923, and during the 1920's in China it was strongly nationalistic and opposed not only warlordism and Communism but also the current pro-Russian policy of the Kuomintang. The party supported the Nationalists during the Sino-Japanese War, however, and both during and after the war it was permitted to participate in the government. But its role was always insignificant, because it was a small group with very little support. Like so many small political parties in China, furthermore, it was divided by internal clique squabbles which destroyed organizational unity. At present one fraction of the party is in Taiwan, but a number of former leaders are now "new force" supporters in Hong Kong. Their present relation to what remains of the party is difficult to determine.

One of the founders of the Young China Party, Li Huang, joined the "Committee of Five" organized by the Chang-Ku group and still appears to be lined up with them in a general way. Another former leader, Tso Shun-sheng, also cooperated with the Chang-Ku group for a while, but his present position is more uncertain. Hsieh Ch'en-p'ing, a third leading ex-Young China Party man, is the leader of the Freedom Front group in Hong Kong. There are others of less prominence.

Similarly, a number of former leaders of the Chinese Democratic Socialist Party are now "new force" supporters. This party, organized in 1946, was an amalgamation of two other small groups, the Chinese National Socialist Party and the Democratic Constitutional Party. Like the Young China Party, it was small and had little influence, even though tolerated by the Nationalist Government, but it did attract a few respected Chinese intellectuals. It, too, however, fell apart as a result of internal schisms. One faction joined the Democratic League and is now in Peking. Another continued cooperation with the Kuomintang and is now in Taiwan. A third group came to Hong Kong and has

supported the "new force". For a while this group, which has published National Renaissance, continued to carry on the party tradition, but recently Carson Chang, who founded the party, severed all ties with it, and others may follow his lead. Apart from Chang himself, only a few of this group, such as Wu Hsien-tze, are well known. It is probable that most of the group will follow Carson Chang and will adopt whatever position he takes.

Another group is composed of former members of the Legislative Yuan. This handful of probably less than a dozen men is a remnant of a reformist clique of Yuan members which formed in Canton during the Nationalists' last days on the mainland, when Li Tsung-jen was Acting President. Under the leadership of Yuan President T'ung Kuan-hsien, the group tried to ensure legislative support for Li Tsung-jen's policies. When the government collapsed, some joined the Peking Government (usually via membership in the Kuomintang Revolutionary Committee), and others went to Taiwan, but a few, including T'ung himself, came to Hong Kong. Their association with Li Tsung-jen lasted for a while, but at present they share the general disillusionment with Li, and T'ung gives full backing to Ku Meng-yu. This, like so many links in Chinese clique politics, has a long background to it. T'ung, a remarkably well-educated man (Waseda University, Chicago University, Wisconsin University, Columbia University, the Sorbonne, the London School of Economics, University of Berlin), taught at Peking National University where Ku Meng-yu was dean, was a subordinate of Ku's when Ku succeeded Mao Tse-tung as head of the Kuomintang (sic!) Propaganda Department in 1926, and was Dean of the National Central University when Ku was Chancellor.

Former Kwangsi Province leaders constitute another group active in the "new force" field in Hong Kong. This is not surprising in view of the long history of friction which the Kwangsi clique has had with Chiang K'ai-shek, symbolized in the past few years by the bitter personal feud between Chiang and Li Tsung-jen. In 1949 when he was Acting President, and even for a considerable period of time after the fall of the mainland, Li was regarded by many Chinese as the main possible leader of a significant political grouping opposed to the Communists but independent of Chiang. Li's personal stock has declined greatly during his long period of exile and inactivity in the U.S., however, and "new force" leaders such as those in the Chang-Ku group do not want to be connected with him now; they say that his feud with Chiang, which at one time involved important issues, has now degenerated into a personal squabble. Many former subordinates of Li in Kwangsi still support him, however, and also maintain ties with various "new force" groups. These men include Ch'en Szu-yuan, reputedly Li's personal representative in Hong Kong, Huang Hsu-ch'u, former Kwangsi governor who has joined the "new force" exodus from Hong Kong and is now in Tokyo, Hsia Wei, a leading Kwangsi general who is close to Huang, Chiang Jen-min, one-time garrison commander in Kwangsi, and others.

Until about a year ago the Kwangsi group was particularly active, and among other activities they published a paper called Jen Yen Pao (now defunct). One reason for their importance then was the fact that they seemed to have closer ties with remaining guerillas on the mainland - Kwangsi was one of the last areas

cleaned out by the Communists - than any other group in Hong Kong. But the decline in guerilla activity has been accompanied by a decline in the influence of the Kwangsi politicians.

Another group is led by Hsu Ch'ung-chih, a 66 year old Kwangtung general who was one of the early military leaders of the Kuomintang revolution. Hsu joined Sun Yat-sen while he was still in Japan, receiving a military education. When the 1911 revolution took place he immediately became Commander-in-Chief in Fukien Province, and from then until Sun's death he was a leading military figure. First he was Commander of the Canton Army and later he became Minister of War, from 1924 to 1925, in Sun's Canton Government. Chang K'ai-shek was one of his subordinates. After Sun Yat-sen's death, however, Hsu's career went into an eclipse from which it has never emerged. As an old-time revolutionary, however, he has maintained a coterie of followers, including a few prominent politicians such as Liang Han-ts'ao, former member of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee and wartime Secretary-General of the Legislative Yuan. Hsu also has some supporters abroad, including a few prominent Overseas Chinese in the U.S. In 1951 he made a strong effort to rally anti-Peking, anti-Taiwan Kuomintang members to his support, but like so many efforts of would-be "new force" leaders the attempt was abortive.

Still another "new force" group is made up of a small number of former Kuomintang Revolutionary Committee members who supported the Committee in its anti-Chiang activities, but refused to join the majority in going to Peking without more specific guarantees from the Communists as to how they would be treated. These men now state that their views have been vindicated and that the Committee's members in Peking would like to get out if they could. The small group in Hong Kong, however, is not doing anything to speak of. They are bitter, disillusioned, and anti almost everything.

This listing does not by any means include all of the groups in Hong Kong, but it illustrates the nature of some of the "big name" cliques associated with the "new force" idea.

The "big name" personalities are not the ones who are doing most of the writing, publishing, and propaganda activities in support of a "new force", however; these activities are being carried out principally by younger people, most of whom are anonymous. In the short run, the political manoeuvrings of the well-known personalities may be of primary importance, but in the long run the thinking, talking, and writing of the younger people may be of greater importance.

The best-known group of younger people is the one associated with the Freedom Publishing Co., headed by Hsieh Ch'en-p'ing. Hsieh was born in 1905 in Anhwei and was educated at Peking National University, University of Michigan, and Columbia. While still a student he joined the Young China Party, and during most of his career he has mixed politics with teaching and publishing. After the war he held one public post of relative importance - that of political Vice-Minister of Agriculture - but in 1949, when the

Communists took over in China, he came to Hong Kong, rather than to Taiwan, and began to propagandize for what he chose to call a "third force". In 1949, he started a magazine called Freedom Front, which led to his denunciation by the Young China Party in Taiwan. A year later, in the summer of 1950, Freedom Publishing Co. began to publish a series of anti-Communist books and pamphlets, many of them written by refugees from the mainland; to-date over 100 titles have been published. These activities attracted a considerable number of young people, especially those who fled from the mainland for political reasons, and it is reported that about 100 persons are supported by the various writing and publishing activities of the group.

During the past year, however, the prestige of this "third force" group has declined to the extent that the name "third force", once generally applied to those who hoped for a new political movement, is now in disrepute, and many small groups which were once supported by Hsieh have broken their connection with him in order to embark upon independent writing and publishing. There are several reasons which probably explain this decline in prestige. On the one hand there have been persistent rumors that Hsieh's group is financed by foreign money (usually it is alleged to be American money), and whether or not this is true it is generally accepted; this has discredited the group in the eyes of some Chinese. Another reason is the fact that although it has attracted some sincere supporters it has also attracted political opportunists of many sorts. Much of the writing in its publications, furthermore, is considered to be uninspired and second-rate. Hsieh himself has not emerged as a real leader, although that obviously was his hope, and his group which aspired to consolidate and lead an organized "third force" has become just one of the many groups in the "new force". The Freedom Publishing Co.'s publications provide, however, an outlet for the energies and ideas of a considerable number of younger people who believe in a "new force".

Some of the best writing now being done by "new force" supporters in Hong Kong is coming from a number of small independent groups of young people, many of whom got their start with Hsieh's help but have subsequently branched out on their own. These groups, which have no "big names" at all, include organizations such as the Union Press and Platitude Press. The aim of the groups at the present time is to mould the political opinions of Chinese exiles and Overseas Chinese in order to lay the groundwork for development of a "new force" in the future.

It is not possible to describe these groups in a few words. Some of the groups have titles; others do not. Some are "organized"; others are just loose groups of friends. The people in them are too young to have had public careers which one could describe. They are anonymous. But many of them are impressive youngsters, hardworking, idealistic, sincere. If one can take a long-range historical view, these young people may prove to be more important than the older intellectuals, politicians, and generals, because they are genuinely trying to find a new approach to China's problems and are relatively unencumbered by the past. They have their eyes fixed upon the future, and if a "new force" ever develops

into a significant political movement it will be in the future.
At present, however, the "new force" is still merely a hope.

Sincerely yours,

A. Doak Barnett

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