

This policy somewhat abated during the two years that the Arusha peace process under the sponsorship of Nyerere were undertaken.

Events have escalated

But since mid-September, events in Burundi have escalated. As it appeared that the capital of Bujumbura, which the Tutsi military had moved to ethnically cleanse in 1995, might come under a siege from various Hutu forces, the Buyoya regime took swift, retributive action against the local population. At the end of September, the military forcibly removed 260,000 people from their homes and put them into 30 camps. Humanitarian agencies have not been permitted to visit the camps. According to MISNA, "for the past weeks thousands of civilians of Runyaga, Kanyosho, and Isale (all in Rural Bujumbura province) have been crowded into concentration camps, without water or food. Dozens have already died from fatigue and violence. The men are held separate from the women; they are interrogated, often beaten, and sometimes tortured in atrocious manners. Some even had their eyes extracted. Though the authorities justify a similar mass deportation as a necessary step for a 'census,' no humanitarian organization or agency has been permitted to bring aid, even to the women and children." There are reports that new camps have also been set up in southern Burundi, where fighting has been intense.

MISNA says that the round-up of hundreds of thousands of people was carried out with back-up from the Ugandan armed forces, although this has been denied by Uganda. "Military forces surrounded the areas all situated outside the capital. They then began the mass operation, gathering all the residents and closing them in temporary camps near the Catholic and Protestant churches in the area. . . . The units conducting the operations also opened fire, killing many people."

A month has not improved the situation. UN special rapporteur for human rights Marie-Thérèse Keita visited Burundi at the end of October, and reported that "massacres, numerous assassinations, arbitrary executions, and forced displacement to supposedly protected areas" are all ongoing in Burundi. Keita was not permitted to leave the capital, and therefore did not visit the 50 camps which by the time of her visit were holding 314,000 people.

Without pressure for immediate negotiations which attack the central issues, as opposed to giving the Burundian military plenty of time to fill its pockets in the Congo, the danger is rising that a total conflagration could break out in Burundi or in the capital Bujumbura similar to the panicked chaos and mutual murder that gripped Rwanda in 1994. According to Amnesty International, as of Sept. 30 "the situation in Bujumbura is reported to be extremely tense, with rumors of attacks or infiltration by Hutu-dominated armed opposition groups." The Buyoya regime has permitted the re-formation and arming of Tutsi youth militias, which had carried out the ethnic cleansing of Bujumbura.

Book Review

The evil of banality

by Mary Burdman

The Road to Democracy: Taiwan's Pursuit of Identity

by Lee Teng-hui

Tokyo, PHP Institute, Inc., 1999

229 pages, hardbound

Lee Teng-hui, the President of Taiwan, is an obsessive proponent of what he terms "democracy" and having an "affirmative" outlook. However, his "political philosophy" embraces some of the worst evils which have afflicted modern American culture since the 1950s: Here is the utter banality of "democracy and a nice life," of "positive thinking," the awful prosings of Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale, imposed on the strategic issues of modern East Asia.

Just where such "positive thinking" can lead, is revealed in the following passage, on Lee's conversion to "Christianity" as a young man. "The Christian concept of love," he asserts, "boils down to taking an affirmative view of life. Among the great thinkers of history are many people who tried to look back on their lives in a positive light. . . . The ultimate aspiration even of Friedrich Nietzsche, well known for his 'God is dead' thesis, was in his later years to live 'a life to which I can say "ja"!'" Actually, Nietzsche, the philosopher of world fascism, died a demented syphilitic.

An agent provocateur

Lee Teng-hui claims to be a "liberal democrat," but "agent provocateur" would be a more apt epithet. Lee is, in fact, a mouthpiece for a small, but dangerous circle of neo-conservatives in the United States, such as U.S. Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), and their counterparts in Japan, who are trying to create a U.S.-Japan-Taiwan monolith which, as conceived by this mob, would be totally against the national interests of everyone. Lee is in a position to inflict real damage, on China, the United States, and Japan.

Lee grew up in Taiwan under the colonial rule of the Japanese empire, in a family of police officials and landowners. He was educated in Japanese, as were all members of the elite at that time. From his studies at the Kyoto Imperial University, he ended up in 1945 in Nagoya, serving as a sec-

ond lieutenant in the Imperial Japanese Army — the same Imperial Japanese Army which had been running a war against China since 1932.

Lee Teng-hui remains hostile to China and Chinese culture today. He dismisses 5,000 years of Chinese history as a “stagnant, repetitious cycle,” and complains about Confucianism, which is “very much part of traditional Chinese culture,” but which “sorely lacks teachings which address ‘death’ and ‘resurrection.’” Death, claims Lee, is necessary to “negate” the self, because a truly affirmative life “is possible only through ‘death’ of the self.” It is the born-again Lee Teng-hui, and his Taiwan, which must become the model for all China, he demands. And the purpose of it all? For the people on Taiwan to “fully express their individuality and lead happy lives.”

Lee’s political agenda

Lee then gets to his political agenda. This is, first and foremost, to attack China, and, secondly, to try to create a trilateraloid American-Japanese-Taiwanese bloc in the Pacific. This triumvirate must direct policy on the economy, on political questions like the situation on the Korean Peninsula, and so on, and take on their “common potential enemies” — which can only mean China.

Japan, for example, says Lee, should expand cooperation with U.S. military forces, and take initiatives on economic policy in Asia, “in such a way that Washington cannot help but approve and help the effort.”

Lee reveals his economic agenda by objecting to Taiwanese investment in China, while touting, in contrast, investments in Indonesia, which “are making large profits.” Because of the collapse of Indonesia’s currency, wages are one-third the level of those which have to be paid in China. The drawback, Lee admits, is that Taiwanese investors have to fund a special “policing unit” to guard their factories — leading the reader to wonder whether their impoverished Indonesian workers lead such “happy lives.”

Lee wants this triumvirate to, at all costs, prevent China from taking economic leadership, or any other kind of leadership. He strenuously opposes President Clinton’s efforts to “engage” China, on the grounds that China is not “democratic.” But then, we come to the heart of the matter, the reality of Lee’s obsession with “democracy”: He uses this



Taiwan’s President Lee Teng-hui

well-worn phrase as the basis to attack the very idea of a sovereign, united nation of China, and to demand that it be dismembered.

Lee asserts, first, that the “Republic of China” on Taiwan is an “independent and sovereign state,” and, while he claims not to be looking for “Taiwan independence,” it is “important for the world to recognize the existence of the R.O.C. on Taiwan,” and that there are “two equals on either side of the Taiwan Strait.” He ignores the historical reality, that the R.O.C. was founded as the government of all China, and that when the government “moved to Taiwan in 1949,” it was because the Nationalists had lost the civil war to the People’s Republic.

Plotting the breakup of China

Lee then makes clear why he ignores these historic realities: He is fundamentally opposed to a united nation of China. Its very existence, he asserts, is “unquestionably a threat to mainland China’s neighbors” — and perhaps his own career. Modern, united China is not a nation, but something which he calls “Greater China.”

“Taiwan has its own identity as Taiwan, Tibet as Tibet, Xinjiang as Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia as Inner Mongolia, and the Tungpei [northeast] as the Tungpei. Ideally, if each one were allowed to affirm its own existence, we would see Asia’s regional stability enhanced. For reasons of effective management alone, ‘Greater China’ would be better off divided into perhaps seven autonomous regions, which could then compete among themselves and with the world for progress,” Lee writes. Unfortunately, he complains, this is not likely to happen soon.

However, for all Lee Teng-hui’s professed admiration for Japan, he is also very impatient with its current orientation. Prewar Japan had made mistakes, he acknowledges, “but did manage to assert itself in the international community.” Lee has his own circle in Japan, including Kiyoshi Ito of the Kyorin University in Tokyo and Mineo Nakashima of the National Foreign Languages University of Tokyo, which also advocates dividing China into many or fewer entities. Lee’s book, in fact, was first written as a series of interviews with journalist Katsuhiko Eguchi, and the Japanese and English versions were published by the Japanese Peace, Happiness, Prosperity for All (PHP) Foundation.

Outside this circle, however, modern Japanese are too “low-profile” for Lee. Japan should be more forceful in its international dealings, asserts the erstwhile second lieutenant: For example, he says, “A sudden and massive sale of U.S. bonds could produce the greatest jolt since the Pearl Harbor attack.”

The wretchedness of this book, with its toothy cover portrait, is only matched by the politics of this neo-conservative puppet. The people of Taiwan will get rid of Lee in the coming elections in March 2000; it is to be hoped, they will also root out Lee’s influence.