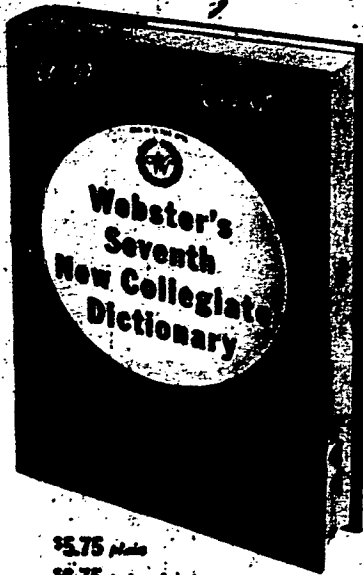


2/66

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they were handed over to the greedy Nationalist Army, which ruthlessly suppressed their effort at rebellion in February, 1947. After the military collapse of the Kuomintang government on the mainland and Chiang's retreat to Formosa, the situation became worse, and the islanders' hopes for independence died. The United States was ultimately responsible for the betrayal. It should have held control until the Formosans were in a position to govern themselves.

The analysis is somewhat overdrawn and fails to take into account the genuine economic and social progress in Taiwan in the past decade. Certainly the indices of economic development are encouraging. There is also evidence that the old animosities are subsiding and that the basis has emerged for a free China in which elements of both cultures will fuse.

Moreover, all such efforts to spell out what might have been discount the pressures of the actual situation. Even had the wartime leaders enjoyed the leisure to consider the case for Formosan independence, they could not have turned against Chiang, their ally in a desperate struggle against a common enemy.

Above all, Formosa illustrates the dilemma repeatedly posed to American policy makers. To have followed the line Mr. Kerr urges and to have assumed a protectorate over Formosa would have exposed the United States to precisely the charges of imperialism that undermine its position in the uncommitted areas of the world. Yet the United States cannot abdicate the responsibilities that power thrusts upon it. After 1945 it could neither leave the island to the Japanese nor assure it independence nor allow Chiang's regime to collapse. Under these very difficult circumstances, the best-intentioned policies were bound to be imperfect.

The dilemma is even more clearly stated in *AMERICA'S PARADISE LOST* (John Day, \$5.95) by WILLARD PRICE. This is a description of Micronesia, some two thousand Pacific islands held as a trust territory by the United States, the most important being Saipan, Palau, Truk, and Yap.

Mr. Price knows the islands well. He was one of the very few white men to visit them in the 1930s, when the territory was a tightly guarded Japanese mandate. The present

book is the product of an eight thousand-mile tour, and it presents a lucid description of an area with problems for which there are ready solutions.

Their culture has not prepared the islanders for political independence. Their economy is scarcely viable, and they have neither the training nor the institutions appropriate to a twentieth-century state. If all the strangers were to go away the tribes would revert to the intestine warfare which retarded the development in the past. But all the strangers will not go away. If the United States, for whatever reason should withdraw, other more aggressive powers would quickly pour into the resultant vacuum.

Substantial groups among the islanders understand that they need not political independence, but support and development. Indeed, the strongest resentments — among the followers of the curious Cargo Cult — arise out of the conviction that the Americans are somehow withholding gifts that are due the people.

The classic responses to colonialism are therefore hardly relevant here. Some of these atolls may have strategic value, but scarcely enough to give the United States an interest in holding them. American imperialism therefore involves a commitment to expenditure rather than the prospect of a gain. If we succeed in our task, our reward in the next generation is likely to be an American nationalist movement, a sense that Kipling did not intend colonies have become the burdens of the developed nations.

TILLMAN DURDIN'S *SOUTHEAST ASIA* (Athencum, \$3.95) offers an excellent general introduction to this vast area that borders on China, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, China, Burma, and Thailand. It is the most useful of the New York Times "Byline" Books yet to appear. Written by a veteran foreign correspondent who has spent more than thirty years in the Far East, it reveals an expert's knowledge of the subject, yet it is concise and clearly written. Thoroughly objective, it gives the general reader an excellent if not altogether cheerful picture of the whole region.

A brief historical introduction opens up a survey of the diverse peoples and places in the area. There is a sober, balanced account of the independence movements