

That YANG did not inspire his nearest officials with feelings of unmixed sympathy was sufficiently natural. He was much too autocratic and despotic for this to be possible. At one of the big dinners given for us in Urumchi FAN is said to have remarked to one of the prominent foreigners in the town that YANG would not live for »10,000 years» (a Chinese expression for 'a long time').

During my stay in Sinkiang and Urumchi six years later, in 1934, FAN was completely exonerated from any share in the outrage. That he had hastened to the yamen immediately after the murder was said to have been motivated only by his desire to make sure of the appropriation of the seal before any unauthorized person could seize it. CHIN SHU-JEN was now supposed to have been one of the two real instigators of the murder. The other was a General CHANG PEI-YUAN.

With my knowledge of FAN's and CHIN's respective dispositions I should be more inclined to hold CHIN responsible for the crime than FAN, even if one cannot blink the fact that it was to FAN's personal advantage that YANG be removed. What really took place behind the scenes in this dark and bloody tragedy can, however, scarcely be decided now; and most, if not all, of those who were implicated have themselves gone the way of all mortality.

The man who now took the power in his hands was, then, the former government secretary CHIN SHU-JEN, who made himself chairman of the provincial council and was afterwards formally recognized as such by the Nanking government.

For a time there was great tension in Urumchi; martial law was proclaimed and no-one was allowed to go out after nine o'clock. In our head-quarters, where Professor SIU, HUMMEL, and HEMPEL were staying, everybody was prepared for the worst. Collections and scientific data were buried in a cellar beneath the house. Fortunately, however, nothing of an unpleasant nature occurred. The new governor maintained the strictest discipline and order in the province. There was no rioting or unrest, no plundering or violence. He was obviously gifted with presence of mind and energy; and like YANG he was determined to manage both the internal and the external affairs of the province himself.

That the relations between our expedition and the highest provincial authorities had taken on quite a different character became clear to us in the course of the autumn. For us and for the scientific researches we were carrying out and had planned, YANG's premature death was a very hard blow.