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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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FROM USPOLAD, Tokyo

564

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TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

October 8, 1951

REF Mission's despatch #43, Sept. 19, 1951.

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SUBJECT: Fukuoka's Report of Attitudes toward Depurgees Tadao OASA and Taketara OGATA in their Kyusuu Constituencies.

There is enclosed a copy of a memorandum prepared at Fukuoka which reports that Tadao OASA, recently depurged leader of the Shinsai Club now seeking a prominent role in the Democratic Party, is stigmatized in his former constituency in Kamamoto Prefecture as a former member of the Tojo Cabinet, with the result that Oasa is seeking (through his brother Yaji OASA) a more promising constituency in which to gain a Diet seat. Yuji Oasa, said to be the foremost pre-surrender authority on fencing as a "martial art", and as such enjoying wide prestige among local police and administrators with backgrounds in the old Japanese army, reportedly is building political support for his brother through a prospective fencing association.

Takao MIKI, Secretary General of the Democratic Party, recently remarked to the reporting officer that the maneuvers of Tadao Oasa and the Shinsai Club have more sound than substance, and until Oasa and his fellow depurgees win Diet seats, "their claims to authority are counter-felt". Former Prime Minister Hitoshi ASHIDA also expressed to the reporting officer his opinion that all but a few depurgees would find their claims to "seniority" rebuffed by the indifference of their constituents. Fukuoka's report that the political machinery in Kamamoto which once elected Oasa no longer serves him would, if accurate, substantiate these views. Oasa may very well find that the current publicity attending his political moves has no more permanence than that accorded Hikizo HIRANO, who was depurged in October 1950 amid furor and speculation about anticipated party realignments under Hiranoe's influence that never materialized. It would be unwise to underestimate Oasa, but the ready assumptions of some observers that he and his fellow depurgees will assume influential political posts as a matter of routine and right, based upon seniority in the former Selyukai or Mansite, are undoubtedly unjustified.

Taketara OGATA may face similar resistance, but his eventual return to political life (widely rumored, but unconfirmed) supposedly envisages support from both Ichiro HATOYAMA and the Liberal Party when Prime Minister Yoshida retires (assuming Hatoyama is incapacitated at the time) In such case Ogata, unlike the average depurged, would find a ready-made post-war political machine available to support him in

WRStokes/bjb

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2: Tokyo, 11/1/51

Yamaguchi Prefecture, long a Liberal stronghold).

The Mission commends Mr. Roland H. NOSE, FSLB at Fukuoka, for initiative in obtaining and reporting his interesting conversation with Yaji Gasa.

For the Political Adviser:

Charles N. Spinks
Charles N. Spinks
First Secretary of Mission

Enclosure:

Memorandum from Fukuoka entitled, "Political Memorandum of Deported Kyushu Ultra-Rightists".

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from USPOLAD, Tokyo.

MEMORANDUM for Political Section, USPOLAD, Tokyo

Subject: Political Maneuvering of Depurged Kyushu Ultra-Rightists

OASA Tadao, recently depurged former State Minister, is now visiting his native prefecture of Kumamoto for the first time since the war. His visit has been marked by a notable increase in reports of political maneuvering among depurged extreme-right leaders in the area with a view to recovering political influence and eventual power. The following version of the present line-up and prospects is based largely upon information supplied by Roland H. NOSE, FSLE at Fukuoka, after a meeting with OASA's elder brother at the home of a common acquaintance on September 24, 1951.

OGATA Taketora of Yamaguchi-ken, protege of KOJIMA Kazuo, is regarded among the Kyushu ultra-conservatives as the depurged most likely to succeed in conservative political circles, being mentioned (along with HAKDA Tomozo) as a potential candidate for Prime Minister. OGATA, a State Minister during the war, is said to have been largely successful in disclaiming responsibility for disastrous wartime policies. It is claimed that KOJIMA has instructed Prime Minister KOSHIDA that OGATA is to be treated with due consideration as a man of great promise. In this district KOJIMA is credited with almost unlimited influence with the present Prime Minister, the final inclusion of TOMABECHI in the peace delegation being attributed to his intervention for one example. KOJIMA, as previously mentioned (Kyushu Political Summary, August, 1951) is the highest surviving leader of the GENYOSHAI, possibly most powerful of the pre-surrender ultra-nationalist societies.

OASA Tadao's immediate prospects of regaining political leadership through support from his home prefecture appear slight, as the stigma connected with his role in the wartime Cabinet still attaches strongly to him there. His elder brother, OASA Yuji hopes to remedy the situation by attracting support for Tadao in Yuji's home prefecture (SAGA) and other parts of Japan. OASA Yuji is known as the foremost expert and authority on Japanese fencing, and as such commands much prestige among circles such as the police and former police (including many procurators and other local officials) interested in fencing as one of the old "martial arts". He is presently engaged in organizing a fencing association throughout Japan which would emphasize recruiting young members, and whose actual purpose would be political support for his brother.

OASA Tadao at the time of his depurge was viewed as a possible candidate for leadership in the Democratic Party. His brother now says that they find the Democratic Party "lacking something" and further makes unfavorable comments concerning ASHIDA Hitoshi. He

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indicated that CASS Taine would work toward a conservative coalition, apparently meaning that he had little hope that the Democrats would come to political power in the near future and hoped to get in an expected coalition of power among primarily Liberal Party conservative forces.

There are some indications that Chinese Nationalists have established contact with certain of the ultra-conservative circles in Kyushu and are offering financial support. KIDAKI, notably, actively aided Chinese Nationalists both in Japan and in China before the outbreak of hostilities in 1937.

Summary. It appears that the ultra-conservatives in the Kyushu area are going ahead with their political maneuvering without sufficient consideration of the changes which have taken place there since the war. The estimation of their actual strength is very difficult because they have normally tested in a general election, or at least in prefectural elections. They themselves seem confident of their ability to regain power in the rural prefectures of Kyushu. It appears that one of their principal needs will be an increase of financial support.

/s/ Thomas W. Ainsworth

Thomas W. Ainsworth
American Vice Consul

Tokyo, Japan
September 27, 1951

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