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COMMUNISTS COMMANDEER SHIPS FOR TROOP CONVOYS;
DROP EMBARGO ON FOREIGN SHIPPING

OFFICERS, CREWMEN CONSCRIPTED -- Kung-shang Jih-pao, 21 Jan 50

Macao, 20 January -- The Communist military authorities of Chung-shan, Chiang-men, San-fou, and neighboring ports are feverishly busy commandeering large numbers of ocean-going ships and seamen for military transportation purposes and dispatching them to the Lei-chou peninsula. Besides the SS Chin-hai and SS Yin-ho on the Macao--San-fou run, the SS Wen-hsing on the Hong Kong--Chiang-men run has been seized at Chiang-men. The steamers SS T'ai-hsing, Li-hua-sheng, Fu-hsing, and San-hsing, on the Macao--Chiang-men run, have been taken. Ships other than ocean-going vessels which can transport troops are having their officers, pilots, engine-room men and other trained crewmen conscripted. Because these men suspect the reason for this conscription, many of them are taking every opportunity to sneak away and desert the vessels. Thus practically all the ships at Chiang-men that have been seized are without pilots and engineers; hence the authorities are forcibly taking this type of men from other ships.

In view of the above occurrences, on 19 January, the SS Li-te the SS T'ai-hsing, the SS Li-t'ai, the SS Sheng-li, and the SS Jung-hua, which had already left Macao for Chiang-men and San-fou, were recalled to Macao by their owners, and the service on these two runs suspended. On 19 January, the SS Li-chiang, on the run from Macao to Kuang-chow, after leaving Macao turned back because of the fear of being commandeered. On 20 January, in order to secure their quota of men and ships speedily, the Military Control Commission of Chung-shan sent men aboard a number of gunboats to patrol the waters outside the harbor of Macao so as to seize vessels when they emerged. This has even resulted in the suspension of service between Macao and Shih-shi, and travelers are obliged to resort to land transportation.

Although no public announcement has been made as to the destinations of the commandeered ships, everybody suspects that they will be used to convey the Communist troops assembled in the neighborhood of Chiang-men and Hsin-hui to Kuang-chow or directly to the Lei-chou peninsula.

- 1 -

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CHINESE SHIPS CHANGE REGISTRY -- Hsin-sheng Wan-pao, 21 Jan 50

Hong Kong -- Up to 20 January 1950, not less than 48 ships of Chinese registry in Hong Kong have changed their names and applied for registry in the Panamanian Consulate in Hong Kong, so that they may fly the Panamanian flag. Among these ships are the following:

Former Name	New Name
Nan-hai	Chia-hua-li
Su-yuan	Chia-lao-la-tu /Colorado/
Ts'ai-a-tung	Su-fei-ya /Sophia/
Al-la-su	Mei-tu-hua
Ta-liang	Ta-hsi-yang lung /Atlantic Dragon/
T'ung-p'ing	T'ai-p'ing-yang lung /Pacific Dragon/
T'ai-hsing	Tung-niao
Chu-kuang	Tung-lung /East Dragon/
Hsin-chung-kuo	No-pa
T'ai-hsin	Ya-li
Yang-hsu	T'ien-na-na
Ao-hai	Po-ta

On 20 January, a spokesman for the China Merchants Steamship Company positively denied the statement by outsiders that the China Merchants' ships were about to change to Panamanian registry.

SEAMEN ON SS MEI-LING REFUSE TO LEAVE HONG KONG -- Hua-ch'iao Jih-pao, 31 Jan 50

Hong Kong -- It is learned on good authority that the seamen on the KMT SS Mei-ling, now anchored at Yu-ma-ti, Chiu-lung, are unwilling to leave Hong Kong. This 3,200-ton steamer was formerly a landing craft. Its master, a Dane, recently received orders from Taiwan to proceed there at once. The seamen aboard fear that upon arrival there the ship might be assigned to military duty with the possible result that they would be separated from their families and perhaps never again reach home. The same fate might befall them if the ship proceeded to Hainan. For these reasons the majority of the crew are unwilling to man this "dead ship" if it should try to leave Hong Kong under present conditions.

The People's government is opposed to allowing this ship to escape, and its sale by any party whatsoever would be regarded by them as a transaction robbing them of what is rightly theirs. They are confident the British authorities of Hong Kong will assume responsibility for the protective custody of the ship until the Communist government takes it over.

FOREIGN SHIP TO MAKE RUN -- Hsin-sheng Wan-pao, 21 Jan 50

Hong Kong -- The SS Yung-hsing of British registry has recently obtained from the Military Control Commission in Kuang-chow a 4-month temporary permit to operate between Hong Kong and Shan-wei. This ship is scheduled to leave at 1800 hours, 21 January 1950, on its first trip to Shan-wei since receiving its permit, and intends hereafter to make regular trips on this run.

Shan-wei is a small market town on the eastern coast of Kwangtung and heretofore has not been an open port. Now a foreign ship has been granted permission not only to enter, but to make regular calls there. This action is an indication of the effectiveness of the KMT's naval blockade of the coast and shows that the Communist government has lifted the long-standing embargo against foreign shipping doing business in other than treaty ports.

- 2 -

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50X1-HUM

A short time ago, the SS Yung-hsing visited Shan-wei and was detained by the Communist authorities for 3 weeks, mainly on the pretext that Shan-wei was not a treaty port. Recently, this same steamer called at Shan-t'ou and while there was attacked and damaged by KMT aircraft. Now, after undergoing repairs in a Hong Kong dockyard, it is loading for trade with Shan-wei. This latest trade permit now makes it clear that a convenient door has been opened in the Chinese wall of exclusion of foreign shipping.

KUANG-CHOU FERRYBOATS TO RUN AT NIGHT -- Kung-shang Jih-pao, 21 Jan 50

Kuang-chou, 20 January -- Due to the fact that not a few people have been machine-gunned by KMT planes over the city, the local authorities have ordered ferryboats and steamers plying between the city and the suburbs to operate only at night. Whenever an air-raid alarm is sounded, policemen are to display red flags at the main intersections so that motorbus drivers may know that an air attack is imminent. Busses must then stop and remain stationary, or the drivers must bear the responsibility for any casualties.

- E N D -

- 3 -

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