

THE PAST 60 YEARS OF PEKING UNIVERSITY
(1898-1958)

Peking University has reached this year its sixtieth anniversary.

① It was not accidental that the Metropolitan University — the original Peking University, was founded in Peking 60 years ago; it was the result of the struggle of the bourgeois democratic thoughts against the feudal rule of the time. After the Opium War in 1840, China began to sink into a semi-feudal and semi-colonial status. The Chinese people, including the young bourgeoisie, was then under the dual oppression of feudalism and imperialism. The defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895 aroused a nation-wide indignation at the corruption of the government and an urgent demand for reform. The reformists Kang Yu-wei, Liang Chi-chao, Yen Fu and others advocated enthusiastically the so-called "New Politics and New Education". Under the pressure of public opinion, the Ching Dynasty was forced to make some compromises and established in Peking the Metropolitan University in 1898 to spread modern sciences and culture. In 1911 when the Ching Dynasty was overthrown the Metropolitan University was renamed Peking University.

Peking University has a glorious revolutionary tradition. Under the influence of the great October Revolution, Li Tah-chao, professor of Peking University, and other vanguard revolutionists started to propagate Marxism and organized Marxist groups in China. About a year and a half after the victory

- 1 -

③ what was the situation bet. 1898 - 1949?

②a) When did the teaching of law start?

④ what was the curriculum?

② - was law taught?
① - was it taught before 1898?

of the October Revolution, the May 4th Movement, the beginning of the New Democratic Revolution of China, was launched in Peking, and the vanguard role in this movement was taken by the progressive teachers and students of Peking University. Shortly before the May 4th Movement, Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the great leader of Chinese people, had done in Peking University active work in propagating Marxism.

After the failure of the First Revolutionary war of China in 1927, during the reactionary rule of Chiang Kai-shek for more than twenty years, the progressive teachers and students of Peking University fought heroically and unflinchingly, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, for democracy, liberty and national independence. They took an active part in the December 9th Movement against the Japanese aggression in 1935, the December 1st Movement protesting against the civil-war and demanding democracy in 1945, and the various revolutionary student movements from 1946 to 1948.

During the Anti-Japanese War, Peking University was moved to Kunming in Yunnan province, and incorporated with two other universities, Tsing Hua and Nan Kai, to form the South-western Associated University. It became the centre of the December 1st Movement.

During the reactionary regime before 1949, especially under the rule of Chiang Kai-shek, Peking University was under the oppression of reactionary forces, and lost its freedom in its teaching and scientific activities. A few scholars, who

stood by the reactionary government, such as Hu Shih, took hold of the University and did their best to spread their idealistic educational ideas and reactionary cultural views, while Marxist scholars were persecuted politically and their academic activities ruthlessly suppressed. As for the numerous honest scholars, who were dissatisfied with the reactionary rule, although they did make certain contributions with their researches, their achievements were greatly hampered by the reactionary government, by the profound influence of their bourgeois idealistic ideology and by the divorce of learning from practical social activities.

At the beginning of 1949, the teachers and students of Peking University welcomed the liberation of Peking with great enthusiasm and joy.

In the course of the three years from 1949 to 1952, many teachers and students of Peking University took an active part in various mass movements, such as the study of revolutionary theories, the land reform, the campaign to aid Korea against American imperialism, the San-Fan and Wu-Fan movements, the ideological reform, etc. Their patriotic ardour was raised to an unprecedented height, and their common goal was: "to serve the people whole-heartedly".

After the liberation, the People's Government readjusted the colleges and departments among the institutes of higher learning with a view to avoid the unreasonable overlappings and repetitions in the old educational system, and to concentrate both teaching staff and material facilities, in order to

provide more favourable conditions for training personnel for the national construction at a greater speed and on a larger scale. The colleges of medicine, agriculture and engineering, and the greater part of the college of law of Peking University were amalgamated with the corresponding colleges of other universities to form new universities or independent colleges, while its colleges of arts and natural sciences and the remaining part of its college of law were incorporated with the corresponding colleges of Tsing Hua, Yenching and other universities to form the new Peking University in 1952. Its principal task is to train specialized personnel in the fields of basic sciences (including both natural sciences and social sciences). The new Peking University moved in 1952 from Sha-tan in the city to the former campus of Yenching University in the north-western suburbs of Peking.

At present, there are 14 departments in Peking University, namely, mathematics and mechanics, physics, chemistry, biology, geology and geography, philosophy, economics, law, Chinese language and literature, Russian language and literature, oriental languages, western languages and literature, and library science. The university has at present over 1,200 teachers, five times more than before liberation, and over 8,000 students, three times more than before liberation. Books in the library have increased from 1,000,000 volumes before liberation to 1,800,000 volumes at present. Laboratori-

es have increased from 20 before liberation to 127.

To turn the old University of capitalistic nature into a socialist university, and to train qualified personnel to meet the needs of national socialist construction, Peking University has carried out since 1952 a series of reforms in the teaching system, curriculum, teaching methods, organizations, etc., in accordance with the basic principle of "applying the advanced experiences of the Soviet Union to the actual conditions in China". Besides, the University has made great efforts to promote the scientific researches to raise the academic level of the teachers. Within the period of the first 5-year-plan of the socialist construction of China, i.e. from 1953 to 1957, about 4,000 students and 225 post-graduates were graduated from Peking University. They are now either doing research work in the various scientific and cultural organizations or teaching in the higher institutes or middle schools. They are contributing their share to the cause of science and culture of the country.

Since last May, Peking University has carried on the Rectification Movement to overcome the bureaucratism, subjectism and sectarianism of the upper or lower leading personnel. Both teachers and students have received in this Movement a profound socialist education. They are making great efforts to reform themselves, improve their working discipline, and raise their ideological and scientific level. They are striving strenuously to fulfill their glorious task of training more and better

qualified personnel to meet the needs of the
socialist construction of their fatherland.

THE CAMPUS AND ITS BUILDINGS

The campus of Peking University is situated in the north-western suburbs of Peking, an area renowned in old days for its gardens and parks. The garden named Shao Yuan, which was built over 340 years ago at the end of the Ming Dynasty and modelled on South China scenery, was at the south-western corner of the present campus. The garden around the present Unnamed Lake, which is the best scenic-spot on the campus, was laid out at the beginning of the Ching Dynasty at about the same time as when Yuan Ming Yuan and other gardens were built. It was then called Shu Chun Yuan. The lake is surrounded by a series of undulating hillocks like belt. There are on the campus other smaller gardens such as Wei Hsiu Yuan, Ching Chun Yuan, Lang Jun Yuan and Chen Tze Yuan, which were also the former summer residences of members of the imperial house or the aristocracy of the Ching Dynasty. All these are the creation of the labouring people. In 1860 when the British and French aggressors burned Yuan Ming Yuan, many neighbouring gardens were also destroyed. In 1920, Yen-ching University, founded by the American missionaries, built its campus at this place, thus the grounds for pleasure of the feudal aristocrats became a base of the cultural aggression of the imperialists. After the liberation of Peking, these old grounds, built up by the labouring people, came back to their own hands and became in 1952 the campus of Peking University which serves the people.

Since 1952, the campus has been extended on a large scale. The total floor space of the new buildings exceeds 210,000 sq. metres, about twice the total floor space of the buildings of the former Yenching University. Already 42 buildings for dormitories, reading rooms and canteens and 8 buildings for classrooms and laboratories are erected. A big physics laboratory of 19,500 sq. metres of floor space and a mechanics laboratory of over 4,000 sq. metres of floor space are now under construction. A new library, too, of 24,000 sq. metres of floor space, containing 2,600 seats, will soon be built.

A Brief Account of Peking University

Peking University was founded in 1898.

It has a history with a glorious revolutionary tradition. In 1918 and 1920, Chairman Mao, the great leader of the Chinese people, came twice to Peking University to study and propagate Marxism, and was engaged in revolutionary activities. The University is also the cradle of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal May 4th Movement waged in 1919.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, in accordance with the Party's policy that "Education must serve proletarian politics and be combined with productive labour" and "must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture", the University has carried out systematic transformation in the educational system, in teaching contents and teaching methods, and achieved great progress and development.

Peking University is a comprehensive university. Its basic task is to train researchers in natural sciences and social sciences and teachers for colleges and universities, and to carry out scientific research and develop sciences with results of high standard. It now has 22 departments of natural sciences, social sciences and languages. They are the Departments of Mathematics, Mechanics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geology, Geography, Geo-physics, Radio and Electronics, Technical Physics, Computer

Science and Technology, Psychology, Chinese Language and Literature, History, Philosophy, Economics, Law, International Politics, Library Science, Oriental Languages and Literature, Western Languages and Literature and the Russian Language and Literature.

To strengthen scientific research, 11 research institutes have recently been set up. They are the Institutes of Mathematics, Solid State Physics, Theoretical Physics, Heavy Ion Physics, Physical Chemistry, Molecular Biology, Computer Science, Remote Sensing Technique, Asian and African Studies, History of Philosophy of Foreign Countries, and Southern-Asian Studies.

In the year 1978 and 1979, the student body consists of 6,783 undergraduates, 462 postgraduates and 608 students in refresher courses. Besides, there are 138 foreign students from more than 30 countries. The number of teachers and research workers amounts to 2,700. The campus occupies an area of 150 hectares, with a building space of 400,000 square meters. The library has a collection of 3,100,000 books, with 2,400 seats in 31 reading rooms.

During the [REDACTED] Cultural Revolution, Peking University was severely sabotaged by Lin Biao and the "Gang of Four", with its teaching work and scientific research badly damaged. Since the last two years, encouraged by the general tasks of the new period, the teachers and students of the whole university have tried to eliminate the pernicious influence of Lin Biao and the "Gang of Four".

carried out completely and precisely the system of educational thinking of Chairman Mao, adjusted the work of the University, transformed the system of enrollment, enhanced teaching quality, carried out scientific research and thus scored initial success. They are now striving to build the University into both a centre of education and a centre of scientific research and to contribute positively to the realization of the "four modernizations".

1980

the corporation will finance the construction of a multi-storey office building at jiangoumen area in beijing to be rented to foreign firms.

with an initial investment of 200 million yuan, the corporation is preparing to issue debentures to increase its capital, rong yiren said.

visitors from other countries are deeply impressed by china's political stability and unity, he said. the foreign businessmen he met generally showed understanding of china's principle of equality and mutual benefit in absorbing foreign capital and conducting economic co-operation. he said he believes that joint ventures have good prospects in china.
end item

npc
090319 -- professor chen tiqiang on china's draft nationality law

beijing, september 3 (xinhua) -- china's draft nationality law is the first such law in the world that rejects dual nationality.

this was stated by chen tiqiang, research fellow at the institute of international affairs and professor of international law at beijing university, in an interview with xinhua today.

commenting on the draft law which has been submitted to the current national people's congress session for approval, professor chen called it a contribution to international law with respect to nationality.

professor chen said that the draft law had gone through repeated revisions after opinions were canvassed from among specialists in citizenship law and many other people.

article two of the draft law says, "no dual nationality is recognized for any chinese national." chen tiqiang felt that this provision is the most salient feature of the draft law.

professor chen explained that the problem of dual nationality had resulted from the confusing legislative principles, namely jus soli, which says a child's citizenship is determined by place of birth, and jus sanguinis, which says the child takes the citizenship of the parents. this confusion is inevitable when there are no unified nationality laws in the international community. for historical reasons, there are large numbers of chinese residing abroad, some of whom are now naturalized citizens of the countries in which they reside.

chen tiqiang went on to say that in order to handle relations with other countries in a friendly manner and in the long-term interests of the chinese residing abroad, the chinese government has made it clear that it does not recognize dual nationality. chinese residing abroad have been encouraged to acquire citizenship in the countries where they reside.

new china has settled a large number of problems involving dual nationality, but there are still disputes among certain other countries regarding dual nationality.

in taking the initiative to avoid or reduce such problems, he said, "china is making a contribution to world peace and friendly co-existence among the peoples of all countries and to international law with respect to nationality."

a graduate from qinghua university, chen tiqiang went to england in 1945 and studied international law at oxford university where he received his

doctor's degree. his book, "the international law of recognition" written in english, was published in britain in 1951. it aroused wide interest among international law specialists. since returning home, he has been engaged in the study and teaching of international law. not long ago he received an invitation to lecture at harvard university.

professor chen said that the draft law reflects the socialist principle that men and women are equal. articles 3 and 4 stipulate that any person, one of whose parents is a chinese national, has chinese nationality.

the principle that a woman's citizenship status is not affected by marriage is explicit. the law states that the acquisition, loss or renunciation of chinese citizenship only involves the person himself.

professor chen said, "there are 17 articles in the law and the language is simple and concise, making it easy to understand and implement."

he said that relevant departments would work out bylaws specifying acquisition and restoration of nationality and other procedural details.

chen tiqiang, who is also vice-president of the chinese society of international law, said that the adoption of the nationality law will promote research into international law in china. "china still has to draw up some laws concerning foreign relations," he said. "this calls for further study of international law." end item

090322 -- a glimpse of contemporary chinese women writers

guangzhou, september 3 (xinhua) -- four generations of chinese women writers, all still publishing, are introduced in a new book published in guangdong which carries selections of their works.

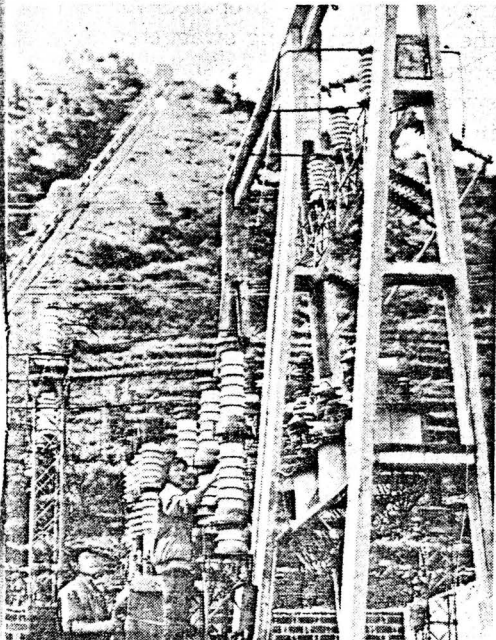
EDUCATION

Reforming Middle School Education

- Fuel forests should be created in areas where there are no coal deposits or where conditions are not suitable for building marsh gas pits.

- Build more small hydroelectric power stations is another way to solve the problem. These stations require little investment but yield quick results and the cost is low. China now has 89,000 small hydroelectric power stations with an annual output of more than 10,000 million kwh., or about 40 per cent of the total electricity consumption in the countryside. However, to date only a small fraction of the known hydropower reserves in China are utilized. The building of more small hydroelectric power stations, therefore, is an important way to accomplish electrification in the rural areas.

- More experiments should be made in the exploitation of solar, wind and geothermal energy resources.



One of the 460 small hydroelectric power stations built in recent years in Pingjiang County, Hunan Province.

Four thousand students were chosen from among 36,000 applicants and enrolled in 97 senior middle school vocational classes in Beijing recently. They will after three years' training become junior or intermediate specialists with a middle school education and at the same time equipped with a certain level of special knowledge and production skills.

This is one of the measures taken in Beijing this year to change the structure of middle school education.

These training classes are turned from ordinary senior middle schools and divided into 35 specialties, including tourism, foreign trade, commerce, service trades, electrical appliances, cooking, sewing and printing. They are run by 51 enterprises in conjunction with 45 senior middle schools in the capital.

At present, there are 803 senior middle schools with 300,000 students in Beijing. But only 6 or 7 per cent of the graduates have the opportunity to continue their studies in colleges and universities due to limited accommodations and other reasons. Hence the need to reform middle school education.

In the early years of the 60s middle school education was more or less geared to the needs of the developing national economy, attention being paid to providing a general education and to giving vocational and technical training.

Available statistics show that the ratio between students in regular senior middle schools and those in vocational, technical and agricultural schools was about 48 to 52 in 1965, and the latter had trained various kinds of useful personnel for China's socialist construction.

During the ten tumultuous years of the Cultural Revolution, however, the policy of paying attention to both general education and vocational training was labelled as "revisionist." As a result, large numbers of vocational and agricultural schools were closed down.

After the smashing of the gang of four, these schools have been restored in China, but their development has fallen far behind that of the regular middle schools. In 1979, the ratio between students in regular senior middle schools and those in vocational and agricultural schools was 86 to 14. This proportion is far short of the needs of the four modernizations.

During the ten years of turmoil, China's higher education was seriously damaged, while ordinary middle school education developed in a blind way. In the last few years, only 4 per cent of the middle school graduates each year were enrolled in institutions of higher learning, and there will be no marked increase for some years to come. So on the one hand, there are several million middle school graduates who have to find work every year but do not have special training, while on the other there is a severe shortage of skilful technical personnel. Workers newly recruited usually have to undergo two or three years'

Introduction

Peking University was founded in 1898.

Its history is closely related to that of the development of modern China's politics, ideology, culture and sciences. Yan Fu and Cai Yuanpei who were China's famous educationists and ideologists, Mao Zedong, Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu who were founders of the Chinese Communist Party, and Lu Zun who was China's great writer and chief commander of the Chinese New Culture Movement, either taught here or held offices here. During the Chinese Democratic Revolution, Peking University played a very important role in opposing old morals and old culture, in advocating science and democracy, and in disseminating Marxism. The University was also the cradle of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal May 4th Movement which took place in 1919.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the University has implemented the Party's policy and carried out a systematic transformation of the educational system, of the teaching contents and teaching methods, and achieved great progress and development in all respects.

Peking University is a comprehensive university. Its basic task is to train research workers in natural sciences, social sciences, literature and languages, and teachers for colleges and universities, carry out scientific research projects, and achieve high-standard results in developing new sciences.

In the years from 1949 to 1966, nearly 20,000 undergraduates and over 1,000 graduate students were graduated from this university. They are now scattered throughout the country, the bulk of whom have become the backbone in the industrial, agricultural, scientific, educational and cultural fields. During this period, scientific research activities were in full swing and numerous results were achieved reaching advanced standards in the country. Total synthesis of bovine insulin with full biological activity was first achieved by our research workers in collaboration with those of the Institute of Biochemistry and the Institute of Organic Chemistry under the Academia Sinica. In accordance with the policy of "letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools contend",

Adopts Resolution on Past Laws

(from FBIS 30 Nov 79)
13-4

OW291848 Beijing XINHUA Domestic Service in Chinese 1511 GMT 29 Nov 79 OW

[Text] Beijing, 29 Nov--The NPC Standing Committee's resolution on the validity of the laws and decrees enacted since the founding of the PRC (adopted by the 12th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 5th NPC on 29 November 1979):

To strengthen and perfect the socialist legal system and to insure the smooth progress of the socialist modernization drive, it is hereby decided, in accordance with the guidelines of the resolution on the validity of the PRC's existing laws and decrees adopted by the first session of the 1st NPC in 1954, that the laws and decrees approved and enacted by the former central people's government since the founding of the PRC on 1 October 1949 and that

the laws and decrees formulated and approved by the NPC and its Standing Committee since the establishment of the PRC Constitution by the first session of the 1st NPC on 20 September 1954, shall remain in effect except for those which are in conflict with the Constitution and laws formulated by the 5th NPC and those which are in conflict with the decrees formulated and approved by the Standing Committee of the 5th NPC.

Issues Decree on Resolution

OW291610 Beijing XINHUA Domestic Service in Chinese 1509 GMT 29 Nov 79 OW

[Text] Beijing, 29 Nov--Decree No 3 of the Standing Committee of the 5th NPC of the PRC: "The NPC Standing Committee's resolution on the force of the laws and decrees enacted since the founding of the PRC" was adopted at the 12th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 5th NPC of the PRC on 29 November and is hereby made public.

[Signed] Chairman Ye Jiaying, 29 November 1979

RENMIN RIBAO ON NPC RESOLUTION ON PAST LAWS

OW300726 Beijing XINHUA in English 0713 GMT 30 Nov 79 OW

[Text] Beijing, November 30 (XINHUA)--The resolution adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress yesterday to confirm past laws and decrees is today welcomed in an editorial in the PEOPLE'S DAILY.

This resolution, the paper says, is necessary to strengthen and perfect the socialist legal system, ensure political stability and unity and to promote China's modernization drive. Laws and decrees formulated after liberation are an embodiment of the people's fundamental interests, the paper stresses. They played a very positive role in maintaining social order and ensuring China's socialist revolution and construction. Though some have been superceded and others now require revision, the essential spirit of most laws and decrees still holds true. They are an effective weapon for solving current problems and ensuring proper social order and the modernization drive, says the paper.

M. J. J. it interesting

Sept. 1980

→ National Library of Beijing 9 million
~~equivalent~~ counterpart of Library of Congress.

→ 7. Skinner, William G. Modern Chinese Society:
An Analytical Bibliography. V.1, Western Language
Asia Ref Z3106 .M63 (Keep at Ref Desk)

→ ~~National~~ ~~Library~~ China Library Association

April 16/80, E-W Gates: discussion

N.B. → 1. Choo's point: the possibilities are now opening out
in China; they are probably a lot

→ [2] Jang's pt: they are becoming a little more ~~the~~ more
open but Mao at any other stage thought that
China had up to itself the words of circulation & distribution.
So they will be a bit more, but not free.

→ And they will serve P.L.

→ [3] Jang says: read Schwartz: to keep the day view.
(Maybe ask Jang to look at things - to have a lot!)

→ [4] Read Sandy Anton = D. L. v. 10

→ [5] In your story, also a balance, long-term
view; no details

On the domestic side

[For Women Lawyers]

✓ 1. The Chinese experience will throw fresh light on the very losses of legal services, especially as it pertains to the process of modernization. —
the promotion of soc. change

2. As Tao-tai Hsia observed, "the task of studying the law of Communist China barely begins"

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Simon Leys

Human Rights in China

'How much of this is known in the free countries of the West? The information is to be found in the daily papers. We are informed about everything. We know nothing.'
Saul Bellow (*To Jerusalem and Back*)

On the question of human rights in China, an odd coalition has formed between 'Old China hands' (left over from the colonial-imperialist era), starry-eyed Maoist adolescents, bright, ambitious technocrats, timid sinologists ever wary of being denied their visa for China and even some overseas Chinese who like to partake from afar in the People's Republic's prestige without having to share any of their compatriots' sacrifices or sufferings. The basic position of this strange lobby can be summarised in two propositions:

1. Whether or not there is a human rights problem in China, remains uncertain: 'we simply do not know';
2. even if there should exist such a problem, it is none of our concern.

I shall attempt here to reply to the increasingly vocal and influential proponents of this theory; more simply, I shall try to remind my readers of certain commonplace and common sense evidence which this line of thought seeks to conjure away. I do not apologise for being utterly banal: there are circumstances where banality can become the last refuge of decency and sanity.

The starting point of any reflexion on contemporary China—specially with regard to the human rights question—should be the obvious, yet unpopular, observation that the Peking regime is a totalitarian system. My contention is that totalitarianism has a quite specific meaning, and that, *inasmuch as it is totalitarian*, Maoism presents features which are foreign to the Chinese political tradition (however despotic some of these traditions might have been), while it appears remarkably similar to otherwise foreign models such as Stalinism and Nazism. Yet, 'totalitarianism' has become a taboo concept among fashionable political scientists, and specially among contemporary China scholars; they generally endeavour to describe and analyse the system of the People's Republic without ever using the very word 'totalitarian'—no mean feat. It is akin to describing the North Pole without ever using the word 'ice', or the Sahara without using the word 'sand'.

This is the edited version of a seminar given in the Contemporary China Centre, Australian National University, in reply to an earlier paper on the same topic, by Dr S. Fitz Gerald Readers who would like to consult Dr Fitz Gerald's paper can obtain it from the Contemporary China Centre.

A first, convenient and generally acceptable definition of totalitarianism could be for instance, the one provided by Leszek Kolakowski in his essay *Marxist Roots of Stalinism* (R.C. Tucker ed.: *Stalinism*, New York 1977, p. 285):

... I take the word totalitarian in a commonly used sense, meaning a political system where *all social ties have been entirely replaced by State-imposed organizations* and where consequently, all groups and all individuals are supposed to act only for goals which both are the goals of the state and were defined as such by the State. In other words, an ideal totalitarian system would consist in the utter destruction of civil society, whereas the state and its organizational instruments are the only forms of social life; all kinds of human activity—economic, intellectual, political, cultural—are allowed and ordered (the distinction between what is allowed and what is ordered tending to disappear) only to the extent of being at the service of state goals (again, as defined by the State). Every individual (including the rulers themselves) is considered the property of the State.

Kolakowski adds that this ideal conception has never been fully realized and that perhaps an absolutely perfect totalitarian system would not be feasible; however, he sees Soviet and Chinese societies as very close to the ideal, and so was Nazi Germany —

There are forms of life which stubbornly resist the impact of the system, familial, emotional and sexual relationships among them; they were subjected strongly to all sorts of state pressure, but apparently never with full success (at least in the Soviet state; *perhaps more was achieved in China*).

Lack of space prevents me here from invoking a sufficient number of examples to show how well the above definition fits with the Maoist reality. I shall provide here only one illustration, selected from among hundreds and thousands, because this particular illustration is both typical and fully documented by one unimpeachable witness—I mean the noted writer Chen Jo-hsi who is now free to express herself among us, and who reported it in a public lecture on the Chinese legal system which she gave earlier this year at the University of Maryland. In 1971, when Chen was living in Nanking, she was forced with thousands of other people to attend and participate in, a public accusation meeting. The

accused person's crime was to have defaced a portrait of Mao Tse-tung; he had been denounced by his own daughter, a twelve year old child. On the basis of the child's testimony, he was convicted and sentenced to death; as was usually the case in these mass-accusation meetings, there was no right of appeal, and the sentence was carried out immediately, by firing squad. The child was officially extolled as a hero: she disclaimed any relationship with the dead man and proclaimed publicly her resolution to become from then on 'with her whole heart and her whole will, the good daughter of the Party' (yi hsin yi yi tso tang ti hao nü-erh). This episode was neither exceptional nor accidental: it was a deliberate, wellplanned occurrence, carefully staged in front of a large audience, in one of China's major cities; similar 'happenings' recur periodically and accompany most 'mass campaigns'; they have a pedagogic purpose; they fit into a coherent policy pattern and, as such, exemplify the State's attempt to become the unique, all-encompassing organizer of all social and human relations. It should be remarked that whatever feeling of scandal a Westerner may experience when confronted with such an incident, it is still nothing in comparison with the revulsion, horror and fear which it provokes among the Chinese themselves: the episode not only runs against human decency in general, but more specifically it runs against Chinese culture—a culture which, for more than 2,500 years extolled filial piety as a cardinal virtue.

A second, useful definition of totalitarianism is George Orwell's (in his postface to *Homage to Catalonia*). In his description, the totalitarian system is a system in which there is no such thing as 'objective truth' or 'objective science'. There is only, for instance, 'German science' as opposed to 'Jewish science' or 'proletarian truth' as opposed to 'bourgeois lies':

The implied objective of this line of thought is a nightmare world in which the Leader, or some ruling clique, controls not only the future, but *the past*. If the Leader says of such and such an event 'It never happened'—well, it never happened. If he says that two and two are five, well, two and two are five. This prospect frightens me much more than bombs.

How does this definition square with Peking reality? Let us glance at Maoist theory. In one of its key documents (the so-called 'May 16 Circular') we read precisely:

The slogan 'all men are equal before the truth' is a bourgeois slogan which absolutely denies the fact that *truth has a class-character*. The class enemy uses this slogan to protect the bourgeoisie, to oppose himself to the proletariat, to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung Thought. In the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between Marxist truth and the lies of the bourgeois class and of all oppressive classes, if the east wind does not prevail over the west wind, the west wind will prevail over the east wind, and therefore no equality can exist between them.

(In their latest book, *Le Bonheur des pierres*, Paris 1978, J. and J. Broyelle produce a very interesting quotation from *Mein Kampf* and show that by merely substituting in Hitler's text, the words 'bourgeois' and 'anti humanism' to the words 'Jews' and 'antisemitism' one obtains orthodox, standard Mao Tse-tung Thought.)*

'Two and two are five': we find countless variants of this type of proposition in the Chinese press: the downfall of the Cultural Revolution leaders and the rehabilitation of the Cultural Revolution opponents are currently described as *the supreme victory of the Cultural Revolution*; Liu Shao-ch'i as a Soviet agent; Lin Piao was a traitor; Madame Mao and Chang Ch'un-ch'iao were Kuomintang agents, etc. Of course, nothing of this is very new: we heard it all forty years ago at the Moscow trials, and we also remember how, in Stalinist

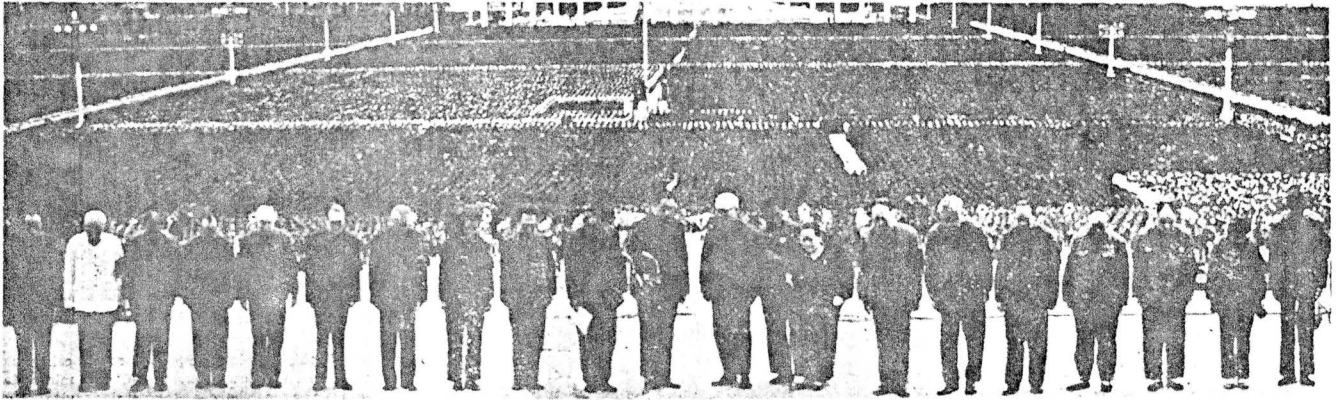
parlance, Trotsky used to be Hitler's agent. Victor Serge who experienced it all at first hand, analyzed it well: the very enormity of the lie is precisely designed to numb, paralyze and crush all rationality and critical functioning of the mind.

'The leader controls the past'. I have described elsewhere the constant re-writing of history which takes place in China (as it does in the Soviet Union) and in particular, the predicament of the wretched curators of the History Museums who have in recent years been successively confronted with, for instance, the disgrace, rehabilitation, re-disgrace and re-rehabilitation of Teng Hsiao-p'ing . . . These political turn-about can be quite bewildering for the lower cadres whose instructions do not always keep up with the latest shake-up of the ruling clique. As one hapless guide put it to a foreign visitor who was pressing him with tricky questions: 'Excuse me, sir, but at this stage it is difficult to answer; the leadership has not yet had the time to decide what history was'. There is nothing furtive or clandestine about history re-writing; it is done in broad daylight, and sometimes, at its most humble level, the public itself is invited to collaborate: thus, at one stage of Teng's political vicissitudes, journals which had already been printed before his latest successful somersault were sent to subscribers together with little slips of paper expatiating on his virtues, slips which were to be pasted by the readers themselves over various special passages which described him as a scoundrel. The most spectacular example of this practice will be remembered by many. The day after Mao's funeral, all Chinese newspapers carried photos of the top leadership standing in a long line in front of the crowd at the memorial ceremony. When it was the monthlies' turn to carry the same photos, the Gang of Four had meanwhile been purged. The photos, already known to the Chinese public, were issued again, but this time, the disgraced leaders had all disappeared from the pictures, leaving awkward gaps, like missing front teeth in an open mouth—the general effect being underlined rather than alleviated, by the censor's heavy handling of the airbrush, and by his clumsy retouching of the background (see illustration p. 72). To crown the cynicism of such blatant manipulation, a little later, New China News Agency issued a report denouncing Chiang Ch'ing for the way in which she had allegedly falsified various official photographs, for political purposes!!!

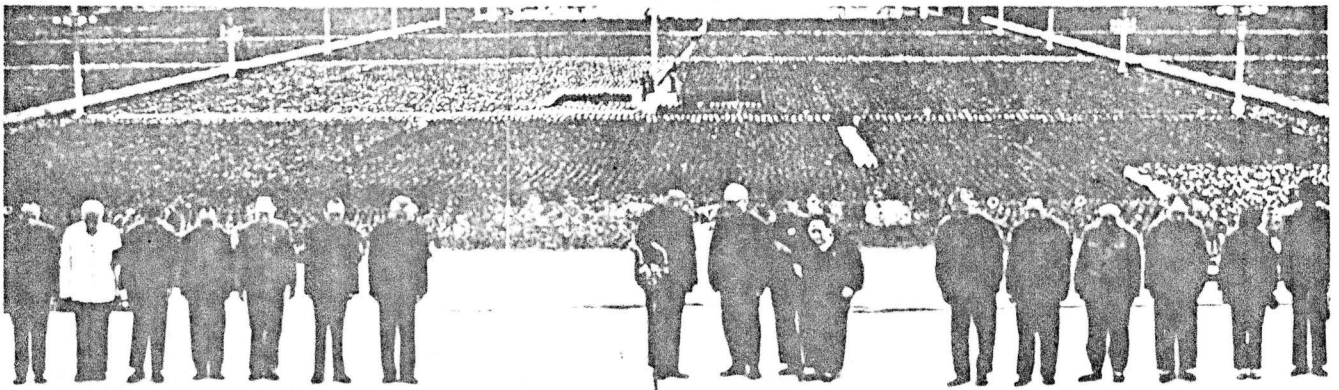
The incident of the missing figures in the official photographs, though widely circulated, provoked hardly any comment in the West. Chinese after all must be expected to behave in inscrutable and strange ways. What was not realized was the fact that, however odd the episode may have appeared in our eyes, *the Chinese themselves* felt it was even more grotesque, bizarre—and humiliating . . . The key to this puzzle did not lie in the Chinese mentality, but in totalitarian psychology.

The most masterly analysis of totalitarian psychology is certainly the one provided by Bruno Bettelheim in this book, *The Informed Heart*—which was rightly hailed as 'a handbook for survival in our age'. The great psychiatrist observed the phenomenon at first hand in Buchenwald where he was interned by the Nazis (the concentration camp is not marginal to the totalitarian world; on the contrary, it is its purest and most perfect projection, since, there, the various factors of resistance to the system—the familial, emotional sexual relationships mentioned by Kolakowski—have all been removed, leaving the subject totally exposed to the totalitarian design).

*Political scientists and psychologists who conducted systematic interviews of Chinese youths, former Red Guards, etc., were often struck by the fascinated interest and amount of knowledge shown by these young Maoists on the subject of Hitler and the Third Reich. See for instance, M. London and Mu Yang-jen: *What are they reading in China?*, *Saturday Review*, September 30, 1978, and also M. London's review of Chen Jo-hsi: *Mayor Yin*, in the *American Spectator*, fall 1978.



20 September, 1976: Memorial ceremony for Chairman Mao, Tien An Men Place (Pekin-Information, No. 38, 20 September, 1976).



The same photograph, two months later. Note the absence, from left to right, of Chiang Chin, Chang Chun-chiao, Wang Hung-wen and Yao Wen-yuan.

Bettelheim noted:*

It was forbidden for the prisoners to observe anything of what was happening around them. To take notice of events happening in the camp was a most dangerous thing—even though it was necessary for survival. And it was not enough to agree passively not to see anything and not to know anything; one had to show actively that one had observed nothing and that one knew nothing of those things which the S.S. forbade one to see and to know.

Bettelheim gives various examples of S.S. behaviour which presented this apparent contradiction: "You have not seen what you have seen, because we decided so" (which could precisely apply to the blatantly falsified photo of the Chinese leaders) and he adds this psychological commentary:

To know only those things which your superiors allow you to know is more or less the condition of a small child. To be able to observe by oneself and to draw one's own conclusions, characterises the beginning of independence. To refrain from observing and to accept blindly other people's version, amounts to renouncing one's own ability for reasoning and even one's perceptive faculties. Not to observe matters which are of vital importance, and not to know what one needs to know, is utterly destructive of the human personality . . .

Eventually one ceases to live one's own life, which was precisely the goal the S.S. aimed at.

* I am indebted to C. and J. Broyelle's book, *Le Bonheur des pierres* for the choice of this example (the falsified photographs) and for the illuminating parallel with Bettelheim's observations. The importance of C. and J. Broyelle's contribution cannot be over emphasized; it is to be hoped that their latest book, together with the earlier one, *Second retour de Chine* will be soon available in English. Not having at hand Bettelheim's original text, I retranslated these quotations from the French edition of his book, *Le Coeur Conscient*, Laffont "Pluriel", Paris 1977.

Bettelheim cites striking cases of this personality disintegration—which again are of particular relevance for the Chinese situation. Dr S. FitzGerald argued recently that, since the Chinese themselves, and particularly those who recently left China, did not show willingness to express dissent or criticism (a questionable assertion—I shall come back to this point later), we had better not try to speak for them and should simply infer from their silence that there is probably nothing to be said. According to Bettelheim, the camp inmates come progressively to see the world through S.S. eyes, they even espouse S.S. values:

Once, American and English newspapers published reports about cruelties happening in the German camps . . . When discussing this event, old timers in the camp said that it was wrong for these foreign newspapers to interfere with German institutions and expressed their hatred for these very journalists who had been trying to help them . . . When in 1938 I asked more than a hundred of former political prisoners if they thought that the story of the camp should be disclosed in foreign newspapers, many hesitated and found it difficult to agree with that suggestion. When I asked them if they would support a foreign power in a war against Nazism, only two were of the opinion that any person able to leave Germany should fight the Nazis to the best of his ability.

J. Pasqualini—whose book (*Prisoner of Mao*, New York, 1973) is the most fundamental document on the Maoist 'Gulag' and, as such, most studiously ignored by the lobby which maintains that there is no human rights problem in the People's Republic—notes a similar phenomenon. He confesses that after a few years in the labour camps, he came, if not exactly to love the system which was methodically destroying

his personality, at least to *feel gratitude* for the patience and care with which the Authorities were trying to re-educate worthless vermin like himself. Along the same line, Orwell showed premonitory genius in the last sentence of 1984: at the instant of his execution, Winston Smith realises that *He loves Big Brother*, that he had loved Big Brother all along . . .

Seemingly, I have wandered away from my topic: instead of dealing with human rights, I have talked about the nature of totalitarianism, the falsification of the past, and alteration of reality, etc. In fact, all these observations are of direct relevance for our topic. We can summarise them by saying that totalitarianism is the apotheosis of *subjectivism*.* In 1984, the starting point of Winston Smith's revolt lies in this sudden awareness:

The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. (Once more, see the falsified photos of the Chinese leadership on T'ien An Men!) Against that, what has the common man got?—The obvious, the silly and the true had got to be defended. Truisms are true, hold on to that! The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall towards the earth's centre . . . If that is granted, all else follows.

Objectivism—the belief that there is an objective truth whose existence is independent of arbitrary dogma and ideology—is thus the very cornerstone of intellectual freedom and human dignity, and as such, the main stumbling block for totalitarianism.

Objectivism, as opposed to totalitarianism, can take essentially two forms: legality or morality. For historico-cultural reasons. Western civilization seems to have put more emphasis on legality, while Chinese civilization was more inclined towards morality. Yet, to oppose the two concepts, as some admirers of Maoism have attempted to do**, betrays a complete misreading of both notions. In traditional China, 'morality' (which meant essentially Confucianism) was the main bulwark against incipient totalitarianism. This question was best expounded by the Chinese historian Yü Ying-shih, in a masterful essay (*Anti-intellectualism in Chinese traditional politics, Ming Pao Monthly*, February and March 1976) which could be very schematically summarized as follows: Confucianism described the world in terms of a *dualism*: on the one hand there is the concrete, changing realm of actual politics, on the other hand there is the realm of the abstract, permanent principles. The duty of the scholar-politician is to serve the ruler inasmuch as the ruler's behaviour and policies harmonize with the unchanging moral principles, which provide a stable reference by which to judge them. In case of a clash between the two realms, the Confucian scholar must, in the strong and unambiguous words of Hsun-tzu "follow the principles and disobey the ruler".

For this very reason, Maoist legality and Maoist morality are equally inconceivable: both are self-contradictions (the

* This point was well made a few months ago by George Watson in a lecture on *Orwell's Political Language* at the Humanities Research Centre, ANU.

** They say for instance 'Chinese authorities emphasize morality rather than legality', meaning that if the People's Republic lacks legality, it is essentially because it is more concerned with other values, such as morality. As I am trying to show here, the Maoist regime is bent on destroying morality as much as legality, and for the same reason. The pathetic thing is that our Western advocates of Maoism may even be of good faith: they sincerely believe in the existence of a Maoist morality, because in their own callousness, they never perceive the distinction between *morality* and *moralism*. That moralistic concern can eventuate in essentially immoral measures is most graphically illustrated by the sexual repression which is exerted in Maoist China: as we know, in some circumstances, homosexuals can be executed on the spot, without judgement, promiscuous women can be sentenced to a minimum of five years of hard labour, etc., etc. . . . That some people here can read in such measures a concern for 'morality' is what frightens me most!

same applies to Stalinist, or Nazi, legality or morality: the terms are mutually exclusive). Mao himself readily and cynically acknowledged this situation; however, for his subordinates (as for Stalin's), in practice, this created an increasingly dangerous and frightening situation to the point where a number of old and prestigious communist leaders could be bullied, persecuted and even tortured to death during the 'Cultural Revolution'. During the 'anti-Confucius campaign', Chou En-lai himself nearly tumbled into the Maoist frying pan; Ten Hsiao-p'ing twice had a taste of it . . . Having come so close to being devoured by the very monster they had created, Chinese leaders have recently begun to clamour for the establishment of some sort of legality. Their appeals, which have filled the pages of the *People's Daily* these last few months, are pathetic, because they run against the very nature of the regime: establishment of legality would mean the end of the system—with legal boundaries, Party authority would cease to be infallible and absolute, and the rule-of-law would mark the end of its ideological rule . . .

It is in this context of quintessential—indeed *institutional*, illegality, that the human rights question must be considered. In other words, for such a system, the very concept of 'human rights' is meaningless. A sketchy record of the issue would for instance have to encompass, among others, the following points (listed at random, merely as illustrations):

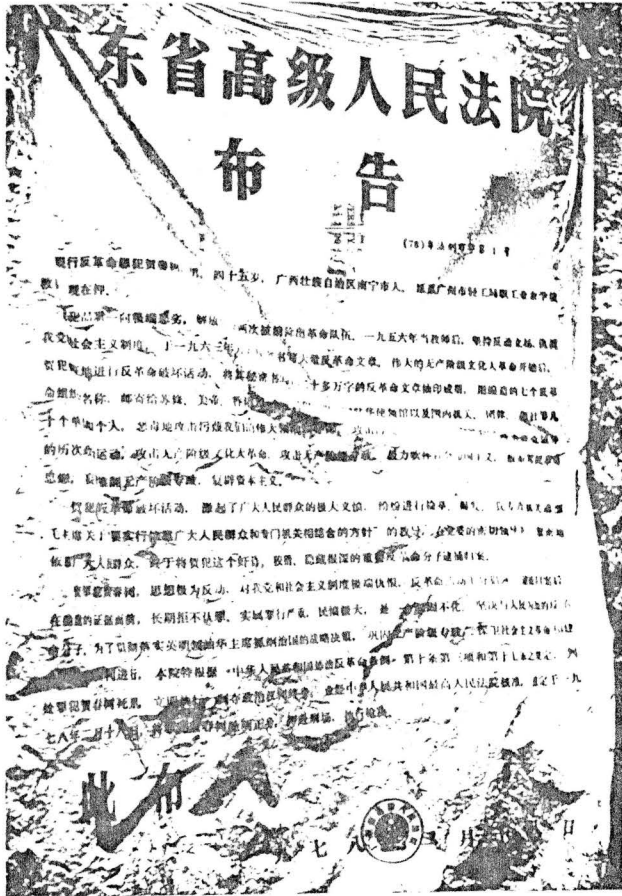
1949-1952: liquidation of counter-revolutionaries, land reform, 'Three Antis' and 'Five Antis' campaigns: five million executions (conservative estimate, advanced by one of the most cautious and respected specialists of contemporary Chinese history, J. Guillermez, *Le Parti Communiste Chinois au pouvoir*, Paris 1972, p. 33, note 1).

1957: 'Anti-rightist campaign': according to the figures issued by the Minister for Public Security, during the months of June to October alone, '100,000 counter-revolutionaries and bad elements were unmasked and dealt with', 1,700,000 subjected to police investigation; several millions sent to the countryside for 're-education'.

1966-1969: 'Cultural Revolution': no global figures are available as yet. By Peking's own admission, the losses were heavy. (In the last interview he granted to Edgar Snow, Mao Tse-tung said that foreign journalists, even in their most sensational reporting, had grossly underestimated the actual amount of violence and bloodshed.) There are some partial figures: Han Suyin (interview in *Le Point*, no. 171, 29/12/1975) acknowledges 90,000 victims for Szechuan province alone (this figure is probably a fraction of the real one). Li Yi-che in his manifesto states that Lin Piao's repression in 1968, in Kwangtung province alone, had 40,000 victims . . .

'Anti-Lin Piao and anti-Confucius Campaign' (1973-1975), Campaign for the 'Denunciation of the 'Gang of Four' (1976-1978): both campaigns have been accompanied by a rash of executions, publicly announced in all Chinese cities; no global figures are as yet available. Note that the campaign against the 'Gang of Four', besides the bloody repression it entailed, also brought further disclosures about the bloody repressions which the 'Gang of Four' itself had previously practised. We learned for instance, from the *People's Daily* that under Madame Mao, in one single administration—the Culture Ministry—in Peking alone, *more than one thousand* persons were persecuted, jailed, tortured or killed.

Political and intellectual dissent has produced the largest number of martyrs, continuously through the whole history of the People's Republic. In all periods it has been exemplified by daring and vocal personalities: Hu Feng (1955), Lin Hsi-ling (Hundred Flowers) Teng T'o and Wu Han (criticism of Mao's policies), Yang Hsi-kuang (Cultural Revolution) Li Cheng-t'ien (post-Cultural Revolution) to name only a few among the better known. Even more significant has been the dissent expressed by the anonymous masses: think for in-



Death sentence of Ho Ch'un-shu, executed in Kwangchow, 18 February, 1978, for having criticized in his writings the Chinese Communist leaders.

stance of one single incident such as the T'ien An Men demonstration of April 5, 1976: this spontaneous anti-Maoist outburst gathered 100,000 demonstrators (figure acknowledged by New China News Agency!) in the heart of Peking and met with brutal repression: 3,000 arrests on the spot, more than 100 killed by the militia of Wu Teh; in the next few days, all through Peking, more than 40,000 persons who had been connected with the demonstration were also arrested and subjected to various forms of ill-treatment. Similar demonstrations were held in other cities, with similar consequences—but for these we have no precise figures. Finally, let us not forget the hundreds, the thousands of individual victims who all the time, all over China are routinely arrested, condemned to hard labour or executed merely for having expressed unorthodox opinions: no one takes notice of them, they never make the headlines in our newspapers, it is only by chance encounter that, here and there, a more attentive visitor comes across their names and record their fate. The document we reproduce here for instance is an ordinary public notice, posted on a wall in Kwangchow, where it was photographed early this year by a foreign visitor: issued by the People's Provincial High Court it announces the death sentence and execution (18/2/1978) of Ho Ch'un-shu, teacher, age forty-five, whose crime was to have held 'reactionary ideas', to have criticised the Communist Party leadership and to have written and circulated 'counter-revolutionary literature' . . .

The Chinese 'Gulag': this gigantic topic is well described by first-hand witnesses: J. Pasqualini: *Prisoner of Mao*, New York 1973, and Lai Ying: *The Thirty Sixth Way* New York, 1969. The reading of these accounts is a basic duty for everyone who professes the slightest concern for China. I have commented elsewhere on the central relevance of the labour camps for any meaningful analysis of the nature of the Maoist regime (*Images brisées*, Paris 1976, pp. 83-95). Suffice it to say here that whoever wishes to dispose of the human rights issue in China without first tackling this particular topic, is either irresponsible, or a fraud.

Chou En-lai observed quite accurately (in 1959) that "the present of the Soviet Union is the future of China". There will be, in the future, Chinese Solzhenitsyns to provide us with the fully documented picture of what Maoism in action actually meant for millions of individuals. Yet it should be remarked that the most amazing thing about Solzhenitsyn's impact is that the West reacted to it as if it was *news*. Actually Solzhenitsyn's unique contribution lies in the volume and precision of his catalogue of atrocities—but, basically, *he revealed nothing new*. On the essential points, information on Soviet reality has been available for more than FORTY years, through the first hand testimonies of unimpeachable witnesses such as Boris Souvarine, Victor Serge, Anton Ciliga etc . . . Practically no one heard of it at the time, because no one wanted to hear: it was inconvenient and inopportune. In the foreword to the 1977 edition of his classical essay on Stalin (1935), Souvarine recalls the incredible difficulties he had in finding a publisher for it in the West: everywhere, the intellectual elite endeavoured to suppress the book: "It is going to needlessly harm our relations with Moscow." Only Malraux, adventurer and phony hero of the leftist intelligentsia, had the guts and the cynicism to state clearly his position in a private conversation: "Souvarine, I believe that you and your friends are right. However, at this stage, do not count on me to support you. I shall be on your side only when you will be on top (*Je serai avec vous quand vous serez les plus forts*)!" How many times have we heard variants of that same phrase! . . . On the subject of China, how many colleagues who came to express private support and sympathy (these were still the bravest!), apologising profusely for not being able to say the same things in public. 'You must understand my position . . . my professional commitments . . . I must keep my channels of communication open with the Chinese Embassy . . . I am due to go on a mission to Peking . . .'

Finally, I would like to examine successively the various methods which have been adopted in the West to dodge the issue of human rights in China.

The first line of escape is the one which I have just dealt with. It is to say: 'We do not know for sure, we do not have sufficient information on the subject.' Actually there are enough documents, books, witnesses to occupy entire teams of researchers for years to come. Of course, much more material is bound to surface; however, when the Chinese Solzhenitsyns begin to expose methodically the Maoist era in all its details, anyone who exclaims in horrified shock: 'My God! had we only known!' will be a hypocrite and a liar: we know already the main outlines—basically, there can be no new revelations, only the filling of more details. The essential information has been available practically since the establishment of the regime and everyone even slightly acquainted with Chinese affairs is aware of it . . . It is true that, in comparison with the Soviet Union, there may be a *relative* scarcity of documentation; this does not mean (as some people have had the temerity to assert) that the situation is relatively better in China—it means exactly the opposite. The fact is, there is no Sakharov in the Chinese Academy of Sciences today. Did we hear of any Sakharov in the Academy of Sciences in Moscow under Stalin? No Chinese dissidents

hold press conferences in Peking with foreign correspondents, or keep telephone links with the outside world. Which Soviet dissident ever held press conferences or could be reached by phone from Paris or London under Stalin?? The Stalin analogy is acutely relevant here, since Maoist China always kept, and still keeps, proclaiming its unwavering fidelity to the principles of Stalinism; Khrushchev's half-hearted de-Stalinization was already more than Mao could bear, and was taken by Peking as the ultimate proof of Soviet ideological betrayal. Maoist China proudly professes its Stalinism, it does so unabashedly and graphically. (I always marvel at those foreign visitors who remain blind in the face of the evidence, and manage never to see these ubiquitous portraits of Stalin which are to be encountered at every step in China, beginning with the gigantic one which decorates T'ien An Men, in the very heart of Peking!)

The second line of escape (possibly the most sickening one) is to say sadly: 'Yes, indeed, we know; there have been gross irregularities—even what you might call atrocities, — committed in the past. But this is a thing of the past: it was all due to the evil influence of the 'Gang of Four'. This new tune is now being dutifully sung by the entire choir of the fellow-travellers, the travelling salesmen of Maoism, the sycophants, and propaganda commissars—the very people who, a few years ago, used to tell us how everything was well and wonderful in China under the enlightened rule of that same 'Gang of Four' . . . Pretending shock and indignation, they now come and tell us horrible stories—as if we did not know it all, as if they had not known it all—the very stories we told years ago, but at that time, they used to label it 'anti-China slander' and 'C.I.A. lies' . . .

The downfall of the 'Gang of Four' is a momentous event; this is not the place to analyze its meaning in the context of the continuous power-struggle in policy. We are here concerned only with its implications regarding the human rights issue; these implications appear thus far negligible. Violations of human rights, political and intellectual repression, mass deportations, persecution of dissenters etc. were perpetrated for nearly twenty years before the 'Gang of Four' accession to power; for all we know, these methods and policies have not significantly changed following in the 'Gang's' disgrace: witness for instance the routine arrest, condemnation and execution of Ho Ch'un-shu a few months ago . . . The terms in which criticism of the 'Gang' is being expressed, the methods by which their denunciation is being pursued, represent a direct continuation of the very language and methods of the 'Gang' itself. At no stage was any politically meaningful criticism and analysis allowed to develop; the basic questions (whence did the 'Gang' derive its power? What kind of regime is it which provides opportunities for such characters to reach supreme power? How should the system be reformed to prevent similar occurrences in future?) are never raised. One man could have raised them: Li Cheng-t'ien, the main author of the courageous and lucid manifesto *On Democracy and Legality under Socialism* (1974). He alone dared to challenge the 'Gang of Four' when they were still in power. Had their disgrace represented more than a mere change of personnel in the ruling bureaucracy, Li should have been vindicated and should have been allowed to pursue his political analysis. What in fact happened to him delineates the exact extent and meaning of this so-called 'denunciation of the 'Gang of Four': Li was again arrested (he had been arrested a first time by Lin Piao in 1968 and a second time by the 'Gang of Four' in 1975) and sentenced last year to life imprisonment!*

It is true that under the 'Gang of Four' the life of the mind was frozen: China was a cultural wasteland; but the confusion created by the power-struggle at the top left numerous oppor-

1 NB
tunities for political dissent. What is happening now is an inversion in some respect of the previous situation: intellectual and cultural life seems to be allowed a genuine if limited freedom, but political control and repression are tighter than before . . .

The third line of escape: 'We admit, there may be gross infringements of human rights in China. But the first of all human rights is to survive, to be freed from hunger. The infringement of human rights in China is dictated by harsh national necessity.'

What causal relationships is there between infringement of human rights and the ability to feed the people? The very relative and limited ability of the People's Republic to feed its people represents but the bare minimum achievement one could expect from any Chinese government which enjoyed for a quarter of a century similar conditions of peace, unity, freedom from civil war, from colonialist exploitation, from external aggression—a chance no other Chinese government had in the last hundred years. Teng Hsiao-p'ing in a recent speech (March 18, 1978) bluntly acknowledged the backwardness and basic failure of the People's Republic's economy: after nearly thirty years of Communist rule "several hundred million people are still mobilised full time in the exclusive task of producing food (. . .) We still have not really solved the grain problem (. . .) our industry is lagging behind ten or twenty years . . .". In proportion to population, food production in the People's Republic has not yet overtaken the record of the best Kuomintang years, of more than forty years ago! The economic take-off has not yet been achieved: China is still in a marginal situation, not yet secure from potential starvation, always vulnerable to the menace of successive bad harvests or other natural catastrophes.

Some of the major catastrophes which have hit the People's Republic and crippled its development were entirely Mao-made and could happen only because the totalitarian nature of the regime prevented rational debate and forbade informed criticism and realistic assessment of the objective conditions. Suffice it here to mention two well-known illustrations. *The 'Great Leap Forward'* which Mao's private fancy imposed upon the country, resulted in widespread famine (a authoritative expert such as L. La Dany ventured the figure of fifty million dead from starvation during the years 59-62) Falsified production statistics were issued by the local authorities, so as to protect the myth of the Supreme Leader's infallibility; this hiding the extent of the disaster, it prevented its early tackling and made the tragedy even worse. *The problem of population control*: in the early fifties, one of China's most distinguished economists and demographers, Ma Yin-ch'u expressed the common sense warning that it would be necessary to control population growth, otherwise the demographic explosion would cancel the production increase. Mao however held to the crude and primitive peasant belief "the more Chinese, the better": Ma was purged, all debate on this crucial issue was frozen for years and precious time was wasted before Mao reversed his earlier conclusion (Ma himself had to wait twenty years for Mao to die, before obtaining his rehabilitation . . .)—Such examples could easily be multiplied. In a totalitarian system, whenever common-sense clashes with dogma, common-sense always loses—at tremendous cost for national development and for the people's livelihood. The harm caused by arbitrary decisions enforced without the moderating counterweight of debate and criticism almost certainly exceeds whatever advantage could be gained from the monolithic discipline achieved by the system.

The fourth line of escape is articulated in several variations on a basic theme: 'China is different'.

First variation: "human rights are a Western concept, which has no relevance in the Chinese context." The inherent logic of this line of thought, though seldom expressed with

* According to the latest report (not yet confirmed) he was recently executed.

such frankness—amounts to saying: “human rights are one of those luxuries which befit us, wealthy and advanced Westerners, it is preposterous to imagine that mere natives of exotic countries could qualify for a similar privilege, or would even be interested in it.” Or, more simply: “Human rights do not apply to the Chinese, because the Chinese are not really human.” Since the very enunciation of this kind of position excuses one from taking the trouble to refute it, I shall merely add here one incidental remark. Human rights are not a foreign notion in Chinese modern history. Nearly one century ago, the leading philosopher and political reformer K’ang Yu-wie (1858-1927) included it in his *Ta Tung Shu*, and made it the cornerstone of his political philosophy. In practice, under the first republic, a human rights movement developed effectively as a protest against the white terror of the Kuomintang; the famous ‘China League for Civil Rights’ was founded in 1932 and mobilized the intellectual elite of the time, with prestigious figures such as Ts’ai Yuan-pei, Sung Ch’ing-ling, Lu Hsun, etc.; it also had its martyrs, such as Yang Ch’üan (assassinated in 1933). However, the history of human rights in China is after all an academic question. What is of burning relevance, is the present situation. Foreigners who pretend that “the Chinese are not interested in human rights”, obviously never read the Chinese wall posters: Chinese are clamouring for it, often at the risk of their lives. More recently, even the *People’s Daily* began to expound the same theme. I shall return to this important point later on.

Second variation: “we must respect China’s right to be different.” One could draw interesting logical extensions of that principle. Had Hitler refrained from invading neighbouring countries and merely contented himself with slaughtering his own Jews at home, some might have said: “Slaughtering Jews is probably a German idiosyncrasy; we must refrain from judging it, and respect Germany’s right to be different.”

Third variation: “China has always been subjected to despotic regimes*, there is thus no particular reason for us to become indignant at this one.” Such reasoning is faulty twice over: first, because Chinese traditional government was far less despotic than Maoism; secondly because, had it been equally or more despotic than Maoism, this would still not provide a justification. The second point does not need to be argued (since when can past atrocities justify present ones?). Let us very briefly consider the first. The great ages of Chinese civilisation such as the T’ang and the Northern Sung presented a political sophistication whose enlightenment and liberalism had no equivalent in the world until modern times; other periods were markedly more despotic, some (Ch’in, Ming), even tried to achieve a kind of totalitarianism. However, they were always severely hampered by technical obstacles (genuine totalitarianism had to wait for twentieth century technology to become really feasible). Ming politics were ruthless and terrifying, but they were such only for the relatively small fraction of the population who came into contact with it. In the mid-sixteenth century, Chinese officialdom consisted of some ten to fifteen thousand civil servants, for a total population of about a hundred and fifty million. These officials were concentrated in the cities, while most of the population was living in the villages; distance and slow communications preserved the autonomy of most countryside communities; the great majority of the Chinese could spend an entire lifetime *without ever having come into contact with one single representative of imperial authority*. The last dynasty which ruled China for nearly three centuries, the Ch’ing government, however authoritarian, was far less law-

* Dr S. FitzGerald has expressed this point so felicitously in his recent paper on the subject, that I cannot resist the temptation to quote him. He spoke of the Maoist regime as “authoritarianism tempered by Marxism-Leninism” which reminded me of the well-known definition of the Byzantine empire: “despotism tempered by assassination”!

less than the Maoist regime; it had a penal code which determined which officials were entitled to carry out arrests, which crimes carried the death penalty, etc., while Maoist China has been living for thirty years in a legal vacuum, and, as we read in the *People’s Daily**, high officials took advantage of this situation to establish their own private goals where they tortured and executed their own personal enemies.

Fourth variation: “respect for the individual is a Western characteristic”; in China (I quote from an eminent American bureaucrat) there is “an utterly natural acceptance of the age-old Confucian tradition of subordinating individual liberty to collective obligation”. In other words, the Chinese dissidents who, like Ho Ch’un-shu, are being gaoled and executed merely for having criticized the regime, the *millions* who, having been branded once and for all as “class enemies” (the classification is hereditary!) are reduced, they themselves and their descendants, to a condition of social outcasts or are herded into labour camps—these people either, as good traditional Chinese, imbued with ‘age-old Confucian tradition of subordinating individual liberty to collective obligations’, are supposed to be perfectly satisfied with their fate, or, if they are not (like the 100,000 demonstrators who dared to show their anger in Peking on 5 April 1976), thereby prove that they are un-Chinese, and thus presumably unworthy of our attention!

In all these successive variations ‘difference’ has been the key-concept. If Soviet dissidents have on the whole received far more attention and sympathy in the West, is it because they are white Caucasians—while the Chinese are ‘different’? When Maoist sympathizers use such arguments, they echo die-hard racists of the colonial-imperialist era. At that time, the ‘Chinese difference’ was a leit-motiv among Western entrepreneurs, to justify their exploitation of the ‘natives’: Chinese were different, even physiologically; they did not feel hunger, cold and pain as Westerners would; you could kick them, starve them, it did not matter much: only ignorant sentimentalists and innocent bleeding-hearts would worry on behalf of these swarming crowds of yellow coolies . . . Most of the rationalisations which are now being proposed for ignoring the human rights issue in China, are rooted in the same mentality.

Of course, there are *cultural* differences—the statement is a tautology, since ‘difference’ is the very essence of culture. But if from there, one extrapolates differences which could restrict the relevance of human rights to certain nations only, this would amount to denial of the universal character of human nature; such attitude in turn opens the doors to a line of reasoning whose nightmarish, yet logical, development ends in the very barbarity which this century already once witnessed a few decades ago.

As several articles in this issue have indicated, very important changes have recently occurred in China’s political orientations. One of the most momentous might well be suggested by the fact that now even the official press has occasionally taken up the notion of “people’s rights” which is so often found in the spontaneous, informal wall-posters. In the past, I have expressed scepticism and pessimism regarding the ability of this regime to modify its basic nature. My dearest wish is that its actual evolution may eventually prove me wrong! However, the situation is fluid; at this stage, it is still too early to draw conclusions: The present contradiction is perhaps best expressed in the emphasis which is being given now to the new Constitution (1978); this Constitution restores some of the citizens’ rights, yet simultaneously one of its articles (art. 56) simply cancels the whole document itself: “Citizens must support the leadership of the Communist Party of China.”

* See for instance, *People’s Daily*, 14th May, 1978.