

PEOPLE'S CHINA

9
1955



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May 1, 1955

A FORTNIGHTLY MAGAZINE

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Editor: Liu Tsun-chi



Improving the Life of the People

Liu Ning-I

*Vice-Chairman, All-China
Federation of Trade Unions*

THANKS to the great, heroic efforts put in by the workers, restoration of China's national economy is now complete, and large-scale production and construction in full swing. Output of modern industry is steadily rising, and in 1954 it was nearly four and a quarter times the value of total output in 1949. As production grows, the living and working conditions of the workers improve too.

Security for All

In our country, with its planned economy, with the number of industrial workers increasing with each passing year, the threat of unemployment and insecurity is no longer a worry. In 1952 the number of workers and office employees coming under the various industrial ministries was 22 per cent larger than in 1951. And in 1953, the total number of workers and staff all over the country reached 13,740,000, some 15 per cent above the 1952 figure. The problem of unemployment left over from old China is being gradually and progressively solved. Between July 1950 and the end of 1953, 2,070,000 people had been found jobs through the government labour departments alone, in addition to those who found work on their own, or through other channels.

All branches of our national economy are constantly expanding as a result of our socialist construction. Anarchy in production characteristic in the capitalist society has been eliminated. Labour is supplied to the new and expanding enterprises through unified arrangement made by the government labour offices. Workers on the job have no longer to worry about unemployment. With the whole national economy co-ordinated under a unified plan, the

recurring economic crises and depressions which beset unplanned capitalist economy can never happen, and we can look forward to an ever-increasing prosperity alongside the rise in our industrial and agricultural production.

Wages of the workers have been progressively raised every year, as productivity rose. In 1952 the average wage of workers in state-owned enterprises throughout the country was 60 to 120 per cent above 1949. In 1953 it was again increased by 5.5 per cent above 1952, and in 1954 the state plan again succeeded in raising wages by another 5.2 per cent above the previous year. These wage increases were not an attempt to keep pace with a rising cost of living, but a real increase in the workers' living standards; for prices of commodities have been stabilized over a number of years, and, with increased services provided by the state, the cost of living has actually gone down. Nowadays the shops are crowded with people whose purchasing power is greater than it has ever been.

The principles underlying the wages policy of the state are "to each according to his work" and "equal pay for equal work." Workers who turn out the same amount of work, of the same quality, in the same time, receive the same wages, irrespective of sex or age. Higher wages are paid to those engaged in specially skilled or heavy work, those who work in important sections of industry, or who work on jobs which are unhealthy or dangerous. A special allowance is also paid to workers who go to work in remote places with a bad climate. Women workers who have to take time off to feed their babies during working hours still receive full pay. Workers engaged on night work also receive a higher rate of pay.

All overtime worked by industrial workers is paid at time-and-a-half or double time. This measure is not designed to encourage the working of overtime. General overtime is actually prohibited in industry, and overtime working allowed only in very special circumstances, with the consent of the union, and even then it is limited. Workers receive full pay for all national holidays. In addition special cash awards are paid for inventions, technical innovations, or rationalization proposals.

These measures both guarantee the real wages of the workers and at the same time give them an incentive to increase their productivity and encourage them to study and improve their technical knowledge. As the workers become more skilled and production steadily grows their individual income increases.

Free Insurance

In the past workers were looked upon as just so much labour power to be obtained as cheaply as possible. Now they are considered the most important resource our country has. Article 93 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China says: "Working people . . . have the right to material assistance in old age, illness or disability."

The People's Government has passed an act making the provision of labour insurance benefits compulsory in enterprises employing more than a hundred. And each year they apply to more and more workers. In 1949 only 600,000 were covered. By 1953 the number had gone up to 4,830,000, and by the end of 1954 to over 5,380,000. Benefits on a rather more limited scale are enjoyed by workers in enterprises employing less than 100, where contracts in the spirit of the Labour Insurance Regulations have been signed between the management and the trade unions. Labour insurance is non-contributory. The regulations provide that the whole cost of benefits shall be met by the management, or by the owner in the case of a privately-owned firm. A sum equal to 3 per cent of the total payroll is handed over to the workers' representatives for them to administer. In addition there are medical funds and insurance directly paid by the enterprise, which increases the total labour insurance fund to over 10 per cent of the total wages paid.

In the case of workers and staff injured in the course of their work, all expenses for medical treatment, medicines, hospitalization, meals taken in hospital and fares are covered by the labour insurance fund. Full wages are paid during the period of treatment. Workers who are disabled as the result of injury sustained in the course of their work receive a pension according to the degree of disability—about 60 to 75 per cent of their wages, which is paid for the rest of their life, or until such time as they are able to resume work. In the case of non-occupational injury or illness, in addition to free medical services, 60 to 100 per cent of the wages are paid, according to the length of time worked in the enterprise. An ever-increasing number of sanatoria and convalescent homes are being provided. In addition to the provision of help for sick and injured workers, special attention is paid to the prevention of illness and injury.

A funeral benefit equivalent to three months' average wages is paid to the next of kin of workers and office employees whose deaths are attributable to causes connected with their work, while their dependents receive pensions of 25 to 50 per cent of the wages of the deceased, until such time as they no longer occupy the status of dependents. The actual amount paid is based upon the total number of such dependents. Any orphaned children of the deceased not otherwise provided for have the right to be cared for in an orphanage.

Care-free Old Age

Retirement pensions for all workers coming under the labour insurance benefits are paid to women (who may retire at the age of 50) and men (whose retirement age is 60). Miners, workers in the chemical industry and others who work under abnormal conditions may retire earlier. Retirement pensions are calculated on the basis of from 50 to 70 per cent of wages, according to the period of service, and are paid monthly until death. A funeral benefit and a relief benefit for the dependents of the deceased is also paid when an old-age pensioner dies. Women workers are entitled to 56 days' maternity leave with full pay. They also receive a small maternity benefit; and this also applies to the wives of male workers.

Besides assistance in the event of birth, old age, illness, death, injury or disability, work-

ers have the right to rest and leisure. By the end of 1954 there were 198 large sanatoria and rest homes catering for workers, and another 1,488 run by local trade unions. In addition many workers are now enjoying holidays at seaside resorts for the first time in their lives.

Housing conditions are also being gradually improved. In 1952 alone the state spent more than 286 million yuan on building housing for a million workers and office employees. In 1953 still more houses with close on 130 million square feet of floor space were built.

Labour conditions in factories and mines have greatly improved with the adoption of safety and sanitary measures. On the railways, for example, if we take the figure of expenditure on labour protection in 1950 as 100, in 1951 it had increased to 490, in 1952 to 628, and in 1953 to 1,291. The eight-hour day is worked in all state-owned factories. In mines and some branches of the chemical industry in which work is detrimental to health, a six-hour day is worked. With improvement of labour conditions has gone a sharp decline in the death and injury rates. If we take the death rate in all factories and mines for 1950 as 100, the 1951 figure was 39.01, 37.52 in 1952, and only 29.18 in 1953. The trade unions and the state are paying a great deal of attention to the work of labour protection and improving the safety of factories and mines.

To Better Themselves

In the past few years both the government and the trade unions have paid increasing attention to raising the cultural and technical level of the workers. At present there are three million workers and employees studying in part-time schools. In addition to the high and middle schools of technology run by the state, there are schools training skilled workers sponsored by the government labour offices, classes for technical training and groups for technical studies run by factories, mines and other enterprises. It is one of the regular jobs of the trade union organizations to help and encourage workers to avail themselves of education and technical training. Workers and office employees were trained to become technicians or members of the managerial and administrative staff. Among the 50,858 trained in 1954, 1,351 are now factory directors, and 357 chief en-

gineers. In the same year, 38,776 workers were trained by the unions to become trade union officials.

By the end of 1954, 1,261 large workers' clubs have been set up by the unions, in addition to 11,929 clubs inside the factories and mines. There were also some 17,486 libraries and 977 film projection teams, as well as 18,359 choirs, dance and amateur dramatic and literary groups organized by the workers.

Sport and physical culture, too, has made great strides. In 1954 there were 82,725 workers' basketball, volleyball and football teams. Among the 658 athletes who took part in the National Sports Meeting held in Peking in October 1953, 92 were workers or office employees. Among them Liu Cheng, a post office clerk, broke the national record for the women's 80 metre low hurdle, and Sun Hung-hsia, a signal worker in a railway electrical engineering works, broke the national record for the women's 800 metres. Worker athletes such as Yao Shih-chung and Cheng Shih-chun, both basketball players, and Ma Jen-hua, a woman volleyball player, have represented China in teams playing in international tournaments.

The Chinese workers are the leading class in the country: they have full political rights, and state power is in their hands. They fully realize that it is only through greater industrialization and higher productivity that our national defence can be strengthened and a better life for the people ensured. They know that their work does not go to enrich a few capitalists, but directly towards improving the standards of the country and the whole community. That is why they are so enthusiastic about improving their work and increasing production. It is only because of the tireless labour of the whole population, and, first and foremost, of the working class, that the state is able to raise material and cultural standards. The improvement of our life today will lead to a still better life in the future. In order to bring about socialism and secure a still happier life for the whole population, the Chinese working class are determined to put everything they have into their work. This determination will guarantee the overfulfilment of the First Five-Year Plan and the liberation of Taiwan, and play no small part in defending peace in Asia and throughout the world.

Primary Tasks Imposed by the Five-Year Plan

Chu Chi-hsin

THE Draft of China's First Five-Year Plan was presented to the National Conference of the Chinese Communist Party held from March 21 to 31. This plan clearly defines the task before us—the development of China's national economy between 1953 and 1957. It is a great plan to make our country prosperous, wealthy and strong, to bring happiness to the people and to set the whole population, led by the Chinese Communist Party, forging ahead along the road to socialism.

In fact, the First Five-Year Plan has been in operation for over two years. But because we lacked experience in drawing up a long-term plan of construction, and because of certain other objective difficulties, we could only draw it up while going ahead with the actual work of construction. Today, with our two years' practical experience, the whole plan can be worked out with greater regard to reality. The plan, which still needs to be amended in some small details, is to be submitted to the second session of the First National People's Congress later this year for consideration and adoption; but the plan as a whole has now taken shape.

The Fundamental Tasks

It imposes on us certain fundamental tasks, and these can be summed up as follows:

(1) To lay the foundations on which China's socialist industrialization rests. This means concentrating our efforts on industrial construction—694 large-scale construction units,

156 of them designed with the help of the Soviet Union and forming the core of the whole;

(2) To foster the growth of agricultural producers' co-operatives and handicrafts co-operatives—forms of partial collective ownership which pave the way for the transformation of agriculture and handicraft industry on socialist lines;

(3) To bring capitalist economy, in the main, into the orbit of state capitalism in one form or another, so as to pave the way for socialist transformation of private industry and commerce.

Industrial Construction

Laying the foundations for socialist industrialization means, first and foremost, building and rapidly expanding the power, coal mining and oil industries; building and expanding the modern iron and steel, non-ferrous metals and basic chemical industries; and building an engineering industry capable of producing large machine-tools, motors, metallurgical and mining machinery, aeroplanes, tractors and motor cars. In short, we start with capital construction, with heavy industry as our main concern. Before we can change the face of our national economy, now technically backward, and equip its various branches with modern technique, we must build up our heavy industry. Then, and then only, can any drastic change in the national economy come about.

Alongside the building of heavy industry we also need to undertake a certain amount of construction in the textile and other light industries, and the building of new medium-size and small industrial enterprises to serve agriculture. This must be done to meet the grow-

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ing needs of both the urban and rural populations for consumer goods and capital goods for agriculture. At the same time we need to develop transport and communications, to build railways, expand inland and sea-borne shipping, make and repair roads, and extend postal and telegraphic facilities.

Investment in various forms of capital construction, according to the Draft First Five-Year Plan, is to absorb the best part of all expenditure on economic construction. Take industry for instance. Besides the 600-odd great works mentioned above, there are some two thousand more medium-size and small enterprises; so it may easily be seen that we have a herculean but glorious task before us.

But even so, this is only part of the industrial plan. While going ahead with new industrial construction, we must also utilize to the full all existing, including local, industrial enterprises, and exploit their potential productive capacity to the limit. The reason for this, of course, is that during the Five-Year Plan many of the new enterprises will still be in the capital construction stage, and fulfilment of production tasks by heavy and light industries must depend mainly on existing enterprises.

Socialist Transformation

Another side of our primary task during the plan is the active and steady socialist transformation of the individual economy of the peasants and handicraftsmen and private capitalist economy.

At present small-peasant economy still dominates Chinese agriculture, and private capitalist economy still occupies a fairly large proportion of the national economy as a whole. Small-peasant economy holds back productive forces in agriculture and fails to meet the need of socialist industrialization for agricultural development. As far as industry and commerce are concerned, capitalist relations of production more and more constitute a drag on the forces of production, not to speak of the conflict between the anarchy of capitalist economy and the planned development of socialist economy. Capitalist ownership must, therefore, be replaced by ownership by the people as a whole.

In agriculture, to bring about its socialist transformation we have to rely on the poor

peasants (including those new "middle peasants" who were "poor peasants" before the land reform); to enter into close alliance with the middle peasants; to give an impetus to the co-operative movement in agriculture by means of persuasion, good example and state aid; and to begin to transform small-peasant economy mainly by forming agricultural producers' co-operatives, which are a form of partial collective ownership. At the same time the best possible use must be made of individual peasants as potential producers. To this end certain preliminary technical reforms have to be introduced in agriculture, productivity raised, and as much waste-land as possible reclaimed. These are measures designed to raise agricultural output, especially of grain and cotton, and gradually to lessen the disparity between advanced industry and backward agriculture.

Individual economy in our country consists not only of that of the individual peasants, but embraces the handicraft industries, private transport and small private trading. Here again our task, under the unified guidance of the state, is gradually to get them organized through one kind of co-operation or another suitable to conditions in each trade. In other words, they must be drawn into a plan to effectively serve the needs of the state and society.

In the field of capitalist economy our task is to carry out a policy—as the Constitution of the People's Republic of China puts it—of using, restricting and transforming capitalist industry and commerce. (See "State Capitalism in China" by Chien Chia-chu in *People's China*, No. 23, 1954.)

Socialist industrial construction and socialist transformation are no easy tasks. The creation of heavy industry requires a large amount of capital which brings in no immediate return, and a steady and ever-growing supply of skilled technicians. To raise capital for such construction, we have constantly to raise industrial and agricultural output, to expand trade, do our best to raise the productivity of labour, lower production costs, and cut down non-productive expenses. To train more skilled labour we have to promote higher education, secondary technical education and scientific research, and learn particularly from Soviet experience.

Such are the fundamental tasks of the First Five-Year Plan. By the time they have all been carried out, several things will have happened. There will have been a vast increase in the value of our total industrial and agricultural output. The proportion of modern industry to the value of industrial and agricultural output as a whole will be far greater, and there will be a similar increase in the proportion of capital goods to the value of total industrial output.

Our country will have more iron and steel, more coal and electric power. We shall be making our own aeroplanes and motor cars. Light industry, textiles, transport and com-

munications will have made great strides, and so will commerce and agriculture.

In other words, the productive forces of the country, both in industry and agriculture, will have expanded out of all knowledge; and alongside this expansion will have gone a great improvement in the people's livelihood, and a great flowering of education and culture.

Our whole economy and the relationship of forces inside it will be completely changed. Socialist economy will be flourishing, while the importance of other sectors will be minimized. The socialist sector of the national economy, and the democratic state power of the people itself will be stronger than ever.

A Crime Against Humanity

The ruthless abduction of 20,000 inhabitants of the Tachens by U.S. forces and Chiang troops

Liang Szu-yi

ON April 7 the Red Cross Society of China published *Disaster Strikes the Tachens*.* It is a report of an investigation into crimes committed by Chiang Kai-shek's troops, instigated and protected by the United States, during their withdrawal from the Tachens and other islands. This 45-page booklet, which includes both eye-witness testimony and photographic evidence collected on the spot, is a damning exposure of the crimes committed by the United States' forces and Chiang's troops. It shows how some 20,000 inhabitants of the Tachens, the Nanchi and other islands were

ruthlessly torn from their homes and taken to Taiwan.

The Chinese people have expressed their bitter indignation at this crime and have protested against it. The evidence proves that the United States government must bear the responsibility for this crime.

On February 5, 1955, President Eisenhower of the United States ordered the U.S. Seventh Fleet and other units to give cover to Chiang Kai-shek's forces in their withdrawal from the Tachens and other islands, and their forcible removal of almost the entire local population of over 18,000 to Taiwan. Upon receipt of this order, the United States military authorities, using the Seventh Fleet as the main force, dispatched 132 naval vessels, more than 500 aircraft, more than 45,000 naval personnel and 3,000 air force personnel to take part in this action.

From February 14 to 25, when the Chiang Kai-shek forces withdrew from Nanchi Islands

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**Disaster Strikes the Tachens*, 45 pp., published by the Red Cross Society of China, Peking, 1955. The full text of the report is published in a supplement to this number of *People's China*.

off the southern coast of Chekiang, they also carried off all the islanders, numbering over 2,000. This was also at the instigation of the U.S. government.

On February 13 and 26, 1955, the Chinese People's Liberation Army landed on the Tachens and the Yushan, Pishan and Nanchi Islands. They succeeded in rescuing many inhabitants imprisoned by the Chiang Kai-shek forces on the Yangchi and Pingfengshan Islands near the Tachens. These islanders, full of indignation, accused the United States and Chiang Kai-shek troops of using extreme violence in forcing the 20,000-odd peaceful inhabitants of the Tachens and other islands to leave their homes. They also made the charge that these troops, without the slightest scruple, burnt and destroyed the houses which the islanders had built and the property they had accumulated by their own hard work. In this way they were deprived of even a home to go back to.

Red Cross Investigations

On learning of these charges the Red Cross Society of China, to uphold humanitarian principles, organized an Investigating Commission, groups of which visited the Tachens and other islands. The Commission made on-the-spot investigations, interviewed all available witnesses and collected material evidence of the crimes. The present report is the result of this detailed investigation.

The mass of conclusive evidence provided by the report shows that the inhabitants of the Tachens and other islands were abducted to Taiwan by force. Wang Shou-chien, an old fisherman of the Tachens who had been imprisoned by the Chiang troops on the nearby Yangchi Islands, told the Commission: "When the hundred odd fishermen's homes of Huang-fuchiao heard that we must go to Taiwan, every family broke into tears."

Even Chiang Kai-shek's soldiers confirmed this. One of the diaries discovered belonging to members of Chiang's army, has this entry:

... They mostly don't want to go. They say it is good here at home. Their faces were sad.

[This diary was found by the Commission on the Nanchi Islands—Ed.]

Measures of strict control and threats of armed force were used by Chiang Kai-shek

military and administrative personnel in removing the islanders. The Chiang Kai-shek Office of the Special Commissioner for Administrative Supervision in the Tachen Area set up an "evacuation organization" with absolute control over the local people. This machinery of abduction was based on the *pao chia* groups in which the people of the Tachens and other islands were regimented. Every member of the "Small Evacuation Groups," which formed the basic units for evacuation, was at the same time a member of the "chain responsibility" system which linked every three or four households. Under this system, the inhabitants were compelled to sign written guarantees for each other. If one household was found "guilty," the other households would also be punished. If anyone refused to go to Taiwan, not only would his whole family be punished but so would the other households connected with his in the chain guarantee.

Chiang Kai-shek's military and administrative personnel also ordered all fishing boats to be concentrated in one place in order to prevent the local inhabitants from escaping in them. All these boats were dragged ashore and surrounded by mines and barbed-wire entanglements.

The Part U.S. Forces Played

More than a hundred U.S. warships and other vessels and about five hundred U.S. planes arrived at and around the Tachens on February 7, and the mass uprooting of the population began.

During investigations on the Tachens, the Commission found innumerable proofs of the way the people had been snatched from their homes. They saw mesh-pins still lying beside damaged fishing nets, soiled clothes still soaking in wash tubs and babies' napkins still lying on stone benches where they had been put to dry. In most houses, there were signs that families had been preparing or eating meals. Pots of rice or soup were still there on tables, with bowls and chopsticks. Some of the bowls contained bits of fish or salted vegetable. . . .

Such pitiful sights showed that even in the last few minutes before they were forced to leave, the Tachen islanders were still unwilling to give up their normal life. They were not

prepared to leave their homes. But at last the U.S. troops appeared, U.S. warships trained their guns on the islands, U.S. planes dived overhead, and U.S. marines mounted machine-guns on the beaches. All this clearly told the simple folk of the islands that if they refused to give up their homes and possessions and embark for Taiwan in the U.S. landing craft as they were ordered, they would have paid with their lives and with the lives of their sons and daughters.

The report further shows that those who were forcibly removed to Taiwan were as often as not separated from their dear ones and lived in misery. According to Chiang's *Credit Information* of February 13, when the islanders abducted from the Tachens were taken to Taiwan, "Families were lodged in different places so that more often than not husbands and wives lost contact and children got stranded and had to wait for their parents to claim them."

On February 28 the *Taiwan Chung Yang Jih Pao* (Central Daily News) said that the Tachen inhabitants taken to Taiwan found that part of the rice they got was mildewed and contained sand, gravel, charcoal and sawdust. The same paper also revealed that there were 1,661 cases of sickness among the 2,775 Tachen inhabitants sent to Yilan County, Taiwan, during the period March 3 to 16.

Mass Destruction

The U.S. and Chiang Kai-shek troops not only forcibly removed these thousands of people from their homes on the Tachens and other islands, but burnt houses and shops which these islanders had built with their lifelong toil, and other belongings on which they relied for their very existence. The Commission found houses burnt down in twenty towns and villages on the Tachens. They now lie in utter ruin. Near the ruins, petrol drums were found which invariably bore the words: "From USA for Mutual Defense." Many public wells, ponds and reservoirs, built by the Tachen islanders and indispensable to their daily life, were destroyed by the demolition squad of the navy which landed on the islands. High explosives made by the Trojan Powder Co., Allentown, Penn., U.S.A. were found beside the ruins. Temples and public schools were badly damaged.

The forcible uprooting of these 20,000 inhabitants of the Tachens and other islands by the U.S. armed forces and Chiang's troops was an act of utter savagery and a crime against humanity. These innocent civilians were forced at the point of the gun to leave their native country and homes and give up their normal life. Scores of peaceful villages and towns were reduced to deserted ruins in an act of brute force no less criminal than those committed by the Nazis.

U.S. Government Is Responsible

The main responsibility for this heinous crime against humanity lies squarely on the United States government. If the U.S. government had not dispatched a naval and air task force twice as large as the population of the islands, if the U.S. military authorities had not massed a vast fleet of transport vessels to take part in this abduction, if they had not provided large quantities of explosives and petroleum and sent demolition squads to take a direct part in arson and other acts of destruction, the inhabitants of the Tachens and other islands would not have faced this great calamity, nor would the Tachens and other islands be as utterly ruined as they are today.

The United States government claimed, in an attempt to keep the truth from the world, that it was a "peaceful" evacuation, that these inhabitants left their homes of their own choice almost unanimously, and that it was purely out of regard for "humanitarian principles" that these inhabitants were "delivered from the reign of terror" under the Communists. But the irrefutable evidence collected in this booklet exposes the truth about this "peaceful evacuation" and "humanitarianism" that the United States government boasts about.

The crime of uprooting these innocent people from their homes in the Tachens and other islands was committed by the U.S. armed forces and Chiang's troops. For this crime, the Chinese people will hold them fully accountable.

The determination of the Chinese people to liberate their territory of Taiwan is now reinforced by their determination to free these thousands of people from the Tachens and other islands who have been ruthlessly carried off from their homes to Taiwan.

Making Steel to Plan

Tai Yen-nien

Our Correspondent

HOW does planning work—at factory and shop level—in China's state-owned industry? How is each plan set, discussed, amended and carried out?

It was to secure answers to these questions that I recently visited the open hearth furnace shop of the Tientsin Iron and Steel Works. The steel smelters here have increased their output thirteen times in the past five years, though the equipment has not increased much. The target for 1955 is seven per cent more than last year's.

From the moment I entered the factory, I was aware of how important its efficient operation is to our country. The yard was heaped with dark-grey steel ingots, some still so fresh from the moulds that their heat warmed my face as I passed. Cranes were hovering overhead, picking up the ingots and loading them on trucks for shipment to rolling mills, where they would be made into various steel products for our national construction.

"The Workers Did It"

The first person I talked to was I Pin, manager of the open hearth shop and secretary of its Communist Party organization. During the war, he worked in a factory in the countryside, but the factory at that time was very small and was a sort of handicraft enterprise. He came to the city and worked in modern industry after the victory of the revolution. He had been at the works for only a year. Despite his newness, however, he clearly had all the facts and figures at his fingertips. "Yes," he confirmed, "we finished our assigned output for the first quarter about seven days ahead of schedule.

But as you know, quantity isn't the only target in planning. There are two other requirements: higher quality and reduced costs—we have made progress in these matters too. The quality of our steel is now better than last year's, and the cost of production lowered by 160,000 yuan."

I congratulated Comrade I Pin on the good showing made by his shop, but he smiled and said:

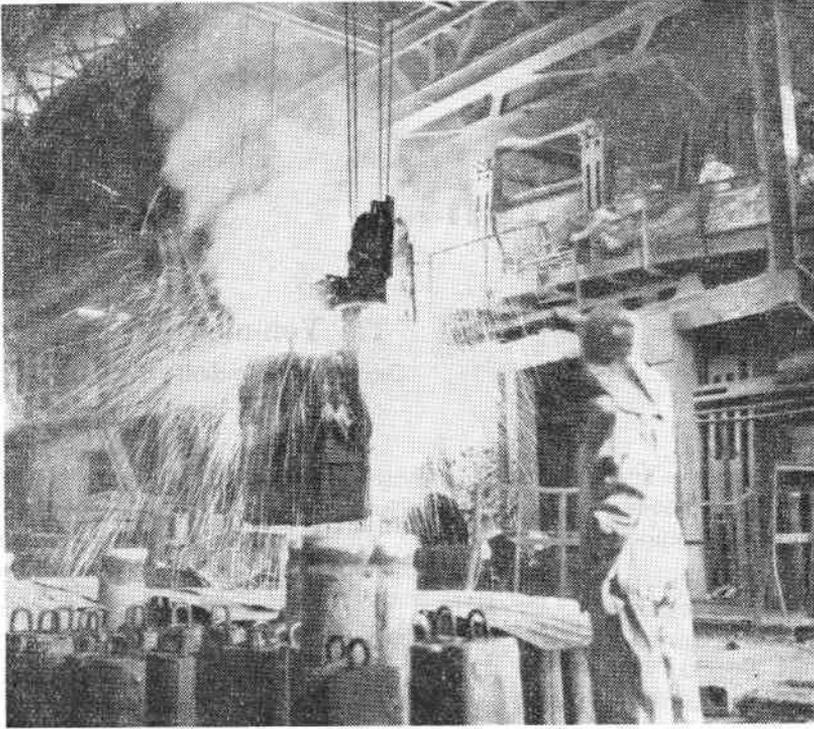
"You're congratulating the wrong person. The workers are the ones who did it. Our skill in management isn't developing as fast as the production itself. We still have much to learn."

How Plan Was Made

Comrade I Pin then told me how the 1955 plan had been mapped out and adopted. The main targets for the works, he said, had been laid down on the basis of three considerations. One was the state's need for steel. Another was a careful study of month-by-month production at the works in 1954. The third was a scientific assessment of the potentialities of its furnaces and other equipment.

In the last two weeks of 1954, after the leading personnel of the plant had studied the plan, the over-all targets, along with copies of the analysis of last year's production, were submitted to the workers in each shop for discussion. This discussion was organized by the trade union, which called a general rally to set it off.

Comrade I Pin was invited to deliver the mobilization report. In it he pointed out that



A Martin furnace in the Tientsin Iron and Steel Works

1955 was the key year of the present five-year plan and stressed the importance of plan-fulfilment to China's progress towards socialism and the immediate national task of liberating Taiwan. He pointed out how the interests of each individual were bound up with those of the state, and how every increase in production brought with it a rise of living standards for the workers—something his hearers knew very well from their own experience. He noted that the development of heavy industry was the only possible basis for a mechanized, highly productive agriculture—a point that was all the closer to the hearts of his hearers because many of them were from peasant families. Then he called on the workers to take their part in drawing up detailed plans for each month, and for each shop, section, shift and work-team—and to struggle to carry out these plans for the good of the whole nation.

“What happened in the discussion?” I asked Comrade I Pin.

“All doubts about the attainability of the 1955 targets were resolved and they won con-

fidant, enthusiastic support,” he replied. “The workers turned in no less than 170 suggestions for improvements and short-cuts in the technique and organization of work—and these were so useful that most of them were incorporated into a new production procedure.

“Everyone learnt what his part in plan-fulfilment would be and made pledges to carry it out. Some men who had been shortsighted, shiftless or irresponsible recognized their errors and resolved to do better. All in all, a great force for the fulfilment of the plan was generated.”

I asked Comrade I Pin to describe some fruitful suggestions, and he gave me several instances.

Important economies, for one, were suggested in the use of ferro-manganese, an expensive element in steel-making. Previously all or most of the ferro-manganese had been put into the furnace before tapping, with consequent waste. In the planning talks some technicians and workers proposed going over to a practice employed both in the Soviet Union and in other plants in China—in which all this metal was added to the molten steel after tapping, as it flowed through the chute from the furnace-vent into the ladle. This made it possible to achieve the desired results with a smaller quantity.

The open hearth shop now uses 25 per cent less ferro-manganese than foreseen in the plan—for the same tonnage of steel.

From Doubts to Record-breaking

Another subject of discussion concerned both economy of resources and the speed of heats—which of course is related to output. The main materials used in the open hearth steel process are pig iron and steel scrap—and the 1955 plan was to use a smaller proportion

of the latter, since China has much less scrap available than countries which are more industrialized.

When this was made known, Li En-tsai, a veteran shift foreman on one of the furnaces, began to protest that the new targets were impossible. "All my experience is that if we use more pig iron we'll need higher temperatures," he said. "That means more, not less time for each heat—and if our speed is lower our output will go down too. These planners are killing the hen, yet they still want the eggs. It won't work."

Wang Cheng-lien, a Communist Party member who was one of Li En-tsai's shift, got up to answer. "It is true that if a greater proportion of pig iron is used," he said, "a higher temperature is needed. But we can manage it without lengthening the time. Of course there are difficulties—but we can overcome them."

Workers who believed him asked the administration to allow them to experiment. Mainly by raking more slag out of the furnace, they turned out a heat in seven hours, which was then a record for our works. Seeing this, Li En-tsai was convinced and he himself later led his shift to lower the record further—to six hours twenty minutes.

The lesson of this experience, Comrade I Pin pointed out, was that one must not slavishly follow one's own experience, but look forward instead of back. Li En-tsai was a good worker but conservative: he had seen the works lower the time per heat from over ten hours at the time of the liberation to a little over seven hours in 1954, and thought this was so great an achievement that nothing more could be done. It took a man with strong political faith and a sharp appreciation of the nation's need to demonstrate the real possibilities.

Greater Sense of Responsibility

"These are only samples of the usefulness of the discussion," Comrade I Pin said. "There were others equally important about which you will learn later. Now I just want to mention another thing. The discussions not only produced all this valuable initiative, but raised everyone's sense of responsibility, and this was

true even of some of the most backward people in the works.

"For instance there was a material-sorter named Tien Shou-tien, who suddenly got up and criticized himself for past sloppiness and dishonesty on the job. When assembling the charge for the furnaces, he revealed, he had disregarded the proper proportions of light and heavy scrap to suit his own convenience—for instance, he would put in what was nearest regardless of whether it was what was required or not. He even admitted, completely voluntarily, that he had put his foot on the scales when a charge was underweight, or held up the scales when it was too heavy, to save himself trouble. Saying that he had never realized that these lazy tricks hurt the nation, he promised that he would never be guilty of them again. I mention this so that you can see that higher consciousness of duty such as the plan talks produced can eliminate shortcomings that even the best administrative measures might not reach."

Carrying Out Plan

"Could you tell me how the plan was carried out in practice?" I asked Comrade I Pin.

He answered that, in this matter too, the trade union had played a great part by organizing an emulation campaign for quick steel-making—embracing all sections, shifts and groups in the shops. By such means, good examples were promoted and errors and shortcomings quickly put right.

In the January adjudications, the open hearth section was given the honourable title of "advanced," for exemplary fulfilment of quotas. Within this section, the group headed by Li Wan-fu was rated the best.

"Why don't you talk to Li Wan-fu and find out how they did it?" said Comrade I Pin. "You can see him after the shift tomorrow. I think his story will interest you."

Li Wan-fu turned out to be a slim, keen-featured young fellow of 25. He wore a red sweater of the kind favoured by the Tientsin steel workers and had a short coat with a fur collar thrown over his shoulders.

"How, in your opinion, did your group come out in front?" I asked him.

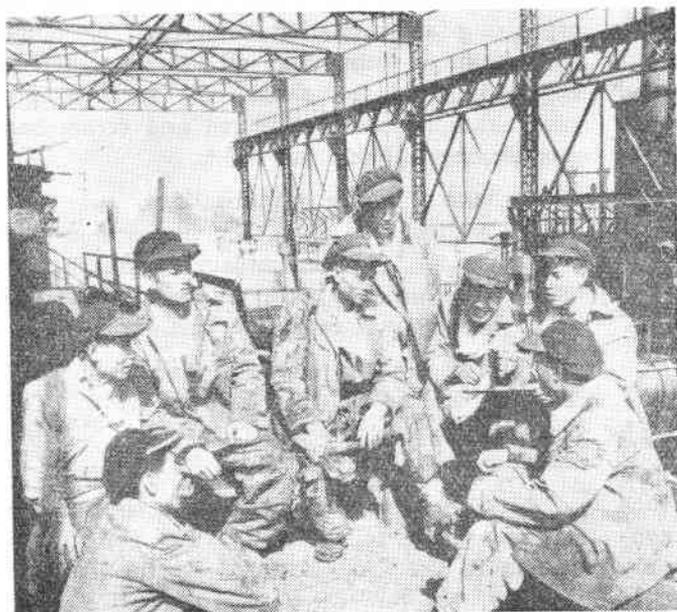
"It began with the plan discussion," he said after a moment of thought. "The eight men in our group would crowd into one of the rooms in the single men's quarters, or in the open yard of the works, and talk over what we could do. I said I thought the thing holding us back was the frequency of what we call cold repairs on the open hearth, when work has to stop during the overhauling. This, I suggested, was due to the slag pocket under the furnace filling up so quickly. The others agreed, but our first meeting didn't produce any proposals for improvement. In fact it was rather a poor meeting. Several of the men didn't speak up at all.

"Four of us were Communist Party members, and made individual production pledges beforehand, as is our custom. We had also decided that each of us would help one non-Party worker. When I saw that Chao Ching-wu, the man to whom I had been assigned, sat through the meeting absolutely silent and paying very little attention, I made it my business to walk home with him and ask what was the matter. He said, 'I don't know any technique and anything I said wouldn't be worth much.'

I answered, 'Don't you know the old saying that three shoemakers in consultation are better than the great strategist Chuko Liang. If we all think together and get the technicians to help us we'll be no worse.'

"This must have had an effect on Chao Ching-wu, because at the next meeting he was one of the first to speak. 'As I see it,' he said, 'the difficulty in the slag pockets starts because we let the cinder notch, through which the slag is removed, get too clogged. I suggest that we make the bricklayer who seals the furnace for each heat the inspector, to see that this doesn't happen. If he refuses to wall it up unless it has been well raked out, we shan't have this difficulty again.'

"Everybody recognized the suggestion as a sensible one. The second meeting got so lively that the secretary couldn't even take note of what was said. We passed the idea on to the administration and it was approved. About three months have passed since then and the slag, which would have been chest-high by now in the old days, is only up to my knees. We haven't had to close down the furnace for cold repairs this year, and I don't think we shall for at least another month. That was one factor in our success."



Li Wan-fu's group discuss their production plan for 1955

Life Improves

I was impressed with Li Wan-fu's enthusiasm and inquired about his life history. He said his father and grandfather had been workers too, and he himself had started to work at the age of 12, when Tientsin was under Japanese occupation. From then until 1949 he had been in and out of various odd jobs, in the plant and elsewhere, with many periods of unemployment and never enough food to fill his stomach.

Only after the People's Liberation Army came had his job become permanent. Since then he has not only become literate but had had two and a half years of evening technical school, joined the Communist Party, worked up through the grades to his

present position, increased his wages several times, married and set up a home.

All the members in Li Wan-fu's group, as it happens, are about his own age. Five of them are from peasant households. All of them have advanced in skill in the last two or three years, and all, because of the overfulfilment of plan, draw better than average pay. Most of them live in the new workers' settlement outside Tientsin, where rents are less than ten per cent of wages, and enjoy free medical service and other benefits. All of them study in the evenings.

Li Wan-fu's voice rang with pride as he spoke to me of the prospects now open to workers. Chen Tso-hsiang and two other men from the plant, he said, have gone through the Iron and Steel Institute and become full-fledged technicians. One open hearth worker, Liu Hsien-ting, is now assistant chief of the shop under Comrade I Pin. Another, Pan Chan-yu,

has been elected a member of the Municipal People's Council of all Tientsin, a city of nearly 2,700,000 people, and chairman of the Tientsin Trade Union Council.

When I went through the open hearth shop the workers told me of how, before the liberation, men used to faint from the heat in summer. They then pointed to the new air blowers which now keep the workers comfortable in all weathers.

Such are the men who plan their own labour in the Tientsin Iron and Steel Works, who began the year 1955 with the slogan, "Get off to a good start; carry out the new plan from the first heat, the first shift and the first day."

Now, with the overfulfilment of their first quarterly plan behind them, they have a new watchword: "Make each month successful, make the whole year successful." And of course they will do it.

Behind the Scenes at Peking Station

—What Labour Insurance Is Doing for the Railway Workers

Chang Feng

Our Correspondent

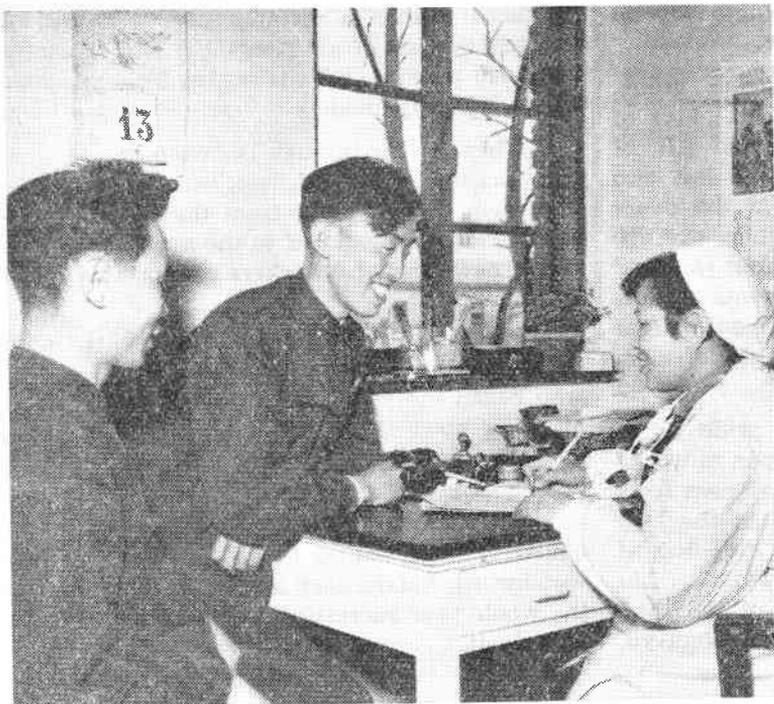
THE first thing that strikes the visitor to Peking by train is how clean and tidy the station is, and how competently and courteously everything is run. It was not a bit like that in pre-liberation days.

On the platforms, in the booking office, the information kiosks, the waiting rooms, the luggage offices—everywhere you meet pleasant workers, fit, cheerful and always ready to

oblige. You might think they had been picked specially for the station that serves the capital. But you'd be quite wrong.

Let me introduce you to one or two of them, so that you can see how they came to be what they are.

Meet Li Shih-ming. He joined the station staff sixteen years ago, long before liberation. At first he was just a cleaner; and keeping



Li Shih-ming gets a report on the patients from Dr. Mao of the clinic

Peking Station clean in those days was almost like cleansing the Augean stables. They used to work twenty-four-hour turns of duty, and even so, Li was still at the beck and call of the station-master between shifts, doing odd jobs at his house. There was, perhaps, some excuse, because the station-master had T.B., but for Li it was a case of all work and no play.

In the finish his health gave way. He'd been ailing a long time. Then, in 1951, he contracted acute tuberculosis, and had to take to his bed. His mother nursed him as best she could, but without much result. T.B. is an expensive disease, and how was a railway worker to afford proper treatment?

Then, in March, the government passed the Labour Insurance Law. The branch committee of Li's union rushed through an application and got him sent to the Railway Sanatorium at Peitaiho, a health resort between the sea and the hills. The doctors who examined him on arrival found his condition critical. He was given the latest and best treatment, nourishing food and loving care. At first it was touch and go, but gradually he pulled through.

And it wasn't simply a matter of care and treatment, important as they were. If he had had domestic and money troubles on his mind he would probably have gone under. But the provisions of the Labour Insurance Regulations were applied to the letter. He had only to pay for his food, and everything else came out of public funds. And he was on full wages for the whole period of treatment and convalescence. After six months at the sanatorium he was fit to return to Peking Station, where he's now working as a ticket collector.

A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind, and when Li got back from Peitaiho he found himself becoming a sort of unofficial health inspector, always ready to help any of his work-mates who fell ill, paying them frequent visits and doing every-

thing he could to make them feel the warmth of friendship. For, as he says, "When I was ill, everybody here thought I'd had it. But here I am, a living proof that if you give a patient confidence that he'll recover, the more likelihood there is that he will."

Li got such a reputation for such comradely help that his colleagues finally elected him on to the trade union labour insurance committee, and he is still on it.

Li on the Committee

It is just such men as Li that the trade union wants—men who put their heart and soul into the service of their fellow-workers.

As a member of the labour insurance committee Li is always on the go. He often has meetings to attend, and between meetings he goes around among the workers trying to get first-hand knowledge of their working and living conditions. And if anyone is a bit off colour, he immediately takes him under his wing. For instance, not long back he discovered that Cheng Ta-chung in the luggage office had long been a martyr to arthritis, and that, although he was supposed to be cured, in damp

weather his joints still gave him trouble. Thereafter, if Li caught him working at such times, he'd give him a mild telling-off and tell him to lay off till the weather cleared up. Finally he had Cheng sent to a sanatorium where he has been having water and tissue treatment. Cheng had recently sent his mates a letter saying he was coming back soon, as fit as a fiddle.

In 1953 there was still a lot of illness, with quite a number of workers on sick leave for lengthy periods. But last year most of them had recovered: only seven still remained in sanatoria.

Lately a clinic has been started at the station itself, with a couple of doctors in charge—good doctors who see their main job not as treating patients when they are ill, but preventing their getting ill in the first place. A campaign for preventive measures against sickness and accidents has been going with a swing.

Care of the Old

Wang Shun, one of the porters, had been at Peking Station for close on fifty years. He gets quite worked up when he talks about conditions in the old days. They had attempted to organize a union, and it was ruthlessly suppressed. In those days workers who were getting on in years never knew when the station-master would come strolling up and say: "You need not come here any more. You're sacked!" Of course there were no pensions then. When old workers found their jobs becoming precarious, the most they could do was sell their jobs to youngsters for nine or ten bags of flour. That was about the best they could hope for after a life-time of hard work.

Soon after liberation mechanical horses were introduced to handle luggage. The porter's lot was far easier then, and Wang began to find life much more pleasant. But he was 66, and the chairman of the union finally persuaded him to retire: with all the years he'd been working he was entitled to a pension of 70 per cent of his wages, as provided for by the insurance regulations. They told me that though Wang allowed himself to be persuaded, at first he still kept on showing up at the station and asking for odd jobs. They refused and told him he'd earned a rest. So he

started doing voluntary work for a public health group organized by his neighbours, and he now enjoys himself seeing that the streets round his home are kept as clean as he used to keep his platforms.

Wang is only one of twenty-seven old Peking Station workers now on pension. They have the prospect of a comfortable life for the rest of their days; and it all comes out of the labour insurance fund.

The Labour Insurance Fund

Labour insurance is non-contributory. The employers or administration of all industrial enterprises which come under the scheme have to pay in every month an amount equal to three per cent of their total wages bill. In 1954 receipts from Peking Station amounted to 13,500 yuan, and 10,600 yuan were paid out as sick benefit to forty-two claimants.

There is no statutory minimum benefit. The rule is that payments shall cover need. In urgent cases the trade union branch can authorize payment. In other cases, applications have to go through "the proper channels." The labour insurance committee investigates circumstances, and then the matter is discussed by the trade union group before a decision is made. Everything is run on thoroughly democratic lines, and particular care is taken to avoid anything in the way of impertinent inquiries.

In 1954 the fund paid out 8,700 yuan on ordinary pensions. In addition, another 1,080 yuan went in *ex gratia* payments to the dependents of three men who lost their lives fighting against American aggression in Korea. These payments will continue as long as they are needed.

Four workers died during the year, and some 3,800 yuan was paid out as funeral benefit and subsidies to their families, while 476 yuan was paid out in maternity benefit.

A moment's thought will show how generously the fund is administered, for outgoings for the year were some 11,000 yuan more than receipts. The deficit was made up by the trade union headquarters. It is very certain that labour insurance is one of the things that have

made the staff at Peking Station such a contented group of people and why the station is so admirably run.

But I promised to introduce you to some more of the staff.

Last year Jen Yu-ju had a baby—a bonny boy. She got all the privileges she was entitled to, including fifty-six days' maternity leave with pay. Ante-natal care and the expenses of confinement were all paid for, plus a special subsidy when the baby was born. Everything was made as easy for her as possible, and now, she says, she's showing her gratitude by making things as easy as possible for the travellers under her care. As a clerk on the train, she is at present working with all her heart on a new service to the passengers: booking seats for those long-distance travellers who need to change trains. This saves the travellers the trouble of making train connections at the stations themselves.

Hsieh Shih-chang was busy rehearsing a play at the station recreation club when the chairman of the union branch came up to him and told him he was going to a sanatorium. Hsieh didn't know there was anything wrong with him. "Must be a mistake," he said; but the chairman insisted. Then he remembered that when he went for the routine X-ray check some while back he was asked certain questions that the others were not. So off he went to Paoting sanatorium, and came back three months later as right as rain. He is now the station-master in charge of turn-round of trains, and is also the trade union leader of his department. From his perch he has a bird's-eye view of the tracks all round the station. The telephone rings incessantly, and trains shuttle to and fro. A nerve-racking job, you might think; but Hsieh has few worries.

May Day is coming, and by way of celebration the station workers in March started an emulation campaign. They have split up into teams competing one with another to cut out all accidents for

the next two months, to keep tightly to scheduled times, and excel in service to passengers. The turn-round staff are now applying Soviet experience, and have vowed to see that all short-run trains keep time to the second, and that the absolute maximum stopping time of goods trains is 3 hours 12 minutes.

But despite all improvements, station-master Hsieh isn't satisfied—far from it! Improved methods have meant that the signal tower is now manned by four persons, whereas before it took thirteen. What he is looking forward to is the installation of more electrical control and switch-gear, which some other stations already have, so that one person can operate the lot!

Working himself and his mates out of a job, you say? Nothing of the sort! In New China the government guarantees that no worker needs fear unemployment. So every worker is interested in improving equipment and economizing manpower so that more is available for new construction schemes.



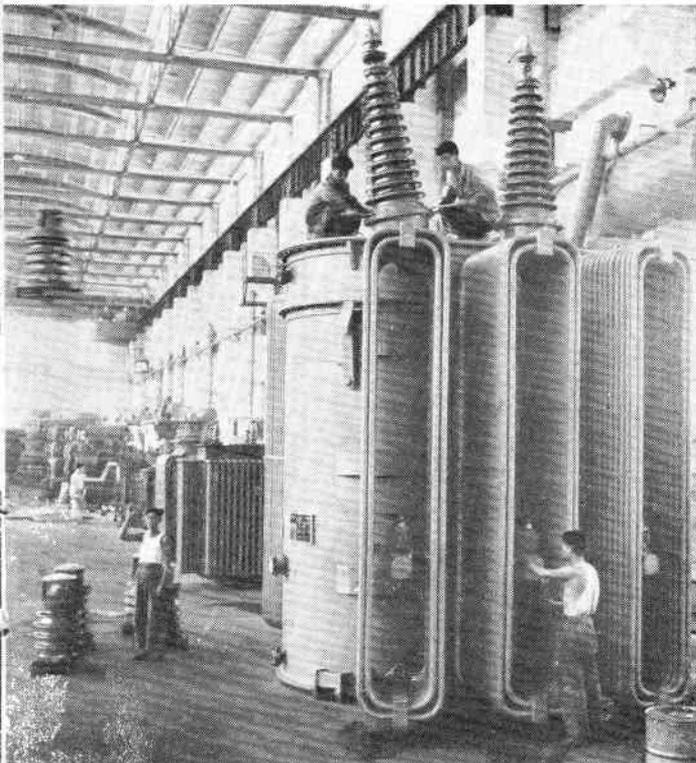
Hsieh Shih-chang at work in the signal tower



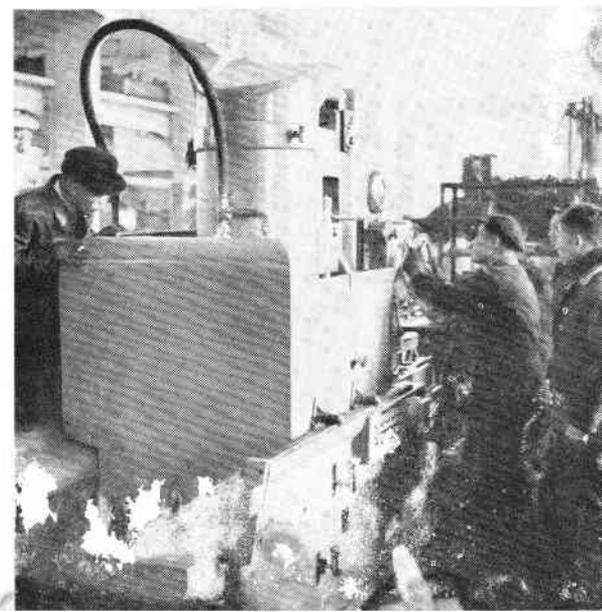
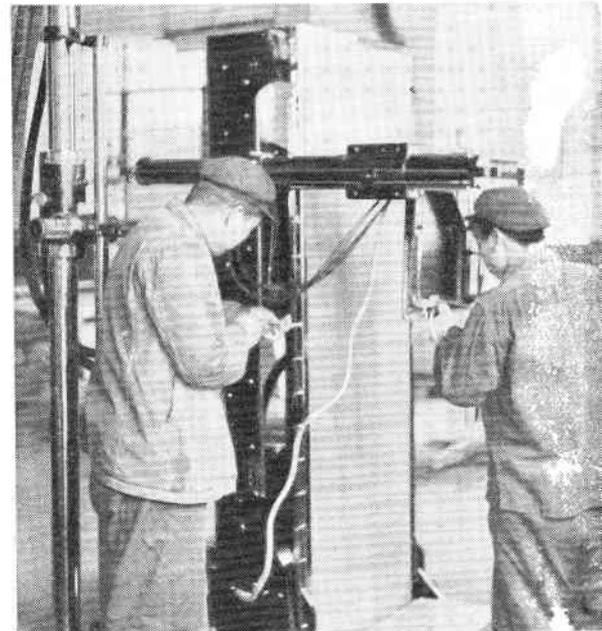
Feng Shen checks the new 25 mm. drill-heads she made in a Harbin instrument works. They are used in making precision instruments, watches, clocks, etc.

More New Industrial Products

X-rays apparatus in
trial production at
Shanghai



Monsters made by the
Shenyang Transformer Plant



A Soviet-type 3756 surface grinder made by the Shanghai Machine-Tool Works

WORKER IN NEW



Knocking-off time



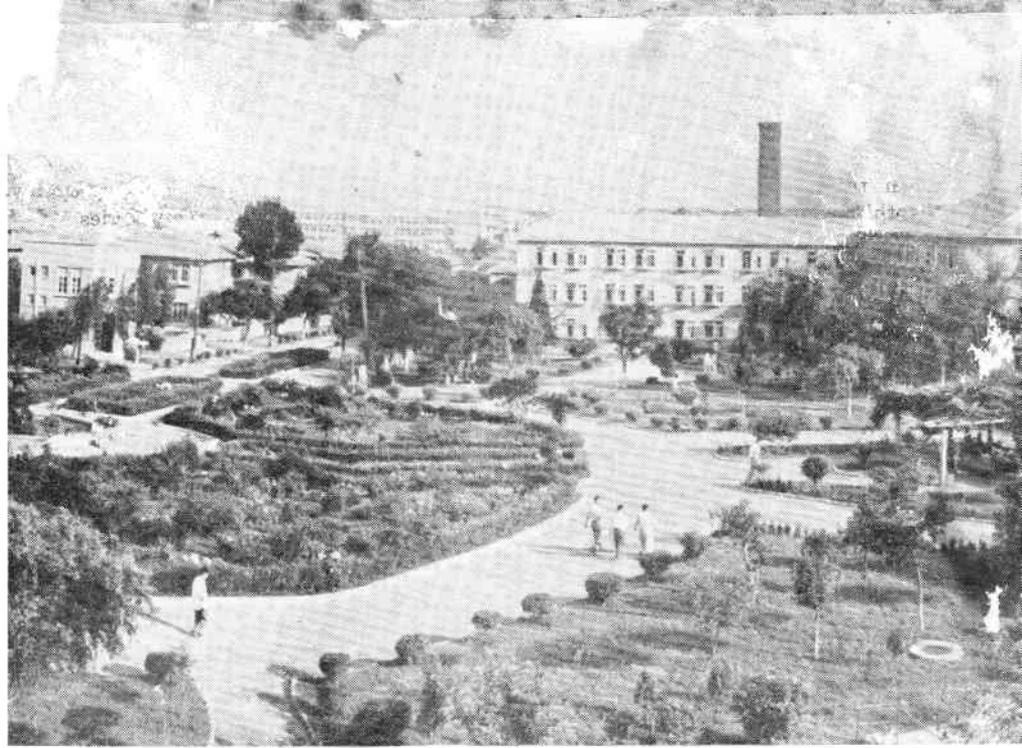
A co-operative restau

At the Peking Spare-time Art School



Housing for workers of the st

S' LIFE CHINA



Dairen Sanatorium

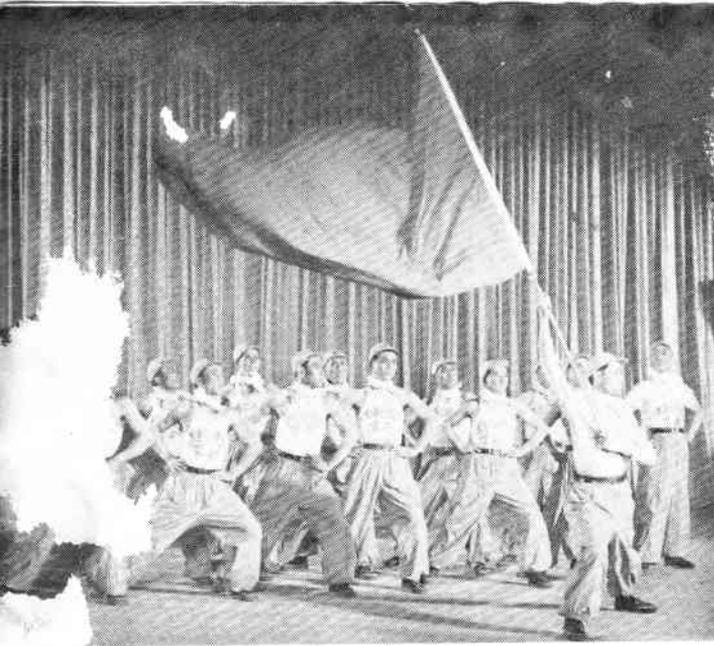


Restaurant in Shanghai

Factory nurseries are a boon to working mothers



Sino-American Oil Company



Rail
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Three Shanghai workers play *Spring Nocturne*, a Chinese classical piece

National Amateur Show

A National Amateur Music and Folk Dance Festival was held in Peking from February 10 to March 24

Liu Hai Plays with a Frog Fairy—a peasant dance from Anhwei



Clapping—a dance composed and performed by youngsters of the Peking No. 8 Girls' Middle School



Dance performed by Korean peasants from Kirin Province



The Girl at the Control-Board

Wen Chun-chuan
and Shan Fu

ONE spring morning in 1953 found Liu Chih-tuo as irritable as a bear with a sore head. Liu was an old hand in engineering who had been promoted foreman in charge of the control-board at the new seamless tubing mill of the Anshan Iron and Steel Company. He puffed viciously at his pipe. The whole office was thick with smoke.

In another five or six months the shop was supposed to go into production, and they still hadn't got half the number of skilled workers they needed. When Northeast China was still the puppet state of Manchoukuo it took a good two years to train a decent control-board operative. And here they were, not only with not enough operatives, but no signs of any showing up for training. Every day for months Liu had been cheyving Chi Pao-chen, head of the personnel department, about it, but nothing came of it.

Three Young Girls

Suddenly the door creaked, and in came three girls one behind the other. Liu pretended not to notice them, but threw a sidelong glance through the clouds of smoke. They were typical north-easterners, two all in blue and the third in a black jacket and slacks—a good-looking girl with bright eyes and sun-tanned face. She was a bit shorter than the others.

"We want to see Comrade Liu, the foreman," she said diffidently.

Wen Chun-chuan before the liberation was a cleaner on the railways. Subsequently he became first a fireman, then a No. 2 driver. He has written a number of short stories, including "My Master," "My Neighbour," and "Master Chao."

Shan Fu works on a newspaper and is the author of "Golden Wings," a collection of essays.

"That's me." Liu put his pipe on the desk and held out his hand for their letter of introduction. When he'd read it he asked, "Which of you is Li Chin-chih?"

"Me," said the girl with the sparkling eyes. "H'm! And who's Sun Yu-ying?"

"Me."

"Then you must be Ting Hsiu-ying."

The other girl nodded.

Liu put the letter on his desk and took up his pipe again. After a little meditation he asked, "Where are you from?"

"From the political training class. . . ."

"All right, I know that!" said Liu, irritably. All workers coming to work at Anshan had to go through the political training class. "But where were you before that?"

"In the country, doing odd jobs on the farm."

Liu re-read the letter. Then he looked up again and said, "So you want to be control-board operatives?"

"Yes," chorused the pair in blue. "The personnel told us so." Little Li said nothing.

Liu scowled. "That's no job for the likes of you," he growled.

Li flushed, looked wide-eyed, and then burst out indignantly:

"Why isn't it? How do you know? What do you think we're fit for?"

Liu was a bit taken aback. "All right," he said, "all right. I'll think about it. You go back to your quarters and have a rest."

When the girls had gone, Liu stalked off to the personnel department and bearded Chi, lately transferred from the army.

"Here, Comrade Chi," he blustered, "what sort of a joke is this?"

Chi gave a start and turned round. "Why," he said, "what on earth's the matter?"

"The matter? I suppose that in a country the size of China there isn't a lad to be found? Fobbing me off with a mouldy letter and three girls. . . . Pah!"

"But comrade," expostulated Chi, "what difference does it make? Have a little patience, and I bet they turn out to be as good as any lads."

But Liu wasn't appeased. "What do you take me for—Mu Kuei-ying?" he fumed. Mu Kuei-ying, of course, is the famous woman general in the opera who commanded an army of Amazons. And Liu turned on his heel and stalked off.

He was sorry afterwards he'd lost his temper, even though those who knew him were used to it and weren't offended. But that wasn't the point. He began to berate himself. "Bad tempered old so-and-so you are! And what good does it do? In the old society you had some excuse, perhaps. Now you're a Party member and you're still flaring up at one of your own comrades."

But he still couldn't stomach the idea of these girls. Who ever heard of girl operatives? They'd never master the skill, and the shop would never start on the day fixed.

When he got back to his office he found the Party secretary waiting for him.

"Ah, Liu!" he said, "I was looking for you. Personnel have sent you three of the trainees you've been asking for, and there'll be more to follow in a day or so. The first three are girls. They come from poor peasant families, and they showed up remarkably well in the training class. I reckon they'll do equally well on the technical side, with your help."

Then, as if he had an inkling of what Liu had been thinking, he went on, "Of course, girl operatives are something new, but we don't turn up our noses at them. Contempt for women went out with feudalism. As a Party member you naturally won't have any such daft ideas. You'll do your best to help them master things in the shortest possible time, won't you? The Party expects it."

* * *

The technical courses started, and Li found herself in a class conducted by Chu, a young



Li Chin-chih

fellow who'd been working till recently in the Soviet Union in the Urals. He'd learnt a lot there, and he was keen as mustard.

At the first lesson Li was keyed up to a terrific pitch of nervous excitement. The tutor slowly drew a sort of picture on the blackboard. "Comrades," he said, "this is a side elevation of a re-heating furnace." "Side elevation? What on earth's that?" she wondered. But she noticed everyone else taking notes like mad, and started to follow suit. Then she couldn't remember the Chinese character for "elevation" and had to put a cross instead.

The tutor was going on. ". . . and the furnace is lined with fire-proof brick." "Fire-proof brick? Oh dear," thought Li, "where do they get all these queer terms. Never heard of them." She began to get flustered and sweaty. Casting a glance about her, she saw all the other trainees busily taking notes, their pens scratching on the paper. In the finish, she closed her notebook and sat there, pursing her lips with mortification. She couldn't take in a thing.

After the lecture she made her way home, her head still dizzy with the effort to understand. "That was a poor show," she thought. "Maybe the foreman is right, after all." A motor horn woofed behind her, and she jumped aside in a fright. A huge lorry swished by, followed by a whole string of them, loaded with

huge steel tubes. Others were loaded with machinery—great things as big as the shrines which stood at the roadside in her village. And close by was a gang of workers installing gas pipes, singing as they worked.

That cheered her up for a moment. After all, back in the country she was a bit of a live-wire herself, always to the fore, whether it was sowing, threshing, planting, or what not; and in the fields she, too, used to laugh and sing, just like these workers here. But here she was a dud—couldn't even call a screw by its right name.

Again she went all red at the thought of it, and tears gathered in her eyes. She bit her lips to keep them back. "Come on, my girl," she told herself. "What's the use of crying? Look at the whopping blisters you got when you were learning to plough. Everything's hard at first."

A bit reassured, she made her way back to her bedroom, where she found her classmates, Ting and Sun, and one or two other country-girls. They too were complaining that the courses were too much for them. She didn't say a word, but slipped out again. She found a piece of open ground behind the hill, and sat down to read her syllabus. It was printed in close characters and had queer, incomprehensible pictures. "Oh dear," she thought, "this is beyond me."

Suddenly someone called her name. Looking round she saw Chu, her teacher, approaching.

"Aha," he said, "so this is where you hide yourself to study. Don't you take any recreation?"

"Recreation!" said Li. "I've got no heart for that now. This sort of thing gets me down."

"Oh, don't you worry. It's the first step that counts. You'll get into the way of it. You know," Chu went on, "we had just the same trouble when we first went to the Soviet Union: we thought we should never understand. But it's all right. Tell yourself you're going to master it, and work hard, and you will. . . . Perhaps you'd like me to run over today's lesson again?"

Actually it wasn't a run-over. Chu explained the whole thing again from the very beginning. He did everything he possibly could

to get her to understand, and at last she began to get an inkling of what it was all about.

Eager Beavers

The other girls had much the same experience. Once they began to see where they were going, they were keen to learn. They studied the syllabus morning, noon and night. They couldn't tear themselves away from it at morning and afternoon breaks. They propped it up and went on studying at meals, and even took it to bed with them.

At first foreman Liu was pleased: it looked as if they'd turn into good workers after all. Then he began to get scared that they were overdoing it and ruining their health. So he made it a strict rule that when they went to the mill each day for practical work, they were to get there on time, and knock off on time. But he might as well have talked to the gatepost: once the girls got near the machines there was no tearing them away.

One day Liu was really furious. It was a good hour after practical training ought to have finished, and Li and Chu were nowhere to be found. After looking all over the place, he finally discovered them by the furnace. There was Li, still listening intently to Chu, who was holding forth about the function of the recuperator.

"You know what I told you about time-keeping!" roared Liu. "Messing around at this time of night! Call that discipline? Recuperators, indeed! The next thing'll be that you'll be recuperating, in hospital, just when the real work starts!"

"Sorry," said Li, "but you know how it is. . . ."

Liu's anger was blowing over, but he still looked stern. Li and Chu started to walk out. When they'd gone a little way, he called after them, gruffly, "Too late to get anything at the canteen now. You'd better clean up and come round to my place. My wife'll knock something up for you—noodles, I expect."

"Noodles? Good!" they shouted back. "We won't be late for that—discipline first!" And they burst out laughing. "Bloody youngsters!" said Liu to himself, with a grin.

As the days went by, the students found they were working harder and harder. But Li

Chin-chih was doing well. As a matter of fact, the more she studied the more interested she got in her lessons. In the summer evenings she would go out to the hill slope nearby not only to enjoy the country scene which made her feel so much at home, but to think over the lessons she had learnt during the day. Her efforts were not wasted. She was several times cited for good work.

* * *

The long-expected day came at last. After five months' intensive work the automatic seamless tubing mill, the first of its kind in China, was to start trial operations.

Little Li—she was still only eighteen—stood before the No. 1 control-board, tingling with excitement, her cheeks crimson and her eyes brighter than ever, with her hands on the

gleaming controls. She was completely oblivious of the surging crowds who had come for the opening ceremony: there was nothing in the whole world at that moment but her and her machine.

A hooter gave a long, shrill whistle. Li's heart missed a beat, and for a moment she was thrown off her stroke. Then she looked about her . . . prominent Party comrades, the management, foreman Liu, instructor Chu, visiting Soviet experts—they were all there, and all proudly watching her, waiting. What a moment!

Calmly and deliberately she turned the controls. A white-hot, dazzling steel tube emerged from the piercing mill and hurtled along the rollers to the cooling bed. A storm of applause burst out.

Our Visit to India and Burma

Li Shao-chun

A Chinese cultural delegation, invited by the governments of India and Burma, visited those countries from December to February last. In this article specially written for People's China, Li Shao-chun, the well-known Peking opera actor, gives his impressions of the visits, in the course of which he gave his famous interpretation of the Monkey-King in a play based on the famous novel Pilgrimage to the West.

DECEMBER in New Delhi is like early spring. When our plane landed we already felt rather warm. The moment we left it we were deafened by cheering and applause from the crowds who had come to welcome us. They shouted and sang, waved coloured pennants, scattered rose petals, and thrust garlands upon us. The whole airfield echoed to cries of "Hindu Chini Bhai Bhai!" which I afterwards learnt means "India and China are brothers!"

It was my first visit to India and Burma. Although these countries are neighbours of ours, I had never seen many Indians and Burmese before, though in recent years, owing to the closer contact between China and these countries, I had several times had the good fortune to welcome Indian and Burmese friends in Peking. I had also seen performances by Indian musicians and dancers which had left a lasting impression and made me long to visit



Prime Minister Nehru of India presents flowers to Li Shao-chun (writer of this article), who played Monkey in "Heaven in an Uproar," at the first performance given in Delhi by the Chinese Cultural Delegation

India and its people. So, when I was asked to join a cultural delegation to India and Burma, I was wildly excited, and I am sure all the other sixty-odd delegates were too. We were led by Cheng Chen-to, Vice-Minister of Culture, and we went with a repertoire of some thirty items—songs, national instrumental music, dances and Peking opera.

Appearance in Delhi

We gave our first performance on the fourth day after arrival in Delhi. As an actor I always like to know the ways of an audience beforehand. I was told that Indian audiences don't clap their hands unless they are really carried away by something. Ordinarily they show approval by just nodding their heads.

The show took place in the evening in the newly-built Happiness Theatre. President Prasad and Prime Minister Nehru were both present, and the house was packed to capacity long before the performance began. Our programme included *Indian-Chinese Friendship*—a song in Hindi, the *Lotus Dance*, folk songs and operatic excerpts.

We were not a little surprised to find that, quite early on, the audience not only nodded approvingly, but burst into loud applause. I

played Monkey in *Heaven in an Uproar*. What with the suffocating heat and the ponderousness of my costume, I felt dreadfully tired and uncomfortable at the curtain call. Then suddenly I saw Prime Minister Nehru and his daughter, Mme. Indira Gandhi (who was in charge of the group taking care of our delegation), coming on stage. The Prime Minister presented me with a big basket of flowers. The whole place shook with applause. It is hard to describe just how I felt, but I do know that in the excitement I clean forgot how tired and uncomfortable I was.

We gave other performances in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta; and everywhere we were greeted with the same warmth and friendliness.

Exchanging Experience

Between appearances we attended performances of Indian dances in four classical styles—Bharat Natyam, Kathak, Kathakali and Manipuri. We met famous Indian actors and swapped experiences with them. Indian dances, which have a long history, are intensely expressive, and Indian dancers past-masters of their art. One of them, a woman, taught me two basic movements of the classical style. The fingers of the two hands are first drawn together; then the hands are placed before the breast, with an expression of joy in the eyes.

This symbolizes *love*. Then the hands are clapped and with a leap into the air, the left foot is raised while the right is thrust violently backward, the left hand extended and the right raised above the head, with the eyes looking straight ahead. This symbolizes *strength*. The demonstration gave me a deeper understanding of the spirit of Indian dancing.

In exchanging experiences we found much similarity between Indian and Chinese national art. Monkey Sun Wu-kung, for instance—the part I play—is one of the most popular figures in Chinese mythology. I found that India has a Monkey-King, too—Hanuman. My Indian friends told me that Hanuman likes bananas, (our Sun Wu-kung likes peaches). Also, Hanuman is depicted with a long tail (our Sun Wu-kung none). But what the two monkeys have in common are wisdom and courage. In Calcutta I saw Hanuman in the Kathakali dance.

Visiting Cultural Relics

On our Indian tour we visited many beauty spots and places of historic interest, including the Taj Mahal. We visited the famous mausoleum in the early morning. Seen through the mist it has an unearthly beauty. Inside, the walls are faced with marble and decorated with gem-inlaid floral designs.

We also saw the Ajanta Cave, visited, according to tradition, by the Chinese monk Yuan Chwang who brought back Buddhist scriptures from India to China thirteen hundred years ago. The sculptures here are specially interesting for the variety of their postures, which have almost certainly inspired many dance movements. Their exquisite workmanship reminded one of the stone images in our Yunkang Grottoes and the murals in our Tunhuang Caves, both of which bear the impress of Indian art. The Chinese and Indian peoples began cultural exchange thousands of years ago, as a rich store of artistic treasures bears witness. Today we are following in the footsteps of our ancestors, and as a result of social progress our intercourse has acquired a new richness.

But assuredly the most memorable thing about our visit to India was the reception accorded to us in every town and city. It was

two o'clock in the morning, I remember, when we got to Bhopal Station. As usual a huge crowd was waiting to welcome us. Among them was a woman carrying a number of fairy-lights in a dish. She walked up to Lou Shih-yi, the writer, who was secretary to the delegation, and made a vermilion mark between his brows. Brigadier-General Kaul, one of those looking after us, told us that this was a folk custom expressing the highest affection. Mothers or sisters bless their sons or brothers in this way when they are leaving for military service or on a long journey.

In Madras we were invited by the All-India Congress for Peace and Asian Unity to attend an evening mass meeting on Triplican Beach. More than a hundred thousand people were there. The platform was close by the water's edge, and the waves beat constantly against the shore. Dr. Kitchlew was chairman. "India and China," he said, "stand together, and will continue to stand together, to safeguard the peace of the world and fight for the freedom of all nations. Our friendship is unbreakable. No power on earth can sunder us."

Cheng Chen-to, leader of our delegation, also spoke. "The aim of the Chinese delegation's visit to India," he said, "can be expressed in three of the happiest and noblest of words: culture, friendship, and peace." Amidst the cheers of that vast audience, Cheng Chen-to and Kitchlew embraced each other.

In Rangoon

On January 20 we arrived in Rangoon by plane. About a thousand people had come to the airfield to welcome us.

My first impression of Burma was how like China it was in many respects. Even the people looked alike: but for their language and clothes we could hardly have told them from Chinese. There were still more significant resemblances. Burmese music and musical instruments bear a striking resemblance to their Chinese counterparts. It is known that Burmese musicians were performing in China over a thousand years ago.

Our first performance in Burma was given in Rangoon, which is noted for its splendid

golden pagodas and beautiful ancient architecture. It was near the largest of these pagodas that a huge stadium, capable of holding over ten thousand, had recently been built—and here it was that we played. Towards dusk, two or three hours before the performance was to begin, the stadium was already pretty full, with people still pouring in. They even swarmed up the iron gates and on the tops of buses, and the streets on both sides of the stadium were thickly lined with curious crowds. By the time our performance started the sky had darkened to an inky blue. An ocean of pink silk scarfs waved in the evening breeze. Every item we gave was wildly applauded—not least by the spectators on the bus-tops.

Warm Reception

As in India, the government, and circles connected with art and culture, gave us an extremely warm reception. They did everything they could to help us understand their rich and colourful folk art. We saw performances by many dancers, whose grace and precision belied the weight of their ornate costumes. Our own dancing group, headed by Tai Ai-lien, learnt from them several Burmese dances, which we later ventured to perform. We tried to make some return by teaching our Burmese friends two of our own dances—the *Lotus Dance*, and *Picking Tea and Catching Butterflies*. Since our return to Peking we have given several of the Burmese and Indian dances which we learnt on tour.

Other highlights of our Burmese visit were a boat trip on the lovely Irrawaddy, lined with picturesque pagodas and villages, and a visit to the ancient capital of Mandalay. There we saw the Imperial City, a historical site sadly damaged during the Second World War. All that is left now are crumbling, yellowish walls surrounding ruins which barely hint at the splendour of former palaces. One could well understand why the Burmese people so long for peace.



Prime Minister U Nu of Burma shakes hands with Chang Mei-chuan, who played in "Ssuehchow City" at the first performance the delegation gave in Rangoon

President Ba U and Prime Minister U Nu both saw our performances in Burma. Two days before we left, Mme. Nu, on behalf of her husband, presented each group in the delegation—the dancers, singers, instrumentalists, and actors—with a silver shield. She also presented several of us—Jen Tung-hsiang, the *sona* (Chinese clarinet) virtuoso, Chang Mei-chuan, a Peking opera actress, and myself—each with a gold medal bearing the figure of the god of the dance. We shall treasure these gifts as a mark of the Burmese people's love of Chinese art.

But all things must end. On the morning of February 20 we left Rangoon by boat for home. Many of our Burmese friends came to the dock to see us off, loath to let us go. A ten-year-old girl who had had some lessons in dancing from us threw her arms round Yen Chi of our dancing group and wept. Then the whistle blew, the golden pagodas gradually receded. . . . Our Burmese friends were lost to sight—but they will long remain in our memory.

Night Voyage Through the Yangtze Gorges

Fan Ling

AS darkness closed down on the upper Yangtze, navigational signals on both banks and in the main stream of the river lit a path of safety through the treacherous gorges where countless ships have foundered.

Coloured lights glittered on the sheer walls of the canyons. On the left bank the line of riverside buoys glowed white; on the right, they were red. Those in the river itself gave intermittent flashes of white, red and green in quick succession. It was a dark night, but our steamboat ploughed steadily ahead along this lane of safety through the rapids and between the shoals of the great river.

This 380-mile stretch of the upper Yangtze between Chungking and Ichang is a strategic link between fertile Szechuan, the "Kingdom of Celestial Abundance," and the thickly populated plains of Central-South China, but because of the shoals, fog and dangerous currents of the Yangtze gorges, it has never before been navigable regularly at night. Only in the brightest moonlight, with good conditions on the river, have captains dared risk their boats along this stretch at night. The slightest fog made navigation even by day a hazardous enterprise.

In the last nine months of 1954, however, a complete system of visual day and night navigational aids was established on this section. It is based on the Soviet system. Ships can now travel the Yangtze gorges in safety both by day and night.

The writer is a correspondent of the *Hupei Daily*.

It was my great good fortune to be able to join the first night voyage up the Yangtze from Ichang to Chungking made on December 18 last year. On that day Ichang's wharves were decorated with festive arches. Coloured neon lights glittered over the Yangtze. Ships in the port ready for the journey were gay with bunting. Sirens hooted, firecrackers rent the air and a huge crowd gathered at the water's edge clapped and cheered as crew and passengers said their good-byes and anchors were weighed. It was with understandable excitement that I went aboard the S.S. *Hua Yuan*, on which I was to make the passage.

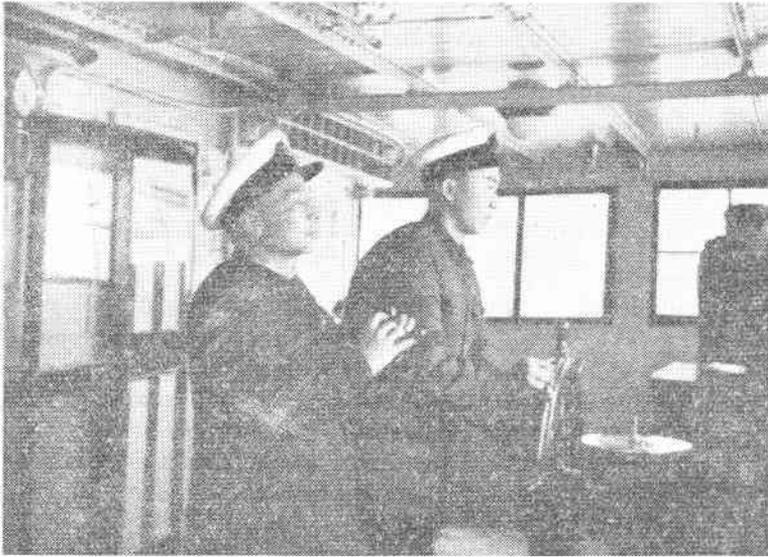
Captain Mo

It was already late when we left Ichang. The half-moon that hung in the sky shed only a feeble light on the bridge where I stood with Captain Mo Chia-jui. He is a veteran of the Yangtze fleet, and a mine of information about the river.

"In the old days we would never have attempted this trip on such a night. It was dangerous enough going through the gorges by day, not to mention doing it at night."

Captain Mo was in fact one of the few who had made urgent trips between Chungking and Ichang in April 1953 by moonlight and starlight to bring grain from Szechuan to the down river ports. He had had 30 years' experience on the Yangtze. Few other pilots would have dared to make the trip.

He told me how in the old days the crews of vessels travelling between Chungking and Ichang used to sacrifice to the river gods be-



Captain Mo Chia-jui (left) on duty on the bridge of the "Hua Yuan"

fore they set off on the journey. "In those days we used to steer our course by taking bearings from well-known landmarks, like trees, peculiarly shaped rocks and riverside buildings," he said. "Now we have easily visible buoys and navigational aids all along the route, telling us exactly what course to take between the rocks, shoals and other dangerous spots on the river. Science has made an end of superstition by deciphering the riddle of the river bed."

By this time our ship had entered the famous Siling Gorge. Lofty peaks on either side towered into the clouds. The sheer cliffs looked as if they had been split asunder by a blow from a giant sword. But the moonlight gave only the dimmest view of some sections of the banks. Only the lights of a chain of glowing buoys showed our course.

The swift flowing current of the river changed into the turbulent waves of rapids. But we forged ahead steadily through the whirlpools. Now and then through the whine of the cold wind that fluttered our pennants we could hear the howling and chattering of monkeys scampering along the faces of the cliffs.

Passengers slept soundly that night. In the old days they would have been worried travelling these parts even by day. A sudden

crash against a hidden rock or running aground on a shoal were the least of the dangers that threatened them.

Just before daybreak our convoy of ships passed Kung Ling, which has the reputation of being one of the most dangerous shoals on the Yangtze. Huge rocks suddenly loomed up in the middle of the stream, splitting the river into two narrow channels. Only one channel is navigable and this is obstructed by many hidden reefs. The water here boils and swirls like a mad thing. The slightest negligence on the part of the pilot can send a ship to its doom. Captain Mo recalled that even in his time

more than 70 ships have foundered here. This explains the name given to these shoals: "Kwei Men Kwan"—The Path of the Ghost Gate.

At this point Captain Mo left nothing to chance. The engine room was alerted, the course was checked and re-checked against the navigational aids on the banks. Under the pressure of water the ship trembled as if she were alive. Then suddenly we were past the rapids. All our convoy got through without incident.

Heroic Signalmen

By this time the thin veil of the morning mist was rising to reveal the fantastic beauty and splendour of the gorges. Astern we caught a glimpse of some river signalmen dressed in bright red safety suits steering their boats through the rapids. They were carrying out a routine check of the location of buoys and signals and sounding the river.

It was thanks to these courageous men who have been given the title of "Guardians of the Upper Yangtze" that we could now make this journey with such unalloyed pleasure. They keep a constant watch on the river and its signals at every hour of the day and night. It is thanks to them that since the installation

of the new navigational aids, not a single accident has occurred on this section of the Yangtze.

The signalmen have given devoted service to the people not only in installing the navigational aids on sheer cliffs and in the midst of rapids in the stream, but in maintaining them under all conditions at no small risk to their own lives and safety.

When our ship moored for a space at the mouth of the Wu Gorge, I made the acquaintance of Cheh Yin-shan. He lives on the far bank but had rowed over against a stiff current especially to meet us on this historic trip. He was a signalman on the Yangtze for 18 years under the reactionary Kuomintang and he recalled how in all those years only the most haphazard "system" of aids existed. These were almost useless to the pilots and had been set up only as window dressing for the bureaucrats who pocketed funds that were supposed to aid navigation on the river. Before liberation there were only some 50 signalmen on this 370-mile stretch of the river. Now there are over 500. He told me that in addition to other navigational aids over 900 of the 1,300 buoys installed are lighted. All the maintenance personnel are well equipped and accommodated, and they are keenness itself on their work. I found out that when the new aids were being installed Cheh had himself asked to be transferred to the Wu Gorge where the work of maintenance is most difficult.

Safe Voyage by Night

Soon after we emerged from the gorges, we met a fleet of steamers and barges making its way downstream with cargoes of grain and local products from Szechuan. We greeted each other with blasts on our sirens. Crews and passengers waved and cheered.

It was a great day for the Yangtze River sailors. The new navigational aids cut the round trip from Ichang to Chungking by two days. This was a new victory for greater efficiency in Yangtze transport. The introduction of the Soviet methods of towing barges

in series and of placing the tug behind instead of in front of the barges to be towed had already increased by several times the amount of freight carried by tugs on the Yangtze. The nightly stoppage of navigation, however, had held up the movement of goods. Now the opening of safe night navigation has cut the turn-round time of vessels by a fifth. Traffic on the upper Yangtze is brisker than ever.

We arrived at Chungking punctually on time. Crowds lined the wharves of this beautiful hill city to greet us. A band played; firecrackers were let off. Sailing past the long rows of junks which serve floating warehouses for grain, tung oil, oranges and other local produce, we put into the bank.

We unloaded our cargo of machines, steel products, cotton, cotton piece-goods, cement and other industrial products. No sooner were these taken from the hold of the *Hua Yuan* than grain and other Szechuan produce were loaded into it. That same night the fleet I had arrived with began the return trip to Ichang.

The work of making the upper Yangtze safe for navigation continues. By 1957 the clearing of dangerous reefs and shoals will be completed and the Yangtze will become a still safer, more efficient waterway.



A night navigation signal on the Yangtze in Szechuan

Reform of the Chinese Written Language

Wei Chueh

Administrative Member of the Committee for
Reforming the Chinese Written Language

After publishing Wei Chueh's earlier article, "The Problem of Reforming the Chinese Written Language" (People's China, No. 10, 1954) we received letters from many readers saying how much they were interested and making further inquiries. In this article the author tries to clarify some of the points raised.—Editor

1. The Chinese Written Language, and How It Differs from Phonetic Languages

CHINESE, the language of the Han people, is an ideographic language. That is to say, it is written in characters which symbolize an idea. Each character, or ideogram, consists of strokes arranged in a special way.*

It is characteristic of the Chinese language that words can often be understood, or partly understood, by their form. All homophones (words differing in meaning but identical in sound) in Chinese are readily distinguished from one another by the form of the characters. For instance, the characters 葉, 業, 頁, meaning leaf, deed, and page respectively, are all pronounced *yeh*, but their form distinguishes the one from the other.

As the Chinese character is not written in a phonetic way, it can be used by different dialects and even in foreign written languages. In China a character may be differently pronounced in one dialect or another, but its meaning is still apparent from its form. Japanese is a language entirely different from Chinese, but it adopted a great many Chinese characters. Chinese characters were also used at one time by the Koreans and the Viet-Nameese.

*See "The Origin and Development of Chinese Script" in *People's China*, No. 5, 1954.

In a phonetic language every word represents a sound, or sounds, spelt out in alphabetic letters. The meaning of a word or sentence can be understood by its pronunciation. Phonetic languages, therefore, belong to a system that has no similarity to Chinese.

It is, of course, to be counted as an advantage that the Chinese language can express meaning through ideographic characters and is unaffected by local differences in pronunciation. On the other hand, phonetic languages must be given credit for the close relation between the written word and its sound in speech.

Owing to their ideographic form, the varying arrangements of strokes and different styles of writing, Chinese characters, viewed from the point of view of the calligrapher, have more aesthetic value than the alphabetic letters of phonetic languages. But as Chinese words are made up of often highly intricate combinations of strokes, while the alphabets of phonetic languages are simpler, the latter lend themselves more easily to a cursive hand and rapid penmanship.

The Chinese written language is not so easy to learn as a phonetic language, nor is it so convenient in practical application. The reason is not far to seek. The arrangements of strokes in the Chinese characters are infinitely varied and their ideographic structure compli-

cated. That means one needs to spend more time and effort in learning and using the language. A working knowledge of the Chinese language requires the mastering of 1,500 to 2,000 totally different characters—their form, meaning and pronunciation: a difficult and arduous task. With the phonetic languages things are altogether different. One has only to learn to recognize and write an alphabet of some twenty or thirty letters, and then with these letters one can spell out words and learn to read.

Again, owing to the complexity of Chinese characters, the Chinese language is very inconvenient for use in such modern media as type-writing, type-setting and telegraphy.

Liberation brought the Chinese people conditions favourable to cultural advance. But the Chinese written language remains a very inconvenient means for the spread of education and culture, the propagation of knowledge and assimilation of new ideas and skills. It is sometimes hard to adapt it to the needs of life in a modern society. That is why we are planning a reform of the written language and gradual adoption of the phonetic system.

2. Are Phonetics Possible?

China has a vast number of people and an enormous territory. The Chinese written language has been in use for thousands of years. To replace it by a phonetic language is no easy task and there are quite a few problems that need to be solved.

I shall now try and answer briefly three questions raised by readers of *People's China*, namely, those on homonyms, dialects and our cultural heritage.

Homonyms (words spelt alike but different in meaning, like *dock* in English, meaning either a weed, to cut short, part of a police court, or a berth for ships), and homophones (words spelt differently but pronounced identically, like *our*, *hour*) occur in all languages in varying degrees. In Chinese there are quite a number of homophones; but the present tendency is towards an increase in the number of words of two or more characters. This process drastically reduces the number of homophones over which confusion might arise. It is estimated that among some 30,000 Chinese words in common use, there are only 246 real homophones. For

instance, the characters 葉, 業, and 頁 mentioned above are, in practice almost always combined with other characters to form polysyllabic words, such as 樹葉 *shu-yeh* (leaves), 事業 *shih-yeh* (deeds), and 頁碼 *yeh-ma* (page number). The meaning of the few real homophones which would remain after Chinese became a phonetic language would nearly always be clear from the context. In cases where confusion could still arise, variant spellings might be adopted.

Dialects exist in most languages. Although there are many dialects in China, a common national language (Mandarin), based on the Peking pronunciation, has already taken shape. (The national minorities, incidentally, often have their own languages, but that is another problem altogether.) Now, with greatly improved communications in New China and its economic and cultural progress, the common language is rapidly gaining ground. Furthermore, it is not, as might be supposed, so difficult for the people of different regions to learn the common language, for the dialects which they have hitherto used differ one from another mainly in pronunciation, not in the basic vocabulary or the main grammatical structure. Besides there is a limitation to the difference in pronunciation, and this can be mastered. All things considered, therefore, it is possible to take the common language as a basis and from it, given the time and effort, work out a phonetic language for the people of the whole country.

The question of the preservation of our cultural heritage is not, strictly speaking, one of reform of written language, but rather a matter for students of ancient books to deal with. The problem exists, to a large extent, whether Chinese is made phonetic or not. Most ancient Chinese books are written in the *wen yen*, or ancient literary style, which is greatly different from the *pai hua*, or modern literary style. Readers of the latter are often quite at a loss to make out the former, despite the fact that both use the same kind of Chinese characters. Nowadays some people with the equivalent of a middle school or even college education are often quite unable to understand the writings of Chuangtse.* The preservation of the ideo-

*Chuangtse was a Chinese philosopher who lived around the fourth century B.C.

graphic characters, therefore, is not necessarily a help in the preservation of China's cultural heritage. Nor does their replacement by a phonetic language necessarily mean total loss of the characters and ancient Chinese literature. Specialists will continue to study them with added interest, and translate them into the modern Chinese language and so make them more readily available to the general public.

3. How Will Reform Be Carried Out?

As I said in my earlier article, reform of the Chinese written language will be brought about in two stages—first by simplifying the characters, and then by gradually introducing a phonetic script.

The characters have been in use for thousands of years. It would be foolish to rush into replacing them by a phonetic system in a hurry. Even after a phonetic language is actually adopted, there will be a period of transition during which the characters and the new alphabet continue in use side by side. Therefore, before a phonetic script is universally adopted, the characters must first be adequately simplified. This will make the work of teaching, reading and writing the characters, as well as applying them practically, much less cumbersome and difficult.

A draft plan for simplification of the characters has already been drawn up. It has been put into experimental use, and the opinions of the public are being collected. The plan consists of the simplification of 798 characters and the discontinuance of 400 characters differently written but identical in pronunciation and meaning. It also includes a table of radicals in cursive hand, which simplifies, to varying de-

grees, the writing of most Chinese characters. After final revision and approval by the authorities the plan will be adopted by the people of the whole country.

Active research is going on preparatory to drawing up a plan for a phonetic script for Chinese. The guiding principle in the work is to use the common language, commonly known as Mandarin in accordance with the Peking pronunciation, taking into account all the peculiarities of the Chinese language. Most philologists feel that some sort of method should be devised to indicate the characteristic "tones" of Chinese; but whether every word should have such an indication, and whether it should take the form of letters or symbols, is yet to be studied. The letters, too, have not yet been decided.

Once the draft plan for making a phonetic language is completed and announced, it will be submitted to the people of the whole nation for comment and suggestions. It will then be revised, submitted to the proper authorities for approval, and finally, step by step, put into use. The adoption of a new phonetic language will be a momentous event for the Chinese people. How long it will take to establish only time will show.

It is fairly certain that the present characters, in one form or another, will go on being used for some time yet. Boys and girls at school, and, for that matter, grown-ups of our own generation are still learning to use the Chinese characters. Foreigners who are learning the present Chinese language will still find it useful. The work they have put in will have helped them read Chinese, and will stand them in good stead when it comes to learning the phonetic Chinese of the future.





A Plan to Simplify the Chinese Written Language

Last January, after two years' careful study, the Committee for Reforming the Chinese Written Language issued a draft plan for simplifying Chinese characters, which is now being used as a basis for discussion everywhere in China.

Simplification of the characters is the first step towards more drastic reform at a later date. Its purpose is to reduce as much as possible difficulties in the way of learning, reading and writing the language till such time as a phonetic system is introduced.

The present plan consists of three parts. The first is the introduction of 798 simplified characters. In the main these are characters which have been in common use among the people (though not for literary purposes) for some time—forms which have been substituted for the complicated "regular" characters, for instance, 礼 (ceremony) for 禮, 灵 (spirit) for 靈, and 声 (sound) for 聲.

The second part lists 400 variant forms of Chinese characters which are to be discontinued. These groups of variants, all pronounced and meaning the same, are quite needless and throw an unnecessary burden on the learner. It is therefore proposed that the simplest form of each character should be selected, and the rest discarded.

The third part contains suggestions for a simpler form of handwriting based on the earlier Chinese cursive hand.

The draft plan roused enormous interest. Many newspapers published it in full. It was reproduced as a poster and sent all over the country. It is reckoned that in one form or another over a million copies of the plan reached the hands of the public. The Committee has already been flooded with letters from workers, peasants, soldiers, teachers, students, government workers, scientists, and overseas Chinese and with answers to its questionnaire. Practically everyone has replied, warmly supporting the plan for simplification and the idea of ultimately

going over to a phonetic system. Many valuable suggestions for improvement of the plan have been sent in, and many local conferences of people concerned with education and culture have been held to discuss the plan. The National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference itself organized meetings and group discussions; and members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress participated in the latter.

Some Peking newspapers will shortly be putting some of the simplified characters into tentative use. After this and similar experiments, and after all the suggestions have been collected and studied, a special committee will be formed to examine and revise the draft plan. It will then be submitted to a national conference on reform of the written language which the Committee is planning to call this year. The final plan will be sent to the government for consideration and publication. From then on the discarded complicated characters and redundant variants will drop out of use for everything except ancient books.

Besides promoting simplification of Chinese characters, the Reform Committee also recommended newspapers and magazines to start printing horizontally instead of vertically, so as to make for easier reading, to wean people away from the habit of reading from top to bottom of the page and prepare them for the introduction of some system of phonetics in the future. Some forty newspapers and magazines, some of them circulating throughout the country, have now gone over to printing horizontally, to the satisfaction of the best part of their readers.

Workers' Music and Dancing Festival

The recent four-day workers' music and dancing festival in Peking was a huge success. Two hundred and seven entrants came from eight cities—Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai, Shenyang, Wuhan, Chungking, Port Arthur-Dairen and Canton. For months workers had been feverishly preparing and practising

for the great day—miners, railwaymen, electricians, draughtsmen, textile workers, shipbuilders and what not. Local contests were arranged, and finally, from close on 1,800 items put on, 109 were selected for performance at Peking. This galaxy of working-class talent on the Peking stage was an eye-opener, showing the enormous interest in cultural matters which exists nowadays among workers.

Good as some of the instrumentalists and orchestral players were, it was in vocal music that the competitors shone, in solos, duets, quartets and choral singing. Practically all the singing was clean, natural and convincing.

Yeh Jui-wen, a twenty-two-year-old electrician, sang *The Lenin Hills* and *The Prospector's Song*. He hadn't what one would call a trained voice, but its quality was pleasing and the compass adequate, and he put his songs over in a very taking way. Kuo Chun-ying, from the Hengyuan Textile Mill at Tientsin, sang *Auntie Wang Wants Peace*, a fine piece of characterization. Another textile lass, Yang Chia-hua from Chungking, sang *Roll on the Day When the Red Army Comes!* She made you really understand how people in one of the old soviet areas felt under Kuomintang rule, and how they longed for the return of the Red Army. Seven years ago Yang, then a young girl, driven by poverty became an apprentice in a mill. Liberation brought her a completely new life.

This new life, not surprisingly, is the theme of a number of songs composed by workers on the job, and some of them were sung at the festival. There was, for example, *All Out to Beat the Output Record*, by Chang Hung-hsiang, a Shanghai mechanic, and *We've All Found Better Ways of Working*, by Yo Hung, a railwayman; and, perhaps most delightful of all, a song called *The New Gown*, written by a Port Arthur-Dairen textile worker called Sun Hsueh-teh, in which the singer makes the point that without the textile workers "I shouldn't be wearing this new flowered gown."

Dances performed at the festival were equally varied. There were twenty-seven in all, including classical dances, folk dances from the national minorities in China, Soviet folk dances and dances reflecting the life of New China today.

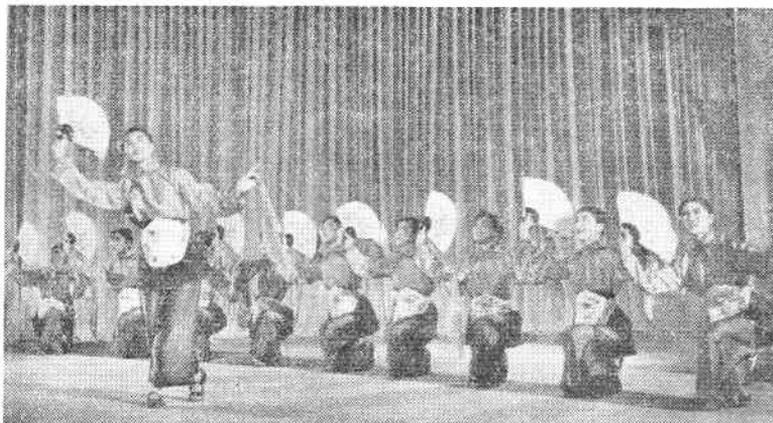
There was, for instance, *The Ten Sisters*, a folk dance from Yunnan, depicting ten girl tea-

pickers on their way home telling the thoughts nearest their hearts. It was performed by ten women workers from Chungking, who were helped during rehearsal by the Southwest China Art Theatre. The ensemble was highly finished, their dance beautifully performed, and very charmingly and dramatically they differentiated between the ten sisters.

Then there was a jolly *Porters' Dance* created by an amateur cultural group formed by railwaymen at Dairen East Station, and performed by fifteen of their fellow-workers. It was a rollicking affair in praise of their new life.

Another dance was called *Outstanding Work*. It was performed by a dozen women workers from Canton, and had been created by a dance group at a textile mill in that city. The women at the mill had long been trying to create a dance around their "red flag" competition campaign and the giving of awards for good work. But they were all very much amateurs, and try as they might, they hadn't been able to bring it off. Then the government cultural department in Canton started sending professionals to factories to help workers with their dancing activities, and some of these experts came to the mill. A special group was formed, and they all set to work again on the dance which had eluded them before. *Outstanding Work* was the result.

This festival was sponsored jointly by the Ministries of Culture, Education and Higher Education, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and the New Democratic Youth League. At the closing ceremony many players received prizes or honourable mentions. During the course of the festival the opportunity was taken of arranging get-togethers to discuss workers' amateur artistic and literary activity, to hammer out problems and make suggestions.



The Yunnan folk dance, "Ten Sisters"

NOTES AND VIEWS

A Common Will and Purpose

On April 13 the Peking *People's Daily* published a leading article headed "A Great Call to Defend the Peace of Asia." It summed up the achievements of the Conference of Asian Countries held in New Delhi between April 6 and 10, and said that the Chinese people would give full support to the resolutions* which it adopted and would, alongside all Asian nations, do their utmost to see that they are acted on.

Representatives of nations with different political convictions, different religions, living under different social systems, managed, in a mere five days, to arrive at unanimous decisions on many political, cultural, scientific, economic and social problems discussed at the Conference. "That in itself shows how much alive the idea of peaceful coexistence is among the peoples of Asia and what a new spirit is now prevailing among them. Such expression of the will for peace is something that the Asian peoples should be proud of."

The United States' propaganda machine, said the leader in *People's Daily*, lied about the Conference for all it was worth. The Americans said it was "Communist-controlled" and tried to turn people against it and destroy its influence. But, as results show, their tricks failed to come off.

"The Conference resolutions," said the article, "are bound to give an enormous impetus to the

struggle of the Asian peoples for peace, independence and freedom. They are bound to play an important part in strengthening the bonds of friendship and solidarity between them, in making more widely known the five principles of peaceful coexistence, in preventing war between nations, and in relaxing tensions in the Far East."

The leader said that the Conference resolution on the five principles was its most important achievement.

"This resolution," it said, "reflects the common desire of all people who love peace in Asia and everywhere else, crystallized in the shape of the five principles. It calls upon all governments, in Asia and the world over, to subscribe to these principles and make them the basis of their relations with all countries. Application of these principles in Asia has already created an atmosphere hitherto unknown. Not only are friendly relations between China, India and Burma—the countries which enunciated the principles—growing closer with every passing day, but relations with other countries of Asia are improving, and an atmosphere of conciliation and mutual trust is growing."

The article went on to cite many examples to prove its point—the joint communique issued by Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, and Pham Van Dong, deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, during the latter's visit to India; the conclusion of a treaty of friendship between India and Egypt; and the communique advocating the five principles issued by the Cambod-

ian Government's delegation to India, for example.

It went on to say that the Conference of Asian Countries also came out strongly against the United States for organizing military blocs and dividing Asia, and demanded that all foreign troops and bases should be withdrawn from Asian soil. This, it said, showed that the people of Asia, 1,400 million strong, were determined to uphold the five principles and set their face against any conspiracies for war.

The Conference also took a firm line on the continuance of colonialism in Asia and interference by foreign powers in its internal affairs. The Conference held that places now under foreign occupation should be returned to their rightful owners—Goa to India, West Irian to Indonesia and Okinawa to Japan—and that the people of Malaya should have their freedom. At the same time, the Conference expressed itself in full support of the people of North Africa and the Arab countries in their fight for independence and freedom. It came out strongly against racial discrimination, and made the fair and reasonable demand that Japan should now be accorded full equality in the comity of nations.

"The resolution passed by the Conference," the leader said, "affirmed its view that Taiwan belonged to China, demanded withdrawal of American armed forces from the island and the calling of an international conference to find a peaceful solution of the problem. They are the right demands. . . . Tension in the Far East would certainly be slackened once the United States withdraws its forces from Taiwan and the Taiwan Straits. A peaceful liberation of Taiwan is possible if this is done."

The Conference also sent its best wishes to the forthcoming Asian-African Conference, and on this point the article said: "In doing so it voices the common aspirations of the whole Asian peo-

*See supplement on the resolutions of the Conference of Asian Countries.

ple. The United States aggressors, on the other hand, hate the whole idea of such a conference. They have even incited special agents of the Chiang Kai-shek crew to resort to murder, by sabotage of the plane taking staff members of the Chinese delegation to the Asian-African Conference. They have thus resorted to the most contemptible sabotage against the conference itself. The Chinese people are naturally furious. The American aggressors cannot refute their responsibility for the crime."

Speaking of the support given to resolutions on the Korean and Indo-Chinese questions, the article said it was imperative that the Korean Armistice Agreement should be carried out in its entirety, and an international political conference called as quickly as possible, so as to settle the Korean question peacefully. The United States must cease interfering in the internal affairs of Indo-China. All countries concerned had to ensure that the Geneva Conference agreements were strictly observed.

The resolution against atomic warfare and those on social, economic, cultural and scientific questions, said the editorial, also reflected the firm will and purpose of the people of Asia.

"The Conference of Asian Countries," it concluded, "shows that the Asian peoples have made new gains in the cause of peace. As the Conference has achieved so much, the people of every country in Asia will go on exerting all

their efforts to consolidate the unity and friendship between Asian peoples, and, more resolutely than ever, take the defence of peace, in Asia and throughout the world, into their own hands."

Accomplices for the U.S.

The press in Western countries has been saying that the United States is secretly negotiating with Britain and other countries in the British Commonwealth to win their backing for its "defence" of Taiwan.

Commenting on these reports, an editorial in the April 8 issue of the Peking *Kwangming Daily* said that the United States was making every effort to embroil its followers in a war of intervention against the Chinese people. The following are some excerpts:

The United States may think that if it gets the support of a few followers it will look more "tough" and that the Chinese people will be scared. That is sheer nonsense. The Chinese people will never be frightened into submission. Look at the history of America's war of aggression against Korea. No matter what fancy names they give aggression, no matter how many accomplices they have, the result will always be the same: the American aggressors will always lose to those who have justice on their side.

The United States may also think that by roping in accomplices it will be able to refute the charge of utter moral and political bankruptcy. That is another vain

hope. It is the United States which is engaged in aggressive activity in a place five thousand miles from its own shores. It is the United States which is occupying China's territory. Therefore, no matter what support it gets from allies of aggressive blocs, nothing can alter the fact that it is guilty of aggression.

Recently the United States' propaganda machine started putting out a rumour that once a guarantee of support from Britain and other countries for its occupation of Taiwan is forthcoming, America will make Chiang Kai-shek's forces withdraw from Quemoy and Matsu. There are reports that certain British Commonwealth countries are disposed to support this proposal. We have to tell Britain, bluntly, that the Chinese people are determined to free all the islands in the hands of Chiang and his crew, including Taiwan, just as Britain recovered the Channel Islands from the Germans after the Second World War. This is a matter of fact, and it is a matter of principle. If countries choose to tag along behind the United States and join it in intervention, they are, ipso facto, helping an aggressor. And there is no getting away from it.

The Chinese people have made up their minds to liberate Taiwan; and liberate it they will. Not an inch of Chinese territory will be abandoned. And whoever seeks to meddle in the affairs of the Chinese people, whether by violence or arbitration, will end up by burning his fingers pretty badly.

IN THE NEWS



May Day Labour Emulation

As May 1, International Labour Day, draws near, workers in factories and mines are in the midst of an enthusiastic campaign of labour emulation. New production records are being set by factories, workshops and individual workers.

At the Anshan Iron and Steel Company, workers of the No. 5 open-hearth furnace reduced the company's previous record for a heat of steel by four minutes and thus set a new record. Between April 1 and 11, they also surpassed the state plan for the production of various kinds of steel by seven per cent.

In Shanghai during the May Day labour emulation campaign, between April 1 and 8, workers of two open-hearth furnaces of the No. 1 Iron and Steel Works produced 117 tons of steel above the plan. Workers of the second rolling mill of the No. 2 Iron and Steel Works also overfulfilled their workshop plan for square steel by 13.76 per cent.

U.S.-Chiang Plane Sabotage

A statement was issued on April 12 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and the following are excerpts from it:

Staff members of the Delegation of the Government of the People's Republic of China to the Asian-African Conference, a staff member of the Delegation of the Viet-Nam Democratic Republic, and Chinese and foreign correspondents accompanying them to cover the conference, 11 persons in all, left Hongkong on April 11 by air for Djakarta and from there to Bandung. While flying over the sea northwest of Sarawak, North Borneo, the plane exploded, caught fire and fell into the sea. The fate of all the persons aboard the plane is unknown.

Prior to the departure of these staff members and correspondents, said the statement, the Government of the People's Republic of China had already learnt that secret agent organizations of the United States and Chiang Kai-shek were actively making arrangements to wreck the Indian planes chartered by the Chinese delegation, so as to carry out their long-planned scheme to assassinate the members of the Chinese delegation headed by Premier Chou En-lai and to sabotage the Asian-African Conference. Therefore, on April 10, the Office of the British Charge d'Affaires in Peking was informed of this by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the

People's Republic of China and requested to bring this to the attention of the British authorities in Hongkong and to ask them to take measures to ensure the safety of the above-mentioned staff members and correspondents. Nevertheless, secret agent organizations of the United States and Chiang Kai-shek succeeded in their plot. The British Government and the British authorities in Hongkong bear a serious responsibility for this unfortunate incident. We demand that the British Government and the British authorities in Hongkong conduct a thorough investigation into this incident and arrest and punish according to law the secret agents taking part in this sinister plot so as to place the responsibility where it belongs.

The Asian-African Conference, the statement concluded, which enjoys the warm support of the wide masses of Asian and African peoples and the peace-loving people of the whole world, absolutely cannot be obstructed or sabotaged by any ignominious plots of the United States and the Chiang Kai-shek brigands. The dastardly acts of the United States and the Chiang Kai-shek brigands will only result in strengthening the united action of the peoples of Asia, Africa and the whole world to win peace and freedom.

State of War with Germany Ends

On April 7 Chairman Mao Tse-tung issued an order terminating the state of war between the People's Republic of China and Germany. The following are excerpts.

On December 9, 1941, China proclaimed that it was in a state of war with Germany by reason of the fact that Hitlerite Germany had unleashed a fascist war of aggression and supported Japan's war of aggression against China. After the Hitlerite aggressors were wiped out, however, because of the consistent policy of the United States, Britain and France

of dividing Germany, reviving militarism in West Germany and bringing it into aggressive military bloc, it is still impossible to conclude a peace treaty with Germany. The United States, Britain and France are now taking further steps to try, through the carrying out of the Paris agreements, to prevent the peaceful unification of Germany and the conclusion of a German peace treaty, thus seriously jeopardizing peace and security in Europe. The People's Republic of China resolutely supports the struggle now being waged by the German Democratic Republic and the people of the whole of Germany, as well as by the Soviet Union and all other peace-loving countries and people, for the peaceful unification of Germany and the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, and for the defence of collective security in Europe and the preservation of world peace. At the same time, the People's Republic of China, in the interests of the Chinese people and the people of the whole of Germany, hereby proclaims that the state of war between the People's Republic of China and Germany shall end forthwith.

Hungarian National Day

The tenth anniversary of the liberation of Hungary was celebrated in Peking by a huge meeting on April 3 and a reception given by the Hungarian Embassy on April 4. Among those present at the two events were members of the Chinese Government, of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and of many organizations, together with scientists, artists, journalists and

other public figures. On March 28 a Chinese government delegation headed by Vice-Premier Teng Tse-hui left Peking for Budapest by air to attend the celebrations in Hungary.

Tibetan Postal Service Handed to China

On April 1, in accordance with the terms of an agreement reached earlier, representatives of the Indian Government at a ceremony in Lhasa handed over to representatives of the Chinese Government the whole of the postal, telegraph and public telephone facilities which the Indian Government had formerly operated in Tibet, complete with equipment. This transfer was made without compensation, while twelve rest houses and their equipment were also transferred at a mutually-agreed price. The actual transfer started the same day.

Representatives of both sides, speaking at the ceremony, said the transaction proved the friendly co-operation of the two governments, and augured still closer friendship between the two countries in the future. On the same day a banquet for officials in charge of the transfer was given by General Chang Kuo-hua, acting representative of the Chinese Government in Tibet.

400 Million Sign Against A-Weapons

A communique issued on April 10 by the Chinese people's Signature Campaign Committee Against Atomic Weapons announced that the campaign, which was started on February 14, had been success-

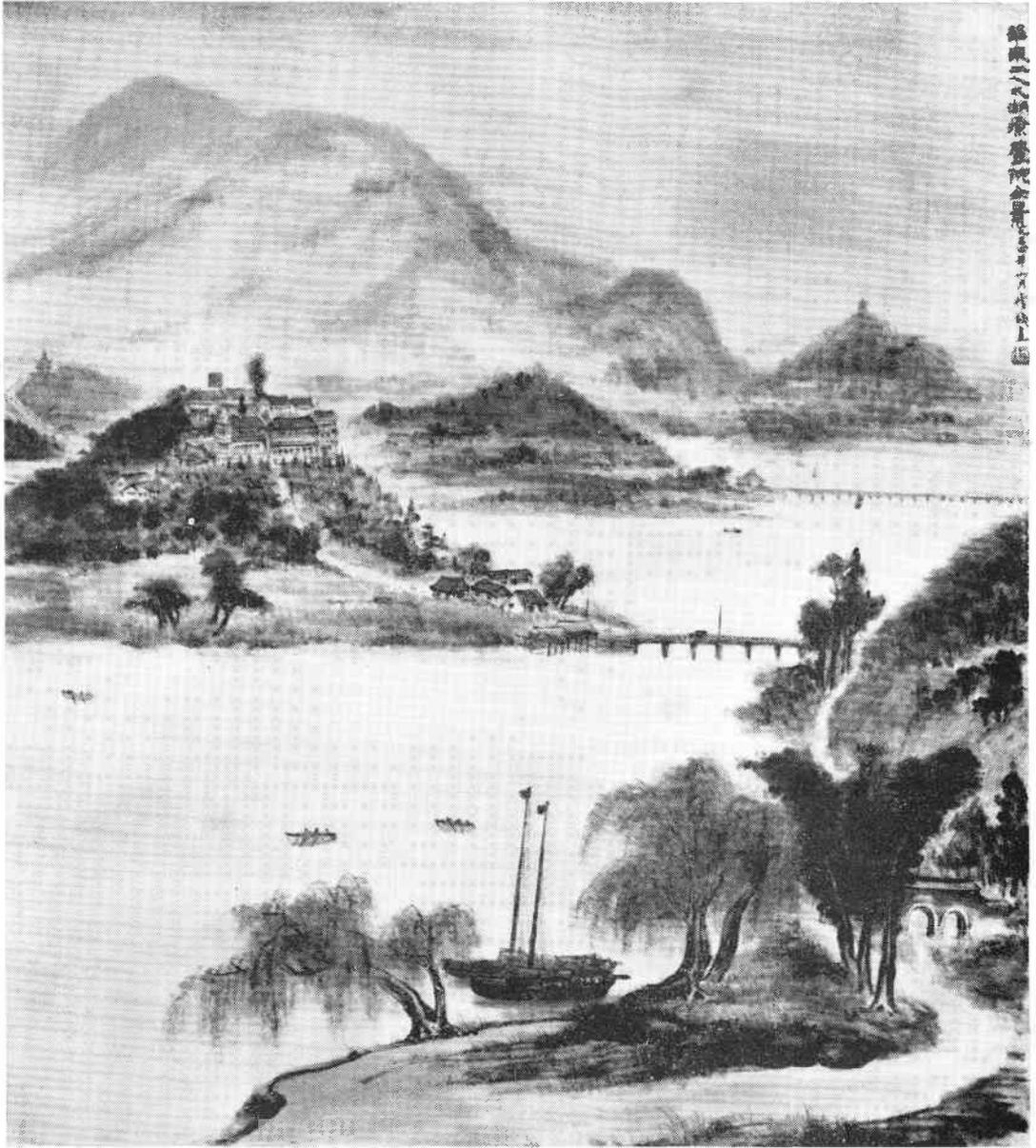
fully concluded. In less than two months, 400,505,997 people in China signed the appeal. People in all walks of life and of all nationalities enthusiastically responded to the campaign, whose great success, the communique stated, "once again demonstrates the will and determination of the Chinese people to defend peace and oppose war."

50 Years on Opera Stage

Tribute was paid to Mei Lan-fang and Chou Hsin-fang, two of China's most distinguished contemporary opera actors, on the completion of their fifty years' work on the stage, at a meeting held in Peking on April 11. Sponsored jointly by the Ministry of Culture, the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and the Union of Chinese Stage Artists, the meeting was attended by over 1,400 workers in the field of art and culture.

Hsia Yen, Vice-Minister of Culture, and other well-known figures in the theatrical world were speakers. Playwrights Ouyang Yuchien and Tien Han delivered addresses on the professional careers of Mei Lan-fang and Chou Hsin-fang. They paid tribute to the artistic achievements, and the sterling qualities of these two artists. They described how they had enriched China's dramatic heritage and how both in their work displayed their democratic spirit, their patriotism, and their hatred of the foreign aggressor.

On behalf of the Ministry of Culture Shen Yen-ping, Minister of Culture, presented certificates of honour to the two veteran actors.



A workers' sanatorium on Lake Tai

Painting in Chinese ink by Chien Shou-tieh