

a bird's tail in order to catch it: if you can get that close, you don't need salt. "In essence," writes Montias,

unless the planners dispose of all the complex information needed to set efficient outputs, they must have rational prices to guide them—or to guide producers; but these prices, in the absence of markets, cannot be determined without reference to efficient outputs. This dilemma lies at the core of the problem of economic calculation in a centrally planned economy. (p. 46)

This is also where Campbell's assessment of the weaknesses of Soviet accounting is relevant. It is rather futile to talk of price reforms in the presence of an accounting system that is designed to facilitate central control but is utterly unsuited for rational estimation of true production costs.

Genuine decentralization would mean compromising with the operation of market forces; the government would retreat from attempts at universal guidance of the production process toward the position of a buyer of final products. Is it likely that the Soviet Union will set out on such a course in the near future? In view of the implications involved, the answer would appear

to be negative. At present, the government generally demands more from the economy than it can comfortably deliver. Should it surrender, even partially, its direct and comprehensive controls over the economy, it would be offering the production managers a degree of freedom that would allow them to adjust to the actual capacities and true cost levels of their productive resources. By relaxing the "command economy," the state would thus lose the principal instrument of pressure it exerts not only upon the resources, but also upon the people who produce them and use them.

Can the totalitarian state afford to lose control over social relations and allow the emergence of autonomous social and economic forces? If these questions appear to answer themselves, then the conclusion follows: all the inefficiencies of centralized planning may be a cost that the system must bear for the sake of its political survival. These social and political implications may be decisive for the fate of the recent proposals for economic reform in the Soviet Union. They tend to be overlooked by those economists who see the issue only in terms of a search for a purely economic optimum.

Glimpses Through the Chinese Wall

The Wiling of the Hundred Flower: The Chinese Intelligentsia under Mao, by Mu Fu-sheng (Pseud.). New York, F. A. Praeger, 1963.

Contradictions: China in Ferment. Hong Kong, China Viewpoints, (no date).

The Peasant and the Communes, by Henry J. Lethbridge. Hong Kong, Dragonfly Books, 1963.

Ta Ta, Tan Tan: The Inside Story of Communist China, by Valentin Chu. New York, W. W. Norton Co., 1963.

Dateline—Peking, by Frederick Nossal. Toronto, Longmans, 1962.

Reviewed by Richard L. Walker

IN LATE 1959, when the full extent of the damage wrought in mainland China by the "Great Leap Forward" experiment became manifest, the Chinese Communist government clamped a tight embargo on the

export of all but a few publications. Even the comrades in "fraternal countries" found sources of information about China cut off. For three years the Mao regime has curtailed the number of visitors from abroad and virtually eliminated the possibilities of meaningful exchanges with the outside world. If the Soviets under Stalin rang down an "iron curtain," the Chinese Communists under Mao have erected a "great iron wall."

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It is difficult, even for those in the Soviet Union, to get much of an idea of what is going on in China today. Communists in many areas of the world frankly admit that they are perplexed about China. The same is probably true, to a considerable extent, of the Chinese people themselves. No meaningful national statistics have been published for years (of course, some may question whether official Communist statistics have ever been meaningful in a scholarly sense). The National People's Congress has met only once in three years, and then only in secret session. Practically all information at the national level is being kept a state secret today, and reports concerning individual enterprises or activities are not sufficiently numerous to permit any generalized conclusions.

Given these restrictions on information about Communist China, it is not surprising that there should be a wide divergence in interpretations of conditions in that troubled land. Assessments of China have tended to swing like a pendulum from one extreme to another. During the first year of the Great Leap (1958-59), for example, even some of the most confirmed critics of the Mao regime began to talk in terms of an "economic miracle" in China. The self-confidence engendered in the Peking leadership by the sight of countless millions bending to its commands inevitably communicated itself—thanks to the official monopoly on communications—to the outside world as well as to the Chinese themselves. With the hunger and chaos of the year 1961, however, the mood became almost the reverse. Some reporters abruptly changed from the view that the leaders of the Chinese People's Republic could accomplish practically anything to the view that they were capable of *practically nothing*. The lesson taught by this is that in evaluating books about Communist China, it is necessary not only to correct for the predispositions of particular writers, but also to make due allowance for the prevailing mood which influenced them. This injunction certainly applies to the works under review.

These five books indicate clearly that although Mao and his colleagues consider themselves the embodiment of a great new proletarian force in history, they have found themselves again and again to be utterly dependent upon two groups that are as significant and as old as Chinese civilization itself—the peasants and the intellectuals. In many respects the volumes under review can be conveniently discussed in terms of what they disclose of Chinese Communist ineptitude in handling these two groups; taken in their entirety, of course, they reveal much more about the "new" China. Themes that emerge to some degree in all five works include: (1) the arbitrary nature of the Communist regime, (2) the

power and privileges of the party, (3) the revolutionary changes wrought in the traditional pattern of Chinese life, (4) the effectiveness of Chinese Communist control techniques, (5) the absurdities inherent in the attempt to apply Marxist dogma in the land of Confucius, and (6) the extent to which the Chinese Communist leadership is caught up in the whirlwind of its own slogans.

MU FU-SHENG'S VOLUME is surely one of the most thoughtful appraisals of Communist rule in China yet published. Its constant tone of philosophical detachment and measured understatement assures that its indictment of the Mao regime will not be dismissed as one based on personal pique or prejudice. The author is an engineer who, after twelve years in Britain and the United States, returned to his homeland in 1957 to contribute his services to the reconstruction of China. In less than two years he left the country in sorrow and distress. However, he was an eye-witness to the dramatic "rectification movement" of 1957 and the initial stages of the 1958 Great Leap Forward with its backyard steel furnaces and people's communes. Because of these experiences, his work reflects belief in the ability of the Communists to sustain their despotic control, an appraisal that was shared by many abroad at that time. He is even convinced, for instance, of the long-range efficacy of the Communist approach to economic problems.

Though an engineer by training, Mu is capable of profound philosophical insights and has given close attention to his own civilization as well as to Western culture. He is equally at home with Hsün-tzu and Nietzsche, Lao-tsu and Milton. His view is that of the intellectual, and he is primarily concerned with the problems of the Chinese intelligentsia under Mao. He devotes the first third of his work to a historical and cultural survey of China in relation to the impact of the West, noting that once Western power had shattered the assumed infallibility of the Confucian system, there were few guides for the Chinese intellectuals to follow. They sought in vain for some organizing principle that would enable them to meet the challenge from the West without "losing cherished cultural values and revered moral standards." Writes the author (p. 113):

The Chinese Communists like to tell the Chinese people that communism was the only possible solution for China's problem—which, like all speculative statements in history, can never be decisively proved—but it was, so far as effective government was concerned, certainly the first solution offered. The failure of the previous reforms gave the Communists some likelihood of being the "only solution," and the fatal consequences of further experiment

inclined many people to accept communism as if it were the "only solution." Like the people in the sinking ship, those who went over to the Communist side during the recent civil war had no time to think what the "solution" would cost China. Working government and industrialization had been too long denied for the people to be circumspect. In the meantime, labor camps, fixed elections, engineered trials, destruction of men with real spirit, coercion, intimidation, mass violence, children informing on parents, and friends spying on friends are the price to pay for national strength. The very high price makes one wonder if strength could be had for less.

Discussing the cultural atmosphere in which the Chinese Communists have operated, Mu points out that the rigors of Chinese life over the centuries gave rise to attitudes and patterns of behavior that others might find strange. Perhaps the Chinese intellectuals, because they had been so long accustomed to the sight of human suffering and death, were initially not as ready to condemn Communist violence as outsiders might have expected. Mu sees the veteran middle-level cadres as the decisive force in the Communist control structure in China. The veteran Communist, he observes, "is a grim soldier, totally devoid of humor. Humor is born of an overabundant confidence and carefree mischief, neither of which a Communist has. . ." (p. 134)

The final section of Mu's volume is a profound essay entitled "An Attempt at Self-examination," in which he analyzes the meaning of the Communist despotism in his native land in broad philosophical and moral terms. The author shows how basically alien Marxism is to China, and what sort of intellectual dishonesty is necessary for its application. "Once Marxism is seen as part of the intellectual tide started in the Renaissance," he says, "it becomes, for the Chinese, all the more difficult to accept, because the Renaissance was an event in European history, not in the Chinese, and the ideas it produced, especially those about history and man's future, cannot be illustrated from Chinese history." (p. 256) Obviously Mu understands why the current regime cannot allow an honest intellectual approach to Chinese history.

The author's indictment of Maoist totalitarian rule is as devastating as it is measured in tone. "The Communist regime," he states, "is no overall solution to China's problem; if it were, culture would occupy a place beside economics." (p. 258) Speaking from his own experience in attempting to adjust to the intellectual dishonesty of life under the Chinese Communists, Mu writes: "It is the totalitarian, not the authoritarian aspect of Chinese communism that repels the intellectuals and torments the whole people." (p. 268) And again, "There is hardly any traditional moral precept

which has not been violated somewhere by the Communist methods. . . . The most basic disease in the Communist moral sense is . . . the lack of respect for other people's dignity." (p. 282)

This sensitive intellectual feels, however, that the Chinese Communist regime will last and even that it still retains considerable support from the intellectuals because of its accomplishments in certain areas. "The crux of the matter," he writes, "is that though in the Communist programme industrialization and mass education, which coincide with the interests of China, are merely incidental to Marxist aims, yet the Chinese intellectuals, in the depth of their hearts, support the Government for these objectives and these alone." (pp. 285-6) Nevertheless, Mu's own compelling story leaves little doubt that the price the Chinese have paid in terms of the sacrifice of human values is too high.

There are, to be sure, some minor points in this valuable book to which exception can be taken. For example, Mu is quite wrong in asserting that Marx "said nothing about China." (p. 256) Again, in the light of criticisms that were being voiced by recognized experts within China even during the period of his stay, the author hardly seems justified in his statement that "the Communists have shown that *with their method of pushing people around*, organization and planning do far more good to the large industries than the money-incentives that socialization kills." (p. 195)

MANY OF THE CRITICISMS which Mu must have overlooked are to be found in the very useful volume published by China Viewpoints, assembling official Chinese Communist materials regarding the "rectification campaign" of 1957. New China News Agency dispatches as well as excerpts from the central party organ *Jen-min jih-pao* (People's Daily) are arranged chronologically to show the full weight and scope of the campaign. In concentrating on the voluminous outburst of anti-Communist criticism that occurred in China in May and June of 1957, outside observers frequently overlooked the fact that this was part of a larger, planned rectification campaign by which the Communists intended to bring the intellectuals into line. There can be no question as to the authenticity of the documents contained in this collection. All from Chinese Communist sources, they nevertheless constitute as damning an indictment of the regime as can be imagined, indicating beyond all doubt that Mao had lost the support of the Chinese intelligentsia. The collection provides a handy reference for those who wish to know what sort of criticisms the intellectuals levelled against

Communist rule during this period. Though lacking the scholarly setting of Roderick MacFarquhar's similar study, *The Hundred Flowers*, it is equally valuable.

Contradictions starts out with the text of the Communist Party directive of April 27, 1957, which launched the "rectification campaign." The documents that follow are divided into the four general stages of the campaign. The first was the "blooming and contending" stage, from April 30 to June 8. This was the period when leading personalities of the non-Communist "democratic parties," professors, and students denounced the Party and its leaders with a vehemence that took the Communists by surprise. The second group of documents charts the beginning of the party's counterattack against its critics, from June 8 to 18, and the third section deals with the transformation of the campaign into a "struggle against the rightists" between June 18 and 30. The final section documents the intensification of this struggle as the intellectuals were forced to make confessions in abject self-abasement and the regime introduced new punitive regulations, including the State Council's decree of August 4 on Labor Custody, a euphemism for forced labor. This small volume gives only too eloquent a picture of the anguish of the Chinese intellectuals today. It also shows that they are under few illusions about the shortcomings of the Communist regime in many areas where others have conceded them success, particularly the economic field.

MR. HENRY J. LETHBRIDGE'S *The Peasants and the Communes* was influenced by an entirely different period and atmosphere. The author, a lecturer in sociology at the University of Hong Kong, has produced a first-rate summary and analysis of the peasant policies of the Chinese Communists, stressing the disastrous results of the people's communes and the Great Leap Forward. Whereas Mu Fu-sheng concedes substantial economic achievements under the Maoist despotism, Lethbridge, writing in the wake of the mass flight of peasant refugees into Hong Kong in 1962 and the clear revelation of blunders committed by the top Chinese leadership, questions many of these supposed successes. Emphasizing the stupidities occasioned by the Communists' belief in their own infallibility, he writes: "It is safe to say that without this acceptance of and belief in the infallibility of Marxist science, the CCP would have been more cautious and realistic in the carrying out of agrarian policies, and more likely to spot evidence suggesting revision of these policies much earlier than in fact occurred." (p. 114)

Lethbridge, like Mu, writes with quiet and scholarly

restraint. Following a brief survey of the condition of the Chinese peasantry, he describes Communist agrarian policy prior to the 1949 seizure of power and then traces the development of agricultural controls and collectivization up to the launching of the commune movement in 1958. Three chapters are devoted to the communes—their introduction, their social control aspects, and their failure. The author supplements his treatment with a comparative summarization of the more successful approaches to the problems of agricultural reform and production in India, Taiwan, and Japan, all of which serve to point up the inadequacy of the Communist approach. He also compares Soviet and Chinese collectivization policies, noting that they have much in common, including failure.

One of Lethbridge's major conclusions is that "the Soviet model for agriculture can hardly be applied to an Asian country." (p. 182) As for the people's communes, he writes: "First, the communes have failed as an instrument to introduce a Communist society in rural China. Second, they have failed to increase production, and thus have been unable to make available larger surpluses for industrialization as they were intended to do." (p. 107) Although the threat of famine finally forced a drastic retreat from the policies of 1958, the Peking regime, following a somewhat improved 1962 harvest thanks to that retreat, now appears to be once again tightening its controls in the countryside. This bears out Mr. Lethbridge's prophetic final warning that "paradoxically, one good harvest could have disastrous consequences for the peasant." (p. 184)

VALENTIN CHU AGREES with Mr. Lethbridge that the conditions of near-starvation in mainland China during 1960-61 were brought on by the follies of Chinese Communist agricultural policy rather than by mother nature. He observes (p. 61):

Plowing too deeply, sowing too closely, planting too early, using the wrong crops or wrong seeds, employing too much or too little or inadequate fertilizer, and not allowing certain fields to lie fallow—these reasons alone, even if there were not natural calamities, dealt the harvests a severe blow.

But just as some of the earlier books about China mirrored the optimistic exuberance of the Peking regime in the Great Leap period, so Chu's book—based on years of reporting from Hong Kong, supplemented by a close following of Chinese developments in the author's present capacity as a staff member of *Time* and *Life* magazines—reflects in extreme measure the more recent atmosphere of negativism concerning Com-

munist China. The general thesis of *Ta Ta, Tan Tan* (Fight, Fight; Talk, Talk) is that despite the vaunted resilience of Maoist strategy as implied by the title, the Chinese Communist regime is but a paper dragon.

Chu concentrates on the negative aspects of Mao's rule almost to the point of excluding any of its accomplishments. In many instances he is quite right in accusing the Communists of flagrant blunders on their road to "instant paradise," and he does a deft job of demolishing the myths surrounding statistics emanating from the Chinese Communist capital. But much of the effectiveness of his critique is undercut by the tone of brash flippancy that runs through the whole book. Though many of the phrases are humorously turned, the slang become almost overbearing at times.

Chu clearly believes that the Communists no longer have the support of the Chinese people, particularly the intellectuals. One interesting and valuable aspect of his volume is the stress it places on Taoist tradition, which in the author's view arms the Chinese with methods of evading and offering passive resistance to Communist control. This is a factor which Mu Fu-sheng may not have taken adequately into account. Chu points, for instance, to the subtle irony resorted to by Chinese intellectuals in order to poke fun at dogmatic party cadres. "One has to know the language," he remarks, "to realize that the deadliest insults in Chinese are always couched in exquisitely polite words." (p. 199)

The major portion of *Ta Ta, Tan Tan* deals with the economic blunders of the Chinese Communist leadership, particularly during the period of the Great Leap. Quoting from the Communist press to show that "China's water conservancy has done more harm than good," the author goes on to say (p. 68):

The foolish squandering of resources and manpower on big haphazard projects before 1958, and the wanton canal-digging since then, deteriorated the water and soil in China's richest farming regions. It is no coincidence that the worst droughts of the past several years have been found in the very provinces where millions dug canals from 1957-1959.

Mr. Chu's case against the formerly prevalent myth of the ever-successful and all-powerful Chinese Communist threat in the East does indeed have much validity, and there is ample reason for believing with him that the Mao regime now faces an increasing threat of "invisible sabotage by peasants and workers." Nevertheless, it would be dangerous to underestimate the power of Communist totalitarian control and what it can accomplish, however high the cost in human values.

Chu devotes two chapters to poking fun at the "guided tourists" and pointing out how little they can see

or learn of actual conditions in Communist China. Only a Chinese, he feels, is equipped, linguistically and culturally, to understand the shades of meaning that are so important in arriving at an accurate assessment. On this point the author is in accord with Mu Fu-sheng, who writes in the preface of his book: "Would any man feel assured by a report, say, on Great Britain, written by a Chinese unable to read or speak English, travelling with guides through the country in two weeks?"

YET, IN SPITE OF its general validity, the two Chinese authors' contention that the foreigner can learn little in Communist China also has its occasional exceptions, as illustrated by *Dateline—Peking*, the work of a competent Canadian journalist who was resident correspondent for the Toronto *Globe and Mail* in the Chinese capital for eight months starting in September 1959. Frederick Nossal was not fooled by the guided tour or by what Chu refers to as "the ruse of the vacant city." An inquiring foreign reporter frequently asks questions which do not occur to a Chinese, and he can also provide an added dimension of understanding that no Chinese can ever give: that is, he can report the manner in which the Chinese Communists handle foreigners, particularly journalists. Nossal's volume is an enlightening account of the frustrations that any foreigner seeking information in the Communist capital experiences—handouts at odd times, unavailable officials, closed buildings, and isolation. He speaks of the "invisible wall" that shuts off Mao's subjects from foreigners and from one another; yet, as a Westerner, he is eminently able to sense the rigidity and tension of "the Communist way of life that has no time for human joy."

Thus, while the Chinese Communists' formidable controls over information have made precise knowledge of developments in China well-nigh impossible to obtain, the five books under review nevertheless do provide a clear outline of the tragedy which has befallen a great civilization. They all highlight the danger inherent in the increasing isolation of the Mao regime from the realities of the outside world and from its own people, particularly the intellectuals. As Nossal points out, "Where Mao . . . has failed is in his inability to appreciate, from his isolation within China, that the nuclear age has accelerated not only aircraft and rockets—but also political theory and global strategy." (p. 142) Perhaps the chief danger lies not so much in Western inability to learn what is happening in China, as in the dogmatic determination of the Chinese Communists to isolate themselves from all who will not kowtow to their leader and his version of truth.

Eclipse of the Polish October

POLAND'S GOMULKA REGIME has never held a public anniversary celebration of the bloodless revolt that brought it into being in October 1956. Communists recognize only one October Revolution, the seizure of power in Russia by the Bolsheviks in October 1917. Shortly after his own elevation to power, therefore, Gomulka abandoned the popular term "Polish October," and began using instead the term "Eighth Plenum" when referring to the events of 1956.

The Eighth Plenum was the historic meeting of the Central Committee of the United Polish Workers' Party (PZPR) held in Warsaw during those turbulent autumn days. Red Army divisions led by Marshal Ivan Konev, Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact forces, were converging on the Polish capital. When it became clear, however, that those forces would face the resistance of the entire Polish people united behind Gomulka, Moscow agreed to the demands put forth by the Eighth Plenum. They were: abolition of police rule, an end to forced collectivization of agriculture, reaffirmation of the right of peasants to own land, and a truce with the Roman Catholic Church. But more than anything else, the Poles then sought a restoration of freedom of expression, which was to bring about a veritable renaissance in every field of creative endeavor in Poland.

Today, as the seventh anniversary of the Polish October approaches, the Gomulka regime is rapidly curtailing the freedoms that had earned for Poland the reputation of being the most liberal country in the Soviet bloc. During the bloodless October revolt, Gomulka symbolized the unity of the Polish people and became a national hero. But to anticipate economic miracles from him was unrealistic. The unfulfilled promises of more consumer goods have fostered growing bitterness among the people. In a vicious circle of cause and effect, the productivity of labor has declined to a point bordering on sabotage, and the country's economic stagnation has been deepening.

As a result, Gomulka is now confronted with criticism from both extremes of the Communist Party. The liberals

attribute economic failures to half-measures in moving along the "Polish road to socialism," which Gomulka himself had proclaimed. The diehard dogmatists of the Natolin Group¹ accuse him of drifting away from a consistent Communist economic policy based on centralized planning and strict government controls. Moreover, the weakening of Gomulka's popular support caused by the widespread dissatisfaction over living conditions has encouraged the diehards to demand more and more stringent measures to repress discontent.

When he returned to power, Gomulka was gentle in his treatment of his adversaries. He did not liquidate the enemies who had caused his downfall in 1949; he merely purged them from key positions in the party and the government apparatus, exiling some to unimportant diplomatic posts in other Communist countries, which were jokingly called Poland's equivalent of Siberia. At that time, his generosity was generally regarded as an expression of self-confidence, obviously based on the enthusiastic support given him by the overwhelming majority of the Polish people. Even then, however, there were observers who warned that the old Communist Gomulka was putting the Stalinists "on ice" in the expectation that some day he would need them. They proved to be correct.

THE FIRST TO RETURN, from a minor position in the Polish Embassy in Prague, was the notorious General Kazimierz Witaszewski, a leader of the Natolin Group, who in the fall of 1959 was entrusted with an important post in the party's Central Committee. He was followed by other members of his faction, some of whom were installed in key positions in the Ministries of Interior and Justice. The effect of these appointments was quickly felt in the fields of education and culture. The Catholic

¹ Natolin, a suburb of Warsaw where the pro-Moscow faction held its meetings before and during the October days of 1956.