

# Through People's China in a Friendship Train



By **FERNAND LERICHE**

PREFACE BY

**LOUIS SAILLANT**

General Secretary of the W.F.T.U.

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*"Let happiness replace slaughter, and let sanity depose madness."*

Kuo Mo Jo.

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## P R E F A C E

FERNAND LERICHE'S report serves the great cause of friendship between peoples. To this end, he makes use of a convincing method. He puts each reader in the "Friendship Train." He makes you one of the group of delegates from twenty-one countries who were invited to tour China after the Seventh Congress of the Chinese trade unions.

Leriche makes his readers travel. He invites you to think, all the time. He does not impose; he explains everything he saw. His explanations are enthusiastic—how could they be anything else? And he takes his stand on what he has seen and what he has heard. He gives his own opinions while he is making his report. And in this way he serves the great cause of friendship between peoples with a praiseworthy and clear-cut political sincerity.

After being Chief Editor of the C.G.T.'s militant weekly *La Vie Ouvrière* for many years, Fernand Leriche is now attached to the Secretariat of the W.F.T.U. as Chief Editor in the Publications Department.

This first major piece of international reporting of his is assured of success. We owe him a debt of gratitude for making known one aspect of the work of the W.F.T.U. and at the same time spreading a better knowledge of People's China. It may well be that we are too modest in the trade union organisations of our different countries about the contribution which the W.F.T.U. can make towards finding new ways of establishing contact between the workers of different nations.

As a member of the W.F.T.U. delegation to the Seventh Congress of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, Fernand Leriche is able to show, through his own report, that the W.F.T.U. has not made enough use of this means of propaganda, which constitutes a living, active form of information and education.

In the countries known as 'Western', people other than workers are sure to read this account of a journey through China in the Friendship Train.

A good deal about People's China is read in these countries. Since a good deal of nonsense is talked on the subject among the

ruling classes, the nonsense is naturally reflected in what gets written in the press which they control. So many politicians and journalists and writers daily board the train of hatred and enmity, of their own free will, in order to misrepresent the meaning of the Chinese people's victory over their oppressors at home and abroad, that many of them may like to take a trip in the Friendship Train, just out of curiosity.

Just out of curiosity . . . and also, possibly, of necessity. For the 'best people' of the bourgeoisie—who are less and less the best people of the nation—no more understand the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic in October 1949 than they understood the considerable historical significance and implications of the victorious October Revolution of 1917.

Those who have not yet recognised People's China will have to do so. They will be compelled by necessity to end the blind stupidity of a policy of turning their backs on the gigantic work which is going on in China.

A nation of more than five hundred million people, in which the entire active population is working, is not going to let its life and prosperity wait on recognition by His Belgian Majesty's Government, or even by the Government of the Fourth French Republic or the Government of . . . San Salvador.

My own impression of the Chinese people, from what I saw of them on my two visits in 1949 and 1953, is that they are a dignified people, shrewd, friendly, and just the least bit mischievous.

One of them drew my attention to the national census they were taking. He said China had passed the 500 million population mark. Perhaps the French Government, he asked me, was waiting until they had 541 million before they would recognise them? Perhaps the present official figure was too small? "How many people are there in France?" he added. "About 41 million," I replied. We were in Tientsin, in the quarter that used to be the French concession. My Chinese friend saw the connection at once; he pointed to a bridge: "Before the liberation, that bridge used to be called the French Bridge. Today, our people call it Revolution Bridge."

Naturally.

So the question of recognition by governments which are still hanging on to Chiang Kai-Shek is not one which makes the Chinese people impatient and nervous.

They themselves recognise the present government as "our" government. It is the first time in the whole of China's long history that they have acknowledged any Chinese Government as their own. They now do it every day. Every action of the government makes it possible for them to, and they feel no need to hang on the

opinions of Foster Dulles, Georges Bidault, or the Negus about the quality of "our Government." When they are reminded that it is the representative of the remnants of Chiang Kai-Shek's army in Formosa who represents China at the United Nations, they naturally regard the United Nations as a queer organisation. And when they shrug their shoulders over all this, one realises that U.N.O. is to be pitied for being so much under the thumb of the United States. So let us hope that for the sake of its own authority and effectiveness in world affairs, U.N.O. will soon have a Chinese delegation that is the effective representative of the Chinese people.

This people is living and working in an atmosphere of domestic security and national self-confidence. They are sure of success in everything they undertake. And they have undertaken great things. For example, they want to achieve an intense cultural life. They have made a good start.

I recall the 31st May last. Our train had a two-hour stop at Tientsin. What could one do in two hours on a Sunday afternoon? We went to the Trade Unions' Cultural Club. We arrived unexpectedly. The recreation rooms were full of people playing billiards or ping-pong, taking singing or dancing lessons. There wasn't a vacant seat in the whole enormous theatre. But the place where the real crowd was turned out to be the library. We were surprised. The Chinese trade union leaders who were with us were not in the least surprised. They were much more astonished at our surprise—our very pleasant surprise.

One of them confirmed things that had been said at the Seventh Congress by our friend Lai Jo-yu, the new President of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. The Federation had opened over 5,100 libraries; more than 3,030,000 workers and employees were attending some 16,200 evening classes.

Well, why should this nation of working people call a halt when they are on this road? They want to conquer illiteracy step by step; they want to perfect their technical and social knowledge. They will win. They are convinced that the more they follow the wise counsels of Mao Tse-Tung, their leader, the quicker they will win. Let us give them our approval.

Why expect the workers in China's towns and fields to get upset because Radio Vatican is displeased with the closing of a few empty schools which served to camouflage the "special duties" of a handful of missionaries for "western civilisation"?

The Chinese people is building its own modern civilisation. It is studying and learning to that end. From Washington to Rome and from Rome to Madrid the obscurantists are complaining. But why expect the workers of America, Italy and Spain, whether they are



Catholics or not, to be dissatisfied with what is happening? What is sure, is that they are rejoicing over it, in spite of General Eisenhower and Pope Pius XII and General Franco.

\* \* \* \*

Where do the Chinese Trade Unions come in?

The fact that there are now nearly eleven million workers in the unions is not the most significant thing. The figure will seem absurdly low in a few years.

The 7th Congress enabled me to understand the new level of maturity the Chinese trade unions have reached. The great value of this Congress lay in the efficient, sure manner in which the workers' representatives faced up to their responsibility of making it possible for the people of China to reach a splendid future quickly.

In February 1949, just after the split in the international trade union movement, I was at the meeting of E.C.O.S.O.C. (United Nations Economic and Social Council) in New York. A high U.N.O. official from Great Britain asked me what there was left for me to do in the Executive of the W.F.T.U.

"It is a pity," was my immediate reply, "that the British T.U.C. and the American C.I.O. have withdrawn from the W.F.T.U., but we still have on our Executive some great national trade union organisations which are very active on international questions: such as the Central Council of Soviet Trade Unions, the French C.G.T., the Italian C.G.T., and the All-China Federation of Labour.<sup>1</sup>

As the person I was talking to expressed some doubts about the potentialities of the Chinese unions I tried to make him understand that the Chinese workers had a different conception of their future.

What a pity that he could not come on the Friendship Train in May 1953! Along with all the other people who think like him.

Today, the Chinese trade union organisation is the second largest national trade union body in the world. The Soviet trade union organisation, with its 34 million members, remains far and away the biggest of all.

The Chinese trade unions are still in the W.F.T.U. It was they who organised the Friendship Train.

They showed great ability for international action, like the Central Council of Soviet Trade Unions which, in its own field, is constantly opening up the way.

<sup>1</sup> The name was changed to All-China Federation of Trade Unions in 1953.

There were a number of leading people from trade union organisations not affiliated to the W.F.T.U. on the Friendship Train, especially from India and Indonesia. We exchanged ideas. We talked of international trade union unity. The Friendship Train became, little by little, the Unity Train.

And the Chinese workers embraced us, whether we were members of the W.F.T.U. or not. Bravo brothers of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. In this May, 1953, you have advanced our work of unification in the countries of Asia in a remarkable way. Carry on along this good road.

\* \* \* \*

And now let us take a little trip with Fernand Leriche through this great People's China.

LOUIS SAILLANT.

Vienna, September 10, 1953.

## THROUGH PEOPLE'S CHINA IN A FRIENDSHIP TRAIN

By FERNAND LERICHE

*"It is possible for countries with differing social systems to coexist and compete in peace. Let the countries then get together and consult one another, and let construction take the place of destruction!"*

*"Let happiness replace slaughter, and let sanity depose madness!"—Kuo Mo Jo.*

### THE DEPARTURE

"WE ARE GOING TO CHINA," Louis Saillant, General Secretary of W.F.T.U. told me casually; mischievously, sure of his effect, he watched my reaction out of the corner of his eye. In the W.F.T.U. we are used to these departures, today here, tomorrow there, on journeys to the four corners of the world for an exchange of experience; we are used to this spirit of mutual aid, of brotherhood, which is known as working-class internationalism. But this time I was left breathless, and I think I showed it by a sort of gurgling in my throat which must have been very comic, to judge from the effect on Saillant.

China! I don't believe there is one of us, from whatever continent or country, who hasn't at some point in his childhood, or youth, or manhood, dreamed about and thrilled to, and been led to think over, news of events which from time to time reached us, until the thunder-clap of 1949: China is liberated!

Since the guns of the cruiser "Aurora," trained on the Winter Palace in Petrograd, announced a new era, no events except the victory of Stalingrad have had such a great, profound and lasting echo. 1917 opened the door to the communist future. 1949 proclaimed that its triumph would be inevitable and complete over the whole world.

How vast the world of socialism is! A vast expanse on which the sun never sets! When midnight strikes in Budapest and People's Hungary sleeps, a new day has already dawned over there in Peking, a new day in which to build the new life. How grotesque and ridiculous are the western governments and politicians, who imagine that they can impress us and make us doubt the ideas which guide our whole life, when we can now witness the magnificent triumph of these ideas.

And we, a W.F.T.U. delegation, were going to travel right through this vast socialist world, in order to get to the Seventh Congress of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. And we were going via Moscow. I told you it took my breath away.

### HULLO, MOSCOW!

BUDAPEST, KIEV . . . one day's air trip from Vienna, and there is Moscow, the Moscow I had not seen since 1948. The tremendous change in her leapt to the eye the moment I left the aerodrome.

On the asphalt road, between two rows of green, the powerful Zis sweeps forward, while the soft strains of a concerto can be heard on the radio. We turn a corner and there is the massive bulk of the university, imposing and graceful, with its red roof which stands out in the gathering dusk. I had heard a great deal about it and seen a number of photographs; but the actual sight of it is beyond imagination. In 1948, A. N. Nesmeyanov, the Rector, had shown me the layout in his office in the old university, which was quite close to the Hotel National where we were going to stay. Today, there it is with its 38 storeys, its 150 kilometres of corridor, and its 20,000 different rooms. They are just finishing the last splendid buildings intended as living quarters for the teaching staff, the huge park and the sports stadium. While the Soviet friend who was accompanying me laughed at my astonishment with all his young heart, I could not help thinking of you, my comrades in prison in Cuba, in the U.S.A., in France and in Central Africa. Two worlds, in truth. On the one side a world where this work of art dedicated to the glory of science and of man, this monumental instrument for truth and happiness is being built; and on the other side a world of capital where sinister walls are being

The University of Moscow



erected, behind which they have shut in the best of the best of men, simply because they are fighting for truth and for the happiness of mankind.

In front of Moscow University irresistibly that fundamental law of socialism which Stalin uncovered just before his death, springs to mind: "The securing of the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society."

Satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements? My thanks go out to that good aeroplane which enabled us to spend a few days wandering about Moscow both on our way to China and on the return trip.

I don't think there's a better way of getting to know the real character of a town than to stroll along the streets with your hands in your pockets and do a bit of window-shopping.

First observation: Buildings have been going up everywhere, and everywhere buildings are still going up. When you leave the Red Square and go down to the bridge over the Moskva, you not only get a magnificent view of the Kremlin cathedrals with their golden domes; there is something else for you to admire; those imposing skyscrapers which stand now like heralds of the epoch of Communism.

I say skyscrapers. In fact this New York term is inappropriate. Nothing is farther removed from those cubic monstrosities of the American city than these buildings whose gracefulness suffers no loss from their colossal dimensions, and which do not overpower the town but, on the contrary add harmony and charm to it.

There are already seven of these buildings in Moscow. Sites for others have been cleared, particularly near the Moskva river. Moscow and its surroundings are themselves a great building site, where every day more than a hundred new homes are handed over to the population. Surely this is something for a young homeless couple in capitalist countries to dream about.

Observation number two: The considerable improvement in living standards. Since 1948, there have been six price reductions. The effect is visible. The crowds in the shops are impressive . . . not only in the food shops, but also in the clothing and drapery stores and . . . in the jewellers. I think there is only one kind of place which is apparently more difficult to get into than the shops, and that is the theatres. Yet Moscow has thirty-seven, including four for children. I say "apparently," for everyone manages in the end to get a seat to the great delight of young and old.

Thus, my third observation naturally follows: Whether you mix with the crowd in the metro or in the Gorky Park, in the streets or on the terrace of an ice-cream bar, or whether you go for a trip on a pleasure steamer along the Moscow-Volga canal, where there are bathers on both banks, what stands out is the obvious happiness of the people of this country, to whom each one of us owes much of his human dignity and the perspective of a life which is worth living. How, then, can one fail to understand why the word "Mir" (peace) is the most popular word in the Soviet Union.

Indeed, there is one thing here that stirs you to the depths of your heart. It is when you go through the Red Square and see there on the red marble mausoleum two names, inseparable in death as they were inseparable in life, Lenin and Stalin. You have to make an effort to take it in, for the mind and the heart revolt at the idea that never again. . . . They revolt all the more since, in truth, these two giants are not dead. They have become part of our lives, which they are guiding. At every turn, they are our sure guides and friends. Their thought is the most living thing there is, in a world which it is transforming and leading towards the future. That future is the most wonderful thing in the world, a fulfilment of the old dream of the communards, Communism, whose smile can be seen at every street corner, on every scaffolding, in Moscow.

## STAGE BY STAGE THROUGH TWO LONG DAYS

MOSCOW, KAZAN, SVERDLOVSK, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyar, Irkutsk . . . Stage by stage the aeroplane took us through two long days. Below us, stretching to infinity, the Soviet land.

Between the mighty and invulnerable industrial centres bloomed the springtime of this land, which is traversed by the greatest rivers in the world—the Volga, the Ob and the Yenisei—as they meander slowly and majestically along. . . . The taiga is cracking under the first warmth of Spring. The motor roars. A song comes into my head . . . "Great and lovely is my land, the free," the call-sign of Radio Moscow, for which we listened breathlessly in the dark hours of the last world war, the call-sign which preceded the announcement of the Stalingrad victory and our deliverance.

At the airports, welcoming us with their comfortable, blue-upholstered armchairs, there are crowds of people waiting for the plane. Here, you take a plane as easily as you catch a train in our little European countries. This is explained not only by the huge distances. The men and women who are here are obviously ordinary workers. In the western countries, flying is a great luxury, inaccessible to the people. Here it is within the reach of anybody. Another glimpse of two worlds. . . .

After Irkutsk, you catch sight of Lake Baikal, still frozen, between the mighty peaks. Here is Ulan Bator, capital of the Mongolian People's Republic, a white oasis of socialism, where the leaders of the Central Council of Trade Unions come out to welcome us, while the plane refuels, with the fraternity and generosity which are characteristic of the brave Mongolian people.

The plane is now tossing in the warm air currents above the desert. Renato Vidimari (Secretary of the Agricultural Trade Department), who, like me, has decided to go to sleep so as not to be airsick, jumps up suddenly and catches his left eye on the luggage rack. Somebody





The Socialist town of Ulan Bator gleams in its whiteness against the desert

rushes for cottonwool, iodine . . . he is fixed up with a bandage, which gives a martial air to our delegation when we arrive. But the plane is soon flying smoothly again. I glance out of the window. Although I have never seen this countryside before, its pattern leaps to my memory: the shimmering rivers, the terraced fields, which rise sharply up the hills, the mosaic pattern of the crops, the infinite presence of men. This is China. Here is the Great Wall, winding from crest to crest like a mad giant.

I look for the city of Peking so long awaited. All I can see is what looks like a huge park, dominated by the curved yellow roofs of the Summer Palace. The aircraft dives down, the landscape heels over, and suddenly, through the trees, there is Peking and its houses with the typical inner courtyards. We touch down. The door opens and we are overwhelmed with flowers, laughter, songs. A sea of happy young people surges round us. "Nikao! Nikao!" Hallo! New China is there before us.

## THIS WAS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST WRETCHED PEOPLE

HOW CAN I DESCRIBE the happiness of the liberated Chinese people, of these people who accompanied us from Peking to Mukden, to Nanking to Shanghai, to Hangchow, to Tientsin, to the towns and villages, the factories and the fields, the shops and universities?

There are words we use every day, which we think we understand; and then suddenly we find we have not understood their real depth, their full emotional power. In People's China, the word "people" teaches us a new meaning of the word "happiness."

Those who have humiliated and plundered and martyred China, imperialists of every kind, with American imperialism in the lead, the reactionaries of every shade, with the Kuomintang at their head, have in their literature created a picture of a secretive, sly, China, which looks at the world with an impenetrable and disquieting gaze. Yes, for the imperialists, for Chiang Kai Shek's executioners, the expression of the Chinese people must have been like daggers. They ought to have been frozen by the hatred in the faces of the Chinese masses. But, today, with the liberation an accomplished fact, all the gentleness and spontaneity and joy of living of this people has burst forth.

One has to see this new China parading on May Day, 1953, in front of the Tien An-Men, the gold and green Gate of Heavenly Peace, with its enormous tasselled Chinese lanterns. One has to see the Chinese people cheering the man who led them to victory, because he is China's best disciple of Lenin and Stalin, Mao Tse-Tung, the staunch leader of a nation of five hundred million people.

Laughter was king and flowers were queen on this May Day parade. Laughing, the workers made a kind of flowery picture, full of meaning, even out of their production charts. "We want to build a powerful heavy industry, a foundation for the building of socialism in China."

How they laugh these peasants waving aloft their flowering

### May Day Demonstration in front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace





**W.F.T.U. delegation at the monument in Nanking to those who died for the liberation of China. From left to right. In the foreground: Jacqueline Levy, B. Zambaux, Josette Saillant. In the background: F. Leriche, Louis Saillant (General Secretary of the W.F.T.U.), R. Vidimari (Secretary of the Agricultural and Forestry Workers' Trade Unions International), Marcel Dufliche (French C.G.T. delegate).**

branches; these peasants who yesterday were starving, in rags, oppressed by the feudal lords and the warlords, and to whom today land reform has brought a life "such as we didn't dare to dream of," as the wife of one of them said.

How they laugh these women, who yesterday were downtrodden, crippled, slaves, and today are the equals of men and are already beginning to take their place in the forefront of the battle for production.

How they laugh these young men and women who raise high their bouquets, which transform the procession into a mighty river of flowers.

In the Kun Ming lake in the Summer Palace in Peking there is a

boat, a wonderfully delicate and beautifully ornate affair, but it is made of stone. Its immobility no longer symbolises China. All that is over. Now a beautiful new ship sails into sight, "The New China!" Here is its mast, rising above the horizon. We must greet it and wish it welcome. "Raise both your hands. New China is ours." The man who wrote those words is called Mao Tse-Tung.

## FROM THE RED EARTH, ROSES

TO UNDERSTAND THE REASONS for this enthusiasm, we must learn to grasp its cause, as we would pick a red rose. We must understand the martyrdom of the Chinese people.

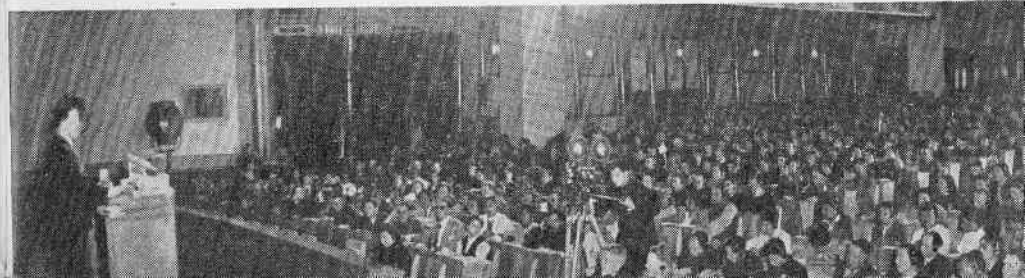
In Nanking there is a hill called the Hill of the Rain of Flowers. Legend has it that there a holy monk once made sweet-smelling flowers fall from the sky. They immediately changed into stones, each more beautiful than the next. These beautiful stones still exist. But what they hide has no beauty. One hundred thousand indomitable heroes were brought here in carts, chained, lips pinned together with a bamboo point run through them and shot by the Kuomintang. In Shanghai—"The Workers' Town"—a museum is open. Once this was an hotel devoted to the pleasures of the imperialists. Now it is the museum of the Chinese Revolution. Walk round the rooms,—and the whole tragic, heroic, inspiring history of the Chinese people unfolds before you.

Here is the photograph of the first session of the Chinese Communist Party, which was founded in 1921, in the same year as the All-China Federation of Labour was also founded in Shanghai.

Thirty-two years of struggle, led by the Chinese Communist Party, years in which the battles of a revolutionary army, recruited for the most part from the peasants, were combined with an underground struggle in the towns and villages.

The trade union movement, naturally, also found its own forms of action and organisation during these 32 years, according to the needs of the moment. Until the failure of the first Chinese revolution in 1926, that is, until the Fourth Congress of the All-China Federation of Labour, it had a legal form, at least in some of the big towns. But then it was forced to develop underground, to a large extent among the peasantry. This was one of the characteristic features of the movement in China. After the Japanese imperialists gave in under the

**A view of the Congress of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions during the speech of Louis Saillant, General Secretary of the W.F.T.U.**



heavy blows dealt them by the Soviet Army, the movement of the town workers, who were still under Kuomintang rule, drew closer to the surrounding peasant population, who were hostile to Chiang Kai Shek and who were soon set free by the liberation army. This tactic of transferring the revolutionary forces to the countryside, so as to bring about—under the leadership of the party of the working class—the capitulation of the Kuomintang gangs which held the towns in their power, was not only shown to be absolutely correct, but it is one of the fundamental aspects of the way in which the Chinese Communist Party, under the leadership of Mao Tse-Tung, have been really able to apply Marxism to their own country. Marxism is not a dogma, but a guide to action.

So the first legal Congress of the All-China Federation of Labour was the one held in Harbin in 1948, after the Japanese had been thrown out. But it was not yet able to be a Congress representing the whole of China, since the southern provinces were still in the hands of the Kuomintang. The first trade union congress of the whole of liberated China was this 7th Congress of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions which we attended.

This then was the first aspect that made it important.<sup>1</sup>

But let us continue our visit to the Shanghai museum.

Here are photographs of the armed workers when they were masters of the town, during the Shanghai commune, of the British, French, American, and Japanese imperialists shooting down the workers, of the massacre of revolutionary workers perpetrated by Chiang Kai Shek on April 12, 1927, of the last struggles before the liberation in that heroic strike of the workers of one of the largest textile factories—when they occupied it despite the police, tanks and rifle-fire.

Why did this strike take place? Because the women, and the whole people, had had enough of hunger. Hunger made the children wide-eyed, struck down mothers, workers, peasants—wasted them with poverty.

“Enough to eat!” That was the first demand of the Chinese people living under the heel of the imperialists and the feudalists.

In 1948 the drama reached its climax. Here are the last photographs of one of the last people to be shot: it is a young man, Wang Cha-Mona, leader of the electricity company workers. He is calm as he walks forward to the place of execution. Before he died he wrote the following words in his own blood: “We have a magnificent future. We shall struggle to the end, and we shall win.” He smiled. The earth drank his blood, but victory came, for Shanghai, for the whole of China, and for all time. And when the Chinese worker today passes slowly before these photographs, and remembers, he not only clenches his fists; he redoubles his energy and exclaims with joy that all this filth has been swept away with one blow of his strong hand.

<sup>1</sup> See article in No. 13, 1953 of the W.F.T.U. Review “World Trade Union Movement.”

## NO ORDINARY TRAIN

MANY FOREIGN TRADE UNION delegations were present at the 7th Congress of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. They came from 20 different countries and represented almost all currents of the international trade union movement. There were Hindustani, Ceylonese, Australians, Burmese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Mongols, Japanese, Indonesians, Italians, Frenchmen, Russians, Bulgarians, Germans, Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Rumanians, Algerians and representatives of colonial Africa (The Cameroons, and Senegal). Apart from the W.F.T.U. delegation, led by its General Secretary, Louis Saillant, and delegations from organisations affiliated to the W.F.T.U., there were also present delegations from organisations not affiliated to the W.F.T.U., as, for example, the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the United T.U.C., the All India Railwaymen's Federation, the Bombay Association of Secondary School Teachers, the G.S.B.I. (Federation of Indonesian Trade Unions), the Indonesian Teachers' Union, etc.

And then the problem arose. It was a big one. How could it be arranged for all these delegations, consisting of some 200 people, including technical personnel, to see this huge country? The problem was solved in the most stylish manner. A whole train, with sleeping berths, two restaurants, a saloon coach, was provided for the delegations. And thus, when the Congress was over, we set off to discover this world that is both known and unknown—People's China.

## ALONG THE STREETS OF NEW CHINA

ON MAY 14, PUNCTUALLY (for Chinese trains are punctual) our train moved off. With us were Liu Ning-Yi, Vice-President of the Federation, with his tranquil smile; Li Chi-po, leader of the Railwaymen's Union, and all our Chinese friends who brought so much friendly understanding to bear on facilitating our work, and satisfying our curiosity.

Under the wheels of the saloon coach, which was at the rear of the train, the railway lines slipped by—as at the cinema—and met at infinity.

We cross fields, with here and there the little mounds of earth that are graves. On this greyish screen Peking leaps back into the memory; Peking, the regret of leaving which is tempered only by the joy of seeing it again on return, and the happiness of constant discovery.

Peking, where charm bewitched us like a magic potion.

While Marcel Dufriche dozed, stretched out on his berth, I gave myself up to dreaming.

It has been said of Peking that it is the most Chinese of Chinese towns. This is the exact truth. A few steps from the hotel—there is Tien An-Men, the Gate of Heavenly Peace. A short walk—and there is the forbidden city, yesterday the home of the Emperor who cut off





A walk through the grounds of the Summer Palace

the head of anybody who was imprudent enough to trespass on his threshold, and not only his, but that of his ancestors and descendants. Now its treasures are open to the people, its great courtyard, paved with rough quarry stones, its golden roofs decorated at the corners with carved genii, its enormous copper cauldrons, its ibis and tiger incense-burners and all its wonderful objects: silks with dream-like designs, ivory sculpture of extraordinary delicacy, representing the passing of the seasons, or a fairy palace with its countless figures.

To find a similar accumulation of treasures in Peking, you must go to the Summer Palace and visit all its buildings, where at every step there are things to enchant the eyes.

Everything here was made for the enjoyment of a greedy, rapacious caste, insatiable in regard to its own well-being, pitiless towards the people. From this jewel of a building made entirely of copper, on the hillside where the wind shakes little bells that murmur softly of old legends, down to the lake below where boats are gently rocking, all is beauty; but at the same time everything reminds one of what was once the misery of a people. In fact, this hill was raised with earth carried by dozens of bare hands; this marble boat with the elegant lines, these dream-like constructions, were the result of the whim of an Empress who thus got rid of the money forcibly extracted from the peasants supposedly to build a fleet.

And here is an enormous rock in a garden. I heard the story of how its shape pleased some Emperor or other, who had it brought here, over thousands of kilometres, on wooden carts dragged by men. And how many died, how many had their heads cut off, for not being

able to satisfy the whim of the monarch in the required time.

Four thousand years of feudal rule. Can we understand what that means in terms of humiliation, of unspeakable suffering for this people?

The people! Today they have taken possession of all the treasures they themselves built. It is the workers who are canoeing on the lake of the Summer Palace, who are walking about in the imperial gardens of the Forbidden City, who are assimilating the artistic and cultural traditions of old China, and creating the new songs of New China.

The people! You have to mingle with them in the streets of Peking, of Mukden, of Tiensing and Shanghai. You have to stroll about at random, among the countless merchants' and handicraftsmen's little shops, that you can walk straight into. You have to go round the open-air restaurants, the multi-coloured markets where the most everyday objects jostle side by side with gems of carved ivory, or bamboo, representing old mandarins on the back of an ass, mocking with their eternal enigmatic smile.

And it is no small subject for astonishment when you buy the most minor article and find yourself given a good and proper receipt. The powerful "Sanfran" movement (the three rules) and the "Wonfan" movement (the five rules) have done their work.<sup>1</sup> For although private retail trade still plays an important role and is entirely free, speculation, abuses of all kinds in the quality of merchandise, and so on, has been brought to an end. In addition, now that prices have been stabilised, the State keeps control over the market with the help of its shops, which have the following three advantages: quality, abundance and lower prices.

We visited several of them in different Chinese towns and I know many housewives in western European countries who would be highly delighted to wander about in front of these shelves where you can find everything from the most up-to-date household utensils to wonderful bed-covers in embroidered silk, and superb jewels.

Wholesale trade also is for the most part in the hands of the State. However, private trade, especially retail trade, still constitutes an important sector.

In the report he presented to the 4th Session of the Chinese National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Council, Chou En-lai, the Foreign Minister, was able to say:

"We must bring together all the industrialists and businessmen whose enterprises are useful to the national interests and to the well-being of the people, and give them the opportunity to give proof of their initiative under the direction of the State and in conformity with the single national plan. We should seriously study the experience of the Soviet Union, undertake propaganda in favour of making use of

<sup>1</sup> Started among civil servants and extended into 450,000 private industrial and commercial enterprises, this great public morality campaign, with the assistance of the people, was aimed in the case of the "Sanfran" movement, against corruption, wastage and bureaucracy, and in the case of the "Wonfan" movement against bribery, tax evasion, embezzlement of State goods and theft of economic information.





Indian delegation with young villagers

former experiences, organise patriotic competitions, and a campaign of struggle for economic development, giving it greater scope, and progressively raising the living standards of the workers and peasants.”

## PEASANTS IN NEW CHINA

YOU HAVE TO GO, as we did, into the villages to understand the meaning of these last words.

It was in the Town Hall, over a cup of green tea scented with jasmin (at first it makes you pull a face, but later you can't do without it) that the mayor of the village of Pa Tio, Chai Mao, assisted by Liang We, leader of the peasants' trade union, received our delegation.

The room was bright, large and well-ventilated. It was decorated, as are all public places and many private houses, with a portrait of Mao Tse-Tung between portraits of Lenin and Stalin.

The mayor was an old peasant, dressed in black, with the deeply lined, parchment-like skin that is typical of old peasants the world over. He spoke for nearly an hour without a note, and from time to time screwed up his eyes to stress a point.

There are 449 homes in this village; it has 2,098 inhabitants and covers 6,488 mows (one mow=1/6th of an acre). Before the liberation, 18 big landowners had cornered for themselves most of the land in the village. The most fortunate peasants possessed hardly a fifth

of a mow. There was perpetual hunger, indescribable poverty, accentuated by the Japanese occupation; and the plundering Japanese were followed by gangs of Kuomintang raiders from whom the young people had to escape by fleeing into the mountains.

“But,” said the old peasant, “we knew that there was Mao. We know that he was leading a revolutionary army and in December, 1948, the sun rose: land reform came about. . . .”

Land reform! When we remember that in China the feudal landlords and the big landowners represented four per cent. of the peasant population and possessed 70 per cent. of the lands! Next came rich peasants who were six per cent. of the peasant population and possessed 15 to 20 per cent. of arable land. The middle peasants were about 20 to 30 per cent. of the population—and the rest were poor peasants virtually without land! We can understand therefore the radical, basically revolutionary changes that land reform has brought to almost 400 million people.

It was this land reform, which was carried out right up to the front line, that gave vigour to this liberation army, mostly made up of peasants, and which gave it the wings on which it flew to victory. It was this land reform that peasants bent under the yoke of the Kuomintang and the big landowners dreamed about, and for which they impatiently awaited the arrival of the liberating army.

And what was land reform? It did away with the feudal landlord. It gave the land to those who work it.

Listen to the mayor of Pa Tio: “Today, everyone has an equal share in the land. The landlord has received the same share as everybody else. The women and the children, too, have the same equal share. Now at last we are working for ourselves. At least we can eat twice a day. What is even better, our lot is improving day by day, because the government provides us with seed, fertiliser, agricultural implements and so on. Thanks to the cutting of irrigation canals, we have wrung from nature over 3,000 mows of arable land.

“All the village business is decided by the peasants themselves after discussion. So our fate is in our own hands. Now come and have a look.”

We followed him through sunny streets. From the doorsteps, smiling people came forward to shake up by the hand, women, children and peasants resting from work. We were taken into a “fanza” (Chinese house), where we sat down on one of those flat stoves covered with matting, on which stood a small low table. You sit round this table, cross-legged, and sip the inevitable cup of tea.

The joy of life that these people have is really something to see. Take Li Chin, whose house we were in. Before the Liberation he had been a day labourer, landless, working for the landlord at starvation wages. Today he owns 17 mows. He used to be wretchedly poor. Now he can eat his fill, and so can his wife and children, and his old mother, too. He has a three-roomed home, modestly furnished but spotlessly clean. It is a home into which happiness has come. And

his 14-year-old son goes to school; which to Lin Chin seems like a miracle.

Another peasant told us that before the land reform he had only two mows. Now he has a holding ten times that size, and he too can eat his fill.

He explained that like most of the peasants in his village he belongs to one of the Mutual Aid Teams of which there are eleven here. This term "mutual aid" is on everyone's lips. Mutual aid is an example of the initiative that has surged up among the people themselves, an initiative based on the new laws of development.

For agrarian problems could not be solved simply by dividing up the land. Differences in the quality of the land and the quantity of equipment between one holding and another made the new holdings unsuitable for polycultural farming. So at first the peasants started to help one another by lending a hand to a neighbour or letting him have the use of their implements. Then they began to rationalise their work, pooling the land so as to cultivate each plot in the way best suited to its qualities, but leaving each man owner of his particular

Ali Codja, the Algerian delegate, with a family of peasants



holding. The State naturally encouraged these mutual aid arrangements, which are a rudimentary form of producers' co-operatives into which they are inevitably developing. In February, 1953, 200 million peasants had already been drawn into this movement, and there were 4,000 of these co-operative enterprises, as well as a dozen model collective farms.

"We ourselves have got two producers' co-operatives," the Mayor of Pia Tio told us. There are 291 members in the one I'm chairman of. We have six mules, a horse, seven modern ploughs, six rubber-tyred carts and a number of other pieces of agricultural equipment, all common property."

He took us over the stables, which were clean and tidy and housed animals gleaming with good condition. We visited the pig-styes, with their characteristic Chinese black pigs (the Chinese are now adopting the more profitable European breeds). We saw the stock of agricultural implements. You must realise what all this means in a country where the use of human being as draught animals was one of the most widespread customs in agriculture—as it still is for certain forms of light transport, because of the inadequate number of motor lorries and cars.

What is the result of these changes? You have only to glance at the figures we got from the other kind of co-operative, the consumers' co-operative, to see what has happened. This is one of those co-ops that is like a big village store where you can buy anything from seed to trouser buttons.

There are 426 families in the co-operative. Here are the figures of sales they gave us:—

		<i>Cereals</i>	<i>Fabrics</i>	<i>Value in Yen</i>
1950	...	117,000 lbs.	2,200 ft.	220 million
1951	...	174,000 lbs.	16,000 ft.	540 million
1952	...	371,000 lbs.	57,000 ft.	970 million

It is worth noting that the advance made in those three years consisted not only in the quantity of grain sold, but also in improved quality. Thus in 1950 there were 37,000 lbs. of first-quality grain used as foodstuffs against 80,000 lbs. of second-quality. In 1952, these figures were reversed: the peasants bought 323,000 lbs. of first-quality against 48,000 of the inferior sort.

Moreover, since 1950 the peasants have had loans worth 17 million yen through the co-operative for the purchase of fertilisers, 12 million yen for seed-purchases, and a further 125 million yen for livestock.

By 1952, money loans were no longer needed. The peasants had enough to finance their own purchases.

The co-operative also helps the peasants to sell their produce. Thus in 1950 it sold 6,000 lbs. of wheat for them; in 1951, 24,000 lbs., and 48,000 lbs. in 1952.

In the village of Kao Kang, near Mukden, you find the same pattern. This village consists of 167 families. Before the liberation,

the landowners and rich peasants, who formed eight per cent. of the population, owned 88.7 per cent. of the land. High rents and crippling taxes reduced the villagers to wretched poverty. Out of a harvest of 27 picles, for instance, 13 picles would go to the landlord, six in agricultural taxes, two in general taxes, and a further one in various gifts to the landlord and his representatives. So only five were left over for the peasants, who had to live wretchedly, on credit. After the agrarian reform, all this changed. Everyone received about three mows of land, and the feudal landlord's farm implements were requisitioned. The heavy rents were abolished. Houses were built, wells sunk, mutual aid teams set up. The peasants could buy clothes (three suits every year, one peasant told me; and you realise what that means when you know that before the liberation a man used to inherit his rags and tatters from his father). They could eat their fill. Songs and laughter could be heard, coming from the magnificent six-year school that had been built. (We visited it later on.) Two producers' co-operatives were already functioning, with a membership of 115 families or 68 per cent. of the population. Rationalisation and the pooling of holdings had enabled the peasants to increase production, reclaim waste land, and economise human labour. 2,239 work-days of hard field labour had been saved, and this had made it possible to build a collective stable, seven sheds, and three crèches; to buy fertilisers and insecticides; to sink five wells; and still to have a surplus of 100 million yen which was shared out among the co-operative members, each according to the work he had done.

We visited a stable of 18 sturdy little rough-haired Manchu horses; we stopped to look at the rubber-tired carts, the automatic seeders, the modern ploughs. Two tractors have been allotted to these co-ops, and in the shed we noticed a threshing machine, all new and shiny, which the peasants stroked lovingly. From the ceiling hung an ancient primitive Chinese drum, its red paint washed out and its skin horny with age. How old was it? A century, maybe. Once again, past and future clash in contrast.

## A DIGRESSION . . . TO INDIA

IN THE INTERVAL since our last trip on the train, our train life had become organised. Our rooms were particularly comfortable. I say "rooms" because that is the only word I can use for these compartments. Each has two beds, and a table that you could convert into a toilet-table, but which was now loaded with far more cigarettes, sweets and fruit than we could get through. There is one particularly tasty fruit which I am crazy about. It is rather like a fig but with a thick rough skin which peels off easily and reveals a juicy flesh that tastes something like a black grape.

We are getting to know one another, to understand and respect one another in spite of differences in language, dress and political and

philosophical opinions. We begin to realise that among honest militants who are sincerely devoted to the working class, to the people, minor disagreements give way before common ideas, judgments and feelings.

Union leaders who have taken opposite sides at times find themselves getting together here. They live and take their meals together and get into conversation through force of circumstances; in this way they make the astonishing discovery that there is common ground between them, that there are possibilities for association, for unity, based on the will of their members.

It's rather like families that have been sulking at one another for years. In the end, nobody any longer remembers what it is all about, but they go on irritating one another, and grievances pile up, until something happens which shows up the idiocy of their fratricidal guerilla warfare. Then prejudices collapse, and people open their eyes. How often I have heard a conversation end with some member of a union that is not in the W.F.T.U. exclaiming, "But I never knew *that* was your policy. I agree with you, we're after the same thing."

Explain, explain again, keep on explaining, refute patiently, one by one, all the slanders of enemy propaganda, keep going back to actual experience, to facts, to the expressed will of the masses! What a long way we still have to go along this path!

Will you, my Indian friends, deny it? You, with whom we had such passionate arguments of an evening, when, after some long visit or other we used to sit around and chat over a smoke—you people who looked like Magi in your white robes, and we in our light Chinese dress which was so kindly given us?

You used to tell us about the developing economic crisis in your country, about the way the standard of life was being pressed down to starvation level, and the more and more frequent laying-off of workers. You would tell us, too, about the growing movement of the workers: 54 big strikes between November, 1952, and February, 1953, especially in Bihar and West Bengal—13 of them in the textile industry—involving 90,000 men and women workers. Then there were nine strikes in heavy industry, eight in public services, three in education, and so on.

But above all you told us of the workers' thirst for unity. For instance, wasn't it in Bengal that there was a wide movement against redundancy, with the A.I.T.U.C., the U.T.U.C., the independent unions, the Communist Party, the Socialist Parties, etc., all taking part?

In addition, there was a conference on February 21, which brought together 788 delegates from 196 unions and 41 organisations of peasants, women, students and intellectuals. It elected a Provincial Committee and recommended the formation of united local committees to take any necessary action.

Another example was the recent united strike in Calcutta against the increase in tram fares decided on by the British Tram Company. This movement resulted in broad, vigorous mass action and united





**A magnificent symbol of unity. At the end of the journey through China, Sibnath Banerjee, in the name of all the Indian trade union organisations, thanks the Chinese trade unions, and calls for trade union unity. From left to right: Sibnath Banerjee (Hind Mazdoor Sabha), S. Pramanik (United Trade Union Congress), S. Yusuf (All India Trade Union Congress), S. Guruswami (Southern Railway Employees' Union), B. Rajderkar (President of the Teachers' Association of Northern Bombay)**

activity between most of the trade union organisations. In this respect it was very significant. The Indian working class and the Indian people want an improved standard of living and the extension of their trade union and democratic rights. At the same time they want their country to continue to play the important role which it played in connection with the cessation of hostilities in Korea. The Indian working class passionately desires the closest links to be forged, or re-forged, between the workers of all countries, for the defence of peace and for the workers' rights. That is why the Indian masses have this passionate desire for unity.

T. Parmanand a member of the Executive of the United Trades Union Congress, said to me, "We must not only put an end to the split among the Indian unions, which does not help anyone except the reactionary, pro-imperialist forces; it's also obvious that many of the Trade Union Federations are fighting along similar lines to those of the W.F.T.U., and that is why we must make known the character and aims and results of the Third World Congress of Trade Unions."

"Trade union unity is the most immediate problem in India," said

S. Yusuf, the courageous and likeable militant who leads the A.I.T.U.C. delegation, in his speech on the Third Congress. "I assure you that the A.I.T.U.C. will work towards this with all its might, for this question is decisive for the success of trade unionism."

Speaking of the Third Congress, S. Pramanik, leader of the U.T.U.C. delegation, added: "Internationally speaking, the unhappy fact is that although in 1945 practically all the national trade union centres in the different countries were agreed on the formation of a single international body under the name of the W.F.T.U., in the interests of working class unity against the capitalists and the imperialists, a number of them have left the W.F.T.U. and once more created a rival international body. Militant and progressive unions which feel themselves cut off from the W.F.T.U. ought to be able to take part in its councils so as to defend their common class interests. . . ."

And S. Guruswami, President of the Southern Railway Employees' Union, was able to say: "If the order of the day for the workers of the world, "Unite!", is to have any meaning, every effort ought to be made to ensure that honest trade unionists, the organised workers in the two groups of countries, should meet one another, and come together, for a better understanding of their difficulties and with the aim of solving them."

Isn't this a symptom of the will to unity which is today growing in the world at an unprecedented rate?

## THE NEW SONG OF THE YUNGTING RIVER

NEAR PEKING there is a river. This river has a story, which is no fairy tale. It has behaved very badly, like many of the rivers of China. Six hundred and fifty kilometres long, it used to get into terrible rages as a result of its steep fall, the wild country through which it flowed, the climate, and the distribution of the rainfall. It caused catastrophic floods, when its waters inundated areas of up to two thousand square kilometres, ravaging the crops and covering the fields with sand; sometimes it would go to the length of flooding the town of Tientsin at its mouth, as it did in 1917 and in 1939. It should never have been called Yungting, which means "eternal stability," but rather "the unstable one."

Anyway, the Chinese people especially the liberated peasants found they had had enough of the Yungting. They had tamed the River Houai; they decided to tame the Yungting.

The government at once granted a sizeable sum, and the great work started.

To tame the Yungting, a huge system of three interlinked reservoirs have to be constructed. The biggest of these will have a capacity of 2 billion 270 million cubic metres. That isn't child's play.

We went over by car one fine day in May. The wind and the



## BUILDERS OF THE NEW CHINA

wheels raised clouds of dry, reddish dust, which forced us to keep our mouths and noses covered with cotton masks, fastened to our ears, so that we all looked like surgeons.

The scenery here is cyclopean. There is no water (for either the river overflows its banks or else it disappears) and the earth is parched. Many of the mud huts have been abandoned. A camel train on the horizon adds to the impression that one is in the desert.

Now, all this is going to be changed. To-morrow, the dams will be finished, lakes will have appeared, the miracle will be accomplished. The water will shoot forward over the earth like a silver dragon, a symbol of power and riches. Golden harvests will be raised. Electric power will come to lighten the peasant's toil. Electric tractors will plough the heavy furrows. A new era will arise, an era the Chinese peasant had never dreamed of. Such is the powerful idea that is rousing all these thousands of people, mobilising them for titanic labours in the midst of the blinding sandstorms whipped up by the hurricanes blowing from Mongolia.

The minute you get out of the car, the scene thrills you. The howling of the wind as it sweeps through the gorge, and the whistling of the sand, now mingle with the dull thudding of a full chorus of drums, beaten by the young people who are there to greet us in their national costume. In their eyes is that indescribable joy that I have never seen anywhere except in China.

Here we are now, on the site. They have rigged us out with glasses and cotton "muzzles," but the fine sand soon penetrates this protection. And so we climb, protected from the wind by the walls of the gorge, and suddenly we are out above the dam.

Picture thousands upon thousands of workers, peasants, in single file, each carrying over his shoulder the characteristic balance-pole with a basket at each end, loaded with earth for making the river bed. It is like a gigantic human anthill. The storm rages, the sand swirls, lashes their faces, blinds them. Impassively, masked and goggled, the porters continue to bear their baskets of earth, like treasure, one behind the other.

Bit by bit the earth piles up, the river bed levels off. Further on, the dam begins to arise, and the water starts to growl in its concrete tunnel.

Here are the Soviet bulldozers, packing the earth. A few more weeks of effort and this great work will be done. Tomorrow the land will be fertile. Tomorrow there will be electricity, and industry coming to the aid of agriculture.

Let the scribblers and lie-mongers of the capitalist press stare! What is it that can mobilise and discipline and turn into heroes these countless people and guide them towards happiness, these people who yesterday were crushed down?

There is a name for it. Its name is Socialism.

THE DOOR OF THE metal cab clanged to with a frightful clatter. The black wall began to slide past like a conveyor-belt. A cold dampness took the place of the heavy heat of the surface. A hundred metres . . . two hundred . . . the lift slipped through the blackness. The only gleams of light came from our electric lamps, which were fastened to our helmets and powered by batteries suspended from our belts.

Slow. A barely perceptible bump. More clanging. In the lamplight appear the palid faces of Joseph Starobin, the American journalist, Felice Chilanti, the Italian journalist, and Marcel Dufriche, the member of the Executive of the French C.G.T. We are swallowed up into the gallery. We are nearly 400 metres under the good Chinese earth, in the Lon Fon coal mine in Manchuria.

This isn't something that happens every day.

A little electric train is waiting for us. We get in, and the convoy moves off.

"Feels like the Paris Metro," Joseph Starobin mutters to me. It does indeed. The gallery is high, and, oddly enough, completely lit up by neon tubes. You may well call the thought ridiculous, but the word that comes into one's head here is—cleanliness.

This is due partly to the modern fittings, which are irreproachable, and partly to the absence of dust. As far as I can judge, as a layman, the lack of dust is the result of the humidity, and the nature of the coal here.

Now we step on to the ground again, and go down a slight incline by a little wooden stairway which takes us 60 metres lower.

"Nikoa!" The first Chinese miner, pick in hand, stands before us, smiling broadly. And that was how we made contact with these men who in China are one of the vanguard detachments of the working class, as they are all over the world.

The Chinese working class. From Peking to Mukden, from Mukden to Nanking, from Nanking to Shanghai, and to Tientsin, we had seen it in action, with its drive and its enthusiasm, master, now, of its fate.

What tremendous prospects there are before it! But what hard work as well!

You have to realise where this country has come from. China was a semi-colonial country, and essentially agricultural. Before the war, the total value of its means of production to the total value of industrial production, did not exceed 5.5 per cent. Only in the regions annexed by the Japanese was there the beginning of heavy industry, particularly in the north-east, in Manchuria, at Tientsin and Peking. These Japanese factories were in any case prisons rather than factories. They were surrounded with barbed wire and machine guns that could spit death at a moment's notice. The workers were treated worse than beasts of burden. Apart from this embryonic heavy industry, there was only some light industry, mainly in textiles; this was at a low level of development relative to the general economy, and

was subject to all kinds of speculation on the part of the imperialists and the Kuomintang.

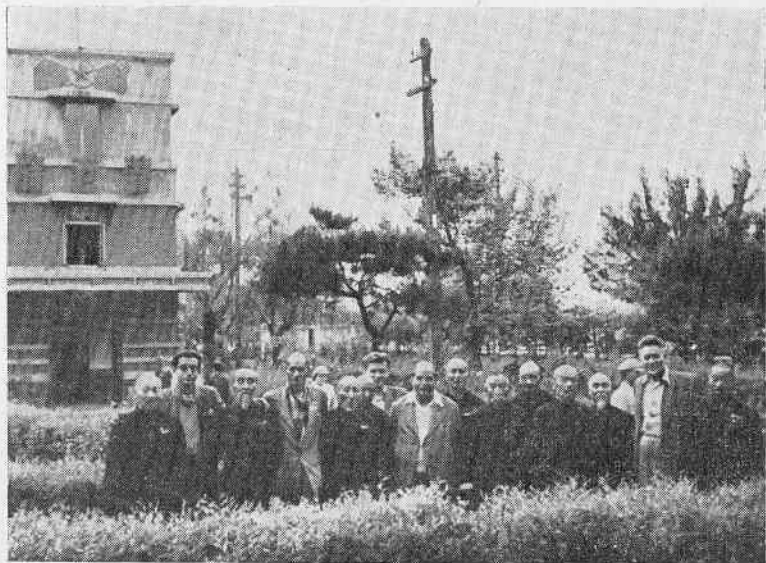
At the time of the liberation, industrial production was running at not more than half its pre-war volume. Coal production had dropped 50 per cent.; iron and steel, 80 per cent.; textiles 25 per cent. But in 1952, industrial production as a whole had not only been restored to pre-war level, but had surpassed it. Between 1950 and 1952, the total industrial production of China more than doubled in value.

What made this possible? The fact that, at the very moment when agrarian reform was liberating 400 million peasants, the Chinese nation became the owner of all the big industrial and commercial enterprises, banks, and means of communication, and drove bureaucratic capital from the field.

The Central People's Government got down to developing the State sector of the economy, and strengthening its leading role in the national economy. Within three years, the State sector had become the dominating one in industry, transport, finance, foreign trade, and wholesale home trade. In 1952, it accounted for more than 60 per cent. of industrial production (not counting artisan production), and 80 per cent. of heavy industry.

All the banks are under State control. The People's Bank of China accounts for 90 per cent. of all deposits and credits. It issues currency, and guarantees fiduciary issues. The railways, and 60 per cent. of all other forms of transport, belong to the State.

**The Indian and Polish delegations with old miners at the Fou Choun Rest Home**



**Louis Saillant looks surprised at the automatic milling machine**

The State, that is the people, led by the working class, also controls foreign trade. And though a mere three per cent. of retail trade was in the hands of the State in 1952, all wholesale trade in wheat, cotton, copper, fabrics, raw materials and commodities for export was State-conducted.

The leading role of the State sector is the decisive factor not only in the rapid rehabilitation of China's economy and in the rise in production, expansion of industry, and general raising of living standards for the masses, but also in the step by step advance to Socialism.

Today, People's China has reached a major turning point in her history. The key question is the problem of building a powerful, modern heavy industry by which the country can be radically transformed from an agricultural to an industrial power. That is what will lay the basis for the building of Socialism.

To this end, China has undertaken a huge construction plan, which has been made possible by agrarian reform and the consolidation of the State sector, with its socialist character and its leading role in the country's economic life.

The first Chinese Five Year Plan has begun. Chou En-Lai defined its tasks at the 4th meeting of the Chinese National Committee at Peking (February 4 to 17, 1953):

"In 1953, the first year of the Five Year Plan, our industry and agriculture will make a significant increase in production as compared with 1952. Basing our calculations on the 1952 plan forecasts and on the provisional 1953 plan, we may estimate that industrial and agricultural production will reach the following levels for

the main items during 1953 (taking 1952 as 100): cast-iron 114 per cent.; steel ingots 123 per cent.; coal 100 per cent.; electric power 127 per cent.; crude petroleum 142 per cent.; copper 139 per cent.; lead 149 per cent.; zinc 154 per cent.; machine tools 134 per cent.; caustic soda 131 per cent.; cement 117 per cent.; timber 138 per cent.; spun cotton 109 per cent.; cotton goods 116 per cent.; paper 106 per cent.; sugar 123 per cent.; cereals 109 per cent.; raw cotton 116 per cent.; tea 116 per cent.

"Parallel with the strengthening of industry and agriculture, the plan provides for increases in the allocations for social and cultural needs, and for education, which will bring them 55.86 per cent. above the 1952 level; investment in transport and means of communication will be stepped up by 64.97 per cent., and in irrigation by 12.8 per cent. These figures show that from the very start our national construction plan is a far-reaching one. It sets us magnificent and glorious tasks; but, at the same time, it presents plenty of difficulties."

Chia To-fu, Chairman of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the Administrative Council of the Government, said in his Report to the 7th Congress of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions:

"In 1953, the first year of our Five Year Plan, the total value of industrial production will increase by 23 per cent., and the production of nationalised industries by 32 per cent., compared with 1952."

Ivan Goroshkin, head of the Soviet delegation, with an old miner at the Fou Choun Rest Home



There is no question but that the essential condition for the realisation of such a programme is that the whole strength of the working class should be mobilised, with the workers seeing clearly that it is for themselves that they are working now.

Wherever we went we found this magnificent awakening of consciousness, these achievements of the working class in the leadership of the Chinese nation. We found them in the Fou Choun mine, in the synthetic petrol factory, in the engineering shops at Mukden, in the printed stuffs factory at Shanghai, in the automatic casting works and even in the great Chensing textile factory which is run by a capitalist.

To realise how much has been accomplished, one needs to know the state of these enterprises when liberation took place. At Mukden, for example, when the Liberation Army freed the town in 1948, they found the Kuomintang had destroyed all the best machines, as well as the buildings. The workers had been scattered by starvation. In their fury at defeat the Kuomintang men were carrying out this sort of sabotage, to some extent all over the country, and protection of material against sabotage became an important aspect of the workers' fight.

So what happened? Here is a little story which is something more than a symbol.

In one of the big textile factories at Shanghai which we visited, the workers managed to conduct a strike of unusual strength and determined heroism, in spite of the enemy's tanks and guns, right through the days just before the liberation. On the very day of liberation, these workers spontaneously stepped-up production.

This is no isolated example. The Mukden machine factory has not only been rebuilt since 1949, but today has exceeded its pre-war level of production; following Soviet examples, it is now moving towards semi-mechanisation.

At the open cast mine at Fou Choun, 1952 production was 454 per cent. of pre-war, and productivity 240 per cent. The price of coal has gone down 62 per cent. since 1949.

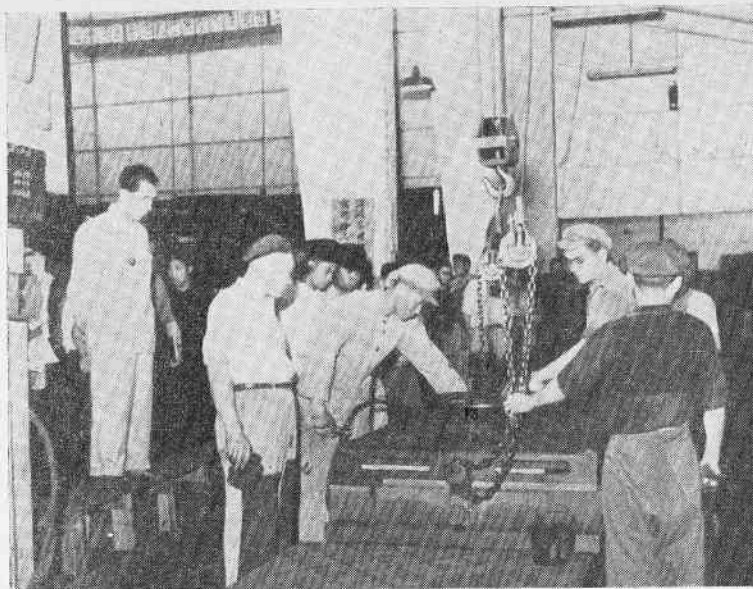
The Shanghai printed stuffs factory has doubled production since the liberation. The automatic castings works has multiplied production by 4.4 per cent., and the textile factory by 40 to 45 per cent. All in all, apart from coal, the level of production is the highest China has ever attained in her whole history.

Compared with 1949, cast iron production has increased by 7.5 per cent., steel by 9.4 per cent., coal by 2 per cent., petrol by 3 per cent., cement by 3.5 per cent., cotton goods by 2.3 per cent., etc.

How has this been done? First, by a mass movement given impulsion by the trade unions, which act as a transmission belt between the party of the working class, and the mass of the workers.

No production plan is put into operation without the masses having first been informed of every minutest detail, without their having discussed it and made their own proposals; so that by a dialectical process the plan becomes their own, the concrete expression of their





With the Shanghai metal workers

will and of their knowledge that they are working for themselves.

This way of discussing and adopting plans is the exact opposite of what the capitalist press tries to make people believe in—the worker-robot, hypnotised by rhythmic compulsions.

When the workers adopt a plan, whether nationally or in an individual enterprise, it is the result of a long discussion of proposals and counter-proposals, through which the humblest apprentice learns to foresee the future—that is, to become a ruler of the State.

It is this new consciousness, combined with unprecedented technical advance, that accounts not only for the efforts the workers make, but also for their search for ways of increasing production by rationalisation. Thus in three years alone, 489,000 rationalisation proposals have been put forward by the workers themselves. “Organise socialist competition,” said Lai Jo-yu, President of the All China Federation of Trade Unions; in other words, draw the broad masses into participating in the running of the enterprise. That is the most practical form of communist education.”

### “THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER EVERY DAY”

“IN ORDER TO KEEP raising the level of consciousness of the masses,” Lai Jo-yu said, “it is necessary to pay constant attention to the

workers’ living standards and well-being; that is the living proof that history is developing in the direction of a happy future. Secondly, the working masses must be tirelessly educated in the spirit of communism; the communist outlook must be linked with their personal experience, so that the ideological level may be continually raised. The worker’s individual interests must be integrated with the interests of the whole people and of the State.”

What does “paying constant attention to the workers’ living standards and well-being” mean?

It means, for instance, that the workers in the automatic casting works get wages which enable them to keep bank deposits; a thing that is absolutely unheard-of in the whole history of the Chinese working class. 1,700 million yen have already been deposited by the workers of this plant.

That is the first point. But though wages have in general risen by from 60 to 120 per cent. in comparison with 1942 in the nationalised enterprises, there are plenty of other matters that must be taken into account. There are the various bonuses which the workers earn; bonuses for economies in the use of raw materials, bonuses for rationalisation proposals, bonuses for work competition, and so on. And there is the fact that the worker’s life, his or her health, and that of their families is protected, in striking contrast to the old days, when the workers were treated like cattle if they were not being tortured, massacred or shot at the first sign of rebellion.

The open cast mine at Fou Choun







**The Australian and Polish delegations with Chinese children**

And what does that mean, that their lives are "protected"? In the Shanghai printed stuffs factory, all the machines are fitted with a casing and exhaust pipes, so that the odours from the dyes do not spread through the shop. In the Shanghai factory where they make textile machinery, all the sawdust and shavings are cleared away by a suction device the moment they leave the wheel or the saw, and the visitor feels that he is walking through a well-swept office rather than a joiner's shop.

What is more, mechanisation had already begun, though it is still in its early days. Thus, in the same factory, the process for casting iron moulds is now completely mechanised. The dust-creating business of mixing, which is necessary in order to make the mould, is done automatically, and the mould is pressed by machinery without any effort on the part of the worker. The casting is also automatic. The worker has only to supervise the process, so to speak. It is worth noting that all the machines used in these processes are of Chinese manufacture. The increasing use of Chinese machines in the factories is one of the signs of the great change that has come over the country.

The worker is protected, and his toil is being made lighter. There is a third thing. Let us take another example from this same textile machinery works. They have a consumer co-operative which supplies the workers at prices 10 per cent. lower than those in town; three crèches, games rooms, basket-ball, dance-halls, a theatre, a library, evening classes; two dispensaries, with seven doctors, three

chemists, and ten nurses; in addition to this, they have signed agreements with 26 hospitals to provide for all cases which call for more serious medical attention. An ultra-modern rest-house in the country is at the disposal of the workers.

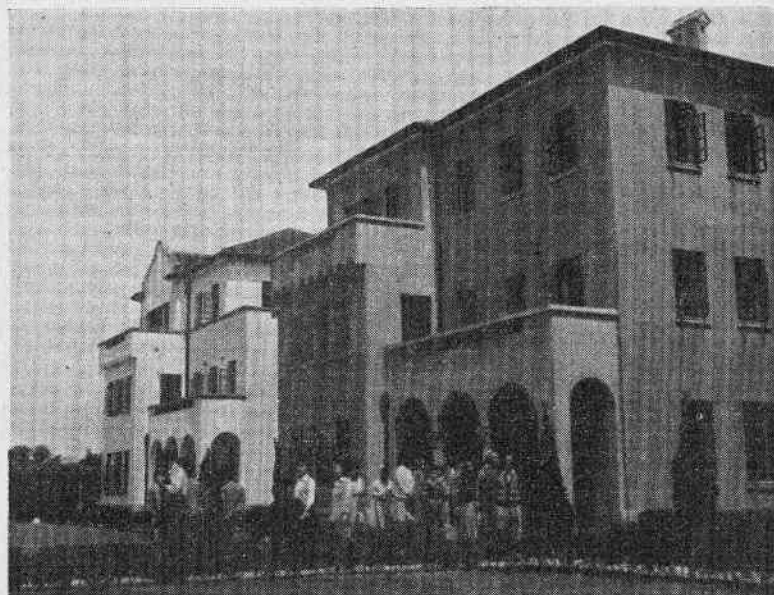
Such are the radical changes which have been brought about in the lives of the Chinese workers. It is their awareness of these changes, which are developing all the time, that gives them such astonishing dash in their organised socialist competitions; this is what guarantees the building of New China.

## THE RIGHT TO LEISURE

WHILE WE ARE SPEAKING of these changes, it is worth noting what the application since 1951 of social insurance has meant to this previously semi-feudal country.

Every enterprise that employs more than 100 workers has a Social Insurance Committee. All the funds are provided by the management and employers. The risks covered are births, sickness, old age, death, accidents and disablement. Total expenditure on these insurances is constantly growing. Hence the continual increase in the number of hospitals, dispensaries and sanatoria, and the development of the social services in China.

**One of the wonderful rest homes**



Come with us, if you like, in the car that is waiting for us outside the Hotel King-Kong. The hotel is a sort of sky-scraper from which you can see the whole of Shanghai.

With a great deal of hooting, we nose our way through traffic arteries crowded with taxis, in which sit the fashionable, allowing themselves to be admired with a quietly ironical air. We travel quickly along the Soutchou Creek, and a dismal scene unfolds before us—junk dwellings, motionless amid sickening smells. Then we are in the suburbs, with their low-built houses, if you can call these wretched hovels houses; anyway, tens of thousands of men, women and children still live in them.

The car suddenly stops. And once again, there is the sharp contrast between past and future before our eyes: we have arrived at the Shanghai Workers' Sanatorium.

This rest-house is primarily for convalescents and people who are run down. It has 160 beds. When we were there, 142 of these were occupied.

The buildings are grouped around a spacious lawn with banks of flowers. They remind one not so much of a convalescent home, still less a hospital, as of a block of charming villas.

The workers, men and women, are at recreation, seated in a circle on the grass. At our approach they get up and rush forward to clasp our hands; they have the same happy faces that we have met all over China.

When we get inside, we find that our impression of comfort is justified. The rooms are spacious, the beds white and furnished with mosquito-nets. There are flowers.

The workers pay only a third of the expense; the rest is covered by social insurance.

Here is the menu for the day we were there:

Breakfast: eggs, cucumber, soup.

Lunch: chicken, stuffed eggs, French beans; liver soup. (In China they eat soup at the end of a meal.)

Dinner: kidneys, green vegetables, tomatoes, fish soup.

We questioned some of the patients. One of them was a film worker who had had a stomach operation and was now convalescing. He told us: "I've been here a month, and I can get an extension if my condition warrants it. My family is able to visit me every day, but they come mainly on Sundays, because we have to be careful of the tiring effect of too many visits."

"For us," he said, "it's really extraordinary to think that places like this nowadays belong to the workers."

"How does one get into one of these sanatoria?" we asked. The answer was that first of all the unions are informed how many places are available; then the unions, as the representatives of the workers, with whom they are in close touch, make their proposals as to who should go. In this way any danger of injustice or favouritism is cut

out. It really is the workers themselves who run their own social services.

It's a fine example of democracy, you workers of the colonial and semi-colonial countries who are denied even the shadow of any real social security!

## IN A FACTORY—BUT A CAPITALIST ONE

WE HAVE SHOWN that the struggle to increase production *in a country where the people, the working class, is in power*, depends in the last resort on the permanent well-being of the masses. That is why in China this struggle is waged not only in the State enterprises, but also in those which are still run by capitalists who belong to the national bourgeoisie.

Such factories exist, and it is understandable that they should. Remember that in the struggle for national independence the Chinese bourgeoisie were not all of one mind. The compradores (capitalists who bought and sold on behalf of the imperialists), the four great families (Chen, Kung, Soong, Chiang Kai-Shek), servants of the imperialists who built their colossal millionaire fortunes on the backs of the people, these, quite simply, betrayed China. They have been removed.

But another section of the bourgeoisie, correctly understanding their own interests, ranged themselves with the people in the struggle against imperialism and sided with the development of Chinese industry and commerce. Today, the fact that they did so is of value to the country's national economy; that is, it profits everybody. It is these capitalists who are called the "national bourgeoisie".

"The State economy of the Republic of New Democracy, under the leadership of the proletariat," wrote Mao Tse-Tung, "is socialist in character. But this Republic does not confiscate the private property of capitalists and does not forbid development of capitalist production, so long as it does not control the economic life of the country. This is *because of the still low stage of development of the Chinese economy.*" (On New Democracy.)

The whole problem in fact is how to "turn to advantage all the capitalist elements in town and country which are of use to the national economy and do not prejudice the people's standard of living." (Mao Tse-Tung, Dictatorship and People's Democracy.)

This is the foundation for a correct policy of a united front of the working class, the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie, which constitute the four component parts of the Chinese people, and are symbolised by the four yellow stars on the national flag.

How does this policy work out in practice? What is the role of the union in a capitalist's factory? That is what we wanted to find out when we went to visit the Chen Sing textile factory at Shanghai. Six thousand men and women workers! Mr. Yung I Yen, the young

owner, is no petty capitalist. He owns nine other textile factories of this kind. He inherited them from his father, against whom the workers waged some hard battles—especially the heroic strike of January 1948, when the workers occupied the factory.

I visited the huge workshops in the company of the Director and the Secretary of the trade union branch. One's attention is caught straight away by a kind of triumphal arch in the yard. When I asked what it was for, the union Secretary told me: "This is the place where one time they used to search the women workers before they left the premises, which was intolerably humiliating for the women. Now, that's all over, the workers are in power. They've built this arch as a symbol of the changes that have taken place, and they call it the Victory Gate."

I went on questioning him as we went from one workshop to another. The workers' own drive has raised the production of yarn by 40 per cent. and cloth by 45 per cent. since the liberation. What about wages? Thanks mainly to price stabilisation, purchasing power has almost tripled.

Moreover, the workers have gained all sorts of other advantages. I noticed first of all the careful attention that is paid to safety and health. There is a perfect air-conditioning system, and vacuum dust-absorbers, transmission belt protectors, and so on are installed everywhere. I was taken to the polyclinic, an attractive place, with its flower-decked rooms furnished with blue tubular beds and bedside tables with vases of flowers on them. The women can come and rest here when they are feeling unwell. Forty-one doctors and nurses are at their disposal. The factory has also two other rest-houses, making a total of 116 beds.

To help workers who are mothers, there is a big crèche, which at present looks after 380 children, and a nursery school with 656 children. And that is not all; I went into a hairdresser's shop and a dressmaker's for the women workers.

There is a large dormitory for girls who live at a distance, and a spacious canteen serves cheap meals for anybody who wants them.

My companion laughed at my astonishment. I asked who ran these services. "The union, of course."

"Are there many trade union members?" "Six thousand, with a democratically elected shop committee in every shop." "And do you owe all these gains to your union?" "Yes and no. Once again, you mustn't forget that the people and the working class are in power in China; and therefore no other policy is open to anyone except one which leads to the raising of the workers' standard of life, proportionately with the rise in production. The part the unions play . . ." "Yes, what part does your branch play for instance?" "First of all, it looks to production, for that represents the fundamental interest of the working class. The shop committee discusses the plan put forward by the State for our factory with all the workers. It struggles to realise and even surpass this plan."

I noticed the phrase "it struggles". The point is that all this is no idyll, but often, in some factories, a real battle against the capitalists' attempts to hold back production, export their capital abroad, lock out their workers and close down the canteens, and so on.

That is why, as Lai Jo-Yu said: "Capitalists who break the law, oppress their workers, and undermine working class unity, must be kept under the control of the masses. We must fight them when necessary. Trade unions in private enterprise establishments must constantly teach the workers to maintain political class vigilance and keep their leading trade union bodies free from corruption."

When I remarked that there didn't seem to be any fight going on here, the Director replied: "It's very simple. We know quite well that we, as capitalists, are going to disappear. The day is getting nearer all the time when socialism will be finally established in China. That's not the question. We are patriots. Today we are serving our country. Shall we not be able to serve her just as well tomorrow under a socialist system of production? And as for our children, isn't their future assured under socialism? Well then . . ."

Mr. Li Chu-Chan, President of the Association of Industrialists and Merchants of China, who is himself a big chemical manufacturer, told the Italian journalist Felice Chilanti: "Every industrialist and businessman in China ought to realise that today there is a People's Democracy in our country and that one day socialism will come. Those who are working best today will have earned the recognition of their services by the people tomorrow." Wise words. I think certain people might well think them over.

## ASIA AWAKENED

ONE THING THAT HAS always struck me on my visits to various countries, is that people (I am thinking of workers) are astonishingly alike. The movements of a turner in Peking are just like the movements of a turner in Sheffield. The wrinkled, weather-beaten faces of peasants are the same in France and in Indonesia. A mother's look of love as she offers her breast to her baby is the same anywhere in the world. And the worries and struggles and hopes of peoples still under the dictatorship of capital are also the same everywhere.

You may say that I have discovered a self-evident truth. So I have. But one shouldn't under-estimate capitalist propaganda aimed at splitting the peoples of the world. In capitalist countries imperialist propaganda is peculiarly false and insidious right from the school-room. The people's minds are assaulted right from infancy by a false literature which is supposed to be 'exotic', and which seeks through the myth of the 'savage' to justify shameless and bloodthirsty plundering by the imperialists.

The struggle against racial discrimination ought therefore to be tirelessly and ceaselessly kept up by the trade unions. This struggle





**Delegates from various Indonesian organisations reading a joint appeal for a workers' United Front. On the left, A. M. Datuh (from the Indonesian Trade Union Federation not affiliated to the W.F.T.U.). Beside him is Tjugito (of the Indonesian Federation of Trade Unions affiliated to the W.F.T.U.)**

is part of the concrete assistance they can bring to the colonial and semi-colonial peoples' fight for their national liberation. Here is the point of that warm, moving feeling of brotherhood which existed between all the delegations during our journey. Here is the point of that friendship and understanding which was forged between us.

In my language, French, the word "understand" (comprendre) means "to take in common": to take in common the same difficulties and worries, the same hopes so as to solve them together.

What a contrast between that May Day 1953 in People's China, and May Day 1953 in those Asian countries which are still under the heel of capitalism.

"You remember," said Hiroki, leader of the Japanese delegation, "you remember the powerful movement of May Day 1952, when the people, the workers, won the right to demonstrate for our national independence, for an end to our country's being used as an American base, for the defence of trade union rights and our economic demands—won it in spite of police, tanks and bullets. Well, again this year, under the leadership of S.O.H.Y.O. More than five million workers took part in demonstrations in more than 410 places up and down the country. Of course, this year too the government mobilised a

mass of armed police and established more than thirty check-points. They declared a state of siege and sent cars and helicopters to intimidate the workers and prevent them celebrating May Day in Tokyo. But in spite of all this more than 500,000 workers took part in the vast demonstration. They demanded that the cease fire in Korea should be followed by the removal of American bases in Japan and the immediate departure of the occupation forces. They marched past with placards calling for 'Friendship with the Soviet Union,' 'Hand in hand with our brothers all over the world,' 'We want peace and independence' and so on.

"Never, never will the Japanese people make war against the other peoples of Asia. Our interests are completely identical with those of our brothers in China, the Soviet Union, and the other countries of Asia and the world. Tell all people this."



"In Indonesia," Tjugito told us, "this May Day is a May Day of struggle, for today, since the Round Table Conference, Indonesia in a new type of colony, in which, the workers are unconditionally exploited. Compared with pre-war, prices of primary necessities have gone up 24.6 times. In 1952, the cost of living was 27 times what it had been before the war, but wages, on the average, had risen only 18.8 times. In 1937, workers' wages covered only 17.6 per cent. of the bare necessities of life; but in 1952, they cover only 16.2 per cent.

"There is no social security. Seventy-five per cent. of the sugar workers, 90 per cent. of the plantation workers, 80 per cent. of the dockers and seamen, and 70 per cent. of all State employees are only part-employed.

"Altogether there are something like 15 million partially or totally unemployed; 9,400,000 of them are peasants and agricultural workers.

"Fifty-five thousand women die in childbirth every year. Six hundred thousand children die every year. In the towns, hundreds of people are living on the bridges, in railway coaches, under gateways. Last year 52,979 people died of hunger, or sold their children to buy rice."



"In Burma," said Thakin Hla Kyway, Vice-President of the Burma T.U.C., "the people's living conditions are getting steadily worse. Average monthly wages are 60 rupees; the minimum wage on which a worker can keep himself and a family is 120 rupees a month. The cost of living index was 526.9 in 1951 if you take 1939 as 100. Social insurance is non-existent, and the people's cultural welfare is neglected. In Rangoon, the capital, nearly 200,000 out of a total population of 711,520 are partly or totally unemployed. In the country, the workers get no wages but are paid in kind, in agricultural



produce, which they have to sell in order to live. Sixty per cent. of the population are under-nourished. There is one hospital bed to every 1,980 people, and one doctor to every 16,580. Tuberculosis, malaria and cholera are rife; infant mortality is 195 per thousand. Seventy per cent. of school-age children do not attend school, for economic reasons or because of the shortage of places.

"The Burmese people and workers are deprived of any real trade union rights and of all basic democratic liberties. Yet in spite of appalling difficulties, their struggle for national independence, better living and working conditions, peace and democracy, is growing stronger, thanks to the steady application of a policy of united action. Quite often, it is the workers who win. Committees for the defence and protection of trade union rights and democratic liberties have been organised in the towns among the workers, peasants, youth, students and patriotic men and women, and their activities are linked with the struggle for national independence, peace and democracy. Peace committees have been set up in the factories, and signatures are being collected for the Five-Power Pact Appeal."



"In Ceylon," said M. G. Mendis, the General Secretary of the Ceylon Trade Union Federation, "May Day was celebrated with unprecedented enthusiasm, according to reports we have had from Colombo, Kandy, Galle, etc. For the first time, the workers responding to the appeal of the Ceylon Trade Union Federation decorated their houses and the streets and public squares with red flags inscribed 'The workers want international unity,' 'We want peace throughout the world' and so on. Colombo especially on this May Day morning had an air of struggle and impressive unity.

"A number of workers took a half day from their employers in order to take part in the demonstration. The Colombo port workers in particular, whose militancy is well known, came to the demonstration. Each group of workers carried its own banner and made the procession a forest of flags. Pieter Keuneman, President of the Ceylon Trade Union Federation, led the demonstration.

The strength of this demonstration is not surprising. Since then the movement in Ceylon has broadened considerably with the introduction of measures which have raised the cost of living. (Postal charges, railway charges, abolition of school dinners, increase in clothing prices, and above all the heavy increase in the price of rice, etc.) These measures, which aim at making the starving people bear the cost of the crisis resulting from the government's policy of surrender to the U.S.A., have aroused tremendous mass protests. One of the most important movements in the history of Ceylon has started, involving tens of thousands of urban workers and also great masses of the peasantry.

Not only has there been a widespread strike movement, but in the

country districts, women have lain in the road to stop the traffic, shouting 'Run over us, we do not want to die of hunger'."

The characteristic of this movement has been the unity achieved from below in the action committees. And this has led further to unity of action between the different trade union organisations. Faced as it is with savage repression, this movement is the proof of the Ceylonese people's will for a better life in conditions of national independence and democratic liberty.



"In Australia," went on G. M. Dawson, member of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, "there are unfortunately serious divisions within the trade union movement. These divisions give the reactionary Menzies Government the opportunity to attack the living standards of the people by organising opposition to every wage increase, despite the constant increase in the cost of living.

"They use police methods to limit the democratic rights which have been gained in struggle, and they attack trade union rights by means of amendments to the laws which guarantee these rights, and particularly by trying to take away from the workers their control over the election of trade union officials.

"But these attacks are being shattered again and again against the rock of the unity which the workers are forming in the factories to withstand and check the government. 1951 saw the example of the possibilities of united action, when the Australian people, Communists, Labourites and non-party people, united to check the government's fascist law compelling the disbandment of progressive organisations.

"In this way the state of mind of the Australian industrial workers is moving towards a wider and firmer unity between all sections of the trade union movement for a better life at the expense of those who are making profits out of war. We must still use understanding and tolerance to bring about unity with other sections of our people, who badly need houses, social services, and better conditions of life, like the small farmers and small businessmen. This we can get above all by developing trade with China and by making use of our national resources for peaceful economic ends instead of for war preparations. There is the widest possible basis for unity."



Every time I meet Tran Bao, President of the Central Council of the Vietnamese C.G.T., a short dark man with a peasant's sturdy physique, and Tran Dai-Nghia, a member of its Executive Committee and one of the greatest working class heroes of this great people, they smile at me and my heart constricts. There is so much friendship, so much confidence, in that smile, which is not for me but for the people of France, the people of France who are struggling to stop

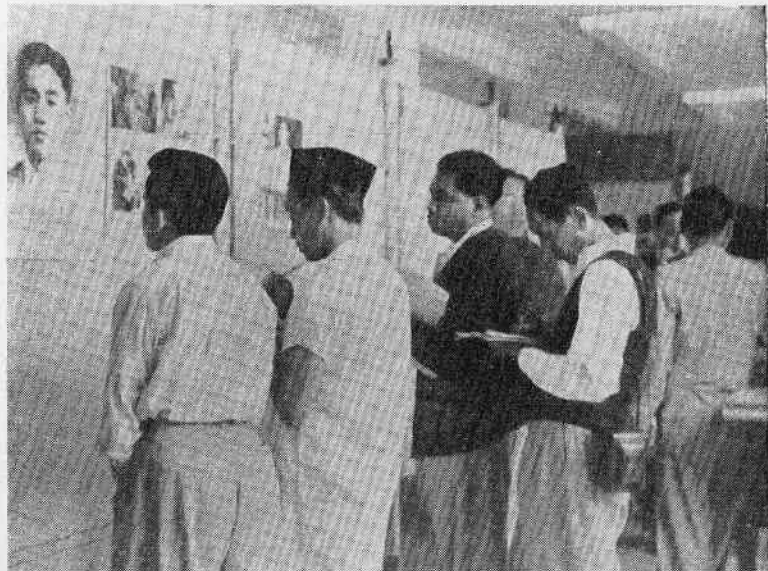
an unjust and fratricidal war; and if the imperialists insist on trying to find a solution to the question of Viet-Nam by continuing the war they should understand that it is already lost. If tears of rage come into one's eyes when one thinks of the criminal stupidity of this war against a people who at heart have a profound love for the people of France, one cannot fail to notice as well that the fire and determination in the eyes of the Vietnamese patriots is the very same as that which burns in the eyes of Bang Tai-Uk, President of the Korean Miners' Union.

It is no accident that on these delegations, the Vietnamese and the Koreans were always together, bound by warm friendship. They have the selfsame guide in their struggle—liberty. The same certainty, which has been confirmed since the Korean armistice, inspires them—the certainty of victory for the forces of peace and democracy.

Since this trip of ours, the Korean people has triumphed. Like the Hitlerite army, the most powerful and most highly mechanised capitalist army, has been smashed on the rocks of the invincible courage of a determined people supported by the Chinese volunteers.

And Viet-Nam? "They will never conquer us. They did not conquer us when our army was still being organised. They did not conquer us when we lacked everything, or nearly everything, that we needed for our struggle—arms, armament industry, adequate commissariat, etc. How can they conquer us now when we have all

**Fraternally united, the Indonesian delegates, representing S.O.B.S.I. and G.S.B.I., learn something of the history of China**



**Chinese and Ceylonese fraternise**

these things, when our army is wonderfully organised, supported by the whole people, and winning victory after victory?

"We have experience on our side, the experience we have inherited from the great People's China through her thirty years of victorious struggle. We have behind us the experience of the Chinese trade unionists, thanks to which we have been able to develop patriotic labour competition at a pace no one would have thought possible; the kind of competition which is founded on wide democracy, and achieves miracles in our factories and forests, just as the peasants achieved miracles in the fields and rice plantations.

"The unity of the Vietnamese people, led by Ho Chi-Min, and of Khmer and Pathet Lao, is indestructible. We will go on fighting as hard and as long as we must. But, no more than the Nazis were able to destroy the people of France, will the French imperialists, who are stupidly trying to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the American imperialists, be able to destroy our people."

The man spoke in a rather low, slow, voice as if he was weighing his words. There was nothing excited about him, only the calmness of strength and certainty and he added: "We do love your people, your culture, your struggles, the General Secretary of the French C.G.T., Alain Le Léap, and your Henri Martin, who are the symbols of our common struggle for our common interests. How beautiful it could be, friendship between a free France and a free Viet-Nam." Wise and human words, a hundred times true. Words that are

beginning to come true now, even in certain French bourgeois circles where the shock of the setbacks they have suffered are making people realise that their interests lie along other paths than those of fire and bloodshed.

You can't turn back the wheel of history. The road which the Vietnamese people have taken is not the one that leads back to colonial slavery. It is the road through national independence towards the ideal of socialism. Nothing now can turn them aside from that road.

## THE CHINESE WOMEN AND YOUTH

ONE OF THE MAIN factors in China's forward march is the women and the youth.

One needs to have seen for oneself in the streets of Peking and other cities those old Chinese women dragging themselves painfully along on feet that have been deformed by arresting their natural growth in childhood. It is enough to know that in old China women were sold as commodities, deprived of all right to choose their husbands or their future, in order to be fired with enthusiasm for what the new Chinese woman has become, the equal of men in every respect.

**Tran Bao, head of the Vietnam delegation with young Chinese friends**



**Louis and Josette Saillant with Marcel Dufriche, surrounded by children in Shanghai**

The marriage law dealt a death blow to the old feudal mentality. Today you will meet Chinese women playing a leading role in all walks of life. They drive locomotives, they are turners, they drive modern tractors. In the universities you can see them leave their books to go and take part in running, jumping, ball games, or to dance those wonderful dances which have come down from old China and have been transformed by socialist ideas. All over the country they get equal pay with men for equal work. They get maternity leave of fifty to seventy days on full pay. Night work is forbidden for pregnant women, and so is overtime if their health is not up to it. Rest rooms for mothers have been installed in some factories. There are buses to bring those who live at a distance to work. In the textile



industry, 60 per cent. of the women are trade unionists and in the teaching profession, 50 per cent. Seventy-six million women take part in the work of the Chinese National Federation of Democratic Women.

And the mothers! I can see them now surrounded by their babies in the fine workers' city which has been built in the suburbs of Shanghai. How proud they were to show us their attractive houses, those spacious houses which are shooting up in China like mushrooms, for there is building going on everywhere. Three hundred and seventeen two-storey houses in the village of Tzao Yen alone, in the suburbs of Shanghai. The plans were discussed with the people who were going to live in them before building was started. Not only have these homes every modern comfort (and it must be remembered what this means to people who have been used to living in mud huts) but the village also contains a kindergarten, a fifteen-class primary school, a co-op, a club, a polyclinic, a rest-house, public baths, etc. How proud they were these Chinese mothers to show us their children, who were so delightfully spontaneous, bursting with health and cleanliness, as they took our hands and surrounded us in a joyful circle.

Little children of China, youth of China, what happy eyes you have! Laughing young faces at the railway stations, serious faces of apprentices bent over their machines! The enthusiasm of the young

Here clean and well-lit houses have replaced the shacks and slums



men and women in the universities of Peking and Mukden! It was all overwhelming.

In the factories, the young people have a different trade union organisation from the adults. But there is a branch of the League of Democratic Youth open to all. And it is enough to see the seriousness and enthusiasm with which the young Chinese are studying, working, building, to realise how true it is that the youth is the future of New China.

## THE BATTLE FOR CULTURE

CHINESE CIVILISATION goes back (and I scarcely exaggerate) to the time when the ancestors of Mr. Foster Dulles were still swinging among the trees. It is true that since then, Mr. Foster Dulles and his peers, who have covered themselves with glory by destroying Korea and whose only dreams are of atomic bombs, have made no technical progress except in barbarism.

China has known printing since the seventh century; yet in this country, where theatrical taste is developed as highly as anywhere else in the world, and where popular traditions in art are marked by grace and delicacy, imperialism had kept the people ignorant. The percentage of illiterates reached the level which the colonial and semi-colonial peoples know to this day. There was a literate aristocracy which, in general, maintained the feudal tradition. Until the movement of the 4th May 1919, which broke out under the inspiration of that great thinker and revolutionary Lu Syn, the literary language was completely unintelligible to the people. Today, the Chinese people, children and adults, are slaking their centuries-old thirst for culture. It has to be seen to be believed, the pride of these little Chinese scholars as they go off to school with their satchels, just like school children anywhere in the world. There isn't a village that hasn't its primary school, and what is more, there isn't a village where this school isn't filled with the sons and daughters of workers and peasants.

Pa Tio, for example—the village we have already spoken about—has a six-year primary school. There are no slummy classrooms; no classrooms which light and air never penetrate, or where the children are crammed sixty and seventy to a class as they still are in Italy and France and Britain. No, these rooms have large bay-windows, they are light and sunny and gay, surrounding a big playground where the boys and girls form circles and sing their "mi, do, do, do, fa, mi, la, la, do, so . . ." in that inimitable accent which makes it so difficult for them to pronounce an "r".

In this particular village school (we saw some that were much better in the new quarters of Shanghai), there are 210 pupils, six teachers, a head teacher, and two domestic staff.

Before the liberation, 30 children in this little district used to go to school. They were all sons and daughters of the feudal land-



Inside a class-room in the village of Kao Kang

owners or of rich peasants. After the liberation, 80. Then came agrarian reform; the numbers rose. In 1950, there were 130 pupils, in 1951 there were 163, in 1952 they achieved the plan target of 210 pupils. And of these 210, 106 are the children of wage-earners or of people who used to be poor peasants.

Why the change? It seems from the basic economic fact of the agrarian reform. Parents no longer have to make their children work in order to avoid starvation.

In 1952, there were more than 40 million school children of both sexes, or as many as the total population of France, and nearly six times the total population of Austria. It's a figure that makes one think.

Apart from the primary schools, the number of secondary and higher technical schools is multiplying. The W.F.T.U. delegation visited the Polytechnic University at Mukden, for example. This ultra-modern University is equipped with the most up-to-date laboratories. It will turn out 1,500 mining, metallurgical, and mechanical engineers, architects and chemists and so on every year. It is growing in step with demand. In 1951 it had 220 students on its register; in 1952, 372; in 1953, 1,050, and they now estimate that it will reach the 6,000 mark.

The remarkable thing is that the students you find here are not all products of the secondary schools, but many of them are men and

women workers who have taken the intensive three-year evening courses which are the people's universities. Thanks to co-ordination of theoretical and practical knowledge, they have succeeded in entering the University itself.

From factory to University! That is a dream that does not come true for millions upon millions of young workers in capitalist countries; and what can one say about the workers and peasants in the colonial and semi-colonial countries who are denied even the elementary apprenticeship of literacy?

But when the people are liberated, everything changes. This Mukden example is not unique. In the suburbs of Shanghai we visited the Institute of Textile Technology. Of 1,631 students, 266 were workers straight from the factory; 28.5 per cent. of them were women.

One question comes to mind: is this opportunity for higher education reserved for an elite?

No. Technical, social and political education is widely distributed among the broad masses of the workers, particularly through the agency of the trade union institutions. Sixteen thousand two hundred and seventy-seven evening courses have already been given. Nearly four million people have attended them. Hundreds of thousands of workers have learnt to read and write; 477,000 have attended technical evening classes, and 56,000 of them have entered the technical colleges as students. Finally, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions' publishing house has brought out 339 publications of various kinds, running to a total of 36 million copies, between September 1949 and March 1953.

These are astonishing figures, which still do not give a true picture. You have to add to them the great numbers of peasant students who turn up on winter evenings at the village school, and whom you find later on in the University lecture rooms.

Then one should mention the libraries, which are multiplying under the impetus of literacy and the people's thirst for reading. One should mention the clubs and houses of culture like the one at Tientsin, where the workers find not only entertainment like games, dancing and so on, but also theatres, cinemas, classes, music, songs, classical dancing and I don't know what.

That is what it means to be a liberated people.

I should add that the theatre, the cinema, and music play an important part in popular education. The number of Chinese people who attend the theatre cannot be explained only by the fact that they love and appreciate it; for centuries, the theatre was the only form of culture accessible to the illiterate masses. The Chinese theatre, with its refined symbolism and actors in richly impressive costumes, is certainly still influenced by medieval ideology. But here too a rapid evolution is taking place. The most popular plays are those in which the people see their own struggle for independence against their tyrants. And a new form of modern drama is being created.

Thus at Nanking we saw a play which was meant to throw into relief the gains won by the marriage laws, and to combat the old prejudices which still obstruct their application in some areas. This play was in a style that was thoroughly imbued with socialist realism.

The Chinese ballet, in which wit and satire mingle with a graceful charm that I have never felt so intensely anywhere else, is another typical example of the drive towards a culture that is "national in form and socialist in content."

Lastly, I must mention the choirs and orchestras. These are combining the classical instruments we know in Europe with ancient Chinese instruments, and giving birth to symphonies which will enrich the cultural treasure house of all the peoples of the world with new great music.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF PEKING

ONE CANNOT SPEAK OF Chinese culture without speaking of Peking University.

To the left of the People's University, a beautiful gateway suddenly discloses to our view a magnificent park, where ancient trees surround a lake. On this lake is a stone boat, which gives one the indefinable feeling that you get from watching a perfectly still bird.

Ma In-Chou, Rector of the University, is waiting for us on the steps. With him is the Vice-Rector, the poet Lo Ta-Kang, who was a student at Grenoble University, and is a sensitive writer in French.

Universities are being built in China as part of the policy of peace



Today he teaches at the University, and produces interpreters as reliable as Yan Tan-Ous and Ou Ka-lya were for us.

In the cool of a reception room, we sit over a cup of Chinese green tea. And with real passion, Ma In-Chou talks to us about the University.

They have twelve faculties, and nearly 4,000 students. They teach all the subjects of a great modern University, including, of course, Marxist political economy. The teaching system is inspired by the Soviet polytechnical method. Moreover, there are one or two Soviet professors on the teaching staff.

"But there's one question that worries us," the Rector told us. "Space! Last year we built 50,000 square metres; this year another 10,000. It's still not enough." And when we seemed surprised, he went on: "Oh yes; Peking has 2,600,000 inhabitants today you know, and there will be five million in the near future. The University will have to cope with all the students who will come out of such an increase in population and out of the Chinese people's desire for learning. We reckon on having around 10,000 young men and women here in five years time."

"And how do they live?"

"Come and see."

Under the thick shade of the great trees, young men and women were stretched out reading, or talking together with the healthy comradeship that is one of the most striking characteristics of the young people of China. A little further on were the sports grounds, for football, volley-ball, tennis, track-racing, and so on. There were gymnasias too, with all the proper equipment.

They greeted us with shouts of pleasure, and with songs. All these young people are full of vitality and self-confidence and zest for life; there is a fire in them that overwhelms you. You feel revitalised and refreshed by the optimism that radiates from these sturdy, boisterous, well co-ordinated bodies and intelligent, laughing faces.

Out of today's China is rising the China of tomorrow, and she is great and joyful, like the future itself.

## TWO DOMINANT IMPRESSIONS

TWO IMPRESSIONS OF New China stand out. First, the unity of the Chinese people around their Communist Party and Mao Tse-Tung; a unity based primarily on the indestructible alliance between workers and peasants, a unity that comes from the prevailing community of interests of the different sections of the Chinese people on their forward march.

The second impression derives from the first: it is the peaceful strength of the Chinese people. They want peace, they want a relaxation of international tension. They need peace as they need water and light. This will for peace of theirs leaps to the eye! It is





**N. Soloviev, a locomotive driver, and member of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., surrounded by Chinese railwaymen**

expressed equally in great political acts, and in the most touching little gestures, like those superbly feathered doves of peace which one finds on the walls of every Chinese house.

This will for peace and for construction, for the new life, is the first rock on which the Chinese people build their strength. The imperialists have already broken their heads on this rock once, in the liberation war. They broke their heads a second time in Korea, when the Chinese Volunteers brought their Korean brothers the inestimable aid of their thirty years experience of armed revolutionary struggle.

Today, thanks to that struggle, thanks to the heroism of the martyred Korean people, thanks to the peace forces which fought for more than three years for the end of hostilities, the armistice has been signed.

As the Executive of the W.F.T.U. declared at its Twenty-third Session (August 1953), "The signing of the Korean armistice is a great victory for the peace forces; it is the result of the struggle waged by the world peace movement, in which the workers have played the leading role. It is the proof that the peoples can impose the peaceful settlement of international differences and oblige warlike governments to solve all the other existing international problems by negotiation."

But, the W.F.T.U. Executive added, "If it is true that some of the

forces making for war, which have been brought to bay, intend to launch brutal provocations in order to set the peoples against one another and let loose a conflict, it is up to the workers to be even more vigilant than ever before . . ."

The imperialist hydra will break all its heads on the rock of this working-class vigilance, if tomorrow it has the madness to snarl in the direction of China. For there is a second rock too on which the Chinese people's strength is founded: the solid friendship they have forged with the Soviet Union.

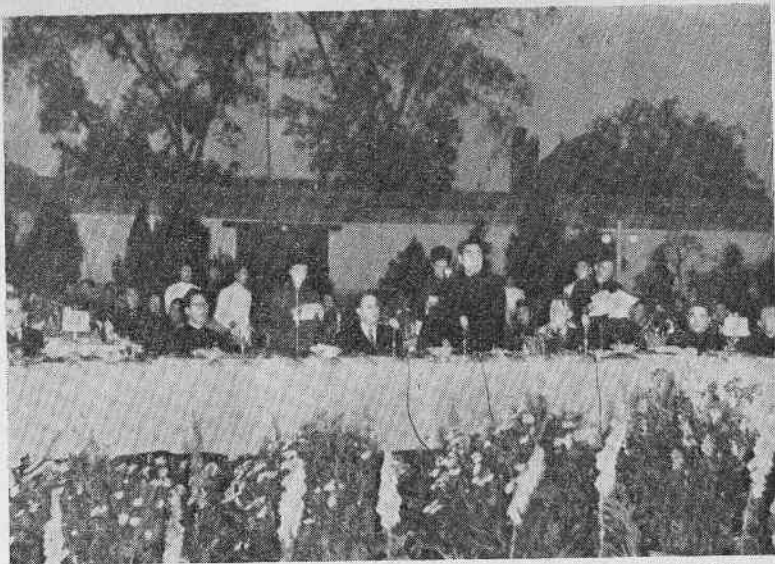
"Chinese-Soviet friendship," said Stalin in his telegram to Mao Tse-Tung on October 1, 1952, "is the rampart of peace and security in the Far East and in the world!"

"The whole world can see that the unity of the great Chinese and Soviet peoples . . . will influence not only the flowering of the two great powers of China and the Soviet Union, but also the future of all humanity, and will lead to the victory of justice and peace in the whole world," wrote Mao Tse-Tung.

One has to travel through China to understand the love the Chinese people bear the Soviet Union. It is an expression of the highest kind of working class internationalism. You have to go through the towns and villages of China to understand the thirst the Chinese people feel for learning from Soviet example, the respect they have for the

**Mao Tse-Tung, surrounded by members of the Chinese Central Government, receives flowers from the hands of young Chinese**





Chou En Lai, Minister for Foreign Affairs, declares the great Chinese people's desire for peace at a reception held for the foreign delegations. On his left is Louis Saillant, General Secretary of the W.F.T.U., and on his right Ivan Goroshkin, head of the Soviet delegation

Soviet Union and its great leaders, for Lenin and Stalin, those giants of humanity whose advice and unceasing help made victory possible.

So it is that in the factories and in the villages, in the artisans' workshops, in every popular demonstration, you hear a certain song, a joyful, magnificent song that is taken up by millions and tens of millions of voices. It is enough to hear this song once for it to stay in your memory and make you feel the warmth that radiates from the shining eyes of the Chinese people. The whole of new China is in this song, the China that is marching towards the building of Socialism. This is what it says:

The flag of victory floats above our heads  
 The earth trembles, and the mountains, beneath the cheers of  
 human millions  
 Mao Tse-Tung! Stalin!  
 Like the sun shining in the sky  
 The red flag floats before us  
 And all men are marching towards the same goal  
 For a People's Democracy, for a lasting peace  
 The hearts of all the peoples of the world beat as one.

## NOTHING IS MORE STUBBORN THAN REALITY

BOATS ARE ROCKING gently on the Hangchow lake. The sky is clear as the innocent eyes of a child. All round the lake flows the line of mountain tops, clean as an etching. A pagoda points its finger to the sky in the sunset. In the distance a song is heard, an old love song.

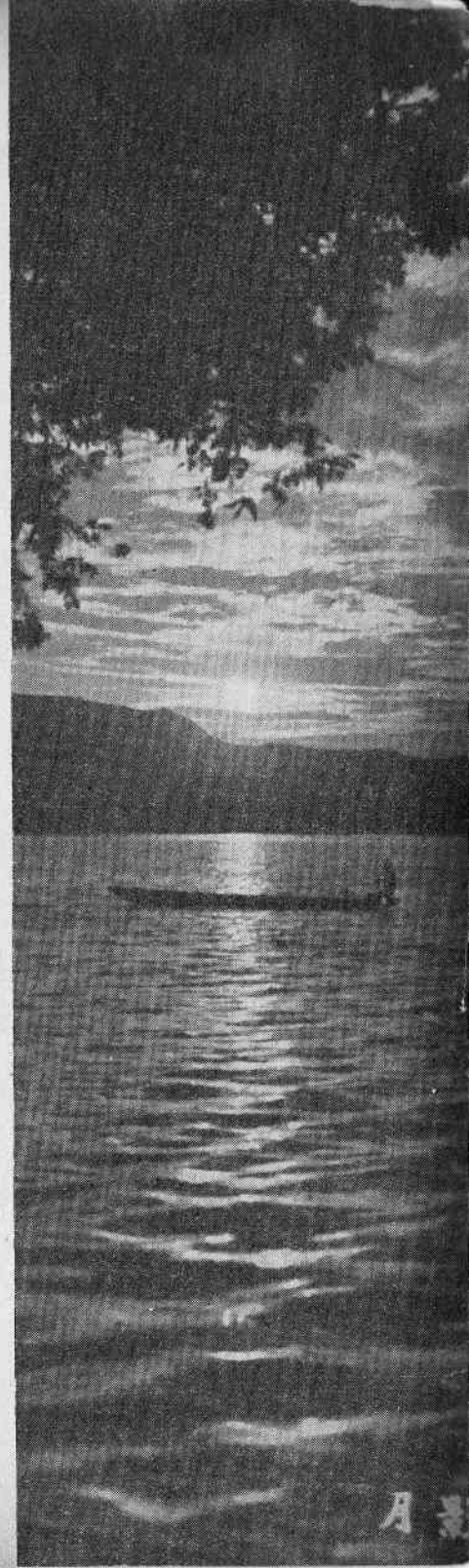
Marcel Dufriche and I paddle along in silence. Rings of waterlilies float by. Amid the green waters rise the purple roofs of bandstands. On the cushions in our boat the girl who has been with us all day has quietly gone to sleep, tired out. Her soft black hair falls gently across her arm.

Everything is calm and beautiful. . . . I am dreaming!

Yesterday these enchanted places were the preserve of the compradors, the capitalist bureaucrats and the greedy imperialists. Today, it is the Chinese workers who come and spend their holidays on this lake.

Yesterday this country was exploited, wretched, humiliated. Today it is free, proud, joyful. How can one fail to understand the tremendous attraction which People's China has for all the peoples of colonial and semi-colonial countries, who are still living today under the conditions that the Chinese people knew yesterday, and who see the possibilities of their own future in what China has become today.

The lake of Hangchow



Nearly five hundred million people! Will the full lesson of the check that has been administered to American imperialism be understood? Will people understand that it is senseless to try and ignore this immense country, which is only just beginning to astonish the world, and which in a few years, following in the footsteps of the Soviet Union, will have become a great industrial country, and along with the Soviet Union will be the vanguard of every aspect of human civilisation?

Will they understand that there is no other road to peace, which the Chinese people and their government passionately desire, except to grant the Chinese People's Republic her legitimate rights in the United Nations Organisation.

Will they understand that the peoples of the world, and all the different social strata of their populations, whether in Great Britain or the United States, or France, or Latin America, or where you will, have the greatest interest in being able to trade freely with this People's China, on equal terms and with mutual advantages—this People's China that can offer so vast a market that trading with her would allow the capitalist industries to reabsorb a considerable number of their unemployed and ensure further work to the mutual advantage of all.

The businessmen's delegation from Great Britain and France, which came to Peking in May 1953, show the possibilities that exist provided the governments of these countries do not sacrifice the interests of their peoples to the interests of American millionaires.

In any case, these peoples, with the working class at their head, are demanding this kind of policy.

Louis Saillant, General Secretary of the W.F.T.U., in his great speech to the Seventh Congress of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, expressed the feelings of the workers of the whole world when he said: "The United Nations, which we regret to say, have used their flag to cloak imperialist aggression against the Korean people, can and must become an instrument of peace in the service of the peoples. To do this U.N.O. must fulfil the obligations for which it was created in 1945. Therefore it must, without further delay, put an end to its weakness and give the Central Government of People's China the place in the United Nations which belongs to the great Chinese people."

There is no force in the world that can prevent this. For facts are more stubborn than the most stubborn of reactionary diplomats.

We are living at a time when, in the words of the late Yves Farges, member of the Bureau of the World Peace Council, who gave such a magnificent report of his journey to China and Korea, we are living at a time when, "it is men's duty to seek discussion and to come to terms with one another."

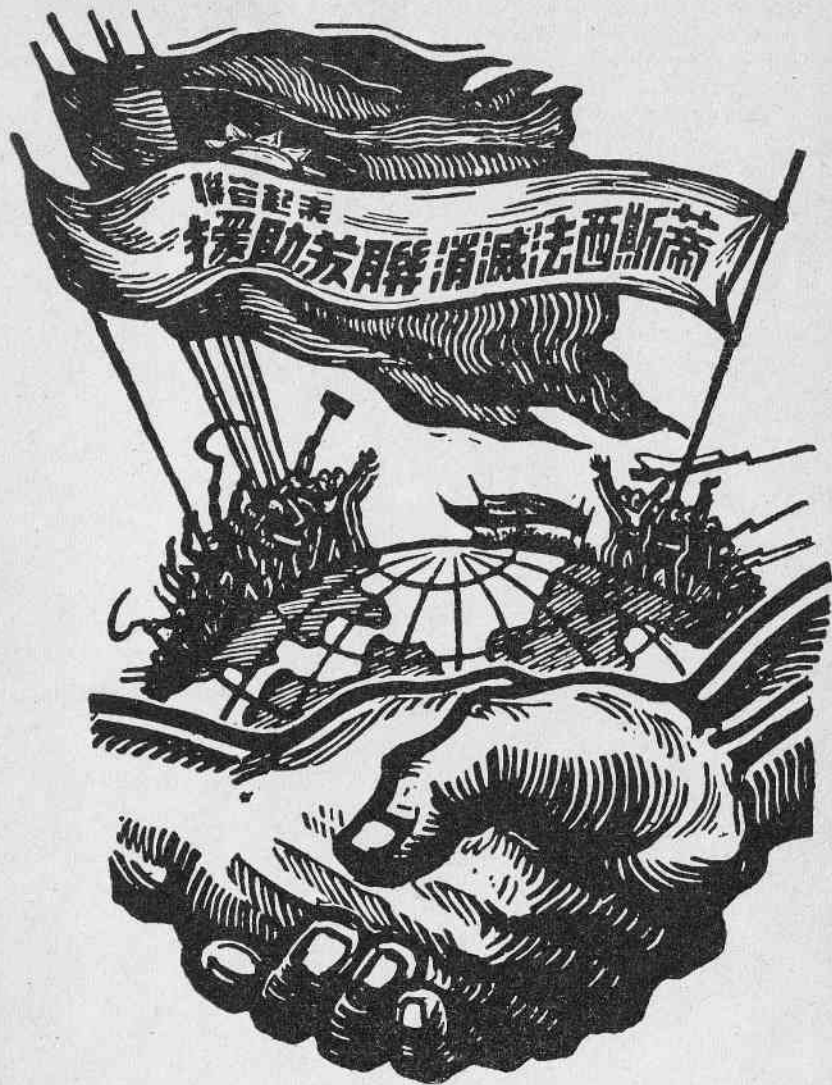
The workers and the trade union organisations have an enormous part to play in this rapprochement, especially in forging trade union unity in a common struggle towards a common end.

The W.F.T.U. delegation has made a great journey across China, with trade union delegations from twenty-one countries, many of whom had different political affiliations, different political and philosophical ideas, with men who may have been enemies yesterday, but who, by the end of the journey, found they were brothers in arms. This journey has opened up immense possibilities and brought to light the great desire for unity which exists in Asia and beyond Asia throughout the world.

So it was that this friendship train which travelled across People's China carried our common convictions.

They were those which will prevail at the Third World Trade Union Congress.





"Fraternity of the Peoples"

(Drawing by Wu Chi)

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