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% U.S. Consulate
Hongkong
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Mr. Walter S. Rogers
Institute of Current World Affairs
522 Fifth Avenue
New York 18, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

If there were a Hit Parade in Peiping the following song would probably top all the rest in popularity.

The East is red
The sun is rising.
China has produced a Mao Tse-tung
He strives for the people's existence
He is the people's saving star.

Mao Tse-tung
Loves the people.
He is our guide
In building a new China.
Lead us forward.

The Communist Party
Is like the sun.
Wherever it shines
There is light.
Where the Communist Party is,
There the people are liberated.

There are dozens of other songs, in a similar vein, which the Communists have introduced into Peiping. They are simple, have catchy tunes and carry a political message. School children, college students, party functionaries, civil servants and soldiers are taught these songs and sing them on frequent occasions at the top of their voices. Gradually they have seeped into the consciousness of other people. Tiny street urchins hum the tunes but don't know the words; occasionally a rickshaw coolie, plodding through the muddy hutongs looking for a fare, sings a phrase or two of the songs: "The East is red. The sun is rising....." Improvised, perverted versions of the words have also gained currency. At the back counter of a rice shop a customer may say: "Have you heard the latest version of..."; the clerk listens, then bursts out laughing - but he probably learns the correct version too, if he doesn't already know it. Whether praised or ridiculed, the ideas spread - ideas set to music.

Songs are only one of the propaganda weapons used by the Chinese Communists. Their field of propaganda is all-embracing. Every form of artistic and cultural expression is used, together with all media which can carry the written or spoken word. Their goal is complete

thought control, achieved through an ideological and cultural revolution, and directed toward the achievement of a "New Democratic culture."

The function of literature and art in Communist China was defined by Mao Tse-tung in a speech at Yen-an in May, 1942. "We must rely on the armed forces to conquer the enemy, it is true," he said, "but this is not enough. A cultural army is also indispensable for uniting ourselves and conquering the enemy." "In the world of today," according to Mao, "the entire culture, or literature and art, belongs to a definite class, a definite party, a definite political line. Art for art's sake, art of a universal class or universal party, art which stands parallel to politics or independent of it, does not exist...Proletarian literature and art are a part of the entire revolutionary cause....Because of this the literary and art work of the party, its position in the party's entire revolutionary work, is definite, is set....Literature and art are dependent on politics, but in turn also wield a great influence over them." Mao went on to say that "...our literature and art are for the masses..." and therefore literary and art work should strive simultaneously for "popularization" and "elevation"; it should reach the masses yet should raise the level of their culture. In July of this year the All-China Artists and Writers Association, meeting in Peiping, endorsed Mao's 1942 doctrines completely - but with one important addition. There should be more emphasis on "praising" the Communist Party's leaders, as well as the masses, in all future work.

Dancing, drama, and all forms of pictorial art are used with great effectiveness for propaganda purposes by the Communists. One dance, the "yanko" or "rice transplanting" dance, has become almost a trademark of the regime, in fact. It is a simple step, a sort of jazzed up Chinese version of the conga which is based on an ancient peasant folk dance. Almost anyone can learn it in a few minutes. It is danced by groups who twist, turn, and cavort to the rhythm of endlessly. Drums and cymbals beat out the rhythm, and at times, particularly when an official celebration is approaching, it is impossible to escape from the noise of the percussion instruments booming and clashing all over the city. They go on day and night, without a break, without deviation, tattooing the new regime on the eardrums of all the two million inhabitants of Peiping.

A new form of drama has been evolved. Communist plays are "modern"; they treat contemporary subjects. They are often crude but nonetheless starkly effective. All of them are completely and thoroughly political. Most of them are written by young, hitherto unknown Communist writers and performed by special drama groups of political workers. Because up until the present they have been directed primarily toward peasant audiences the themes and settings are almost entirely rural, and the characters are the "laopaihsing." There is always an obvious moral in the plays. They are very much in the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" tradition, and there are villains to be hissed and heroes to be cheered. Probably the most popular of the plays is one called "The White Haired Woman,"

and its theme is characteristic of most. Hsi-erh is the daughter of a tenant farmer, named Yang. Yang can't pay his rent and is forced to sell Hsi-erh to Huang, the landlord. Yang commits suicide soon thereafter from remorse. Hsi-erh is forced to work for the landlord, is raped, attempts unsuccessfully to commit suicide, becomes pregnant, is sold to a man in another village but runs away. She takes refuge in a cave, has her baby and lives on grass roots for three months. The landlord, meanwhile, has married a rich girl and gone his own way. One night in a snowstorm, however, he takes refuge in a temple and finds a white haired woman who frightens him. The story of this woman quickly becomes a village legend. Then the Eighth Route Army arrives. The landlord refuses to carry out the land reform and spreads a rumour that the white haired woman predicts the Eighth Route Army will not stay long. An investigation is made, and the woman turns out to be - who else? - Hsi-erh. The landlord is sentenced to death - and justice triumphs. Plays of this sort are now being performed in most of Peiping's theatres. Traditional drama and opera continue on a reduced scale, but a great number of ancient, but "reactionary," operas have been officially banned.

Communist motion pictures follow the same pattern as the plays, when they are fictional. The majority, however, are documentary. A popular one recently shown in Peiping, for example, was the story of how a railway bridge in Manchuria was repaired in record time. The facilities for making motion pictures in Communist China are still limited, however, so the Communists are bringing in as many Russian films as possible. Hollywood's products are definitely on the way out, although one still sees Betty Grable's legs as a coming attraction, in startling juxtaposition on the billboards with a hammer and sickle.

The hammer and sickle or the red star is used as a motif everywhere, on streetcars, on banners, on buildings, on flags, on the badges worn by all government employees. They are the emblems of the new regime.

Every form of pictorial art is used for political and propaganda purposes. Multicolored posters, well designed and printed, are plastered all over the place; an industrial worker smiling in front of looming machinery; Mao Tse-tung looking into the future and silhouetted against a massive city gate, an unfurled red flag and marching troops; a huge Communist soldier guarding the Chinese shoreline against the pointed gun of a warship on which is perched a grinning Japanese admiral being pushed by an American who looks vaguely like MacArthur. Large slogans, painted in white letters, appear on walls throughout the city: "Benefits to Both Labor and Capital," "Revoke All Traitorous Treaties Signed by the Kuomintang," "Confiscate All Bureaucratic Capital," "Defeat the Reactionaries," "Establish a Coalition Government of the People Under the Leadership of the Communist Party." Paintings of Chinese and Russian Communist leaders are hung prominently in public places, in book shops, on the gateway to the Forbidden City. More sophisticated visual propaganda is disseminated through paintings, block prints and paper cut-outs. Pressure is put on the best-known

modern Chinese painters in Peiping to adopt a "revolutionary style" and paint popular scenes. Crickets, butterflies, and hazy mountains are going out of vogue. Block prints are probably the most widely distributed of all art forms, however, because they can be duplicated in large numbers. Block printing is an old art in China, but it is now being encouraged as never before. Many of the prints are aesthetically excellent, with dramatic compositions sometimes in black and white and sometimes in several colors. The subject matter almost invariably falls into a few well-defined categories, however: the "miseries of the people" under the old regime, the beauty and joy of everything under the new regime, "oppression" and "liberation." political cartooning is also being encouraged and developed, and it deals with similar themes.

A completely new literature is flooding Peiping. Flooding is probably not a hyperbolicism, either, because new books are being printed in vast quantities and are sold in stores and stalls all over the city. This new literature includes not only Chinese Communist literature but a great many translations of Russian works and novels and plays by Chinese writers who have been or are leftist but not members of the Communist Party. The new literature includes every field. Much of it is strictly political -- Marxist theory, Communist history, Communist policies. History, sociology, political science and economics have been rewritten in Communist terms. In addition there are novels, plays and short stories, almost all of them with a Marxist revolutionary twist or significance. There has been no official "burning of the books" of the old regime, but most of the old books are no longer being published, and already many of them are difficult to find. They are being displaced by volume. Most of the old magazines are already gone. In their place, there are more new magazines than ever before: pictorial magazines, art magazines, economic and political magazines, current "news" magazines, laborers' women's and youth magazines, literary magazines, technical magazines and so on ad infinitum.

The most direct and constantly used medium for Communist propaganda is, of course, the newspaper. The Communists have not followed a completely uniform press policy, but their end objective of a completely controlled press as a "revolutionary weapon" is clear. In Shanghai, for example, the last foreign-owned newspaper has only recently decided to close, the use of foreign news agencies has just been ended, and foreign correspondents can still file news even though they are subject to censorship. Although I am not entirely clear on the situation in Shanghai I believe the Chinese press received treatment more similar to that in Peiping. In Peiping soon after taking over control the Communists banned foreign correspondents and foreign news agencies. Even before that, however, the Chinese press was placed under strict control.

Only one newspaper which predated Communist rule, the Hsin Min Pao, was allowed to continue operating. Another non-Communist paper, the Kuang Ming Jih Pao, has opened since then as an organ of the Democratic League. A few other non-Communist papers, such as the

Tientsin Chin Pu Jih Pao (the former Tientsin Ta Kung Pao), can be bought in Peiping. Actually, however these papers are in many respects redder than the Reds. They never disagree with anything the Communists do or say, and they serve as unofficial salesmen of the party line. All the other papers in Peiping are official party organs.

The Regulations Concerning Registration of Newspapers, Magazines and News Agencies, issued in Peiping in March, provide for complete government control of the publication of everything, "with a view to protecting freedom of the press and speech of all the people and depriving counter-revolutionaries of freedom, of the press and speech." A number of non-Communist publications have been registered since then, but all of these follow the Communist line. If they opposed it they would not be tolerated. Editors are given a certain amount of rope, but in Peiping none have used it; they are anxious to avoid hanging themselves. The press throughout Communist China reverberated for weeks last Spring with recriminations directed against a Communist editor in Manchuria who stepped slightly out of line, and the editor was warned to hew the line in the future.

The Communists are not apologetic about the lack of impartiality in their news. Partisanship is considered necessary, and impartiality is openly condemned. As one Communist editorial recently put it, "Chinese journalists must lean to one side, at least for the time being. So long as there are different classes in our society, the press will remain a weapon in the class struggle, and will be a part of the machinery of state. With the state machinery in the hands of the people, journalists must reform themselves and become servants of the people, otherwise they will have to seek refuge in the imperialist camp, where, together with other 'White Chinese', they may continue to harp on their anti-Soviet, anti-Communist, and anti-people themes."

The news published in Communist papers comes almost entirely from one source, the official New China News Agency. The heads of this government organ are reported to be among the most strongly pro-Soviet persons in the party, and circumstantial evidence would certainly seem to indicate this is true. New China News Agency dispatches and editorials are supplemented to a certain extent by locally gathered news, and international news is taken largely from translations of Tass, Pravda, Izvestia and New Times articles, but the official agency provides the bulk of the "news."

The Communists' newspaper propaganda technique might be described as the "sledge-hammer type." There is very little subtlety involved. Good and bad, friend and foe, are defined in terms of black and white. Everything is reduced to simple slogans or formulae, and all channels (the radio as well as the press) concentrate simultaneously on pounding them in. One "campaign" succeeds another; one week it may be "fight to prevent floods" and the next week "support the Soviet-led world peace movement." "News" is selected, slanted and distorted to fit the "campaign" currently in progress.

It is impossible to keep up with what is going on in the world, or even in China for that matter, by reading Communist newspapers. A comparison of one of their newspapers with a non-Communist publication will show how true this is.

The following news appeared in the Jen Min Jih Pao, official party organ, in Peiping on July 25 (I picked this date at random; it is an ordinary day on which no spectacular developments took place either in or outside of China). Page 1. Communist armies in Northwest China defeat 45,000 enemy and move south in three routes. The All-China General Labor Union's conference opens in Peiping and is addressed by Chu Teh and Chou En-lai. The conference to establish the All-China Artists' Association ended yesterday and sent greetings to Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh. Important extracts from Chu Teh's speech to the labor meeting are printed. Yesterday the conference to establish the All-China Dramatists' Association opened in Peiping and was addressed by T'ien Han and Chou Yang. The text of "Decisions" concerning 'Chinese Youth' made on July 20 by the Central Committee of New Democratic Youth Corps is printed in full. Membership in the Port Arthur-Dairen Sino-Soviet Friendship Association has climbed to over 200,000 in the past four years. Peiping educational circles hold a meeting to commemorate the educator T'ao Hsing-chih on the anniversary of his death. Units of the Second Field Army carried out a health movement at the time when they crossed the Yangtze. Preparations are being made to convene the Northeast People's Representative Assembly, and one of the delegates is Lin Feng, head of the Northeast Administrative Commission. Page 2. The All-China Music Association has just been established and sends a message to Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh, pledging to follow their policies, as well as a message to their counterpart organization in the Soviet Union. The North China Conference on Agricultural Production ends and its work is summarized. The Central Hopei Irrigation Promotion Association has distributed 1,000 water wheels in a half year period. The All-China Artists' and Writers' Association telegraphs congratulations to South Shensi and Central China and to the British Communist Party. The North China Agricultural Machinery Factory is making insect-killing machines. The head of the Transport Office of the North China Highway Bureau reports achievements despite difficulties. Production in private and public industry in Changyuan is being helped by government bank loans. The People's Bank is extending loans to weavers in Kaoyang. Today's prices (far below actual market prices). Page 3. (Mostly from Tass.) Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania celebrate nine years under a Soviet regime. The second period of the Soviet Union's economic plan for this year is successfully completed. Newspapers in the Soviet Union publish articles commemorating Poland's National day. The People's Liberation Army in Nanchang, Mukden, Tsinan and elsewhere prepares to celebrate Army Day on August 1st. Seventeen government mechanized farms in Manchuria prepare for harvesting. One million members of the Polish Youth League join a competition to build up Poland. The 4th International Motion Picture Day will be celebrated in Czechoslovakia. A Washington

group condemns the Senate for passing the aggressive North Atlantic Pact. The bus drivers' strike in New York is successful. The Italian Legislature discusses passage of the North Atlantic Pact and Togliatto strongly opposes it. Page 4 - Feature page. Article on the difference between struggle in a private property society, when it must be class struggle, and in a Socialist society after the elimination of private property, when it must be criticism, self-criticism and competition. Article on educational problems during the initial period of national development in the Soviet Union. Article on how to be a good school principal. Article on the successful Communist crossing of the Yangtze River. Article about T'ao Hsing-chih.

The South China Morning Post, an average paper in Hongkong, carried very few of the above items on July 25. It is impossible to list all the news appearing in its sixteen pages on that day. Many of them were local items, miscellaneous feature stories, reports on strikes, the theatre, prices, trade and shipping, and so on. For the sake of comparison, however, I will list some of the news which it carried that day about China and general international developments. China. General Ma Hung-kwei says he is not planning to leave China. A Cooperative Union is formed in Kwangtung in conjunction with the U. S. China Aid Program. Peasant uprisings are reported in Manchuria. Chinese in South China are trading with the Communists in Hankow. Chiang K'ai-shek leaves Amoy after his visit there. The President of Sun Yat-sen University in Canton requests a speedy trial for the students and professors arrested there. The Chinese Communists are having difficulty with their cities and industrial plans, and some of their policies seem to be changing. A U. S. Senator condemns the State Department for letting Chiang down. Taiwan is being prepared as the last Nationalist holdout. The Indian government says it knows nothing of a reported Communist-inspired revolt in Tibet. The Chinese Communists boost their official rates for foreign exchange. The Chase Bank is closed by the Chinese Communists in Tientsin. The Communists in Hunan are driving toward Chuchow in an attempt to isolate Changsha, while General Pai Chung-hsi has withdrawn to the region around Hengyang. And other items. General International. Churchill and Attlee make speeches as a prelude to election campaigns. The Burma government is closing in on a group of rebels. A U. S. Senate Committee releases testimony that the U.N. Secretariat is said to be dominated by Communists. The Czech Communist press accuses the Pope of supporting Fascism and imperialism. A UNESCO committee rejects a Soviet resolution condemning India and other countries for not giving equal rights to women. A Cairo paper claims the Jews are making great military preparations. An American member of the Palestine Conciliation Commission expresses optimism on the Arab-Israeli talks. An Australian official says trade unionism in Australia is being disrupted by the Communists. British diplomats at a Middle East conference indicate that the Russians are active in Arab countries. The Philippine Minister to Thailand is seeking Thai support for the proposed Pacific Union.

The Yugoslav Ambassador to Washington says Tito is stronger since his break with the Kremlin. Moscow celebrates Navy Day. The Russians announce the success of the second period of this year's economic plan. The British Government claims to have documentary proof that the Soviet Union uses forced labor as an established policy. A Russian newspaper in Berlin criticizes the North Atlantic Pact. European comment on the U. S. passage of the pact. The U. S. State and National Defense Departments are preparing an arms aid program to supplement the pact. The ten percent cut in Marshall Aid probably will not be restored. A U. S. Senator opposes giving atomic secrets to Britain. An American negro group presses for a negro appointment to the Supreme Court. Lehman defends Mrs. Roosevelt against Spellman's charges of prejudice. The Hongkong garrison is being reinforced. The French and Indians discuss French establishments in India. Nehru calls for meeting the Indian food problem on a war basis. Vague debates on foreign affairs take place in the British House of Commons. A violent earthquake shakes Turkey. And many other miscellaneous items.

The Hongkong paper, based largely on Reuter, AP and UP reports, carried the news which probably appeared over most of the Western world on July 25. The Peiping paper, based largely on the New China News Agency and Tass, carried news which appeared all over Communist China and some news which probably appeared over most of the Soviet-oriented portion of the world - that part of the world behind the iron and bamboo curtains. Comparing the two papers throws into sharp relief some of the reasons why today there is not one world but two. (The Western press leaves much to be desired, but the volume and variety of news is striking after being in Peiping.)

The idea of a curtain - iron, bamboo, or whatever else one wants to call it - preventing free intercourse between the Soviet-oriented and American-oriented nations is already hackneyed, but it is a useful concept nonetheless. There is, in fact, a bamboo curtain separating Peiping from the countries of the West. There are still many gaps in the curtain. People with short-wave radios hear news from abroad which - unsatisfactory as it is - supplements their information about the world. The main obstacle to incoming mail, books and magazines, up to this point at least, seems to be the disruption of mail service rather than official policy; these things are still allowed to come in when they can. Slowly but surely, however, because the sources of outside information are shrinking, because Communist control of the press is so complete, and because Communist propaganda and thought control is so all-embracing, people in Peiping are losing touch with events and developments outside of Communist territory.

One rather surprising aspect of Communist policy so far, in view of their general ideological approach, is the way in which the better colleges and universities in Peiping have been left alone for the most part. Except for the introduction of a few new courses in line with Marxist thought and Communist policy, these universities have undergone very few changes to-date. Groups representing both the

universities and the Communists are now studying future changes in curriculum and teaching methods, but the suggestions of university people are being generally followed, and the Communists are moving very slowly and carefully. This policy is paying dividends in terms of support from intellectual circles connected with the universities. In lower education, however, books and curriculum are being changed, and propaganda favorable to the Communists is being substituted for propaganda which was favorable to the Kuomintang. A new element has been introduced into higher education, also. Many so-called universities and academies have been organized to take in thousands of students, give them a quick, intensive indoctrination course, and "graduate" them for political work under the Communist regime. The indoctrination in these new schools consists mainly of Marxist theory, "the thought of Mao Tse-tung," and specific Chinese Communist policies such as city policies, land policies, labor policies, industrial policies and so on, all of which are carefully defined in Communist literature and must be learned by rote.

It is difficult to know what effect the all-pervasive Communist propaganda and thought control methods are having. In a sense, because China is ideologically bankrupt, the market for new ideas is wide open. There is no doubt that many people are accepting both the Marxist approach and specific ideas which the Communists are promoting. There is also no doubt that everyone is affected in subtle ways by the one-sidedness of the information available to them. On the other hand there is great inertia in China which obstructs change. There is also undoubtedly a good deal of scepticism and passive resistance to ideas being jammed down people's throats. The Communist ideology, furthermore, conflicts greatly with many long-standing traditions, and even though there is no dynamic ideology competing with Communism in China today, Confucian and other ideas have become so firmly rooted in Chinese culture that anyone would have difficulty changing them. For example, Communist policies come into conflict with family loyalties, with the traditional idea that harmony is better than struggle and that compromise is superior to obstinacy, with the belief that the environment should be accepted, with individualism and the feeling that a government should interfere in people's lives as little as possible. To what extent the Communists' ideological sledge-hammer can beat down the old ideas and shape the Chinese mind into a new mould is still to be seen.

It should be remembered, however, that there may be less resistance in many respects in China to the idea of a single "correct" ideological line than there would be in many Western countries. Communism is not the first ideology in China to claim a monopoly of political truth. Confucianism and Sun Yat-sen's theories both were characterized by the idea of infallibility as State ideologies. The Communists are now making their bid to succeed them, to become the rulers of the minds of China's millions.

Sincerely yours,
A. Doak Barnett
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