

# CHINA IS RE-WRITING HISTORY

By RUTH FIRST

"You are welcome to come to China," read the cable I received from the All-China Democratic Women's Federation. Three days later, after our plane had skimmed over the forests of Siberia, the Gobi desert, the great stretches of China in the North West, we landed at Peking.

Turn up the old books on China and read the "experts" on the East: those who know the "Chinese mind" (as they pretend to "know the African"), those who have studied the old philosophers, and know about ancestor worship and the dynasties through the ages. You will be in a world of fatalistic peasants, of gangsters and concubines, child brides and slave mothers, women hobbling on tiny bound feet, cholera, plague and smallpox. A land of opium, tea and rice, but most of the people too wretched to eat a bowl of rice a day.

Since 1949 the books have become out-dated. The "experts" have to study again, the prophecies about the future of China have been turned by history into slanders and wild guesses, and "truths" about the character of the Chinese people have been revealed as hollow and base. The people of New China have confounded the world.

Three days before I arrived in Peking I had left a country whose people have built in 37 years a civilisation of breath-taking wonders. Five seas have been joined by inland canals to transform nature; agriculture in some areas has been completely mechanised. Culture has become universal, and not the monopoly of a few.

Miss RUTH FIRST was recently prohibited by the Minister of Justice from attending meetings of any kind and at the same time was ordered not to take part in the activities of a list of organisations. Believing this was an unjust and autocratic attack on the freedom of the person, "New Age" has asked Miss First to send an article containing some of her impressions on her recent visit to China. China is "news" today as much to the peoples of America and Britain as to the people of South Africa, and we believe the attempt to silence this well-known progressive journalist is an attempt to keep this country in ignorance behind an artificial curtain.

Everywhere gigantic blocks of apartment houses are going up, and there are only a few tower-cranes perched on top of them to show how mechanised building has become and how man has used his skill and ingenuity to free himself of manual labour so as to allow time for study and play.

## HUMAN POWER

China at first sight was vastly different of course. Few tower-cranes, few wheelbarrows even. Men carrying soil in baskets slung from bamboo shoulder poles. A thick traffic of donkey carts, piled high with bricks, an unending stream of them, moving in single file as fast as donkeys will, to scores of building sites in every neighbourhood.

One cannot go anywhere in China without seeing building. It goes on by day and by night too,



During her visit to China, Ruth First chats to a representative gathering of Chinese youth.

with the aid of flood-lighting. For what China lacks in the way of tower-cranes, concrete-mixers, trucks and, yes, even wheelbarrows, she makes up with an unimaginable fund of initiative, enterprise and human endeavour and a sense of deep purpose. Her people are creating a new industry, and bare hands must do today what gigantic machines will accomplish tomorrow. If today armies of men swarming like ants on a hillside do the work of bulldozers and excavators in the construction of a flood control project, it is because they have before them the vision of that new way of living.

China's industry was only ten per cent of her economy in 1945. The market was flooded with American goods, the 12-year-long inflation was staggering, the factories had only the most archaic and primitive of machines, thousands of years of feudalism had left a legacy of illiteracy and superstition and famine as periodic as the seasons.

Under the People's Government prices are stable and no longer sky-rocket, the budget has been balanced, the economy unified, the damage of decades of war repaired in town and country—and all these achievements were accomplished in record time in the years of reconstruction from 1949 to 1952.

Hundreds of miles of new railways have been laid, new factories built, new mines opened, the country surveyed for new riches. Living standards are soaring, everybody is learning, the whole country is moving ahead so fast that statistics become outdated as one learns them.

## FEUDALISM GOES

For the first time the peasants of China own the land they cultivate. That in itself is a change of the most far-reaching order. The basis of China's old-age poverty and backwardness is being destroyed, and as feudalism goes, great new energies for production are released in the countryside.

In the factories the workers are turning out the first "Made in China" lathes, steam turbines, electric balances. The whole country, its sleeves rolled up, is on the job of industrialisation.

Where the machines are old and inadequate, the workers are making do until the day when they can be replaced by the most up-to-date machines. Each month thousands of suggestions for new techniques, improvised machine

parts and quicker and more time-saving work methods come forward in the factories.

For the first time there is no unemployment in China. Under the first labour insurance regulations China's workers have a system of sick benefits, workmen's compensation and maternity leave for women workers, all on full pay.

For the first time the 60 nationalities of China are free and equal and share fully in the government.

For the first time the people of China exercise universal adult suffrage and only two weeks after I left China the first all-China National People's Congress of 1,226 representatives met—the largest Parliament in the world.

## MAKING HISTORY

That Parliament adopted China's new constitution in September and during the months I was there the entire country was discussing the Draft Constitution. No opinions were barred, no one was too illiterate or too poor to propose amendments to his country's basic law, and in two months 5,900 proposed amendments had come forward from among the ordinary people.

China's statistics are overwhelming. Pablo Neruda, Chile's poet, wrote of "streets peopled to infinity." Up to 1952 China's population was reckoned at 475 million. But in that year the first accurate scientific census revealed a population of 601 million. Each year 12 million babies are born. Imagine, the equivalent of the whole population of South Africa born anew in China each year. Shanghai alone has a population of six million. Mukden's population has grown by three times since 1949. Each year 90 million children must be placed in schools. The impression everywhere in China is of boundless humanity. By 1970 the population will be about 800 million.

But talk of Malthus and limiting populations, and hungry mouths devouring all cultivable food and you'll be laughed at in New China. Today China's cultivated land area is 250 million acres. She has still another 230 million acres waiting for the tractors, combine harvesters and insecticide sprayers that her factories are turning out. Already, since 1949, she has produced a food surplus and that as a result of land reform and the beginnings of planning in agricultural production.

# Pamphlet Exposes "Dark And Damnable" Act

CAPE TOWN.

"That evil instrument of apartheid—the Bantu Education Act—must be opposed and destroyed by us, before it can destroy us, our children, our future."

This is the conclusion reached in an excellent pamphlet, entitled "Educating for Ignorance" and issued by the South African Congress of Democrats, in which the Bantu Education Act is mercilessly exposed. This pamphlet is a "must" for every anti-Nationalist South African, and is especially timely now as it deals with the Act that is being so sharply attacked here and overseas.

## CALCULATED INHUMANITY

In revealing the real meaning and intentions behind the Bantu Education Act, the authors have quoted from its originator, Dr. H. F. Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs. The picture laid bare is one of cal-

culated inhumanity—regimented education on the one hand, and, on the other, the white supremacist's fanatical determination to overcome all obstacles in his path.

The following quotation from Dr. Verwoerd puts the position clearly: "There is no place for him (the 'Bantu') in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour . . . for that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community. . . ."

The pamphlet brings home the fascist provisions of the Act and the authors, on a number of occasions, draw a grim comparison between its aims and those of the Nazis, as expressed by the foremost exponents of Hitlerism.

This is the pattern that emerges behind the Act, says the pamphlet:

## RIGHTS DENIED

"Africans of South Africa shall for all time be denied the right to share the culture and richness of society and mankind as a whole, and must be reared, instructed and confined within the circle of something known as 'Bantu' culture.

"At no time can the African people be educated above a certain level, rise above a certain level, or have any place in South African society 'above the level of certain forms of labour.'"

"Ignoring the findings of countless Government commissions (including that of the Eiselen Commission) on the disintegration of tribal life and the urbanisation of the African people as a whole, the tribal institutions of the reserves must be revived and become the basis for 'Bantu' life and learning. So that the future of education for Africans is set within the already disintegrating culture of the backward Reserves."

If this pattern is brought into full practice, says the leaflet, "it means the deathknell of cultural advance, educational freedom and social progress, not simply for the African people, but for South Africans as a whole, of all races."

## DARK AND DAMNABLE

Welcoming the appearance of the leaflet, Father Trevor Huddleston states in an introduction: "Everything must be done and done with all possible speed, to convince the public of South Africa that the Bantu Education Act is the most sinister, as it is the most far-reaching piece of apartheid legislation so far produced. . . ."

"Here is racialism at its darkest and most damnable—that evil thing which seeks to direct and dominate even the children. It must be defeated."

N. S.

\*"Educating for Ignorance," obtainable from the S.A. Congress of Democrats, P.O. Box 4088, Johannesburg. Price 3d.

## Leader Commemorated

JOHANNESBURG.

November 15 marked the first anniversary of the death of T. N. (Roy) Naidoo who was for many years an outstanding leader in the trade union, national and peace movements.

At a large gathering in Mrs. Naidoo's home last Sunday tributes to her late husband were paid on behalf of the Transvaal African National Congress, the Peace Council, the Transvaal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress.

## WORLD STAGE by SPECTATOR

**HELP "WITHOUT STRINGS" TO  
WORLD'S BACKWARD AREAS**

The Western world has been greatly alarmed at the extent to which the Soviet Union is encouraging the industrial development of what are called the "undeveloped" countries.

Greatest Soviet aid is being given to People's China and the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe. In China, for example, the Soviet Union is at the moment engaged on the construction of 141 basic industrial enterprises which in a comparatively short space of time will transform China to a front-rank industrial power.

In Eastern Europe many technical projects of a similar nature have been carried through with Soviet aid. The entire Scantia printing works in Rumania, for example, which produces the largest daily paper in the country, as well as all manner of other publications, was supplied from the Soviet Union.

The terms on which Soviet assistance has been given have varied from country to country, but in all cases the most significant feature has been the absence of any desire on the part of the Soviet Union to dominate the economics of her neighbours.

**IN CHINA**

In 1950 and 1951, for example, an agreement (one of many) was reached between the Governments of China and the Soviet Union for the establishment of four joint Sino-Soviet companies to extract non-ferrous and rare metals in the province of Sinkiang, to build and repair ships in Dairen and to organise and operate civil air lines.

Last month, the basic work of these companies having been completed, the two governments signed an agreement whereby the Soviet shares in these companies would be transferred over a period of time, starting from January 1, 1955, to China. Payment would be made by China by means of supplies of export goods, and in due course the companies would be entirely the property of the People's Republic of China.

**Thus the Soviet Union supplies capital goods plus management and industrial techniques to China. When the Chinese people have learned to manage these new industries on their own, the Soviet shares are transferred, the Soviet personnel are withdrawn and the enterprise becomes Chinese property.**

In the past five years the Soviet Union has supplied large quantities of machinery and raw materials to China. Machinery and equipment for some of China's most important industrial enterprises, mines and power plants are from the Soviet Union. In agriculture and livestock farming, China has been getting large stocks of farm machinery, selected seeds and stud livestock.

In consequence of these close relations between the two countries, the volume of China's trade with the Soviet Union increased by 33 per

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**20% Reduction to Africans**

cent. in 1953 as compared with 1952. Trade with the Soviet Union last year amounted to 56 per cent. of China's total foreign trade.

**INDIA AND INDONESIA**

The Soviet Union is not, however, restricting her aid to "like-minded" countries. Similar aid is to be given to India and Indonesia in terms of agreements reached this year.

Mr. Raden Sanusi, head of the Industrial Department of the Indonesian Ministry of Economic Affairs, announced on his return from Moscow at the end of October that the Soviet Union had offered to establish various types of industry in Indonesia on a long-term credit basis. The U.S.S.R. would build the factories, equipped with their own machinery and technical experts, and would train Indonesians to operate the factories themselves.

More details have also become available of the terms on which the Soviet Union is to establish a steel mill in India. Russia will build the £30 million plant at its own cost, recoverable from India in 10 to 15 easy instalments at a nominal interest rate of between 2 and 2½ per cent. The Soviet Union would not ask for any share in the capital, management or profits.

Soviet technicians would carry out the preliminary discussions, survey and planning at Soviet expense. Indians would be associated with the project from its beginning, and Indian personnel would be trained from the inception. The Soviet Union would import only such materials and plant for the construction job as were not available or could not be made in India.

The Soviet steel mill, which will have a capacity of 500,000 tons a year, will be completed in 18 months—sooner than another plant which is being built by Germany and on which work has already started.

**TREMENDOUS IMPRESSION**

This "aid without strings" has made a tremendous impression not only throughout Asia but throughout the world. The London Times' correspondent in Delhi reported that informed circles there which at first regarded the offer with suspicion eventually found it "irresistible."

The American paper *Business Week* called the deal "one of the most spectacular ever made in the history of capital export" and pointed out it was "on terms private interests in the West can't hope to match."

Why can't the West compete on these terms? Because their businessmen are only prepared to invest where they can exercise control and reap a good profit; because they are only prepared to invest in countries whose political climate is "favourable" because for the most part the U.S. is not interested in the industrialisation of backward countries, but looks to them to supply her deficiencies in raw materials and minerals.

The U.S.-dominated World Bank, for example, lends money for economic development at a rate of four to five per cent.

**Australia**

One of the countries which is alarmed by the Soviet aid programme is Australia. The Sydney Sun, in a recent editorial headed "Red Light Flashes in Indonesia," said the establishment of Soviet-built industry there "brings Russia almost to our doorstep."

The United States is already over the Australian doorstep. The journal *Business International* observed recently: "Few nations have induced many U.S. manufacturing firms to invest in their economies as

Australia. Since the end of the war arrangements have been made with 209 Australian firms to manufacture goods under U.S. patents and know-how. Seventy-four of these are U.S. subsidiary or affiliated plants, and 135 are operating under licensing, royalty and other arrangements. . . . The United Kingdom, once the traditional source of capital for Australian development, has now been surpassed by U.S. investors."

**In our own South Africa, United States economic penetration has also greatly increased since the war. In 1948 U.S. private investment in the Union was 86,600,000 dollars. By 1952 this figure had risen to 194 million dollars. According to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Havenga, speaking in Durban last week, no less than £53 million was paid out to overseas interests in 1953 by way of dividends, interest and profits.**

Mr. Havenga himself complained of the increasing strain of these repayments on the South African economy. Yet foreign capital retains its stranglehold on South Africa, and the Nationalists, no less than the United Party, are compelled to dance to its tune.

**Iran**

The Tudeh Party has called upon democrats throughout the world to voice their anger against the Zahedi regime's mass murder of Iranian patriots. Sixteen officers have already been shot in what the Tudeh appeal describes as "one of the blackest pages in the history of the crimes of imperialism and reaction in Iran."

Pointing out that over 600 patriots now in prison as a result of the Zahedi coup face death before a firing squad, the appeal says: "Their only crime was their love of liberty and their deep devotion to the cause of Iranian independence."

The patriots were arrested on allegations of espionage and treason. In fact, their crime was that they opposed the Zahedi sell-out to the Anglo-American oil consortium.

**While patriot blood flowed, the Anglo-Iranian Company announced the distribution of £80 million to shareholders, who will get £4 in new ordinary shares for each £1 in ordinary shares they already hold. This 400 per cent. share bonus is the biggest in British financial history.**

Anglo-Iranian, whose interests Zahedi serves, paid out £35 on £100 of shares in 1952—the year in which it was complaining it was hardest hit by Mossadegh's nationalisation proposals. In 1953 (still complaining) Anglo-Iranian paid out (including a bonus) £45 10s. on every £100 of shares.

Two weeks ago the company announced a 5 per cent. interim dividend on its old ordinary shares.

"There is still time to stay the hand of the murderer," the Tudeh appeal continues. "In the name of humanity, in the name of international solidarity, in the name of those who are condemned to die—act!"

**Germany**

The names of the 12 men who will control West Germany's new army were disclosed last week in an article in the *Muenchener Illustrierten*, an illustrated paper widely read in southern Germany.

All are old officers of Hitler's army, all took part in the conquest and pillage of Europe. Here they are:

**Adolf Heusinger** will be Chief of Operations, and drew up plans for invading Holland, Belgium and France.

**Hans Speidel** will be liaison officer to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. He was Rommel's Chief of Staff, later responsible for the burning of hundreds of villages in the Ukraine.

**Ludwig Cruwell** will be Commander-in-Chief. He helped rebuild the German army after World War I, was later a general in the Afrika Panzer Korps.

**Col. Count Gerhard von Schweinin**, who worked in Hitler's espionage department preparing the last war and was in command of the 116th Tank Division on the Russian front, will be a General Staff Officer.

**Major General Baron Smilo Luetzwitz**, who commanded a tank division under Hitler and helped in the destruction of Warsaw, will be a corps commander. He was sought by the Polish Government as a war criminal but the Americans refused to hand him over.

**Col. Count Johann Adolf von Kielmanswegg**, who worked with Heusinger on Hitler's General Staff, will be Secretary of State for War in Bonn. His Parliamentary Secretary will be:

**Dr. Erich Mende**, who joined Hitler's brownshirts in 1936, and who since the end of the war has led a campaign for the release of war criminals.

Other corps commanders will be: **Wend von Wietersheim** (formerly of the notorious S.S. "Ghost" Division), **Baron von Gersdorff** (Chief of Inspection, Nazi Eastern Front Secret Service), and **General Baron von Edelsheim**.

The Chief of the Navy will be **Kurt Zenker**, who worked in Hit-

ler's Naval Warfare Department. Air Force Chief will be **Gerhard Panitzki**, former Lieut. Col. on Hitler's General Staff.

**NAZI ATMOSPHERE**

The Nazi atmosphere in West Germany grows apace. Baron von Neurath, former "protector" of Bohemia and Moravia, sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for hideous crimes against the Czech people but released recently on health grounds, was given a hero's welcome when he returned to West Germany. Dr. Adenauer sent him a telegram of best wishes, and even the West German President, Dr. Heuss wrote expressing "pleasure and satisfaction . . . that your martyrdom of these last years has now ended."

The war criminals are national heroes.

What's more they are unrepentant. Field Marshal Kesselring, sentenced for the murder of hundreds of civilians in Italy during the last war, appeared on television in Britain last week and said he was only sorry the Nazi plans to conquer England had not succeeded.

Former Nazi General Alexander von Falkenhausen, interviewed by a Hearst correspondent recently, pleaded for the rearmament of West Germany and said: "France cannot be permitted to destroy the unity of what remains of Western Europe."

Asked how France could be brought into line, he said: "Germany is occupied for her own protection, is she not? Could not similar measures be devised for the protection of France?"

The Nazi Army is on the march again, and the Nazi appetite is already whetted.

**China**

The 200th anniversary of the English novelist Henry Fielding was commemorated at a ceremony in Peking recently. Among the speakers were the noted Chinese novelist Lao Sheh (Lau Shaw), the critic and historian Cheng Chen-to and the famous English scientist Professor John Bernal.

**"S. Africans Must Answer Swart Challenge"**

From our Durban Correspondent

"South Africa is in grave danger and, unless men and women stand for the democratic cause with courage and determination, our country may enter a period of unprecedented oppression and suffering from which it will take many years to recover," declared Dr. G. M. Naicker in a message to a meeting of the Working Committee of the Natal Indian Congress last weekend. Delegates from all over Natal attended the meeting.

In his message Dr. Naicker said: "Now is the time for each and every person who loves basic human freedom to speak out clearly and without hesitation against the wrongs that are being perpetrated by those who rule our beloved country.

"It is quite natural that in the attack that has been launched by the Nationalist Government on the democratic forces of South Africa, special attention should be given to the Natal Indian Congress, the foremost national organisation of our people in this country. The Minister of Justice, vested with wide and arbitrary powers under the Riotous Assemblies Act and the Suppression of Communism Act, has banned a large number of leaders of the Congress and trade union movement in the Union."

Dealing with the banning orders served on six leading members of the Natal Indian Congress, Dr. Naicker said he had no doubt the Congress membership and the Indian people of Natal would respond to the challenge of Mr. Swart with even greater determination in the fight for the cause for which Congress stands.

"The real opposition to the fascist trend in South Africa comes from extra-Parliamentary sources, for the nine million Non-European people cannot send their own men and women to Parliament."

**"The most inspiring feature of the**

political scene today is the call of the African National Congress for convening the Congress of the People to draft a Freedom Charter. I urge all Congress men and women to give their best to this campaign which is an historic one in South Africa's history. For the first time in our country's history Africans, Europeans, Coloureds and Indians who stand for democracy have jointly sponsored a peaceful campaign to enshrine the hopes and desires of our people into a Charter of Freedom."

"Mankind has always in its dark and difficult days sought to reiterate and emphasise the basic human values which should guide human society. The Freedom Charter, which the Congress of the People will formulate, will become the yardstick by which to measure the democratic content of the organisations and individuals of our country."

The meeting unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the recent banning of Congress leaders by Swart and reiterated its condemnation of the two laws which are being used "viciously and indiscriminately to destroy democratic opposition to Nationalist tyranny in South Africa." Congress reaffirmed its confidence in those leaders who were banned, assuring them and the Indian people that Congress will continue to function in the tradition and spirit of the Dadoo-Naicker leadership.

Published by Real Printing & Publishing Co. (Pty.) Ltd., 6 Barrack Street, Cape Town, and printed by Pioneer Press (Pty.) Ltd., Forgate Street, Woodstock. Political reports in this issue by:— Cape Town: Naomi Shapiro, 6 Barrack Street; Johannesburg: M. Harmel, 5 Progress Buildings, Commissioner Street; Durban: Mrs. J. Arenstein, 6 Pembroke Chambers, West Street. All political matter, unless otherwise stated, by R. K. Cope, 6 Barrack Street, Cape Town.

**Collection Number: AG2887**

**Collection Name: Publications, New Age, 1954-1962**

***PUBLISHER:***

*Publisher:* Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

*Location:* Johannesburg

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