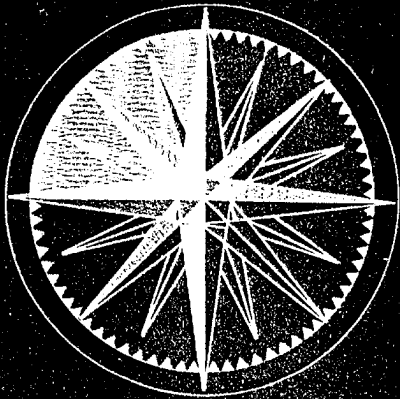


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SPECIAL REPORT

REPRESSION OF INTELLECTUALS IN COMMUNIST CHINA

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REPRESSION OF INTELLECTUALS IN COMMUNIST CHINA

An anti-intellectual, almost Orwellian atmosphere prevails in Communist China today. This is a product of a three-year campaign which reflects Mao Tse-tung's personal conviction that intellectuals as a group share Soviet "revisionist" ideas, that they would work against the regime at every opportunity and that draconian "reforms" are necessary.

The Chinese scorn as soft the Soviet practice of punishing a few individual intellectuals for dissident attitudes. Peking assumes that all intellectuals are dissidents, and is forcing all but the most essential to engage in long, punishing stints of hard physical labor. Intellectuals must spend most of their "free time" at political lectures and in supervised study of the works of Mao Tse-tung. They are repeatedly told that their sole concern is to glorify Mao Tse-tung and Communism and to provide justification for Mao's militant attacks on "class enemies at home and abroad." No freedom of intellectual expression is permitted, and it goes without saying that nothing of artistic merit is produced in China today.

Intellectuals considered "necessary"--scientists, technicians, and some government cadres--are allowed to work with less interference, but, if the propaganda is to be believed, even these groups now spend long hours every week doing physical labor and studying Mao's works.

The Unfolding of the Campaign

The present campaign against the intellectuals stems from decisions made at the tenth plenum of the central committee in September 1962. The previous two years had been a period of relaxation, when the regime, its prestige at a low ebb because of the disastrous effects of the Leap Forward and anti-Soviet policies, played down ideological themes and allowed intellectuals to engage in "constructive"

criticism of cultural and economic policies. This permissive period ended in September 1962 when Peking announced that it intended to turn China into a bastion of Marxist purity and to wage an all-out struggle against "revisionism and imperialism" abroad and against "revisionist," capitalist, and bourgeois inclinations at home. Once again Peking began asserting that intellectuals had to be "Red" as well as "expert."

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It is doubtful if the regime then knew how fast it could proceed in remolding intellectuals. It spent late 1962 and all of 1963 carefully setting new guidelines for cultural and academic workers. They were told over and over again in party and cultural journals that the sharpening "class struggle" dictated a new across-the-board "revolutionary" approach. Previously approved literature and philosophical concepts were declared heretical. Unnamed writers were denounced for attempting to portray "real" flesh and blood characters and were told to stick to party-approved stereotypes, bourgeois villains and revolutionary heroes. Western music was declared "bourgeois." Even China's "cultural legacy"--revered classic novels and popular traditional operas--was disparaged. Peking felt these novels and operas portrayed feudal characters too favorably and were irrelevant to current issues. Social scientists such as philosophers and historians were attacked for ignoring the class struggle and told that henceforth their chief task would be to provide "justification" for the need for harsher social controls.

The hardening attitude toward intellectuals was summed up by Chou Yang, deputy director of the propaganda department of the central committee, in a speech published on 26 December 1963, Mao's 70th birthday. Chou

Yang set as the "fighting task" of intellectuals the refutation of "modern revisionism and bourgeois ideology in all its manifestations on the academic front." The speech set forth a dictum by Mao, soon to be widely publicized, that "one always splits into two." This dictum has been used to "explain" the widening Sino-Soviet split and the decision to sharpen attacks on allegedly hostile "class enemies" inside China.

Following the publication of Chou Yang's speech, the campaign to remold intellectual and cultural activities moved out of the discussion stage. Early in 1964 the regime ordered a total ban on traditional operas. They were replaced by a hybrid form of opera that used traditional devices to portray revolutionary themes and characters. Village story-tellers were told to replace their repertoire of popular stories with recitations of atrocities formerly committed by landlords or examples of selfless behavior of revolutionary heroes like the soldier-martyr Lei Feng. Novels, plays, and movies produced under the party's imprimatur in recent years were condemned for their lack of "revolutionary realism," and were replaced. Peking told opera buffs that if they found fault with the new operas and plays, this proved they were "reactionary."

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In mid-1964 the party attitude toward intellectuals became markedly more hostile, partly as a result of the worsening Sino-Soviet dispute. Also in mid-1964, Peking intensified the struggle against "revisionists" both at home and in the international Communist movement and hardened both its domestic and foreign policies. These policies presumably resulted from decisions reached at a "special work conference" of the central committee presided over by Mao in June 1964--the first high-level party gathering announced since the tenth plenum.

In retrospect, mid-1964 appears to have been a watershed for policy toward intellectuals. The regime had hitherto considered them reformable, but it now seemed to reach the conviction that, as a class, they were incorrigibly "revisionist" and antagonistic to Maoist ideals. This change reflects Mao's own views. Foreigners who talked to him in late 1964 report that he complained bitterly of the unreliability of students and scholars, and a senior official in the Ministry of Culture reported in early 1965 that Mao was saying that "the intellectuals have never aligned themselves with us."

In mid-1964 the regime began accusing prominent individuals of having deliberately spread "revisionist" ideas. The most notable victim was Yang Hsien-chen, low-ranking member of the party central committee and head of the Higher Party

School until 1961. In August 1964 the authoritative party journal Red Flag accused Yang of propagating the anti-Maoist doctrine that "two merge into one," and thus providing a philosophical basis for a policy of reconciling class conflicts at home and international conflicts abroad. Red Flag said that Yang was attempting to perform the same role that the philosopher Deborin had played in supporting the "Trotsky-Bukharin anti-party group" in the USSR. This was the label given to victims of the Stalin purge of 1937.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1964 other personalities criticized for advocating "revisionism" included Feng Ting, professor of dialectical materialism at Peking University and vice chairman of the university's philosophy department; Chou Ku-cheng, a prominent historian and a member of the presidium of the Peasant and Worker's Democratic Party; Yang Han-sheng, vice chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and motion picture script writer; Ou-yang Shan, a noted pre-1949 novelist; and Shao Chuan-lin, vice chairman of the Union of Chinese Writers,

These were all prominent intellectuals who had written considerable party-approved material in the 1950s and early 1960s. Feng Ting, for example, is the author of The Communist View of Life, a textbook published in 1956 and distributed in millions of copies. In singling out these individuals, who

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clearly represented the mainstream of cultural work before 1963, the party was implicating all intellectuals.

The party has always stressed the moral value of manual labor, but "labor reform" in the past was usually assigned only to persons considered backward "rightists." In mid-1964, however, the regime issued directives ordering all students, scholars, and government employees engaged in "mental work" to spend at least one month a year doing hard, physical labor. These directives were promptly and rigorously applied. In practice most labor assignments appear to have been for about three months. In addition, university students after graduation were to do manual labor for a full year before assignment.

Premier Chou En-lai in his December 1964 report to the National People's Congress provided further indications of party policy toward the intellectuals. Speaking of a "great debate" that had been carried on in the fields of philosophy, history, education, culture, and art, Chou announced that "initial" results had been achieved in combating erroneous theories, with the clear implication that the party was going to try for more. According to Chou, the "torrent of revolution" would allow no slackening in an intellectual's attempt to reform himself, and Chou prescribed going among the workers, peasants and soldiers for "long periods" as the prime means of reform.

Chou's remarks were amplified by a senior New China News Agency official who told the NCNA staff in Paris in January 1965 that new disciplinary action against dissident intellectuals had been approved at a meeting of top leaders in December 1964. The NCNA official said that the regime, reluctant to shed blood, had instead decided to launch a "movement of peaceful struggle." The NCNA man said that Mao--complaining that a plan for cultural action first proposed in 1942 had not been supported by "certain leaders"--had ordered a complete new reform of cultural organizations. Presumably, Lu Ting-i, politburo member and director of the propaganda department of the central committee, was charged with responsibility for carrying out these reforms. In January 1965 Lu was appointed minister of culture, replacing Shen Yen-ping (Mao Tun), perhaps China's greatest novelist, who had held the position since 1949. According to the NCNA official referred to above, Mao Tun was removed because he could not subdue the insubordination of intellectuals.

In 1965 the party for the first time since the Great Leap Forward began publicly expressing concern over the political attitudes of scientists and technicians. In January 1965 Red Flag demanded that scientists, like everyone else, treat the "class struggle" as their foremost task, and warned that the party would be unable to make full use of the services of scientists who tried to stay aloof

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from politics. In June, this theme was followed up by Chien Hsueh-sen, US-trained rocket specialist and probably China's foremost scientist, who apologized for having personally belittled politics in the past. Chien warned that scientists must not consider themselves an elite group, but must humbly study Mao's ideas and engage in manual labor.

In the summer of 1965 Red Flag published several important articles which attacked prominent Western scientists--including Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, and Linus Pauling--for philosophical failings. Scientists were exhorted to rely less on Western science and more on Mao's revolutionary tracts for guidance in their research work.

Another sign of the anti-intellectual atmosphere in mid-1965 was a statement by Tao Chu, powerful head of the party's Central-South bureau, defending the right of the Chinese Communist regime to repress cultural activities. Noting that most people have always condemned the "First Emperor" (Chin Shih Huang Ti) for "burning the books and burying the scholars alive," Tao stated that any regime had the right to do such things to strengthen its control, and that "we, the proletariat," have the same right.

Current Policy

A series of party pronouncements in 1966 have spelled

out in the harshest terms possible the current party attitude toward intellectuals. The most definitive statement to date appeared in a bitterly anti-intellectual manifesto published on 1 January in Red Flag. Again, as in 1963, the spokesman was Chou Yang, deputy director of the propaganda department of the central committee. Chou, echoing views which Mao had privately expressed, charged that the overwhelming majority of intellectuals, including even those who are members of the Communist Party, had received a bourgeois education, retain bourgeois ideas in their world outlook, and think they are strong enough to challenge the party.

Chou claimed that cultural workers had unsuccessfully resisted party leadership five times since 1949. Dates listed were 1951 (The Story of Wu Hsun), 1954 (Dream of the Red Chamber), 1954-1955 (Hu Feng), 1957 ("Hundred Flowers") and 1961-1962 ("Second Hundred Flowers"). Chou described the alleged attack by intellectuals in 1961-62 as the strongest and most dangerous of the five, and promised that the party's counterattack would be unprecedently harsh. Chou, of course, ignored the fact that the party had actually relaxed its strictures on intellectual expression in 1961-62, and that all evidence indicates that intellectuals were extremely careful not to exceed the bounds of expression then in effect.

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Chou attempted to portray intellectuals as potential traitors by drawing a parallel between Hungary in 1956 and the present situation in China. "When the counterrevolutionary elements revolted in Hungary in 1956 and wanted to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat there was the Petofy Club, that is, a clique of revisionist bourgeois literary and art people and intellectuals, which acted as the vanguard." Chou warned that intellectuals could be made the tools of the bourgeoisie who through the "trick of peaceful evolution" would try to overthrow the revolution. According to Chou, the scheming of class enemies had been effective in the Soviet Union, and "when the cart in front overturns, this should serve as a warning to the carts behind."

On 1 February 1966 Peking-- for the first time since the anti-rightist campaign of 1957-58-- began to name names in charges that leading cultural figures were deliberately working to subvert the regime. People's Daily accused Tien Han, chairman of the Chinese Drama Workers' Union and composer of China's national anthem, and Wu Han, prominent historical and vice mayor of Peking since 1949, of attacking the party through the medium of historical dramas. The "anti-party" charge, by implication, was directed at intellectuals in general. In a full-page dissection of Tien Han's work, the

story of an imaginary heroine of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), People's Daily accused him of saying in 1961 that the interests of the party do not coincide with the interests of the people and that the party oppresses the people.

On 24 February People's Daily carried further the imputation of traitorous activities to intellectuals by implying collusion between Tien Han and Chiang Kai-shek. It noted that two 1956 articles by Tien Han, which could be interpreted as critical attacks on regime cultural policies, were reprinted and circulated by Kuomintang propagandists in Hong Kong in 1957.

Wu Han, in a long self-criticism in December, pleaded that in his 1961 play, Hai Jui Is Dismissed From Office, the work for which he is now being pilloried, he had simply "forgotten" the "class struggle." Wu Han conceded that he had granted virtues to his Ming Dynasty official hero and not painted the bourgeoisie all black. Since December, People's Daily and Red Flag have published numerous denunciations of Wu Han's self-criticism as an attempt to counterattack the party. According to Peking, Wu Han has "actively joined the anti-Marxist and antisocialist chorus" and the play in question was deliberately intended to propagate these views.

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To date the party's wrath has fallen much more heavily on intellectuals in social sciences and the arts than on natural scientists and technicians, but mistrust of this latter group is growing. One segment of this group--medical workers--has been treated surprisingly harshly during recent months. In February 1966 Lu Ting-i, director of the propaganda department of the central committee, explained that the new policy toward medical workers resulted from the regime's conclusion that the health field was a special preserve of intellectuals. Medical workers, he said, are "notorious for...upholding individualism, looking down on the laboring people, resenting hardship, and being haughty, egotistic, and subjective."

The indicated solution was for medical personnel to spend more time in rural areas, both serving on roving medical teams and working in the fields side by side with the peasants. In early 1965 the regime had begun assigning urban doctors to roving medical teams that served for two to five months in the countryside. The announced purpose then, however, was mainly to raise rural health standards and improve party-peasant relations; ideological reform of medical personnel was secondary.

No further change in policy toward scientists in general was evident in early 1966. Party journals continued to harp on their ideological shortcomings, and reiterated old complaints

about scientists who place "blind faith" in Western science, do not consult the "masses," and do not assiduously apply Mao's thinking.

Manual Labor for All

Chou Yang in his anti-intellectual diatribe of January 1966 decreed drastic and vindictive measures to counter the alleged threat posed by intellectuals. They would, he said, participate to a much greater extent than before in hard physical labor, in effect becoming "part-time intellectuals," while spending much of their remaining time in political indoctrination meetings or in supervised study of the works of Mao.

On 22 February People's Daily announced that 160,000 workers in the fields of literature and art are now engaged in agricultural and industrial labor for an indefinite period. This figure does not include movie projection teams and other basic-level cultural groups who work in the rural areas throughout the year. People's Daily further reported that steps were being taken to establish a regular system whereby all urban-based writers and artists would spend one third to one half their time each year in physical labor. According to People's Daily, intellectuals in the past went to farms and factories simply to "gather material"; now they are getting their hands callused in production teams and brigades. "Shunning neither dirty jobs nor tiresome work,

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they have truly discarded their pompous airs."

A stiffer policy toward social science departments of universities also is now evident. Several reports indicate that the philosophy and history departments of Peking University --long a center of political ferment--the philosophy department of China People's University, and the language department of the Peking Normal University have just been transferred permanently to the countryside. Foreign Minister Chen Yi reportedly told a group of researchers in Shanghai in November 1965 that the whole educational structure of China was rotten and the teachers must go to the countryside and study and apply Mao's thinking. Letters indicate that with the exception of people trained in a few important specialties, all college graduates now spend their first year after graduation in manual work, partly to give them practical training but mostly for their own ideological good. Even before graduation, students are often assigned for an entire semester at a time to rural communes. Last fall, for example, a student at Tsinghua University in Peking wrote that 4,000 students--nearly the entire enrollment--were serving a six-month stint in the countryside. Since the letter writer "fortunately" had a history of tuberculosis, he was one of a group of 800 students excused for health reasons.

In October 1965, Minister of Health Chien Hsien-chung re-

portedly told a group of doctors in Chengtu that the normal tour in the country for a doctor, formerly two to five months, would in 1966 be extended to ten months.

A public health conference held in Canton in November 1965 announced that one third of all municipal medical and health personnel would be assigned to rural health work, some for "long periods." The conference further announced that "many" conference delegates had pledged to spend their lives in the countryside.

Doctors are privately critical of these programs. A recent graduate of a Canton medical school complained in a letter that he could not understand why he and 80 percent of his class were being assigned to commune health clinics. Another medical school graduate said that most of his fellow graduates had been sent to the rural areas and that he himself, in spite of China's pressing health needs, would have to spend one year in physical labor before being allowed to start medical practice.

An NCNA broadcast of 25 February painted a glowing picture of the "tremendous enthusiasm" that Peking's students, teachers, scientists, artists, and government workers were showing for a variety of nasty, dirty jobs. According to the broadcast, 100,000 intellectuals in Peking, including two vice mayors, have taken a hand in the collection of night soil, canal

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digging, snow removal, and street sweeping. It cited a group of laboratory technicians who were no longer content to give only one month yearly to physical labor but have agreed periodically to remove rust from the pipes of the city's heating plants. Soaked with sweat and caked with mud, these researchers crawled out of underground tunnels "exhilarated," not by the fresh air but because in cleaning pipes they had also rid their minds of "odious bourgeois ideas."

A technique which the regime is employing to bring pressure to bear on scientists is to demand public acknowledgement from them of the value of Mao's thought in their research, an undoubtedly humiliating experience for a person who knows that his audience knows how ludicrous this sounds. National prominence was given on 24 February to a forum convened in Peking by the central committee's political department for higher education at which Western-trained professors of physics, mechanical engineering, soil chemistry, and petroleum abjectly attributed their scientific accomplishments to the study of Mao's political tracts. An associate professor in thermodynamics related how he had used Mao's On Practice and On Contradiction in studying and improving the ammonia synthesis tower.

A professor of theoretical physics told how he and other physicists at Peking University had achieved breakthroughs in their study of fundamental par-

ticles by using Mao's thought. This professor as well had to denigrate Western research. He characterized Western study of physics as being in a state of stagnation because Western physicists were adhering to bourgeois philosophical concepts. On the contrary, he and his fellow physicists, using dialectical materialism, had allegedly blazed new trails in science.

At the conference a noted US-trained professor of soil chemistry servilely confessed that in the past he had been too engrossed in foreign scientific writings and had confined himself too much to his laboratory. Inspired by Mao's writings, and purified by an extended stay at farm labor, he had discarded the "pompous airs of an expert and college professor." Claiming that he had learned much about soil science while working in the fields, he pledged to go back for an even longer stint of manual labor.

Effects of the Campaign

Peking's aim has been total thought control--the inculcation of all intellectuals with Mao's harsh, fundamentalist philosophy--but in this, the regime has failed. What little is known of the attitudes of intellectuals indicates that many or most are deeply alienated and disaffected. Most are probably "revisionist" at heart, out of sympathy with regime efforts to keep "class" hostilities alive, and would prefer to leave the rest of the world alone and

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concentrate on China's enormous developmental problems.

Increasing disaffection among intellectuals would be especially detrimental to Peking's scientific programs. It is not yet clear how far the regime intends to go in intruding politics into natural science, but indications are that henceforth Chinese scientists will be expected to use political as well as scientific criteria to determine the suitability of Western scientific theories. The damage done will depend on the extent to which scientists

are allowed to continue their serious work while merely giving lip service to political shibboleths. Certainly, medical services and higher education must have already suffered from regime hostility to intellectuals in these fields.

Although the intellectuals have no capacity or inclination for open resistance, Peking's current campaign against them has probably severely impaired the effectiveness of its professional elite. ~~(SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)~~

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