

CHINA DOES MORE THAN FIGHT

Far-Sighted Policy Of Reconstruction

A CHINESE horticulturist who insists on a positive view of life is Dr. Lai-Yung Li, recently arrived here from America. He will not talk of mass slaughtering, the destruction of industries or the dispersal of schools; he prefers to talk of China's unity, her industrial co-operatives, her mass education, and her "reconstruction amid war." He has studied soil erosion in America, but he prefers to talk about "soil conservation."

Dr. Li was, or rather is, Assistant Professor of Horticulture at Lingnan University, Canton, China, which operated an exchange system with 25 universities in the United States and two in Canada. He himself went to Pennsylvania in 1938 and was on his way back to China when circumstances brought him to Wellington.

Christians Lead New China

Dr. Li is a Christian, and he told *The Listener* that many of the leaders of the New Life Movement in China are Christians, notably, Chiang Kai-Shek and his wife, Madame Sun Yat Sen, H. H. Kung, Minister of Finance (whose wife is a sister of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek), and Dr. Chang Po-Ling, a prominent member of the People's Council.

When asked why Christianity had made so much more progress in the new China than it apparently had in Japan, Dr. Li said he thought the background of Chinese philosophy made his countrymen more receptive to Christian teachings. There were obvious points of similarity between the teachings of Confucius and Mencius (both approximately 500 B.C.) and of Christ.

"Confucius taught that 'within the four seas, all men are brothers.' Christ taught 'Love thy neighbour,'" said Dr. Li.

Other points of similarity might be found, and the disparity with Japanese Christianity may be attributed to this fact since there were probably as many Christian missionaries (in proportion to the population) in Japan as there were in China.

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Chinese smells, and Chinese children. Especially Chinese children. For in this not-naturally-Chinese cleanliness, the yellow immigrants accumulate fast that form of wealth which they value above all—offspring. In fact, the Straits Chinese, yearly increasing their two millions (half the population of Malaya, sixth-sevenths that of Singapore), are also yearly becoming wealthier, better educated, better dressed, better athletes, better sportsmen. In fact, the destiny of Malaya was settled long before the Japanese landed to fight for it. Whoever rules there for the next few years, ultimately, irresistibly, irrevocably it shall be Chinese.

"Basically, Christianity and Chinese teachings are the same," Dr. Li said, "except that you could not call the Chinese teachings theology; they are the teachings of morals, humanistic teachings. Resurrection is not touched on, nor anything superhuman."

His Personal Views

Dr. Li stipulated that his views were purely personal, when he began to answer questions about names appearing in current news from China.

"This is only what I think, and if I am wrong, then it is my fault and not the fault of the Chinese nation," he said laughing.

"Sun Fo? Yes, he is all right. There is nothing exceptional about him, you know, but he is the son of Sun-Yat-Sen."

"*Takung Pao*? Ah, yes, that is a very fine paper. It is from Tientsin. It is highly respected and trusted. It has had a hard time. It has had to move several times from one town to another. But it has national circulation. I should say that it is found in every town, large or small, in China, 6 or 8 pages daily."

Possibly *Takung Pao* continues with its 6 or 8 pages daily, because, as Dr. Li said, the paper it is printed on is made in China, from bamboo pulp.

As for the section it represents, Dr. Li said that this paper was published in a democratic country, "irrespective of who has the first say." Often it expresses the views of the Government, but just as often the people's criticism of the Government.

Conserving the Soil

Going on to speak of the future of China, Dr. Li said, "China to-day is not just fighting, she is building up for the future. The Government takes a very far-sighted policy, it invests in the reconstruction of the country. They could have put us all in arms, but some of us have been able to go to America to study sciences."

Dr. Li's special studies as a horticulturist have been devoted to soil conservation, which is China's worry as much as New Zealand's.

"But in China the problem is more obvious; you can see Nature's work immediately with the naked eye," he said. "China is an older country, and agriculture has been known there for 40 centuries. At present, erosion there is the result—as I hear it in this country—of the misuse of modern artificial methods of exploitation. Not merely cutting down of the vegetation; a man may cut down trees, but he may also burn, or plough the grassland in order to put stock or crops on the land, in order to get twice as much off the square acre—which Nature usually doesn't give."

Chungking is Safe

Chungking, the new centre of China's great effort is very well protected, Dr. Li says. There are many days of fog

and cloud in the year, and around the city there are many caves which give natural protection from air raids.

Very rapid modernisation has been in progress—business has sprung up and colleges have been established; the co-operatives, led by the New Zealander Rewi Alley, are working hard all over the nation, and in Chungking some of them are working on armaments.

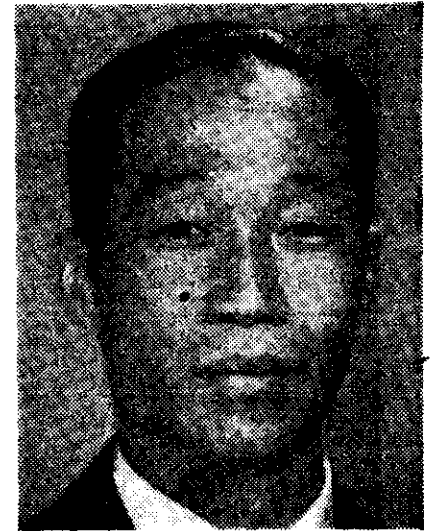
"I have one friend who is a fuel technologist in Chungking. His work is connected with the production of alcohol from cane sugar. I have another friend who is a metallurgist. He is in Chungking, making armaments, I suppose. I have not heard from them for some time."

Scientific Advances

Dr. Li was asked whether China had followed the progress made by Russia in applied science.

"Yes, the Russians are very great pedologists, and they have gone ahead in plant physiology as applied to agriculture," he replied. "China is very keen on pure and applied science too. Our National Scientific Research Council publishes its records in *Academia Sinensis*, and there are altogether 15 scientific publications coming out regularly in China. This would indicate how much emphasis is placed on scientific research in the building of a new China. Among those 15 there is the Lingnan Science Journal (from my university) which I found here in your Department of Research library."

"Of course China started later than the other countries, but she was fortunate



Spencer Digby photograph

DR. LAI-YUNG LI

"If I am wrong, it is my fault"

in a way, because she was able to profit by the findings of European scientists, instead of having to start at the beginning."

A New Zealander known to Dr. Li at Lingnan was Robert Fortune, of Victoria University College, who was in Canton with his wife in 1937-38, as a faculty member in anthropology.

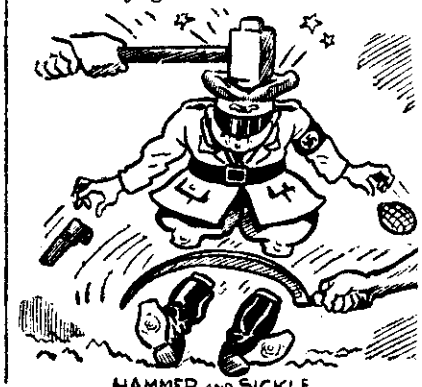
"Of course the university is large and he was in the College of Arts and Sciences while I was in the College of Agriculture, so I did not know him well, but I knew of him. I have been trying to locate him but I do not know where he is at present."

LISTENINGS

Perpetrated and illustrated by
KEN ALEXANDER

EVENTS move so fast these days that they have to be practically sniped in flight. Now that General Wavell is on the job, he can be trusted to give the Pacific Ju-jitsuers a spot of ju-jitters.

The A.I.F. presents an I.O.U. The Japs will have to pay P.D.Q. Japan is after fuel; the Unsentimental Blokes will give her the "dinkum oil." The Japs are looking for it in the Netherlands East Indies; they will be "in Dutch" before they get it.



HAMMER AND SICKLE

Australia's Federal Prime Minister gave Whitehall a Curtin lecture; after which he declared that "the show must go on." Here is one Curtin that doesn't obscure the light when drawn.

An important section of British opinion deplores the past muddlement in Malaya. The Antipodes has said comparatively little—but, oh those thoughts!

American submarines have sunk Japanese transports off Formosa to prove that they can nip in on Nippon.

The Russians are dealing the Boche more hammer blows; they are using the sickle to cut off his retreat.

The Nazi Field Marshal Reichenau is said to have died of a stroke after being bawled out by Hitler; one of those Gestapoplectic strokes!

The German public are told on this year's anniversary of Hitler's assumption of power that they need not hang out flags. They can save the bunting for when he is bumped off.

Winston Churchill flew home from America. Democratic leaders fly; dictators take to flight. There's a difference.

The Russians are still taking things as they come. Hitler is going strong.