

GENERAL SCIENCE

China Presses Scientists

Survey shows that top scientists in Communist China are being brain washed. Most of them are not Communists, but must accept the Party line or face the consequences.

► THE LEADING scientists in Red China, most of whom are non-Communists and U. S.-trained, are being brain washed.

This is a conclusion of a partial survey on China prepared for the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass., by Dr. Walt W. Rostow, professor of history.

The survey reveals that these scientists, who were successfully wooed and won over to the Reds soon after the end of World War II, now find themselves in the position of conforming to the Party line or facing the consequences.

The hopes which led many scientists to remain with the Communists, the MIT survey notes, have not been realized. Pointing out that some of the most prominent Chinese scientists have been strangely silent, the survey states that "helplessness and acceptance of authority" may now characterize their situation.

It was only after the war that the Communists successfully appealed to the Chinese scientists and special inducements to keep them in Red China or return to the mainland met with "phenomenal success."

But gradually, the scientists have been forced to give up their non-Communist islands in a sea of Party politics and put up with increased official interference. Although their lot has been better than that of their colleagues in the social sciences and some still hold responsible positions in the government, isolated cases of self-criticism and public confessions have become evident. One prominent American-trained scientist was done away with, apparently, says the report, because of his refusal to sign an Anti-American declaration.

"More generally," reports the survey, "the most serious challenge to these scientists, a challenge to truth itself, on which these men have built their lives, is the Communist

concept of science as the servant of political and social expediency. Attacks on 'bourgeois science' commonly appear when scientists do not serve these purposes as the Communists see them."

Dr. Rostow likens the use of the humans for Red China's peacetime construction projects to the tactics the Chinese Reds employed on the battlefield. Stating that they rely more on great masses of humans to perform the heavy labor than on technical know-how, Dr. Rostow calls it "a sad day for the 'bourgeois scientists' who must sit inactively watching the wastefulness of the Communist military tactics of organizing masses to perform unskilled tasks."

Science News Letter, May 7, 1955

AGRICULTURE

Spaniards Started Continents' Soil Abuse

► THE SPANIARDS who settled the Americas, unsettled the land, a Mexican archaeologist told the International Arid Lands Meeting in Albuquerque, N. M.

"There is no doubt that in many districts the exploitation of land might have resulted in serious depletion and destruction of soils," Dr. Pedro Armillas of Mexico City said, "but the wholesale damage seems to have been a result of the technological changes introduced with the Spanish conquest."

The pastoral life, dependent on the raising of grazing animals and which might have notoriously harmful effects on soil conservation, was not found in pre-Columbian America, Dr. Armillas said.

At the time of Columbus, Dr. Armillas reported, Indians from southwestern United States to northwestern Argentina planted floating gardens, called chinampas, built rock walls, dug wells, irrigated and practiced contour land terrace farming. But the Spaniards ended many of these practices.

They stripped forests for mine-timber, introduced herds of grazing animals, changed the cultivation practices from intensive to extensive by introducing the plow, unbalanced the population by moving them and finally, "the decrease in population resulting from the epidemics introduced by the Spaniards brought about the abandonment of pre-Spanish irrigation systems."

Applying the historical causes of land misuse to today's technical aid programs, Dr. Armillas warned that "whatever may be the technical value of programs of aid, these may run the risk of failure if they do not take into account the cultural conditions."

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