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The First May Day in A People's China

On May First of every year — the day dedicated to international working-class solidarity — workers of all lands render what they have achieved and present for further struggle "in the vanguard of all struggle and all oppression of man by man, in the struggle for the emancipation of the suffering masses from hunger, poverty and humiliation." (Lenin)

The workers celebrate this festival day with higher joy, unwillingness and confidence, for it also marks the first May Day of the great People's Republic of China.

This indicates that a people's state in China stands as a mighty achievement for all progressive mankind. It signifies the eradication of imperialist influence from a land broader than continental Europe. With this tremendous achievement of China's people, the world spell for peace becomes ever stronger. This is the result of the Chinese people's thirty years of bitter struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic exploitation under the leadership of the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party of China.

The Chinese working class made a new record among the most stubbornly oppressed and exploited, but now became the leading class in the Chinese People's Republic. The Communist Party, the party of the working class, plays a leading role in government administration at all levels and in all spheres of national life as well. General Mao Tse-tung, leader of the Communist Party and the people, has been elected Chairman of the People's Republic. This high honor is also enjoyed free of the leading members of the All-China Federation of Labour, in addition to other representatives of the Government.

These are: Liu Shao-chi, President of the People's Republic of China; Chou En-lai, Premier of the People's Government of China; Lin Piao, Vice-Premier of the People's Government; Li Shao-kang, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Wang Hsing, Minister of Finance; Cheng Tzao-ting, Minister of Communications; and Chen jen-tsung, Minister of Industry.

China's workers are rapidly training themselves to take over administrative responsibilities in industry. Many workers, particularly in industries, have been promoted to leading positions as directors, managers and other responsible officials. In North China alone, over 5,000 rank-and-file members in the state industries have been administered personally by the trade unions and state officials during the past three years.

In the course of their patriotic program, the Chinese workers have simultaneously raised their economic qualities. Workers' wages are now connected on the basis of essential commodity prices, which ensures that they stay on course with market fluctuations. Since the 12-year period of inflation resulting from the KMT's misrule, the people's government will now begin a series of active measures to improve the standard of living, to develop the industry, to raise production, and to set up social insurance at a level where the workers' wages can be doubled.

Now that People's China is entering its fifth month of publication, we feel that you will have had some opportunity to form an opinion about our publication. We sincerely welcome all your comments and suggestions for improvement so that we can better satisfy your needs for information about the new China.

For your greater convenience, we have drawn up the following questionnaire, which we hope you will be good enough to fill out and return to us:

1. Which of our articles have you found most interesting?
2. Which articles have seemed least interesting?
3. What do you think of our regular sections? —Current China, Cultural World and the Pictorial Section?
4. What are some of the topics you would like to know more about?
5. What kind of opinions about this magazine have your friends expressed?
6. Would you prefer the magazine to publish more theoretical or informative articles?
7. Would you prefer that our magazine devote part of its space to translations of literary works now being produced in New Democratic China?
8. What other suggestions can you give us for improving our magazine?
9. How long does it generally take for you to receive your copy? Have you any difficulties in obtaining the magazine?
10. Please list the names and addresses of your friends to whom you would like us to send introductory gift copies.

To Our Readers
China's Workers Build a New Nation

Liu Ning-I

The role of leaders of the nation is truly an honourable one, but it is a most responsible one as well. Our working class, therefore, is confronted with the pressing task of being masters and learning to manage and raise production.

Due to the prolonged oppression and exploitation of imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism, China's rural areas have been severely devastated. The factories in the cities run by the bureaucratic capitalists had been turned into the tools by which the owners, combining with foreign imperialists, oppressed and exploited the working class.

Today, almost all of China has been liberated. However, land reform has not yet been carried out in the newly liberated areas and the broad masses of peasants still remain in an impoverished state. Factories are suffering from inadequate equipment, shortage of raw materials and lack of capital. The methods of management and production and the system of wages inherited from the bureaucratic capitalists are extremely corrupt, inefficient and unjust. These factors, plus the blockade and air attacks being carried out jointly by the American imperialists and Chiang's remaining forces, account for our present difficulties in production. The working class, therefore, must uphold its glorious revolutionary traditions by demonstrating its capacity for endurance, steadfastness, initiative and responsibility, thus enabling us to surmount all our major difficulties this year.

Immediately after liberation, the workers assisted the government in protecting their factories and in making detailed inventories of all factory property and equipment. With the workers' help, the factories belonging to bureaucratic capitalists have been turned over to the people's state so that they may, from now on, produce in the people's interests. Thus, the foundation for the development of a socialist economy has been laid down.

Our trade unions have also assisted various industries in changing their old systems of operation into new and democratic ones.

With the enthusiastic support of the broad masses of workers, communications are being rehabilitated with particular success. Our railway workers responded whole-heartedly to the call: "Where the People's Liberation Army marches, the railways must go too!" Within a single year, they repaired 8,200 kilometres of railway, more than double the original plan. By the end of 1949, service had been resumed along 21,046 kilometres of the total 24,784 kilometres of liberated railway lines.
The workers in Northeast China are now tackling the job of fulfilling or surpassing the 1950 plan. This plan for rapid industrialization had been set above last year’s level in the total value of North-east China’s industrial production. This will raise the area’s ratio of industrial production to total production from 39 per cent in 1949 to 43 per cent in 1950.

North China has also made tremendous progress in production, and new production records are being set up. According to the help of Soviet advisers, the workers in the industrial area of Shanxian, which is adjacent to the Shangdong region, have increased output by 30 per cent over the same period last year. In Taiyan, they have raised their output one-fourth above the highest level achieved under the Japanese or KMT regimes.

The workers in Shanghai and throughout East China have placed themselves in the front ranks of the drive to prepare for the liberation of Taiwan. Their attempts are bordering the brink of the blockade and constant aerial bombings. But they are shouldering their responsibilities and facing their difficulties in a manner that provides inspiration to the whole country. Nor are the workers of the newly-liberated areas of Central-South, Southwest and North-east China lagging behind them.

In privately-owned enterprises, the trade unions are helping the workers acquire a correct understanding of the government’s policies. They are encouraging the full use of their new rights and to utilize the methods provided for defending their interests, such as consultation, negotiation, mediation and legal processes. At the same time, they have been shown the need for paying due attention to the management’s legitimate interests in order to ensure full-capacity production and economic prosperity for the nation.

One cannot deny that we still face difficulties and that we still lack experience in many lines. As Chairman Mao said so correctly: “We have taken only the first few steps in our first factory for production. We must go on.” Nevertheless, we have adequate conditions for overcoming these difficulties. We have a unified national economy in vast areas and large population. We have the brilliant leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung of the Chinese Communist Party. We have the rich experiences of the workers, the management and the administration. As a result, we can advance from the New Democratic stage to Socialism.

Manchuria occupies an especially important place in the national economy of China. According to statistics compiled in 1948, coal production in Manchuria constituted 40 per cent of the nation’s output; pig iron production reached 38 per cent; steel reached 55 per cent; and electric power, 78 per cent. Railway mileage accounted for 4 per cent of the nation’s total mileage. Production figures in many other branches of heavy industry were similarly high.

Because of Manchuria’s economic importance, even before the American-backed KMT army had been driven from the area, Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party told us to concentrate on the reconstruction and development of Manchuria’s economy, and particularly its industry. Manchuria, it was pointed out, must be turned into a base for industrializing the whole of China. Manchuria’s industry, built by the sweat and labour of the Chinese working people, had formerly attained impressive proportions. But it was seriously damaged by both the Japanese invaders and by the KMT hordes before their final defeat. While the same area in Manchuria was finally liberated in August, 1948, a great section of its industry lay in ruins. Not one single railway bridge remained intact. Coal pits were filled with water. There was an acute shortage of electric power in many factories. Buildings had been levelled to the ground. Of the 170,000 workers formerly in Anshan, one of the industrial centres in Manchuria, only a few thousands remained to look after the factories. All the rest had either been forced by hunger to flee the city or pressed-gagged into the KMT army. Steel and iron production was virtually at a standstill. Light industry was also largely destroyed. The pay and scale of much of the local labour was not enough for the workers to make an adequate living. This was the chaotic state of the industry which we took back from the hands of the imperialists and domestic reactionaries.

It is upon such ruins that the workers and the people in Manchuria have been rebuilding their industry. The Northeast Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party and the Northeast People’s Government have set the goal of restoring production to the 1949 level by 1952. At the same time, they have called on the people to remodel Manchuria’s colonial economy into one that serves the Chinese people. The difficulties that this huge task involves should not be underestimated. But our politically awakened, industrially advanced workers have secretly organized themselves to protect industrial equipment. During the transitional period after the enemy’s collapse, workers everywhere guarded their factories against the subversive activities of straggling KMT soldiers, secret agents and saboteurs. At the risk of their own lives, Anshan’s 1,200 remaining workers rescued 1,800 cars of machinery under enemy fire.

As factories and mines resumed operation, a shortage developed in spare parts and raw materials, some of which could not yet be obtained on the local market. Were it not for the great efforts of the people in overcoming this problem by volunteering to salvage useful articles from scrap heaps and half-forgotten corners of warehouses many workers turned over to the factories what they had previously taken away and hidden from the KMT authorities. Some even placed their own tools at the disposal of the factories, and with the help of the people who had been active in the underground work, overcame the production difficulties that had threatened to slow down the rehabilitation program.

On May Day last year, the Manchurian workers launched a huge-scale elevation campaign to increase production. In addition to raising output, this campaign elevated the workers’ political consciousness still further. As the workers gained a clearer conception of their new role as masters, the old hostility towards management evaporated and the workers came to regard the factories as their own. Now they view with each other in taking good care of tools and worked with heightened enthusiasm. As a result, both the quantity and quality of output were raised.

Two months later, in July and August, a campaign in labour saving was carried out by the workers. They freely criticized anyone who was wasteful or incompetent in his job. Poor management came under fierce attack because it hindered production.

Then in September, the new-famous New Record Movement began. It was touched off by Labour Heroes Chao Kuo-yu and Chang Shang-chun, both of whom are now members of the Manchurian People’s Congress. Many workers who raised the rate of labour productivity in their factory by 3.2 and 6.2 times respectively. Under
Democratic Management in Public Enterprises

Chen Yung-wen

One of the characteristic features of the Chinese Revolution was the fact that it was the People's Liberation Army led by the vanguard of the working class, the Chinese Communist Party, that stormed into the cities from its bases in the countryside and thus made the industrial revolution in China.

Meanwhile, the general price stability brought about by the government has meant further steady improvement in the workers' livelihood.

A comprehensive labour insurance program was introduced in 1952 in the People's Republic of China. Under the system, all the employees gain the benefits of a comprehensive insurance plan. The plan provides for the workers with generous assistance covering childbirth, illness, disability and old age. Large industrial unions have already set up special funds to pool the money collected from their members to cover the medical expenses of the members who are disabled by accidents or illness, as well as the medical expenses of the workers who are in need of convalescent homes. In addition to the insurance plan, the government has allocated large sums to cover medical treatment for its workers. In these cases, the government pays an amount equivalent to 4.5 per cent of the wages to the workers in light industry and 0.5 per cent in heavy industry.

Since skilled workers now feel greater security in their jobs due to the various government measures, they no longer fear to teach their techniques to young apprentices. As one master craftsman said: "In the past, we were afraid of unemployment when we grew old. Therefore we were reluctant to pass our skills on to apprentices. Since we have the labour insurance program to protect us, such fears have vanished." A campaign started spontaneously in the railways and spread to the factories in which veteran workers compete among themselves in teaching their apprentices. This would have been an unheard of phenomenon in pre-liberation days.

Because of the improvement in the workers' living standards, they are more anxious than ever to raise their cultural level. To help them in this respect, the government has appropriated a sum equivalent to 1.5 per cent of the annual total payroll for educational and cultural purposes.

Imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism consolidated their rule over the people by fostering the latter's backwardness. At the time of liberation, 60 per cent of the Manchurian workers were illiterate. Today, the workers' education is considered the key to their reconstruction work. Therefore it became a major task to wipe out illiteracy and raise our workers' level of consciousness.

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One point is equivalent to the value of 1.63 catties of assorted grain, 1.54 catties of coal, 0.02 catties of vegetable oil, 0.05 catties of salt and 0.02 square feet of cloth.
The End of Gang Rule in Transport

Wang Ke-ho

The day of the gang labour bars is over in China. Early in April, the Central People's Government struck another mortal blow at their feudal hold over the workers by abolishing the gang labour system in transport. Earlier the government had taken similar action in the mining industry.

Gang labour, which can be traced back 300 years in China, has been one of the most vicious forms of feudal oppression and exploitation surviving in the cities. It first came into existence in Tientsin, the biggest seaport in North China. However, it was not long before the brutal labour system had spread to all major cities and towns in the country.

By the time of the KMT era, such gangs had thoroughly entrenched themselves in urban society, becoming an inseparable part of the vast under-world and tightly interlinked with the whole sinister structure of superstitions associations, religious societies and other feudal organizations in China.

These gangs operated as secret societies, headed by despots who ruled their respective “zones of influence” by terrorism and held life-and-death power over the members of their bands. Top positions in the gang were rarely distributed outside the leader's clan.

Gang law could be summed up in an old Chinese saying: “The big fish eat the little fish, the little fish eat the shrimps—and the shrimps eat mud.” Transport workers were, of course, the shrimps. They could only obtain jobs through gang connections, and on condition that they give up the bulk of their pay to the gang boss and his vast hierarchy of subordinates.

In Swatow, for instance, the Li Clan controlled the chief transport gang, the top leaders appropriated 55 per cent of the workers’ earnings, the subordinates took 35 per cent, and the remaining 12 per cent was divided out among the labourers who did all the work.

In addition, it was customary for gang bosses to extract innumerable special levies from the workers whose jobs they controlled. The workers were often forced to contribute a fund for entertaining or bribing KMT officials. But even a gangster's birthday was reason enough to extort gifts, and the size of such gifts was generally considered a stick for measuring loyalty to the leader. In Penglish, a communication junction north of Nanking, transport workers had to hand over their entire earnings for several days to their gang bosses at every Chinese lunar New Year's time. And what little money remained in the workers’ hands was usually filched from them in the brothels, opium dens and gambling halls which the gangsters set up in order to keep their workers in perpetual debt.

Quite naturally, this highly profitable system of extorting money from the workers led to endless feudal, and even pitched battles between rival gangs. At the time of Penglish’s liberation, there were 18 different transport gangs existing side by side in the city, and true among them was rarely more than nominal. One of the biggest gangs wars in China's history broke out in Tientsin 60 years ago. Before peace was restored in the transport business, 500 people were involved and the casualties had run to 200.

Should any transport worker try to break away from the gang’s stronghold and earn a living on his own, gang vengeance was swift and certain. Every gang leader had a squad of armed men to handle just such eventualities. This squad was often made up of ordinary workers chosen by lot who knew that they must submit to the gang code of “kill or be killed.” Some of the bigger gangsters, like Chang Yum-schan of Penglish, had private court
rooms and prisons in their homes where those who violated gang law were tried, tortured, flogged and even executed.

Under this gang system, transport charges throughout the country rose to exorbitant levels. In Shanghai, the cost of unloading cargo from a freighter and transporting it to a warehouse often exceeded shipping charges across the Pacific Ocean. And in Pengpu, one of the worst strongholds of the labour gangs, a merchant had to pay 13 assorted fees to four different gangs in order to move cargo from a river barge to a warehouse.

After the liberation of China’s big cities, the people’s government found it was no easy thing to stamp out such deeply embedded labour practices and to break the power of gangsterism. The very biggest labour racketeers naturally fled with their gold bars to Taiwan or America, but these were the relative few. The rest stayed in business as usual, at most making a few adjustments in line with the times. They relied on their time-tested methods of intimidation to keep their workers cowed and submissive. The workers were also assured that the KMT would soon be back in power, when any defections to the revolutionary camp would be suitably punished. Some of the gang bosses even posed as elected spokesmen for their workers in all dealings with government and trade union officials. Chen Hao-chu, one of Shanghai’s leading underworld figures, transformed his gang into a fake dockers’ union two days after the city’s liberation. He had so terrorised his 2,000 dockers over the years that it was a considerable time before anyone dared to reveal the true situation to the people’s government.

The story of how the racketeers’ hold on their workers was broken in Pengpu illustrates the manner in which this problem was handled throughout the country.

At first, the trade union officials made a number of mistakes because of their inexperience in dealing with such matters. They began by creating a new trade union for the city’s 4,500 transport workers. But the organizers were not vigilant enough and the gang bosses and their underlings managed to infiltrate into the union’s ranks. So great was the workers’ fear of their gang leaders that they voted them into the top union posts. Therefore, conditions among the transport workers remained virtually unchanged. Despite all the new laws safeguarding the workers’ rights, the men secretly handed over a part of their pay to the bosses and continued to observe gang traditions. Meanwhile, the gangsters seized every opportunity to discredit the new union and people’s government in the eyes of their workers. They even sent thugs to attack the cadres in an effort to make them leave town.

By the time the cadres understood their mistakes they were already extremely isolated from the workers, who in many cases distrusted them even more than the gang bosses. It was a slow, patient task to regain the ground that had been lost. However, by visiting the workers in their homes and helping them to solve some of their personal problems, the cadres gradually won the confidence of a nucleus of workers.

The trade union also organized evening literacy classes for the rank and file of the workers. For greater convenience and efficiency, classes were broken up into small mutual aid groups of five persons, which studied as a team and held inter-group competitions. These courses offered additional opportunity for political education.

Workers’ clubs were set up in various parts of the city to provide recreational facilities and entertainment. Before many months elapsed, the workers had their own choral group and had staged their first play.

Meanwhile the mounting victories of the People’s Liberation Army in southern and western China convinced the workers that the Chiang Kai-shek’s corrupt KMT regime was gone for good. This fact, plus the gradually heightened political level of the workers, led to a general realization that labouring people now had a powerful government of their own which would back them up in all efforts to overthrow their oppressors.

About this time news came from Shanghai that the notorious Chen Hao-chu, the biggest transport boss in that gang-ridden city, had been arrested by the people’s municipal government and placed on trial. A huge Accusation Meeting was held at which the 3,000 workers of Chen’s gang had a chance to tell of their long, bitter sufferings. The story also came out of how Chen had been directing an underground KMT spy ring. In the end, Chen was sentenced to death and his fortune was used to recompense the workers he had robbed and to pay for a new union club house.

This example was all the Pengpu workers needed to launch into an fierce struggle against their own gang bosses. Their first target was Chang Hia-ying, the most ruthless and powerful of all Pengpu’s gang leaders.

Chang had inherited his labour kingdom from his father. Together with his right-hand man, Tsau-Kai-chin, he controlled 800 workers. Forty-one percent of their earnings went into his personal treasury, but he also imposed many other levies on his workers.

In 1945, a gang war broke out in Pengpu and Chang ordered his men into the fight. Several of his workers were arrested in the course of the disturbance, Chang then levied 100 sacks of flour and five tons of wheat from gang members on the pre-

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The Hual River bridge, which Chiang's vandals destroyed, was repaired in two months.

Workers Assume Leadership in Building a New China

The liberated workers of China can now divert their energy toward creating a modern, industrial, prosperous new China. Since they know that future belongs to them, labour enthusiasm runs high. The exploits of new bonded heroes of labour make headlines almost daily. As a result, the nation's industry is being restored at a phenomenally rapid rate.

Chang Tse-fu is a famous shock worker at the Fushun mines.

Telegraph workers return equipment they hid from the KMT.

Workers learn new production methods at an industrial exhibition in Dairen.

Shanghai textile workers help take over the mill of a bureaucratic capitalist.

Anshan steel workers hold a rally to celebrate the reopening of their mills.
The Defence of Kunming’s Factories

Cheng Lien-tuan

Only four months after its liberation, Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province, is turning out 20 per cent more coal, more steel, more rice, than it produced under KMT rule. Behind this remarkable achievement lies a story of the valiant struggle of Kunming’s 35,000 industrial workers, some of whom gave their lives to defend their factories from KMT devastation.

Kunming, which has a population of 360,000, is one of the major industrial centres in Southwestern China. There were formerly about 140 big factories in and around the city. Among the larger ones were the Central Machine Works, the Yunnan and Yutien textile mills, the 53rd Arsenal and the Tacheng Chemical Works—each employing more than 1,000 workers.

Before liberation, Kunming’s workers had a wretched life at best. By the spring of 1949, the ruinous inflation and the corrupt KMT rule had forced 40 per cent of the factories out of business. Workers were laid off almost daily. A few of the unemployed managed to eke out a living by street-hawking and other makeshift devices. The rest pawned or sold whatever they still owned and lived on the verge of starvation.

Employed workers were not much better off. A skilled worker at the Tacheng Chemical Works, for instance, received 42 catties of rice a month. This was not enough to cover the bare food requirements of one person and did not begin to meet the needs of a family. Recalling those dark days, a railway mechanic named Li Tso-yu said: “My starving mother and sister both contracted malaria. I knew that a few pills of quinine would save them. But where could I get the money? I paid a few days, and my grief-stricken wife committed suicide. On the day of my wife’s death, I went to work as usual. I swear, otherwise I would have lost my job.”

Among delegetes to the Chinese People’s Féd. Supreme organ of the People’s Republic, were Labour Heros Chao Chuan-kwei (left), Cheng Yung-tien (right) & Labour Heroine Li Feng-lin.

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Among delegates to the Chinese People’s Féd. Supreme organ of the People’s Republic, were Labour Heros Chao Chuan-kwei (left), Cheng Yung-tien (right) & Labour Heroine Li Feng-lin.

The Defence of Kunming’s Factories

Cheng Lien-tuan

It was under such circumstances that the Kunming workers secretly organized themselves for a life-and-death struggle against the repressive KMT rulers.

During the summer months of 1949, when Chiang Kai-shek was sustaining successive defeats in eastern and southern China, the factories in Kunming began to take on an air of unusual liveliness and gaiety. Many singing and dramatic groups sprang up, as well as reading classes and a wide variety of other non-political sounding organizations. But all these activities were, in fact, mere disguises for underground trade unions led by Communists and other progressive workers. An underground “New Democratic Workers’ League” was formed to provide centralized leadership for the Kunming workers’ struggles to prevent any destruction or removal of industrial equipment before liberation.

Frequent strikes broke out in the next few months. Some were for better working conditions, but an increasing proportion were political demonstrations of the workers’ strength and solidarity in opposing the destruction of the city’s industry. There were numerous protest strikes against KMT plans to evacuate equipment from the city. Strikes were also called to prevent corrupt officials from selling publicly-owned factories and machinery to private businessmen.

A typical instance occurred when the management of the 53rd Arsenal announced its decision to move the factory to Taiwan. All the 2,000 workers walked out of the plant, carrying away with them the key parts of important machines. The KMT authorities then offered top pay to anyone willing to help dismantle the factory. But although Kunming was full of unemployed and starved workers, not one worker applied for this job even though local newspapers carried “help wanted” advertisements for workers. In the end, workers and engineers formed a cooperative to purchase and operate the factory.

This display of popular strength so alarmed Chiang Kai-shek that he flew from Taiwan to Chungking early in September. There he personally mapped out tactics for crushing the peace movement. Chiang entrusted the carrying out of this plan to his elder son, Chiang Ching-kao, and his first wife’s brother, Mao Jen-feng, who headed the KMT dictator’s personal goatee. Soon after this infamous pair reached Kunming, 2,000 secret service agents arrived by air.

Chiang’s strategy consisted of launching massive raids, primarily against the workers, who
were arrested by the hundreds. All local newspapers were suspended, and the workers decided to pool their resources and buy weapons from the local police and gangsters, who customarily sold their arms on the black market. In addition, a number of workers were elected to handle the negotiations, but the deal ultimately fell through when the workers found that the price was too high.

But in actual fact, Chiang Kai-shek's government had only intensified the Kunning workers' determination to fight for their rights. In the two terrible weeks alone, more than 1,000 young men—of whom half were workers—slipped out of the city and joined the guerrillas fighting in the surrounding countryside. Thus Chiang's brutal assault on the Kunning population resulted in sending fresh reinforcements to the armed peasant units that were constantly harassing his troops. By November, the KMT regime had liberated the major part of 13 counties to the south of Kunning.

The workers who remained in the city tried to protect their factories. It was now clear that in order to carry out this task, the workers must arm themselves. Workers at the 53rd Arsenal tried to smuggle out guns and ammunition, but they failed because the KMT agents were on guard against just such action. However, a plan was drawn up to seize the arsenal before the KMT could evacuate it. The workers organized a volunteer "three-label guard" for the purpose of carrying out this task when the time came.

The workers at the Tacheng Chemical Works, the factory with which they made explosives in their homes at night, somehow managed to disperse the guards. When the police arrived, they were met at the gates of the factory, which turned ink bottles into hand grenades. Workers in another factory used the explosives to destroy the factory buildings in cases that their plant turned out.

The textile workers of the Yunnan Yutien, in the city of Yulin, pushed for the purpose of arming themselves, but there were no facilities for making weapons in their factory. Undeterred, the workers decided to pool their resources and buy weapons from the local police and gangsters, who customarily sold their arms on the black market. In addition, a number of workers were elected to handle the negotiations, but the deal ultimately fell through when the workers found that the price was too high.

As the PLA approached the provincial border, the situation in Kunning grew still more tense. All workers armed themselves in one way or another, if only with a pair of slaps, or heavy brass knuckles, or spurs. The armored squads in the different factories were amalgamated into a city-wide Self-Defense Corps. Various workers were secretly assigned responsibility for guarding vital equipment and factories with their lives if necessary.

On December 9, Governor Ou Han suddenly broke off relations with the KMT regime and announced that he was defecting to the Communist Government. Assisted by the workers, his provincial troops quickly disarmed all of Chiang's demobilization squads before they had a chance to act.

But two of Chiang's armies that were stationed in southern and eastern Yunnan marched on Kunning. To bolster the fighting spirit of his troops, Chiang announced through his generals that the soldiers would be granted "freedom of activity" for three days if they captured the city. This, of course, meant freedom to plunder, rape, burn, and kill with no fear of reprisal. The soldiers were also told to blow up all industrial installations in Kunning.

Fighting began in the southern suburbs of the city on December 18. The forces attacking Kunning occupied the site of the old KMT airfield. Moreover, the KMT had an American-trained air force to back its assault, as well as a small army of secret agents inside the city.

As soon as the fighting began, the Self-Defense Corps composed of 800 workers and 1,000 workers who had returned to Kunning in action. It was immediately joined by 5,000 students, government employees, merchants and other private citizens. This unit removed most of the police force for front-line action by taking over their pool of arms. Under the leadership of the workers, the Corps rounded up KMT saboteurs, built defense works and transported supplies to the front. When the Corps was established in this manner, General Lu's army was able to turn its full attention to fighting the KMT anavanze temporarily checked.

The workers, meanwhile, were also carrying out their long-prepared plans. This was a crucial moment. Many of them moved into their factories and lived beside their machines throughout the whole battle. As in the past, the management was disarmed and hidden for greater safety.

While the battle for Kunning was in progress, the PLA was rapidly advancing across the high mountains to the east. The peasant-worker guerrilla forces were also closing in on the city. Faced with the danger of being surrounded and unable to smash through government lines, the KMT troops broke off the battle on December 23 and fled towards the Indo-China border.

But in any case, all Kunning workers were back on their feet. The self-defense movement was a first resumptions operations within a few days. Led by their unions, which could now function openly, the workers compiled detailed factory inventories and prepared reports on ways to increase production. Everything was in readiness for the approaching battle. In the meantime, the Hsi-Shih Shan PLA reached Kunning.

The local population formed a defense procession, carrying rice, vegetables, and other food 5 to 6 kilometers long that passed out of the city to greet the people's army. The workers' delegations marched proudly along the route of many still swathed in bandages. When the procession met the advance PLA unit, the workers and soldiers sang songs of victory to the tune of the battle.

Until he was awakened politically, Hsi-shih used to blame all his misfortunes on his inability to read and write. Traveling through the country, he started his life as a cowherd, in his native Shantung province where he was born 55 years ago and later in the streets of Dairen, he cherished the belief that he had only been literate, he would have been able to do all his job.

Eventually Hsi-shih managed to get taken on as a cooly by the Dairen Fishing Corporation. This company used to employ 2,800 workers with various departments for making fishing equipment and small boats. Hsi-shih was assigned to the fishing department.

Hsi-shih had to get from door to door until he found a good-hearted butcher willing to help him make out his application. Watching the greasy hand swiftly move the brush up and down the application blank, Hsi-shih was filled with gratitude and envy.

Since Hsi-shih had no mechanical skill and could not read, he could serve as a cooly. For 95 cents a day, he worked from dawn to dusk as a beast of burden. When he arrived at the end of the day, he was nearly physiologically because he had always lived on the verge of starvation. Often when carrying a heavy load, he would go to the ground. Whenever it happened, the Japanese foreman would beat him with a hemp whip. At one time he was caught off his back, he would curse the fate that had kept him illiterate so that he was unable to get a better job.

When World War II started and the Allies threw a tight blockade around Japan and Manchuria, Hsi-shih's factory found itself running short of raw materials. One morning all the workers were told to assemble in the factory yard. The workers were called out each received a chalkmark on his back, either a circle or a cross. Hsi-shih received a cross. When the workers who were supposed to be management announced that all those with cross-marks were fired. Throughout the ensuing months when Hsi-shih and his family begged

PEOPLE'S CHINA 19
A Biographical Note:  

LIU SHAO-CHI  

Liu Shao-chi, Honorary President of the All-China Federation of Labour, is one of the early leaders of the modern Chinese revolutionary movement and of the trade union movement.

Liu Shao-chi was born in 1900 in Xingning county, Hunan province. As a student in 1920, he joined the Socialist Youth League. The following year he became one of the founding members of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1922, he was appointed to the Secretariat of the Chinese Labour Organization, the precursor of the ACFL. In the autumn of the same year, he became the first president of the Anyuan Trade Union in the famous Pingshan mining area of Kiangsi province. This union developed into one of the strongest and most militant unions in the early trade union movement.

Comrade Liu helped to prepare the groundwork for the Second All-China Labour Congress in Canton on May 1, 1925. The ACFL was founded by this Congress, and Liu Shao-chi was elected Vice-Chairman of the new Federation.

Later in the year he went to Shanghai, where the revolutionary movement was developing rapidly, and worked for a time in the Shanghai Trade Union Council. That winter he returned to the Federation Headquarters in Canton.

In 1926, he went with the ACFL Headquarters to Wuhan. When the 1927 Northern Expedition swept to Central China, he worked also in the Trade Union Council of Hubei province in the same city. After the failure of the great revolution in 1927, Liu went underground and continued to direct the revolutionary trade union movement. In the autumn of 1932, he went to the Kiangsi revolutionary base from where he still carried on his trade union work.

Between 1936 and 1942, Comrade Liu was secretary successively of the Northern Bureau, Central Plains Bureau and Central Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Since 1933 he has been a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. From 1943 onwards, he has been a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Party and Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Revolutionary Northern Bureau.

In September, 1949, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference elected Liu Shao-chi one of the six Vice-Chairmen of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China.

"It was like riding two horses at once," Hsieh once said in discussing his studies. He threw himself into the task of gaining an education with such diligence that his wife finally complained of his indifference to family matters. He was often late for meals, and immediately after eating, he would run to the crude blackboard he had made up on the end of his bed. Once he tried to persuade his wife to study as well, but she replied by throwing his blackboard out of the window. However, not even his wife's constant pestering could stop him from his studies. Despite his eagerness to learn as quickly as possible, Hsieh grew restless.

(Continued on page 66)
Hainan Landing
The PLA’s Fourth Army, famed as the liberator of Manchuria and southern China, landed in force on Hainan Island during the early hours of April 17. After quickly consolidating a broad beach-head along the northwestern coast, the people’s forces fanned out in three columns, crashing through one long-prepared KMT defense line after another with the help of veteran local guerrilla units and the people of Hainan. Six days later, on the 23rd, General Lin Piao’s troops liberated Hohow, the island’s capital, lying 40 or 50 kilometres from the original landing point. This strongly fortified city had previously been held by two garrisons of Gen. Haueh Yuh, top KMT commander on the island, as well as the sect of the KMT South China administration. Within the first week of its full-scale offensive, the PLA routed six KMT divisions and liquidated numerous strategic towns and villages, including the Chinese Nationalist party seat of Kuangshan and Linke.

The Hainan Campaign had been preceded by four small experimental landings in March. All of these amphibious operations came under heavy KMT attack, nevertheless they managed to carry out the landing and the Hainan Island operation with the people’s armed forces, under Gen. Peng Pai-chia, and of preparing the groundwork for the major offensive.

The people of Hainan have been suffering under a cruel regime of one KMT oppression since 1927, when, under Communist leadership, they created the Independent Division of the Workers and Peasants’ Red Army. After the Japanese Irgak Division invaded Hainan in February, 1939, this armed unit was expanded into the Hainan People’s Anti-Japanese Self-Defence Corps. Fighting under tremendous handicaps and sometimes reduced to using stones as weapons, the Hainan column proved a heroic committee and kept strong Japanese forces immobile on the island to the end of World War II. The Hainan people’s forces again took arms when Chiang launched his civil war, and they had succeeded in liberating three quarters of the island by the time of the PLA landing.

Hainan, with an area of 13,974 square miles and a population of three million, is China’s second largest island after Taiwan, it is in the southernmost region of China facing Viet-Nam across the Gulf of Thoink. The area’s mountainous sectors are rich in mineral resources, including high grade iron ore and wolfram, and its fertile fields produce three crops a year. With its three excellent harbours and fine climate, it forms an important defence post guarding the air and sea approaches to South China.

The Hainan landings, which involved cutting diagonally across the twenty-odd kilometres of the Hainan Straits with junks and small launches in the face of desperate KMT naval and aerial opposition — proves that the PLA is as invincible on sea as on land, when faced with the liberation of Taiwan, Chiang Kai-shek’s last remaining foothold on Chinese soil. The PLA’s Kwangtung Military Headquarters might well have been addressing all the scattered remnants of Chiang’s troops when it issued a proclamation to the KMT Hainan forces which said, in part:

“This unprecedented and heroic action of the PLA has broken the illusion that Chiang’s gang can maintain its last-ditch existence by relying on the ocean. We hope that Chiang will completely attack on the mainland! Have you forgotten his 7,500,000 troops that were almost completely annihilated on the mainland? You are facing a third world war! Have you forgotten the history of the past two world wars? How many troops did the Americans use; how many battles did they fight or win? Did they not rely on others to make the sacrifices while they enjoyed the fruits? Wake up from your dreams! Two roads lie open to you — either die for Chiang Kai-shek or fight for yourselves!”

May Day
Workers throughout the nation plan to celebrate May Day by presenting the nation with new production records and labour achievements. Many of the Sino-Soviet factories in Dairen aim to complete their half-year’s production by the occasion.

This law stipulates that husbands and wives have equal rights and obligations in the home. Both parties have the right to retain the use of their own names, to choose their occupation, to obtain education and to take part in social activities.

Diversity is permitted under the new law if both parties desire it. If only one party wants a divorce, it will only be granted after efforts to effect a reconciliation have failed. After divorce, both parties remain equally responsible for their children, no matter with whom the children are living. Children born out of wedlock have the same rights as children born in the same family. Discrimination is permitted. A divorced wife may retain property belonging to her before marriage, but the division of other household property is subject to negotiation between the two parties.

The sovereign power of this new marriage law can only be fully realized when the people break away from the old family traditions of Chinese old society, under which women were completely subjected to their fathers, husbands or sons throughout their lives.

As Shih Lian, China’s first woman Minister of Justice, commented: “Women need special support if they are to study for equal qualification. After land reform, women who had been victims of unreasonable marriage arrangements in the past, now have land in their own right. Their economic status has been raised and they are no longer subject to their husband’s economic bondage.”

The Peking People’s Daily hailed the new measure as “the crystallization of the long experiences of the people’s labouring struggle against feudalism.”

Sino-Soviet Pacts
A trade agreement and an agreement covering goods to be exchanged in the new year were signed on April 19 by Chinese Minister of Trade, Yeh Chi-chung, and Soviet Minister of Foreign Trade, M. A. Menshikov. A protocol was signed at the same time concerning Soviet delivery to China in the near two years of equipment and materials to be exchanged with China in the agreement of Feb. 14.

The Sino-Soviet treaty and agreements signed in Moscow on Feb. 14 were ratified by the Central People’s Government Council at its 16th meeting on April 11. On April 21, the Government Administration Council ratified the Sino-Soviet agreements regarding the establishment of a joint civil aviation company and two joint stock companies to develop the petroleum and non-ferrous metal industries in Sinkiang. These agreements had been signed on March 27.

Peace Front
The first anniversary of the formation of the World Peace Congress was widely celebrated throughout China. Peking observed the occasion with a large meeting addressed by Kuo Mo-jo, chairman of the China Committee of the W.P.C., and Eini Sisio, Chinese delegate to the third congress of the Executive Committee of the W.P.C. who reported on the recent Stockholm meeting.

On April 18, a joint declaration supporting the Permanent Committee’s call for the abolishment of atomic weapons was issued by the Chinese national federations of labour, women, youth, students and intellectuals. The Committee of the W.P.C. has announced a drive to collect signatures of those who endorse the Permanent Committee’s platform.

On May Day, the China Committee will establish branches in many leading cities, including Shanghai and Nanking.

CORRECTION
The title on page 24 of this issue should read: “A New Life for Anshan Steel Workers.”

In Ke Ta—“A Furnace of Revolution” which appeared in our last issue, the second half of the last paragraph on Page 17 should read thus: “Of the 6,000 students in the second term, for instance, excluding those in the First Section, 2,100 were fired from beur—

Linkow
Workers Restore Manchuria's Industry

(Continued from page 8)

...cultural and technical level. To help solve this problem, the trade union organized 3,924 part-time schools for factory workers and 1,600 short-time classes. The education in these schools is free, as well as from the trade union councils covering the electrical industry, postal and tele-communication industry, timber industry and textile industry.) There are 3,000 full-time teachers helping more than 200,000 workers in the main factories. The average number of teachers is still insufficient. In many places, the more advanced students are therefore helping the less advanced ones, and there is also a shortage of class rooms. Clubs, factory yards and parks, dormitories, noon halls and workshops are often used for holding classes. None of these unfavourable conditions has dampened the workers' enthusiasm for learning. Although Chinese characters are difficult for beginners to learn, an illiterate man can acquire a stock of 700 to 800 characters after one year's study. Liu Mei, a woman worker in Dairen, learned 2,000 words in one year. She is now the secretary of a branch office of the New Democratic League. It is possible for her to write reports without difficulty.

The workers are also enthusiastically studying to raise their technical knowledge, since the New Record Movement commenced. The railway trade union and the Port Arthur-Dairen unions have set up 74 schools in the various technological schools, with an enrolment of 16,000 workers. The workers in Manchuria will forever be grateful to the Soviet experts who have extended such invaluable help to them in this respect.

The Party and the trade unions have always paid great attention to their political education of the workers. Many regular political training classes have been established. In addition, every constructive occasion is used to give further political education to the workers.

Workers throughout Manchuria have joined the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association in great numbers. Like workers in the rest of China, the Manchurian workers are greatly interested in learning about the re-construction in the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies and the activities of their fellow workers there. The spirit and standards of international friendship displayed by the Soviet people, and especially their unselfish help to the Chinese workers, have impressed every one and every man in Manchuria. The Soviet people have provided us with examples of raising living standards and of increasing productive capacity, all of which inspire us to march forward courageously along the route charted by Lenin and Stalin. We also find instruction in the revolutionary struggles of the working class in capitalist and colonial countries, and we rejoice in their victories in the same way that we rejoice in our own victories.

Hsieh Shih-shan

(Continued from page 20)

...gave his time to others who found it more difficult to grasp all the new things they studied in the reading rooms to help anyone who approached him with any of the factors behind his widespread popularity among his fellow-workers.

In time, he was elected to a trade union position, which took still more hours from his studies. In carrying out his job, however, he displayed exceptional ability in organizing whatever work needed to be done.

Hsieh, who by now had been placed in charge of the compressor in the refrigerating department, also demonstrated outstanding ingenuity in repairing this old machine. Even during the Japanese occupation, the plant had gone out of order and frequently. Hsieh made a number of improvements, the compressor ran for six months without a break-down. As a direct result, ice production rose from 18,000 tons to 24,000 tons per month.

On the fourth anniversary of the factory's liberation, conditions warranted a trade union proposal that the workers take over the jobs of the remaining 1,400 managers, technicians and administrators in the factory.

On October 15, factory-wide elections were held to select the workers who would replace the former management officials. Hsieh was chosen to be manager of the refrigerating department.

That day, however, Hsieh went home as if nothing had happened. As usual, he tried to read all the advanced work he had appropriated his wives at will. His record of crimes included working for both the Japanese and the KMT secret police, and he was proved directly responsible for the death of at least ten patriarchic workers. On the basis of the transport workers' testimony in court, both Chang and Tsui were convicted and sentenced to death. Their fortunes were handed over to the Transport Union to be democratically distributed among those workers who had worked to restore the wealth. Their houses were confiscated and turned into schools for workers' children.

After this initial success, Pengpu's transport workers quickly dealt with the remaining 17 big gang bosses in the city. A few met the same fate as Chang Hsiao-yun; others received lighter punishments. Some made full confessions and threw themselves on the mercy of their former victims, knowing that the government favoured giving all trouble to the workers. Another change was the use of useful members of society, earning an honest living through their own labours.

Today it is the Pengpu workers themselves who dictate conditions in transport work. They have voluntarily set up an administration centre to oversee 85 percent, unified the system of payment, and abolished the humiliating dipping system. In spite of lowered transport fees, the workers' wages are higher than ever before because now all earnings go to those who do the work. Since transport workers now make a great point of offering efficient and courteous service, travellers and merchants no longer need fear that their goods will be pilfered or lost en route.

The Transport Trade Union has been completely reorganized. Bolsheviks have been elected into membership, and new elections ensured that all union posts are filled with the most active and competent workers. Eighty per cent of the eligible workers have joined the Union. One of the most imposing things about the former bank owed by bureaucratic capital—has been taken over for the union's headquarters.

The transport union has set up many facilities for its members. In addition to running several social centers, it has set up a cooperative store that supplies daily necessities below market price. There is a restaurant serving hot meals at 20 or 30 cent below street prices. The union has also established a cooperative store and a bakery, whose members receive a 50 per cent discount. It is even running a flour mill, which not only serves the membership but helps defray union expenses. All the jobs in these various enterprises are filled by former transport workers.

In Pengpu, like many other cities, there have always been too many people trying to earn a living in transport work, with the result that cutthroat competition undermines the system. It was necessary to liberalize the transport labour force down to more realistic proportions. The trade union helped resettle many workers on government-provided land. Previously, the workers never got any land.

The union also offered vocational training to members who wanted to learn new trades and granted loans enabling groups of workers to go into business. Workers who were also elected to jobs on government irrigation projects, highway construction, etc.

This pattern for overthrowing the feudal gang system and improving the workers' conditions has been duplicated with minor variations throughout the country. According to a survey made this January, 313,768 of some half-million transport workers had already been organized in 50 leading cities (not including the newly-liberated south-western areas of China). In February, the First All-China Congress of Transport Workers met in Peking and elected the national trade union leadership.

Less than two months later, acting upon a proposal submitted by this Congress, the Government Administration Council decreed the abolition of the gang labour system in transport. This Act also enjoined all major transport centres to set up state transport companies. These are to be operated by municipal bodies in close cooperation with the trade unions. A union delegate is to serve as vice-chairman of the board of directors. The company's income will be handed over to the local union for its educational and welfare programs. The transport companies will also set aside funds to repair or construct local transport facilities, such as wharves and warehouses.

The government regulation specified that private transport companies were to continue to operate. However, they must abide by a unified schedule of rates drawn up jointly by the public and private companies.

As a result of these measures, which are being rapidly implemented throughout the country, a free and unrestricted flow of commodities is ensured at a cheaper price. This in itself will have a tremendously stimulating effect upon production and new construction in all corners of China. But such developments would only have been possible in a strong people's republic where the workers are powerful enough to overthrow the gang labour system and free themselves from centuries of oppres-
RADIO PEKING

Radio Peking, the New China Broadcasting Station’s International Broadcasting Service, transmits daily the following programmes of news and commentaries:

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Amoy dialect  11:00 — 11:30 "  19:00 — 19:30 " "
Ke Chia dialect  11:30 — 12:00 "  19:30 — 20:00 " "
Viet-Namese  12:00 — 12:30 "  20:00 — 20:30 " "
Cantonese dialect  12:30 — 13:00 "  20:30 — 21:00 " "
Standard Chinese  13:00 — 13:30 "  21:00 — 21:30 " "
English  13:30 — 14:00 "  21:30 — 22:00 " "
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