

Traveler Says Suffering in China Is Not Now Noticeable

By GREG NOKES
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

Ashland — Robert Cohen told a Southern Oregon college audience Friday that the suffering which used to be evident in pre-Communist China no longer exists — "at least on the surface."

Cohen, 30, is the only U.S. citizen to ever take films inside Red China. He showed these films and narrated their content before several hundred students in the Britt student center.

Cohen was one of 42 American youths who were severely criticized in 1957 by the U.S. state department for traveling to China against the department's wishes.

Attends Festival

Cohen said Friday that the trip came about when he ventured to a 1957 World Youth Festival in Moscow. He went to the festival, he said, out of interest and to help combat Communist propaganda directed toward representatives of the "neutral" nations represented there.

Toward the end of the Moscow festival, Cohen said, the Chinese Youth federation invited all of the non-Communist representatives at the festival to a three-week visit in China.

Out of the 180 Americans at the festival—most of whom did not represent any particular organization but were there just out of interest, like himself—Cohen said 40 of them indicated they would like to see Red China.

Returns to Paris

Cohen said, however, that he decided to be a "patriot" and return to Paris where he was studying at the Sorbonne. Out of curiosity though he said he asked several Moscow correspondents of the U.S. press if there was any law against visiting China.

They replied that there was not and Irving Levine of NBC said the company would supply all of the film and equipment if Cohen would journey to China and take films to show throughout the U.S.

Cohen said he then felt a greater responsibility to bring back films for people in the U.S. to see, than to comply with the wishes of the state department.

He decided to go along with 40 other Americans, he said, and they journeyed from Moscow to Peiping by way of the Trans-Siberia railroad. The trip took nine days.

On arrival in Peiping, the first thing they were required to do was to list all the places they wanted to see while in China. A dilemma arose in the American delegation over whether they should visit the prosperous Manchurian province or the poorer Canton province which are 2,000 miles apart. There was not enough time to see them both.

The Chinese government then obligingly extended their stay another three weeks so that the group could visit both places, Cohen said.

He said he was able to take pictures of whatever he saw, except for the inside of a Shanghai prison in which some Americans were jailed. His films were not censored, he said, and were not even developed until after they reached the U.S.

Not an Expert

Cohen said he is not an expert on China. He had never been there before and was unable to draw any accurate comparisons of what China was like before and after the Communist takeover.

Neither did he know the language, he said, and was unable to really understand much of what he saw, nor talk to very many Chinese.

However, Cohen did notice that the many prostitutes, beggars and cripples that filled the streets in east China cities, according to U.S. servicemen who were there during WWII, have almost completely disappeared.

Illustrates Power

If nothing else, he said, the fact that the government was able to get these persons off the streets shows what tremendous power they must have.

The group saw the "Great Wall of China," Cohen said, which the Communist government is rebuilding. He said they are doing this for two reasons: one, to show that the Communist government is the government of China, and two, to show the world that once more China is a great power.

Children's Hospital

China, he said, is much "a contrast between the old and the new." He said he noticed that Chinese coolies were rebuilding the great wall by largely the same methods as it was built in the first place — by hand.

This contrast was also evident in a model children's hospital, he said. When the

Communist government first took over, he said, they decided to eliminate the practice of traditional medicine and adopt nothing but the most modern practices.

However, he found that the people still had much confidence in the traditional methods, and decided to use both. In this modern model hospital, Cohen said, one can now see the traditional and modern medical practices going on side by side.

Manchuria, the industrial capital of China and boasting perhaps the most modern cities in China, looks about like mid-19th century industrial America looked, he said. They have the same smokestacks and the crowded workers' tenements surrounding them.

In Port City

In the port city of Dairen, in Manchuria, apparently good ships are being built with the help of Russian technicians.

In the interior of Manchuria, Chinese locomotives and trucks are being turned out for the first time in China using Chinese steel and Chinese labor.

The truck factory, Cohen said, was completed in 1954, employs 18,000 persons and has a production capacity of 300,000 heavy-duty trucks per year. Each truck has the Communist symbol stamped on it, he noted.

While in the locomotive factory, Cohen said he saw brand-new heavy machinery marked "made in Rochester, New York." This was odd, he said, because U.S. trade with Communist China is forbidden.

Asks at Source

When he asked a Chinese worker how they got this machinery, he replied that "there is a store where if you have enough money you can buy anything." Cohen said he apparently meant the "black-market."

He also saw a brand-new Plymouth car in another Chinese city. Stamped on the car, he said, was a sign saying it was assembled in Switzerland. He assumed this also came from the black-market.

The Chinese Communists have built the first bridges ever constructed across the 2,000-mile long Yangtze river in central China, he said. This was a major accomplishment because trains no longer have to be ferried across the river as they were in pre-bridge days. The river had served to cut China in two in times of inclement weather.

Visits Prison

Cohen said he also visited a Chinese prison which had many "political" prisoners, who had been jailed for publicly speaking against Communism and Socialism.

He also visited a Chinese "commune" which is a series of villages that have been combined into one. The only thing new in this particular commune, he said, was a barber shop.

Cohen saw the "Sampan people" who live in little wooden boats their entire lives. They were noticeable around Canton which is said to be the city that has progressed the least under the Communist dictatorship.

Working Women

Canton is the only city, he said, where he saw women working "harder" than men as a rule. Women work right along side men throughout China, he said, but the men

usually do the heavier work.

Before the Communist takeover, the Sampan people, which number about 120,000 around Canton, were actually forbidden by law to come ashore. They were equivalent to the Indian "untouchables," he said.

Some of these people have lived their whole lives on the water without ever once putting their feet on land. These people still exist under the Communist government, he said, although the government has made some efforts to relocate the Sampan people in interior China. They have also provided some schooling for the children of these people, he said.

Sees Celebration

At the end of this trip, Cohen said, he visited Peiping again (the capital of China) and saw the National Day Parade, celebrating the Communist takeover in China.

As many as 100,000 workers marched in the parade when he saw it, Cohen said, and he understands that last year there were 500,000.

Watching the parade, he said, were Chinese Communist party boss Mao-Tse-tung and Hungary's Communist leader, Janos Kadar.

Cohen concluded his talk with the statement that the ancient dragon of China "has come to life," and "people of the world will watch as the Chinese dragon continues its leap forward."

Bank Deposits Said \$20.7 Million

The Medford branch of the U.S. National Bank of Portland showed deposits of \$20,770,686 in its Oct. 3 report to the comptroller of currency, according to Allan F. Perry, branch manager.

Loans and discounts on that date showed a total of \$10,933,494.

The total banking system of the U.S. National bank with 75 banking offices reported deposits totaling \$787,793,077 Oct. 3.

Total loans and discounts for the statewide system were \$400,336,721. Total resources rose from \$875,522,126 as of the June 15 call, to \$883,784,282 as of Oct. 3.



RINK READY—Rogue valley's new skating rink, the Jackson County Rollarena, located about 2½ miles south of Medford on highway 99, will be open to the public some time this coming week, according to manager Merle VanHoesen. The picture above shows VanHoesen, (left) receiving the keys to the building from Contractor Meyers Jones, an associate of Siskiyou Development corp., upon completion of the structure last week. The skating area, covered with pean veneer, will be the largest in southern Oregon, VanHoesen said. Coffee, soft drinks and sandwiches will be available at the snack bar and live music for skating will be furnished every evening except Sunday, by Jerry Miller at the organ. On Sundays the music will be taped, VanHoesen said.

Forest Products Week Observed

The importance of the lumber industry to southern Oregon will be highlighted this week as foresters and woods industry organizations observe National Forest Products Week.

Local observance is being coordinated by the Rogue Valley Hoo-Hoo club with Ivan Harrington, Ross Lumber company, serving as chairman of the planning committee. Cochairman is Bob Nelson, Neeley-Nelson Lumber company.

Special activities are planned in Ashland, Medford, and Grants Pass, Harrington said. Representatives of the forest industry plan talks before service organizations during the week to bring attention to the economic importance of the industry to this area.

Amendments to Social Security Law Reviewed

Survivors of individuals who died before 1940 may now be entitled to Social Security payments, according to Edward B. Jacobson, manager of the Medford Social Security administration office.

New amendments to the Social Security law provide for payments to the widows, aged dependant parents, and disabled children of workers who died after March 31, 1938, and before Jan. 1, 1940. The deceased worker must have been employed under Social Security for approximately 18 months in order for his survivors to receive these benefits, Jacobson said.

To qualify for benefits a widow or dependent mother of a worker who died before 1940 must be 62 years of age or over. A dependent father must be 65 or over. A disabled son or daughter must have a disability so severe that it keeps him or her from doing any substantial gainful work, he added. The disability also must have begun before the child reached his 18th birthday.

As with other benefits, no payment may be made unless an application is filed, Jacobson noted. Individuals who believe they may be entitled to payments under these new amendments should contact the Social Security office in their area.

The office in Medford is located at 1005 East Main st., and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Week has been proclaimed by President Eisenhower and has received the support of Medford Mayor John W. Snider.

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