

S. O. 52

It was a visit where I was struck by the thirst for information, not only by the Chinese students, because being somewhat of an extrovert myself, while I was there I took to the streets. I had a small Chinese dictionary and learned a few phrases and went out and spoke with the people. Many of them had never spoken on a one-to-one basis with a westerner. They had questions that they wanted to ask me about our civilization, about our so-called capitalist system and how in fact we could go out and speak in a democratic fashion.

One Sunday morning, in a covert fashion, I was taken by a taxi driver to a Catholic church. I had an opportunity to witness a Catholic ceremony at six o'clock in the morning. Afterward, we spoke with the priest who himself had been a victim of the cultural revolution.

I spoke with him and I said: "How can you follow through the Catholic religion in China when in fact the Chinese Government has made it quite clear that Rome and the Pope have absolutely no place to play in your particular religion?" He said: "When you have gone out and worked in the field, and when you have suffered as we have under the hands of the Gang of Four during the cultural revolution, you accept this particular restriction as one step on the road to democracy."

Just as I spoke to the students, I spoke to the workers in the streets. I saw the look of fear in their eyes, not in 1989, but in 1982, when worker organizers would stand on the corner and if they spoke too long to a stranger, if they spoke too long in their halting English, organizers would come up and say: "It's time to move on." The quiet peace-loving Chinese people, even though they were thirsting for information would follow instructions and would move on.

● (2140)

In one particular case, in one surreptitious visit, I was invited to visit the home of a Chinese person. In that home lived a young man, his mother and father, the three of whom shared one bathroom with about 15 other families. It was the China that we did not see according to the official vista. He and his mother and father shared a room which was approximately 10 feet by 20 feet.

They invited me into their home and served me crabs. To them it was a dinner of luxury, something which they spent a whole month's salary to put together. When I saw the crab legs I thought that we in Canada would probably toss off the amount of fish that they were so proud to offer to their guest. They hungered for information.

That is why when I saw the throngs of students gathering in Tiananmen Square recently who were prepared for the first time in a long time not only to throw off the shackles of the cultural revolution but also to stand up and be counted for democracy I as one from the West was in my heart rooting for them saying: "Thank God that the wave, the undercurrent, the search for democracy that has so touched the people of China over the last number of years has found its fruition in of all places Tiananmen Square".

What we saw this weekend was the brutal hand of anarchy, the brutal hand of totalitarianism striking down those students—not just the students but the workers and people who were coming together to speak for freedom, to bring forward the Statue of Liberty. When the armed forces came through and started to shoot them down brutally in the streets, we saw phalanxes of students forming a human chain going to certain death because they believed in a democracy and a freedom which China has not seen for many, many years.

We in the western world and Members on all sides of the House, as well as other Governments around the world, are not seeking ways to blame the people of China. The people of China, as the people of Poland, have kept alive their hope in the face of oppression and in the face of certain death in some cases, and in other cases the anarchy of the cultural revolution. They still have the memory of working on the farms, of having intellectuals and people who had so much to contribute to their culture being sent off to work in the rice paddies to do the bidding of the Government.

What we do reject as a Parliament and as the people of Canada is the fact that the armed forces of China and the Government which was directing those armed forces is moving to smote down a movement to freedom which we should be embracing.