

Be that as it may, the Canadian Prime Minister did not hide his admiration for China's political leaders, who, he said, "pursue the same objectives as ours — national development and the fulfilment of the individual". In saying this, he obviously did not intend to imply that he also agreed with the means used by the Chinese to attain these ends.

Personal impressions

Western travellers returning from a trip to China have always found it difficult to express their reactions to China and the Chinese and, even after 24 years of revolutionary experience, China has certainly lost none of the mystery it has always held for foreigners. I should say that the new China is probably even more fascinating than the old precisely because of this revolutionary flavour, the concrete expression of which is seen everywhere in China.

For a North American, used to neon lights, bikinis and the omnipresent automobile, "culture shock" occurs the moment one sets foot in China. Austerity, restraint and discipline are visible from the top of the passenger-steps of the airplane that has just set one down in Peking. Yet the Chinese are glowing with health, relaxed, and, outwardly at least, happier than the average Westerner. It seems to me that one explanation for this phenomenon might be the fact that in China the values of society are clearly defined and constitute a quasi-mystical ideal, whereas, in the West, almost all the traditional values have been shaken to their roots and diffi-

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It is symbolic of recent developments that presidents, prime ministers and emperors now visit Peking in a steady stream and represent a wide political spectrum. The leaders of the United States and Western Europe have made the pilgrimage, as have those of Iran, Greece and Ethiopia, to mention but a few — taking their places in the guest-rolls beside such "old friends" as the Albanians, North Koreans and North Vietnamese. Nor are the visits confined to political leaders. Americans, Europeans and Japanese from various circles, together with their counterparts from the Third World, come in great numbers as guests of China. Peking has become an international crossroads, with only the Russians and their closest supporters currently unwelcome. The mystique of Chinese authority and power is correspondingly enhanced.

culties are being experienced in replacing them. China does not have this problem since the thoughts of Mao are used to provide an answer to every question.

What is more, there can be no doubt that the China of today has succeeded in breaking free from centuries of political, economic and social stagnation. It has reformed — among other things — the diet, the feat of feeding its 800 million inhabitants besides giving them increasingly-advanced education and health services. Above all, it provides work, and with it dignity, to this people that has known for too long the humiliations imposed by invading emperors who were more interested in their own glory and comfort than in national development.

Although resolutely refusing to resort to the use of foreign capital to speed development, China is making progress, but at its own rate. It has already set up a useful infrastructure of roads, railways, irrigation canals and airlines. Currently it is placing stress on industrial and technological development, and it knows that Canada can help it in this area.

In its own way, China wants to give its people modern comfort and material prosperity. "Refrigerators? The Chinese would not ask for these today," remarks an interpreter, who, on another occasion, said with absolute conviction: "We are going to catch up with the West." The Progress will take their own time, but it seems to me that China's development has only just begun, and that its progress may accelerate considerably in the near future.

Yet uncertainty continues to hover over the Chinese domestic scene. How could it be otherwise in a society of 800 million, still in the preliminary stages of its struggle toward political stability, economic modernization and social change? The big questions that relate to China's future remain unanswered and, more than that, unanswerable. On the political front, the issues cover a wide gamut: the training of new élites in a society professing egalitarianism; authority relationships at the centre, region and locality in a system with strong centrist proclivities; and, above all, the character of top leaders after the first-generation revolutionaries have passed from the scene. . . . (Excerpt from *China and The Balance of Power*, by Professor Robert Scalapino, University of California, in *Foreign Affairs*, January 1974).