

Chinese intellectuals are more socially concerned

By DERWIN GOWAN
News Editor

Chinese scholars are more socially minded than the Western variety according to Professor Charles LeBlanc of the University of Pennsylvania to a Fredericton audience last Tuesday.

He claimed the Chinese intellectual must identify with the problems of the community whereas in the West they usually define their own projects and spend their whole lives working on problems which may have no social relevance. Since the nationalist revolutions in China, he said, there has been a gradual change in the role intellectuals play in China, although they still act as a driving force behind Chinese society and in setting up the communist society.

Although intellectuals had an important role to play in pre-revolutionary society, that role was partially negative, said LeBlanc. They were taught traditional Chinese values and were employed by the government after going through a process of examination. They were given a fixed salary which they often used to buy land to rent to peasants. Thus they helped create a feudal system all through the imperial period.

To these people, China was the centre of the universe and they tried to close China to the rest of the world. Foreign relations were seen in terms of tribute said LeBlanc. Also, China was geographically isolated.

However, LeBlanc noted that China had some trade relations with the Roman empire and accepted Buddhism. Also, Europeans were readily accepted when they first began to move eastward in an aggressive manner. However, China very quickly closed the doors due to "improprieties" by colonizers and missionaries.

LeBlanc said the reason for the present day isolation of China stems from European actions in the East during the 19th century plus the fact that the Chinese are "rearranging their house." "They want to do it themselves without interference," he said. When they loosen up their borders, LeBlanc said they want to remain in control of the situation. For example, LeBlanc said the Chinese were cool to offers from Exxon to aid the Chinese in exploration for oil because they were afraid they would not be able to adequately control the company once it was let in. However, he said, corporations may be allowed in the future. "They are afraid of those huge western organizations which tend to be maneaters," said LeBlanc.

According to LeBlanc, after the first republic was set up in 1911 scholars with traditional Chinese training plus education in the United States introduced the idea of progress, hitherto unknown. Along with progress came the ideas of science and democracy which were also new to the Chinese people said LeBlanc.

According to LeBlanc, traditional Chinese values are non-temporal and the past was venerated due to Chinese ancestor worship. Due to this veneration Chinese values were connected with the past. Hence the Golden Age was in the past and not the future as the idea of progress would suggest.

LeBlanc claimed intellectuals under the nationalist regime "cut their roots with China" because of their western education. "They were too far from the situation," he said, and did not understand the "Chinese problem."

With the coming of a communist revolution in 1949 said LeBlanc, the intellectuals were abolished as a class but their function remained.

During the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" of the 1960's - a response to the excesses to the "Great Leap Forward" - as many as 90,000 civil servants were put to work in rice paddies so they would not become remote to the problems of the Chinese peasant, which counts for 80 percent of the country's population. LeBlanc said Mao was trying to disperse the remnants of bourgeois thought from intellectuals who had not been re-educated, and this caused a change in the thought of the Chinese intellectual community.

After the communist revolution in 1949, said LeBlanc, the communist rulers needed the intellectuals as they had the know how to run the political apparatus, regardless of their political leanings.

LeBlanc pointed out that after the communist revolution, many landlords were executed but intellectuals were not. He said there was a compromise on both sides. The Chinese kept the old intellectuals and they, in turn consented to serve under the new regime although they did not believe in the goals of the revolution.

However, new personnel came along eventually and communist rulers decided civil servants should be converted, or re-educated to the new ideology. Therefore, a lot of them were replaced temporarily, LeBlanc said.

LeBlanc claimed Mao foreshadowed this change in 1942 when he gave a speech saying that in early life he thought only the intellectuals and the bourgeoisie were "clean" and did not like to be associated with the working class. However, said Mao, he became acquainted with workers and peasants after embarking on the "revolutionary path" and decided only workers and peasants were "clean."

Therefore, said LeBlanc, the role of the intellectual has vastly changed in China as they are no longer a class but must immerse themselves in community problems.

Still, he said they were important to building communist China as they act as a "progressive force."

In Chinese schools today, "as far as we know," said LeBlanc, work and study are combined "so scholars can feel an affinity with the masses."

LeBlanc said sending scholars to the fields has more of a propaganda than a functional value as the Chinese regime wants people in positions of authority to have the "right attitude". "They do believe in their socialist gospel," he said, and they are willing to hold up progress in social and economic policy in order to make sure people keep true to the

Pre-med meeting to discuss abortion

A general meeting of the Pre-Med Society is scheduled for January 27, 1976 at 7:30 p.m. in Tilley Hall, Room 303.

A discussion on abortion will highlight the meeting. Featured will be Law Professor Dan Hurley, Doctor Robert Tingley from the Student Health Centre, Joe Higgins of the Campus Ministry Team, and Family planning councillor Pat Thorp.

The general public is invited, particularly those interested in public health fields.

Also discussed will be the Dalhousie trip planned for February 12 to 14.

communist ideology. The Chinese say one group in society should not shoot ahead of another, said LeBlanc, and the Chinese are concerned that the whole society advance together. LeBlanc noted Chinese criticism of the Russians for letting their intellectuals live in luxury.

Chairman of the Political Science Students' Association Cliff Pierce said it should be recognized that the social conscience of Chinese intellectuals is "imposed" and the contributions of the Western scholar, although conducted on an individual basis, are just as great. Further, he said this diversification is the main reason for the "richness" of Western culture.

LeBlanc agreed with this but said there was a problem in China in supplying the basic physical needs of the people. "Hungry men don't create," he said. Therefore, he continued, the regime did not feel disputed to let academics take up their time "writing poetry." LeBlanc said it would be possible to validly criticize the Chinese regime if, after all of the physical needs of the Chinese people are adequately provided, academics are still constrained.

LeBlanc said there were "dissatisfied intellectuals" in China who "never changed their minds" about the communist regime but they are not allowed to speak out. Further, he said there was dissatisfaction amongst Taiwan intellectuals as well, but said they were "not always free to speak out." LeBlanc divided the Taiwan academic community into two groups. One he called "ideologues" who tried to justify the nationalist regime and who were still interested in retaking the mainland. "There has been no real change in outlook," LeBlanc said. The others he said, were those who would speak out but were not allowed to. "Many intellectuals in Taiwan are dissatisfied with the situation," LeBlanc said.

During the cultural revolution, LeBlanc said there was a threefold power structure in Chinese com-

munes. One person from the central government was to ensure members of the commune kept within the official political line, another representative from the army was to ensure the security of the commune, and another representative from the intellectual community was included - "the intellectual of new China" - who understood abstract Marxism yet was familiar with the concrete situation in the commune and could tie the two together.

LeBlanc concluded by saying, "It seems that the revolution has reached the most backward village." He said documentation says people had a "tremendous feeling of liberation" after the

revolution was over.

Furthermore, he said, "relationships of fear" have been replaced by generosity as landlords can no longer "divide and rule" by threatening to take land from poor producers and give it to those who did better.

LeBlanc is a PhD candidate and teaches in the department of Oriental studies at the University of Pennsylvania. A native of new Brunswick, he graduated with a BA from St. Joseph College, Moncton and the University of Quebec. He holds an MA from the University of Montreal. He has conducted extensive research in India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Taiwan.

Bridge project on says Wilkins

By ALISON KING

The bridge project is definitely "on" according to Fredericton Mayor Elbridge Wilkins.

Initial groundwork for the construction of the controversial Westmorland bridge will hopefully be underway by this spring, although he was unable to specify an exact date.

The provincial government will foot the bill, although the amount of funds available for the venture has not been disclosed. General information on the bridge seems to be very nebulous. However, Wilkins did say that details published recently in local media on proposed budget cuts were apparently incorrect. There are definitely going to be minor modifications in the original design plans, "minor" being the operative word.

One the other side of the fence, opinions are less cloudy, more synthesised, and it would seem, more confident. Professor Stephen Patterson, head of the erstwhile Bridge Committee, said it was now obvious that the original plan had undergone drastic modification, and, "People in the Bridge Committee are confident that there

doesn't need to be a public campaign against the Westmorland bridge."

Wilkins said with the greatest confidence that plans for the Riverfront Drive were also definitely going ahead, but members of the bridge committee say these riverfront expressways will probably never materialize.

Both factions recognize the necessity for a bridge that links North to South, the present Carleton Street bridge being inadequate as regards to safety standards. The controversy arose because of the proposed location for the new bridge, as this may be detrimental to Fredericton's urban heritage in view of the ensuing increase in traffic. Opponents to the bridge say that a modest two-lane bridge could be constructed providing the link at the Western end, just as the Princess Margaret bridge provides the link at the Eastern end.

With this confusion of fact and feeling, it remains only to await the big thaw of Spring, when the question of "to bridge or not to bridge" will either have melted away with the snows, or will continue to be a vague controversial issue.



Gentleman Jim's
455-4343

WANTED:

**Disc jockeys for disco cabaret.
Apply in person.**



BIG SHOT NIGHT

(Every Wednesday Night)
9:00 - 10:30 p.m.
Buy a double for the price of a single!

**NO COVER CHARGE for students
with I.D.'s, Monday — Wednesday**