

Research Review

# Zoology Prof Says Chinese Communists Use Science to Eliminate Insects, Pests

By KAY MILLS

The Chinese Communists are applying science to reduce the insect and parasite populations that have plagued their land for centuries, Dr. Tien-hsi Cheng, professor of zoology, said.

They have been able to capitalize on the centuries of research conducted in the West in developing modern control methods, Cheng said.

His report on zoological sciences appeared in "Science in Communist China," an 872-page book published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

In pre-Communist days, crude measures were employed against the "four evils" of the regime—rats, flies, mosquitoes and sparrows, Cheng said, but since 1949 more insecticides have been used. Clinical and medical methods are now employed against parasites.

To illustrate the human methods long used in Communist China, Cheng gave the following account of the sparrow extermination campaign:

"During April 19-21, 1958, the entire population of the nation's capital, Peking, was mobilized to take part. Masses of people carrying gongs, drums and bamboo sticks gathered on roof tops, under trees and at places where sparrows made their nests.

"Scarecrows and red flags were planted on some open grounds and fields and poisoned bait was scattered in others. No sooner had the sparrows appeared to search for food in the mornings and evenings than the 'human sea' burst, beating gongs

and drums, yelling, screaming and waving the bamboo sticks.

"The poor birds were chased from one place to another, flying and running for their dear lives. This relentless pursuit continued for two hours or so, until most of the sparrows, now hungry and exhausted, dropped to the ground and were captured without the least resistance.

"Some took refuge in places where poisoned bait was scattered and died after taking a seemingly hearty meal. In the three days, over a half a million sparrows were destroyed."

With the help of Russian crop-dusting planes and pilots, the Communists have virtually ended locust infestations over millions of acres that formerly were laid bare by the pests, Cheng wrote.

Soviet Russia has also contributed other generous technical assistance, although in the last five years "work in the field of zoology has been better organized and executed by China's own scientists," he wrote.

By order of party leader Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese have been emphasizing applied science in making these tremendous strides, Cheng said, adding that rather little has been done in basic science. Consequently, Cheng cautions of the danger of underestimating the practical achievements of science there.

"The philosophy of 'science for science's sake' is denounced as reactionary and indifferent to China's practical problems; it is considered a luxury which Communist China can ill afford."

"It has taken years of trial and error for the Western world to achieve its present state of de-

velopment in science," Cheng wrote. "To expect that zoology in Communist China . . . will equal that of the West in the next decade or so is overly optimistic, but to find comfort or even contempt on the basis of the present status is equally unrealistic."

Cheng added that "to undertake pioneering work in scientific research in an atmosphere of suspense and under conditions of rigid regimentation is a task which few of us appreciate . . . As far as

the scientific workers are concerned, we can only show respect and sympathy regardless of how the fruits of their efforts are exploited."

The book in which his report appears contains the proceedings of a two-day seminar held at the association's last meeting. A grant from the National Science Foundation supported the massive literature survey necessary to gather the information and make publication possible.

## New Navy Grant Awarded to Lab

The Navy has provided the University with \$2,258,435 in support of the research program of the Ordnance Research Laboratory.

Dr. John C. Johnson, director of the Laboratory, explained that the funds, made available through an amendment to the continuing contract between the Navy and the University, will support the laboratory's program during the period, Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, the final nine months of the fiscal year which began Oct. 1.

The support is for the extensive program conducted by the Laboratory in the field of water acoustics and hydrodynamics, a program that has special applications for defense.

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