

REPORT ON CLASH IN SHANGHAI

A July 3 clash in Shanghai between some foreign students and some Chinese students, which was widely reported in the Western press, did in fact take place. The unfortunate fight was recently confirmed in the Chinese press as well as by some members of a U.S. youth delegation travelling in Shanghai.

The foreign students were among hundreds, particularly from various third world countries, who are studying in China as guests of the Chinese government. This is one of the many ways socialist China lends its material support for the development of those countries. In the main, relations between the foreign students and the Chinese people have been very good.

But on July 3, as students at the Shanghai Textile Engineering Institute were preparing for examinations, some arguments broke out. The Chinese com-

plained of the loud playing of music, drunkenness and some reported insults of Chinese women. This led to a fight in which some students were beat up and one Chinese student was stabbed twice in the back.

The following morning, hundreds of Chinese students at the Institute demonstrated on campus and posterred the walls demanding that the student who pulled the knife be punished. A few foreign students then tore down the posters and the clash escalated. A number of students from other colleges rushed to the Textile Institute and more fights broke out.

In the wake of the incident, police came to prevent Chinese students from attacking the foreign students' dormitory and to protect the foreign students. Finally, the foreign students had to be evacuated to a hotel.

A spokesman for the Shanghai Municipal Higher Education Bureau called the event "unpleasant and regrettable." The spokesman was self-critical, saying that it should have been possible to restore order and handle the affair properly.

"Our failure to take more resolute and effective measures in our initial efforts to disengage the two sides," noted the spokesman, "and the refusal of the Chinese students to listen to dissuasions made matters worst."

LESSONS DRAWN

The spokesman added that the authorities would draw the appropriate lessons from the incident. He said that efforts would be made to swiftly restore a friendly environment for foreign students in China. As to how similar incidents could be prevented in the future, he stated that Chinese students would be given more education on internationalism. Quarreling, fighting, and anarchism would be criticised.

The incident shed some light on the problems occurring now that China is opening up more to the outside world since the "closed door" policies of the gang of four have been overturned. Many of the foreign students have some difficulty adjusting to life in China. According to U.S. students who recently returned from that country, many of the African students who had been living for several years in China, had little social life.

Even though they are given better treatment, housing and facilities than the Chinese students, foreign students still

have many problems. Many are from upper class backgrounds and most are used to different social and cultural conditions. As a result, sometimes drinking or partying among them gets out of hand.

Furthermore, as one U.S. student told *The Call*: "There is still some racism and backwardness among the Chinese students. But unlike here in the U.S., it is not institutionalized or supported by the policies of the government. Just because a country is socialist and its government policies promote internationalism and oppose racism, this doesn't mean that ideas from the past don't continue to exist among the people."

SOLIDARITY MEETING

Some of the problems in this area, according to the returned U.S. students, include not enough sensitivity to the cultural values of African and other foreign students and treating foreigners too much like guests.

The foreign students returned to the school on July 5. A meeting of friendship and solidarity was held by foreign and Chinese students on July 17. The Institute then organized teachers to help the foreign students review the lessons they had missed.

On July 26 the China Youth News carried a commentary on the incident called "Unity and Friendship Come First." The article expressed sympathy for all students and others injured in the mishap and voiced respect and friendship towards foreigners and "especially students from third world countries."

Embassies of Asian and African countries have been very understanding and cooperative. Members of 13 embassies came to Shanghai to investigate the situation and spoke to the students from their own countries. Some recalled with the Chinese authorities that their countries and China were all part of the third world and were close friends.

According to reports, the Soviet press and radio is gloating over the incident and trying without success to sow dissension and hurt China's long-standing friendship with the third world.

But as the China Youth News concluded: "Now the incident has ended. We can all learn useful lessons from it. We hope that Chinese and foreign students will value unity and friendship, and join hands to make an active contribution to friendly relations between the people and youth of all countries."



Photographs by Gun Kessle

"Myrdal's daily observations . . . reveal how the people . . . were reacting to the momentous events of those four years."

—Maud Russell, editor of the Far East Reporter

Order Now!

155 pages, \$3.95
Please add \$.60 postage

7128, Chicago, IL 60680