

# Veni, Vidi, Victus

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*The following is in two parts. The second is composed primarily of the dispatches sent by Mr. Buckley from China to the newspapers that syndicate his column. He has slightly altered them, and added a closing section. The first part, except for the opening paragraphs which are from his final column cabled from Shanghai to his syndicate, is fresh material written for NATIONAL REVIEW.*

Shanghai, Feb. 28—Here is what the Chinese gave up:

1) They consented to traffic with representatives of the government of the United States even though the United States still recognizes the government of Taiwan. 2) They performed routine rhetorical exercises on the themes of world peace and national sovereignty, thereby disappointing a few Berkeley sophomores and African fundamentalists who believed that Maoism would never equivocate on the primacy of its international revolutionary mission. When the *New York Times'* reporter asked Kissinger: What has the United States accomplished that wasn't already accomplished by Ping-Pong? Mr. Kissinger, nettled, recited Chinese obeisances to the good international life. He might as well have cited the Soviet Union's guarantee of civil liberties as listed in its constitution.

Here is what the United States gave up.

1. With all the world poised to consider one point above all, namely the integrity of the United States' commitment to Taiwan, we issued a communiqué in which the Red Chinese asserted and re-asserted their absolute right to conquer Taiwan, which is what it comes down to; while we uttered not one word on the subject of our defense treaty, not one word on the applicability of our principles of self-government and independence to the people of Taiwan. That staggering capitulation, for all that Kissinger sought to distract from it by citing President Nixon's World Report which last January reaffirmed our defense treaty with Taiwan, was the salient datum in the week that changed the world. All Asia will understand that whatever the mandarin niceties of the President's World Report, at the crunch Nixon didn't dare to risk a social breach in Peking, and the implications of such a breach, merely to reassure the people and the government of Taiwan, and will understand the Asian

implications of that reassurance—notwithstanding that, on announcing last summer that he would go to China, Mr. Nixon guaranteed that he would not jeopardize the best interests of our "friends." Since uttering those words, Mr. Nixon has seen the expulsion of Taiwan from the United Nations, and now the expulsion of Taiwan from the Presidential catalog of nations in Asia whose independence he is prepared to affirm even while in China.

2. We have lost—irretrievably—any remaining sense of moral mission in the world. Mr. Nixon's appetite for a summit conference in Peking transformed the affair from a meeting of diplomatic technicians concerned to examine and illuminate areas of common interest, into a pageant of moral togetherness at which Mr. Nixon managed to give the impression that he was consorting with Marian Anderson, Billy Graham and Albert Schweitzer. Once he decided to come here himself, it was very nearly inevitable that this should have happened. Granted, if it had been Theodore Roosevelt, the distinctions might have been preserved. But Mr. Nixon is so much the moral enthusiast that he alchemizes the requirements of diplomacy into the coin of ethics; that is why when he toasted the bloodiest, most merciless chief of state in the world, he did so in accents most of us would reserve for Florence Nightingale.

3. Mr. Nixon has almost certainly adjusted American politics in such a way as to compel almost the whole of the Democratic Party—as noted below—to the position that we need to dump Taiwan. Previously that had been one of the aberrations of Senator George McGovern, who collects them. Last week, Senator Fulbright took it up. Now, in the communiqué midwived by Richard Nixon, the Chinese list the independence of Taiwan as the principal obstacle to the "normalization" of relations between China and the U.S. And Richard Nixon, by his heroic actions of the past week, clearly puts normalization as the highest objective. The analytical deduction will necessarily occur to Democratic Presidential candidates, and the arguments will have been made for them by Richard Nixon. All of this might take a few years to transact, in America. But in Asia, they will have got the signal. They will have got it by the time these words are printed. Mr.



Kissinger spoke to the press about the "basic objective" of setting "in motion a train of events and an evolution in the policy of our two countries."

That was brilliantly accomplished. We should certainly know, by now, the direction in which we are headed. No wonder that they took to toasting, in the People's Republic of China, with increasing ardor, the health of Richard Nixon.

A reporter seated at the table with me in Hangchow, after listening to Mr. Nixon's toast to Mao Tse-tung, whose revolution he bracketed with George Washington's, leaned over and said: "That should dispel the last suspicion that there is a trace of ideological conviction left in Richard Nixon." He wasn't suggesting that Nixon is not committed, within the United States, to the usual ideals—self-government, a private sector, a bill of rights. Merely that he is utterly indifferent to whether these ideals are practiced elsewhere in the world: indeed, that he apparently cares not at all if these ideals are persecuted in other parts of the world. How far, far away Nixon is from being the "last Wilsonian" that Garry Wills thought him to be, a year or two ago. There is the school of thought that says we should go out with our Marines and make the world safe for democracy. The soldiers in that school are very few, and tatterdemalion, and there are volunteers only when freedom in Israel is jeopardized. There is the school at the other extreme, which is quite simply indifferent to the practices of other governments—the school in which Richard Nixon has apparently enlisted. In between there is the main army, composed of those who, while not prepared to go to war merely to relieve an oppressed people, are prepared to distinguish between those governments that make an effort, however clumsy, to acknowledge the role of the individual, and those others that make the individual the objective of their extirpative passions.

Because we are a people of conscience, unsuited to cynicism, it became necessary—indeed it was inevitable

—that very soon after Ping-Pong we should discover the virtues of Red Chinese society. James Reston, quicker even than anyone expected, opened that particular dike, with a testimonial to Maoist society which would have been appreciated by a settlement of Franciscan brothers. "I'm a Scotch Calvinist," Mr. Reston said. "I believe in redemption of the human spirit and the improvement of man. Maybe it's because I believe that or I want to believe it that I was struck by the tremendous effort to bring out what is best in man, what makes them good, what makes them cooperate with one another and be considerate and not beastly to one another. They are trying that." Next came the celebrated articles by Professor Ross Terrill, the Australian Sinologist who traveled extensively in China last summer, a writer of great literary skill whose two very long articles, published in the *Atlantic*, have been by far the most influential documents on China of this season. I didn't come across a correspondent who had not seen and fondled them.

THE articles in question are extraordinary because, with the rather important exception that Mr. Terrill treats not at all the subject of Maoist terror or Maoist slaughter, he does not, really, hide anything. It is as if Owen Lattimore, traveling through Siberia with Henry Wallace, had reported not that the Soviet Union did not maintain concentration camps there, but that the Soviet Union did indeed maintain them, in great profusion, but that even so, Soviet life was ardently to be cherished.

It is important precisely because Terrill is a departure from the school of apologists of which Lattimore, Walter Duranty and Joseph Davies were conspicuous practitioners, to savor his arguments, to finger the texture of his appreciation of Mao's China. Important not only ad hoc, but because here is the waystation to Orwell.

Everyone who knew Shanghai then, and knows it now,





remarks the transformation. Indisputably, and by anybody's measuring rod, there are improvements. Twenty-five years ago, in Shanghai, the street-cleaners would begin the day by picking up the corpses of people who, since the previous day, had died—of cold, or famine, or exhaustion. There are no casual corpses in Maoist Shanghai, no beggars, no dope peddlers, no prostitutes, no gambling, no night life, no racetrack, no fun. Ah. Terrill is defensive about the grayness of modern Shanghai, and he exercises himself on the subject by discussing the famous Bund—the fabled waterfront, formerly the fashion and play center of the city. Now, in the old way there is no Bund, and no role for the Western visitor to the contemporary Bund. "Yet the fact that [the Western visitor] is nothing as he wanders unheeded proves that what was once a preserve where he felt his authority now belongs to the Chinese people. And there is an obvious, to some people moving, egalitarianism in the social relationship of these streets and parks. Of course it is 'dull' for the spender or the adventurer. Justice is not necessarily exciting, and it is the face of international and social justice which smiles behind the blandness of Shanghai Bund."

Now it is quite true that during much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the white man was king in China, which was carved up by the major Western powers into spheres of interest in which the extraterritorial agencies exercised control even to the point of running their own courts and post office. And let us grant that the situation was ripe for change: grant, even, that it had begun to change well before what the Chinese Communists call "Liberation," October 1, 1949, the date when, having vanquished the armies of Chiang Kai-shek, Mao established the People's Republic of China.

But even under the British and the French, the usufructs of the Bund were not denied to Chinese on the basis of the color of their skin. They were available on the basis of the ability to pay. It is at the very least incomprehensible what it is that Terrill means by the phrase "justice is not necessarily exciting." At worst he is saying that justice is an attribute of Maoist China. To say that, on the morning after the Cultural Revolution persecuted, tortured and killed hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of Chinese for alleged inconstancies to Mao, is effrontery. Mao's victims are exactly the counterparts of the tortured victims of Josef Stalin, best described by Solzhenitsyn, and counted by Robert Conquest. He must mean kicking out the foreigners. But were the foreigners guilty for all those corpses lying in the streets? Who is guilty, now that the foreigners are 25 years gone, for the corpses that continue to line the streets of Calcutta? Of socialist Calcutta? On the other hand where are the corpses in uncolonized Taiwan, where the annual income is five times that in the People's Republic of China?

Professor Terrill disdains comparative figures. He likes discrete Chinese figures. "Some statistics by province, supplied to me by Revolutionary Committees, show why

the worker is better off than in the recent past. Take Shensi. The value of fifteen days' industrial production in the province equals that for the whole year of 1949. The value of industrial production in 1970 was double that of 1965. At Liberation, there were twenty thousand pupils in the Middle Schools of Shensi. Today there are 710,000 (population has about doubled)." In 1949, China had fought a civil war for four years, following a war fought against the invader Japan during the previous seven years, which followed a civil war of ten years fought simultaneously with a war against its own warlords. One old China hand commented, "For every mile of railroad track the Nationalists laid down after the [Second World] War, the Communists would tear up two miles of track. How can you blame the Nationalists for a lack of progress?" And Mr. Terrill neglects to mention that between 1965 and 1968 though there may have been 710,000 students in the Middle Schools of Shensi, there were zero students in colleges in Shensi or elsewhere, the entire college system having been closed down by the Red Guards. So it goes with the statistical game. Always the assumption is that you can compare the tons of steel manufactured today, with the tons of steel manufactured during the last year that Nicholas II ruled Russia. How would Russia fare today if you extrapolated the progress it made between 1900 and 1914? Terrill reminds us that after the War, China was "prostrate." So was Japan prostrate; and Formosa and West Germany. Not only prostrate like China, but defeated, unlike China, which was on the victorious side. In Japan, the average wage is \$1,800, in Formosa, \$800. In China estimates vary, from \$100 to \$140. The typical wage is \$1 per working day. Socks cost \$2.50. White cotton shirts, \$4. Foot-operated sewing machines, \$75. Bicycles, \$75. Food and shelter are extremely cheap (how could it be otherwise?).

**T**HE DAY before leaving, we visited the Friendship Store, where the Chinese goodies are. There were no Chinese in that vast store, at least not on the buying end of the counters. Social justice is drab indeed. A young CBS cameraman with five small children fussed about, making his purchases. At lunch he told me: "I dropped \$525 in that damned store. My thirteen-year-old boy wanted a jade Buddha." Social justice, under Mao, is drab indeed.

As long as human beings are free to use the language, they will find elegant excuses for depriving other human beings of their freedom. And Terrill, as I have said, makes no bones about freedom's end. "Turning back towards the hotel, I pass a Protestant church—its closed gates bearing the banner, 'Carry through the Cultural Revolution to the end.'"

Sometimes he tries to explain it. "Wherever I walk, there is a People's Liberation Army man with boyish grin and fixed bayonet. 'Back the other way.' Well, it is



a sensitive area . . . There was, in sum, an openness and a practical root to nearly all the restraints that met me in China." Terrill does not explain the practical root of the refusal of any news vendor to sell him the morning papers. Meritocracy? "Another PLA [army] officer, a tough, cheery man who confessed his total ignorance of medicine, was head of a Peking hospital." Cultural freedom? "I found cultural life far more politicized. . . . Public libraries, and museums too, are closed. Churches are boarded up, empty, and checked with political slogans. In 1971 you simply do not find, as you could in 1960, segments of social and intellectual life around which the tentacles of politics have not curled." Propaganda? "In Shensi, with a population of 25 million people, 100 million Mao works were distributed during the Cultural Revolution." (It is one of the minor benefactions of Providence that since Lin Piao became an unperson, all copies of Mao's works carrying Lin's introduction, which is to say virtually all extant, have had to be recalled.) Freedom for the fabled worker, in behalf of whom the whole colossus exists? "I inquired of the spokesman of the factory Revolutionary Committee. 'Can a worker transfer work by his own individual decision?' I might have asked if the leopard can change his spots." A broad education? "At PKU [Peking University] I saw the English class which was reading and discussing Aesop's fables. . . . They received me with clapping—though few, I found, knew what or where Australia is." Coercion as an aspect of daily life? There is the lacuna I have mentioned, that Terrill is silent about the bloody Caesarian section that brought about Mao-man. Still . . . "Though force remains the ultimate basis of any state, control of the people in China is more nearly by psychological than by physical coercion. It is no longer simply 'Communists' on one hand and 'Chinese society' on the other. A merger has occurred at many points—a new kind of tao (way) emerges. This makes possible a Dictatorship by Idea (rather than

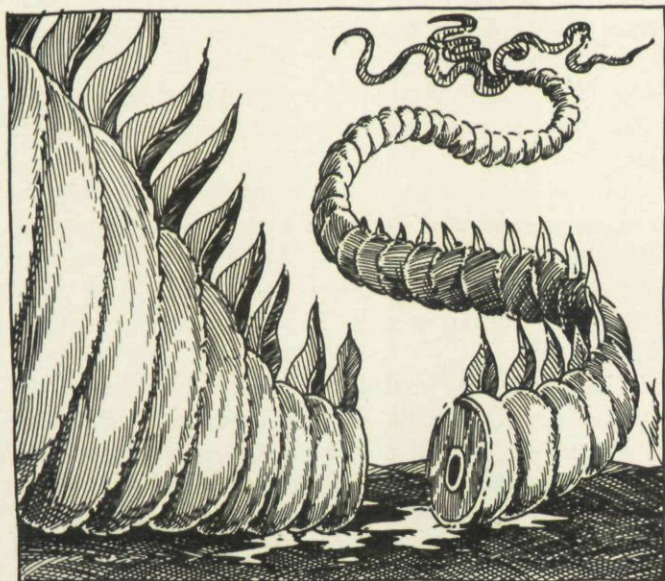
by force). It is not like Poland or Hungary, where the Communists are a blanket spread over the body social. This may be what gave me an impression in China of pervasive yet light-handed control." (I learned, while in Peking, that the Chinese authorities had specified, in advance of Nixon's arrival, that nothing should be sent out by foreign reporters relating to the intensive preparations being made by the advance television and satellite teams, a proscription which was honored with the trivial exception that a correspondent from Reuters sent a paragraph reporting on two Americans who, having contracted pneumonia, were sent to a hospital in Hong Kong. The authorities, reaching for means of expressing their displeasure, suspended for 48 hours the delivery of the little sticks of candy that are placed every day on the bedtable of hotel guests. The Reuters man, though mightily amused, confessed that he felt keenly the psychological force of this deprivation.)

**A**ND Professor Terrill summarizes. "People ask 'Is China free?'—but there is no objective measure of the freedom of a whole society. . . . Study of China suggests that the revolution has been good for workers and peasants but problematic for intellectuals. It is hard to go on from there and make over-all value judgments that are honest. First, there are so many gaps in our knowledge of China that it can be like judging America on the basis of Kent State and Angela Davis' case (I know this because I used, before I came here, to judge the United States mainly by its spectacular lapses). Second, our experience has been so different from China's. Not having plumbed the depths of brokenness and humiliation that China did in the century following the Opium Wars, we cannot know the corporate emotion that comes with the recovery.

"Yet at one point we and China face the same value judgment. Which gets priority: the individual's freedom or the relationships of the whole society? Which unit is to be taken for policy and moral judgment alike: the nation, trade union, our class, my cronies, me? This is the hinge on which the whole issue turns. Professor Fu . . . did not make his own decision to take up the problem of insect pests—it was handed him. Is that wrong? The writer, Kuo Mo-jo recalled, cannot now do books for three thousand or at most eight thousand readers, as Kuo used to in Shanghai in the 1930s, but must write for the mass millions—and he's judged by whether he can do that well or not. Is that wrong?" Surely the corporate good is to be preferred? "Capitalism opens the door to tyranny of wealth: Chinese Communism opens the door to the tyranny of a corporate design."

Terrill, then, is merely B. F. Skinner, operational. A brave man, in such an essay, to allude to the "tyranny" of capitalism.

It is in a season that receives cordially the theoretical works of B. F. Skinner and the journalism of Ross Ter-





rill, that Richard Nixon is operating, toasting Chairman Mao, who by material standards has yet to do for his country as much as Adolf Hitler did for his. Somehow the generic incantation, which used instantly to collapse such analyses—Mussolini made the trains run on time—doesn't have its ancient power to restore instantly the focus. The reason is that the West, so far gone these days in a rare combination of satiety and self-abuse, is indifferent in part to freedom, in whole to the cause of freedom. By contrast the Chinese Communists are not indifferent. They are proof against Western derision because they know what they want, are utterly outspoken in their consecration to human debasement as a means of achieving Communism, lucid and unswerving in their designs, insouciant to the resentment we used to feel, at the corruption of the terms that used to designate our ideals: justice, liberty, individual rights, government as the servant of the people. Richard Nixon—his glass raised high to Mao Tse-tung, toasting to a long march together, he and we, likening our two revolutions to each other, landing at Andrews to impart the information that the Chinese people greatly esteem their government—may yet emerge as the most flexible man of the century, perhaps even as the most deracinated American who ever lived and exercised great power.

**T**HE HAUNTING philosophical questions temporarily aside, there is the practical question of the future of the island of Taiwan.

Over the years, Chiang Kai-shek has steadfastly maintained that he is the lawful head of the government not only of the province of Taiwan, but of all of Mainland China.

For a long time we indulged him the title of chief of state of all of China. Partly we did this out of sentiment, even as we recognized exile governments during the Second World War. Partly we did it thinking it just possible that Mainland China's government would collapse, as once or twice it came very close to doing.

But the situation is now irrevocably changed. Even if the next Cultural Revolution should succeed in deposing Mao, it will not restore Chiang Kai-shek. So that Chiang, growing old, lives by a fiction in which he is all but isolated. Meanwhile, that fiction serves the purposes of his enemies.

"The United States," said the joint communiqué issued in Shanghai, "acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes."

Now it can be seen not only that the contradiction

closes in on Chiang Kai-shek, but that the United States is making gleeful use of it. As long as Chiang maintains that the two territories are one, who is the United States to disagree? And if they are one, it will in due course be plain that the dog should wag the tail rather than vice versa. We have a defense treaty, on the basis of which it continues to be strictly a matter between Taiwan and the United States how many troops we desire to keep on Taiwan territory. But we have, with China, a joint communiqué in which we pledge ourselves to Chou's Five Points, one of them non-interference in internal matters. The lowering paradox finds us, already, promising the Mainland that we will reduce our military mission in Taiwan. And in the United Nations, Taiwan has only the standing of a mutinous province, an Asian Biafra.

The time has come for the government of Taiwan formally to secede from China. The instrument of secession would be at least as eloquent as our own Declaration of Independence. More, really, because however hateful King George was, he was the soul of toleration, by Mao's standards. George Washington and his fellow secessionists had not had an experience of independence from Great Britain. By contrast, Taiwan has governed itself for 23 years, disturbing not the peace of the world, indeed earning the admiration of all who have come to know it, for its economic progress, for the slow but steady enlargement of democratic institutions, and for its devotion to its own independence.

Granted there are Taiwanese who resent Chiang Kai-shek and his government of Mainlanders. But even there, there has been a considerable shift of sentiment from fifteen years ago, when the Mainlanders occupied almost all the positions of responsibility. Although there are Taiwanese who will continue to resent Chiang's government (there were Americans who opposed the Declaration of Independence), there are very few Taiwanese who would elect to be governed by Peking.

Accordingly, the stage is set. It is difficult to see how the United States, or for that matter any other country whose politics are not dictated by Communist capitals, could fail to recognize, instantly, the independent country of Taiwan. Even the Communists acknowledge—formally—the right of revolution, and the rights of independent states. And Taiwan would be nothing less than that—an independent state, *de facto* and, now, *de jure*.

One wishes that one could instantly assume that the United States would welcome such a development, as releasing it from a dilemma. At the present moment our posture towards Peking is too slavish to be absolutely certain even of that. But what alternative would we have?

That is, to the extent one can find solutions, the current solution for the Taiwan problem. It would be a sign of health, and ultimate patriotism: a gesture of devotion to the people who have sheltered him during the past 23 years, if Chiang were now to make this concession to reality, and this contribution to order and hope for what is left of his people. □



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