

REPUBLICA DE CHILE
 PRESIDENCIA
 REGISTRO Y ARCHIVO

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ARCHIVO

Atentamente

MANFRED WILHELMY VON WOLFF

28.8.92

1888  1988 CENTENARIO PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATOLICA DE CHILE

Queridísimo :
 Aquí va lo prometido. Me
 contó Manfred que hay mu-
 chos que quieren fotografiarse
 en la misa y comprar
 garritos chinos... a costa de todo.
 Se adjunta art. del Economist.
 A él se lo pidió C. Pr-
 tares y D. Evangeliz hizo un
 "refrito".
 Carinos

hoy por hoy

Stevens



Santiago, 20 de Julio de 1992

Sr. Embajador
Don Carlos Portales C.
Director General de Política Exterior
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Presente

Estimado señor:

Agradezco sinceramente su carta de 1 de julio en la que a nombre del Ministerio ha tenido la gentileza de consultar mi opinión acerca de diversos aspectos del próximo viaje de S.E. el Presidente de la República y comitiva a la región del Asia Pacífico.

Felicito a usted por esta iniciativa, ya que a mi juicio es muy positivo que el Gobierno recabe los puntos de vista de quienes han estudiado esta área para el mejor éxito de las actividades diplomáticas que se están preparando.

Coincido con el planteamiento de su carta en el sentido de priorizar los aspectos económicos de nuestras relaciones con la región. Sobre el particular no tengo, sin embargo, antecedentes que aportar fuera de aquellos que ya están en su conocimiento a través de los canales regulares de las Embajadas, de Pro Chile y de las comunicaciones con los comités empresariales.

En cuanto al itinerario, he comprobado con satisfacción que mi sugerencia de incluir a Singapur, hecha verbalmente y por escrito al señor Ministro y a usted, ha sido acogida. Ello redundará, sin duda, en una visión más acabada -aun-



que todavía parcial- del sudeste asiático.

Me preocupa, sin embargo, que el Presidente de la República visite la República Popular China. Aún reconociendo la importancia demográfica de ese estado, me parece que Chile carece de intereses geopolíticos en Asia que justifiquen, en nombre de un cierto realismo político, pasar por alto los negativos antecedentes políticos del actual Gobierno chino en temas centrales para nuestro país, como la democracia y el pluralismo político, los derechos humanos, el respeto a las minorías étnicas y otros.

Considero que en las actuales circunstancias políticas que vive China, donde una gerontocracia comunista se aferra al poder mediante la represión, es un gesto político erróneo realizar una visita presidencial, toda vez que ella puede perjudicar las perspectivas de una relación fructífera con un eventual nuevo liderato chino.

En el aspecto económico, como es sabido, la importancia de los vínculos con la República Popular China no resiste comparación con otros, como los que existen con Taiwan y con otros países. Su cultivo y desarrollo no requiere, por lo demás, de una visita al más alto nivel político.

Aunque usted no me ha consultado acerca del punto en que me he concentrado, sino sólo de eventuales ideas para el mejor desarrollo de la gira programada, estimo que es mi deber como chileno, como demócrata y como especialista en el área hacer presente los reparos arriba expresados.

Le agradezco nuevamente su oportuna consulta.

Saluda muy atentamente a usted,

MANFRED WILHELMY
Director Académico

ARTS, BOOKS AND SPORT

on other planets, for instance—were the dream of von Neumann's immediate successors. The question is whether such creatures might come to regard the humans which created them as parasites in their turn. And what they would do about it.

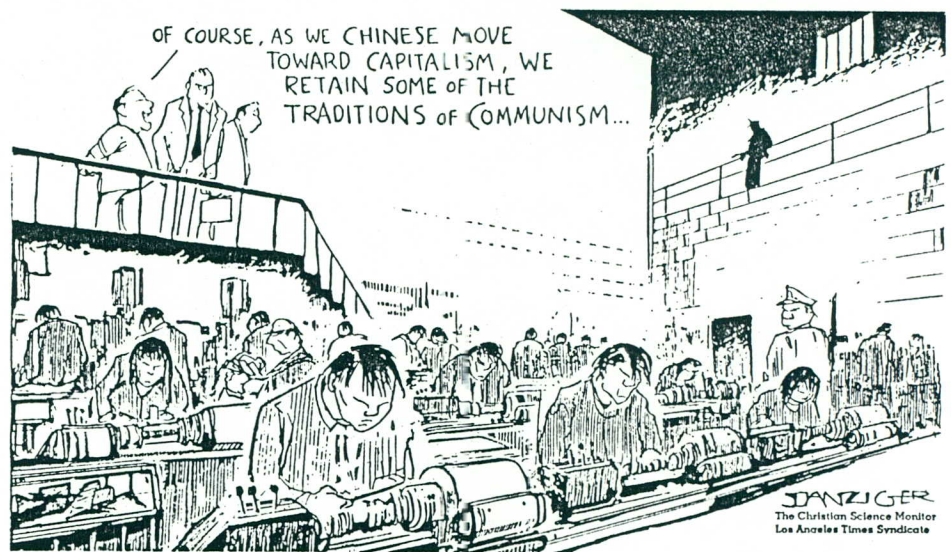
Chinese communists

Blood stained

LAOGAI: THE CHINESE GULAG. By Hongda Harry Wu. Westview Press; 247 pages; £23.50 and \$34.95

TEARS OF BLOOD: A CRY FOR TIBET. By Mary Craig. HarperCollins; 374 pages; £17.95

CHINA has a terrible record on human rights. It holds 15m people in labour camps and executes around 20,000 people each year. The death penalty is applied for crimes as insignificant as the illegal export of cultural relics and works partly through quotas allocated to each province. Chinese military power also holds captive millions



of people in Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. It remains a mystery why these evils have attracted so little attention. Part of the explanation is a reluctance of outsiders to make too much of China's cruelties lest they jeopardise opportunities for investment and trade.

A comprehensive account of Chinese behaviour is still awaited. It does the people of Tibet no particular good to have yet another paean to the virtue of the Dalai Lama, like Mary Craig's, when part of the reason that Tibet is under Chinese rule is that Lamaist Buddhism failed to provide good government. A more sophisticated study of the politics and economics of Chinese rule might even demonstrate effective ways for outsiders to help Tibetans and other Chinese minorities.

Mr Wu's effort is not so disappointing. After nearly 20 years in Chinese labour camps, he is remarkably academic in his analysis of the scale of the Chinese Gulag. Although he is often vague about his sources for viciousness he did not see, he still provides the most comprehensive documentation of where and how China handles its prison population. Mr Wu's explanation of why China behaves like this falls back on ideology, a plainly unsatisfactory approach when Chinese economic ideology has changed so drastically even while its ruling Communist Party has remained in power.

In fact, one of Mr Wu's most unexpected revelations is the part played by prison labour in China's surge into the international market economy. The Gulag makes so much money that it more than covers its costs. One of the reasons for the success of joint ventures with China is the fact that prison labour is so cheap.

Enthusiasm for China's market economy fades as one contemplates the map of labour camps in Guangdong province, the richest part of China's Gold Coast and increasingly integrated with the international economy. But then it is the people in Hong Kong who are happy to buy organs for transplant from prisoners in Guangdong, the tissues being matched before the "donors" are executed. Even before 1997, Hong Kong and China are well on the road to one unpleasant kind of convergence.

Baltic parable

LITHUANIA is a small country of three languages and cultures—Lithuanian itself, Polish, and Russian, the language of the eternal oppressor. The enmity between Lithuanians, both Lithuanian- and Polish-speaking, and the Russians has a long history, and Lithuania was the first of the Baltic states to declare its independence from the Soviet Union. Tadeusz Konwicki puts all these themes in their proper historical context in a novel* set in rural Lithuania a dozen or so years after the failed uprising of 1863. The story has a superficial simplicity but, as in Chekhov, the smallest and most inconsequential of details proves to be of great significance.

Its central character, Helena Konwicka, is the daughter of a Lithuanian yeoman whose involvement in the failed uprising has caused him to be deprived of his lands and manor house. Helena is a hopeless, rudderless, unmarried young woman of 30 who feels oppressed by her circumstances. She is betrothed to an ageing aristocrat whom she despises for his girlish beauty and self-indulgence. When a wandering Jew, with a shock of red hair, erupts into her rural isolation, she recoils with horror.

* "Bohin Manor". Faber & Faber; 240 pages; £14.99. Farrar, Straus & Giroux; \$19.95



But she is also driven towards him, fascinated by impulses that seem irrational.

There is suspicion everywhere: the Russian-speaking chief of police, for example, who dashes about sniffing out subversive elements—among whom, of course, is that wandering Jew. Even the old parish priest, once a seemingly harmless collector of Belorussian folk songs, is under surveillance. And all this turbulent inactivity, including the heart-searching by Helena, goes on in the strange backwoods of 19th-century Lithuania, all marsh and endless forest, with an atmosphere of foreboding and superstition.

The book is in part a political parable. The reader's thoughts are pitched in this direction by the voice of the narrator who is telling the story of Helena. It is his own grandmother whom he is writing about. He is reaching back to her, seeking clues to the identity of a woman he never knew. And suddenly, by the use of that small tactic, past becomes present in the reader's mind: those tensions associated with the rise of national feelings; the voice of that gruff Russian police chief; and the terrible sense of oppression when no one feels free, nothing seems possible—and the heat of summer conspires to weigh down like an iron upon the reader's forehead.