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People of China Mark Cohen's Fiftieth Birthday

Beijing, July 1, 1980 (xinhua) FLASH

In spite of the ban on meetings and demonstrations of more than 10 people imposed by the Chinese authorities, thousands gathered in Tian Anmen today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the birth of China's legal labor hero Professor Jerome Alan Cohen.

The chanting crowd moved from the square to the Beijing Hotel where it demanded an appearance and speech by the popular Professor. When informed by responsible members of room 1009 that he was quietly celebrating his first half century in Hong Kong with his family, the crowd erupted and became unruly. It was persuaded to disperse after the responsible staff member read quotations from Director Cohen's The Criminal Process in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1963.

Reached for comment Chairman Hua praised Professor Cohen's contribution to Sino-American friendship and stated that his presence in China has deepened the mutual understanding and trust and furthered the amicable relations between the two countries and friendship between the two peoples.

Vice Premier Deng focused on the Professor's help in the development of law in China. He explained that if each province had a Cohen China could modernize by the year 2000. He added, "It is hard to believe he has only been working on Chinese affairs for the last 20 years."

Ye Jianying, reached after his daily four hour nap, remarked that despite his youth Cohen had accomplished a considerable amount. He added that in another few decades he would attain the proper age to meet with the Chinese leadership.

In Guangdong, provincial officials expressed the hope that entry into his second half century might help him to free himself of the bonds of western legalism. While in Shanghai, lawyers and officials used the occasion of his 50th birthday to push for Cohen's permanent presence in that city.

In Beijing, Mr Xiao Yang, President of Cohen's Chinese host organization the Beijing Economic Development Corporation, called on Professor Cohen to continue his efforts to train Beijing city cadre in law. With Cohen's help, Beijing will have the same ratio of lawyers to population as the United States.

Mr. Sun Tsunghan, also of the Beijing Economic Development Corporation, hearing of the birthday enthusiastically promised Professor Cohen a telex machine as a birthday present. An unidentified foreigner was heard to ask Mr. Sun if the telex would be plugged in but received no response.

A third member of the Corporation was heard to exclaim, "Alas, alack, harken to him for he is now 50."

The tenth and seventeenth floor fu wu yuan of the Beijing Hotel were clearly stunned by the news that Cohen was only 50.

Reached for comment at his permanent retreat, the Dean of Beijing University's law school expressed surprise that Cohen had spent anytime in Beijing during the last year and asked this reporter if Cohen intended to return here during his next half century.

Finally, reached while vacationing with his family in a yurt in Mongolia, his colleague, former student, friend and admirer, Stephen Orlins, explained that any words he used to express his respect, admiration, affection, and gratitude to the Professor appropriate for his 50th birthday could not adequately convey the depth of these feelings. Accordingly, he wished the Professor a happy birthday and asked, "CAN CHINA STAND ANOTHER 50 YEARS AS PRODUCTIVE AS THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS?" -End item.