

SACU CHINA TOUR

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Lushan, Wuhan and Peking.
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JUNE 1967

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A More Resolute SACU

WE ARE meeting in a dark time; perhaps a darkening time, Dr Joseph Needham told the members attending SACU's second Annual General Meeting held in the Holborn Assembly Hall on Saturday, 20 May.

'I'm afraid that one has to admit that the political situation has been getting steadily worse and worse,' added the SACU chairman in his opening address in which he evaluated the Society's work over the first two years of its existence.

He named three of the main factors against which the second AGM had to be seen. These were the escalation of the war in Vietnam; the progress of the cultural revolution in China which had been totally misunderstood by the Press in this country; and the troubles in Hong Kong during recent weeks.

Dr Needham felt that the current situation raised several points about how SACU might alter its emphasis in the future. He recalled that one of the fundamental differences between SACU and another organisation which aimed for friendship between the peoples of Britain and China, was that SACU had not passed day to day resolutions on political matters. However, he thought that it might be possible for SACU to adopt a more resolute stand in these matters in the future. It might be that members had grown more and more indignant about the treatment given to China in past months and would welcome such action on the part of the Society.

The Council proposed that immediately following the AGM there should be time for a general discussion and consideration of a resolution on Hong Kong. Those present readily agreed to this.

SACU's General Secretary Mr Derek Bryan presented the Annual Report on behalf of the Council of Management. The full text of the report was circulated to all members by post prior to the meeting.

The first resolution to be put to

the meeting was proposed by Mr Geoffrey Carrick, chairman of the Barnet branch. In its final paragraph the resolution stated: 'Believing that understanding between Britain and China is of the highest importance, and understanding the basis for all friendship, the purposes of SACU are to foster friendly relations between our two countries, to provide factual information, correct any misrepresentations of its stated policies and intentions, to stimulate interest in China and offer a forum for discussion, constructive comment and sympathetic criticism. The conclusions that members reach are their own, without attempts at mutual censorship. Similarly, speakers on SACU platforms and writers in SACU publications are expressing their own individual points of view, but these should necessarily be compatible with the stated aims of SACU and therefore conducive to understanding.'

Friendship in English

In introducing the resolution to the meeting, Mr Carrick said that after all SACU used the Chinese character for friendship as its symbol. 'We are now merely asking that SACU shows these friendly aims by using the English and not just the Chinese character to do so,' he said.

Commenting on the resolution on behalf of the Council of Management, Professor Joan Robinson reminded the meeting that at the previous AGM she had spoken against a similar resolution introduced at the time and defeated. 'However, it was quite clear that SACU now found itself in a 'difficult and prickly situation' and that the earlier objections to the resolution no longer held as far as she was concerned,' she said.

The resolution was enthusiastically carried by the vast majority of the members present, without anyone voting against it, but with a handful of abstainers.

Report by Bill Habets

The question of a Press Officer was re-opened in the wake of a resolution passed at the 1966 AGM calling upon the Council to appoint one. The main difficulty here was one of finance, said Mr Bryan. There was every intention of naming a Press Officer if the opportunity to do so were to materialise. In the meantime, he, with the help of a number of volunteers, had been keeping in contact with the Press and writing letters to the editors when warranted.

Enlarging on the subject of branches raised in the Annual Report, Mr Roland Berger said that only forty per cent of SACU's members were formed into branches. 'It only needs a dozen really active people to get things moving very quickly,' he said. There were, he added, possibilities for starting branches in Hull, Leicester and Southampton. However, much more was possible and he stressed the need for an 'active' membership. 'We have 1,100 or 1,200 members; there should be 5,000 or 6,000,' he said. 'We save yet to find the way to a large membership.'

Eleven Elected

In accordance with the Articles of Association, half of the members of the Council of Management retired, leaving 11 seats vacant. As only 11 nominations had been received for the vacancies, no ballot was necessary as no objections were raised to any of the nominees. Elected by acclamation to the Council were: Mr Roland Berger (retiring member of the old council), Mr F Brunsdon, Mrs Hung-Ying Bryan, Lady (Dorothy) Haworth, Mrs Susan Leach, Mr John Lloyd, Dr Joseph Needham (Chairman and retir-

(continued overleaf)

ABOUT SACU

Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding Ltd (Founded 15 May 1965)

Office: 24 Warren Street, London W.1
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Chairman: Dr Joseph Needham

Deputy-Chairman:
Professor Joan Robinson

Vice-Chairman: Mrs Mary Adams

Joint Treasurers: Mr Alec Horsley and
one to be appointed.

Secretary: Mr Derek Bryan

Council of Management: Mrs Mary Adams, Mr William Ash, Mr Roland Berger, Mr Frederick Brunson, Mrs Hung-Ying Bryan, Mr Geoffrey Carrick, Mr Andrew Faulds, MP, Miss Margaret Garvie, Lady (Dorothy) Haworth, Mr Alec Horsley, Mrs Susan Leach, Mr John Lloyd, Mr Evan Luard, MP, Dr Joseph Needham, Rev Paul Oestreicher, Mr Colin Penn, Mr Ernest Roberts, Professor Joan Robinson, Mr Martin Tomkinson, Dame Joan Vickers, MP, Mr Ronald Whiteley.

Believing that friendship must be based on understanding, SACU aims to foster friendly relations between Britain and China by making information about China and Chinese views available as widely as possible in Britain.

Membership of SACU is open to all who subscribe to the aims of the Society. Members are entitled to receive SACU NEWS monthly free of charge, use the library at central office, call upon the Society for information and participate in all activities of the Society.

Annual subscription: £1.0.0. Reduced rates for old age pensioners (5s), and full-time students (7s 6d).

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AGM

(continued from page 1)

ing member of the old council), Rev Paul Oestreicher, Mr Colin Penn, Mr M Tomkinson and Mr R Whiteley.

Co-treasurer Dr Nicholas Kurti, in introducing the Treasurer's Report (the income and expenditure account was circulated to all members) stated bluntly that SACU had been 'living above its station.' There was a deficit of £1,411 and it had only been possible for the Society to continue day to day operations because of the excess of more than £1,600 carried over from the previous year. Emergency action had had to be taken during the previous few months. Had it not been for the fact that members of the staff had insisted upon taking a substantial reduction in their salaries until the situation improved things would have been even more difficult.

Dr Kurti outlined four remedies which he felt the situation suggested. These were:

- (1) A vast increase in membership to 10,000 or more.
- (2) A large increase in donations. These were down to under £1,200 for the past year, a fifth of the amount raised in the first year. In this connection, Dr Kurti stated that Mr Berger was currently organising an appeal for funds.
- (3) An increased subscription — up to £2 or £3 per year.
- (4) Drastic reduction of all central office expenditure with the bulk of SACU's work being run primarily by the branches themselves.

Following his co-treasurer, Mr Alex Horsley made an appeal for a collection. Offering to match every pound collected at the meeting with five shillings from his own pocket, he raised a collection of £155 in minutes.

The proposers of a resolution initiated by the Barnet branch committee which asked that all properly constituted branches of SACU be represented on the Council of Management agreed to remit the resolution to the Council for further action.

A special resolution, adopted by the Manchester branch at its own AGM, making it possible for five instead of twenty members to move a resolution at future national AGMs was carried. In the light of this, a resolution put forward by the Barnet branch committee to enable branch committees to put forward resolutions to the national AGM without 20 signatories was withdrawn.

After an interval for tea, members re-assembled to exchange views. The discussion on how SACU might re-assess its role in view of current events was launched by a resolution put forward by Mr William Ash which said:

'A meeting of members of the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding appreciates the circumstances which made it necessary for the Chinese Foreign Ministry to lodge a protest with the British Government about the actions of the British authorities in Hong Kong. Attempts on the parts of these authorities to suppress the legitimate demands of Chinese workers in this undemocratically governed colony could not be expected to go unnoticed by the people and the Government of China.'

'This meeting considers fully justified the condemnation expressed in the Chinese Foreign Ministry's statement that the British Government's collusion with the Government of the United States in its war against the people of Vietnam by allowing Hong Kong to be used by the United States in spite of repeated warnings of the Chinese Government.'

The general consensus of members who spoke in the discussion following the proposal of the above resolution was one of complete agreement with its spirit. It appeared that most members at the meeting were in a frame of mind to welcome more energetic action on the part of SACU.

With the exception of only 10 abstainers, the membership enthusiastically endorsed the resolution.

SACU'S NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS: WHO'S WHO

Mr Frederick Brunson, Secretary, Merseyside and North Wales Branch.

Mrs Hung-Ying Bryan, Member of Barnet Branch Committee.

Lady Haworth, Member Manchester Branch Committee.

Mrs Susan Leach, Secretary, Birmingham Branch.

Rev Paul Oestreicher, Associate Secretary, International Department, British Council of Churches.

Mr John Lloyd, Secretary, Merton Friends of China.

Mr Colin Penn, Chairman, Camden Branch.

Mr Martin Tomkinson, Student, London School of Economics.

Mr Ronald Whiteley, General Treasurer and Past President, Draughtsmen's and Allied Technicians' Association (DATA).

SCIENCE IN CHINA FORUM

ON MAY 3 at University College in Gower Street an exceptionally interesting forum on science in China was held under the chairmanship of Dr Ralph Lapwood. The speakers were: Dr W B Harland, Reader in Geology at the University of Cambridge; Prof Dorothy Hodgkin, Chemical Crystallography Laboratory at Oxford; Dr Joseph Needham, Master of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge; and Dr C H G Oldham, Snr Research Fellow at the Unit for the Study of Science Policy at the University of Sussex. Because the content of the four speeches has particular importance today, a summary of each is offered for those members who were unable to attend.

Dr Joseph Needham

The opening speech by the author of *Science and Civilisation in China* scanned the past contributions by China to science, and the comparative relations between the natural sciences in China and the West.

Western historians have long tended to dismiss China's early scientific achievements. Dr Needham cited a number of quite early 'firsts': 1500 years before Europeans were even aware of their existence, sun spot cycles were being recorded in China. The mechanical clock, a key instrument of the scientific revolution, was invented in China in the early 8th century, while in Europe it did not appear until the 14th century. And while Euclidian geometry and Ptolemaic astronomy clearly originated in Greece, there is a third vital component of modern science—the knowledge of magnetic phenomena—the foundations of which had all been laid in China long before Europeans were at all aware of magnetic polarity.

Still, one must grant that modern science of the 19th and 20th centuries (the testing by systematic experiment of mathematical hypotheses about natural phenomena) did develop mainly in the west and through the new experimental philosophy originating from the time of Galileo.

In considering the background of Chinese science of the present day, two essential questions must be posed: (1) when in history did a particular science in its Western form fuse with its Chinese form so that all the ethnic characteristics melted into the universality of modern science? and (2) at what point in history did the Western form decisively overtake the Chinese form? Using a graph, Dr Needham represented what might be called the fusion point on the one hand, and

the transcendent point on the other. He illustrated the steady rise of the 'scientific level' in China, uninterrupted by what we term the Dark Ages—while in the West, after the brilliant successes of the Greeks, there was a long period of sinking to a very low level from the 6th through the 9th centuries, then rising steadily until the time of Galileo when a sharp upward rise begins. The graph particularly represented the dual situation in mathematics, astronomy, and physics.

The rise of modern science in 17th century Europe coincided with the activities of the Jesuit mission in China so there was little delay in juxtaposing the two great traditions. It is very striking that the **mathematics** and **astronomy** of West and East united so quickly after they encountered. By the end of the Ming dynasty in 1644 there was no perceptible difference between these sciences. The apparent early advantage of the European mathematicians was found to be due to the loss of expertise suffered by the Sung and Yuan algebraists (previously world leaders in algebra for two centuries). When their techniques were restored the balance was redressed. Still, the lack of deductive geometry remained a debit on the Chinese side.

Astronomy developed between the civilisations in an equally fundamental way. But while Greek astronomy was elliptical, angular and annual, Chinese was polar, equatorial, mean and diurnal. The two systems were in no way incompatible—the scientists were simply working with different aspects of nature. Indeed, Chinese mediaeval cosmology was far more modern than the European, for while the latter thought in terms of crystalline celestial spheres bounding the earth, the Chinese thought of an infinity of empty space and time. However they had no passion for geometric models which ultimately produced the Copernican solar system.

Botany presents a totally different picture. Instead of taking about 40 years to get together, the fusion point came about 200 years after, in 1880. The Chinese kept to their classical way, taking no account of advances made in Europe during the 19th century.

In **medicine** the coming together of the two cultural traditions and fusion into a unified modern medical science has still not been effected.

After the Opium War, China realised the need to modernise and in this context some of the 19th century Pro-

testant missionaries contributed greatly to the importation of western knowledge. Dr Needham cited a number of Chinese universities which have led the way into the 20th century. He asserted that there is a value in assessing the Chinese people and civilisation, past, present and future. For one thing it does away with the notion that these are simply an imitative people without any natural genius for science, and who can not be expected to contribute. The release of the talents of 700 million people promises a tremendous encouragement and expansion of our knowledge of nature.

Dr W B Harland

Speaking of the recent history of geological sciences in China Dr Harland said that Western/modern geology came to China only since the foundation of the Republic in 1912. There has been considerable Western influence, especially from England, as the two leading Chinese geologists were trained in this country.

By 1949, after the great internal upheavals, the standard of geology was high but the numbers were pathetically few for so vast a country. On a previous visit from 1942 to 1946 Dr Harland observed that the Chinese were devoted organisers, keen on symmetry and aesthetically pleasing schemes on paper which were not always matched by actuality. He was interested to find on a recent visit in 1964-65 the tremendous and well organised work in progress. Rationalisation was the keynote. For example, the West China Union University previously attempted a wide range of disciplines but was well equipped only in medicine and dentistry while sadly lacking in other scientific fields. Now the pattern of rationalisation has been altered to collect together activities of one kind into single universities. Thus geological sciences are concentrated in a few but very large colleges, with expansion planned to provide for the rapid production of trained geologists capable of exploring the territory. Perhaps the most impressive is the College of Geology in Peking, with some 4,000 students, 800 staff, and offering many sorts of specialisation including a school of mountaineering.

On his visits Dr Harland noted a certain conventionality of outlook, quite inevitable where the primary object is to survey large areas. They are not yet sparing energy to consider fundamental ideas, though this clearly is planned on a stupendous scale. The focus is on immediate economic

growth, and the resources devoted to this aim are most impressive. Although the tradition has been taken over from the West, and although there remains a good deal of ignorance of the Western literature, there is no doubt that in a few years we will be looking to China for a large scale 'input' of geological knowledge.

Dr C H G Oldham

In considering the general aspects of the development of science and technology over the past 17 years, Dr Oldham wanted to concentrate on the scientific revolution occurring in China today, as distinct from the cultural revolution. It is the former which will, in the long run, prove the more important. By the end of 1963, 700,000 scientists had been trained, 15,000 of whom were research level, the rest technician or engineer level. In 1950 expenditure by the government on scientific research amounted to .07% of the budget—ten years later this figure had risen to 1.54%. The reason is that China believes that science will assist the change from a Confucian to a communist society.

There are three goals in China's subsidising of science:

1. **Basic research** is pursued in order to 'catch up' with more developed countries, and to contribute to world knowledge.

2. **Applied science** is stressed in order to increase economic development of the country.

3. **Popularisation** of science takes a third portion of the budget for it is a crucial means of changing society.

In following a programme of scientific advancement since the liberation, certain problems have faced China. One is that government policies have varied in emphasising one or another of these three goals. However understandable, and perhaps unavoidable, this has resulted in inhibiting scientific progress. A second great problem has been the constraint of scientific manpower. In 1949 only a few thousand Chinese were capable of doing research; some of these were required for setting up research institutes—others were sent about to teach—most of them had too little time to do research on their own. Now it is clear that there is a missing generation. People who would, in most countries, be project leaders are unavailable. Therefore it will be a long time before China can make a contribution on a broad front. Energies must be spread thin, and concentrated on only a very few pinnacle projects. A third problem is the result of China's refusal to adhere to any international scientific organisation admitting Tai Wan as a member (limiting her to one or two groups). She makes up for this draw-

back in some respects by an impressive use of international journals, the great mass of which are acquired, translated and made available in libraries. A final constraint has been the inexperience of many political cadres in scientific and technical matters during certain periods such as 1958 to 1961. This will be solved as political cadres become more technically minded.

It is impossible to measure the successes or failure of China's technological and scientific development. In basic science a major 12 year plan was drawn up in 1956, aiming for the attainment of world level by the end of the period. But realising the strictures imposed by the lack of a middle echelon, a new goal was announced last year extending the time to 20 or 30 years. It seems a quite sensible goal.

As for China's military aims and achievements, she has obviously been very successful.

In **applied research and technology**, considerable energy is being devoted to this branch, with about 1,600 research institutes functioning and applied research occupying the greater percentage of their activities.

It is the field of **social change** which Dr Oldham feels to be the most important of the areas emphasised by the Chinese. As in any underdeveloped country there is a great mass of society which needs to be taught to overcome primitive attitudes, and to realise that the laws of nature can be understood and controlled by man.

Dr Oldham ended with an apt quote from Mao:

'Dare to think. Dare to do. Break conventions. Try to make use of the world's existing scientific and technological achievements. What is still unknown must be discovered and invented. We will not only make ourselves equal to world standards during the 60's and future 70's, but we will surpass world levels by means of a series of five year plans, constructing our country as a socialist power, and with first rate science and technology.'

Professor Dorothy Hodgkin

A fascinating story of a resounding success achieved in China in her own specialty field of the X-ray analysis of crystals was related by Prof Hodgkin.

In Peking during her first visit to China in 1959, she was told by some of her colleagues at the university of a project they had to synthesise insulin. Indeed, they had already carried out pilot experiments. Although impressed by this bold aim, she was unable to visit the labs due to pressures of time, and put the conversation out of her mind. In 1965 she received an invitation to attend a symposium in

Brookhaven, USA, at which a similar project was to be discussed. By dint of balancing other invitations, Prof Hodgkin managed to stop off in China before going to the USA, and there found that they too had achieved a synthesis of insulin.

She described the difficult process:

Insulin is a hormone. It was first isolated as a physiological active extract in 1921, and as a pure crystalline condition in 1926. The chemical structure was worked out in Cambridge and completed in 1955: two chains of amino acids, A and B, which are linked by sulphide bridges. In the initial stages of the synthesis operation carried out in China in 1959, it was shown that the breaking apart of the natural A and B chains by oxidation reactions, then reducing them again, then leaving them in air in suitable conditions, they would reassemble themselves into a preparation showing some activity.

The next part of the synthesis process was to take separate amino acids and assemble them in the correct order to make the A and B chains completely synthetically. Prof Hodgkin emphasised that the work was an extremely difficult and exacting one, requiring many trained research workers. This work was done by both the Americans and the Chinese, and both arrived at a successful result at slightly different times in history. The Chinese concentrated on beef insulin, the others on sheep insulin. Apart from slight differences, the results are basically the same.

Each of the groups then worked on the problem of combining chains of synthetic and natural elements until they had finally succeeded in producing a synthesis which was 1 to 2% active. The next step was to increase this activity. At the time of her second visit to China, two years ago, Prof Hodgkin was shown specimens which were—according to the head scientist, 'rather bad insulin'—showing an activity of 23 units per milligram. The scientist was accustomed to producing 27 units per milligram.

The published papers are very interesting to compare. One appeared in April 1966, the other in May 1966. Prof Hodgkin felt that the Chinese paper had been the more complete, and quoted from it: 'Since Engels predicted, about 90 years ago—as soon as the composition of the protein bodies becomes known, chemistry will be able to set about the preparation of living proteins—it has been man's fervent wish to realise this difficult task.' The synthesis of insulin was an example of both pure and applied science, for such an achievement has tremendous scope for application.

* * *

A TEENAGER AT A TEACH-IN

THE TEACH-IN on China held in Hampstead Old Town Hall on Sunday, 21 May, was the first SACU event that I had attended. I went to the teach-in because although I knew something about China's past I knew almost nothing about present day China. At the teach-in I thought that I would be able to learn about China and her policies from people who had actually been in China and Vietnam during the last few months. I felt that at a SACU meeting I would learn the truth about important issues such as the Red Guards and the cultural revolution, and the war in Vietnam.

Sheer Curiosity

The meeting started at 3 o'clock with an almost full hall. In the audience were many young people of all nations who like myself had come from sheer curiosity to learn more about China. The meeting was opened by Mayor Paddy O'Connor of Camden and then the Chairman of the first session Mr Arnold Gregory, MP, explained that the teach-in would be divided into three parts dealing with China today, China and the cultural revolution, and China's foreign policy with special reference to Vietnam. At the end of each session the audience would be given a chance to express their own views and ask questions from the experts. It was impressed upon us that this part of the meeting was just as important and beneficial as the talks given by the experts. Although I was interested by the talks about present day China I was most excited by the talks given by Roland Berger, Bill Brugger and Frida Knight on the cultural revolution. Bill Brugger started by explaining the history behind the cultural revolution and what effect it has had on present day China. His explanations made the Red Guard movement meaningful and all the more exciting because he explained that the Red Guards are young people like myself, not hooligans. He told us that the Red Guards are school children, students and workers full of enthusiasm who are trying to keep the revolutionary spirit alive in People's China. It made me wish to strive harder in my own efforts in England!

Frida Knight then described her visit to her daughter who is teaching in China. She described how, although she had travelled quite extensively in places where Red Guard fighting was said, in the Western Press, to have been the worst, she could see no sign of it.

Roland Berger's speech was particularly interesting because, instead of describing the revolution in general terms, he read out a conversation which he had had with four young workers in a Peking machine tool factory about the struggles they had had in their own factory. Roland Berger showed through his report that every individual can help the cause of the cultural revolution and as Mao Tse-tung said 'the minority can be right.'

The last session dealing with China's foreign policy impressed me. I was stimulated by Tariq Ali's talk partly because he was young and enthusiastic but mainly because he was able to get his experiences in North Vietnam over in quiet, effective words. He explained, what I and other members of the audience were surprised to learn, that there are no Chinese soldiers in the whole of Vietnam.

As I found the talks informative I also found the contributions from the floor interesting. There were contributions and questions from people who held every shade of opinion. Like myself, people seemed most interested in the cultural revolution and the part that Mao Tse-tung played in its leadership. The discussions on this subject alone lasted three hours and I could well have done with another three as many questions were left unanswered.

When the meeting closed at ten o'clock everyone looked exhausted but I for one left with many new ideas in my head.

MC

LEARNING CHINESE

IN PARLIAMENT on 20 April, John Tilney, MP from Wavertree, asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what encouragement he gives to the study in higher education of modern Chinese. Mr Goronwy Roberts, Secretary, replied that a Committee on Research and Development in Modern Languages has proposed the establishment of an inter-universities Chinese language school, which undergraduates would attend for the first year of a four-year university course; this is now being discussed with the universities concerned. Six universities now have courses in Chinese, (Cambridge; Durham; Edinburgh; Leeds; London; Oxford) and fifteen institutes of further education, (1. North Berkshire College of Further Education at Abingdon; 2. South Berkshire College of Further Education at Newbury; 3. Technical

College, Bradford; 4. East Ham Technical College; 5. Thurrock Technical College in Essex; 6. West Ham College of Further Education; 7. Farnborough Technical College; 8. Mid-Hants College of Further Education; 9. Welwyn Garden City College of Further Education; 10. Liverpool College of Commerce; 11. Holborn College of Law, Languages and Commerce, London; 12. Harrow Technical College; 13. Royal College of Advanced Technology at Salford, Lancs; 14. Marine and Technical College, South Shields, Northumberland; 15. Ewell County Technical College in Surrey).

SACU DIARY

June

- 17 Council of Management meeting, 24 Warren Street, 10.30 am.
- 20 London Events Committee. 24 Warren Street. 6.15 pm.
- 22 Camden branch film show. Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Road. Documentary about China's Three Nuclear Tests, 7.30 pm. Speaker: Tariq Ali.
- Birmingham branch public meeting. Speaker Derek Bryan.
- 24 Merseyside branch public meeting. YMCA Rm no 1, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, 3. 2.30 pm, China from the Inside: Roland Berger, trade consultant and member of SACU's Council. Followed by AGM of the branch, 4.30 pm.
- 30 Sheffield branch public meeting. YWCA, Sheffield. Speaker: Catherine Williamson on The Christian Church in China Today, 7.30 pm.

New Books

MANY IMPORTANT BOOKS on China are now being published in this country, a number of which have already been reviewed in SACU NEWS. It is our aim to mention under this heading every month all such books, as soon as they are received, and, where space permits, to review the most important of them. Inclusion in this list does not preclude a review at a later date.

The Chinese Chameleon: an analysis of European conceptions of Chinese civilisation. Raymond Dawson. Oxford University Press, 1967. 42s.

The Role of the Chinese Army. John Gittings. Oxford University Press, for Chatham House, 1967. 50s.

Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The emergence of revolutionary China 1937-1945. Chalmers A Johnson. Oxford University Press (Stanford Paperback). 1967. 22s 6d.

BETHUNE FILM: 'REMARKABLY SUCCESSFUL, YET IT FAILS'

SACU's third film-show in the Botany Theatre at University College London presented to a large audience the Chinese colour film *In Praise of Revolution* and the Canadian National Film Board production *Norman Bethune*, a film in which Canada has belatedly recognised and honoured one of its outstanding citizens.

Bethune was a man of many and varied accomplishments—a brilliant thoracic surgeon, inventor, painter, lecturer, soldier. Early in his career, at a time when thoracic surgery was hardly known, he was stricken with tuberculosis. He insisted on submitting himself to the new operative technique, underwent a pneumothorax operation, and recovered rapidly. Noting, as he worked at his profession in the Montreal of the 1930s, that there was both a poor man's tuberculosis (in which the patient died) and a rich man's (in which he recovered), he became committed to the cause of socialised medicine and social justice generally.

With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 came Bethune's opportunity to put his passionate convictions into practice. In Spain he organised the first mobile blood transfusion unit in the world, bringing blood to the fighting forces where it was most needed. From Spain he moved in 1938 to the new centre of opposition to fascism—China—to work with the Eighth Route Army, the core

of the resistance to Japanese aggression. Here, in the border areas, under the most adverse condition, he set up a medical service, and literally worked himself to death in the service of the heroic fighters for China's national emancipation. In China he is revered as a hero whose life of devotion to the common people has been held up as an example of internationalism by Mao Tse-tung.

Considering that the story of his life had to be depicted through still photographs, bits of old newsreel, and extracts from interviews with people who knew him, the film was remarkably successful. Some of the interviews were both informative and evoked his many-sided and rich character, but the film-makers' attempt to bring such a vivid and flamboyant personality to life by this means sometimes resulted in trivial comments and personal anecdotes that fell flat.

Bethune was not only a larger-than-life personality, he was one of those fortunate people able to fuse their professional and intellectual life with their social and political life. This was the basis of his character—not conflict between his personality and his achievement, as the film implied. The film-makers chose to make such an unreal conflict the theme of their film, and therefore, in the end, it failed.

The essence of Bethune's life was his capacity for growth and change as he participated to the full in the world

around him and merged himself with the aspirations of the common man the world over. Bethune really *did* learn from the people he worked with in China.

One came away feeling that the Chinese have commemorated him more worthily, and have described his true contribution to mankind. In his tribute to Bethune Mao Tse-tung said:

'I am deeply grieved over his death. Now we are all commemorating him, which shows how profoundly his spirit inspires everyone. We must all learn the spirit of absolute selflessness from him. With this spirit everyone can be very useful to the people. A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interest, a man who is of value to the people.'

Kate Allan

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

The press has chosen to be concerned with a struggle for the succession when the Chinese themselves are concerned with the quality of education, the integrity of teachers and the importance of all media of mass communication and instruction.

This analysis by Jane Gates (*SACU NEWS*, April issue) does not seem entirely right to me. Granted the British Press treated the Cultural Revolution with the usual mixture of malevolence and grotesque ignorance; but cultural revolution is surely primarily to do with political power and thus inevitably, with the succession. The Chinese have said so themselves over and over again. It is not a good idea to pretend either that Liu Shao-chi, et al, did not have their eye on the leadership. Or that Mao and his supporters were slow to knock them down and out. At the centre was and is the question: After Mao goes which way will the party go? The struggle for the leadership is therefore of great significance, since we now know moderately well which leaders support which policies.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Luckin

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It is the aim of *SACU NEWS* to encourage free discussion. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Council of Management.

'On the Agenda of Mankind'

Fanshen — a Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village, by William Hinton. Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1966. Price 90s.

THIS IS ONE of the most important books ever written about China. In over 600 absorbing pages it describes in great detail the events of the spring and summer of 1948 in Long Bow Village, Shansi Province, when a work team, with the author as an observer, was sent to investigate the progress of land reform.

Without a knowledge of the previous history of the village it is impossible to understand its problems. The first two sections of the book therefore analyse the old social organisation and the many ways in which the peasants were exploited. The rapacity of the landlords was such that they could reduce to penury even a rich peasant. The Roman Catholic church, too, had a powerful hold over a section of the villagers and helped to foster disunity.

'The big problem facing the peasants over the years', says Mr Hinton of the time before the area was liberated, 'was not to obtain some variety in their diet, but to find anything to eat at all. . . .' Then land reform smashed for all time the old landlord system, but the new form of organisation was by no means decided when the writer went to the village. The

new peasant leaders had faults, many mistakes were made, the cadres sometimes lost heart and became demoralised. At times the reader wonders how the whole movement could possibly have succeeded.

It did succeed because of the implementation of the mass line — 'from the masses and to the masses'. A series of links for the passing back and forth of information, criticism and policies, stretched right from this remote village in the loess hills of Shansi up to the Party and government headquarters in Peking. Ineffective policies were reported on and corrected. Wrong measures in the village were noticed at higher level and criticised. When a mood of pessimism engulfed the work team it was never long before steps were taken to show them the way forward. Cadres at higher levels who made wrong assessments were corrected. In the end land reform was consolidated, confidence established, and all had gained in experience and wisdom.

One great merit of the book is its convincing detail. None of the difficulties is glossed over, nor the mistakes and failures. Eventually all these are seen in perspective, with the achievements, as part of the whole world-shaking movement. The expression 'world-shaking' is accurate for, as Mr Hinton says, 'Land reform is on the agenda of mankind'. Millions of peasants throughout the world will learn from the experience of China.

Colin Penn

OUR TASK IS NEVER DONE

I HAVE just returned from a visit to Ireland. One evening my friend invited me to a women's club where there was to be a demonstration on fish cooking. Anticipating an evening's entertainment I agreed to go.

On arrival I found about a hundred women present, a cooking stove, ingredients, one man but no demonstrator. The purpose of the man was to explain that the demonstrator was ill and that there would be no demonstration. Having done this unwelcome task, he fled leaving the women wondering what to do. 'Shall we dance? Shall we sing?' Then my friend said to me 'Talk to them about China.' And so I just simply got up and told them about my experiences as a teacher in China.

I had no notes, no pictures, for I hadn't anticipated being drawn into this. Soon there wasn't a fidget or a murmur amongst the audience, the rattle of tea-cups which is inevitable at a women's meeting was hushed and the whole room listened fascinated to hear the truth about life today in China. I was astounded, I was amazed. This audience whose thoughts had been no further than on frying fish were now spell-bound learning about a great experiment in living which is being carried on on the other side of the world. They had not the slightest knowledge of this and the questions which followed showed their great interest. They exclaimed as I have heard so often when I was spoken to groups 'Oh, I didn't know China was like that.'

The moral of this story is not to report a successful meeting but to pin-point the fact that people want to know. They are so conditioned by the radio, television and press reports they haven't the least idea that most of this is ballyhoo and the truth has yet to be told. And so we must keep vigilant, there is so much for us to do; between the frying fish and the tea-cups there is a great field of work and our task is never done.

Irene Spink

STUDY CHINA IN WALES

Spend ten days holiday on the beautiful coast of North Wales combined with a study of China.

SACU's Summer School at Glynllifon, Caernarvon, will provide lectures and discussion on the main aspects of China today, and will leave ample leisure time for walks and local excursions.

Lecturers will include:

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on the Cultural Revolution and Social Development.

Colin Penn (lived in China 1962-1964)
on Democracy in China.

Bernard Martin (WEA Lecturer — Author of 'Strange Vigour')
on Confucius and 20th Century China and
Sun Yat-Sen's Vision for China Today.

W J F Jenner (Lecturer, Department of Chinese Studies,
University of Leeds — lived in China 1963-65)
on Chinese Literature.

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£1 deposit to 24 Warren Street, W1.

This issue of SACU NEWS is being published later than usual so that a report of the AGM could be included. The next issue will be a combined July-August number and be published in the middle of July. The September issue will be published about August 25.



the three banners of china

by Marc Riboud

The three banners of China—the People's Communes, the Great Leap Forward and the new General Party Line.

In 150 photographs, a third in colour, and an eight thousand word commentary, Marc Riboud shows what the three banners mean to the people of China today, at work and in their leisure.

Riboud was one of the last Westerners allowed into China before the first Red Guard incidents; he travelled some 16,000 miles, to within 100 miles of the North Vietnamese border. He was recently given an Overseas Press Club of America award for the pictures in THE THREE BANNERS OF CHINA, and he was hailed by the Washington Post as a successor to the great Henri Cartier-Bresson.

Says Riboud "Leaving China, a Westerner can't help thinking: this is a world where life would be impossible . . . But present-day China is not a country for immigrants or tourists. She is not interested in pleasing the foreigner."

THE THREE BANNERS OF CHINA answers objectively some questions being asked in the West about happenings in China today. You will find it revealing—possibly disturbing.

The Three Banners of China is published by Collier-Macmillan Limited at 63s. Obtainable from all good booksellers, or complete the order form below.

● Photographs from the book are on show at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Gallery, 17-18 Dover Street, London W1, till July 8.

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