

China's economy— fact and fiction

CHINA IS BEING subjected to an onslaught of denunciation for rejecting the use of material incentives in industry.

Now it is perfectly legitimate to criticise the Chinese, or anyone else, for following economic policies that seem to the critic to be ill-judged. The issue of material incentives, for example, has been hotly debated within China both before and during the Cultural Revolution and there is every reason why the debate should continue elsewhere, especially in countries where a socialist economic base is being modified by the adoption of such measures.

It is legitimate to make out a case for the view that in rejecting material incentives an industrialising country condemns itself to a slower pace of development and to rigidity and distortion in the economy. The discussion should be full and fearless, because there is no sense in switching from blind acceptance of a system of central regulation to blind acceptance of a system guided by market forces.

Although central regulation was never the bogey in China that it became in Eastern Europe (the years of apprenticeship in the revolutionary base areas provided a built-in corrective to tendencies to ride rough-shod over provincial opinion) it is always a potential source of friction. That is why the more flexible Chinese method of matching supply to demand through innumerable contacts at town and village level proved superior to the Russian model, and incidentally encouraged the attitude of 'serving the people'. Yet it is legitimate to question the Chinese methods and re-examine them in the light of the purposes to be served in the future rather than in the past.

One thing that is not legitimate in any serious examination, however, is to argue that because the methods seem objectionable therefore they must have produced bad results, therefore it can be assumed that there is a chaotic situation in the economy, social decline and stagnation. This line of reasoning is perhaps to be expected from the American-financed teams in Hongkong and elsewhere and London newspapers who depend on them for their news of China.

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The Cultural Revolution and the family

'THE Chinese Communists are breaking up the family'—how often have we heard it said, read it in headlines, seen it spelled out with 'chapter and verse' by the China Watchers.

At the beginning of the Commune movement this type of propaganda came thick and fast:

'Husbands and wives are being separated. Children are being raised by the state in institutions run by Communist Party functionaries. Grandparents are being herded into

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The Ding family, of the Lunghua Production Brigade, Po Lo County, Kwangtung. (See 'The Cultural Revolution and the family'.)

China's economy

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More surprising is the unanimity with which the hitherto more scientifically orientated countries of Soviet Eastern Europe have taken up this position since they were cut off from direct observation of the progress of the Chinese economy.

In an article entitled 'The Cultural Revolution and the Chinese Economy', reprinted from the Soviet weekly **Economic Gazette**, the bulletin **Soviet News** published by the Press Department of the Soviet Embassy in London recently told its readers that the main emphasis of Chinese economic development is on building up 'the war industry complex' and that 'the aims of improving the material and cultural standards of the people are proclaimed to be "revisionist and reactionary"'. This is a terrifying thought, but fortunately it is not suggested by anything that is happening in China, where over-riding priority is being given to industry that caters for the needs of agriculture (farm tools, fertilizer, insecticide, irrigation pumps, crop processing machinery), followed by industries supplying consumer goods to peasants and urban workers, notably textiles (this year has seen a record output in more than half the main centres of the industry) and plastics (for footwear, gramophone records, book bindings and protective film and tubing for the farms and bags for their supplies of chemicals).

'The heaviest losses from the Cultural Revolution', this plain-spoken report continues, 'were suffered by industry, including the coal, steel, power and transport industries.' In that case the Cultural Revolution can hardly have been a catastrophe economically, as the main industrial news from China in 1968 had been of a big spurt in coal-mining, new output records at two of China's leading steel centres, Anshan and Shanghai, a remarkable speed-up in turn-round of railway freight at ports and the completion of the spectacular 6,700-metre road and rail bridge over the Yangtze at Nanking.

This gigantic project, together with the four-river drainage and reclamation project in Shantung which reached its climax last year, and the opening of a number of new fertilizer factories in different parts of the country, is sufficient comment on the report's further claim that 'Capital construction has virtually come to a halt'.

It is true that we have no overall figures for production in any branch,

and that this means that in the last analysis we can only express astonishment at some of the very low ones supplied from Washington or Moscow. Some fall-back in coal and steel production during 1967 would not be at all surprising in view of the high-water mark reached in 1966 and the uncertainty prevailing during the period when the old management were under attack and in the course of being replaced.

The same might be said of engineering industry, though it is now clear that the technical advances being made in a number of branches at that time were laying the basis for future expansion. The sector of industry of which it could not be said is light industry. Textile production appears to have exceeded expectations in 1967, while sales of five of the main consumer durables—sewing machines, radio sets, thermos flasks, enamel wash basins and aluminium cooking pans—increased by about 15 per cent.

Plan surpassed

In the first half of 1968 the output of all the major light industrial products exceeded the state plan; the output of bicycles—a good index of the provision made for the immediate needs of the ordinary person—was 18 per cent higher than in any previous six-month period.

The Soviet article says that grain and industrial crops in 1967 remained at approximately the same level as the previous year, while animal husbandry markedly declined. The Chinese said, and still say, that the 1967 harvest was an all-time record for grain, cotton, tobacco, bast fibre crops, sugar cane and beet and fruit and that there was a record increase in the pig population.

Within a week of each other the US Department of Agriculture and **Soviet News** warned of the effects of a downturn in the 1968 Chinese harvest, implying that China would be obliged to step up grain imports and even then would have to cut back consumption.

Yet in ten of the major grain-producing provinces grain deliveries to the state had already been reported higher than at the same time in 1967, and additional cash sales of surplus winter wheat were still in full spate at the end of September. Cotton also was better than in 1967.

By all means argue that the legacy of the Cultural Revolution will be slower industrialisation and a slower growth rate in China if that is what

you believe, but do not pretend it has happened already. There is no sense in talking of China as in decline at a moment when she is very much in the ascendant, even though you may have doubts about her goal.

To wring one's hands over Chinese agriculture when it has just solved its thousand-year problem of ending the endemic food-deficiency of the north is about as sensible as lamenting the dearth of technical ability in China in the month the Nanking Bridge is opened.

This has perhaps taken us some way from the starting-point, whether the Chinese are right to aim at an economic system in which the motive force is 'serving the people' and not fatter pay packets, climbing up the career ladder or rising in the social scale. Most Europeans—East and West—would agree that such a notion might be admirable in precept but would prove quite utopian in practice and lead to inertia rather than progress.

Certainly it would do so if it were simply instilled into people at school and during apprenticeship and accepted more or less as a convention. If it were grasped by young people deliberately as an ideal to aspire to, the outcome would at least not be a foregone conclusion. But such dedication requires the fervour born of revolutionary political conviction, in fact of direct involvement in politics.

All the talk today among those concerned with the real problems of the world is about how the stage reached in technology, coupled with the social attitudes of the people, determines the way society is to be run and the speed with which it will develop its resources. We hear in Western Europe about the managerial society and in Eastern Europe about the new system of management. In China too the debate has been about management.

All the authority of Mao Tse-tung's teaching, and treasured experiences of the revolution's hardest years, have been brought to bear against the idea of a managerial élite, a hierarchy that understands the alternatives and decides which of them is better for the people. The conception of management, as distinct from workers, of a managerial career, of material inducements to take on increased responsibility is not only unacceptable on ideological grounds. It is scorned as a means of improving production.

Real impetus is not got this way, say the Chinese, but by the sheer determination and perseverance of workers

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Cultural Revolution and family

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"houses of happiness" for the aged if they can't work."

(R H Shackford in Scripps-Howard press, December 17, 1958.)

The conclusion reached by this commentator was that the 'abolition of the family is an avowed, primary sociological objective of Red China's new commune system . . .'

These articles appeared about a week after the Chinese Communist Party had in fact stated its policy towards families on the communes:

'We stand for the abolition of the irrational patriarchal system inherited from the past and for the development of family life in which there is democracy and unity. This stand has been warmly received by the masses. Therefore, in building residential quarters, attention must be paid to building the houses so that the married couples, the young and aged of each family can all live together.

(Resolution on some questions concerning the People's Communes—Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party—Wuhan, December 10, 1958.)

Now, ten years later, we can begin to see what effect the Cultural Revolution has had on family life. Chinese friends tell me that before the Cultural Revolution, despite the many social changes since 1949, there was a gap if not a conflict between the three generations within the family. Now they study Mao's works together and face up squarely to contradictions between youth and age. Since everyone, of any generation, is concerned with 'serving the people', their thoughts are turned outward to the needs of society; the family is seen within this larger setting. 'Instead of family chit-chat about airy nothings', said one friend, 'we discuss community problems and 'affairs of state'. The result is a greater harmony and a completely new comradesly atmosphere.'

One of the most fascinating examples of the change was made dramatically clear to me at Kwangchow (Canton) last November when I saw the family of Ding Lai-yu, the barber of the Lunghua Production Brigade in Po Lo County, Kwangtung.

SACU NEWS is published by the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding Ltd, 24 Warren Street, London, W1, and printed by Goodwin Press Ltd, (TU), 135 Fonthill Road, London, N4.

Ding Lai-yu had learned the hard way—from bitter experience. The importance of political ideas and propaganda was brought home to him when, during the Cultural Revolution, he attended a study class organised by the production brigade. 'Where better', he thought, 'to start spreading the ideas that within my own family?'. He consulted his wife, who works in the commune tailoring shop. She did not go for the idea. As a semi-literate mother she thought this was not her business. But his two elder daughters were keen and, in a short time, they persuaded mum. They started a regular daily reading of Mao's quotations at the family table. Soon the elder girls introduced a song or two and later the two younger daughters started to express their political feelings in dance. Now this family is well known in Po Lo County and beyond as a Family Propaganda Team, going the rounds of the production teams in the area with their performance.

Delightful

For a delightful, and at times hilarious, two hours Ding and his family held the stage before an audience of 1,500, mostly Chinese but with a sprinkling of foreigners, including myself, at one of Kwangchow's many theatres.

As an ensemble of eight the family regaled us with readings and songs rendered with enormous verve and enthusiasm, and no little talent, the seven-year-old girl getting across with a powerful, indeed stentorian, voice that would do credit to any polished Peking Opera star. Never have I heard such a volume of sound coming from such a young throat. She and her five-year-old sister took the stage with delightful freshness and charm and great expertise, using traditional Chinese dance routines to express modern issues; the booting out of Liu Shao-chi; praise to Mao Tse-tung and the Communist Party; condemning American aggression in Vietnam; cursing the landlord of pre-Liberation days. The baby boy—two-and-a-half—conducted the rest of the family in many of the songs with great gusto and joined vigorously with the rest in the ensemble numbers, clutching his little red book in his chubby fingers and beaming with obvious delight. The ten-year-old lad brought the house down as, in the middle of a song with his dad in praise of communes, he most unselfconsciously, and unprofessionally,

scratched his shock of black hair. No group of professionals could have given greater delight and more effectively conveyed their political message, than this family of eight.

The father had introduced the performance, making comparisons from his own experience of life before and after Liberation. Speaking without notes he gave us some idea of how it has come about that he and his family are today not only expert but also red. This is what he said:

My name is Ding Lai-yu, poor peasant commune member in Lung-hua Production Brigade of Lung-hsi People's Commune in Lo Luo County, Kwangtung Province. We are eight in the family. Under the brilliant leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tse-tung, we have been leading a very happy life. However in the old society we were oppressed by the 'three big mountains'. We had a dog's life. For instance, my wife was sold to a landlord as a maidservant. She has had more than enough of lashings and insults.

But now the wretched of the old society have become the masters of the motherland. I joined the Chinese Communist Party and later was elected leader of the Production Brigade in our Commune. I now have a happy family. I always tell my children that we owe our emancipation to the Chinese Communist Party and our happiness to Chairman Mao.

Chairman Mao teaches us: 'Never forget the class struggle'. As well as our every-day study of Chairman Mao's works, we often make six comparisons among ourselves.

The first comparison is between the old society and the new. Chairman Mao says: 'The Chinese Communist Party is the core of leadership of the whole Chinese people. Without this core, the cause of socialism cannot be victorious.' Under the wise leadership of Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, our new society is like a paradise. Politically we enjoy equal rights. All the labouring people are enjoying a happy life. The old society was worse than hell, a cannibal society. The minority lived in luxury at the expense of the majority. The broad masses of the labouring people lived a hand-to-mouth existence. But worse! They had to sell their children. They had to go begging. It was in that old society that my parents were starved to death, leaving six children behind. We had nobody to depend on. We had practically nothing to eat and no house to live in. We stayed in a dilapidated

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temple. When I was 14 I drifted from my homeplace in Tahi County to Po Lo County where I am now living. Luckily I was adopted by a poor-peasant family. That damned old society! It had broken my family.

The second comparison is between the countryside in the old society and in the new one. In the old countryside we could only see wretched houses. Even if the labouring folk had a thatched house of their own, they could not stay there long. At the same time the landlords lived in luxury. Now we have a collective economy. Radical changes have taken place, economically and politically, in the life of the former poor and lower-middle peasants. Now I own a house. This is something I would not have dared to dream of in the old days. Now it's a fact, thanks to Chairman Mao.

The third comparison is between our family in the past and in the new society. Then, in the old society we were eight. Politically we had no right to speak. What we had were lashings and insults. We had to go begging. My parents were starved to death leaving six children to nobody's care. Now, we are again eight in the family and we are leading a happy life. Three of my six children go to school. What is especially wonderful is that my six brothers and sisters who were sold off or ran away have been reunited. How much I have to thank Chairman Mao for!

The fourth comparison is between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party. It was in the nature of the Kuomintang to oppress and exploit the working people. The KMT betrayed China. They were in collusion with the imperialists who invaded China and repressed the Chinese people. By con-

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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.

trast, the Chinese Communist Party protects the people, devotes itself utterly to the interests of the people.

The fifth comparison is between the reactionary puppet army and the People's Liberation Army. The bandit troops of Chiang Kai-shek were no more than the instrument of the bourgeois dictatorship. They beat the working people and were responsible for all manner of evil things. But the People's Liberation Army is an army of the people. They hit hard at the class enemies. They protect the people. We poor and lower-middle peasants have the deepest love for our own army.

The sixth comparison is between the bourgeois dictatorship and the dictatorship of the proletariat. If the bourgeoisie takes back the power from our hands, we shall suffer for the second time, again we shall lead a dog's life. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat we poor and lower-middle peasants are forever happy—from generation to generation.

Following Chairman Mao's teaching that 'we must never forget the class struggle' the whole of my family thoroughly criticised and repudiated the theory of Liu Shao-chi of 'the dying out of the class struggle'. We have raised our political consciousness and our consciousness of the struggle between the two lines—the revolutionary and the reactionary. Thus we have come to understand that Chairman Mao is dearest to us all and that the Chinese Communist Party is the best and the People's Liberation Army is the most beloved army. My whole family read Chairman Mao's works every day and try to follow his instructions in whatever we are doing. There may be thousands and thousands of books but we are determined to read Chairman Mao's works all our lives. There may be thousands and thousands of roads, but we have made up our minds to follow the road pointed out by Chairman Mao.

Chairman Mao teaches us that 'The proletariat can liberate itself only when the whole of mankind is liberated'. At present two-thirds of the working people of the world are still under oppression. They too are leading a rotten life. We are resolved to study and creatively apply the thought of Mao Tse-tung and actively propagate it so that the whole world as well as the whole of China is illuminated by the thought of Mao Tse-tung. We will carry through to the end the revolution in China and the world revolution.

Roland Berger

FUEL IN SNOWY WEATHER

UNDERSTANDING modern China by reading books would be easier if there were fewer of them. Ideally, one should have the time to do more than dip into them; one should drink deep or not at all. The library, an important part of the Anglo-Chinese Educational Institute, has been growing year by year, and the character of the books acquired seems to change annually.

Two years ago a large proportion of the books were reports by people who visited China or taught there. Sophia Knight's *Window on Shanghai*; Delia Jenner's *Letters*; Charles Taylor's *Reporter in Red China*; Mikhail A. Klochko's *Soviet Scientist in China*; Portisch's *Eye Witness*; and the more recent book by two Australians, Mackerras and Hunter's *China Observed*—each has its own flavour and stance and outlook.

Early in 1967 several short factual books appeared: Han Suyin's *China in the Year 2001*, about China's present and future, was sandwiched in between *Mortal Flower* and *Birdless Summer*, volumes two and three of her huge biographical history. Lyn Harrington, a Canadian writer, links China's past and present with carefully chosen words and pictures in two books for young people, *China and the Chinese*, and *The Grand Canal of China*.

In 1968, however, books tended to be specialised or to be collections of source material, anthologies of literature or poetry, yearbooks, atlases or picture books. Some concentrate on oriental armour, or sailing ships, or the lion dog. Others deal with the May Fourth movement, Asian frontiers, the Red Guards or the Cultural Revolution. Do-it-yourself books teach paper-folding and brushwork, but there is also a history of landscape painting and some Afro-Asian caricatures of imperialists.

The way China has been caricatured and characterised is described in Dawson's *Chinese Chameleon*. In the world of reality is the large book of colour photographs with its imaginative and informative text by several authors, E Schulthess' *China*; and also Herrmann's excellent historical atlas. When the struggle against Japan was at its height in 1942, Mao Tse-tung, quoting a well-known Chinese proverb observed that the prime need of the illiterate and uneducated was not 'more flowers on the brocade' but 'fuel in snowy weather'. Icy winds of prejudice make fuel a prime need today as well.

M Z B

The artist's view

SHORT OF A VISIT to China oneself, there is no alternative to a persistent search for and sifting through the writings of those who know this up-heaving country from first-hand experience. The search is full of pitfalls, since the official line prevails in the press, and personal accounts may offer too narrow a vista for the discriminating enquirer. But if, in the search, we come across an impression of China that is at once broad in its scope, detached in its viewpoint, and informed in its comparisons — east vis-a-vis west, then we have a valuable find.

Holy China, by Feliks Topolski, is a rare experience. On-the-spot line-drawing reactions — a form which Topolski has perfected over many years of scrutinising events the world round, and seen for the past 15 years in his broadsheet, the *Chronicle*, but this time together with his own jotted words, which act as telling guidelines to an unfamiliar environment. It is not an easy tour of contemporary China. Topolski's hand and eye are quick, and his mind teems with unexpected associations. We are obliged to page back and forth, pondering a sketch, co-

ordinating it with the text, chewing over the suggestions and implications. Yet the task is rewarding and altogether absorbing.

An artist's response to China is bound to be quite another kettle of fish from that of any other professional. Topolski's study is far from conventional, far from academic, but it is nonetheless informed by an experience of the world that few people from any walk of life could match. A random quote or two from his provocative and often lyrical text will illustrate the point.

'Tien An Men Square, on the first May night, bursts at the seams with amateur folklore groups from all over the country performing for a million of themselves: a giant open air square mile of a HAPPENING. Ten thousand bands, choirs, dancing feet, whirling, flag-banners hoisting, slogans roaring, applause:

'This is the realisation of an unmatched, all-in happening, a cacophony of the truest ultra-modernity. And much more: humanity gathered in one congested spot by an idea, accumulating single-minded force and, fully charged, exploding, leaping, unaided by

supermachines, into new space dimensions. This pandemonium, this babel of all the senses, is today's symphony of art-faith-will. Puny "observers" from the West, Russians included, their assertive instincts at work, react piece-meal, get at and examine details to fit their own measure: their dwarfed art and "good taste", their sectarianisms and their "freedoms". Thus, measure by false measure, they recover confidence, and even attempt a patronising irony. But the whole; the whole answers well for China. Simpler, and therefore less boneheaded "delegates" from Africa and Asia are perhaps able to perceive the Majesty and Miracle.'

'Steep, dug-out acres: clattering and clattering. Metal, timber, bricks, shrill gaiety, banging, heaving, sliding down, multi-levelled, multi-aged, multitudinous agitation — walling up The Communal Irrigation Scheme, its culmination the calm pointedness of a canal.

'Labouring China takes on the aura of symbolic action. Posters, performers, statues, writing, hieratize real gestures or, as a young American will imitate the tough mannerisms of the screen, life here models itself on the art that serves it.'

By all means, see it. There is a copy of **Holy China**, on loan from a member, in the library at Warren Street.

Kate Allt

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Honest opinion

From Geoffrey Haworth, Cheshire

I AM VERY glad that the SACU Council has issued a statement about the British subjects at present detained in China (SACU News, January). Although I was present as an observer at the meeting when this matter was discussed, I had to leave before the statement was agreed and I should like to be allowed to make some comments on it.

When speaking to audiences which you know must be misinformed about and prejudiced against China, I find it very difficult not to exaggerate in the opposite direction, and I feel that the Council statement perhaps errs in this respect. May I give some details?

'The charges and evidence were so flimsy . . .' This may be true, but is surely irrelevant. No charges, however flimsy, and no evidence have been brought against Anthony Grey.

'It is widely believed in Hongkong . . .' It is also widely believed in this country that British subjects are being detained in China for no reason at all. Surely we have the right and duty to protest against all cases of apparent injustice and to continue to press for information.

'The fact is that Hongkong is a little bit of China.' Yes, it is, and although as far as I know the Chinese government has never asked us to give it back, I think we should initiate negotiations to return it as soon as possible. In the meantime it is a British possession and we are responsible for maintaining law and order there.

'From the personal point of view their relations and friends are rightly concerned . . .' Only personal? Surely detention without any information is wrong and we should say so.

' . . . the aim of overthrowing or subverting China . . .' In what way? We have recognised China, we are increasing our trade with her, and for the last four years we have, in opposition to the USA, voted for her admission to the United Nations.

When meeting revolutionary committees in China in August 1967, it was not apparently possible to make any impression on their point of view, but they did appreciate and expect argument and honest expression of opinion on our part, and I do not think the interests of SACU are served by an uncritical attitude to everything that happens in China, or the passive acceptance of things we believe to be wrong.

THE following, taken from a Hsinhua News Agency statement, states the official Chinese view on the detention of Anthony Grey. It was published on December 27, 1968. — Editor.

'The British authorities claim that the Hongkong British authorities have already released Hsueh Ping and seven other journalists, but China has not yet released Grey. They allege that the Chinese government has "shifted its ground".

'All this is nothing but malicious distortion and vilification. The Chinese government has all along taken a clear-cut stand towards the Grey question. The Information Department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced in a statement on July 21 of last year that in view of the Hongkong British authorities' savage persecution of eight patriotic Chinese journalists, including correspondents of the Hsinhua News Agency, Hongkong Branch, the Chinese government decided to restrict Grey's freedom of movement.

'But the Hongkong British authorities did not immediately release the eight patriotic Chinese journalists. Instead they went from bad to worse and detained more patriotic Chinese journalists in succession. . . .

'Since the Hongkong British authorities continue to keep thirteen patriotic Chinese journalists in jail, the Chinese government is fully justified in continuing to restrict Grey's freedom of movement. This is the consistent stand of the Chinese government.'

Free them all

From Sheila Green, Lancashire

. . . May I say that my husband and I (and some of our friends) support China over the Anthony Grey issue. We are of the opinion that the people responsible for his continued detention are the British Government for the continuation of their oppressive policies in Hongkong. The Government has not been as zealous in exposing the Government of South Africa for imprisoning people holding Zambian passports.

We also deplore the failure of the 'free' press in not publishing Dr Needham's letter.

I am sure we all look forward to the release of Anthony Grey and the Chinese people of Hongkong.

Faithful reader

From Miss N G Dick, London

I'm sorry I can't come to your meetings but I read every word of the literature you send me. I was particularly glad of the article on Mr Grey. I thought there would be an explanation along the lines you suggest. . . .

Individual Art

From John Papworth

THE issue raised by Professor Coulson in his resignation letter is important; as I understand him he is urging we use straightforward English and not use jargon phrases which derive their meaning very largely from what a powerful group of politicians in a given country may decide is suitable for their policy purposes at a given time.

The phrase 'bourgeois art' for example is meaningless for purposes of discussion, as distinct from abuse, unless we know what these power groups at the top in countries like China and Russia currently want it to mean.

My atlas indicates that China is not a country but a continent and one larger than the land surface of Europe as far as the Urals. When one reflects on the sheer diversity of peoples and conditions in Europe is it unreasonable to suppose that China is equally rich in this diversity? How then can one apply to an intensely individual form of creativity, and one that springs largely from the unconscious of the artist, and which is thus not susceptible to production for objective needs such as propaganda without abandoning the inspiration of the unconscious and thus demeaning the product, such sweeping terms as 'bourgeois art'?

There is a further example of 'gobbledygook' in the article about a new bridge in your January issue when it states 'it is the biggest . . . so far designed or built by the Chinese working class'. This is not so much description as incantation, and at the altars of thought processes which need to imprison the free flow of language as the necessary cost of maintaining the grip of these processes on the mind.

To seek to encompass the individual riches and variety of millions of human personalities by a sweeping jargon phrase such as 'the working class' is not only to abuse the humanity of those millions by reducing them collectively to a single block of verbal cannon fodder, but to deaden the imaginative responsiveness of the habitual reader of such phrases and their authors alike.

Since the declared object of SACU is 'to foster friendly relations between Britain and China', by which I suppose is meant the people of these countries, and since most people in Britain are not Marxists, might it not be better if descriptive articles were couched in ordinary plain English rather than the highly subjective tentatiousness of the ritual phraseology of the Marxist straight-jacket?

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moved to exert their best efforts by the knowledge that all the people are going to benefit from it.

Not only the most valuable technical advances but the most beneficial steps in management are those hit upon by the workers and technicians themselves, probing for the simplest way of overcoming an obstacle or breaking through an irksome limit. Whenever the iron and steel plant at Shihkiachwang needed its machinery for boosting furnace temperature serviced, for example, expert specialists had to be summoned from outside and frustrating delays and uncertainty ensued.

This high precision machinery was not of the sort that ordinary steel workers could be let loose on, or so the professional management had always insisted until they were overruled this year as a result of the Cultural Revolution. The 'Revolutionary Committee' of the works gave authority for the machine to be dismantled and repaired by the workers and it was. It took twenty days to discover how to reassemble all the parts, but even that was less than the outside experts had taken before.

On this kind of basis China talks about launching a new leap forward. Plenty of people in the West are ready to explain why it would be no more than a leap into chaos, but—and here we come back to our starting point—it is up to them to take all the Shihkiachwangs, all the Kweiyangs (at the Kweiyang Cotton Mill the workers exposed a situation in which the administration had expanded itself to 22 sections, accounting for 8 per cent of the payroll), all the Yangtze Bridges and the seven successive good harvests, and show where China is going wrong and why our method would be better.

Percy Timberlake
 Editor, China Trade and
 Economic Newsletter

SACU DIARY

February

- 5 **Cambridge Branch.** 'China, India and World Hunger.' Speakers: Dr Hugh Gray, MP and Malcolm Caldwell, lecturer at School of Oriental and African Studies, London. Keynes Hall, Kings College, 8.15 pm.
- 7 **Barnet Branch.** Films from China. Followed by the Annual General of the Meeting Branch. Hendon Town Hall, The Burroughs, NW4. 7.30 pm.
- 11 **Discussion Meeting.** 'China and Japan.' Introduced by Michael Saso who lived in Japan for some years. 24 Warren Street W1. 7.30 pm.
- 12 **Public Meeting.** 'Any Questions on China?' For details see advertisements and special leaflet. (Please send in your questions before the meeting.) Porchester Hall, Queensway W2. 7.30 pm.
- 13 **Cambridge Branch.** AGM followed by Chinese film 'Tunnel Warfare'. Keynes Hall, King's College. 8 pm.
- 19 **Camden Branch.** 'China and US Relations.' Speaker: Premen Addy. Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Road WC1. 7.30 pm.
- 25 **Discussion Meeting.** 'The Life and Works of Lu Hsun.' Introduced by Paul Lewenstein. 24 Warren Street W1. 7.30 pm.
- 26 **Manchester Branch.** 'Tibet and Sino-Indian relations.' Speaker: Mr. A T d'Eye. Friends Meeting House, Mount Street. 7.30 pm.

Weekend school?

WHY NOT spend a weekend in London and learn more about China? If there is enough support SACU will arrange a non-residential weekend school on the weekend March 28-30. It will be held at 24 Warren Street which has a very pleasant meeting room and library, together with a small kitchen.

As expenses will be low, this will enable us to keep the fee for the school within everyone's means—probably about £1. The number of sessions and the aspects of China to be studied will depend on the wishes of those interested.

So please write to central office now and tell us whether you would like to attend the school and, if so, your thoughts on the following:

- Number of sessions? i.e. Friday evening? All or part of Saturday and Sunday?
- What aspects of China and her people you would like to study?
- All work and no play? Or films/slides to be included in the programme?
- Any improvements you think we could make on previous schools?
- If you would need help in finding accommodation in London?

All your answers will be carefully considered and the programme for the weekend will be printed in next month's SACU News.

On television

ON January 20 the first of eight programmes for the sixth form on China ushered in the series with a poem by Mao Tse-tung accompanied by films of the Long March. It then traced the growth of rebellion and revolution from the May Fourth demonstrations culminating in the victory parade in Peking in October 1949.

Edgar Snow described the thin, gaunt Communist leader who had no need for bodyguards when he was living and working and writing in Yanan. Jerome Chen described the 'rectification' movement (1942-44), how the hitherto foreign doctrine had to be rewritten in terms that would be understood by illiterate peasants, so that party and masses could become united first against the Japanese, and later when they faced Chiang Kai-shek's well-armed forces.

The next seven programmes will cover the empire that lasted for 2,000 years, and its artistic achievements, describe its collapse and the failure of the Nationalist Government. They will show how the Communist administration has succeeded in making China strong and united. You can see them on BBC-1 in the school programmes, on Mondays at 11.30 am and Wednesdays at noon. **M Z B**

SACU's AGM

THIS will be held on May 17, and further particulars of the meeting will be announced in the March SACU News. As some Branches will be holding their own AGMs during February and March members may like to take the opportunity at these meetings of putting forward resolutions for the national Annual General Meeting through their Branch.

The Society's programme and policy, to be successful, should reflect the views of its membership and resolutions, either from a Branch or signed by five individual members, which can be debated at the AGM are one of the best ways of seeing that this is in fact the case. So please book the date May 17 in your diaries—come to the AGM—and start thinking about your resolutions NOW.



Air France to Shanghai

Air France weekly service to Shanghai, flown by Boeing Jet Intercontinental, gives businessmen, exporters, diplomats and official travellers fast, direct access to the heart of industrial areas. The flight leaves Orly, Paris at 11 a.m. on Mondays and the Boeing reaches Shanghai on Tuesdays at 3.30 p.m. The return flight departs Shanghai on Tuesdays at 6.20 p.m. and arrives at Orly at 11.30 a.m. Wednesday. London-Shanghai jet economy return fare is £461.3.0. (1st class return £789.4.0.)

Air France is the first West European airline to be granted a route to Shanghai, and the new service brings to seven the total number of flights a week by the company to the Far East. Countries served by Air France include Iran, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, the Phillipines,

Japan—and now the People's Republic of China. Destination in many of these countries may be used as stop-over points on your journey to Shanghai. Full details can be obtained from your Travel Agent or nearest Air France office.

à votre service

**AIR
FRANCE**



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