

VISIT CHINA: SPECIAL TOURS
AT REDUCED RATES FOR SACU
MEMBERS. WRITE TO SACU, 24
WARREN STREET, LONDON, W.1
FOR DETAILS.

FEBRUARY 1966

Study and Work Combine in China

The following article is based on a talk given by Liao Hung-Ying at the week-end school, held at the White House, Sussex, January 7-9.

EDUCATION, like nearly any subject dealing with China, will arouse some vehement and often opposite reactions from different people. On one hand the history of education in China is the longest (and the only unbroken one) in the world, producing some of the most cultured minds the world has known. On the other hand, until the Liberation the vast majority of China's population was illiterate (Readers will have to tolerate the word 'liberation,' for to all Chinese 1949, or Liberation, is a landmark in our history and in our thinking.) Name like Confucius, Mene Li Po or Su Tung-Po of classical times, or Lin Yu-Tang in our times, represent the tiny minority of sons of the well-to-do, the scholar-gentry-mandarin class who were supported by the sweat and blood of the toiling masses. Research has shown that during the 1940s the attendance of one student in a Chinese university required the labour of fifty peasants, while one in a foreign university required at least ten times that many.

What was the nation's gain from such an expensive educational system? During the three decades following the abolition, in 1906, of the old Imperial examination system and the introduction of the Western system, a pattern developed throughout the country. It was the ambition of every young man having sufficient mental-capacity and family-clan support to attend one of the modern schools, following with one of the better known universities in the West or Japan, or failing that, one of the best Chinese universities. In acquiring the

highest degrees possible, he was equipped for an official or academic career, and to make a fortune and a name for his family-clan. He passed his examinations, mostly Western and quite unrelated to Chinese conditions, then moved to the cities where doctors, lawyers and men of all respected professions practised. Though the families of such young men were rooted in the countryside, the sons rarely went back except to visit on special occasions. Thus the vast stretches of rural China became intellectually impoverished, while urban

(Continued on page 2)

SACU WEEKEND IN SUSSEX

THE SECOND SACU week-end school (7-9 January) was held at The White House, Isle of Thorns, Sussex. A warm welcome from Mrs Dorien-Smith, resident warden, a lucky spell of winter sunshine and the stimulus of living in an exciting forest retreat designed by Maxwell Fry and usually occupied by University students all contributed to the success of the week-end.

Within an hour of our arrival twenty-five guests had been installed in twenty-five study bedrooms, a discreet bar was serving its first customers and in the relaxed atmosphere of the common room we felt encouraged to reveal the ignorance about China which had brought most of us to the school.

Intensive study began at 9-30 on Saturday with an introductory talk by Mr R. Berger, Director of Studies, in which he broadly outlined the stages of China's development since 1900 and emphasised the amazing progress in every field of human endeavour which has taken place since the Revolution.

In the group discussions which followed there was scarcely time for everyone to voice all their questions. This first account of the Great Leap Forward resulting from the policy of 'from the masses to the masses' puzzled some of the students and there was a pertinent question as to why Mao's speeches were quoted to the exclusion of anyone else, and some tentative and very British probing about the advice, some even murmured 'directives,' given by the local cadres. We were therefore especially grateful for the presence of Mr Yeh Shih-Lsiang, People's Daily correspondent, who was able to provide facts, from his own experience.

Geoffrey Gorer, social anthropologist and farmer, gave us his impressions

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

areas became centres of expanding bureaucracy, competition and intrigues, and unemployment. The nation was increasingly drained of its strength to educate these young men (and a few women), and to support an enlarging bureaucratic structure. Worse, an ever greater number of Western-educated graduates sought employment in foreign organisations in the quest for better financial security and influential position, further developing the pernicious and self-destroying mentality of the comprador.

In 1949 the People's Government inherited this state of affairs. They faced a task which was, perhaps, more overwhelming than any faced by a governing body in the history of man. As the People's Government had come into existence out of the long struggle to liberate the country from foreign domination and exploitation, from feudal and bureaucratic oppression, one of its principal aims was to carry the process of liberation further — to liberate the energy, talents, and initiative of the people who numbered 500 million. The magnitude of this task and its achievement is a story of miracles. That Western critics try to disparage or condemn the Chinese Government for 'lowering the standard,' or the 'dullness of the arts,' is tantamount to condemning an African country for not having produced a Bertrand Russell since its independence two or three years ago.

Since it is a socialist country having 650 million citizens, a huge area with a rapidly growing agriculture and industry, Socialist China aims at providing higher education, available to everyone, free of charge. Large, thinly populated areas await development. Industry calls urgently for technicians and engineers; agriculture must be mechanised and the countryside modernised; the enormous gap between town and country shall be gradually narrowed and finally closed. Clearly, some fundamental measures had to be introduced into the educational system and carried through. In 1943 Mao Tse-tung put forward the policy for the then liberated areas. 'It is to educate the broad masses of the toiling people in the spirit of communism, to make education and culture serve the revolutionary war, to combine education with labour and happiness.' Between 1954 and 1958 the Central Committee of the Communist Party repeatedly proposed that productive labour should be added to the school curriculum. In 1958 this policy was adopted and carried out throughout the country.

China is still a backward country. In order to become an advanced socialist country, each man and woman must achieve an all-round development. An intellectual must also be a manual worker; a factory worker, a miner, or a peasant must also be an educated person — a **cultured socialist-minded worker**.

Classroom Space

Between 1958 and 1965 productive labour became a regular activity in all educational institutions. The kind of work, the length of working time, and so forth, all varied according to local conditions and the age and interests of the students. The experience of these years has brought remarkable gains, yet the needs grow rapidly and the existing full-time educational institutions cannot make room for all the boys and girls who have graduated from lower levels. New schools cannot be built and equipped fast enough. Therefore last August the National Conference on Agricultural Education (secondary and higher) decided to develop part-farm part-study colleges and secondary schools all over the country. In December the Conference considered the development of work-study schools and institutions of higher learning with special emphasis on the former in cities. There is no doubt that these plans will be energetically carried out in the spirit of experimentation. The standard will be uneven because the people themselves will take an active part in the administration, as China's policy in all activities is 'to walk on both legs,' and people can learn only by doing.

No Privilege

It is not possible, in the limited space of this article, to do more than summarise the life of the schools and universities. Students in full-time institutions will take part in productive labour for longer periods in the year than in the recent past. The part-farming part-study and the part-factory part-study schools and colleges will soon be located everywhere throughout the country. Each school will be at the same time a farm or a small factory; each student will be at the same time a future farmer or industrial producer. Only thus can an individual acquire a comparatively complete knowledge and become morally, physically, and intellectually developed. Only by such a system of education is it possible to prevent the growth of a privileged class and bureaucracy. And only through such education is it possible for persons working with 'revolutionary heroism' to build a new country, and to help other people in need.

SACU WEEKEND (from page 1)

gained during a three week visit to China as a private tourist in 1964. He had visited a number of communes which he defined as 'essentially hydraulic units, their boundaries determined by control of water; that is, use of canals, dams, artesian wells. The communes were exceedingly self-contained, both socially and intellectually, and he had been surprised by their differing standards. 'The best in the world' was his verdict on the irrigation plant, experimental fields and animal husbandry of one commune near Canton, while near Peking he had seen 'the worst maize he had ever inspected,' mainly due to poor methods of seed selection. He had been amazed by the quality and quantity of the equipment in the engineering schools and the meticulous arrangement of a museum in which labelled exhibits illustrated Chinese history from 2,000 B.C. to 1949. His over-all impression was of a 'well-fed, happy and extraordinarily gentle people.'

The gentleness of her students had also impressed Mrs Delia Jenner who had been a teacher in the Foreign Languages Department of the Peking Broadcasting Unit. The provision of unsuitable teaching material, arbitrary changes of policy and fear of foreigners were some of the difficulties she encountered. 'Even the sight of a large, blue-eyed Western monster could be alarming to a Chinese student' she said. Students were often far from home and members of each class had a very intimate, almost family, relationship with each other and with their teacher.

When Liao Hung-ying described the educational scene in China and Dr Adler spoke of the health services we began to realise the all-important dividing line of 1949, and the gulf between pre-revolution and post-revolution. Sixteen years ago eighty-five per cent of the population was illiterate; today there are assured and limitless outlets for the talents of one million university students.

Even those who had visited China were at a loss to account wholly for these miracles. Everything is possible, given the will, was Liao Hung-ying's explanation. Mr Berger drew a pyramid in the air and again quoted the principle of 'from the masses to the masses.' More concentrated questions began to form in our minds and we were all ready for more intensive study. After seeing Mrs Silver's home-made film taken on a private visit to China we began to hope that we might be able to find some of the answers for ourselves — in China.

Fixtures

January

30 Hampstead branch. Party with buffet supper and films, 8 Hollycroft Avenue, N.W.3, 7.30 pm. All SACU members and friends welcome. Tickets 10s 6d. (See page 3.)

February

- 8 Teach-in on China, Shaftesbury Hall, Cheltenham. Dr Joseph Needham and other speakers. 7.30 pm.
- 10 Recall of White House Week-end School, 24 Warren Street, London W.1, 7.30 pm. Discussion on social development in China. All members welcome.
- 11 Oxford branch. Talk by Professor Trevor Roper. (See below.)
- 22 Informal discussion introduced by two recent visitors to China at SACU Headquarters, 24 Warren Street, London W.1. 8 pm.
- 24 Barnet branch inaugural meeting, Barnet Town Hall, 7.30 pm. Speakers: Professor Joan Robinson, Stuart Gelder and others.

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Library Committee

THE LIBRARY Committee which holds its next meeting Tuesday, February 22 at 7 pm is beginning to receive donations of books about China, and welcomes further donations. If there are any particular books members think important for the library to acquire, please let the library committee know. The cutting service still needs volunteers who will cover the following papers and send in cuttings each month: Spectator, Economist, Financial Times, Statist, Guardian, Tribune, Sun, Sunday Citizen, Peace News. The cataloguing of books is now proceeding, and announcement of the opening date for the library will be made in March issue of SACU NEWS.

Oxford Members Form Branch

SACU MEMBERS in the Oxford area at a meeting on 10 January decided to launch an Oxford branch of SACU. A working committee was elected with Mr Raymond Dawson of the Oriental Faculty, as chairman and acting secretary. A programme of six public events a year was agreed upon, starting with a talk by Professor Trevor-Roper on Friday, 11 February.

SACU Stages First Ever Festival of China

PROPOSALS for a China Month in the London Borough of Camden were discussed by members of the Hampstead branch at a meeting on January 11. Professor Carey-Taylor, chairman of the Hampstead Branch, informed members that the dates May 6 to June 4 are set for the month-long series of activities; the formal opening by the Mayor will be held at the Camden Civic Centre.

Three speakers outlined the general proposals for review and criticism, and asked members for their suggestions. Colin Penn announced that an exhibition of sixty contemporary Chinese paintings, mostly landscapes, will form the core of a widely varied programme of events. He underlined the need for assistants to carry out the programme. Not only are they required from the Hampstead membership, but any other members able to help are asked to send word through the head office.

Jack Perry reviewed the achievements already scored by SACU in the eight months since its inauguration, and pointed out that the planned China Month would be the first of its kind in England or Europe. 'Camden Festival of China' is the name chosen to encompass the many-faceted programme which will include: exhibitions on history, archeology, art; concerts performed by Chinese musicians; films; lectures; public meetings and discussions in which speakers representing Africa, South America and Asia will exchange views on China's foreign policy, culture, way of life, etcetera. He hoped that the main bookshops in Camden Borough would agree to keep and display a good supply of books, magazines and pamphlets dealing with China. The festival would end with a large banquet, featuring a variety of Chinese dishes, to be held on June 4.

Charles Cooper then gave details of a list of films which will be available for showing during the month. It is hoped that local cinemas like the Playhouse and Everyman will run new features, while the Odeon circuit in Camden may agree to feature 'China' by Felix Greene. A Chinese film for children, 'Little Bell,' is proposed for Saturday morning showings. Also, television channels may place features on China and related subjects during the month. Short films would be made available to schools.

In the discussion that followed, a number of suggestions were offered from the floor. The film committee might approach the variety of small film societies through the Students' Union. A wistful hope that the Peking

Opera would be performing during the festival was dashed; it was however agreed that the several schools of drama and dramatic societies located in around Camden would welcome speakers on aspects of the Chinese theatre. An exhibition of modern Chinese stamps, still difficult to come by in England, would find an eager audience among Hampstead philatelists.

The question was raised by several members whether the Hampstead branch had perhaps bitten off more than it could chew in designating an entire month to the festival. Two weeks would be easier to manage from the point of view of the tremendous number of assistants required to organise and run the activities, and would create a more concentrated, more powerful effect in the minds of the general public. The question was left open for future determination. Six committees were formed to organise the following activities: Arts and Crafts; Music; Literature; Films; Publicity; and Social. Anyone wishing to assist on any of these committees is invited to get in touch with the head office.

On Sunday, 30 January, the Hampstead branch is holding a party to launch the campaign for the Camden Festival of China. A buffet supper will be served and films shown. All SACU members and friends are welcome at 8 Hollycroft Avenue, London, N.W.3 at 7.30 pm. Tickets 10s 6d.

SACU Council

AT ITS meeting on 13 December held in the House of Commons, the Council of Management heard reports by Mrs Mary Adams, Mr Ernest Roberts and Professor Trevor-Roper on their visit to China. The Council approved a Constitution for the Society and decided to take steps to register SACU as an Educational Institute. The Council decided that the first General Meeting of the Society is to be held early in May. Mr A Horsley and Dr N Kurti were appointed joint acting-treasurers.

WEEKEND SCHOOLS

Saturday, 30 April

GROSVENOR HOUSE, Scarborough 29 April - 1 May

- am 'China Before Liberation,' Sybille van der Sprengel, Lecturer, Department of Social Studies, University of Leeds.
pm 'Developments in China Since 1949,' W J F Jenner, Department of Chinese Studies, University of Leeds. (Translator of the Autobiography of Pu Yi—'From Emperor to Citizen'.)

Sunday, 1 May

- am 'Democracy in China.' Speaker to be announced.
pm 'China's Foreign Policy,' Owen Lattimore, Professor of Chinese Studies, University of Leeds.

Cost: Members £3 17s. 6d. Special rate for student members £3 7s. 6d. Non-members £4 5s. 0d.

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HARRINGTON HOUSE, Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire

29 April - 1 May

'CHINA IN THE WORLD'

China's Foreign Policy Before 1949; China's Foreign Policy; China in South-East Asia, John Gittings; China's Relations with the West, Derek Bryan.

Cost: £3 2s. 6d. (£3 7s. 6d. for non-members)

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Of special interest to members in North Wales, Liverpool and the Midlands :
GLYNLLIFON AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE, Caernarvon

Friday 9 to Sunday September 11, 1966

China Before 1949; Developments in China Since Liberation; The Chinese Communes; China's Place in the World.

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Of special interest to members in Bristol, Bath, Winchester, Southampton and Reading :

WILTON HOUSE, Salisbury, Wiltshire

China's Place in the World; A Look at Chinese History: 1840-1911—The Opium Wars; Taiping Rebellion; Boxer Rising; 1911-1949—Sun Yat-sen and the 1911 Revolution; The Long March, Yennan; China Since 1949.

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You can book for these schools now by sending a deposit of ten shillings to SACU. Fees must be paid by the following dates :

Harrington House, Bourton-on-the-Water, April 8th; Grosvenor House, Scarborough, April 8; Glynllifon Agricultural Institute, August 19; Wilton House, Salisbury, August 26.

Please send in names of friends likely to be interested

All communications to :

The Secretary,
Week-end Schools Committee,
SACU, 24 Warren Street, London W.1.

Book Concession for Members

DURING National Book Week, 23 February—5 March, 'The Timely Rain' by Stuart and Roma Gelder (usually 50s) will be available at a specially reduced rate, 21s, from SACU Headquarters, 24 Warren Street, London W.1.

Course for Speakers

A COURSE to train speakers on China will start in March, 1966 at SACU headquarters. The programme will include preparatory reading of selected books followed by six tutorial evenings at fortnightly intervals. The cost will be 15 shillings (students 10 shillings). Numbers will be limited. Further details from the Secretary, Week-end School Committee, 24 Warren Street, London W.1.

ABOUT SACU

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

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Deputy-Chairman:
Professor Joan Robinson

Vice-Chairman: Mrs Mary Adams

Chairman of General Purposes Committee: Mr Ernest Roberts

Secretary: Mr Derek Bryan

* * *

Council of Management: Mrs Mary Adams, Mr Peter de Francia, Mr Alec Horsley, Dr N Kurti, Dr E R Lapwood, Mr Jim Mortimer, Dr Joseph Needham, the Rt Hon P J Noel-Baker, MP, Professor E G Pulleybank, Miss Vanessa Redgrave, Mr Ernest Roberts, Professor Joan Robertson, Sir Gordon Sutherland, Mr Peter Swann, Professor George Thomson, Mr Jeremy Thorpe, MP, Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper, Dame Joan Vickers, MP, Professor K W Wedderburn.

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Believing that understanding between Britain and China is of the highest importance, SACU aims to make information about China widely available in order to help every interested person in Britain to make his or her own assessment.

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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 head office, call upon the Society for information and participate in all activities of the Society.

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

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