

CHINA'S HEALTH SERVICE

By Dr DAVID ADLER

BEFORE 1949 THERE was no organised health service in China, hospitals were few and far between, doctors were extremely scarce and only the well-to-do could afford medical treatment. In the face of illness the vast majority of the population were virtually left to their own resources either to recover spontaneously or to face chronic ill health or early death. For example, although tuberculosis was widespread there were only twelve tuberculosis institutions, six hundred odd beds, and less than a hundred doctors engaged in this work for a population of 550 million.

I had the opportunity of visiting China in the summer of 1965, and during my five weeks stay I travelled widely taking in Peking and Shanghai, and Harbin, Shenyang, Anshan and Fushun in the North East. In the time allotted I was able to make a reasonable study of the medical services.

Available To All

There is now in China a modern Health Service. Medical treatment is available to all. This includes modern public health and hygiene, scientific diagnosis and therapy as well as up-to-date surgery and laboratory investigation. Medicines, including antibiotics and corticosteroids, are manufactured in China and appeared to be in ample supply. China also produces a wide range of medical equipment such as surgical instruments, X-ray machines and heart-lung machines. Medical schools are scattered throughout the country and ten thousand fully trained doctors (in the Western sense) graduate annually; this figure excludes the large number of feldshers and Chinese traditional doctors qualifying annually. Even so, there is still a shortage of doctors.

The Chinese Medical Services lay particular stress on prevention. Very early on accumulated garbage and filthy pools were cleared, and open ditches were filled in. There was a mass campaign against rats, flies and mosquitoes, all notorious carriers of

disease. By such and other measures cholera, syphilis and kala-azar which were serious scourges before 1949 were eliminated in a relatively short period of time. Plague and smallpox which were endemic have also been eliminated. Special attention is being paid to schistosomiasis which still remains a difficult problem.

24-Hour Clinics

The Health Service is free for all students and workers, but other members of the family pay a small nominal fee. Sick benefit is a hundred per cent of wages and consequently patients in hospital are expected to pay for food. Inoculations are free.

Patients, in the first instance, attend the street clinic or the out-patient department of a hospital. Street clinics or district clinics correspond to the general practitioner services of this country. These clinics are open twenty-four hours' a day, the doctors and other staff working in three shifts of eight hours'. Patients can attend at any time, and when necessary they are visited at home. The staff are also responsible for the health education of the local population. The doctor patient relationship was found to be friendly and informal, and this relationship was noticeable in all branches of the Health Service.

I had the opportunity of visiting several hospitals, all of which had been developed since 1949. The buildings were modern and spacious. The equipment was equally modern with full facilities for laboratory and other investigations. Surgery, including chest and heart surgery, was advanced. Generally, the standards were high.

Dramatic Operations

The specialised traumatic units were particularly impressive. The re-attachment of severed limbs or part of a limb made a dramatic impact. I saw patients with hands completely severed at the wrist which had been successfully re-

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HAVE YOU RENEWED your subscription? Members who joined in May, June and July 1965 should have received renewal notices. If you have not already done so, please renew now, if possible by covenanting your subscription to the Anglo-Chinese Educational Institute (see article in this issue of SACU).

Merseyside Inaugural 110 Attend

ONE HUNDRED AND TEN people attended the inaugural meeting of the Merseyside and North Wales branch at the Royal Institution, Liverpool, on Saturday, 25 June. It was presided over by Councillor Mrs Ethel M Wormald, Chairman of Liverpool Education Committee and a member of SACU's Council of Management. Speakers included the general secretary, Mr Derek Bryan, Liao Hung-Ying and Mr Roland Berger. Felix Greene's film 'China!' shown at the end of the meeting, received warm applause.

The chairman gave a special welcome to the several Chinese members of the audience and said that a branch of SACU in the area, with its large Chinese community, was particularly desirable in view of the close trade links that had existed between China and Merseyside for longer than a century.

The acting branch secretary, Mr Fred Brunson, outlined some of the activities that would be considered by the branch committee, including film shows, public lectures and exhibitions. Another possibility was the adoption of Shanghai as a 'sister' city to Liverpool. He expressed the hope that Merseyside members would take advantage of the ease of accessibility to support the weekend school at Glynllifon Agricultural College, Caernarvon, in September.

A motion to formally establish the Merseyside and North Wales branch of SACU was moved by Councillor Mrs Wormald and seconded by Dr Cyril Taylor. The motion, which also instructed a 'steering committee' to prepare a programme for submission to the membership, was carried without dissent on a show of hands.

The branch sponsors are as follows:
Walter H Alldritt, JP; Member of Parliament.

Elizabeth M Braddock, JP; Member of Parliament.

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THE PRESS REVIEWED

THE 'SUNDAY TIMES' of 12 June carried an article by Lord Caccia, 'former head of the Diplomatic Service and an "old China hand"'. He said that China's leaders had, over the years, made repeated statements to show that they did not flinch from war as an instrument of policy.

China's action in Korea in 1950, in Tibet in 1959 and India in 1962 showed that military intervention could not be ruled out, said Lord Caccia, but in fairness it should also be said that the Chinese claim that their motive in Korea and on the Indian border was to forestall threats to their own territorial integrity and that the occupation of Tibet was part of a process of sealing off her national boundaries.

Lord Caccia said, 'We have made quite clear by word and deed what we think of this claim.' This reference to China's action in Tibet brought a

challenging letter to *The Sunday Times* from Mr F. N. Beaufort-Palmer, Chairman of the Tibet Society.

Mr Beaufort-Palmer wrote of 'the rape of Tibet by China' and accused China either of shocking aggression or of acting like Hitler. This letter provoked a reader of *The Sunday Times*, Mr Robert Rhodes, to reply in the issue of 26 June.

Mr Rhodes described Mr Beaufort-Palmer's letter as misleading. He recalled that Tibet was subjugated by the Chinese in 1720, that although Tibet declared herself independent in 1912 while there were still disturbances in China after the 1911 revolution she was never recognised as independent *de jure* and that when a Tibetan trade delegation wanted to go to the United States in 1946 the State Department required the delegation members to get their visas stamped by the

Chinese Nationalist Government.

Mr Rhodes, as a matter of history, reminded Mr Beaufort-Palmer that in 1954 Mr Nehru recognised Tibet as part of China; and went on to state that when the Chinese liberated Tibet in 1951 they abolished serfdom and prohibited mutilation. He quoted Felix Greene as writing 'The only hospitals in Tibet are those that have been built by the People's Republic,' and added that the Chinese had built the only secular schools.

The Daily Telegraph of 14 June ran an article by Stephen Constant who said that for some months the Chinese regime had been promoting a campaign 'glorifying the alleged genius' of Mr Mao Tse-tung, whom he called China's '72-year-old ailing leader'.

After saying that Mr Mao Tse-tung had been a sick man for years and was also a depressed man, Mr Constant wrote that last year Mr Mao told an American journalist of his great fears about what might happen in China after his death; that there was no guarantee that the new generation of Chinese would carry on his revolution; and that he even spoke of his fear that 'capitalism' might be restored in China.

The Sunday Times of 12 June noted that the Peking newspaper, the *Liberation Army Daily*, had been given a face-lift; and Richard Hughes, *The Sunday Times*' correspondent in Hongkong, said that the *Liberation Army Daily* now not only echoed the party line but laid it on thick with three-decker headlines, but the cartoons still showed the familiar, happy soldiers helping the familiar, happy peasants to collect the familiar manure.

Mr Hughes reported that the editorial staffs of the *Liberation Army Daily*'s three main competitors had been banned—or at least they had officially 'resigned' and were being sent to corrective labour camps where he conjectured that they would, doubtless, be discovering the joys of collecting manure.

The Observer of 19 June carried an article by Dennis Bloodworth from Singapore headlined 'China shapes up for a "new leap forward"'. Mr Bloodworth spoke of a 'witch-hunt' in China for 'revisionist freaks and ogres' and said it looked like the prelude to tomorrow's new leap forward, the trend of which seemed again towards the completely collectivised State that Mao Tse-tung tried—ill-advisedly, in Mr Bloodworth's view—to create eight years ago.

China's Health Service

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attached. One of these had been operated on twelve months' previously and at the time of my visit he enjoyed full movement of the re-attached hand. There were also special units for the treatment of severe burns.

Some of the hospitals were associated with factories. All large factories had their own hospitals. For example, the mining town of Fushun in the North East had a hospital of seven hundred beds which catered for 70,000 miners and their families, a total population of approximately 320,000. Apart from hospital duties the doctors undertook the usual general practitioner services, and also spent a part of their time in the mines where they rendered first aid and advised on hygiene and safety measures. Major surgery, including chest surgery, was carried out in this hospital. Stress was placed on prevention. In 1949 there were 20,000 cases of hookworm disease amongst the miners. By simple methods this disease has been completely eradicated.

In the field of tuberculosis there is a well developed service extending throughout the country. Immunisation with BCG is widely practised and ninety-three per cent of the newborns in Peking were vaccinated in 1963. The use of mass miniature radiography is increasing, and I was given to understand that the majority of workers are examined by this means annually. Treatment is on routine lines using the

three standard drugs and the second line drugs when necessary. Surgery for both pulmonary and orthopaedic tuberculosis is practised when indicated.

Chinese traditional medicine is popular. There are special traditional medical colleges and the training course is six years. Modern diagnosis aids are practised and full use is made of radiology, blood chemistry and bacteriology, etc. In the main, treatment consists of acupuncture or medication with varying mixtures of Chinese herbs. In a traditional hospital I was shown cases of menstrual disorders, thrombo-aneitis obliterans and nephrosis. The results appeared good. Chinese traditional medicine requires long study and I am in no position to express an opinion as to its merits or demerits.

Whilst I was in China the general medical policy was to improve and expand the hospital and medical services in the People's Communes and to increase the number of specialised teams of doctors visiting the countryside. The commune hospitals I saw, although largely improvisations, already represented a tremendous step forward in the provision of rural health facilities, and while much clearly remains to be done, the foundations have been laid.

To have established a modern health service in the short period of sixteen years' is, to my mind, a remarkable and unprecedented achievement.

AIMS AND FUNCTIONS OF SACU TRUST

COVENANTED SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Anglo-Chinese Educational Institute are now coming into the trust as more and more members realise the benefits of renewing membership to SACU in this way. By paying a sum of not less than £2 annually by covenant, members can help the Trust, the Society and themselves since by doing so the value of the money paid is increased by 70% through a system of income tax rebate.

The purpose of the Institute is to encourage and promote the study and dissemination of knowledge about all aspects of China and the life of the Chinese people, a purpose closely bound up with the work of SACU itself.

Thus it will be possible for the Institute to make direct grants to SACU itself for the purely educational work which the Society undertakes. For instance, if SACU wished to publish a pamphlet describing, say, the position of China in international affairs, the Institute could finance it. If however the pamphlet was one which advocated changes in China's position in international affairs—admission to the United Nations, for example—then this would not be considered purely educational and would be more suitable for publication directly by SACU than by the Trust. So there are certain limitations on what the Trust can do.

But the field of spreading information about China is so vast and the need so great that the Institute will have plenty of scope without treading on ground where it will come into conflict with the Income Tax Authorities whose duty it is to see that money

on which they are giving a rebate is spent on the purposes for which the Institute was set up; matters relating to education.

It is possible that the Institute could give grants to SACU for the running of weekend schools since they are educational ventures. The Institute itself could make a factual film about China or finance someone else to do it. While it is likely that the main use of the Institute's funds will be through SACU it is possible, within its terms to make grants to any body which is carrying on educational work about China. It is even possible for the Institute to help finance an educational trip to China.

The founding of the Institute opens up a whole number of possibilities for educational work about China and members are urged to covenant their subscriptions in this way. The minimum amount for a covenant is £2 a year, which must be for seven years although there is an 'escape' clause for those who find themselves unable to continue with the covenant in which case the tax claimed has to be re-paid to the authorities. This is the minimum because much work is involved in reclaiming tax and less than £2 would not benefit the Institute appreciably. But it is a minimum and many members are finding it possible to covenant for larger sums.

Members who may have mislaid the form which was circulated in the last issue of SACU NEWS and who wish to covenant should write at once to central office so that another one can be sent to them.

Camden Festival Shows Profit

WHEN THE ACCOUNTS of the Camden Festival of China were presented to a reunion of Camden branch members on 9 July, the treasurer was able to report a profit of £63 on a total income of £1,373.

Reporting on general aspects of the Festival, Colin Penn said a great deal of experience had been gained in organising it which would stand the branch in good stead when the time came to organise another Festival. Mistakes and successes had been noted by the organising committee. Taking everything into account the Festival was a grand success and was probably the first of its kind to be held anywhere in Europe.

Locals Show 'China!'

'CHINA!'—the colour feature-length film made by Felix Greene—has been shown in several local cinemas since its British premiere at the Academy Cinema last September.

The distributors, Contemporary Films Ltd, reported that the film has been shown for two weeks at cinemas in Kensington, Hendon and Bradford, and for one week at Kilburn, Swiss Cottage, Temple Fortune, Cambridge, Belfast, Glasgow, King's Cross and Richmond.

Apart from these commercial showings, there have been numerous bookings of the 16 mm version of the film by various organisations.

Office News

OFFICE CLOSED

THE CENTRAL OFFICE at 24 Warren Street will be closed for staff holidays from Saturday, 13 August to Bank Holiday Monday, 29 August inclusive, and will re-open on Tuesday, 30 August.

BOOK-KEEPER WANTED

WE ARE LOOKING for a part-time book-keeper. Members' suggestions for filling this post will be gratefully received.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

THE COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT will be very pleased to hear from any member who has suggestions for the future activities of the Society. Ideas for subjects to be dealt with at weekend schools would also be welcome.

MERSEYSIDE INAUGURAL

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Dr M C R Butler; Lecturer in Pure Mathematics, University of Liverpool.

Alderman Louis Caplan, JP.

Alderman Sir Joseph J. Cleary, JP.

Andrew Douglas-Hamilton; Editor, 'Liverpool Weekly News'.

James A Dunn; Member of Parliament.

A D Lee; Borough Education Officer, Crosby.

Alderman Harry Livermore; Chairman, Royal Philharmonic Society.

Dr Ronald Pearson; Department of Zoology, University of Liverpool.

Alex J D Porteous; former Professor of Education, University of Liverpool.

The Earl Russell, OM, FRS.

D B Quinn; Professor of Modern History, University of Liverpool.

Professor Andrew B Semple, CBE; Medical Officer of Health, Liverpool.

Lord Simey of Toxteth; Professor of Social Science, University of Liverpool.

J Claude Speirs; Clerk of Wirral and North Wales Monthly Meeting, Society of Friends.

R W Steel; Professor of Geography, University of Liverpool.

Dr Cyril Taylor, MB, ChB.

Clough Williams-Ellis, FRIBA.

Councillor Mrs Ethel M Wormald, BA, JP; Chairman, Liverpool Education Committee.

Current Activities

SINCE OUR LAST issue a number of SACU meetings have been held in different parts of the country.

David Crook, long resident in Peking, who is at present on vacation in England with his wife, has given several talks, notably to a school audience in Manchester and to an informal gathering in Cambridge. By the time you receive this issue of SACU NEWS the Crooks will also have spoken on 'Young People in China Today' at Holborn Central Library on 27 July.

A very successful meeting was held by the London Co-operative Society at Holborn Central Library on 14 July. Colin Penn spoke on life in China today and Felix Greene's film 'China!' received an enthusiastic reception from an audience of over 70.

Meanwhile, progress amongst the branches continues. Roland Berger was the speaker at a preliminary meeting of the proposed Bristol branch where a preparatory committee of 12 members is going ahead with organisational preparations. Cambridge hopes to have a branch formed by the autumn and the active Oxford branch of SACU are

preparing for their Weekend School, to be held on 2-4 September at Wadham College.

Our speakers panel, to which we have added several names in recent weeks, is supplying many different organisations. School meetings on China have been held in Reading, High Wycombe and Truro as well as in the London area. We are now being approached by organisations who are arranging their autumn and winter programmes. Will any SACU members who have connections with organisations who might like to hold a meeting on China please contact the Central Office, so that we can supply a speaker?

Curing Needles

ANCIENT FORM of Chinese treatment, acupuncture, has been used by doctors at Guy's Hospital to cure a 64-year-old woman patient apparently suffering from rheumatoid arthritis.

The treatment—which involves sticking gold, silver and stainless needles into the body—was known as far back as 1400 BC.

WEEKEND SCHOOLS

OXFORD — Wadham College

Friday, 2 to Sunday, 4 September, 1966

EUROPE AND CHINA; the historical background

Raymond Dawson, 'European attitudes to China before twentieth century'

Keith Scott, 'Russia and China'

Evan Luard, MP, 'Britain and China'

Professor C. P. Fitzgerald, 'China and Europe'

Cost: SACU members £4 15s 0d; Student members of SACU £4 10s 0d;

Non-members £5 0s 0d. Send deposit of 10s to Secretary, Oxford Branch of SACU, c/o Oriental Institute, Pusey Lane, Oxford.

CAERNARVON — Glynllifon Agricultural Institute

Friday, 9 to Sunday, 11 September, 1966

'China Before 1949': Sybille van der Sprenkel, lecturer, University of Leeds, who lived in China, 1947-48.

'Chinese Agriculture and the Communes'; Speaker to be announced.

'China's Place in the World': David Steeds, BA. Lecturer in Far Eastern Studies, University College of Wales.

'China since 1949': Roland Berger. Trade Consultant. Frequent visitor to China.

Cost: SACU members £4 5s 0d; Student members of SACU £3 15s 0d; Non-members £4 10s 0d. Send deposit of 10s to 24 Warren Street, London, W1.

DINTON, near Salisbury, Wiltshire — Philipps House

Friday, 16 to Sunday, 18 September, 1966

'China, 1840 to 1911': Bernard Martin, WEA lecturer. Author of 'Strange Vigour'.

'China, 1911 to 1949' Derek Bryan, author of 'The Land and People of China'. Was in China from 1933 to 1951.

'China since 1949': Roland Berger.

'China, 1966': David and Isabel Crook, authors of 'Revolution in a Chinese Village', (1959) and 'The First Years of Yangyi Commune' (1965).

Cost: SACU members £4 15s 0d; Student members of SACU £4 0s 0d; Non-members £5 0s 0d. Send 10s deposit to 24 Warren Street, London, W1.

ABOUT SACU

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

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* * *

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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 for old age pensioners (5s), and full-time students (7s 6d).

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