

A PRIVATE EYE ON THE PRESS

by Jane Gates

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH of August 2 ran an article by Julian Amery suggesting three possible solutions for the feeding of 600 million Chinese by the Peking Government — China could expand northwards into Siberia, and grow wheat; she could spread southwards into South-East Asia, the rice-bowl of the world; or she could modify her foreign policy and industrialisation programme and seek aid from the free world, as India does today.

There is, of course, a fourth solution — that China go on doing exactly as she has been doing over the past years in ridding the country of flood and famine and drought and pestilence. There has been overwhelming evidence for many years from nutritionists and medical men of every nationality that the Chinese people all have enough to eat for the first time in centuries. Commonwealth farmers are delighted to sell wheat to China which pays in cash and on the dot, and none of that money is so-called aid from the free world. China got no free aid from anyone, but in 1965 was able to clear all foreign debts, including the last of the £558 million commercial credits received from the Soviet Union during the first ten years of the Chinese People's Republic. To suggest that China might swap a system which works so well for the burden of famine and foreign debt which is India's is surely politics and economics in wonderland.

Mr Amery also states in this article that the importance of Chiang Kai-shek is that he represents an alternative Chinese Government. It is well known to all students of the Asian scene, however much they may dislike Communism, that the idea of Chiang's return in triumph to the mainland is just a tired joke. Kuomintang rule was defeated in China only 17 years ago, and there are too many millions who remember it with loathing for Chiang to rally as much as a village to his support.

Considering that British exports to China are rising considerably each year, Mr Amery's gratitude to the United States seems overdone when he writes: 'By containing China, the Americans are making South-East Asia safe for Britain to trade with.' How very Victorian.

The *Guardian* of August 26 had an article by Victor Zorza on youth taking over China's revolutionary torch, and on the subject of dreams which never came true, he writes: 'The aged Chairman Mao and some of his comrades, their lives spent in the service of the revolution, find in the evening of their day that all their great ideals, their brave dreams, their tender thoughts for the poor and the oppressed whom they had set out to succour, are as far from reality as ever.' It looks as if the *Guardian* might also be as far from reality as ever.

Nowhere in the world have the poor and oppressed been so succoured after enduring what was little more than a living death. 'Tender thoughts' for them have ensured food instead of famine, irrigation and water power instead of flood and drought, a just and uncorrupt government instead of venal overlords, a life of the mind, and a boundless faith in the future. As for the great ideals and brave dreams, surely they started to come to fruition in 1949 when Mao said that at last the Chinese people had 'stood up'? He also said that the seizure of political power was only the 'first step in a ten-thousand mile march', and what they are doing now in China is following that same road to its logical conclusion.

The *Guardian* of September 17 says that 'Soviet reports on the Chinese cultural revolution are now giving increasing emphasis to outbreaks of violence and clashes between Red

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CHANGING IDEAS IN CHINA

by Islay Doncaster

I WAS IN CHINA from August 7 to August 26 on a tour organised by the China Travel Service for a group of twelve tourists, each travelling independently. During the trip I was able to see and hear something of the cultural revolution in action. Like Frida Knight (*SACU News* for October), our tourist group, consisting of people from Australia, New Zealand, France, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom, found the Chinese very friendly and helpful, and not in the least hostile to foreigners from capitalist countries. Our interpreters were ready to answer all our questions and to engage in political discussion, with good humour.

While we were in China we understood the cultural revolution to be simply a new stage, marked by the decision of the Central Party Committee on 8 August, in the long-standing campaign to root out the remains

of bourgeois ideology. In this sixteen-point decision schools, factories, mines, urban and rural districts were encouraged to form cultural revolutionary groups which would be a link between the party and the masses in their struggle to change the mental outlook of the whole of Chinese society. The masses were urged to educate themselves through these groups, and told to make full use of big-character posters and not to be afraid of disorder. Their supreme guide must be 'the great red banner of Mao Tse-tung's thought.'

The street processions which we saw were the most obvious mark of the cultural revolution stimulated by this communique. In the early part of August they seemed to be merely celebratory, but gradually their character changed. In Peking (8-13 August) the

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COMING EVENTS

Weekend Schools

AN INTRODUCTORY Weekend School will be held at the White House, (University of Sussex), Isle of Thorns, Haywards Heath, from Friday evening 6 January 1967 to Sunday evening 8 January. The programme will include a session on China before 1949 and three sessions on developments in China since 1949. Accommodation is in single rooms in an attractive modern building. Cost (covering breakfast, lunch and dinner and including 10/- service charge for staff gratuities) will be:

SACU members	£5 15s 0d
Student members	£5 0s 0d
Non-members	£6 5s 0d

Places can be booked by sending 10/- to SACU, 24 Warren Street, London, W1, by Monday December 12 1966.

Other 1967 bookings for weekend schools include:—

31 March-2 April — Nottingham University

16-18 June — Moor Park College, Surrey

14-16 July — Bodington Hall, Leeds

25 August-3 September — Glynllifon College, Caernarvon

6-8 October — Phillips House, Dinton, Salisbury

Meeting

GORGEOUS is a much misused word, but it will doubtless be the correct one to describe colour slides to be shown at a public meeting being staged by the SACU Camden Branch.

For the slides will be of famous Chinese gardens and illustrating a talk on that subject by Colin Penn at the Swiss Cottage Library at 8 pm on 23 November.

It is hoped that the event will attract a large audience — among which it is expected will be many members of the Hampstead Horticultural Society and other local groups with a specialist interest in the subject.

The chairman of the meeting will be announced at a later date.

Discussion Group

THE LONDON Discussion Group is now meeting regularly at SACU's Warren Street premises, and has held good discussions introduced by Colin Penn (on the Cultural Revolution) and Stanley Hutchins (on his recent visit). On 15 November Frida Knight will talk about current developments in the light of her recent visit to China.

Council of Management

THE COUNCIL of Management met on 5 October at Warren Street and dealt with a heavy agenda, including the Society's current programme, organisational matters, and finance. The next meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 17 November, at the House of Commons.

RADIO PEKING

A member living near London reports that good reception of Radio Peking can usually be enjoyed every evening from 2030 to 2125 and from 2130 to 2225 GMT in the 42 and 49 meter bands (on the frequencies of approximately 7.05 and 6.60 MHz respectively) and on most mornings from 0830 to 0925 and 0930 to 1025 GMT in the 19 meter band (frequency approximately 15.03 MHz).

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

IN THE SEPTEMBER issue of SACU News, members were asked to submit any suggestions for amendments they wished to make to the Constitution by 3 October, with a view to the holding of a Special General Meeting in November.

No proposals having been received from members, the Council of Management decided on 5 October not to call an Extraordinary General Meeting this year. Of course members remain free to make proposals for amendments at the next regular General Meeting of the Society.

Speakers' Service

SACU Speakers' Service is supplying speakers regularly to a wide variety of organisations. If any member knows of well-informed speakers on China, particularly outside London, we should be glad to hear about them.

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Guards and workers'. That figures. Russia doesn't like anything about the cultural revolution, and a pious horror at demonstrations seems to be the strongest answer *Pravda* and *Izvestia* can give. One recalls a day when these Soviet newspapers were only quoted in derision, and it is odd that they have so suddenly become respectable by attacking China. The whole of this report in the *Guardian* quotes from *Pravda*, datelined Moscow September 16, but how many readers stop to think about such origins or about the inevitable bias?

The *Scotsman* of June 4 carried an article by Cyril Dunn called 'Indians pressing for nuclear balance', suggesting that Indian promoters of a bomb-of-their-own are not impressed by Western experts who say that direct attack on India would at once bring down on China a crushing side-swipe from the United States. He goes on to say: 'During last September's Indo-Pakistan conflict, the Chinese Army did not pour down the Himalaya staircase into virtually undefended East Pakistan solely out of a rational fear of that Western side-swipe.'

It would be of great assistance to Western policy makers and newspaper readers if reports from their men-on-the-spot dealt with facts rather than conjecture, and if they listened to what the Chinese said rather than what outsiders thought they probably meant. The Chinese are 'border-conscious',

just like any other nation, but they have never even suggested taking over territory which legally belongs to another nation. Only in the cloud-cuckoo-land of speculative journalism and Asian 'specialists' could the probability of Chinese invasion of India be considered. The Chinese do not run their foreign policy 'solely out of a rational fear' of Western nuclear side-swipes. They run it on a basis of justice for themselves and their neighbours, have always done as they have said, and with their rigidly honest dealings in foreign affairs, will continue to do so.

The *Observer* of October 2, in an article from Dennis Bloodworth datelined Singapore October 1, states that 'the first Great Leap Forward instituted in 1958 and intended to revolutionise China's economy, failed miserably'. This is a fashionable view outside China, and has nothing whatever to do with the facts. Natural calamities there certainly were, from 1959-61, with drought and flood losses covering about a third of the whole cultivated area of China, but recovery from this setback was rapid, and un-noticed by the popular press of the West. The fact remains that in one year of that Great Leap Forward, more was done about water conservation in the whole of China than had been done in the previous three thousand years. In any language, that is hardly a 'miserable failure'.

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

Bristol, Barnet, Camden, Leeds,
Manchester, Oxford, Cambridge,
Merseyside, Birmingham.

BRISTOL branch recently heard David Crook speak on China Today at a well attended meeting held at the Folk House. He has also spoken at meetings organised by the Barnet, Camden, Leeds, and Manchester branches.

In Manchester, Mrs Nancy Lapwood is speaking on "China — Yesterday and Today" at 2.30 pm on Sunday 13 November. For particulars of place of meeting, please enquire of the branch Hon Secretary, Mr B. S. Pointon, 12

Baguley Crescent, Rhodes, Nr Middleton, Lancs. On the same day Felix Greene's film 'China!' begins a week's run at the Classic Cinema, Oxford Road, Manchester. This film is also being shown in Oxford at the Scala Cinema for three days from Thursday 1 December. The formal Inaugural Meeting of the Cambridge branch on 15 October was attended by seventy people, including many students. The meeting was chaired by Dr E. Leach, Provost of King's College, and ad-

dressed by Mrs Islay Doncaster and Mr Stuart Gelder.

Members of the Merseyside branch have an active programme of regular meetings under way, with emphasis on a drive for new members. Any member who knows of non-members in the Birmingham area likely to be interested in SACU activities is asked to inform the central office.

Branch representatives are meeting at central office on 4 November to exchange experience and ideas.

CHANGING IDEAS IN CHINA (continued from page 1)

streets were full of marching groups of students, workers, and militia; they beat gongs and drums, clashed cymbals, and carried portraits of Chairman Mao or big-character posters. In Tsinan (14-15 August) the streets were even more crowded with processions but the marchers were less grim-faced; some, both men and women, were armed with real or wooden rifles, but they waved and clapped when they saw our bus-load of tourists. In Shanghai (19 August), the day after Chairman Mao had addressed a mass rally in Peking, the processions were on a far larger, more organised scale; each group carried slogans, and, encouraged by a cheer leader, shouted, sang, and danced, as well as thundered on their percussion instruments. It rained all the evening and night, but the marchers never wavered, though their banners and pictures were ruined and they were soaked. All night long the deafening noise continued and the streets were blocked with waiting marchers. We were told that 800,000 had passed through People's Square that night. This is, apparently, not unusual.

Militant Mood

In Hangchow on 23 August we saw processions in a more militant mood. When we went to see a Buddhist Temple we found a group of students plastering slogans all over the statues. On the face of Buddha was written, 'We do not only crush the old, but we also create the new.' From behind the closed doors of one of the temple buildings we heard a crash, and, when the students emerged, saw some broken statuary. A monk was standing by, smiling amid the desecration of his temple. When I asked him what he thought, he answered, 'Hen hao' meaning 'very good,' which was perhaps all he could say in the circumstances.

The Red Guards might be described as the fireworks of a long-standing

campaign to keep the revolution in being. The same idea is being put across in the arts. We saw how revolutionary themes are spreading at the expense of old-fashioned themes which do not assist the development of socialism. Peasants, factory workers, soldiers, revolutionary heroes and Chairman Mao are chosen as subjects for carving in ivory or jade, and for weaving or embroidery in silk, rather than the traditional exotic birds and flowers which seem to be produced only for export. The opera and the films that we were shown were all concerned with the war of liberation; a puppet show dealt with problems of old and new style marriage, songs and dances performed by children at a district children's palace in Shanghai had such titles as, 'We are the successors of Communism.' A pottery factory near Canton was proud to be turning out only pottery suitable for workers; for example, rather sentimental animals, useful domestic vessels, and figures of revolutionary heroes such as the soldier who lost his own life while saving six children.

Political Slant

Such a change of emphasis will obviously prevent the arts being appreciated only by an educated élite. Moreover, the art selected for exhibition has a political slant and is sometimes designed to rouse anti-capitalist feeling. In Peking we were shown life-size clay figures of peasants and workers being exploited by capitalists as they were in the past. This exhibition was crowded with groups of Chinese being harangued by fervent guides. In contrast, the museums of the fine arts of the past were almost empty. The art of the past is merely preserved, but the art of the present is used as a medium of propaganda.

Undoubtedly an even more potent medium for keeping the revolutionary

spirit alive is the written word, particularly the written words of Chairman Mao. We heard an old people's choir sing, 'The works of Chairman Mao glitter with a golden light,' and a children's choir sing, 'We like to read Chairman Mao's works.' Everywhere we went we saw and heard quotations from his works.

Each ivory carver in a factory at Canton had an excerpt pinned to his bench and the marching processions carried little red books of quotations as well as big-character posters. In every commune and every factory that we visited the leader told us how the workers had been inspired by Chairman Mao. Before Liberation in 1949 there was poverty and low production. After liberation, as a result of systematic study of the works of Chairman Mao which encouraged them to rely on themselves, the workers were able to solve problems of irrigation or of technology thereby increasing their production and improving living conditions.

One of the works quoted several times as being particularly helpful in times of trial, was the story of the 'Foolish old Man' (1945). This old man, in spite of a scoffing 'wise' man, continued to have faith that he could, through perseverance, eventually remove two mountains outside his door; he was rewarded by having them removed supernaturally. This is a kind of parable used by Chairman Mao to give the people confidence in their own abilities, and to show that through self-reliance a way can be found to remove the two mountains of capitalism and imperialism.

Leaders of communes and factories are rightly proud of their achievements in raising production and living standards, and are at the same time well aware that much remains to be done to improve conditions still further. The manifestations of August and September 1966 seem to show that Chinese Communist leaders believe that this can only be done by keeping the revolutionary tradition alive.

HARD WORK AVAILABLE

HELP of all kinds is needed to make SACU grow.

Particularly needed is the voluntary assistance of persons who have special skills and knowledge.

The Society's activities cover a very wide range — from publishing and preparing a variety of printed matter to staffing an ever-growing library at its Warren Street central office.

Each of these activities involves lots of hard work — work for which a voluntary society such as SACU can never hope to be able to pay. Hence the need for enthusiasts who are willing to donate some of their time, experience, energy and knowledge to help the organisation.

Specialist help of all kinds is sorely needed: artists — to draw and prepare posters; typographers — to layout publications; publicity experts — to assist in mounting local campaigns; and so on.

Also needed, at various times, are persons — with or without experience — who can give a few hours of their time regularly to help maintain the office routine at head office. There is nearly always work to be found for a pair of willing hands.

SACU's Secretary, Mr Derek Bryan,

Seventeenth Anniversary

THE MEETING held by SACU in St Pancras Assembly Rooms — bedecked for the occasion with lanterns — on the evening of 4 October to mark the 17th Anniversary of the Chinese People's Republic was attended by 200 SACU members and friends. Joseph Needham and David Crook spoke briefly about the significance of current events in China. Chinese folk songs were sung by Martin Lawrence, and English, Scots and Irish songs by Ewan MacColl, Peggy Seeger, Frankie Armstrong, Brian Byrne, Sandra Kerr, John Faulkner and Dennis Turner, to all of whom we are very grateful.

The small attendance offers a striking contrast with a meeting held in Paris on the same occasion, attended by over 2,700 people. They were entertained with songs and dances by a visiting Chinese student delegation and saw a film of Chairman Mao with the Red Guards in Peking. The Paris meeting was sponsored by the France-China Friendship Society.

said: 'The Society is making an appeal to all those who feel they can make a concrete contribution to its work to come forward. Members who are willing to help are asked to either write or phone to us at Warren Street and specify in what field they are most likely to be able to assist. An index of these volunteers will be kept — to be called upon when the need for their specific abilities is needed. Additionally, we would always be pleased to hear from anyone — who although not necessarily an expert in a particular field — is prepared to come in and give a helping hand in whatever way he or she can.'

'It would be very helpful if those contacting us by letter were also able to mention how much time they could spare when needed,' Mr Bryan added.

Help is needed not only in the London area, but throughout the country for as SACU expands and new branches are being formed in more centres, there is a greater need for expert advice and help in local areas.

For that matter, SACU News is also in need of regular correspondents in local branches. Members who would like to contribute branch news are asked to write to The Editor, SACU News, c/o 24, Warren Street, London, W1.

The article by Jane Gates appearing on pages 1 and 2 is a highly personal and vehement reaction to British press reports on China. SACU NEWS would be pleased to receive other such contributions from its readers, with a view to publication.

Situation Vacant
SACU urgently needs a part-time book-keeper. Hours by arrangement. Please write to the Secretary, 24, Warren Street, London, W1

CORRECTION

WE WERE WRONG — in printing an out-of-date list of the members of SACU's Council of Management on page four of the last issue. For this we apologise.

Fortunately, however, in the same issue the correct list of Council members was also printed — with their biographical notes — in the article on page three.

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 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).

SACU NEWS is published by the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding Ltd, 24 Warren Street, London, W1. (EUSTon 0074-5), and printed by Goodwin Press Ltd (TU), 135 Fonthill Road, London, N4.