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AFTER THE CONGRESS:

report from Peking

THE SUCCESSFUL conclusion of the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party had been a body-blow to the 'China-watchers', the Moscow commentators, and all those who said the Cultural Revolution was destroying the Party, Roland Berger told an audience of 140 people at Holborn Central Library on June 17. Joan Robinson, Professor of Economics at Cambridge University, was in the Chair.

The speaker, who had only just returned from China, said that those who accused Mao Tse-tung of destroying the Party in order to establish

his own will overlooked the vital importance attached by Mao throughout his writings to the role of the Party. The first sentence in the Quotations describes the Chinese Communist Party as 'the force at the core leading our cause forward'. Critics such as these failed to distinguish between the Party apparatus and the Party as a political force. The idea of a political hierarchy and other concepts inherent in the Party as an organization appealed to people in Britain who had grown up against a background of elections, a constitution, and so on. But one also

had to see the Party as a vital political force.

Another tendency in the West was to regard all Communist Parties as monolithic structures, and all conflicts within them as power struggles between rival personalities. But Mao had shown us how, in reality, contradictions can and do arise within the Parties as elsewhere, reflecting class interests and relationships. Such conflicts do not cease with the seizure of power and the establishment of a socialist economic base. They continue to exist long after the initial revolutionary period.

Mr Berger traced the events which had led up to the Ninth Congress, emphasizing the dynamic development of Mao's thought and strategy, the long history of the conflict between his views and those of Liu Shao-chi, and the retrograde influence of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party on the decisions of the Chinese Eighth Congress held later the same year (1956).

In 1957, Mao wrote his famous pamphlet 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People', in which he put forward the view that these contradictions should be faced and dealt with. Such conflicts, he said, were non-antagonistic and were capable of being resolved. Ninety-five per cent of all contradictions, Mao said, fell into this category: contradictions between ourselves and the enemy—the remaining five per cent could only be resolved by class struggle. Mao also said that people's views could not be changed by force, but only by discussion, criticism and argument. This article was the blueprint for the Cultural Revolution.

The 'hard years' (1959-61) which

continued overleaf

Poem written by a student of Kaifeng Teachers' Training College on graduating in June 1964.

IN COLD STARVATION I was born
In that jungle a wretched living life might be lost any time
After Liberation it is the Party that sent me to school
For the whole twelve years it fostered and bred me up
Now the Party calls me to the most difficult place
To obey the assignment is my desire
The yoke is soft and smooth
Three generations from Grandpa to grandson have carried it on their shoulders
The burden is just like a relay baton
One generation after another it is not off our hands
With the burden Grandfather walked on
One end bloody tears, one end sorrow
The landlord hounded Grandpa to madness
At twenty-four Grandma became a widow
With it Dad walked his steps
He shouldered the heavy hatred and worry
Against the landlord he helped to assign land
On the collective way he went ahead
Now the load is handed over to me
I shoulder nothing but happiness and struggle
This poetic sentence was cut on the baton:
Obey the assignment! Follow the Party!
No matter whether it is the South Ocean or the North Earth
No matter that the ice is frozen three feet thick
The engineer of the soul of mankind
Glorious, great but tremendously difficult.

followed allowed ex-landlords and ex-bourgeois to come forward and use agricultural and other problems as an excuse to attack Mao's policies. They also enabled 'organization men' to gain a further hold on the Party and State apparatus.

In his Report to the Ninth Congress, Lin Piao said that Liu Shao-chi had an organizational line which served his political line. He had built up a duplicate administrative structure divorced from the masses which was destructive of the socialist economic base.

At the opening of the Cultural Revolution, Mao's famous wall-poster 'Bombard the Headquarters', was an attack on the bourgeois line of Liu Shao-chi. Unlike the previous rectification movements of 1942 and 1957, which had been directed mainly from above, the Cultural Revolution was essentially a people's grass-roots movement. In January 1967, workers in Shanghai and elsewhere took power in the factories, where a feeling of alienation still existed between the workers, on the one hand, and the management and Party committees on the other. Workers were not allowed to express initiative, and were victims of mistrust. In one printing-machinery factory which Mr Berger had just visited, to get a spare part from the store it had previously been necessary to obtain no less than fifteen signatures.

In 1967 revolutionary committees, consisting of workers, Party cadres, and members of the People's Liberation Army, were set up in factories, communes and schools, and also on the municipal and provincial levels. In August 1968, a new pronouncement stated that the working-class must exercise leadership in everything—especially in the universities and schools, where workers' propaganda teams joined with the revolutionary committees in ensuring that students retained their class roots and remained politically healthy.

Changes in a School

The speaker told of a school which he had visited in November 1968, where a workers' propaganda team was installed. He had visited the same school again last month, and had noticed many changes—the main one being that the school had come under the supervision of the factory from which the propaganda team had originated. This was an example of the way in which working class leadership was penetrating all parts of the superstructure where intellectuals were concentrated.

Mr Berger also spoke of the Kwang-chow Trade Fair he had attended where a workers' team had come to ensure that the orientation of the fair was correct and that the staff members were not led astray by their commercial contacts. Never before, he said, had the Dictatorship of the Proletariat been put into practice at grass-roots level in this way.

The theme of Lin Piao's Report, Mr. Berger said, was the consolidation of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat through the Cultural Revolution. Lin Piao had also spoken of the need for all sections of the community, including the PLA, to accept the leadership of the Communist Party. This gave the lie to those who claimed that the Party was handing over power to the Army.

Searching Scrutiny

The speaker said the Party had emerged from the Congress in a cleansed form. During the Cultural Revolution, every Party member had had to 'stand up and be counted'. It was the culmination of a long process of investigation, during which Party members had been subjected to a searching scrutiny and criticism by the workers, peasants and students with whom they worked. This applied both to old members and to those seeking membership.

The election of delegates to the Congress had been by consensus from the factory floor and other basic units; it also involved a rigorous examination as to their fitness. In one factory he had visited, the names of delegates had been referred from a lower to a higher level and back no less than five times before the list was finalized.

The new Party Constitution produced by the Congress was a simple and direct document, intended for mass circulation and discussion. In its draft form it had been thrashed out at grass-roots level—in some factories

the draft had been referred upward and downward as many as nine times. It discussed, among other subjects, the style of work of Party members—a question that had been debated throughout the Cultural Revolution. Members were to follow the slogan 'Serve the people', and were to keep to the style of personal modesty, freedom from arrogance and rashness, arduous struggle and plain living. They were not to seek privileges of any kind. There should be no large secretariats which could get out of touch with the people—secretariats should be efficient and compact, and there should be constant consultation between people and Party.

One of the Congress decisions was the naming of Lin Piao as successor to Mao; he was a leader known to the people, and the one most likely to carry on Mao's revolutionary line. Another fact which emerged was the concern felt by the Congress about events in the outside world. This was reflected in the Constitution, which placed an obligation on Party members to 'work for the interests of the vast majority of the people of China and the world'. This obligation was stressed in conversations which Roland Berger had in schools, factories and communes. In one school, he visited a class where 14 year old children were studying section 5 of Lin Piao's Report. They were discussing their obligation to the revolutionary movements in Vietnam, Burma and Thailand, and to the coloured people in the United States.

Internationalism

In this school, Mr Berger was told that the teaching of a second language was to be introduced. The purpose of this was not only to further the struggle against imperialism and Soviet revisionism, but to help fulfil the international obligations mentioned above. This showed that China was not inward-looking, as some people claimed.

On the subject of China's attitude towards war, Lin Piao had quoted Mao's saying: 'Either war will give rise to revolution, or revolution will prevent war.'

Mr Berger spoke of the great change the Cultural Revolution had brought about in China's people, nearly all of whom were now politically conscious. The Ninth Congress had been a landmark in China's revolutionary development, and the way now lay open for a great era of radical change, especially in education.

T.R.

China's economy

by Nicholas Brunner
with preface by
Joan Robinson

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FRONTIER CLASHES:

ominous developments

SINCE THE ATTACK by Soviet troops on Chenpao Island in March of this year (analysed in the April/May issue of **SACU News**), there has been a widening of the area of conflict, and reports reaching this country suggest that the Soviet Government is moving large forces of troops to the borders with China in an obvious effort to harass and frighten.

This aim has clearly not been achieved; China has made further statements combining clear warnings with as yet unanswered facts on the Sino-Soviet boundary question.

On May 24, a Chinese Government statement gave more details of the original treaties involving the Ussuri River areas, pointing out that:

1. The map attached to the 'Sino-Russian Treaty of Peking' of 1860 was drawn up unilaterally by Tsarist Russia before the boundary was surveyed in 1861. In fact, the 1861 survey was not detailed so far as the Ussuri and Amur rivers were concerned, and a red line was drawn on the attached map on a scale smaller than 1:1,000,000—so on this scale, Chenpao Island would not even have appeared.

2. Letters from Tsarist Russian frontier officials to the Chinese side (and the statement quotes from two of these) allocate Chenpao and similar islands close to the Chinese bank as Chinese territory.

3. During the Sino-Soviet border discussions of 1964, the Soviet representative had to admit that the red line attached to the small-scale treaty map could not indicate the precise alignment of the boundary line on the rivers, nor could it determine ownership of islands.

4. Chenpao was originally not an island at all, but a part of the land on the Chinese side of the Ussuri, which later became an island as a result of erosion by the river. At low tide it still connects to the Chinese bank by land.

The statement says that; bearing in mind that the treaties were made when power was in the hands of neither the Chinese nor the Russian people, and that Soviet people have lived on the lands taken from China for some time, the Chinese Government would still be ready to take

these unequal treaties as the basis for determining the entire alignment of the boundary line between the two countries and for settling all existing questions relating to the boundary.

On June 9, the Chinese Government issued a statement protesting at the Russians' continued firing at Chenpao Island and areas deep within China's territory. Nearly 8,000 shells had been fired up to June 9, and the attacks were continuing, the statement said.

Violations of the Chinese frontier by Soviet troops had extended to Tacheng County in Sinkiang province, as well as the area east of Suifeng in Heilungkiang Province, and Yumin County, also in Sinkiang.

On June 11, another protest from the Chinese Foreign Ministry was delivered to the USSR Embassy in Peking, which indicated that fighting, which had started the previous evening in Yumin County was growing in intensity. The Soviet intruders—some dozens of them—had opened fire on herders and killed one woman, compelling the Chinese to retaliate. A Chinese herdsman had been kidnapped by the Soviet intruders.

The growing intensity and spread of these incidents, which, at least so far as the Ussuri River is concerned, are probably initiated by the Soviet side, appear to be far more sinister than a mere dispute about the ownership of an unoccupied river island. The Chinese statements, in addition to giving much detailed evidence in support of their case, make it clear that they are willing to negotiate. They have published the Soviet statement of March 30, and challenged the Soviet Government to reciprocate.

POSTSCRIPT

SINCE the above was written, the Soviet Government has published (June 13) another lengthy statement on the Ussuri River question, more carefully prepared than any of its previous statements, but still relying heavily on chauvinism and misinterpretation to make its points.

It talks, quite falsely, in the light of previous Chinese statements, of the Chinese Government's attempt 'to substantiate its claim to a million-and-a-half square kilometres of inalienable Soviet territory.'

Referring specifically to the Ussuri, it denies the Chinese statement that detailed borders were never agreed, and says that a protocol was signed on June 16, 1861, in which the border in the 'Damansky Island' area, 'runs right along the Chinese bank', thus making Chenpao, and the entire waterway at this point, Russian.

This border, unusual to say the least, is justified in the statement by maintaining that no rules in international law stipulate that a river boundary passes through the centre of the main channel. It cites one example (again curious) of a treaty which supports this claim—one signed in 1858 between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. One wonders why, if such a border is so normal, the Soviet Union's statement could not have included a more up-to-date example, or indeed any other example.

'Dear Meg'

The following letter, sent to one of our members by a friend in Peking will, we think, interest readers. It has been abridged slightly, for space reasons.

YESTERDAY some of us returned from a ten-day stay in a village where we helped the peasants with the autumn harvest.

The village, south of Peking, is right on the banks of the Yanting River, in Ta Hsing County. It forms one of 28 production brigades of a people's commune. I don't know if you are familiar with this part, but it is distinguished for its particularly poor sandy soil. Thanks to the constant flooding of the river in the old days, quantities of sand were distributed all over the land and very little farming was done. They used to wait at the river bank and carry people over on their backs, or a group of them got together to buy a donkey for richer people to hire to take them to Peking. People were recruited from this area for work in coal mines and those that went were never heard of again. The Japanese fought a lot over this area and slaughtered numbers of people. The best food the people had were things made from maize flour and salted turnips.

By our standards the people would still be considered very poor, but conditions are different today and all sorts of plans are in hand for constant improvement. For instance the housing. Most of the houses have been built in the last three years, are of good brick and have tiled roofs. They are built in the traditional style, that is

continued on page 6

Chinese History: Opium War . . .

THE MODERN HISTORY OF CHINA,
Henry McAleavy. Weidenfeld &
Nicolson, 1967. 45s (paperback 21s).

FOR ANYONE with a desire to know China and her people—whether in order to gain a sympathetic understanding of Chinese principles and actions, to be a plausible China-watcher, or simply to appear intelligent at dinner parties—this book is a 'must'. After the two introductory chapters, nineteen more cover the period from the Opium War of 1840 to the present decade; the book is also well illustrated and annotated, and includes several pages of suggestions for further reading. To lovers of China's past traditions and social customs, the first two chapters will give much nostalgic pleasure.

McAleavy (who, sadly, died last year) possessed three advantages over most Western writers on contemporary China. He had a Western classical education before embarking on his study of the Chinese language and history, especially 'unofficial history', for which there is an immense wealth of sources in the popular literature. This gave him the historical sense and perspective essential for understanding Chinese culture and the character of the people. Secondly, he lived in China for many years, from 1935 to 1950. These were years of tremendous change in China, like violent thunderstorms before the new dawn in 1949. McAleavy talked to Chinese people from many walks of life; he also had direct contacts with British and other Western officials. These contacts helped him to understand the mentality both of these foreigners who in the 19th century directed and carried out the policies of the powers towards the Manchu imperial court and of those among the Chinese scholar-gentry who collaborated with them against the interests of the ordinary people of China. McAleavy's third advantage was that, being a rebel Catholic, born into a Manchester working-class family of Irish extraction, he did not mince words, as so many Englishmen tend to do.

A few quotations relating to the 'Taiping Heavenly Kingdom' (1851-64) are typical of his pertinent observations on every historical event or movement in the period he writes of:

Although the Chinese market did not live up to British expectations enough foreign goods were imported to deal a blow at native industries. Cottons from Lancashire were the most dangerous of these competitors,

and their effect was perceptible not only along the coast but deep in the heart of the country (p. 58, explaining the causes of peasant unrest).

Anti-Manchu feeling was latent even among the most orthodox and respectable of the scholar-gentry. But to win support in such a quarter would have required an abandonment of all the ideals which gave the movement its revolutionary vigour. Those aspects of the Taiping Movement drew humbler followers by the thousand, but frightened away the wealthy and the educated, who discovered they had an interest in maintaining the existing order of things. It was to these Chinese subjects that the Manchus owed their salvation (pp. 73-74).

In June 1860 a Taiping Army seized the famous city of Soochow, only 40 miles from Shanghai, and was soon menacing the port itself. Without hesitation, the British and French authorities assumed the defence of the place . . . much to the delight of the local mandarins who were only too anxious to ignore the foreign invasion of North China, then in full preparation, in order to benefit from the protection of the same invaders in the territory under their jurisdiction.

Could not the protection be carried a step further? To be sure, the Western powers, although committed to the defence of Shanghai, were not ready to be drawn more deeply into the suppression of the rebels. But Shanghai was swarming with ne'er-do-wells from every country under the sun whose high spirits could be employed more profitably than in terrorising the waterfront. The comprador element among the mandarins knew from experience how to deal with such people, and a corps of foreign riflemen came into existence with a New Englander named Ward for leader (p. 108: the American commander was later replaced by a British regular officer, 'Chinese Gordon', who was killed fighting the Sudanese people at Khartoum).

In Chapter IX (somewhat misleadingly entitled 'The Loss of the Satellites') the author includes the following, among other territories lost:

Loochoo (Ryukyu) Islands—taken by Japan and reconstituted as Okinawa Prefecture, 1879

Ili Region (Sinkiang)—occupied by Russia, 1871

Burma—taken by Britain, 1875-6
Vietnam—made into a French Protectorate, 1874-85

Korea—Chinese suzerainty ended, 1876-95; became Japanese Protectorate 1905.

As a result of the territorial and economic losses and humiliations suffered by China under the rule of the Manchus and their Chinese servants, a movement for reform arose among the more enlightened liberal scholars. When it came, 'vested interests of every kind seemed in danger, particularly those of the mandarin and the teaching profession.' But it lasted only for 103 days. The Empress Dowager,

the most reactionary, depraved, cruel and powerful figure of the Manchu court, could not tolerate any reforms. Reasserting her tyrannical authority, she had the leaders arrested; six who failed to escape abroad were publicly executed.

In tracing the origins of the rising of the 'Boxers' and the reasons for their anti-foreign and anti-missionary actions, McAleavy writes:

All the Christian denominations were equally at fault . . . but the most illuminating examples are to be found among the Roman Catholics, for only in their case is it possible to compare the 19th century with earlier times. Before the Opium War, Catholic missionaries were uniformly respectful and courteous in their attitude to Chinese authority. . . . No sooner had China suffered military defeat and been forced to open her doors than a new kind of churchman appeared on the scene in the wake of the foreign gunboats, proud and domineering, not hesitating to ride roughshod over the feelings of his unwilling hosts (p. 163).

The Empress Dowager feared both Boxers and foreigners, and tried at different times to make use of them against each other. In June 1900 Boxers and imperial troops together attacked the foreign legations in Peking. Troops of eight countries—Austria, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States—relieved the siege, and then sacked the capital,

. . . convinced that all Chinese and Manchus, without distinction of guilt or innocence, were lawful prey. . . . Wherever the foreigners passed, whole families committed suicide to expunge the shame suffered by a wife or daughter (p. 166).

Countless art treasures looted from the palace and from rich homes and shops were brought back to Europe and America, where to this day they adorn houses and museums. Under the 'Boxer Protocol' of 1901 China was saddled with a huge indemnity of 450 million silver dollars and endured all the humiliations of a 'semi-colony'.

Throughout his chapters on the aggressions committed by the Western powers and Japan against China, McAleavy often remarks on the patriotism and bravery of peasants and townspeople in their struggles against both Manchu rulers and foreign invaders. He also shows deep understanding of the high officials, from rich landowning scholar-gentry families, of the type of Tseng Kuo-fan; (who aided by foreign troops under Gordon, suppressed and massacred the Taipings) and Li Hung-chang. Li was an outstanding example

... to 'Red Star'

of a class which had no concern for the interests of the ordinary people and no moral principles; bullied the oppressed but was cowardly in the face of force; and for the sake of its own wealth and power would sell its country to the enemy for 'a mess of pottage'. He was subservient to his Manchu masters, especially to the superstitious, pig-headed and domineering Empress Dowager; he played one imperialist power against another, but would grovel to anyone to save his own position.

Another characteristic of this land-owning scholar-gentry class was that there was no unity between its members, but instead constant struggling for power and position. The Tseng-Li relationship is typical:

For sixty years, since the days when the armies of Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang fought against the Taipings, the stage was being got ready. . . The essence of warlordism was already contained . . . in the relationship between Tseng Kuo-fan, and even more so his heirs, on the one hand and Li Hung-chang on the other: a steady implacable jealousy of all rivals for power and wealth, an awareness that the ultimate threat to such power and wealth came from the people of China, and in consequence an instinctive dependence upon the foreigner for help against this common enemy (p. 201).

This keen observation speaks to our condition today in all countries—Indonesia and Brazil for example—where the people are struggling against both foreign exploiters and aggressors and their own leaders who serve foreign interests.

McAleavy also had a firm grasp of the forces at work in China during the revolutionary period since the late twenties, the war of Liberation prior to 1949 and the years of rehabilitation that followed, especially the power of the masses under the guidance of Mao Tse-tung. But when the people in their hundreds and thousands started to create new social organisations, and when China for the first time in history began to conduct international affairs on the basis of principles and not of expediency, he was writing of a China of which he no longer had first-hand knowledge, and he could not entirely free himself from the somewhat contemptuously sceptical attitude of Western writers in general. Writing of Mao Tse-tung's Thought, for example, he asserts that 'a campaign of propaganda, unparalleled in intensity, seeks to guarantee that the faith shall be handed down whole and entire to future generations.' To say that the Cultural Revolution is concerned with

ramming Mao's Thought down the throats of 700 million Chinese is an insult to a people for whom the author obviously had very high respect and regard. This is a black spot in an otherwise excellent book. However, one must concede that the Cultural Revolution is unprecedented in nature and scale; its full historical significance can hardly yet be grasped by anyone outside China.

Liao Hung-Ying

RED STAR OVER CHINA. Enlarged and revised edition. Edgar Snow. Victor Gollancz, London, 1968. 70s.

FOR FOUR MONTHS between June and October in 1936, Edgar Snow travelled and took notes and photographs behind Chiang Kai-shek's blockade in the loess-covered cave country of Northwest China. The Communists he met there had arrived only eight months earlier, at the end of their Long March. Japan was busily taking over all of Northeast China, Italy had seized Ethiopia, Germany was occupying the Rhineland, and in July of that year the army revolt under Franco marked the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. When he got back to Peking, Snow published his notes in book form and they were translated into Chinese. Then came the articles in US newspapers and periodicals, the Left Book Club edition in London, and a hard-cover edition in New York. It is not easy to recreate for younger people the impact that all these amazing stories had in those gloomy days when the Depression was ending but the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis was looming larger daily in Ethiopia, Spain and Manchuria.

This up-to-date edition has had some cuts, at times damping the fire of youthful enthusiasm, unfortunately. To compensate fully, however, the author has added new comprehensive notes, further interviews with Mao Tse-tung, a chronology of 125 Years of Chinese Revolution, a chart showing the present leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, a bibliography of Chinese and Western writings on the period, and ninety-seven biographies of the men and women introduced to us in 1937, brought up to the present.

'Red Star' is a history of China from 1912 to 1937, with the best account ever written of the strategic retreat towards an anti-Japanese front, the heart-breaking heroic Long March.

The book was also an account of intra-party strife, and of the complicated linking and unlinking with the Comintern in Moscow. Best of all, it reported conversations with little Red Devils (youngsters in the army), actors, peasants, teachers, and Moslems in nearby Kansu. If you study this new edition (make no mistake: to take it in requires concentration and referring back and forth to biographies, notes and chronology) you may find yourself building up your own history of the growing rift with the USSR and the Cultural Revolution. The raw material is all there.

Edgar Snow's second important book, **The Other Side of the River**, is curiously parallel to this one. The blockade was Chiang Kai-shek's in 1936; John Foster Dulles had set one up in the 1950s for Americans. Once again Snow was the first American to get behind the lines, so to speak. On the heels of his visit in 1936 came the Sian incident, a united front against the Japanese invaders, and the postponement of the civil war. Coinciding with his visit in 1960, China exploded its first nuclear bomb, and the quarrel with the Soviet Union came out into the open with all Soviet advisers withdrawn and 300 contracts cancelled. There was to be no united front this time.

In his introduction to this edition, John K. Fairbank states that 'the remarkable thing about **Red Star Over China** was that it not only gave the first connected history of Mao and his colleagues and where they had come from, but it also gave a prospect of the future of this little-known movement which was to prove disastrously prophetic.' What is meant by 'disastrously'? Here is Snow looking toward the far-off 'red horizons' and speculating about the future:

The movement for social revolution in China might suffer defeats, might temporarily retreat, might for a time seem to languish, might make wide changes in tactics to fit immediate necessities and aims, might even for a period be submerged, be forced underground, but it would not only continue to mature; in one mutation or another it would eventually win, simply because (as this book proves, if it proves anything) the basic conditions which had given it birth carried within themselves the dynamic necessity for its triumph.

And the 1937 version, its burst of fire not yet damped down with the years, added:

continued overleaf

And that triumph when it comes will be so mighty, so irresistible in its discharge of katabolic energy, that it will consign to oblivion the last barbarities of imperialism which now enthral the Eastern world.

May we look forward in the future to a collection of all those early magazine articles, unedited, in a paperback, with these excellent notes and biographies added? This background material (brilliant pioneering thirty years ago) to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution surely should be available to those who have proletarian purses.

MZB

On first reading 'Red Star'

WHAT IS THERE left to say which hasn't been said fifty or more times over about this much-quoted, much-pirated classic? Probably nothing. The uniqueness of much of its material is easily gauged by looking through the bibliography of any history of modern China published in the Western world, and the crispness of the writing, thirty and more years after the book's initial publication, makes it easily one of the most readable books around.

This last is a credit, of course, to Snow the journalist, spiking facts, figures, histories and reminiscences with the small details that can make the printed word come to life. Perhaps there are more exaggerations of emphasis, perhaps Snow doesn't ask all the questions, see all the things that we, with the gift of hindsight, would demand. But as the first Western journalist to break the Kuomintang blockade in 1936 and visit Red China, he did well, we must all agree, to stay so long and record so much.

It takes Snow a long time (about 170 pages-worth) in his conversations with Mao Tse-tung to get to the point where Mao is no longer discussing so much his personal history as that of the Chinese Communist movement as a whole, and the growth of the Red Army. But Mao's early life makes fascinating reading, and of course by the time he gets to Peking and Li Ta-chao, the founder of the Chinese Communist Party, the story of Mao becomes more and more the story of the Communist movement in China.

By the time of Chiang Kai-shek's 'Fifth campaign' against the Chinese Soviet area of Kiangsi-Fukien, in 1933, the question of a united front against Japan was becoming urgent. In January, 1933 the Soviet Government said it was prepared to conclude an agree-

ment with any armed force, and combine with it to fight the Japanese. There then occurred a complicated and still partially obscure episode in Chinese history involving Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai and the People's Revolutionary Government of Fukien. Snow quotes Mao as saying in 1936 that his failure to unite with Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai's army in 1933 during the Fukien rebellion was an 'important error.' But it remains a moot point whether Mao would in any case have been in a position to ally with Ts'ai, since evidence seems to show that the majority of the Central Committee of the party in 1933-4 was against alliance with 'intermediate forces.' And so the Soviet government found itself fighting alone the encircling armies of Chiang, and by the summer of 1934 the decision to quit Kiangsi had been taken.

Snow's account of the Long March which followed is understandably, though tantalisingly brief. He tells us that a 300,000-word account of the journey had been prepared by the Party's historians, using personal accounts by the army men who had taken part. He must have thought it superfluous himself to go into details of the march. But, as he adds in a footnote, this account was never published, and our knowledge of the Long March remains somewhat restricted.

And now, with the Red Army firmly established in Shensi, Snow undertakes a sort of long march of his own, talking to the people and finding out the sort of things which in 1936 were completely unknown to the West. Here his style becomes more relaxed, with plenty of homely anecdotes and good, earthy peasant talk. Indeed, in the early sections of the book and at its end, Snow seems most at ease, finding the role of reporter and recorder a much easier one than that of interpreter or evaluator.

The biographical material at the end of the book is valuable, and has now been brought up to date with recent events in China. Liu Shao-chi's role in Anyuan is still described as a leading one, but Snow adds in brackets after the biography: 'In 1967 attacks on Liu by the Maoist press for the first time accused Liu of following bourgeois-reformist policies when leading the Anyuan unions—thus establishing for him a history of forty years of revisionist thought.' Which may be an over-simplification, but does prove that the text has been revised.

The book then, combines readability with staying power—Edgar Snow's work will never be superseded.

Patrick Daly

'Dear Meg'

(continued from page 3)

with a central room into which the front door opens and where the cooking is done on two stoves. Then the rooms on each side have kangs heated from the stoves. Seven of us slept on a very long kang which was roomy even though one or two were rather fat! There was a brick floor and the usual large papered windows facing south. Two electric lights lit the three rooms at night. Each household had quite a big vegetable plot—which is not the same thing as a 'private plot'—in which the family grew cabbages and tobacco and maybe other things at other seasons. In this village all the 'private plots' have been pooled and they are cultivated collectively and the produce divided up.

Our food was quite varied. Usually our breakfast was maize flour porridge with sweet potato in it, some kind of wheat or maize flour bun or griddlecake with small dishes of salted vegetable, cabbage, green pepper or egg-plant.

For lunch we had dumplings and noodles several times, rice and pancakes once each. In the evening we usually had rice congee, sweet potatoes and some of the other vegetables.

The village was made up of 78 households—392 people. They now have 1,000 mu of cultivated land, 80 pigs, 100 rabbits, 14 mules or horses, 22 draft oxen, 8 carts, 30 handcarts, 5 endless chain wells, 3 electrically operated pumps, 1 threshing machine, 1 sweet potato slicer, 3 winnowing machines, 1 electric saw, 1 electrically run mill, 1 sewing machine. Besides this, every family keeps two pigs, 6 or so chickens, some rabbits, and some have goats or sheep. Every house has electric light. There is a public address system over which announcements are made, music played or radio programmes relayed. We were wakened by music followed by the news at 5.30 every morning.

While we were in the village we helped bring in 50 mu of sweet potatoes, 60 mu of rice, 50 mu of peanuts and over 20,000 jin of maize. This year has been a particularly hard one because of the worst drought in 70 years—no real rain for 11 months. In planting the peanuts and sweet potatoes the peasants carried water to the fields continuously for a month! The job of the brigade is to supply a certain quota of peanuts to the state and

continued opposite

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

Office: 24 Warren Street, London W.1
Telephone 01-387 0074

Chairman: Dr Joseph Needham

Deputy-Chairman:

Professor Joan Robinson

Vice-Chairman: Mrs Mary Adams

Secretary: Mrs Betty Paterson

* * *

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* * *

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

* * *

Every member of the Society receives SACU NEWS each month, has the use of the Anglo-Chinese Educational Institute library at central offices, can call upon the Society for information and is able to participate in all activities of the Society. On many occasions SACU members get tickets for Society events at reduced rates.

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they will be able to do this in spite of the unfavourable weather. Oh, I forgot: they also grow beans of various kinds—green beans, red beans and soya beans. There is also a certain amount of winter wheat grown, but I don't know how much. They're only able to grow all these things because they are improving the soil with fertiliser. They're already self-sufficient in grain. Each person gets 420 jin per year, babies included. Most of the families slice a lot of the sweet potatoes allocated to them, dry them on their flat roofs and then exchange them for maize. The state gives them 1 jin of maize for 1 jin of dried sweet potatoes.

(to be concluded)

1 Yuan—about 4s at official exchange rate, but has much more purchasing power. 6.6 mu—1 acre. 1 jin—1½ lbs.

NOTEBOOK

ONE YEAR INTENSIVE DIPLOMA COURSE IN CHINESE

From September 1969 the School of Liberal Arts of Ealing Technical College is offering a full-time intensive course in modern Chinese (Mandarin) leading to a Diploma of Ealing Technical College.

The course lays stress on practical language work, but includes an introduction to Chinese history and culture. Modern audio-lingual techniques (including regular language laboratory work) will be used to develop oral fluency, while the study of texts (selected from contemporary literature and the press) will ensure a good range of passive vocabulary. In the latter part of the course students will be taught in groups arranged according to their needs.

Applications should be addressed to: The Registrar (Admissions), Ealing Technical College, St Mary's Road, Ealing, London, W5.

20th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS:

A committee is working out a programme for SACU events to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the People's Republic of China. Many ideas, talents and plain hard work will be needed. Further details will appear in August News.

All members who would like to offer help please get in touch with central office.

Books received

The inclusion of a book under this heading does not preclude review at a later stage.

WITHIN THE FOUR SEAS: A dialogue of East and West, by Joseph Needham FRS. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1969. 40s.

CHINA PROFILE: A symposium edited by Ross Terrill. Friendship Press, New York, 1969. \$1.75.

NEW BOOKLIST

Some publications on Modern China
For a copy of this June 1969 book list, compiled by SACU, please send large stamped and addressed envelope to 24 Warren Street, W1.

Dates to remember

THIRD PROGRAMME REPEAT

MANY PEOPLE may have missed Joseph Needham's talk entitled 'An Honorary Taoist' which was first broadcast on Tuesday, June 10 on the Third Programme. There will be a repeat of this programme on Saturday, July 12. The expected time is 7.25 to 8.25 pm but members should check this nearer the date of the broadcast.

THE INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE THOUGHT OF MAO TSE-TUNG

During July there will be meetings on July 10, 17, 24 and 31 at 7.30 pm at 24 Warren Street, further details on request.

BARNET FILM SHOW—Friday, July 11: 7.45 pm at Hendon Town Hall, the Burroughs, NW4.

'A CASE TO ANSWER'—a Granada TV 'World in Action' film about Hongkong. Speaker and discussion.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

To SACU, 24 Warren Street, London W1 P 5DG

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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 £461.30. (1st class return £789.40.)

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

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