

Society for Anglo Chinese Understanding



OCTOBER 1966

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE RED GUARDS

In the September issue of SACU NEWS we published an introductory article on the Cultural Revolution which summarised some of the earlier Chinese press reports and statements on the subject. Later developments, in particular the Red Guards, have been widely reported by the British Press, radio and television. One of our members, Mrs Frida Knight, recently visited China and we are fortunate to be able to publish her first-hand observations.

ON RETURNING to England recently after a month in China, it was something of a shock to hear of violence and outrages in Peking; Shanghai's cultural revolution, which I saw at first-hand, was being carried on with so little visible roughness, and so much evident good humour.

When we arrived there after a tour of central China, at nightfall on 23 August, Shanghai railway station was a seething mass of people, a riot of scarlet flags, a deafening cacophony of drums, gongs and cymbals, with the station radio blaring out patriotic songs in the background. We had to jostle our way out through milling crowds of excited young people who had assembled to give a send-off to a group of students going as regional delegates to a meeting in Peking, about the Cultural Revolution. We had seen a lot of marching and flag-waving wherever we had been, but this scene of mass excitement was something new; we soon found it was typical of Shanghai: every day of the last week of August, from early morning till far into the night, the streets were filled with marching groups, some a mere handful headed by a drum, others a hundred strong, others half a mile long, with a band on a lorry, dozens of immense portraits of Chairman Mao, and flags of every shade of red from pillar-box to puce, varied with green, yellow, blue, orange, and dozens of small pink and mauve pennants — a moving rainbow. The march-

ing youngsters and older workers alike were immensely cheerful and friendly — it was all more like a carnival than a political demonstration, what with the banners and the bunting and the skyscrapers along the waterfront all lit up with coloured lights, and slogans like 'Serve the People', and 'Put Politics First' glittering in illuminated characters along the side of boats, reflected in the river.

Traffic was slowed down to a crawl by the processions, which came from all directions, marching from their school or factory or club to show their solidarity, or to present criticisms or demands to the authorities at Communist Party Headquarters. Criticisms and demands were also posted up in

FOLK SINGERS

TO MARK THE occasion of China's National Day (1 October, 1966, being the 17th anniversary of the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic), SACU invites all members and their friends to an evening of entertainment on Tuesday, 4 October, 1966, at St Pancras Town Hall Assembly Rooms, Euston Road, NW1.

The programme, running from 7 to 11 pm, will feature singers Peggy Seeger, Frankie Armstrong, Brian Byrne, and Dennis Turner, under the leadership of Ewan MacColl. Taped authentic Chinese music will also be heard. A licensed bar and buffet will be operating.

Members living in or near London should have received tickets, for which payment must be made at the door.

INVITATION

SACU presents a folk-song festival
China's National Day Anniversary

SEE BELOW

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the form of big placards all over the town; every wall, window, gate, postbox, was plastered with posters, even traffic control posts and buses bore them. Each criticism had to be written in duplicate and signed, and while one copy was posted up the other went to the authorities for consideration. Eventually, they say, every case will be investigated; and the individuals who have been accused of shortcomings will be able to defend themselves and will either be reinstated or sent for a course of manual labour or some other form of re-education.

Superstructure

Unlike the Western observers who explain the Cultural Revolution in terms of an inner-Party power struggle, ordinary people in Shanghai tell you that it is just what its name implies — the aim is nothing less than the rebuilding of the superstructure of the new Chinese society. The social and economic basis is now secure, the workers and peasants are content, and solidly behind the Government; given a period of peace the country will rapidly develop into a prosperous modern state; but this, they say, carries with it the danger of the development of a bourgeois attitude in education and culture, such as they consider has appeared in the USSR, where revolutionary fervour has lapsed, and Western-type films, novels, and art prevail; this could, they think, lead back to predominance in China of a capitalist ideology. The government wants to avoid the emergence of an educated class divorced from the masses, hence the stress on part-work, part-study schools, the proposals that students should spend half the year on communes or in industry, the suggestions for opening wider the doors of universities to the children of peasants and workers.

The plans for reorganising school programmes and college courses are not so drastic nor so sudden as they seem. There has long been part-work,

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RED GUARD (continued)

part-study education attached to factories, and talk of overhauling the examination system and the very long school life of Chinese youth—a leftover from the days when a scholar was a highly privileged person with undue influence and position. In a country which is crying out for skilled and highly trained technicians it is only to be expected that they should be encouraged to develop practical skills as fast as possible, while subjects irrelevant to material progress take second place. Older teachers no doubt have considerable reservations about the changes proposed; they are allowed to voice their opinions in this debate, which has been thrown wide open, but they are unlikely to carry much weight if they are suspected of conservative ideology. Many 'revisionists' have been suspended from responsible posts, and discussions on their future are going on among their fellow-teachers and students, before being referred to higher authorities, who will examine the evidence for and against each case. This business of criticism and self-defence is going to be a lengthy one, and schools (apart from primary) will not be opening for several weeks or months later than usual.

Mainly Education

The Chinese tell the foreigner very little; but as one teacher said to me, 'if we are making the change, we must make it thoroughly, once and for all.' The change applies mainly to education, but every branch of culture is affected. Only 'ideologically sound' films are being shown (the cinema industry is at a halt pending decisions on the correct line); new-style opera, in which PLA (People's Liberation Army) men and Brigade heroines replace the former gorgeous Peking ladies, Generals, and Monkey Kings. Musicals and films alike are packed with propaganda—rather tedious for a Westerner, but clearly enjoyable for the Chinese, as the theatres and cinemas were sold out in every case. For some time, of course, books have been thoroughly censored, and the editorial boards of periodicals purged, but the purification of bookshops is recent, and so is the investigation of big stores to make sure that bourgeois tendencies do not creep in by way of goods for sale on the counters. Many of the shops in Shanghai were closed down for a few days during my stay, and obviously re-arrangement was going on behind the great red flags and portraits of Chairman Mao in the windows. There was talk of the Friendship Store (where foreigners mainly shop for gifts to take home) and the

Antique Shop being permanently shut; but I bought presents at both as easily as at the big Department Store opposite; and on departure at the airport I was given a bouquet of lilies and gladioli which must have come from one of the flower shops which were all rumoured closed.

Changing Names

Drastically changing were the names of shops, public buildings, streets; new names had not been decided on, though suggestions were being submitted and considered. One could only hope that Nanking Road would, after all, be allowed to keep its name, and not be entitled 'Anti-Revisionist and Anti-Imperialist Road' as proposed. Factories and schools we visited were busy discussing possible new titles—such as 'Great Cultural Revolution Fertiliser Factory', and 'Red World Middle School'. In the time I spent in Shanghai I heard of many cases of rough handling of property—shop signs being altered (in the case of partially privately-owned businesses of which there are, or were, many) without permission; decorations with a foreign or bourgeois flavour being removed—the brass lions outside a big bank on the waterfront disappeared overnight, as did the British Consul's Lion and Unicorn—symbols of colonial rule; some statues had their heads covered with sacking, and their chests adorned with placards. But even at the height of the week's excitement there was little hooliganism or destruction. Although I heard of property being damaged and individual 'capitalists' being verbally abused (in person or by placards affixed to the door) not one case of assault or physical harm was reported, in spite of the efforts of some foreign sensation-hunters. The day after we heard of incidents in Peking, the order went out in Shanghai that the Red Guards must show restraint and moderation and 'study the 16 points' of the Government, insisting on responsible behaviour from its youthful monitors.

No Hoodlums

Incidentally, the Red Guards, who have been built up by press and radio as some sinister police force, are more like school prefects or scout leaders, who have been elected by their factory or school groups to represent their fellows and take some responsibility in the current activities. Most of them seemed to be very decent, friendly young men, such as some of the lift boys and waiters in our hotel, who donned red arm-bands and showed

them off very proudly to us. It was difficult, indeed, to imagine they would be involved in hoodlum goings-on—if such existed. Our Chinese guides and interpreters told us that they knew of no 'incidents' in Shanghai and hoped there would be none; but in the present situation, they said, any provocateur or 'enemy agent' might well take advantage of excited crowds to make trouble, and foreigners might find themselves the centre of unwelcome attention if anything untoward happened (such as a street accident, or a misunderstanding in a shop). At first we followed our guide's advice not to walk alone through the crowded streets, but later, finding nothing but friendliness, we went shopping and sightseeing and got the usual clapping and handshaking typical of Shanghai.

From the experience of so short a time one must not be tempted to generalise. I can only speak as an eyewitness, who saw nothing horrible or hateful (though much that seemed to me stupid) in this huge upsurge of a movement; what I did see, both in Shanghai and in the three or four provincial towns I visited, was an immense enthusiasm for the regime, fervent confidence in Mao's leadership, and a solid determination to carry the social revolution right through to its cultural conclusion—something which has never been attempted in the history of revolutions.

FRIDA KNIGHT

SPEAKERS SERVICE

IN AUGUST a detailed questionnaire went out to over sixty known or prospective speakers for SACU, an early step in the development of the Panel's activities (see **SACU NEWS**, September).

To date 25 replies have been received, a most encouraging response—and more are expected. They come from people in different walks of life, and from most parts of England. London is best represented, but Cambridge, Birmingham and Bristol are also promising as centres of activity.

The information gained is now being analysed and turned into a useful form; before long speakers should be hearing the outcome of this, and news of events in their areas.

Meanwhile potential audiences are being contacted, and already many enquiries have been received for the forthcoming season.

We look forward to a year of vigorous development in this important aspect of SACU's activities.

P.J.M.

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT — 1966

MRS MARY ADAMS, OBE, vice-chairman of **SACU**. A pioneer of BBC television, now member of the Independent Television Authority. Associate of Newnham College, Cambridge. Author of papers on genetical cytology and heredity. Other interests include mental health and family planning. Visited China in 1965 as a sponsor of **SACU**.

MR WILLIAM ASH; born in Dallas, Texas. Education: University of Texas (classical languages) and Balliol College, Oxford (philosophy, politics and economics). RAF fighter pilot in Britain, shot down in 1942, a prisoner for three years, awarded MBE for escaping activities. Now a writer, Mr Ash has published three novels and a book on moral philosophy.

MR ROLAND BERGER. Since 1952 Director of British Council for the Promotion of International Trade and Consultant to '48' Group of British Businessmen trading with China. Formerly senior official of Technical Assistance Department of United Nations, New York. Has visited China every year since 1953.

MR GEOFFREY CARRICK; chairman, Barnet branch of **SACU**. Education: University College School, Hampstead; Magdalene College, Oxford. Teacher in University College School since 1950. Half-master, 1953. Vice-Headmaster, 1955. War service: 1943-46; Intelligence Corps, Japanese translator. Before demobilisation attended Chinese interpretation course at School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

MR RAYMOND DAWSON; chairman of the Oxford branch of **SACU**. Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, since 1961 and University lecturer in Chinese. Mr Dawson was Lecturer in the Chinese Language and Civilization at Durham University from 1952-61. During the last two years of his stay at Durham, he was Keeper of the Gulbenkian Museum of Oriental Art. In 1958 he spent six months in China, studying.

MR ANDREW FAULDS, Labour Member of Parliament. Born Nyasaland (now Malawi) of Scottish parents who were missionaries. Has taken part in more than thirty films and dozens of television programmes. Was 'Jet Morgan' in a popular radio series. Won Smethwick for Labour in the last general election.

MISS MARGARET GARVIE; Currently Principal of Furzedown Training College, London. A graduate of London University, Miss Garvie has taught at a number of colleges in England. Between 1945-51 she was on the staff of the Student Department of the National YWCA of China. During this time she spent one year on the administrative staff of the National Student Relief Committee.

MR ALEC S. HORSLEY; Co-Treasurer of **SACU**. Well known Quaker businessman and chairman of the Northern Dairies Ltd. Mr Horsley visited China in 1952 on a trade delegation.

DR NICHOLAS KURTI, FRS; Co-Treasurer of **SACU**. Reader in Physics, Oxford University, since 1960. Senior Research Fellow at Brasenose College since 1947. Associated with Clarendon Laboratory, Oxford, since 1933. Dr Kurti's published works include papers on cryophysics and magnetism. He and his wife visited China in 1964 as guests of the Academia Sinica.

PROFESSOR JOSEPH A. LAUWERYS; Professor of Comparative Education, University of London, since 1947. Visiting professor in many foreign universities. Consultant to UNESCO, 1946-48. His publications include: 'Educational Problems in the Liberated Countries'; 'Morals, Democracy and Education'; and numerous textbooks, articles and papers.

MR JOHN LONGSTAFF; secretary, **SACU** Trade Union Committee. Until recently President of Board of Trade Civil Service Clerical Union. Spanish Civil War veteran, wounded three times. Served with British Army in Italy, wounded three times. Awarded US Bronze Star for gallantry. Founder member of the 'Seventh Club of the Eighth Army'.

MR EVAN LUARD; Member of Parliament for Oxford. Formerly a member of HM Foreign Service. Served in Hong Kong, and in Peking for two years. Since 1957, a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford, working on China and the Far East, and international relations in general. Joint author of 'The Economic Development of Communist China' and author of 'Britain and China'.

MR EWAN MacCOLL; Well-known folk singer, producer and actor. One of the leading pioneers of the folk revival. Original member of the Theatre Workshop. *

DR JOSEPH NEEDHAM, FRS, chairman of **SACU**, Master of Gonville & Caius, Cambridge. Sir William Dunn Reader in Biochemistry, Cambridge University, 1933 to 1966; visiting professor or lecturer in many foreign universities from 1929. Head of the British Scientific Mission in China and Adviser to the Chinese National Resources Commission. Director of the Natural Sciences Division, UNESCO, 1946 to 1948. Has published numerous scientific books including 'Chemical Embryology' (1931); 'Biochemistry and Morphogenesis' (1942) and a large work in progress 'Science and Civilisation in China' (7 vols), started in 1954.

MR E. A. C. ROBERTS; Assistant General Secretary of AEU. Speaker on Chinese Trade Unions at many meetings and conferences. Individual member of the Labour Party for 25 years. Coventry City Councillor for nine years. President, Coventry Trade Council for many years. Visited China 1965 at invitation of Foreign Cultural Association.

PROFESSOR JOAN ROBINSON, FBA; Deputy Chairman of **SACU**. Professor of Economics, University of Cambridge. Professor Robinson's publications include: 'The Economics of Imperfect Competition', 'Essay on Marxist Economics', 'Collected Economic Papers', 'The Accumulation of Capital', and many articles in the 'Economic Journal'. She went to China in 1953, 1957, 1963 and 1964, as guest of the China Committee for Promotion of International Trade and the Association for Cultural Relations.

SIR GORDON SUTHERLAND, FRS; Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, since 1964. Director of the National Physical Laboratory, 1956-64. President of the Institute of Physics and the Physical Society, 1964-66. His principal scientific work was in the field of infra-red spectroscopy, molecular spectroscopy and biophysics. He visited China in October 1962 as a member of a Royal Society delegation, and again in June 1966 at the invitation of the Academia Sinica.

MR JEREMY THORPE; Liberal MP for North Devon, and broadcaster. Hon. Treasurer of the Liberal Party. Liberal Party spokesman on Commonwealth and Colonial Affairs, Overseas Development, the Post Office and Home Department. Hon. Treasurer of UN Parliamentary Group, executive member of Commonwealth Parliamentary

(Continued overleaf)

COUNCIL (*continued*)

Association. Former President of Oxford Union and Secretary of World Campaign for Release of South African Prisoners.

DAME JOAN VICKERS, MBE; Conservative and National Liberal MP for Devonport Division of Plymouth since 1955. Member of the London County Council for the Norwood Division of Lambeth, 1937-46. She served with the British Red Cross in South-East Asia. Visited China 1962.

MRS ETHEL M. WORMALD; Member of the Liverpool City Council and chairman of the Liverpool Education Committee. Past president of the Association of Education Committees and still an active member of the Executive Council of that organisation.

LANGUAGE STUDY

CHINESE LANGUAGE CLASSES resumed on Monday, 26 September, at Warren Street. There are still some vacancies in the Beginners' Class, which is due to start on Monday, 3 October. Members who wish to enrol should apply immediately to central office.

The BBC is broadcasting a series of 10 lessons 'Introduction to Chinese' in its Third Network Study Session on Tuesday evenings, with repeats on Saturday mornings in the Home Service. **SACU** members who would like to join a group to follow these lessons are invited to get into touch with the central office of **SACU**.

WEEKEND SCHOOLS

THE RECENT WEEK-END school at Philipps House, Dinton, Wiltshire, was successful in every way. Those who attended took part in a series of sessions dealing with China historically from 1840 onwards, with special emphasis on developments since 1949 and on the present day. The school benefited greatly from the combined experience of Isabel and David Crook, at present on leave in this country after many years teaching in China, and a series of excellent discussions took place, aided by the presence of a number of other members with considerable knowledge and experience of China.

The setting of one of the stateliest of England's stately homes, in the middle of beautiful countryside, and perfect weather, all contributed to a memorable week-end.

The Week-end Schools Committee will shortly be discussing details of the programme already mapped out for 1967.

PRESS OFFICER

AT ITS LAST meeting the Council of Management discussed the implementation of the Resolution on the appointment of a Press Officer passed at the Annual General Meeting in May. It was agreed that at the present time the Society could not afford to employ a Press or Public Relations Officer, but that members should be encouraged to write individually to the Press on matters concerning China, after consulting **SACU** central office for information if they felt it necessary.

BRANCH NEWS

AT THEIR ANNUAL meeting on 14 September members of the CAMDEN branch discussed their programme for the forthcoming year. On Wednesday, 5 October, Isabel and David Crook are speaking at a public meeting organised by the branch on 'Some Aspects of China's Cultural Revolution'. This meeting will be held in the Old Hampstead Town Hall (opposite Belsize Park tube station), at 7.45 pm.

Details of other meetings, to be held on Wednesday, 23 November, in the Central Library at Swiss Cottage and on Tuesday, 13 December, in the Kentish Town Library, will be given in forthcoming issues of **SACU NEWS**. The branch is to make special efforts to consolidate and expand its membership.

CAMBRIDGE members are holding the Inaugural Meeting of the branch on the afternoon of Saturday, 15 October, in the Small Guildhall. The main speaker will be Stuart Gelder, **SACU** member and well-known writer on China.

DISCUSSION GROUP

THE TWICE-MONTHLY meeting and discussion group at Warren Street announced in last month's **SACU NEWS** should be of special interest to speakers on China. Participants in last year's speakers' training course found the fortnightly discussions very valuable, and the new group has arisen partly out of their desire to continue them.

All members interested in regular informal discussion of events and press comment on China are welcome. The next meeting of the group will be on Friday, 7 October, at 8 pm, when Colin Penn will introduce a discussion of the Cultural Revolution on the basis of the Chinese Government's 16-point statement (referred to in Freda Knight's article in this issue).

ABOUT SACU

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Dr Nicholas Kurti

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 Robinson, Sir Gordon Sutherland, Mr J 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: £10.0. Reduced rates (5s.) for old age pensioners and full-time students.

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