

Society for  
Anglo  
Chinese  
Understanding

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KEEP THIS DATE FREE  
FOUR SACU SPONSORS report  
on their trip to China. Tuesday,  
16 November. Evening meeting at  
Church House, Westminster, London

## INTRODUCING SACU NEWS

*THIS IS the first issue of a monthly news letter intended to keep members in touch with SACU activities and to help further the societies' influence. We shall publish regularly reports on functions organised by SACU and its branches, together with news of Anglo-Chinese trade, cultural and other exchanges. We also hope through the medium of this news-letter to inform members of some of the important developments in China.*

*The editorial board welcomes suggestions, criticism, or material on Anglo-Chinese events. Communications should be addressed to SACU News, 24 Warren Street, London, W.1.*

## SACU: 'A GENUINE EFFORT TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING' SAYS NEEDHAM

*A summary of the speech give by Dr Joseph Needham, FRS, Fellow and President of Caius College, Cambridge, at Church House, Westminster, London, on 15 May, 1965.*

DR NEEDHAM acknowledged the honour and pleasure he felt in opening a meeting designed to launch an organisation for fostering friendship and mutual respect between the British and Chinese peoples on a far broader basis than hitherto. The Chinese culture, with its stature and magnitude, representing the way of life of nearly a quarter of the human race, is, he said, a dominant factor in current international relationships which must be reckoned with.

Having thrown off the inhibitions of some of their traditional social forms, the Chinese, largely by their own efforts, are raising their standards of living as well as taking a place on the modern stage which will be second to none. The immense reservoir of talent released will make an enormous contribution to world civilisation. By air China is now a mere dozen hours away; neighbours need to be good friends—the smaller the world becomes the greater the urgency of mutual understanding between peoples and their cultures.

The keynote of Dr Needham's speech was **equality**. One may read reports of travellers coming from the East or West, from Roman times, through the Renaissance, and down to our own day, expressing with mild astonishment the fact that in these two far-flung ends of the earth the people were of the same quality, followed similar social laws, were, in fact, like each other. Dr Needham's own experiences echoed those of earlier observers. While at Cambridge in the 30's he made friends with some of the Chinese scientists working there for research degrees, and thus was led to take up the study of the language and culture of China. In 1942 he found himself in Kunming in South-West China entrusted with a mission of scientific and technological liaison between the Chinese and Western Allies. There he felt at once 'completely at home' in the laboratories of his Chinese colleagues.

Yet China, he said, is not simply a different country from our own, it is a basically different civilisation. Not only is there a great gulf of fundamental assumptions to be bridged, but all the fascinating distinctions in philosophy, art, landscape, religion and customs to be explored. To do this requires a genuine effort towards understanding: the very purpose of SACU. The intense feeling of unity experienced by Dr Needham may come about with particular

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## Four Sponsors on Delegation to China

A GROUP of four of SACU's Sponsors left London Airport on 18 September for a four-week visit to China at the invitation of the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations for Foreign Countries. The party comprised Mrs Mary Adams, Deputy-Chairman of the Consumers Association, a member of the Independent Television Authority and Vice-Chairman of SACU; Mr Robert Bolt, the playwright; Mr Ernest Roberts, the well-known trade unionist and Chairman of the General Purposes Committee of SACU; and Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper, holder of the Regius Chair of Modern History at Oxford, and a member of the Council of Management of SACU.

With them the party took a gift from SACU to the Foreign Cultural Association: a crystal bowl inscribed 'Anglo-Chinese Understanding' which won the Duke of Edinburgh's Award for Elegant Industrial Design in 1964.

In addition to getting a general view of China today, sixteen years after the Revolution of 1949, the members of the party are pursuing their individual interests: Mrs Adams seeing people in films, TV and radio, as well as recent developments in social welfare, including family planning; Mr Bolt is meeting writers and seeing as much as possible of the Chinese theatre, traditional and modern; Mr Roberts is having talks with trade union leaders with a view to developing exchanges in this field; and Professor Trevor-Roper is seeing something of Chinese universities.

## CONGRATULATIONS

THE COUNCIL of Management has sent, on behalf of all members of SACU, a cable of congratulations to China on the occasion of the sixteenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic.

# NEEDHAM ADDRESS

(Continued from Page 1)

ease between scientists, mathematicians or engineers; nevertheless it was his conviction that everyone in various ways may share this. In order to do so, greatly expanded means of personal contacts are urgently needed.

Many bogus ideas, he said, have been implanted in the Western mind concerning the Chinese and their culture. The Chinese are inscrutable—they all look alike—their names all sound the same—you can never tell what they are thinking or intending. Such phrases constitute, in the words of Claude Roy, 'an iron curtain of false enigmas'. Other favourite and enduring myths have it that the population consists entirely of peasants and craftsmen—that science, formal logic, and historiography are alien to them—that they have no curiosity about the culture of other countries. Such nonsensical beliefs can be eradicated by personal contact, by the generation of sympathy, and by mutual recognition of equality.

## Humanistic Heritage

Plausible half-truths are worse, since these pronouncements sound less ridiculous. Half-truths, frequently arising from a lack of historical perspective, need to be corrected. For instance, in a recent 'enlightened' television programme reference was made to the superiority complex of the Chinese. Certainly the people of China, Dr Needham said, are keenly aware of their proud humanistic heritage which long overshadowed all other cultures of the East Asian geographical area. During the war, though the material conditions in China were, unlike today, still largely mediaeval, the prestige of this heritage was omnipresent in the atmosphere. Ancient and mediaeval China adopted the expression *Chung-Kuo*, 'the Central Country', for their nation-state, and this term was still used in common speech.

## Internationally Minded

Nevertheless, the Chinese people were today among the most internationally minded people on earth. Even in the most remote parts of the country the people know the sufferings of the days of imperialism and colonialism, and everywhere they have profound sympathy with peoples throughout the world now trying to liberate themselves from those conditions.

During the period from the 16th century to the 19th, China's prestige and progress suffered. It was a time when expanding capitalism and commerce were battering at her seaward

gates. A crucial fact, said Dr Needham, is that modern science, with all its associated technology and ideology, grew up in Europe, and in Europe alone. The growth of humanitarianism was connected with this growth of science.

One must remember that China moved on her slow upward way without the vast upheavals of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the rise of Capitalism, out of which modern science came into being in the West. But though modern science began in Europe at the time of Galileo, all nations and peoples had contributed to the development of science as a whole, and no people had been more outstanding in their contributions than the Chinese. For example, they had a lead of 13 centuries in the art of making cast iron, and some 6 centuries in the invention of the mechanical clock.

Dr Needham rejected the observation frequently made, even by some learned men, that China is 'Westernising' herself. The term 'modernising' was much more apt. The age-old traditions of Confucianism and Taoism were still, and always would remain, the background of Chinese mentality—just as Christianity does of the mentality in the West. The idea that China has taken the philosophy of Marxism as her chief inspiration from the West is, again, a mistaken concept.

## Chinese Thought

The perennial philosophy of Chinese culture was from the beginning an organic materialism which left very little place for idealistic systems. It is probable that the leading philosophical thinkers of China throughout the ages would have welcomed dialectical materialism, could they have known of it, as an extension of the characteristic Chinese mode of thought. Indeed, there was some historical evidence for the view that the ideas of Chinese organic materialism entered European thinking by the intermediation of the Jesuit Mission in the 17th century, bearing fruit in the West from Leibniz onwards. So it was not surprising that the Chinese intelligentsia adopted dialectical materialism with such unanimity.

A great deal of bland ignorance about China exists. It was urgent, said Dr Needham, that certain truths be better understood—such as the evolution of the present system of government. There was no indigenous development of capitalism in Chinese civilisation; it was a system essentially foreign, never understood, and not

wanted by the people themselves. As there was no obvious reason why China should recapitulate all the stages of capitalist development, there was naturally much discussion in the 20's about the advisability of proceeding straight to a socialist organisation of society. One could almost summarise the whole of Chinese history in this century by saying that it was the gradual but irrevocable decision of this vast people to omit the capitalist stage of economic development and pass straight to socialism and ultimately to communism.

## Aims of SACU

An immense emphasis was placed on persuasion in the China of today, and this too was an inheritance. It had been said that we were witnessing the implementation of 'the ideals of the first Communist leadership to have had a Confucian education'. There had been little transcendental religion in China; in Taoism, Confucianism, and even Buddhism, there was no divine creator or law-giver, hence religious persecution was not in the Chinese tradition.

Dr Needham underlined the aims and objects of SACU. The British and Chinese people must come to know each other better. A necessary condition of our understanding of world affairs was that we make known the Chinese point of view on all kinds of matters, political as well as cultural, without bias or inhibition, yet also not without constructive comment and criticism. The society had not been designed for political action, but would be concerned with politics in so far as it would provide information on the political attitudes and activities of the Chinese. Having a friendly frame of mind to start with was essential to the objective of getting to know China better; the achievement of this would be a great contribution to the development of world peace and international comprehension.

In conclusion, Dr Needham offered three quotations from the Chinese classics which could stand as watchwords for the organisation now being inaugurated. The first: 'He who comes with the odour of enmity will invite the clash of weapons, he who comes with the fragrance of friendship will be loved like a brother.' Second: 'Where three men are walking together it is certain that one or other of them will be able to teach me something.' And lastly the great doctrine: 'Within the four seas, all men are brothers.'

## LEADING HAMPSTEAD PERSONALITIES HELP FOUND FIRST SACU BRANCH

'THE AIMS for which the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding works will have the good will and support of all right thinking people.' So said Alderman Samuel Fisher, Mayor of Camden, at the inaugural meeting of the Hampstead branch of the Society, which was held at Friends Meeting House, Heath Street, Hampstead, on Saturday, 18 September.

Alderman Fisher took the chair at the meeting and with him on the platform were Professor Joan Robinson, Professor of Economics, Cambridge University, Mr Jack Cooper, former Labour Party candidate for Hampstead and prominent member of the Camden Borough Council, Liao Hung-Ying and Mr Colin Penn. Among the many prominent Hampstead personalities in the audience was Mr Geoffrey Finsberg, deputy leader of the Conservative opposition on the Camden Borough Council.

Welcoming the formation of a branch of SACU in the Borough of Camden, Alderman Fisher said he considered that the question of friendship with China was of great importance. The more understanding there was between the peoples of various countries, the greater the chance of a decrease in world tensions. The aims of the Society would have the support of the members of the Camden Borough Council whatever their political affiliations and they would help to encourage its growth.

Professor Joan Robinson, the next speaker, said that many people were attracted to a society for Anglo Chinese understanding because they felt that through it they could make some small contribution to the peace of the world or because they felt that China had been treated badly and sought to make amends. She thought the main point was that in supporting such a society people were in reality helping themselves because they had an enormous amount to learn from the experience of China in the last

sixteen years. What struck her most on her various visits to China was the way the Communist Party tackled its problems with such common sense. The most important field in which this had been done was in agriculture, where the mistakes of other countries, including the Soviet Union, had been avoided.

The following speaker, Liao Hung-Ying, described the experiences of one of her nephews, a historian on the staff of a university in the north-east of China, who, along with thousands of other intellectuals and professionals, spent a few weeks each year living and working with farmers in the rural areas. This, she said, was seen by him as a collective—and not individual—way of repaying for the many years it took the fruits of the labours of hundreds of peasants to support one student at a university abroad.

But, the scheme went much deeper than that, she asserted, for the intellectuals helped to raise the level of general education during their stay on the farms. This was part of 'another revolution, which will shake the world as much as did the one in 1949'.

The formal motion to found the Hampstead branch of SACU was introduced by Cllr Jack Cooper, who commented that 'we, in the West, have not been brought up to the tradition of understanding the Chinese'. Pointing out that SACU was a non-party organisation and that its membership included representatives from all political parties, he hoped that this would be reflected in the new branch being founded.

The motion was seconded by Colin Penn who said that it was vital that the branch should become part of Hampstead life. He has no doubt that it would and that its varied programme would offer something to everyone.

The motion was unanimously approved by the more than 150 persons present.

## SACU Sets Up T.U. Committee

THE TRADE Union Committee of SACU, recently set up on the suggestion of Mr Ernie Roberts, chairman of the General Purposes Committee of SACU, has met twice and will have a third meeting on 20 October. The Committee have discussed plans to interest British trade unions in China and the work of the Society. Ways in which the services of SACU can be offered to trade union branches,

trades councils and shop stewards' committees, have also been considered.

Trade union members who are interested in the work of SACU are invited to get in touch with this committee, who will be most grateful for any ideas about how the work of the Society can be made more widely known throughout the trade union movement.

## Anglo-Chinese Exchanges

Trade delegations from China to the UK and vice versa have been numerous. In April a six-man Chinese textile mission arrived in London; a month later there followed a five-man metals and minerals group led by Mr Tsao Chung-shu, who headed the big Chinese trade mission to the UK in 1963; and in June came a delegation from the China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation.

On the British side, two groups are scheduled to leave for China this October. One represents five mining-machinery firms, and the other, nine companies interested in port installations. The organisation of the two groups represents something of a new departure. Firms in the mining and port installation fields submitted to the Chinese authorities lists of films, lectures and demonstrations which they could provide. The Chinese then indicated those which would have most bearing in their requirements. As a result high-level executive and technical personnel from the British firms will give lectures and demonstrations to their Chinese opposite numbers in Peking, Shanghai, and other industrial centres.

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In the past three years a number of British Teachers have been engaged by the Chinese Government to teach in language institutes in Peking and elsewhere. Now Chinese students have begun language training in the UK, and the third student group from Peking arrived in London this summer. The students have been taking courses at Ealing Technical College, where special facilities are being provided, but during the summer vacation many attended English language courses for foreigners at various British universities.

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This October, Imperial Chemical Industries is mounting in Tientsin the biggest overseas exhibition the company has ever organized. ICI will be showing industrial alcohols, plastics, pharmaceuticals, polyester fibres, insecticides, and many other items. A company spokesman has described the long-term trading opportunities in China as 'tremendous', and Mr Paul Chambers, ICI chairman, recently stated that 'China is a very attractive market'.

# SACU Presents European Premiere of 'CHINA!'

## ABOUT SACU

### Provincial Drive Gets Underway

THE GENERAL Purposes Committee of SACU, which meets once a month, has discussed at its recent meetings a number of important matters concerning the development of the Society, including the constitution and statement of aims of the Society; the delegation to China which left London for Peking on 18 September (see page one); membership drives in the following towns and districts—Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Essex, Cambridge, Sheffield, Bristol, Oxford, Plymouth and Manchester; the extension of SACU's library; and a programme of lectures to be held in central London.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 27 October.

### WEEKEND SCHOOLS

NEARLY ALL places at SACU's first weekend school have been taken up and only a few remain to be allocated. The programme is a full one, extending from Friday evening, 29 October to Sunday evening, 31 October. Speakers include Mr William Sewell, former head of Chemistry Department, West China University, Chengtu; Professor Joan Robinson, well known to SACU members; Mr Peter Swann, keeper, department of Eastern Art, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Mr Peter Townsend, author of *China Phoenix*; and Mr Colin Penn, ARIBA who lived in China from 1962 to 1964.

The School will be held at Plaw Hall, East Grinstead, Sussex and will cost £4.5.0 (non members £4.10.0).

The second weekend school will be held from 7 to 9 January, 1966 at the White House, University of Sussex, Haywards Heath. Accommodation will be in single study-bedrooms and the cost will be £4.10.0 (£4.15.0 for non-members).

The third weekend school will be held at Barrington House, Bourton-on-the-Water, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The school will run from Friday evening to Sunday teatime, 29 April to 1 May and the cost will be £3.2.6 (£3.7.6 for non-members).

THE ALL-TOO-SHORT colour film 'China!' filmed and edited by Felix Greene, who also wrote the commentary, is a uniquely successful documentary. The editing is superb and serves the vast scope of the film admirably. The historical newsreel footage of the 1920's and 30's made me wish that Mr Greene would compile and edit a full-length historical film on China using this material as a basis.

Every scene is interesting or exciting. Among those which remain long after seeing the film are the highly dramatic scenes depicting the building of a dam by sheer ingenuity and will, in the face of tremendous natural hazards, the charm of the storyteller performing a classic before an enthralled audience, and a glimpse behind the scenes of actors and actresses before and during the process of putting on their highly elaborate make-up and costumes.

My only criticism is that the film ended with a well-worn cliché—scenes of multitudes parading through Tienanmen Square amid a barrage of multi-coloured balloons. Colourful and eye-catching indeed. How could it not be? Artistically this is too easy, and contentwise it makes its point so sentimentally as to be self-defeating. This is a pity because the film is effective and convincing.

The commentary is always informative, intelligent and never obtrusive; a very successful documentary narration. One comes away wanting more which is, after all, the tribute to the excellence of a film. **K.A.**

### Informal, Informative Monthly Meetings

ON THE THIRD Thursday of each month, starting on 21 October at 7.30 pm there will be an evening of informal discussion at SACU headquarters to which all members are invited. It is hoped that on each occasion there will be one or two people present who have recently visited China and that members will take the opportunity to raise questions about China in an informal atmosphere.

### MP Active in Branch Formation

DAME JOAN VICKERS, Member of Parliament for Devonport Division of Plymouth, is taking an active part in the formation of a local branch.

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

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Professor Joan Robinson, FBA

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Chairman of General Purposes Committee: Mr Ernest Roberts

Secretary: Derek Bryan

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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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SACU premises at 24 Warren Street, London, W.1, include a large meeting room, a library where a wide range of Chinese publications is available, and general offices. Members are always welcome.

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SACU is governed by a Council of Management. A General Purposes Committee carries on the day-to-day work of the organisation, and Committees on the following matters are in being: membership and branches; trade unions; films; weekend schools; publications; and Central London activities.

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### Surgeon's Tour

MR J. S. HORN, FRCS, British surgeon working in Peking, is now in this country and has been making an extensive speaking tour during his stay here. He has spoken several times in London and the home counties, as well as in Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds and Edinburgh.

Dr Horn is adviser in Traumatology and Orthopaedics at the Peking Institute. He has lived in Peking for the past eleven years.