

Editorial

In August last year, this journal embarked on what was for it a completely new project: the sponsoring of a full-scale academic conference. The subject chosen was Chinese Communist literature and the articles printed in this special issue represent the fruits of the considerable amount of work put into the conference by its distinguished participants.

The conference was held from August 13–17 at the new Anglo-American conference centre run by the Ditchley Foundation at Ditchley Park near Oxford and much of the enjoyment of the proceedings sprang from the co-operativeness of the Ditchley Park staff and the charm of the Manor itself and its impressive grounds.

Ten papers were presented and thoroughly discussed. All the participants seemed conscious of the importance of establishing a sound basis for a critical approach to Chinese Communist literature at this first conference to be held on the topic in the West. Our only regret was that a few other scholars specialising in Chinese literature were unable to accept our invitation because of previous commitments. At some of the sessions, the participants were joined in their discussions by leading British specialists on contemporary China.

Two of the papers were not presented at the conference. Professor Hsia's "Twenty Years After the Yen-an Forum" was commissioned to provide a rounded conclusion to this special issue. Mr. Ng's "The Poetry of Mao Tse-tung" was offered separately and in view of the intrinsic interest in the topic, we decided that it ought also to be included.

When all contributed so thoughtfully to the discussions, one would not want to single out the work of any particular participant. But we would like to stress that whatever success the conference had was in large measure due to the ideas and efforts of Professor Cyril Birch. He also contributed considerable editorial advice for the preparation of this special issue.

Encounter

EDITED BY STEPHEN SPENDER AND MELVIN J. LASKY

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