# *Economic Necessity and Political Ideals in Educational Reform During the Cultural Revolution* *

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EDUCATIONAL reform has been one of the important issues raised during the Cultural Revolution, not merely because it belongs to the realm of culture but, more important, because it bears on the question of "cultivating revolutionary successors" and on the shaping of the whole future of China. Anyone seizing power wishes to keep it for a certain length of time; it is however a special feature of people's revolutions to set their goals on the prospect of a boundless future. In this regard, gaining power in education is not simply one side of the struggle for actual total power (mastering the "superstructure" as well as the "structure") it is the guarantee of everlasting rule, on the assumption that the mind is ultimately the only thing man can rely upon and which is entirely within his grasp. As one slogan puts it: "The earth may shake, heaven may fall, but we shall ever be faithful to Chairman Mao."

The issue of educational reform during the Cultural Revolution seems, in theoretical terms, to be mainly concerned with such political ideals as proletarian dictatorship and true socialism, together with the suppression of bourgeois or feudal attitudes and concepts. But on looking closer, these ideals appear to spring from a very stringent economic necessity. So much so that, in some reports on educational reform, political and ideological considerations are almost discarded and the reform proposals put forward on principally economic grounds.[1] I have tried in this article to assess the respective weight of economic necessity and political ideals in the educational reform in an attempt to shed some light on the nature of the new "world outlook" which the Cultural Revolution advances. The analysis follows the dialectical process through which the new order is being worked out: that is, criticism of the old system, proposals for reform and the implementation of reform.

## CRITICISM AGAINST THE OLD SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The "old" educational system under attack was essentially the system as it existed in 1965. Criticism against it was launched at the very

* This article was completed in December 1969 and does not include any information available only after that date.

[1] *Jen-min jih-pao* (*People's Daily*) (Peking), 19 May 1969, p. 3, report on Kuangshan district in Honan.

beginning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in June 1966. Since then, the contents and main targets have not changed. They come under three headings: the inadequacy of school enrolment; the contents and methods of education; and the general orientation of the old system, dealing with who goes to school, what is taught at school and what the schools are intended for.

The main criticism against the inadequacy of school enrolment was that children from poor and lower-middle peasant families were barred from the greater part of the educational ladder. Ostracism of workers' children occurred, it seems, only at the middle school, college and university level. The direct responsibility for the exclusion of those children has been imputed first to various institutional features of the schools, such as the examination system and age limits. The entrance examination to middle schools and universities is a subject of major concern in towns.[2] The entrance examination to primary school was a feature of well-known or special institutions in urban areas but it existed also for some schools in the countryside, and the injustice of the system has been severely attacked.[3] But peasants were more concerned about the rules on age limits, which excluded a lot of youngsters from elementary or advanced educational opportunities, and about the promotion examinations, which eliminated a number of "slow" children, most of them sons and daughters of the poorest.[4] Actually it is the marks system with its corollaries of promotion and repeating that has come under the fiercest, steadiest and most united attack, as the key stratagem which excluded children of the working class. The marks system has been attacked on ideological grounds. It is pointed out that this system puts intellectual culture, self-interest and advancement above anything else, thus endangering socialism.[5] However, the theoretical foundation of

[2] The attack was led by the 1966 graduates of Peking No. 1 girls middle school who protested against the system of admission to institutions of higher learning in a letter of 6 June 1966 to the Central Committee and Chairman Mao. On 13 June 1966, a circular from the Central Committee declared that the entrance examinations to institutions of higher learning should be radically reformed and that those institutions would not enroll new students for six months. The two documents appear in *Kuang-ming jih-pao* (*KMJP*), 18 June 1966. Though some later reports casually refer to somebody as a first-year university student (*e.g.*, *People's Daily*, 16 September 1968, p. 3, which mentions a first-year student of Korean in Peking University), there is no evidence that universities and colleges have regularly resumed admission.

[3] New China News Agency (NCNA), 28 October 1968, in *Survey of China Mainland Press* (*SCMP*) (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General), No. 4291, p. 15.

[4] See, for example, *People's Daily*, 18 October 1968, p. 1, in *Current Background* (*CB*) (Hong Kong), No 868, pp. 1–5, on criticism in a Chekiang rural area, and *People's Daily*, 7 March 1968 (*CB*, No. 854), on criticism in the Ts'ao-ch'ang-ti middle school in Peking.

[5] Among numerous other references, see NCNA, 5 November 1967 (*CB*, No. 846), on Shanghai schools; *People's Daily*, 21 November 1967, p. 2 (*CB*, No. 846), on Peking Normal University; *ibid.* 28 October 1967, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 846), on Yenan middle school in Tientsin.

this system—the underlying assumption that it is possible to measure accurately the value of an individual and place it on a scale—has hardly been analysed and questioned. In fact, the complaints against the marks system are basically economic: the existence of tuition fees makes the matter crucial. In every report from the countryside, it is stressed that children from poor and lower-middle peasant families simply cannot afford to repeat a class, something which is almost inevitable with the marks system. This grievance is thus related to the general complaint against tuition fees and the cost of education, which are viewed by a majority of peasants as a clear discrimination against their children. While this issue is often omitted in reports from the cities, it is always raised in those from rural areas, and in a number of cases it is the first charge against the old system. A common additional charge is that the school is located too far away, so that the children cannot get there on foot, while their families cannot afford to pay boarding fees.

Though the cost of education varied from one school to another and from one locality to another, some details might be useful here. In a fashionable, well-equipped kindergarten in a Peking suburb, the fees were 25 *yuan* a month in 1965 (11 *yuan* for board, 12·4 *yuan* for tuition and 1·6 *yuan* for medical insurance). In another the fees went up to 30 *yuan*. At the same time, one of the "pilot" primary schools in Peking demanded 2·5 *yuan* tuition fees per term and 4 *yuan* per month for lunch on weekdays. A rate of 1·5 to 3 *yuan* per term was fairly common in the countryside as well as in cities. In a Liaoning brigade, in order to attend the local school, each child had to pay 12 to 13 *yuan* a year.[6] In middle schools tuition fees could rise to 2 *yuan* per month with an average of 10 to 15 *yuan* per month for room and board. Even where no tuition fees were required, parents had to pay some 3 to 10 *yuan* a year for books and stationery, according to the grade of the pupil. Recently, a rural brigade in Szechwan complained that board and pocket money alone for a child in lower-middle school cost 100 to 200 *yuan* a year.[7] However, tuition fees did not exist at college level. At Ts'inghua University (Peking) in 1965 the largest scholarships were of 19·5 *yuan* per month, which may be regarded as the minimum expenses of a university student. Students in Peking could hardly spend less than 15 *yuan* a month for food, and many of them, even from rural families, did not get a full scholarship and had to rely on their parents for a monthly subsidy of 5 to 15 *yuan*. Such figures may not seem

[6] *KMJP*, 15 November 1968, p. 1, this did not include board. Unless otherwise specified, the preceding and following figures are from direct inquiries by the author in various places in 1965 and early 1966.

[7] *People's Daily*, 31 October 1968, p. 2 (*CB*, No. 868).

excessive to a family where both husband and wife work as cadres each earning some 100 *yuan* a month. The factory worker who has three children and earns 50 *yuan* finds it more difficult, even if his wife works. But what about the commune member who may well make 400 *yuan* (payment in kind included) a year in a wealthy brigade in the suburbs of Sian but gets only 44 *yuan* (payment in kind not included) a year in an advanced Shantung brigade, and 12 *yuan* (payment in kind not included) a year in a Yunnan village? In rural areas, many children could not go to school because they had to earn their living or were needed at home while the mother went out in the fields. In June 1969 a Hunan middle-school teacher reported with concern that for such economic reasons only 8 out of 23 school-age children in the brigade where he was sent could go to school.[8]

Criticisms of the contents and methods of education stress the length of studies, the heavy curriculum, the bookishness, and the abstruse and smothering character of the teaching with its emphasis on cramming and memorizing. The six-year primary and the six-year secondary courses are said to be excessive, especially since much of what is taught is superfluous and over-elaborate. Staggering under heavy homework, students are said to rise early and go to sleep late. They stay indoors, ruining their health or becoming short-sighted. Tied down to books, they stagger from concept to concept and loose all real power of analysis. The prominence given to academic culture leaves no time for politics and, above all, no time for the study of the thought of Mao Tse-tung.[9]

A more specific charge in rural areas is that since the schools were under the *hsien* Education and Culture Bureau and were directed in a uniform way, local needs and conditions were not taken into account. For instance, the school vacations in a Chekiang brigade were fixed according to the needs of the rice-growing areas, in spite of the fact that these particular villages were engaged in cultivating tea.[10] The Bureaux insisted on building schools at the *hsien* seats and commune centres rather than in the brigades; and it was impossible for villagers to dismiss a bad teacher because he was a "cadre of the State."[11] Peasants referred to the schoolmaster as one who on

[8] *People's Daily*, 18 June 1969, p. 3, article by Liu I-nung.

[9] Among numerous articles expounding these various grievances: *People's Daily*, 28 October 1967, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 846), report on Yenan middle school in Tientsin; NCNA, 5 November 1967 (*CB*, No. 846), report on primary and secondary schools in Shanghai; *People's Daily*, 21 November 1967 (*CB*, No. 846), report from Peking Normal University; NCNA, 25 November 1967 (*CB*, No. 846); NCNA, 28 October 1968 (*SCMP*, No. 4291), report on Heilungkiang brigades.

[10] *People's Daily*, 18 October 1968, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 868), report from Chekiang.

[11] *Ibid.* 25 October 1968, p. 1, report from Liaoning.

a beautiful summer day goes humming carelessly to fish in a pond, while everyone around him toils hard under the sun.[12]

The defects of the old system were said to be related to its general orientation. Revisionism and feudal and bourgeois world outlook dominated the educational system owing to the lasting influence of old-type intellectuals and the treacherous policies of Liu Shao-ch'i and capitalist-roaders in the Party. Teaching was divorced from the real struggle—class struggle, a struggle for production and scientific experiment. Education, it was said, was "self-cultivation behind a closed door,"[13] turning out young people estranged from their environment, ready to become the docile tools of a capitalist restoration. Such institutions as the farm-study or work-study schools, in their time hailed as utterly revolutionary, have been criticized by city-dwellers, who did not belong to them, as creations of Liu Shao-ch'i, hateful on two counts; because they did not put politics and Mao Tse-tung's thought first; and because, as the full-time schools continued, they amounted to setting up the "double-track" system of capitalist countries.[14] At the same time, in the countryside, many of these schools have been contrasted with the regular schools as much more reliable politically and giving a useful training, closely linked to practice.[15]

On the key issue of the general orientation of the educational system, two different accusations are put forward. One is the charge of cultivating an elite. The system, it is claimed, fostered a promotion-conscious mentality. Liu Shao-ch'i is charged with having spread the reactionary tenet "to study in order to become a mandarin." As the Yenan middle school in Tientsin put it:

> In the revisionist view . . . the aim should be to cultivate people capable of serving as cadres, engineers, *hsien* magistrates and even secretaries of provincial committees, that is to cultivate parasites and revisionist seedlings divorced from the practice of the Three Great Revolutions, class struggle, struggle for production and scientific experience.[16]

[12] "Abstract from a conference of representatives from progressive units of educational revolution of Honan province," *KMJP*, 16 November 1968, p. 1.

[13] *People's Daily*, 28 October 1967, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 846), report from Yenan middle school in Tientsin.

[14] *Ibid.* 29 October 1968, p. 2 (*CB*, No. 868), report from Yentai; *ibid.* 2 December 1968, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 870), article of Wu Yen-yin; *KJMP*, 7 July 1967, p. 4; *ibid.* 18 July 1967, p. 3; *ibid.* 26 November 1967, p. 2, from Peking University of Agriculture.

[15] *People's Daily*, 23 October 1968, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 868), on Honan; *ibid.* 25 October 1968, p. 1, report on Liaoning; *ibid.* 26 October 1968, p. 1, report on Kiangsu, Hankiang district; *ibid.* 12 November 1968, p. 3, report on Hunan; *Hung-ch'i* (*Red Flag*), No. 4 (1968), p. 25, report on Kiangsi, all translated in *CB*, No. 868.

[16] *People's Daily*, 28 October 1967, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 846), report from Yenan middle school in Tientsin.

Another report said:

> Bourgeois say: if graduates just become ordinary workers, what is the use of having colleges? They declare that their purpose in running universities is to turn out highly trained "experts," such as scientists, engineers, lawyers, economists, administrators, whom they regard as the "elite" of society, superior to the working people.
>
> The bourgeois system serves to maintain the rule of the capitalist class over the working people and make science, technology and arts its monopoly.
>
> China is a state where the working people are the masters, it is inconceivable that the working class should run colleges to turn out people who look down upon physical labour and the labouring people. Of course the working class requires its own intellectuals who master science, technology and other knowledge, but in the first place, schools and colleges should turn out true revolutionaries who are faithful to the cause of the working class and who always remain one with the working people. . . .
>
> The Soviet Union provides a lesson: its universities produce a privileged stratum of bourgeois intellectuals who are the "elite" of society sitting on the backs of the working people. . . .[17]

The issue at stake is that of producing people who gain a higher status through education and consequently feel and behave as superiors.

The other charge, which is uttered by different people, does not focus on elitism but on capacity. It could be summed up thus: the old system turns out an elite which is incompetent and useless. Peasants say: "The more they go to school, the more stupid they become."[18] There is a whole folklore of racy anecdotes featuring the palefaced, thin, dogmatic, dissatisfied graduate versus the quick-minded efficient, hard toiling, open-hearted "local expert," who spent a short time in a less sophisticated school but grasps better the thought of Mao Tse-tung. He cannot grow Michurin apples or Caucasian maize, but he knows all about rice and wheat; he works himself instead of giving orders; he listens to the villagers and helps them.[19]

In cities and towns, protests are mainly against the notion of "elite" itself. This accounts for the radicalism of some reform proposals which suggested nothing less than the wholesale abolition of schools. Although these proposals were dismissed later on as "anarchist," they suggest a widespread sense of guilt, even of anti-intellectualism, among young Chinese intellectuals, not unlike some recent attitudes of their western brothers.

In rural areas the issue tends to focus rather on inefficiency, inca-

[17] NCNA, 25 September 1968 (*SCMP*, No. 4269).

[18] *KMJP*, 2 September 1968, p. 2 (*SCMP*, No. 4269), report from Laoshan district in Shantung province.

[19] *People's Daily*, 26 October 1968, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 868), report from Kiangsu.

pacity, waste of time, money and talent. Education is described as an investment which does not yield interest.

The criticism against the old educational system thus mixes up economic and political motives, with, however, the latter predominant. These political motives account for the deliberate darkening of the pre-1966 education picture, which is obvious to anyone who is acquainted with Chinese schools before the Cultural Revolution. By 1965, Chinese education was very far from being a mere copy of Soviet or American bourgeois education. As will be seen below, most of the educational experiments brought in by the Cultural Revolution had been tried under various forms in Yenan or during the Great Leap Forward, and not all of them had been discontinued. It would be a travesty of the facts to regard all Chinese students, or even teachers, prior to 1966 as a host of petty mandarins with their hands in their sleeves. In education, as in other matters, there has been a long struggle between the revolutionary line and the revisionist line, and according to many reports, the latter has not always prevailed.[20] If the general critique against the educational system holds true, it must be understood as often being directed against mere intentions or tendencies. The picture is deliberately drawn in black colours, as is frequently the case in campaigns designed to arouse powerful reactions.

## Reform Proposals

The number and variety of educational reform proposals show that powerful reactions were indeed aroused. From the Chinese press it can be seen that these reform proposals fall into four stages, following directives given from the top by Chairman Mao or the Central Committee.

Before February 1967, when the call to "resume classes to make revolution" was launched, few detailed reform projects appeared. Some tentative proposals were made in early June 1966 with the decision of the Central Committee on 13 June to reform the entrance examination and postpone admission to universities.[21] But soon after those who made them were accused of revisionism and reformism. One of the charges brought against the work teams in early August was that they tried to divert the students from politics by asking them to discuss educational reform. Only guiding principles were given, incorporated in documents dealing with other questions. Such is the paragraph relating to students

[20] See the detailed articles on the two lines in education in *KMJP*, 20 July 1967, p. 3, 7 July 1968, p. 4, 18 July 1968, p. 3. This last article states that from 80·3 per cent. in 1958 the enrolment of school-age children in primary schools had fallen to 56·1 per cent. in 1962.

[21] *Cf.* note 2.

in the text where Chairman Mao calls on the country to become a big school of revolution [22] and the tenth of the Sixteen Points, which is almost identical. The two texts ruled that the control of the bourgeoisie over the schools should be ended, that the curriculum should be shortened and revolutionized, that students should also learn agriculture, industry and military science and that they should criticize the bourgeoisie. Greeted with enthusiasm, these directives helped to intensify the attack against the old system and its supporters. During this period, however, the focus was on general political issues, and no proposal for the carrying out of the new pedagogical principles received publicity.

After the great revolutionary exchanges of the summer and autumn of 1966, from 1 December, the Central Committee and the State Council repeatedly called for students and teachers to return to their schools.[23] On 4 February 1967, the Central Committee issued a draft regulation on the resumption of courses in all primary schools after the Spring Festival, and on 19 February another document was issued for the middle schools.[24] On 7 March 1967, three important documents were published. One was an editorial in the *People's Daily* entitled "Primary and Middle Schools Resume Classes to Make Revolution." It called for the continuation of the Cultural Revolution inside the schools, developing the criticism and struggle against reactionaries by studying Chairman Mao's Quotations and the Cultural Revolution documents, as well as some science and language courses. This summons was ascribed to the Central Committee, which also issued a circular entitled "Draft Regulations Governing The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Currently Under Way in Universities, Colleges and Schools—For Discussion and Trial Implementation." [25] Everybody, it said, should be back in their unit before 20 March [26] and should undergo short-term military and political training; leniency should be shown, except to people in authority taking the capitalist road and reactionary academic authorities; students and teachers should unite and create an organ of

[22] This document was quoted in the *People's Daily* editorial of 1 August 1966, without any mention of its real date. Its source—a letter of Mao Tse-tung to Lin Piao—and its date—7 May 1966—appear only in the *People's Daily* editorial of 7 May 1967, urging a response to Chairman Mao's call.

[23] See the various documents translated in *CB*, No. 852, pp. 22, 26, 59, 65, 120, 122 and 127.

[24] They are translated in *CB*, No. 852, pp. 62 and 87 and referred to and quoted in a report on Peking and Shanghai primary schools by *KMJP*, 7 March 1967, p. 1, and in a report from Tientsin Yenan middle school, *KMJP*, 28 October 1967.

[25] Translated in *CB*, No. 852, p. 99. Precise reference to it is found in a report on East China Normal University (*KMJP*, 5 July 1967, p. 2).

[26] On 19 March 1967, a circular from the Central Committee said that the plan for resuming country-wide revolutionary exchanges in and after the coming spring, which had been announced in December, was cancelled (*CB*, No. 852, p. 108).

power to lead the Cultural Revolution; the Red Guards should be consolidated and rectified. The third document was a directive from Chairman Mao. It was published by the *People's Daily* only on 8 March 1968, although it was based on the experience of the Yenan middle school in Tientsin, an account of which appeared on 21 March 1967 in the *Tientsin jih-pao*.[27] Its wording has similarities to that of the Draft Regulations of the Central Committee; to some it may seem only a later version of the regulations,[28] but the directive adds a very important point: the role of the army—which had in fact intervened in the Yenan middle school experience. It reads:

> . . . The army should give political and military training in the universities, middle schools and the higher classes of primary schools, stage by stage and group by group. It should help in reopening school classes, in strengthening the organization, in establishing a leading organ of the three-in-one alliance and in carrying out the task of struggle-criticism-transformation. It should first make experiments at selected points and acquire experience and then popularize it step by step. . . .

The admonishments from the top left room for a fair amount of initiative. The only obligation of the young people was to get out of the streets and go back to school; an order which many obeyed with reluctance.[29] During this period, until the end of October 1967, the reform proposals dealt mainly with the organization of power within the schools. Experiments and suggestions were made regarding the achievement of the Great Alliance, whether on the basis of the various militant organizations inside the school or on that of the teaching classes.[30] Some further opinions were expressed on the setting up of school revolutionary committees with the help and participation of the People's Liberation Army.[31]

[27] See *SCMP*, No. 3957, pp. 7–10, which translates the article as it was reproduced by the *Wen-hui pao*, 24 March 1967.

[28] March and April 1967 reports on educational revolution only refer to the Central Committee Draft Regulations, which raises doubts as to whether Mao's directive had been publicized as such. However, the most important passages are reproduced, without date, in the 16 May 1967 editorial of the *People's Daily*. Reference to it under the name of "March 7th directive," with an allusion to the Tientsin Yenan middle school example, is found only in the *People's Daily* editorial of 25 October 1967. *CB*, No. 852 (6 May 1968), pp. 96–98 translates the March 7th directive and a circular of the Central Committee dated 8 March 1967, ordering the study of Mao's directive as well as another document called "Understanding of the Tientsin Yenan Middle School in realizing the Great Alliance and reorganizing consolidating and developing the Red Guards in the whole school, with the teaching class as the foundation," which was reproduced below with the date 6 March 1967.

[29] See for instance the article on a Canton primary school in *KMJP*, 7 July 1967, p. 3; also *KMJP*, 15 July 1967, p. 2. As to universities and colleges, the lead was taken by the Peking Aeronautical Institute, which resumed courses on 3 July, followed by other, mostly technical, institutions (*KMJP*, 5, 14, 15 and 19 July 1967).

[30] *KMJP*, 16 May 1967, p. 1; *ibid.* 17 May 1967, p. 2; *ibid.* 7 July 1967, p. 2; *ibid.* 12 July 1967, p. 3.

[31] For instance, *KMJP*, 11 July 1967, p. 2.

In the heated political struggle of the spring and summer of 1967, educational change could not progress smoothly. A "black wind of anarchism" blew everywhere. On 25 October 1967, the *People's Daily* had to reiterate more earnestly the call to resume classes.[32] This time, however, the editorial quoted the paragraph relating to students in Chairman Mao's directive of 7 May 1966[33]:

> Students, while taking studies as the main task, should learn other things as well, namely, besides learning literature they must also learn industry, agriculture and military science, and they must also criticize the bourgeoisie. The duration of the course of study must be shortened and education must be revolutionized. The situation in which bourgeois intellectuals rule our schools cannot be allowed to continue.

This instruction sets the aims of the educational reform. The editorial insisted that this reform could not be achieved without actually teaching and studying. It commented:

> . . . In the process of resuming classes to make revolution, teachers and cadres should constantly remind themselves that the work in which they are engaged has a great bearing on the cultivation of successors to the proletarian revolution. They should have the courage and determination to thoroughly criticize the old educational system and completely break out of their own bourgeois world outlook. They should realize that they are both educators and educated and that their students are wiser than they in many respects. They must go to the students, mingle with them, establish a new socialist type of teacher-student relationship. . . .

The directive and the editorial are especially noteworthy on two points: one is the contents of education, the other one is the question of world outlook and attitude, particularly of teachers. As far as the contents are concerned, school-training should give young people several strings to their bows. In a way it amounts to a dismissal of the notion of *chuan*, usually translated as "expert." However, one should remember that *chuan* in Chinese does not mean "expert" or "skilled" so much as "specialized" in one single field. Dedication to the study of a narrow technique does not necessarily imply proficiency in its application. Peasants and workers mentioned hundreds of cases where highly trained personnel stumbled over technical problems which they themselves finally succeeded in solving by discarding the blind worship of dogmatic rules and principles. Besides, in China as elsewhere, employment planning is difficult. If young people cannot, and above all will not, do jobs which do not fall exactly within their special domain, the economic balance and progress might be endangered. Without a

[32] The editorial is entitled "Universities, middle and primary schools must all resume classes to make revolution."

[33] See above, note 22.

doubt, too many academic scientists and technicians have been trained in recent years. Not infrequently a university graduate in physics or chemistry would be found holding some desk job in a big city administrative office. This was due not only to bureaucratic aberrations. The fact was that the massive effort started in 1958 to enrol more students in the scientific departments had not been completely discontinued, while the rate of industrialization launched by the Great Leap Forward had been much slowed, and the basic orientation of education had moved from people's science to specialists' science. The countryside was in desperate need of more, and more professional manpower, but new trainees were too learned, and equally too ignorant, to be of real use. At the same time, the already over-staffed urban industry could not absorb them all.

Versatile people were and still are needed, but versatile in concrete things. There is no idea of a reversion to the mandarin type of education—general abstract knowledge without expertise. The required study of industry, agriculture and military science, besides specialization in a particular subject, is to be understood as thoughtful work experience in those activities to familiarize the student with some of their basic principles. The value of such an education in a country where a rural economy prevails and remains largely non-differentiated, is self-evident. It meets the criticism voiced by the villagers who want the hydraulic engineer sent to them to be able to tell rice from wheat in the fields, and to lend a hand in repairing a machine.

But the question is one of moral and mental attitude even more than of variety or practicality of the students' intellectual equipment. Young people must be accustomed to adapt themselves to any situation and make the best of it. They should be open-minded, perceptive and active. Their cardinal virtue ought to be intellectual humility. All this depends on the "proletarian world-outlook" as opposed to the "bourgeois world outlook," which means serving the collective interests of the majority instead of the self-interest of an elite. The "bourgeois" [34] scientist may show humility in front of his colleagues, in order to transcend them later on, but not in front of ordinary people. Experience in industry and agriculture at the basic level is meant to develop a proletarian world outlook in the students' minds, giving them not only a sense of reality and relativity useful to any intellectual worker, but also a personal feeling for society with its contradictions and struggles. Military instruction is intended to develop physical endurance, to teach

[34] The epithet "bourgeois" applies to features prevailing among the socio-economic group traditionally called "bourgeoisie." It does not imply that all people belonging to this group by birth share all these characteristics (though most of them do more or less), neither that people from other groups may not be "bourgeois."

some of the skills of the People's Liberation Army, and even more its spirit. Upon the transformation of the teacher himself lies much of the fate of revolutionary education, as it is he who sets a living example to his students and can influence them deeply. The intention is by no means to cultivate "political parrots" as spiteful critics word it—in any case Chairman Mao says that students must take studies as their main task. Neither is mystic idealism the aim, but real efficiency to achieve a rate of modernization which cannot be truly and fully brought about by revisionist bourgeois education.[35]

The democratic basis of the educational revolution was stressed in an injunction from Mao broadcast on 2 November:

> The proletarian revolution in education should be carried out by relying on the mass of revolutionary students, teachers and workers inside the schools, by relying on the activitists among them, namely those proletarian revolutionaries who are determined to carry the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution through to the end.[36]

The late October and early November 1967 directives stirred up new reform proposals focusing on the general organization of school work. Several tendencies appeared. One was to suggest rebuilding the school like an army with its battalions and companies, minutely scheduled periods of drill, study and productive work, military virtues and discipline. The teacher should play the role of an ordinary soldier among the pupils and, like a company cadre in the army, should make revolution and work together with the pupils.[37] Another trend rejected compulsory methods and showed a strong reluctance to rebuild a system. As a group from Peking Normal University put it:

> From the bourgeois point of view, system means authority and compulsory methods should be adopted to make pupils study. From the proletarian point of view, the human factor and politico-ideological work come first while system is secondary and auxiliary. Only by arousing people's initiative and consciousness is it possible to teach and study well.[38]

Along these principles the practice of promotion and repeating could be abolished. Instead of an entrance examination, one could combine recommendation with selection. Spare-time school students would be admitted to higher institutions, without age limit, and eventually in another than the first year. The curriculum should be flexible.

[35] For an interesting analysis of the distortion of "modernization" by the revisionists, see the article by a group from the Education Ministry in *KMJP*, 20 July 1967, p. 3.
[36] *People's Daily*, 3 November 1967, p. 1.
[37] This is the scheme of the Yenan middle school in Tientsin (see *People's Daily*, 28 October 1967, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 846)), and of the Peking Forestry Institute (see *People's Daily*, 22 November 1967, p. 2 (*CB*, No. 846)); though under the name of a "commune," T'ung-chi University proposed a very similar type of strict organization (see *People's Daily*, 3 November 1967, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 846)).
[38] *People's Daily*, 3 November 1967, p. 1 (*CB*, No. 846).

Others, flaunting the banner of " to rebel is justified," maintained that to resume classes to make revolution was " slave-mentality," the 7 March directive being " patchy reformism, not revolution but reaction." The great alliance they called the " big hodge-podge," and the three-in-one combination the " three-in-one conglomeration." Criticism and repudiation of the revisionist line, they said, were divorced from class struggle, disregarded state affairs and had nothing in common with the rebels. Schools, and especially universities, should be abolished; students and teachers would be distributed among communes and factories.

Judging by the relentless criticism against them, these last opinions, which were branded as anarchist, seem to have been fairly widespread.[39] This fact partly accounts for the stress on military example and discipline, particularly from March 1968 on, as well as for the call on the workers and peasants to help reform teaching and do the ideological work.[40] While enforcing discipline, however, a careful attempt was made to point out the difference between " proletarian discipline " and the " organization discipline " of the bourgeoisie, the former being one willingly accepted and consciously obeyed.[41] Participation of workers and peasants in school affairs remained informal except in a few places,[42] but the idea of unceasingly seeking their advice on educational matters, and entrusting them with the leadership of students' and teachers' manual labour and ideological transformation was put forward as a way of abiding by Chairman Mao's directives.[43]

The fourth stage in the reform projects started in late July 1968, and soon brought to the fore the rural schools. On 22 July 1968, the *People's Daily* published a " recent " directive from Chairman Mao:

> It is *still* necessary to have universities; here I refer mainly to colleges of science and engineering. However, it is essential to shorten the length

[39] On the spreading, contents and criticism of these opinions, see for instance the editorial of the *People's Daily*, 26 November 1967; *KMJP*, 4 January 1968, p. 3, on schools in Wuhan; NCNA, 12 January 1968, on the Shih-ching-shan middle school; *KMJP*, 29 February 1968, p. 1, on Peking schools; *ibid.* 3 March 1968, p. 2, on a Shanghai school; *ibid.* 11 March 1968, p. 3, on Peking schools; *ibid.* 12 March 1968, p. 2, on Chengchow and Wuhan schools; *ibid.* 15 March 1968, pp. 1–2.

[40] For instance, *KMJP*, 28 December 1967, p. 3, in Chekiang schools; *ibid.* 13 January 1968, in Shih-ching-shan middle school in Peking; *ibid.* 14 May 1968, in Haitien schools near Peking.

[41] *KMJP*, 21 March 1968, p. 1, in an article on schools in Shihchiachuang.

[42] In the Hsi-chou primary school of the Hsin-tang commune in Kwangtung province, a Mao Tse-tung's thought study-class had been formed, which played the role of a kind of school council. It was a " four-in-one " combination of pupils and teachers, pupils' parents, brigade cadres and production brigade cadres. At the time of the report (*KMJP*, 7 May 1968, p. 4), their experience was being popularized elsewhere in the district. There seemed to be more formal organization in the case of the Ho-t'ao commune near Ts'ingtao (see *KMJP*, 28 May 1968, pp. 1–2) where it was stated that peasants not only taught in the school but shared in its leadership, and that the students and teachers became ordinary commune members.

[43] *KMJP*, 13 June 1968, p. 2, on a Shanghai middle school; *ibid.* 27 June 1968, p. 1, on a Kansu school.

> of schooling, revolutionize education, put proletarian politics in command and take the road of the Shanghai machine-tools plant in training technicians from among the workers and peasants with practical experience and who should return to production after a few years of study.[44]

This statement settled the upper level of the new fabric. It put an end to disputes on the expediency of running institutions of higher education. The Shanghai machine-tools plant experience showed that engineers and technicians directly promoted from among workers with practical experience were more efficient than university graduates.[45] Their training was faster and therefore cost less. They were generally more progressive, more concerned with common interest, less tied down by pride and prejudice. Consequently, the plant staff suggested that, while continuing the practice of promoting technicians directly from among the workers, young workers who had graduated from lower or higher middle school and who had two to five years' experience of work should be selected to study in the universities and colleges. University graduates should never be immediately appointed as cadres but serve first as ordinary workers, to get a "certificate of ability" from the peasants and workers. Later on, according to practical needs, some might take part in technical work while still doing fixed periods of manual work, others continuing to be workers and peasants. Though stressing the shortcomings of university graduates, the Shanghai machine-tools plant report was far less harsh about formal education than many other documents. There was no suggestion that the direct promotion of workers was the best possible method for getting technicians. Light and shade was introduced into the text itself by the use of such expressions as "relatively," "rather more," "generally." The report ushered in the rehabilitation of basic theoretical studies which by this time were supported also by the first workers' propaganda teams sent to the school.[46]

Very soon, however, attention was transferred from the upper level of the educational system to its base, as it would have been difficult to build a new system from the top down. In his article "The working class must exercise leadership in everything," published on 25 August, Yao Wen-yuan conveyed three "recent" directives from Chairman Mao, one of which applied especially to education:

[44] *People's Daily*, 22 July 1968, p. 1. Italics are mine.

[45] The report on the Shanghai machine-tools plant was published also in the *People's Daily*, 22 July 1968.

[46] In Peking the first workers' propaganda team had been sent to Ts'ing-hua University on 27 July 1968 (*People's Daily*, 29 January 1969, p. 1). By the end of August several scores had been dispatched to other schools in the capital (*People's Daily*, 27 August 1968, p. 1). In Canton, according to witnesses, the workers entered Sun Yat-sen University in July. On the opinion of the workers' teams about theoretical studies, see for instance, *KMJP*, 7 August 1969, p. 1; *People's Daily*, 14 April 1969, p. 4, from Tsitsihar city.

> In carrying out the proletarian revolution in education it is essential to have working-class leadership; it is essential for the masses of workers to take part and, in co-operation with Liberation Army fighters, bring about a revolutionary "three-in-one" combination, together with the activitists among the students, teachers and workers in the schools who are determined to carry the proletarian revolution through to the end. The workers' propaganda teams should stay permanently in the schools and take part in fulfilling all the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation in the schools, and they will always lead the schools. In the countryside, the schools should be managed by the poor and lower-middle peasants—the most reliable ally of the working class.[47]

Immediately an increasing number of reports came out on rural schools run by brigades. On 14 October the *Red Flag* stated:

> It seems that it is quite possible that the rural areas can realize more speedily than the cities Chairman Mao's thinking on the proletarian revolution in education. This is because the superiority of the poor and lower-middle peasants can be established more easily in the schools there. It offers new proof of the pressing need to send Mao Tse-tung propaganda teams of workers, with fighters of the People's Liberation Army participating, to the schools in the cities.[48]

The importance of these documents of the summer 1968 lies in the fact that they keep the idea of a whole system of schools as a distinct institution performing a definite task in the state, and that they suggest a new type of leadership in education. Consequently, a number of specific reform proposals sprang up, relating to every aspect of the educational system: curriculum, leadership inside the school, links of the school with the society and the state. Comparatively few of these projects relate to institutions of higher learning. There were, however, suggestions about moving the technical colleges to the places for which they were supposed to train people—agriculture institutes to the countryside, polytechnical institutes to the factories—and integrating them with *collective* production. Instead of working together in a separate workshop or field (as was generally the case previously during the manual work period), or even on the school grounds, the students would be scattered among ordinary workers and share their regular work.[49] Others insisted, on the contrary, that the right solution was that each department or institute should establish its own factory, as in 1958.[50] As to the departments of humanities, one finds little more than general statements that they must be integrated with society.

The bulk of the reform proposals dealt with primary and middle schools. On 14 November 1968,[51] the *People's Daily* printed a letter

[47] *Hung-ch'i* (*Red Flag*) (Peking), No. 2 (1968), p. 4.
[48] *Red Flag*, No. 4 (1968), p. 24.
[49] For instance, *People's Daily*, 5 September 1968, p. 2; *ibid.* 23 October 1968, p. 2.
[50] *KMJP*, 19 July 1969, p. 3, in Peking Normal University and Nankai University.
[51] Actually the letter is dated 23 October 1968.

from two primary school teachers of the Ma-chi brigade from Chia-hsiang district in Shantung on the convenience of having the local school directly run by the brigade with the teaching staff integrated into the brigade as ordinary members, sharing in the work-point system. The advantages were said to be both political and ideological: the school being under the direct rule of the brigade Party branch, control could be closer and tighter, especially if, as suggested, teachers were employed in their home brigade only, instead of being moved from one place to another; the school would truly become part of the village and its teaching could be linked to reality. The advantages were also economic. The brigade could benefit immediately from the help of the school in such painful tasks as accounts; later on, the new type of school graduate would meet local needs better. But, above all, the system would cost less money for more efficiency. The sums spent by the state on salaries, building and repairs could be allocated to agricultural and industrial aid and to the defence budget. Managing their own school finances, the brigades would be free to abolish tuition fees, reduce expenditure and support schools through the source of income most suitable to them—for instance, through contributions in kind—thus enabling more children to receive education.

Reform proposals from the cities openly aimed at emulating the countryside. They varied between having the schools managed by factories, by neighbourhood organization, by suburban communes or by all together.[52] Some wished to set up a separate administration for the school, others preferred that the school be merged with the factory as a workshop led by the factory revolutionary committee and not by a school revolutionary committee. The latter insisted that until now a school was purely a consumer unit, but once it was run by a factory, it could gradually be transformed into a semi-consumer unit, thus saving a lot of state investment.[53] Others warned, however, that the factory could not run everything: it was not an independent unit like the brigade, and furthermore such a system would perpetuate the difference between town and country since the cities would specialize in industry.[54] For this last reason, resourceful minds proposed that urban schools be run *jointly* by factories and communes.[55]

Much discussion has arisen also as to the length of the curriculum, whether a through-course of seven or eight years combining primary and

[52] *People's Daily*, 6 December 1968, p. 1; *ibid.* 7 December 1968, pp. 2 and 4; *ibid.* 10 December 1968, p. 2.
[53] *Ibid.* 2 December 1968, p. 1, on a Shanghai primary school (*CB*, No. 870).
[54] *People's Daily*, 10 December 1968, p. 2, in a letter from two Ts'ingtao teachers and an article from Shanghai K'ung-chiang middle school (*CB*, No. 870).
[55] *Ibid.* 10 December 1968, p. 2, article from K'ung-chiang middle school (*CB*, No. 870).

secondary education was advisable, or whether, if the two courses were retained, each should be three, four or five years. Very contradictory opinions have been expressed on a theme which is apparently academic, but to which much of the real bearing of the educational revolution may well be linked: should Mao Tse-tung's thought, politics and "socialist culture" (*i.e.*, language, arts and sciences) be taught as one, two or three different courses and what is the ideal ratio of time to be spent on each of them. Some believe that as Mao Tse-tung's thought is to lead all teaching and study, it is unnecessary to introduce a political language course instead of the language course.[56] Others stress that each subject has its own points of emphasis and the students understand better if separate instruction is given.[57]

The main suggestions relating to rural schools have been summed up in a document called "Programme for rural middle and primary school education (draft, for discussion)," published by the *People's Daily* on 12 May 1969. It had originally been drawn up by the revolutionary committee of the Lishu district in Kirin province, and was then improved by the editorial board of *People's Daily*, according to the comments of poor and lower-middle peasants, teachers and students of some communes. It placed the middle school revolutionary committee—formed by a "three-in-one" combination of poor and lower-middle peasants, commune and brigade cadres, teachers and students—under the leadership of the revolutionary committees and the Party branches of the commune and its brigades. According to this draft programme, primary schools are directly led by what is called the educational leading group of the brigade, while those members of the group employed on the school staff manage the daily school work. Regular reports and inspections ensure permanent control by the poor and lower-middle peasants, but those who are involved in school management are not, as a general rule, expected to give up productive labour. No role is mentioned for the People's Liberation Army except that, as does the militia, it should provide a few teachers if necessary. Ideological leadership is entrusted to the Party organization and the revolutionary committees, with the help of the Youth League and the Red Guards. But the actual ideological work among the students is a collective task: school education, social education and family education must be linked together. Finance comes from the brigade for the primary schools and from the commune (or several brigades) for the middle schools with a subsidy from the state. The hiring and dismissal of teachers are first discussed by the poor and lower-middle peasants, then the brigade revolutionary com-

[56] *People's Daily*, 19 May 1969, p. 3, in an article from Ma-chi brigade, Shantung.
[57] *People's Daily*, 21 June 1969, p. 3, in an article from Huiyang district, Kwangtung (*SCMP*, No. 4450).

mittee gives its advice, and the commune revolutionary committee makes the decision and informs the district revolutionary committee, who puts it on record. The salary of primary school teachers consists of work points and an allowance drawn from state funds; middle school teachers' salaries may be paid without using work points. The new system is not intended to reduce the standards of living of the people concerned. Though the programme states that primary and secondary education are combined in a through-course of nine years, it deals also with new conditions of admission to middle schools, to be based on a combination of recommendation and selection, with priority given to children from workers', soldiers' and poor and lower-middle peasants' families. After graduation students should stay in the countryside. Age qualifications, repeating and old style examinations are abolished, but students' work and knowledge are to be checked thoroughly by practical tests or examinations with free use of books. The number of subjects taught will be reduced to five, among which politics and manual labour will fill only 30 per cent. of the schedule in primary schools and 40 per cent. in the middle schools. The content of "cultural courses" is flexible and may be adapted to local needs. Whenever possible, schools must establish their own place for productive labour and carry out there some scientific experiments. However, participation in brigade collective labour is expected to prevail over manual labour inside the school. Any profit from this labour is to be managed by the commune and the brigade.

Some amendments or additions to this draft programme have been suggested: "cultural courses" must take over 70 per cent. of the time in primary schools; foreign languages,[58] accounting, industrial technique, veterinary and health courses should be introduced; the study of *p'u-t'ung-hua* (Mandarin) should be compulsory.[59] But in general this practical scheme, designed to fit peasants' needs, seems to have been approved by the rural areas.

No such charter has yet come out for urban education. The only comparable project relates to technical middle schools. It is the synthesis of inquiries held in Peking, Tientsin and T'angshan by the

[58] There is a debate about the advisability of teaching foreign languages. Some people have said that it is enough to train a few specialized interpreters (*People's Daily*, 24 June 1969, p. 3, letter from three fighters of the PLA; *KMJP*, 16 August 1969, p. 3, article from Heilungkiang University). Others have written that foreign languages are very useful for scientific and revolutionary purposes and even that steps should be taken to spread them in the countryside (*People's Daily*, 24 June 1969, p. 3, from a workers' propaganda team stationed in Hangchow University; see also various articles on the subject in *People's Daily*, 18 and 21 June, 19 July, 16 August 1969).

[59] *People's Daily*, 31 July 1969, p. 3, two short articles from a soldier; *ibid.* 10 July 1969, p. 3, from two Hopei schoolmasters. This problem has been given very little attention in the official press, but it could become very serious if the scheme to have brigades employing only their native teachers is carried out on a wide scale.

Peking Electricity School and was published in August 1969 for further discussion.[60] In contrast with earlier reports, it stresses the great contribution of the graduates from technical middle schools; workers and peasants were said not to think that technical middle schools must be abolished, but that they should be more numerous. The inquirers "have felt among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers the pressing desire to learn professional theoretical knowledge." The task of technical middle schools is to spread theoretical knowledge, while the task of technical universities is to raise the level of this knowledge. Technical middle schools will be managed by the relevant technical bureaux, they will have ties with factories and will themselves run factories. They will provide a variety of short-term courses of six months to two years for students selected from peasants and workers having at least three years of practical experience. Only in the longest course is the level of higher primary education required.

From abstract general concepts the educational reform proposals have thus developed towards very practical measures, the main features of which are to give control of the schools to those who are going to use their products, and to make these products fit for the service expected of them. It should be pointed out how far this approach is from the idea of "student power" as it appeared in the youth revolt in other countries. In China, students have certainly won through the Cultural Revolution the right to express their opinion; they are represented on the schools' revolutionary committees. But it has been felt that to substitute student authority for the authority of teachers and cadres is nothing more than to replace an older elite by a younger elite: it runs against the very principles of socialist revolution.

Critics will not fail to point out that, from exclusive interest in political education, the reform proposals have come to lay more and more emphasis on "cultural courses." They will then go on to underline that politics and Mao Tse-tung's thought are not considered as a part of culture, since the Chinese political vocabulary itself distinguishes *cheng-chih* and *Mao Tse-t'ung ssu-hsiang* from *wen-hua*.[61] Attention will be called also to the fact that after extolling the sole virtue of practice—often distorted to mean mere physical labour, so that one would learn agriculture by carrying water—reformers are now concerned with giving credit to theory: furthermore, from the rejection of regulations and systems they are coming to make every endeavour to discipline, unify and standardize. What is so new, the critics will ask, in the revolutionized educational system?

[60] *KMJP*, 7 August 1969, p. 1.

[61] But let me point out at once that in this particular context *wen-hua* applies to fields where a knowledge of reading and writing is necessary. One can master politics and Mao Tse-tung's thought without it.

To this criticism the answer can be made that it is quite different to shape an ideal and to devise its concrete realization. Plans are designed and are applied by and to people who are not perfect. What is important is the prevailing spirit and the general orientation of education. The educational process has its specific requirements—for instance Chinese children must learn the ideograms, which takes a long time. It would be unrealistic to ignore them, but very different results can be achieved depending on the spirit in which these requirements are fulfilled. There is indeed a good chance that the child who has been taught characters with the constant idea that this puts him above others, and the child who is taught characters as a means to help other people by no ways inferior to him, will not behave in the same way. If the efficiency of an educational system can be appraised only after it has worked for several years, it cannot be denied that there is in China both the will and the endeavour to set up a new education. The first steps in the implementation of the reform proposals testify to this.

## Implementation of Reform

The situation appears to be very different in the cities and in the countryside. Although all city schools interrupted their courses, this was not such a general phenomenon in the countryside. In the cities, army teams entered the schools in February and March 1967, and the workers' propaganda teams came in from the end of July 1968. There was no such uniformity in the villages: soldiers were stationed in an extremely limited number of schools, at very variable dates: workers scarcely came in, except in special cases, such as suburban commune schools; the seizure of power in schools by peasants took place sometimes as early as March 1967, sometimes as late as September 1969. Besides, people in the countryside know what they need. It is far less clear in the cities. It is not by accident that no draft regulations have yet come out for urban schools. Of course the urban schools can train people according to the needs of the countryside, but are these needs exactly the same as those in the cities? Should the very sophisticated schools which existed in Peking, Shanghai, Tientsin, Nanking and Canton be abolished? On the other hand, if urban schools train urban personnel and are only linked with factories or city organizations, will this not perpetuate the tendency of towns to specialize in industry, and the differences between town and country? [62]

The implementation of educational reform displays a very wide local variety. As it was of precisely excessive standardization that the old system was accused, there has been no pre-ordained plan uniformly

[62] This concern is voiced in a letter from two Ts'ingtao teachers and an article from a Shanghai middle school, *People's Daily*, 10 December 1968, p. 2.

applied. Experiments are conducted at various points; their results are used in some of the reform proposals; interpreted and adapted, they are also the starting point of new experiments in other communities. This sensible approach is a current method in Communist China, it bears the authority of Chairman Mao's theory of knowledge and practice, and was again advocated by him for use in education in his directive of 7 March 1967.

The experience, however, does not start *ex nihilo*: there are several reference models. One is the Resist Japan Military Academy in the Yenan period. Particular stress is placed on the fact that in K'ang-ta the students supported themselves by work; teaching was linked with practice and society; and the teacher-student relationship was a revolutionary one of equality, mutual help and confidence.[63] The system in force during the early days of the Liberation is also set forth. The primary schools were then under the village (*ts'un*) leadership; their work was regulated by the village Party branch; teachers taught and did mass work.[64] The "red and expert" schools of 1958 are extolled on similar grounds: they were subject to the brigade Party branch; cadres and technicians were called in to teach in addition to full-time teachers. They became spoiled, it is claimed, when the district educational bureaux took them over and put academic achievement to the fore, instead of proletarian politics. Their original name, "red and expert," was even suppressed in some cases, but was revived when peasants resumed power over them during the Cultural Revolution.[65] Another feature from the Great Leap Forward educational pattern is often recalled by technical universities and middle schools. It is the internal organization of the schools which gives the responsibility for instruction collectively to teachers, students and technical personnel organized in specialized units, instead of entrusting it to teaching-research groups (*chiao-yen-shih*) exclusively composed of teachers.[66] Some farm-study schools established in 1964 or 1965 under the local supervision of Party, militia and peasants are praised as saving money and fitting exactly the needs of local communities, who report that they are transforming or opening other schools along the same lines.[67] It is worth noticing that all these

[63] *KMJP*, 28 May 1968, p. 2; *People's Daily*, 13 October 1968, p. 4; *ibid.* 29 October 1968, p. 2, on a Shantung school; *ibid.* 7 November 1968, p. 3, from a Hupei commune; *Red Flag*, No. 4 (1968), p. 29.

[64] *KMJP*, 2 September 1968, p. 2, in a report from Shantung (*SCMP*, No. 4269).

[65] *People's Daily*, 29 October 1968, p. 2, in a report from Yentai district; also *Red Flag*, No. 5 (1968), pp. 40–45, in *Selection from China Mainland Magazines* (*SCMM*) (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General), No. 638, pp. 10–15.

[66] *People's Daily*, 22 November 1967, p. 2.

[67] *People's Daily*, 23 October 1968, p. 1, in a report from Honan; *ibid.* 25 October 1968, p. 1, from Liaoning; *ibid.* 26 October 1968, p. 1, from Kiangsu; *ibid.* 7 November 1968, p. 3, from Hupei; *ibid.* 10 November 1968, p. 3, from Kansu; *ibid.* 12 November 1968, p. 3, from Hunan.

models are advocated both on economic and political grounds, and that they all represent attempts to get rid of rigid systems. Except the farm-study schools—although even some of them claim to be the outcome of Chairman Mao's directives—they all go back to times when Mao's revolutionary line was supposed to be overwhelmingly victorious. They stand as paragons of the mass line in education.

Rather than describing how the few schools for which we have extensive data [68] have carried out the Cultural Revolution, it seems better for the purpose of this discussion to pass over the details of the power struggle inside the various institutions and point out only, from a wider number of sources, the general features of the educational achievement of the Cultural Revolution.

In the administrative reorganization of the schools, no effort has been spared to do away with any independent staff specializing in educational management, and to reduce as far as possible the number of full-time teachers. A Lanchow middle school, for example, had 59 teachers before the Cultural Revolution; 24 have been retained part-time; among the new teaching staff, made up by adding soldiers, workers and peasants, only four teach full-time, all of them veteran workers.[69] Where no such radical solution could be applied, in order to prevent the remaining full-time teachers from forming any kind of bureaucratic organization or specialized group, they are blended with other elements, namely workers, peasants and soldiers who keep a foot in another reality outside the school walls. The school Party branch is scarcely mentioned. In one case, it was put under the leadership of the Party organization of the factory which managed the school.[70] In another, members of the workers' propaganda team have entered the school Party organization.[71] Large schools set up a revolutionary committee in which people from outside participate in a variable ratio.[72] In cases when the school is run by a given community—factory, commune, neighbourhood—some of those outside members belong to the community revolutionary committee concerned, which leads the school

[68] *I.e.*, the Yenan middle school in Tientsin, T'ung-ch'i University in Shanghai, Ts'ao-ch'ang-ti middle school in Peking, which have been used as a kind of "test-schools" for carrying out the Cultural Revolution. As to Peking University, see Victor Nee, "The cultural revolution at Peking University," *Monthly Review* (New York), Vol. XXI, No. 3 (July–August 1969); what happened there in 1966 is fairly well known but further developments which seem to have involved very fierce struggle are fairly obscure (see *People's Daily*, 16 September 1968, p. 3, and *KMJP*, 6 October 1969, p. 1, which reports the foundation of a revolutionary committee on 27 September).

[69] *Red Flag*, No. 2 (1969), p. 32 (*SCMM*, No. 647, p. 17).

[70] *People's Daily*, 10 December 1968, p. 2, in a Shanghai work-study school.

[71] *Ibid.* 28 July 1969, p. 3, in Peking No. 23 middle school.

[72] The setting up of a revolutionary committee is usually a long process involving much struggle. The early ones did not include outside personnel; they have been recast, sometimes repeatedly, for this purpose.

revolutionary committee.[73] If the school is under the joint management of several communities, there might be above the school revolutionary committee, a leading body composed of representatives of the school and of the various organizations involved.[74] As to very large institutions, such as universities, it is not yet clear how they are to be managed above the level of their own revolutionary committee. Small schools usually do not have a revolutionary committee but are managed by given communities. Sometimes they are directly under the community revolutionary committee concerned, which can appoint some of its members to deal with daily school problems, even to form an educational leading group from people inside and outside the school, while retaining supreme control.[75] Sometimes people from the school staff are elected to join the community revolutionary committee.[76] Sometimes the community appoints an educational revolutionary committee or leading group which is responsible for school matters. It is composed of a majority of people who keep their regular job in the community, and a few teachers and students.[77]

Those steps break through a rigid concept of division of work, and put forward a new praxis for the management of state affairs. The necessity of an Education Ministry has even been questioned.[78] Bureaucracy is replaced by something called the "leading group" (*ling-tao pan-tzu*). Lin Piao is mentioned as the father of the notion, with the following quotation: "The leading group is very important because it stands for political power."[79] The leading group is composed of a diversified personnel whose members are noted for their own dynamism and the trust put in them by others. It is still too early to know if and how the body is to be renewed. The important and new point at the moment is the idea of general initiative, responsibility and concern. Previously, initiative, responsibility and concern were in fact rather the monopoly of Party members; now they are entrusted and put

[73] *Red Flag*, No. 2 (1969), p. 31; *People's Daily*, 28 July 1969, p. 3, in Peking No. 23 middle school.

[74] *People's Daily*, 17 December 1968, p. 2, on the May 7th school in Shanghai.

[75] *Wen-hui pao*, 12 September 1968, on Sheshan commune; *People's Daily*, 18 October 1968, p. 1, on Chekiang schools; *ibid.* 23 October 1968, p. 1, on a Honan school; *ibid.* 6 December 1968, p. 1, on Shanghai schools and on an Anhui school; NCNA, 28 October 1968, on some Heilungkiang brigades; *KMJP*, 14 August 1969, p. 2, on a Hupei district.

[76] *People's Daily*, 6 December 1968, p. 1, on a Ch'angch'un primary school run by a factory; in this case, when taking over the school, the factory had abolished its revolutionary committee.

[77] *KMJP.*, 2 September 1968, p. 1, on three Shantung communes; *People's Daily*, 21 December 1968, p. 2, on a Heilungkiang district; *ibid.* 18 June 1969, p. 3, on a Kansu brigade.

[78] *People's Daily*, 2 December 1968, p. 1, mentioned in Wu Yen-yin's article.

[79] *People's Daily*, 11 March 1968, p. 3, in an article on a Peking middle school. There are also references to Mao, but Mao's phrase is *ling-tao ku-kan* (*Mao Tse-tung hsuan-chi* (*Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung*), Peking (1966), pp. 900–901, 915).

forward as a duty to other people also. The change may mean a great deal for the countryside, where Party members were relatively scarce at the grass-root level.

The leading group as a general concept should be distinguished from specific applications such as the leading groups for the educational revolution—moreover the latter are usually called *hsiao-tsu* and not *pan-tzu*. Where soldiers, workers or peasants are stationed in the schools, they are included in the notion of "leading group," together with the school revolutionary committee or the educational revolution leading group, though only some of these people may be members of such formal organs; so are the factory, neighbourhood or brigade revolutionary committees. Soldiers are supposed to leave the schools as soon as the proletarian dictatorship has been firmly established, but worker and peasant control will stay permanently. Even if in the city schools those who came in as propaganda teams were, during the first months, entirely absorbed in school matters, the trend is that all should keep at least part of their former occupation. The district and provincial education bureaux turn up again—they are necessary as relays between state and local levels to co-ordinate, harmonize and distribute subsidies; but the strengthening of the leading group in each basic unit gives a real chance for a new type of administration to emerge.

As far as the enrolment of students is concerned, there is no doubt that many children from poor families in rural areas have now been given the opportunity to receive some education. All kinds of arrangements are provided by the brigades: itinerant teachers, part-time schooling, new schools, abolition or reduction of tuition fees and no age limit. In some places the children can take to school their baby sisters or brothers and even the cows.[80] A system of recommendation is widely applied for admission to middle schools, the size of which has often increased. Moreover, some rural schools take in educated youth for short-term training on special subjects. It seems that many of the city primary school graduates, who were unable to enter middle school, have been sent to the countryside. The same applies to middle school graduates. In July 1968 and July 1969, numerous articles praised those young people who left the cities to settle in villages. Once in the countryside, it seems that in some places these youths still get some kind of formal instruction.[81] When they left, they knew they were going for several years; now the stress is on "being a peasant one's life long"; but it may well be that after a two- or three-year stay some of them will

[80] *KMJP*, 18 November 1968, p. 2; see also *People's Daily*, 19 May 1969, p. 3, on Honan; *Red Flag*, No. 5 (1968), pp. 49–50 (*SCMM*, No. 638, pp. 17–18); *KMJP*, 2 September 1968, p. 1; NCNA, 28 October 1968, on Heilungkiang schools.

[81] From a reliable informer, who stated further that one of his relatives was thus learning English on top of the mountains near Yenan.

be selected for admission to the universities. As university courses are definitely going to be shortened to two or three years, and enrolment increased, there will probably be no fewer university graduates in 1972 than if college students had been regularly enrolled and had accomplished the five- or six-year course since 1966. As to the quality of the future graduates, it is worth pointing out that the long full-time course system has not given such outstanding results either in China or in other countries that the new system may not give better ones.

Anyway, the standards of "scholarly achievements" are altered as exemplified in the contents of the curriculum. Mao Tse-tung's thought is put first, which can account for both the diversity and common trends of the programmes set up by individual schools. Furthermore, there are interpretations according to the spirit and interpretations according to the letter, with more or less emphasis on the exclusive use of Mao's writings as the textbook. In some places, characters are learned in the *Quotations*; language courses are taught on the basis of the *Three Well-known Essays*; each chapter, each paragraph of a mathematics course is introduced by an excerpt from Mao.[82] Elsewhere, though Mao's writings are always the basic material of instruction, the balance is different. Political education is sought through regular meetings for criticizing and repudiating the revisionist line. Workers and poor peasants are invited to give lectures on class struggle. The general knowledge courses are linked to class struggle and production struggle. In arithmetic, the questions deal with exploitation in the old times and the yield of the fields. Fundamentals of physics and chemistry are taught on the basis of the experience of pupils with machines or fertilizers. They first learn the "how" by using the implements, then the "why" through lectures by their teacher.[83] Students receive regular military training both in drill and discipline, from the PLA and the militia. Manual labour, with emphasis on agricultural work, is integrated into the curriculum. In rural schools and some factory schools, these activities are often run in order to reap a profit.[84] But warnings are uttered against the danger of an excessively utilitarian and mechanistic conception: to do manual work does not teach industry; students must not be used as additional unqualified man-power.[85] Some schools organize manual labour in a very enlightened way, both to help the students in mastering skills and knowledge, and to give them social

[82] *People's Daily*, 21 July 1969, p. 4, in those Liaoning schools it was found unworkable and dropped.
[83] *KMJP*, 12 August 1969, p. 3, on Peking Li-hsin middle school.
[84] *Red Flag*, No. 5 (1968), p. 50; NCNA, 27 October 1968, on a Kirin school; *People's Daily*, 31 October 1968, p. 2, on some Szechwan schools; *ibid.* 10 November 1968, p. 3, on a Kansu school.
[85] Several articles in *People's Daily*, 14 April 1969, p. 4; *ibid.* 19 July 1969, p. 3, from a Shantung commune; *KMJP*, 12 August 1969, p. 3.

experience and political consciousness by participating in collective tasks together with ordinary workers.

However, whatever may be the goodwill and conviction of workers, teachers and students, the regulation of manual labour depends much on material conditions. In many rural schools, the schedule is equally divided between manual labour and formal teaching. Some theoretical knowledge is taught, it is true, while working, and labour is intended to keep up the revolutionary spirit of the youth, but its high ratio is an economic necessity to support the school and enable poor children to attend it. At the other end of the scale, the low ratio—often a half-day a week—of manual labour in large city schools does not inevitably mean a lack of proletarian faith. First, these institutions can afford it: their financial situation and that of their pupils is not so difficult. Second, the very organization of urban economy compels these schools to reduce the proportion of manual labour: for the time being, Peking factories cannot accommodate all the city pupils and students half-time. Even when conditions are at their best—for instance, if the school is a dependency of the factory—equal division between labour and classes does not seem the ideal. Let us take the case of the Lanchow foundry middle school. It resumed courses with three days work and three days classes a week. After a period of experiment, the class-time has increased to four days, including 24 periods of class among which 12 are devoted to Mao Tse-tung's thought, four to fundamentals in industrial work, four to revolutionary literature and art, two to military and physical culture, two to flexible studies.[86]

Rural schools insist that they compile their teaching material themselves according to local needs. There is evidence, however, that this task is also carried on by commissions which act for a larger area.[87]

Teaching " by enlightenment " is considered to be true revolutionary pedagogy, but it is acknowledged that, at least in the primary school when pupils do not know anything, teaching " by infusion " is necessary.[88] Some schools hold examinations—not " trapping " ones: the questions are given beforehand—others do not.[89] There is no attempt to stuff the brain as during the Great Leap Forward, when for the sake of revolution the language students had to learn the dictionary by heart; on the contrary, the key phrase is " little but well." Nevertheless,

[86] *Red Flag*, No. 2 (1969), p. 31.

[87] *People's Daily*, 21 July 1969, p. 4, publishes articles written by such commissions in Ts'ingtao city and Liaoning.

[88] *People's Daily*, 11 June 1969, p. 3, from North-east China People's University.

[89] *People's Daily*, 11 June 1969, p. 3; *KMJP*, 31 August 1969, p. 2.

educators would like to see precisely defined the political, cultural and scientific level to be reached by their students.[90]

Education does not stop at the school door. Strenuous efforts are made to promote extra-mural activities. For instance, Mao Tse-tung's thought study-classes are run outside the schools, involving neighbours and parents as well as pre-school age children.[91] Educational reform as it evolves from the Cultural Revolution shows deep concern about family education as an extension of school education. It is very far from the Great Leap Forward tendency to draw children away from their families. Actually, parents and the heads of families have repeatedly been called upon to help in educating the children.[92] Regard for the family is also emphasized by keeping country people in their village for education and work, or by sending teachers back to their native brigade.

This cannot be called a "rehabilitation," for no special values are attached to the family. As happens to many concrete realities which, at least in its practice, the Great Leap Forward wrongly ignored because they did not fit in well with its ideals, the family is now looked upon as an objective factor, like cold in winter or heat in summer, and an attempt is made to make the most of it. Cold and heat are not good or bad, they merely exist and human activities must adapt to them and in the long run they may transform them to a certain extent. The same logic may explain the paradoxical attitude of the Cultural Revolution towards the individual: fighting the "self," but extolling personal creativity, daring, awareness, consciousness. It is a fact that men are born as separate beings, different in character and abilities. Fighting "self" is designed to prevent, as in the "bourgeois conception," those differences being exalted to absolute values which must be asserted and protected at all costs. But it is recognized that a social ideal can work only if understood and applied by each of the individuals who compose the society. Hence the reaction against education as a coercive uniform mould, and the emphasis on bringing into play personal activity and consciousness.

The carrying out of educational reform is certainly not an easy task. There are numerous complaints that such sayings as "to study is of no use" and "to teach is dangerous" are widespread. Students are insolent and undisciplined in the class-room, they stay away from school as

[90] This concern is expressed by the revolutionary committee and the army propaganda team of Peking Ts'ao-ch'ang-ti middle school (*People's Daily*, 19 May 1969, p. 3).

[91] *People's Daily*, 24 October 1968, pp. 1–2, in rural schools; *ibid.* 2 December 1968, p. 1, in Tientsin schools; *ibid.* 17 December 1968, p. 2, in Peking and other areas.

[92] *People's Daily*, 25 October 1967, editorial; *ibid.* 7 March 1968, p. 2, from Peking Ts'ao-ch'ang-ti middle school; *ibid.* 12 May 1969, p. 1; *KMJP*, 7 May 1968, p. 4, from Kwangtung; *ibid.* 14 May 1968, p. 2, from Peking suburbs.

they please; they refuse to study because they do not want to become "re-education targets"; sometimes, parents themselves take them out of school for the same reason or because they think that the schools do not teach anything. The teachers' ranks have been so well "purified" that some schools are very short staffed. The remaining teachers are so much afraid of being accused by the students that they dare not enforce any kind of discipline; in order to keep safe, they mumble some excerpt from Mao Tse-tung's works all day long. They beg to be given another job. They think that if they are to be paid with work points, they would earn more by doing manual work full-time. Nobody wants to become a teacher. Peasants in charge of schools merely sweep the ground and mend the chairs. Factories get rid of sick workers and unsuccessful apprentices by sending them on the propaganda teams in the schools. Clashes of authority arise from the fact that the factory supposed to be running the school is not the one to send the workers' propaganda team. Feuds divide the students, the teachers, the workers and the army propaganda teams. There is no need to describe further academic entanglements, for which other countries are as gifted as China.[93]

These difficulties are overcome step by step. A universally advocated remedy is to continue the "big criticism" of the revisionist line, which enables people to sift out the true from the false. At the same time, discipline, intellectual culture, educational administration receive due consideration, and the economic usefulness of education is more heavily stressed.

To many observers the originality of the current educational revolution is questionable. It is true that part of the criticism recently voiced was brought forward in 1964 and 1965, though not so harshly and radically. Pedagogy "by enlightenment," examinations with open books, "little but well," living study and living use of Mao Tse-tung's thought, opening the schools to workers', poor and lower-middle peasants' children, shortening the courses, integrating them with practice and manual labour were commonplaces—some of these principles were put into operation, but the process was slow, hampered by many psychological obstacles. As in other fields, the reform, which was sponsored by Chairman Mao,[94] met overflowing verbal compliance and little practical support. The Cultural Revolution has not entirely removed the obstacles,

[93] The above details are drawn from the official press. *E.g.*, *People's Daily*, 15 May 1969, p. 3, from a commune near Shanghai; *ibid.* 21 June 1969, p. 3, from a Shantung district; *ibid.* 7 July 1969, p. 3, and 18 July 1969, p. 3, various articles; *KMJP*, 12 August 1969, p. 3, and 14 August 1969, p. 2.

[94] *KMJP*, 18 July 1967, p. 3: Chairman Mao gave several directives just after the Spring Festival of 1965.

but it has certainly shaken their foundation, thus opening the way to a really new education. After such a huge shock, even if people are not completely remoulded, there are certain things which they dare not do any more. It is only through revolution that the intended reform could be achieved. The Cultural Revolution type of education resumes the mass line of the Yenan period and of the Great Leap Forward. Even without going back to the *Report of an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan*, the emphasis on *min-pan* (run by the people) is a feature from the years 1943–45.[95] When criticism of current education was developed in 1944, transfer of authority from professional educators, decentralization, integration of education with the social and economic life of the village had been implemented to cope with the failings of a too elitist system. Such have also been the trends in 1957–59. However, despite common goals and methods, the present situation is different. Realism has been learnt from past experiments. Never had the question of power over education been so thoroughly clarified. Furthermore, the average cultural level of the country is considerably higher than in 1958, not to speak of 1944, which accounts for a wider awareness of a broader range of problems, and for less shortage of spare teachers. This means that although enlightened statesmen draw up the educational directives, the official statement that it is primarily the workers and poor peasants who are behind the reforms may, this time, not become a fiction. Thus, instead of the dualistic system into which previous attempts degenerated, an education could emerge which gives equal rank to everyone by cultivating "labourers with socialist consciousness and culture."

The priority given to ideology is not a priority to pure abstract theory. On the other hand, economic necessity has doubtless prompted a number of criticisms, proposals and measures in the educational field, though educational reform as a whole cannot merely be considered as a solution of budget difficulties. The reform meets concrete political ideals. Those ideals could be summed up through a quotation from a Liberation Army fighter, as the need to create revolutionary public opinion:

> . . . We must create revolutionary public opinion in a big way . . . To create revolutionary public opinion in a big way means spreading vigorously Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's thought. . . .
>
> The course of the struggle in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has shown us that once Chairman Mao's latest instructions and the various combat orders issued by the proletarian headquarters with

[95] The *min-pan* concept and its applications are very well analysed by Mark Selden in his still unpublished thesis, *People's War and the Revolutionary Transformation of Chinese Society. The Yenan Way* (Yale University), on the schools (see Chapter 6, pp. 73–81); see also his article, *Yenan Legacy: the Mass Line*, in A. Doak Barnett (ed.), *Chinese Communist Politics in Action* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), pp. 145–148.

> Chairman Mao as its leader and Vice-Chairman Lin as its deputy are brought to the notice of the proletarian revolutionaries and the broad revolutionary masses, and translated into their conscious action, they will yield inexhaustible strength that carries all before it. . . . Don't entertain the thought that to create public opinion is something intangible, and we can do with or without it, while production is something solid and it will do to grasp production alone. Actually this is not so. Theory is not anything intangible, because spirit can be translated into matter. If "solid" things are not led by "theory," they also cannot be well grasped, and would go astray in the direction of capitalism. The more we are strained in production, the greater is the need to create revolutionary public opinion in a big way and to surmount all kinds of difficulties with revolutionary drive.[96]

The struggle for production can be successful only in a real political society, where the majority of people are concerned and are able to understand and even share in decisions related to the collective life. The advent of such a political society requires the suppression of the elite which monopolized state power, giving the illusion of the existence of a political society but actually usurping the rights and also the duties of the people below.[97] To eradicate the roots of any established elite, the youth must be trained to be versatile, responsive to concrete challenge and unconceited. That does not prevent society from having leaders, but one motto of the "leading group" will be dynamism: they must "dare" to innovate not content themselves with what is already established.

[96] *Red Flag*, No. 2 (1969), pp. 23–24.

[97] Significant with regard to the charges against elites and elitism are the *KMJP* editorials of 15 and 23 July 1968, also the articles on p. 2 in the latter issue