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**MAO**  
**ON EDUCATION**

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All India Revolutionary Students Federation  
AIRSF

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**A. Jayaramachandran,**  
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K.K. Nagar ,  
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*Dedicated to Martyrs*

**Com. Chandrasekar** (APRSU, Andhra Pradesh)

**Com. Arjun** (RSL, Bihar)

**Com. Sajal Goswami** (RSA, West Bengal)

who sacrificed their lives for the New Democratic Revolution of India.

## **INTRODUCTION**

A massive class struggle was launched to transform the education system through revolutionary perspective in Mao's Red China. In the struggle, led by Com. Mao, he had contributed precious philosophical views about revolutionary education in interviews, conversations, speeches at different occasions.

We think that this booklet, which contains Com. Mao's perspective on revolutionary education will help to understand the reactionary Indian education system and to get clear perspective in practice for those who are in the struggle against the present education system, and for the establishment of revolutionary alternative education system.

We are proud to release this booklet on the occasion of Seminar on "FIFTY YEARS OF FAKE INDEPENDENCE : DENIAL OF EDUCATION & STUDENTS' RESISTANCE" organised by AIRSF at Patna.

**ALL INDIA REVOLUTIONARY STUDENTS FEDERATION.**

## REMARKS AT THE SPRING FESTIVAL

24 January, 1964

**T**oday I want to talk to you about the problem of education. Progress has been made in industry, and I think that there should be some changes in education too. The present state of affairs won't do. In my opinion the line and orientation [fang-chen] in education are correct, but the methods are wrong, and must be changed. Present here today are comrades from the Central Committee, comrades from within the party, comrades from outside the party, comrades from the Academy of Sciences. Comrade XXX will now give a talk.

**XXX:** At present, an urgent problem in the domain of education is that of the educational system, i.e., the fact that the prescribed length of studies is excessive. At present, children begin school at the age of seven, and spend six years primary school, six years in middle school, and in some cases six years at university, generally five, thus making in all seventeen or eighteen years. They graduate from university only at the age of twenty-four or twenty-five, and afterwards they engage in manual labour for a year, and then undergo a further period of one year's on-the-job training, so that they finally emerge [from the whole process] when they are already twenty-six or twenty-seven. This is two or three years longer than it takes in the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union, primary and middle school last for ten years, and the university for four or five, so that at twenty-three or twenty-four they take up a post and begin work.

In the study of the humanities, there is no great problem about students growing too old. In the case of the natural sciences they manifestly [remain at their studies] too long. This is particularly the case with the science of atomic energy, with the most advanced sciences, the students are too old when they graduate. On the basis of the experience of all countries of the world, it is possible to make a contribution to the natural sciences by the time one reaches the age of twenty-four or twenty-five. For example, in the United States and in the Soviet Union, those who have some achievements to their credit in the natural sciences, in the field of atomic energy, are commonly all twenty-four or twenty-five. At that age, the brain functions most effectively, but at that age, our students are still at university, and have not taken up a post and begun work. They start working only at twenty-six or twenty-seven; this is not advantageous to the development of the

sciences. The prescribed course length is exceedingly great, we must give some thought to the system of education.

**Chairman Mao:** The period of schooling should be shortened somewhat.

**XXX:** Recently comrade XX had an idea: there should be five years of primary school and four years of middle school, so that students would graduate from middle school at sixteen. If there were six years of primary school, they would graduate from middle school at seventeen. The problem is that the facilities for higher education are inadequate; each year, the universities take only 1,20,000 or 1,30,000 students, or 1,50,000 at the outside. The others could begin work at sixteen. They could receive two years of vocational training after graduating from middle school, and then at eighteen they could go to work in the factories or the villages; in this way, they would be more in touch [with reality]. Or they could attend two years of preparatory courses, thus establishing links with the university, and begin work at twenty-four or twenty-five. In a word, studies must be shortened somewhat. At present, the Central Committee has set up a small group [hsiao-ts] under the leadership of Comrade XX, especially to study the question of the educational system. If we adopt this suggestion for improving our national education, then students could graduate in general at fifteen or sixteen. There is however, one problem—that of military service. They would be too young for this, but they could undergo preliminary training.

**Chairman Mao:** That's not important, those who are not old enough for military service can also experience military life. Not only male students, but also female students can undergo military service. We can form a red women's detachment. Girls of Sixteen or Seventeen can also experience six months to a year of military life, and at seventeen they can also serve as soldiers.

**XXX:** Thus, the problem of schools teaching literary subject is not so great. The problems with faculties of science and engineering are somewhat greater. The universities have preparatory courses of one or two years; after graduating from middle school, students can either go on to the university preparatory courses, or enter a vocational school, and after two years training they can go on to work in a factory or in the country side at eighteen, thus they will be relatively in touch (with reality). If they study engineering, they will also be relatively in touch, when they graduate at twenty-three or twenty-four they can take up a post and begin work.

**Chairman Mao:** At present, there is too much studying going on, and this is exceedingly harmful. There are too many subjects at present, and the burden is too heavy, it puts middle-school and university students in a constant state of tension. Cases of short sight are constantly multiplying among primary and middle-school students. This can't be allowed to go on un-changed.

**XXX:** The subjects covered by the syllabus are too many and too complicated. Many old teachers have remained at thier posts. The students are not able to bear it; they are tense in the extreme, and they have no extra-curricular activities, and no time for extra-curricular reading.

**Chairman Mao:** The syllabus should be chopped in half. The students should have time for recreation. Swimming, playing ball and reading freely outside their course work. Confucius only professed the six arts - rites, music, archery, chariot-driving, poetry and histroy - but he produced four sages: Yen Hui, Tseng-tzu, Tzu Lu and Mencius. It won't do for students just to read books all day, and not to go in for cultrual pursuits, physical education and swimming, not to be able to run around, or to read things outside their courses, etc.

**XXX:** The students are extremely tense. When I'm at home the children say, what's the point in getting top marks in every thing?

**Chairman Mao:** Throughout history, very few of those who came first in the imperial examination have achieved great fame. The celebrated T'ang dynasty poets Li Po and Tu Fu were neither *chin-shih* nor *han-lin*. Han Yu and Liu Tsung yuan were only *chin-shih* of the second rank. Wang Shih-fu, Kuan Han-ch'ing Lo Kuan-Chung p'u Sung-ling, Ts'ao Hsueh-ch'in were none of them *chin-shih* or *han-lin*, P'u Sungling was a *hsiu-ts'ai*, all who had received promotion, he wanted to rise to the next higher rank, but he was not *chu-jen*. None of those who became *chin-shih* or *han-lin* were successful. Only two of the emperors of the Ming dynasty did well Tai-tsu and Ch'eng-tsu. One was illiterate, and the other only knew a few characters. Afterwards, in contrast, in the Chia-Ch'ing reign, when the intellectuals had power, things were in a bad state, the country was in disorder. Han We Ti and Li Hou-Chu were highly cultivated and ruined the country. It is evident that to read too many books is harmful. Liu Hsiu was an academician, Whereas Liu Pangis was a country bumpkin.

**XXX:** There is too much on the syllabus, and there are too many exercises to hand in, the students cannot reflect independently. The present method of examination...

**Chairman Mao:** Our present method of conducting examinations is a method for dealing with the enemy, not a method for dealing with the people. It is a method of surprise attack, asking oblique or strange questions. This is still the same method as the old eight-legged essay. I do not approve of this. It should be changed completely. I am in favour of publishing the questions in advance and letting the students study them and answer them with the aid of books. For instance, if one sets twenty questions on the *Dream of the Red chamber*, and some students answer half of them and answer them well, and some of the answers are very good and contain creative ideas, then one can give them 100 per cent. If some other students answer all twenty questions and answer them correctly, but answer them simply by reciting from their textbooks and lectures, without any creative ideas, they should be given 50 or 60 per cent. At examinations whispering into each other's ears and taking other people's places ought to be allowed. If your answers is good and I copy it, then mine should be counted as good. Whispering in other people's ears and taking examinations in other people's names used to be done secretly. Let it now be done openly. If I can't do something and you write down the answer, which I then copy, this is all right. Let's give it a try. We must do things in a lively fashion, not in a lifeless fashion. There are teachers who ramble on and on when they lecture; they should let their students doze off. If your lecture is no good, why insist on others listening to you? Rather than keeping your eyes open and listening to boring lectures, it is better to get some refreshing sleep. You don't have to listen to nonsense. You can rest your brain instead.

**XXX:** If we shorten the period of schooling, there will be time for engaging in labour, or for military service. We can also consider having the outstanding students skip a grade, we don't have to keep them eternally in the same place. In the same grade as my child, there is a classmate who was originally an outstanding student; afterwards, he skipped a grade, and he is still an outstanding student. Thus we see that it is possible to skip grades. Ask Comrade XX to organize a small group to conduct a thorough study of this problem of the school system.

**Chairman Mao:** Let both XX and XXX participate in this small group. At present we are doing things in too lifeless a manner. There is

too much on the syllabus, and examinations are conducted in too rigid a manner. I cannot approve this. The present method of education ruins talent and ruins youth. I do not approve of reading so many books. The method of examination is a method for dealing with the enemy, it is most harmful, and should be stopped.

**XXX:** At present, the head of the Department of Education has just called a meeting, at which two questions are being considered: one is that the students' burden is too heavy, and there is homework in every subject; the second is that there are three pedagogical systems, those of Confucius, the Soviets, and Dewy.

**Chairman Mao:** Confucius wasn't really like that. We have cast aside the mainstream of Confucianism. He had only the six subjects: rites, music, archery, chariot-driving, 'shu', and mathematics. (Chairman Mao asked XXX whether 'shu' meant calligraphy or history).

**XXX:** It means calligraphy.

**Chairman Mao:** It means history. As in the *Shu Ching* or the *Han shu*.

**XXX:** At present, middle-school students take continuing their studies as their sole aim. After graduating, they are not willing to engage in labour, this is a very big question, and must solve it. We must put into practice the union of education and productive labour in addition, we must also walk on two legs. Last year there was flooding in Hopei, and the Department of Education was under great strain. Many buildings collapsed, and they had to set up simple schools as best they could. As a result, the number of primary and middle-school pupils actually increased.

**Chairman Mao:** The flood engulfed dogmatism. We must get rid of dogmas, both foreign and indigenous.

**XXX:** Other places have carried out a regularization, and introduced teaching all in one class, rather than separately according to subject. The number of students has declined, and the number of poor and lower-middle peasants has declined, very many poor and lower-middle peasants do not continue their schooling. In Hopei Province they have some good experience. In Hsin-hui hsien in Kwangtung Province, they have investigated ten-odd agricultural middle schools, and ordinary middle schools. In an ordinary middle school, the state spends 120 yuan per year on each student, whereas in an agricultural middle school they spend only 6.80 yuan a year on each student. There is no

problem at all about the graduates of an agricultural middle school filling a job, whereas if a graduate of an ordinary middle school does not succeed in the university entrance examination, there is a great deal of difficulty about placing him in employment. Thus, primary and middle schools should all walk on two legs. At the same time, we must pay attention to improving quality. Previously, everything was done according to Soviet methods, but in 1958 we struck a blow at this, and more provision was made for labour, but then study was neglected in turn, but now that things have been further altered it is all right. It is the same with literature and art, the level is relatively high now, but if there had not been 1958, we would not have attained our present level.

**Chairman Mao:** We must drive actors, poets, dramatists and writers out of the cities, and pack them all off to the countryside. They should all periodically go down in batches to the villages and to the factories. We must not let writers stay in the government offices; they will never get anything written if they do not go down. Whoever does not go down will get no dinner, only when they go down will they be fed.

**XXX:** At present, there are a little over two percent bad elements among the primary and middle-school teachers, and there are also notoriously bad elements among the primary and middle-school students.

**Chairman Mao:** That doesn't matter, they can change jobs.

**XXX:** At present, the worst students go to normal school; the good students go into engineering. Henceforth, we might think about not taking graduates of higher middle school directly into normal school or faculties of letters, but accepting only higher middle-school graduates who have engaged in labour for a year or two. The students of the natural sciences should also go down. They have some experience at the XX School in Harbin; they send the teachers down for a year or two. Those who were not so good originally are all pretty good when they come back from labour, they become part of the core.

**Chairman Mao:** They must go down. At present, there are some people who do not attach much importance to going to work in the countryside. In the Ming dynasty, Li Shih-chen went hither and thither, and climbed the mountains to gather herbs. Tsu Ch'ung-chih never went to middle school or university. Confucius was from a poor peasant family, he herded sheep, and never attended middle school or university either. He was a musician, he did all sorts of things. When someone had a death in the family, he would be invited to play at the funeral. He may

also have been an accountant. He could play the *ch'in* and drive a chariot, ride a horse and shoot with bow and arrow. 'Yu' means to drive a chariot, it is like being the chauffeur of an automobile. He produced seventy-two sages, such as Yen Hui and Tseng-tzu and the he had 3,000 disciples. In his youth, he came from the masses, and understood something of the suffering of the masses. Later he became an official in the state of Lu, though not a terribly high official. The population of Lu was over a million, and for a long time people looked down on him. When he traveled around to different countries, people cursed him. This person liked to talk frankly, and said he had not experienced misery, and could not bear insults. Later, Tzu Lu acted as Confucius' body-guard, and did not allow people to speak ill of Confucius, but would beat anyone who opened his mouth. From this time forward, no more unpleasant sounds entered his ears, and the masses did not dare approach him. We must not cast aside the tradition of Confucius. Our general policy is correct, but our methods are wrong. There are quite a few problems regarding the present school system, curriculum, methods of teaching and examination methods, and all this must be changed. They are all exceedingly destructive of people.

**XXX:** We can get by with five years of primary school.

**Chairman Mao:** Primary school teaching should not go on too long, either. Gorki had only two years of primary school; his learning was all self-taught. Franklin of America was originally a newspaper seller, Yet he discovered electricity. Watt was a worker, yet he invented the steam-engine. Both in ancient and modern times, in China and abroad, many scientists trained themselves in the course of practice.

**XX:** When the school system has been reformed in the future, students will be able to take up a post when they reach the age of twenty-three or twenty-four. Seven is a rather late age for beginning school, we can bring it forward to six. There is a problem with buildings, but if primary school is changed to five years we can dispense with some. Then four years of middle school, and one or two years of a preparatory course at university. In view of the different nature of the various courses at university, we can diversify, and take in 140,000 or 150,000 students each year for a one or two-year preparatory course.

**XXX:** Before entering university, they can take off a period and go to work in a factory or in a village.

**Chairman Mao:** They can also go to the army for training.

XX: This is all right as regards literary subjects, but in physics there is the problem of the use of mathematics, and if they work for two years they might forget it.

XX: In the Soviet Union they work for two years after graduating from middle school, and then enter the faculties of physics and chemistry, they don't take them directly.

XX: Except for some special schools, the universities are divided into three course-lengths: six years, especially for medicine, five years for engineering, and four years for literary subjects. In most cases of university courses, four years is sufficient. In the future, the system should be diversified, there should be different course-lengths. In the cities, there should be two kinds of middle schools one leading to university and the other where students graduate in two years, after which they enter specialized training.

**Chairman Mao:** That's right, we must diversify.

XX: The main problem with the curriculum is a lack of centralization, and there are also those problems we studied in the past, many subjects are studied several times, every semester there are eight or nine subjects to study, there are many examinations, and this creates great tension.

**Chairman Mao:** Nowadays, first, there are too many classes; second, there are too many books. The pressure is too great there are some subjects which it is not necessary to examine. For example, it is not necessary to examine the little logic and grammar which is learned in middle school. Real understanding must be acquired gradually through experience at work. It is enough to know what logic and grammar are.

XX: At present it's all cramming, mechanical memorizing and reciting.

XXX: There are two schools of thought nowadays. One school advocates teaching subjects thoroughly, while the other advocates teaching them in outline, teaching how to go about mastering subjects, though teaching somewhat less. At present many schools follow the first pattern, but isn't it true that this won't work. By advocating doing things in this way, they petrify thought.

**Chairman Mao:** This is scholasticism. The annotations to the Four Books and the Five Classics are exceedingly scholastic, and nowadays they have all become completely indigestible. Scholasticism must

inevitably die out. For example, in the study of the classics very many commentaries were written, but now they have disappeared. I think that students trained by this method, no matter whether it be in China, in America or in the Soviet Union, will all disappear, will all move towards their opposites. The same applies to the Buddhist classics, of which there are so many. The version of the *Diamond Sutra* edited by Hsuan-tsang of the T'ang dynasty was comparatively simplified, only a thousand-odd words and it still exists. Another version, edited by Kumarajiva, was too long, and has died out. Won't the Five Classics and the Thirteen Classics also come to the end of the road? They have been very copiously annotated, and as a result nobody reads them. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they indulged in scholastic philosophy; only in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did [the world] enter the age of enlightenment and the Renaissance take place. We shouldn't read too many books. We should read Marxist books, but not too many of them either. It will be enough to read a dozen or so. If we read too many, we can move towards our opposites, become book-worms, dogmatists, revisionists. In the writings of Confucius, there is nothing about agriculture. Because of this, the limbs of his students were not accustomed to toil, and they could not distinguish between the five grains. We must do something about this.

**XXX:** There is another question, which is a political question, that of the student's nourishment, which must be improved. Each student eats food costing 12.5 *yuan* every month. We should spend another 40 million *yuan*,

**Chairman Mao:** It is all right to spend another 40 million *yuan*.

**XXX:** We should increase it by 2 to 4 *yuan*.

**Chairman Mao:** If you read too many books, they petrify your mind in the end. Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty did pretty well in his early years, but afterwards he read many books, and didn't make out so well any more. He died of hunger in Tai Ch'eng.

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## TALK ON QUESTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY

August 18, 1964

**I**t is only when there is class struggle that there can be philosophy. It is a waste of time to discuss epistemology apart from practice. The comrades who study philosophy should go down to the countryside. They should go down this winter or next spring to participate in

the class struggle. Those whose health is not good should go too. Going down won't kill people. All they'll do is catch a cold, and if they just put on a few extra suits of clothes it'll be all right.

The way they go about it in the universities at present is no good, going from book to book, from concept to concept. How can philosophy come from books? The three basic constituents of Marxism are scientific socialism, philosophy, and political economy. The foundation is social science, class struggle. There is a struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Marx and the others saw this Utopian socialists are always trying to persuade the bourgeoisie to be charitable. This won't work, it is necessary to rely on the class struggle of the proletariat. At that time, there had already been many strikes. The English parliamentary inquiry recognized that the twelve-hour day was less favourable than the eight-hour day to the interests of the capitalists. It is only starting from this viewpoint that Marxism appeared. The foundation is class struggle. The study of philosophy can only come afterwards: who's philosophy? Bourgeois philosophy, or proletarian philosophy? Proletarian philosophy is Marxist philosophy. There is also Proletarian economics, which has transformed classical economics. Those who engage in philosophy believe that philosophy comes first. The oppressors oppress the oppressed, while the oppressed need to fight back and seek a way out before they start looking for philosophy. It is only when people took this as their starting point that there was Marxism-Leninism, and that they discovered philosophy. We have all been through this. Others wanted to kill me; Chiang Kai-shek wanted to kill me. Thus we came to engage in class struggle, to engage in philosophizing.

University students should start going down this winter-I am referring to the humanities. Students of natural science should not be moved now, though we can move them for a spell or two. All those must every one of them go. Professors, Assistant Professors, administrative workers, and students should all of them go down, for a limited period of five months. If they go to the countryside for five months, or to the factories for five months, they will acquire some perceptual knowledge. Horses, cows, sheep, chickens, dogs, pigs, rice, sorghum, beans, wheat, varieties of millet - they can have a look at all these things. If they go in the winter, they will not see the harvest, but at least they can still see the land and the people. To get some experience of class struggle - that's what I call a university. They argue about which university is better, Peking University or people's University. For

my part I am a graduate of the university of the greenwoods, I learned a bit there. In the past I studied Confucius, and spent six years on the Four Books and the Five Classics , I learned to recite them from memory, but I did not understand them. At that time I believed deeply in Confucius, and even wrote essays (expounding his ideas). Later I went to a bourgeois school for seven years. Seven plus six makes thirteen years. I studied all the usual bourgeois stuff - natural science and social science. They also taught some pedagogy. This includes five years of normal school, two years of middle school, and also the time I spent in the library. At that time I believed in Kant's dualism, especially in his idealism. Originally I was a feudalist and an advocate of bourgeois democracy. Society impelled me to participate in the revolution. I spent a few years as a primary school teacher and principal of a four year school. I also taught history and Chinese language in a six-year school. I also taught for a short period in a middle school ,but I did not understand a thing. When I joined the Communist Party I knew that we must make revolution, but against what? And how would we go about it? Of course we had to make revolution against imperialism and the old society. I did not quite understand what sort of a thing imperialism was, still less did I understand how we could make revolution against it. None of the stuff I had learned in thirteen years was any good for making revolution. I used only the instrument-language. Writing essays is an instrument. As for the content of my studies. I didn't use it at all.

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## INSTRUCTIONS

1964

### COURSES AND EXAMINATIONS

**T**here are too many courses offered at schools (and universities) which place a heavy burden on students. They are not often properly taught. The examination system treats students like enemies; it poounces on them suddenly. These are detrimental to the development, in a lively and spontaneous manner, of the moral, intellectual, and physical capabilities of the young people.

10-3-1964

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**ON EDUCATION-CONVERSATION WITH THE NEPALESE  
DELEGATION OF EDUCATIONISTS**

1964

Our education is fraught with problems, the most prominent of which is dogmatism. We are in the process of reforming our educational system. The school years are too long, courses too many, and various methods of teaching unsatisfactory. The children learn textbooks and concepts which remain [merely] textbooks and concepts; they know nothing else. [They] do not use their four limbs; nor do [they] recognize the five kinds of grain. Many children do not even know what cows, horses, chickens, dogs and pigs are; nor can they tell the differences between rice, canary seeds, maize, wheat, millet and sorghum. When a student graduates from his university, he is already over twenty. The school years are too long, courses too many, and the methods of teaching is by injection instead of through the imagination. The method of examination is to treat candidates as enemies and ambush them. [laughter] Therefore I advise you not to entertain any blind faith in the Chinese educational system. Do not regard it as a good system. Any drastic change is difficult, [as] many people would oppose it. At present a few may agree to the adoption of new methods, but many would disagree. I may be pouring cold water on you. You expect to see something good, but I only tell you what is bad. [laughter]

However, I am not saying that there is nothing good at all. Take industry and geology for instance. The old society left to us only 200 geologists and technicians; now we have more than 2,00,000.

Generally speaking, the intellectuals specializing in engineering are better, because they are in touch with reality. Scientists, pure scientists, are worse, but they are still better than those who specialize in art subjects. [Liberal] art subjects are completely detached from reality. Students of history, philosophy and economics have no concern with studying reality, they are the most ignorant of things of this world.

As I have said before, we have nothing marvellous, only things we have learnt from ordinary people. Of course, we have learnt a little Marxism-Leninism, but Marxism-Leninism alone won't do. [We] must study Chinese problems starting from the characteristics and facts of China. We Chinese, myself included, did not know much about China. We knew that we ought to fight against imperialism and its lackeys, but we did not know how to do it. So we had to study the conditions of China, just as you study the conditions of your country. We spent a long time, fully twenty-eight years from the foundation of the CPC to

the liberation of the whole country, in forging step by step a set of policies suitable to Chinese conditions.

The source of [our] strength is in the masses. If a thing does not represent the people's wish, it is no good. [We] must learn from the masses, formulate our policies, and then educate the masses. Therefore if we want to be teachers, we have to be pupils to begin with. No teacher begins [his career] as a teacher. Having become a teacher, he should continue to learn from the masses in order to understand how he himself learns. That is why there are courses on psychology and education in teachers' training. What [one] learns becomes useless if [one] does not understand the reality.

There is a factory attached to the science and engineering faculties at Tsingua University because students must learn from [both] books and work. But [We] cannot set up factories for arts faculties such as a literature factory, a history factory, an economics factory, or a novel factory; these faculties, should regard the whole of society as their factory. Their teachers and students should make contact with the peasants and urban workers as well as with agriculture and industries. How else can their graduates be of any use? Take students of law, for example. If they do not understand crimes in a society, they cannot be good students of law. It is out of the question to set up a law factory, so society is their factory.

Comparatively speaking, our arts faculties are the most backward owing to a lack of contact with reality. Students and teachers do only class work. Philosophy is book philosophy. What is the use of philosophy if it is not learnt from society, from the masses and from nature? It can be composed only of vague ideas. Logic is the same. [One] does not understand much of it if one merely reads through the text book once. But one understands it gradually through application. I did not understand much when I read logic. The understanding came to me when I used it.

I have been talking about logic. There is also grammar which one does not quite understand simply by reading it. But one grasps the use of sentence structure when one is actually writing. We write and speak according to the customary usages and it is not really necessary to study grammar. As to rhetoric, it is an optional subject. Great writers are not always rhetoricians. I studied rhetoric myself, but did not understand it at all. Do you study it before you write?

## SPEECH AT HANGCHOW

December 21, 1965

**N**ow about this university education. From entering primary school to leaving college is altogether sixteen or seventeen years. I fear that for over twenty years people will not see rice, mustard, wheat or millet growing, nor will they see how workers work, nor how peasants till the fields, nor how people do business. Moreover their health will be ruined. It is really terribly harmful. I said to my own child: 'You go down to the countryside and tell the poor and lower-middle peasants, "My dad says that after studying a few years we became more and more stupid. Please, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters, be my teachers. I want to learn from you." In point of fact pre-school children have a lot of contact with society up to the age of seven. At two they learn to speak and at three they have noisy quarrels. When they grow a little bigger, they dig with toy hoes to imitate grown-ups working. This is the real world. By then the children have already learned concepts. 'Dog' is a major concept. 'Black dog' and 'Yellow dog' are minor concepts. His family's yellow dog is concrete. Man is a concept which has shed a great deal of meaning. Man or woman, great or small, Chinese or foreigner, revolutionary or counter-revolutionary-all these distinctions are absent. What is left are only the characteristics which differentiate man from the other animals. Who has ever seen 'man'? You can only see Mr. Chang and Mr. Li. You cannot see the concept 'house' either, only actual houses, such as the foreign-style buildings of Tientsin or the courtyard houses of Peking.

We should reform university education. So much time should not be spent attending classes. Not to reform arts faculties would be terrible. If they are not reformed, can they produce philosophers? Can they produce historians? Today's philosophers can't turn out philosophy, writers can't write novels, and historians can't produce history. All they want to write about is emperors, kings, generals and ministers. Ch'ien-kuo's article is excellent, I read it three times. Its defect is that it does not name names. Yao Wen-yuan's article is also very good; it has had a great impact on theatrical, historical and philosophical circles. Its defect is that it did not hit the crux of the matter. The crux of *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office* was the question of dismissal from office. The Chia Ch'ing emperor dismissed *Hai Jui* from office. In 1959 we dismissed *P'eng Te-huai* from office. And *P'eng Te-huai* is *Hai Jui* too.

We must reform the arts faculties in the universities. The students must go down and engage in industry, agriculture and commerce.

The engineering and science departments are different. They have factories for practical work and also laboratories. They can work in their factories and do experiments in their laboratories. After they have finished high school they should first do some practical work. Only to go to the country side is not enough. They should also go to factories, shops, army companies. They can do this kind of work for a few years and then study for two years. This will be enough. If the university has a five-year system, they should go down for three years. Teachers should also go down and work and teach at the same time. Can't they teach philosophy, literature and history there too? Must they have big foreign-style buildings to teach them in?

Many great inventors, such as Watt and Edison, came from workers' families. Franklin, who discovered electricity, sold newspapers: he started as a newspaper boy. Many of the great scholars and scientists did not go through college. Not many of the comrades in our Party's Central Committee are university graduates.

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### TALK WITH MAO YUAN-HSIN

February 18, 1966-Second Talk

**[C**hairman Mao and his nephew] discussed the question of whether the Military Engineering Institute should go in for two or three years of study first and then do another year of part-time work and part-time study; and also the question of co-ordination and assignment of work.

**Chairman Mao:** The science and engineering faculties should still have their own language. With their six-year syllabus we could start by trying to do it in three years first and see how it works out, and not necessarily be in a hurry to shorten it to two years. With advanced science, if there is a clear-cut objective, then three years of study would perhaps be all right, and if three years are not enough they could later add on a bit.

Only when there is a clear-cut objective can you do less but do it well, and only then can you combine the general and the particular. The six-year system can then be altered into a three-year system, and after we have done that our direction will be right.

When you try new things, the only way to do it is to carry on for a few years, constantly summarizing your experience.

The science and engineering faculties have their specific nature and have their own special terminology, so you have to read a few books. But they also have something in common with other subjects, it's no good just to read books. One had only to study at Whampoa Academy for half a year and after graduation one served as a soldier for one year. In that way many talented officers were produced, but after it was changed to the Army University [I have not made a note of how long they studied] the result was that when people graduated, they kept on being defeated in battle and becoming our captives.

I don't know anything about the science and engineering faculties, but I do claim a little knowledge about the medical faculty. When you listen to an eye doctor talk it all sounds very mysterious, but the human body should be viewed as a whole.

The development of science proceeds from a low level to a high level, from the simple to the complex but when one teaches one cannot follow the sequence of development. When we study history, we should concentrate on modern history. Now we only have three thousand-odd years of recorded history; what will happen when we have ten thousand years of history, how will we teach it then?

Advanced science, including those fundamental theories which practice has proved useful, must get rid of those parts which practice has proved useless and irrational.

When one lectures on nuclear physics it will suffice to talk about the Sakata model: one needn't start from the theories of Bohr of the Danish school; otherwise you won't graduate even after ten years of study. Even Sakata uses dialectics. Why don't you use it?

Man's understanding of things always starts from the concrete and proceeds to the abstract. In medicine they start by teaching abstract things such as psychology, the nervous system, etc. I think this is wrong; they should start by teaching anatomy. Mathematics was originally derived from physical models. Nowadays one cannot associate mathematics with physical models: instead one has gone a step further and made it abstract.

### Third Talk-1966

[Chairman Mao] Formerly, I was principal of a primary school, and a teacher in middle school. I am also a member of the Central Committee, and was once a department chief for the Kuomintang. But when I went to the rural areas and spent some time with the peasants, I was deeply struck by how many things they knew. I realized their knowledge was wide, and I was no match for them, but should learn from them. To say the least, you

are not a member of the Central Committee, are you? How can you know more than the peasants? When you return, tell your political commissar that I said from now on you should go to the countryside once each year. There are great advantages in this!

You don't understand dialectics; you don't understand that one dies into two. Formerly, you thought you were something extraordinary, and now you do not think you are worth a tinker's damn. Both views are wrong.

Those who are guilty of errors should be encouraged. When someone who has made errors sees his mistakes, you should point out his good points. Actually, he will still have many good points. Those who have made errors should be washed clean in warm water. If it is too hot they can't stand it; warm water is most suitable. Young people who make mistakes should not be dismissed. Dismissal harms them, and there cannot be any confrontations. People like Pu-yi and K'ang Tse were transformed. Among the young people who have not been transformed are some Party members and some[Youth] League members. To dismiss them would be to simplyfy matters to excess.

At the Institute are you a leftist? I saw an article praising you. To have people flatter you is no good at all. Young people like you should be told off. If they tell you off too little it won't do. Everything is subject to this kind of compulsion. When I wrote XXX , I was compelled to do it. If I had to write it now, I could not do it.

What do we mean by advanced? To be advanced is to do the work of the backward, to analyse those who are around us, to be intent on making inquires and making friends wherever we go. Our young people must study dialectics, and master the use of dialectics in analysing problems. Talk me, for example. I am not at all more intelligent than others, but I understand dialectics and I know how to use it in analysing problems. If we use dialectics to analyse an unclear problem, the problem becomes clear in a trice. You must diligently study dialectics, its efficacy is very great.

## THE ANTI-JAPANESE MILITARY AND POLITICAL UNIVERSITY

August 2, 1966

**T**he revolutionary and progressive characteristics of this university are due to the revolutionary and progressive characteristics of its staff and its courses.

The educational principles of the university are 'Correct political orientation, plain, hard-working style, flexible strategy and tactics.'

[We must] overcome difficulties, contact the masses, and heighten [our] militancy. Anyone who is corrupt and lazy does not deserve to be a student of this university, for he acts against the rules of this university.

To the second class of graduates: "You must be brave, resolute, and tenacious. [You must] learn through struggles and be prepared to sacrifice your lives for the liberation of our nation.'

Written for the Production Drive of the university: 'Study on the one hand, produce on the other, overcome hardships and unnerve the enemies.' 'Now [you] study and produce. In future you will fight and produce.'

The style of the university: 'Unity, alertness, earnestness, and liveliness'.

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## DIALOGUES WITH RESPONSIBLE PERSONS OF CAPITAL RED GUARDS CONGRESS

July 28, 1968

I said that we should continue to run universities. I mentioned science and engineering colleges, but I did not say that all liberal arts colleges should be closed. But if liberal arts colleges are unable to show any accomplishments, they should be closed. As far as I can see, the basic courses in junior and senior middle schools and the last two years in primary school are about the same as those offered by colleges. One should only go to school for six years, at most ten years. The courses given in senior middle school repeat those in junior middle school, and those courses given in college repeat those given in senior middle school. All basic courses are repetitious. As to courses of specialization, even the teachers don't understand. Philosophers are unable to talk philosophy. What is there to learn in school? Nieh Yuan-tzu, you are a philosopher, are you?

**Nieh Yuan-tzu:** No, I am not a philosopher.

**Chiang Ch'ing:** She is an Old Buddha.

**Chairman:** What is the use of studying philosophy? Can one learn philosophy in college? If one has never been a worker or a peasant and goes to study philosophy, what kind of philosophy is that?

• **Lin Piao:** The more one studies, the narrower one's mind gets. It is called "tse-hsueh" ("narrow study"). [Philosophy is "che-hsueh," "Tse" and "Che" are almost homonyms.]

**Chairman:** How about studying literature? One should not study the history of literature. Instead, he should learn to write novels. Write a novel for me each week. If he is unable to produce, send him to a factory to work as an apprentice. During his apprenticeship, he should write about his experience as an apprentice. Those who study literature nowadays are unable to write. Hu Wan-ch'un of Shanghai used to write a lot, but after a while I saw little of his work.

**Premier:** There is also Kao Yu-Pao. He also went to college. Then his brain petrified.

**Chairman:** Let me talk with you about Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Marx and Lenin finished their college education, but not Engels and Stalin. Lenin studied law for one year. Engels went to college for one and a half years. Before finishing high school, he was asked by his father to work as an accountant in a factory. Then the factory moved to England. It was in the factory that he came into contact with the workers. How did Engels learn natural science? He did it in a London library, where he stayed eight years. He had never gone to college. Stalin had never gone to college, either. He was a graduate of a missionary high school. Gorky had only two years of formal education in primary school, even less than Chiang Ch'ing. Chiang Ch'ing is a primary school graduate. She had six years of schooling; Gorky had only two.

**Yeh Ch'un:** Comrade Ch'iang Ching studied very hard by herself...

**Chairman:** Don't brag for her. Knowledge is not gained in schools. When I was in school, I did not obey the rules. My principle was just to avoid getting myself dismissed. As to examinations, my marks hovered between 50 or 60 percent and 80 percent, 70 percent being my average. There were several courses that I gave up. I was unable to cope with several subjects, sometimes on purpose. During examinations in such courses, I turned in a piece of blank paper. For geometry, I drew an egg. Is it not a geometrical shape? I turned in the paper the fastest because it took only one stroke.

**Lin Piao:** I studied for four years in a middle school, but I left before graduation. It was a voluntary withdrawal. Without a middle school diploma, I worked as a primary school teacher. However, I liked to study by myself.

**Chairman:** The military schools nowdays are very harmful. Do you know how long it took one to finish at Whampoa Military Academy? Three months, six months!

**Lin Piao:** For the first three classes, it was three months. Starting with the fourth class it took longer.

**Chairman:** All that is needed is a little training. As to knowledge, it is not much except for some military drill.

**Linpiao:** The point is: as soon as you learn something, you forget. Things learned in school in several weeks can be seen clearly in the army in a few days. Hearing about something a hundred times is not as good as seeing it once.

**Chairman:** I have never attended any military school. Nor have I read a book on military strategy. People say I relied on "*Romance of Three Kingdoms*" and "*Military Strategy of Sun Tzu*" for my military campaigns. I said that I had never read "*Military strategy of Sun Tzu*". Yes, I have read "*Romance of Three Kingdoms*".

**LinPiao:** At one time, you asked me to get a copy [of "*Military Strategy of Sun Tzu*"]. I was unable to get it for you.

**Chairman:** During the meeting of Tsun-i, I debated with XXX. He asked me whether I had read "*Military Strategy of Sun Tzu*". I asked him: how many chapters are there in the "*Military Strategy of sun Tzu*"? He did not know. I asked him: What is the title of Chapter One? He did not know, either. Later, when I wrote about what I called problems of strategy, I went over the "*Military Strategy of Sun Tzu*" roughly.

**Chiang Ch'ing...**

**Chairman:** What is military Strategy? Who studied English?"Ah-te-mierh" is military strategy. It is good to know English. I studied foreign languages late in my life. I suffered. One has to learn foreign languages when one is young. T'an Hou-lan, what foreign language do you study? (The Chairman asked each one present the same question. Wang Ta-ping said he is studying Russian). One cannot study geology without a foreign language. It is good to learn English. Foreign language study should be started in primary school.

**Han A'i-ching:** After the cultural revolution is over, Mr. Chairman, please send me to the army to be a soldier.

**Chairman:** It is enough to be a soldier for half a year. What is the use of being a soldier too long? Half a year is adequate. Serve as a farmer for a year, and then a worker for two years. That's real college education. The real universities are the factories and rural areas. Comrade Lin Piao may be regarded as an intellectual because he has attended middle school. What kind of intellectuals are Huang Yung-Sheng and Wen Yu-ch'eng? They are country folks. Comrade Huang Yung-sheng, how many years did you attend school?

**Huang Yung-sheng:** One year and a half.

**Chairman:** What is the background of your family?

**Huang Yung-Sheng:** Lower-middle peasant.

**Chairman:** Wen Yu-Ch'eng, how many years did you go to school?

**Wen Yu-ch'eng:** Three years.

**Chairman:** What is the background of your family?

**Wen Yu-ch'eng:** Poor peasant.

**Chairman:** All are native folks with so little knowledge. With that little knowledge, Huang Yung-Sheng can be the Chief of Staff. Can you believe it?

**Lin Piao:** There was an XXX from Whampoa Military Academy. Chiang Kai-shek gave him a watch as an award. Later, in Nanking, he could not give a good account of himself in fighting.

**Yeh Ch'un:** He was against the Chairman.

**Chairman:** What's good about it if you are not opposed by anybody in this world? Let them oppose me.

**Lin Piao:** XXX scored 5 in many subjects at the Nanking Military Academy, but he could not fight.

**Chairman:** When the earth makes one revolution, it is one year. When it turns 10 times, it is 10 years. With the two factions going on like this, I think they have to quit. If they want to fight, let them fight on a big scale. They should give their place in the school to novel writers for self-study. Those who study literature should write poems and drama. Those who study philosophy should write history, family history and the process of revolution. Those who study political science and economics should not emulate the professors of Peking University. Are there any famous professors at Peking University? These subjects do not need teachers. Teaching is harmful. Organize a small group for self study, a self-study university. The students may stay half a year, one year, two years, or three years. No examination is required. Examination is not a good method. Suppose ten questions are asked about a book, which contains 100 viewpoints. The ten questions cover only one-tenth of the book. Even if you answer all the ten questions correctly in the examination, what about the other 90 percent?

Who examined Marx? Who examined Engels? Who examined Lenin? Who examined Comrade Lin Piao? Who examined Comrade Huang Tso-Chen? The needs of the masses and Chiang Kai-shek are our teachers. This was the case for all of us. Teachers are needed in middle schools, but everything should be made simple.

**Wen-yuan:** Establish a few good libraries.

**Chairman:** Give workers, peasants and soldiers time to use them. To study in a library is a good method. I studied at a library in Hunan for half a year, and in the library of Peking University for half a year. I chose my own books. Who taught me? I took only one course-journalism. I can be regarded as a member of the journalism class. As to that Philosophy Research Association, the sponsors were insincere. Hu Shih signed. There were also T'an P'ing-shan and Ch'en Kung-po.

**Chiang Ch'ing:** Reform is a hard task; you people cannot sit still on your rear ends.

**Chairman:** Knowledge is not gained in schools. Hasn't Comrade Lin Piao just said that! Where did his knowledge come from? From Whampoa Military Academy? Comrade Huang Yung-Sheng went to school for one year and a half. Wen Yu-ch'eng is lucky; he went to school for three years. Wen Yu-ch'eng, you are from Ch'ang-kang; you know a few characters. Society is the biggest university. How can it work if you sit in a narrow grove? Society is the biggest university. Lenin studied in a university for a year and a half. Engels did not finish high school. Both of them were better off than Gorky, who went to primary school for only two years. I, too, haven't attended a university... [text illegible]....The inventor of the steam engine was a worker, not a college teacher...[text illegible]...Look at some of our children who spend more than ten years studying. They are physically ruined, and become unable to sleep. A child may study history, but he doesn't understand class struggle.

**Chiang Ch'ing:** They study dozens of thick books. The works of Marx, Engels, and Chairman Mao become reference material, or supplementary material. Only the books chosen by their teachers are formal teaching materials.

**Chairman:** Six years is too long for primary school education; six years is too long for middle school education. Too much time is wasted. Do away with examinations! What are examinations for? It would be good if no examinations were necessary for any course. All examinations should be abolished, absolutely abolished. Who examined Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin? who examined Comrade Lin Piao? who examined me?



## ALL INDIA REVOLUTIONARY STUDENTS FEDERATION CONSTITUENTS:

Andhra Pradesh Radical Students Union	(APRSU)
Tamil Nadu Radical Students Union	(TNRSU)
Pragatipara Vidyarthi Kendra (Karnataka)	(PVK)
Vidyarti Pragati Sanghatana (Maharastra)	(VPS)
Revolutionary Students League (Bihar)	(RSL)
Progressive Students and Youth Front (Bihar)	(PSYF)
Democratic Students Union (Bihar)	(DSU)
Democratic Students Union (Delhi)	(DSU)
Revolutionary Students Federation (West Bengal)	(RSF)
Radical Students Association (West Bengal)}	(RSA)
Revolutionary Students League (West Bengal)	(RSL)
Viplava Vidyarti Sangatana (Kerala)	(VVS)

*"Throughout history, very few of those who came first in the imperial examination have achieved great fame..."*

*"Our present methods of conducting examinations is a method for dealing with the enemy, not a method for dealing with the people..."*

*"At examinations whispering into each other's ears and taking other people's places ought to be allowed. If your answers is good and I copy it, then mine should be counted as good..."*

*"The present method of education ruins talent and ruins youth. I do not approve of reading so many books..."*

*"Do away with examinations! What are examinations for? It would be good if no examinations were necessary for any course. All examinations should be abolished, absolutely abolished. Who examined Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin? Who examined Comrade Lin Piao? Who examined me?"*

- Com. Mao-Tse-Tung

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