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Development and Equity in Chinese Strategies
of Education

University — Université

Carleton University

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

M.A. International Affairs

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade

1982

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Development and Equity
in Chinese Strategies of Education

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in International Affairs

The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
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February 5, 1982

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Strategies of Education"

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
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Abstract

In the People's Republic of China education has been a focal point of development strategies. By examining the relationships between the changes in the development strategy and their impact on education we can recognize the role of education in planned socio-political change. Since the emphasis is upon change in the Chinese search for socialism, the methodological approach of Mao's ideas on the dialectic of contradiction is particularly useful. The first chapter introduces the tensions in Chinese education leading up to the Cultural Revolution. The second chapter examines the change within education as a product of the transformation of development strategies in the period leading up to the Cultural Revolution. The third chapter on education during the Cultural Revolution and the fourth chapter on educational developments since the Cultural Revolution examine the polarization and change in education resulting from changing conceptions of the definition of development.

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Introduction

For many decades in both western and many developing societies, investment in education has been perceived as a mechanism of growth, as well as a panacea for easing slow and uneven development among different segments of society.¹ Education has been entrusted to produce on the one hand, both the skilled manpower and trained citizenry necessary for modernisation and economic development, and, on the other hand, provide some measure of equality, or as in the United States, equality of opportunity through socio-political development, improving the situation of those people disadvantaged by class, race, religion or geography. But in societies as different as India², the United States³, the People's Republic of China, and Great Britain⁴, as well as most of developing Asia⁵, the educational system has generated much controversy as all too often education has failed to satisfy the manpower needs of the economy while reinforcing traditional socio-political differences. Advantaged groups have succeeded at a disproportionate rate while the disadvantaged have remained educationally and economically deprived, despite specific educational goals to relieve these differences.

In the western industrialized nations, educational strategies have come under increasing criticism as their failure to promote the desired social changes has become evident. James Coleman, in his shattering 1966 American

government sponsored study, Equality of Educational Opportunity,⁶ and Christopher Jencks in his study, Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America,⁷ have both amply shown that equality of educational opportunity in the American school system is mythical because of inequality of background which may indeed be reinforced by the school system; thus heralding the need for such affirmative action programs as "busing", "head start" and admission quotas for underprivileged groups. In Britain, the Plowden Report of 1967 echoed the American findings.⁸ A.H. Halsey, comparing the British and American educational systems, has been forced to exclaim "...the essential fact of twentieth century educational history is that egalitarian policies have failed".⁹

If the educational strategies of the developed nations have not always been thoroughly successful, they have at least been conscious of and attempted to deal with the impact of education upon social development. In the developing nations, however, the educational systems have been adopted wholesale from the West, with all too little concern for their impact upon the social structure. Rooted deeply in colonial history, the educational systems of the third world were established to create a class of individuals to serve colonial needs. As Lord Macaulay remarked in the 1830's. "We must at present do our best to form a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect ..."¹⁰ As Martin Carnoy, in his Education as Cultural

Imperialism, suggests, education was to demand passivity from the most repressed segments of society, while eliciting active participation from a small native elite who could most benefit from a status quo revolving around "economic, political and/or cultural dependency" in an imperial colonial structure.¹¹ These trends in the developing world have persisted, often exacerbated by misguided development "aid". In the post war era when economic development was thought to be primarily based on capital accumulation, consumption of capital in educational projects was justified by western economists in terms of "investment in human capital". By the mid 1960's foreign investment in third world education was highly concentrated in secondary and post-secondary levels to meet the perceived needs of manpower studies.¹² Only since the mid 1970's, a decade after similar discoveries were made in the western industrialized nations, did organisations like the World Bank realise that economic growth was not synonymous with social equity, or fairer income distribution. "Poverty oriented development strategies" aimed to satisfy such basic needs as housing, employment and mass rather than elite education were the new solutions to underdevelopment. The alleviation of social inequities were perceived of as the corequisites for economic growth. Thus, the World Bank in 1974 carefully notes that reducing educational disparities between the sexes, rural and urban groups and geographic and social groups all have important ramification for economic as well as social development.¹³

Recent desires of developing nations, most especially the heavily populated Asian developing nations, to satisfy equity goals through education have been frustrated by a multitude of factors: adoption of inappropriate models, demographic trends, inflation, economic recession, and resistance of privileged elites have all contributed to slowing growth and stifling change. The school age population is increasing at such a rate that facilities must be increased by 50% in the next 15 years simply to maintain the 1975 enrollment rate of 61% of Asian 6-11 year olds attending some form of primary education.¹⁴ Meanwhile educational growth, especially in the first half of the 1970's has slackened. Where educational growth cannot keep pace with demand, then the proportion of educational investment shared between mass education, primary schooling, general or vocational secondary or general or technical higher education becomes a highly political choice. In most Asian nations primary and mass education have been the first sectors hit by slackening investment.¹⁵

Encumbered partially by a colonial infrastructure oriented to the selection and training of a few talented youth in a general preparatory education, and also encumbered by the desire to maintain educational standards comparable to the developed nations, Asian nations have tended to stress formal secondary education while overlooking vocational and nonformal education. This in developing Asia and Oceania, 89% of all secondary education

is general arts and science oriented to preparation for higher education.¹⁶ At the same time investment in secondary schooling has increased remarkably in the last 15 years, most especially in those nations where primary enrollment ratios are still very low. Proportional investment in vocational education in many of the poorest countries has actually declined.¹⁷ As the World Bank and UNESCO note, this unbalanced educational development is encouraged by the wealthy who, seeking quality education for their children, exert private demand for increased investment in higher levels of education.¹⁸ In times of slower economic growth and slower income redistribution, these tendencies are exacerbated, in the words of a UNESCO working paper for Asian ministers of education, "...increasing the deprivation of the economically vulnerable sections of society...."¹⁹ Meanwhile, especially in India, Malaysia and the Phillipines high rates of unemployment and underemployment of general secondary school graduates and many graduates of higher education put into question the emphasis on general higher education. This is becoming especially clear as the absolute number of illiterates continue to climb, despite increasing enrollment. Where higher education is 10 to 30 times more expensive per pupil than primary education, and even more expensive than non-formal education, continued high rates of investment in higher education are becoming increasingly difficult to justify.²¹

All too often, the existence of large numbers of

educated unemployed because of overinvestment in secondary and higher education indicates a failure of the educational planners to recognize the developmental needs of their societies which are still primarily rural, despite educational systems fashioned on urban industrial societies. At the secondary vocational level, agricultural vocational schooling has stagnated even more than regular vocational education, even in nations which are predominantly rural.²² Instead vocational education has concentrated on the "high productivity" modern wage sector of the economy. Not surprisingly, a major cause of unemployment for educated youth has been attributed to their desire for upward mobility through urban white collar jobs, reinforced by an education that has not nurtured skills suitable for use in rural areas where many could be employed.²³

Primary schooling is also often inappropriate for the needs of a rural developing society. Primary curricula are regularly identical in rural and urban schools, and teaches little that can be of immediate use in the working world to the primary graduate who does not continue his education.²⁴ Nevertheless, over 50% of students enrolled at the primary level drop out before completing their primary schooling. Not surprisingly, the "vast majority" of these drop-outs are rural children, and rural girls are considerably over-represented. On average, Asian rural enrollment rates are over 25% less than their urban equivalents. Where only 50-60% of the school age population

is enrolled, the difference between urban and rural is even higher. Worse still, expansion of educational programs often has no impact on rural--urban differences, and once in school, rural students are still least likely to succeed.²⁵ Those exceptional rural children who do overcome the inferior education provided in the villages, as Michael Lipton amply demonstrates, are almost inevitably siphoned off to the urban areas from where they rarely return.²⁶

In recent years Asian educators have begun to come to grips with these problems, and many experimental programs have sprung up to expand the base of education. Through mass media and correspondence courses, and decentralisation of higher education out of metropolitan centers, and also through second chance primary programs, people previously neglected by education have more alternatives available. Even more important, Asian educators are talking about, and in some cases acting upon, the need to redefine the objectives of education in order to create a base for real mass education. Thus UNESCO working papers for ministers of education and economic planning are now stressing the need for transforming the educational structure from its "dominant elitist character" to a structure more appropriate to the needs of national development; the first goal of which must be to provide education for the "disadvantaged and deprived groups in the population who have in the past been bypassed by the process of economic

growth".²⁷ Even the World Bank, since 1975, has recognized that social equity, and specifically a sensitivity to the needs of the rural areas and concern for primary education, must be present in any educational system deserving aid. Education is now recognized as a useful tool in rural development, providing skills to make productive the "broad masses" of the population.²⁸ Furthermore, community involvement in education is increasingly accepted, as education is less and less considered a preserve of the young, but more and more is considered a catalyst to involve the whole of society in the development process, regardless of sex, class or geography.

If the traditional western model of education has slowly become obsolete, while the nations of developing Asia are slowly recognising the need to develop a more appropriate system of mass education with a more effective mass base, then perhaps an examination of the successes and failures of a more appropriate model might be useful. Education in the People's Republic of China has, for over three decades been oriented towards a system of mass education that overcomes income, sexual, regional and class disparities in education, while at the same time encouraging economic development. Strategies of educational development such as local initiative and self help, adjusting rural primary schooling to the agricultural calendar, and adjusting primary curricula to suit the needs of the working world, all long-time concerns of the Chinese Communist

Party, have only very recently been accepted by the western development establishment such as the World Bank. The conscious compromises between qualitative vertical and quantitative horizontal growth, leading to the provision of extensive non-formal and basic education at the same time as developing quality formal education, these have been the subject of long term deliberation in China, while appearing only recently in western development education circles.²⁹

Acceptance of the Chinese model of education has grown at a rapid rate among developmentalists and educators in the west. In the last decade, planners have become highly critical of their own strategies and have attempted to come to grips with an educational system out of wack with both social realities and development plans. By 1974 the World Bank had declared:

Education systems have been irrelevant to the needs of developing countries during the last two decades because education policies were often keeping company with overall development strategies which were themselves irrelevant to the societies and conditions of developing countries.³⁰

In this light the Chinese model has become increasingly attractive. John Simmons of the World Bank, in an article entitled "Education for Development Reconsidered" came to the conclusion that Chinese educational policies were the perfect model for World Bank ideals in action:

...educational reform has been achieved on a massive scale.. Although the Chinese acknowledge problems in their education, health and rural development programmes, their efforts in each of these fields

come closest to the World Bank's description of ideal development programmes. In China, the school curriculum is relevant to the populations real needs, ten years of schooling is almost universally available, and there is a university selection process that minimizes discrimination against the poor.³¹

Evidently the Chinese have managed to create mass education consistent with development which is the envy of the World Bank.

The Chinese have had a considerable head start in integrating educational planning into overall developmental plans; a feat which has evaded educational planners in many western and Asian nations.³² Armed with a stable Party structure devoted to the principle of mass education, equipped with considerable organisational skill and range, motivated by a mandate and ideology based on political education and change, and unhindered by considerable demands of a traditional elite married to the status quo-few nations have had such an opportunity to develop an educational system integrated into planned socio-political change. Since so many developing countries suffer from educational systems which often stifle rather than encourage change, and, which are often inappropriate to development strategies, it may be useful to examine Chinese education from the perspective of social change as a function of planned development.

Although Chinese educational policy has been the object of voluminous amounts of research by western scholars, the great majority of studies are static, and fail

to link education to the development process that the educational system was designed to serve. Instead education is regarded in isolation from society and social change.³³ As a result few studies note the considerable swings in direction of Chinese education resulting from changing developmental strategy; rather most studies tend to generalize upon a shorter time frame producing a rather distorted view of a Chinese "model".

The emphasis upon models is in itself problematic, resulting in the peculiarity of foreigners studying China in order to find the model which they either thoroughly revile, or completely accept,³⁴ often, especially in North America, most influenced by the political climate at home.³⁵ All too often China appears as a mirror glass, reflecting most clearly the prejudices of the viewer who often has unwittingly chosen a too narrow perspective or time frame. Simmons, for example, who lauds the Chinese ideal development programs, in discussing barefoot doctors, notes that the "crucial factor" in the programs' success was the lack of opposition from professional associations with vested interests.³⁶ Simmons, because of his limited cultural revolution time frame, fails to note the very late appearance of barefoot doctors after 1966, due to hostility from professional medical educators who in the early 1960's had staunchly fought for eight year post-secondary medical education. Simmons also fails to note the continuing criticism and limiting of the barefoot doctor program

in the post-cultural revolution period.

Another all too common distortion, heightened by the availability of information, is the overriding amount of research in Chinese education on urban rather than rural education. While China remains 80% rural, information on the state of rural education often remains vague. Several western works on Chinese education are flawed by a dangerous tendency to generalize from the urban case.³⁷

By carefully distinguishing between rural and urban, by examining Chinese education in light of continuing dynamism and change, and by relating education to its carefully assigned role in the developmental process, this study will attempt to be more even-handed.

Several studies of Chinese education have laid a theoretical framework for studying the relationship between Chinese educational development and development in other sectors of society. Marianne Bastid, in her brief but excellent article "Economic Necessity and Political Ideals in Educational Reform during the Cultural Revolution", stresses the economic basis of educational reform during the mid 1960's.³⁸ By far the most comprehensive study is that by Julia Kwong, Chinese Education in Transition: Prelude to the Cultural Revolution, in which she carefully analyses the role of the economy during the less radical phases before the Cultural Revolution.³⁹ Kwong, basing her analysis upon the ideas of Ralph Miliband, Nicholas Poulantzas, and Louis Althusser, suggests that in Chinese

educational development, "the economic substructure is the determinant of educational development".⁴⁰ For Kwong, contradictions in education and society are due to conflict between the socialist economic base and capitalist remnants in the educational superstructure.⁴¹ But perhaps Kwong's analysis is a little less appropriate in a developing society such as China. Certainly the economy is the final limiting factor, within the confines of which the educational structures must develop, but her argument that each specific educational change results from a specific economic cause does not ring true; a degree of choice exists as to how limited resources can be allocated. Her choice of time periods allows her to avoid the difficulty of explaining the radical phases of the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution in predominantly economically inspired terms. Her emphasis upon economic determinism sorely fails to explain how leading members of the Chinese Communist Party could so strongly disagree on strategies of educational development; if Premier Liu Shaoqui (Liu Shao-ch'i) disagreed with Chairman Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) over educational strategy, as Kwong amply demonstrates, Kwong would have us believe that Liu had become a pawn of "bourgeois" remnants who were attempting to usurp power in a counter-revolutionary struggle.⁴² Perhaps by going beyond the economic structure and looking at strategies for economic development and their relationship to educational policies she could have found more fruitful answers.

The Chinese case begs for a more flexible interpretation of the relationship between development policy and education. Marx and Lenin could afford to believe that development was primarily economic and that matter determined thought.⁴³ Marx assumed that communism would only come to Asia after Asiatic society had been destroyed and the "material foundations of western society" established.⁴⁴ But the Chinese communists were not served by such a passive approach; and had to build their own "material foundations" and create a new economic base to suit a new political order. Thus the Chinese Communist Party and its major theoretician, Mao Zedong, have been accused of bending Marxism by suggesting that the political and cultural heritage of a society also has considerable impact on the development of the economic base.⁴⁵ Mao, in his 1937 article "On Contradiction" carefully explains his heterodox idea:

True the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role.... Are we going against materialism when we say this? No. The reason is that while we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines the social consciousness, we also, and indeed must, recognize the reaction of mental on material thing, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base.⁴⁶

Thus the Chinese have adjusted Marxism to suit a society which, because of the limitations of the economic base,

needed an ideology which could give a considerable role to the ability of man's ideas and actions in bringing about socialist development. For the Chinese, education is thus of prime importance in the developmental process, given the direct influence of social consciousness upon economic development.⁴⁷

In accordance with the very flexible attitude of the Chinese Communist Party towards economic determinism, (which a renowned Marxist scholar such as Louis Althusser might suggest would be closer to the original ideas of Marx and Engels than "vulgar Marxism" conceives,⁴⁸ an analysis of Chinese development based predominantly upon economic determinism appears rather extraneous. A more appropriate approach would be to study Chinese education in a manner more in accord with Chinese ideology. This study will attempt to survey the interaction between education and changing strategies of socio-political as well as economic development, under the economic constraints of limited resources.

Especially appropriate to the examination of Chinese development is Mao's analysis of change based on the dialectics of contradiction. Although not the basis of the usual formal hypothesis testing methodology, which Julia Kwong suggests is unsuitable due to the limitations of Chinese data,⁴⁹ the dialectical approach is marvellously amenable to a qualitative analysis of the process of change in development strategies. Progress arises through the

continuing struggle and resolution of contradictions within society, each resolution being confronted by further contradictions, change creating the preconditions for further change. As used by Marianne Bastid, in her discussion of educational reform in the Cultural Revolution, the dialectical process of criticising the old system, proposing and discussing ideas for reform and finally implementing a new system, is a structure of considerable value in bringing to light problems and imbalances within the educational system as perceived by the Chinese.⁵⁰ The only major potential flaw in the model is also a major source of distortion for many studies of Chinese education using other approaches: the Chinese emphasis on continuing critical self-analysis, especially in mass campaigns, often creates an unfairly negative image of the preceding period. Hyperbole, as a facet of the developmental process, not only in mass campaigns but also in many of Mao's speeches, is used to create strong feelings about past failures in order to inspire future successes. Any study of Chinese development must take these excesses into account.

Evidently, the area of Chinese education within development strategies is too broad to be encompassed by a thesis, even in a qualitative study of the dynamics of change. Thus, the narrower perspective of examining the impact of development strategies upon urban-rural imbalances in education, a concern shared by other Asian developing nations, is called for. Urban bias in education

as we have seen, has plagued Asian education, and has been charged "the root cause of the failure of "development" to remove mass poverty".⁵¹ "Development", implying modernizing structural change and economic growth, has occurred in many developing nations without easing mass rural poverty.⁵² Over-emphasis upon crude economic growth and industrialisation at the expense of the small farmer economy, combined with an educational system that reinforces these trends, all come into play in urban-biased development. Has China been able to overcome the contradictions between the educational demands of the modern industrial urban economy and the more basic needs of rural development while still satisfying its social and egalitarian goals?

The Chinese have been committed, in education and general development, to breaking down the "Three Great Differences" variously defined as between urban and rural, men and women, and mental and manual labour,⁵³ or between town and country, mental and manual, and worker and peasant.⁵⁴ But, this has been perceived of as primarily a commitment of Mao.⁵⁵ Benjamin Schwartz has suggested that the Maoist vision of society is counter to the requirements of modernisation: in the long run, he suggests, where the Maoist egalitarian vision conflicts with aspects of modernisation most relevant to national power, a more pragmatic view will prevail.⁵⁶ Rhoads Murphy also suggests that China is increasingly rejecting the rural strategy of development.⁵⁷ By examining the changes in Chinese educational policy, and

their impact upon rural-urban bias, as a response to developmental policy, we should be able to detect contradictions between modernisation and egalitarian policies, and discover whether these contradictions are detrimental to development, or, in a more dialectical process, promote further beneficial responses to new needs.

Pertinent areas of inquiry with which to gauge the effectiveness of education in easing social, economic and regional differences can be found in the discussion of Asian education. Effective egalitarian policies should reduce differences between male and female students, reduce the proportion of dropouts, especially in rural areas, and provide the largest possible proportion of youth with access to formal education. Education must be responsive primarily to local needs, not preparatory to higher education. Youth should not have a monopoly over educational resources, but rather effective non-formal education should be available to all those bypassed by regular education. An educational system which produces unemployed graduates, or consistently provides upward mobility by syphoning young people out of the countryside and into the city, is doing little to promote rural development. Finally, of crucial interest to a study centering on change, in times of economic stagnation, which sectors of the educational system, higher or primary, rural or urban, faces the most strident cut-backs.

The scope of this thesis is admittedly large, the timeframe from liberation to post-cultural revolution is

ample. But, general discussions of education in China are numerous enough; there is little need to concentrate on the general structures of the educational system. Studies of rural-urban development in education, are, however, much more rare. Only John Gardner, in a brief article "Educated Youth and Urban-Rural Inequalities" which deals with the time period from 1958 to 1966, goes into any detail on inequalities within the educational system between village and town.⁵⁸ Since the focus of the thesis is upon the evolution of an educational system under changing development strategies, it would be unsuitable to choose a narrower perspective. But, to avoid a constant reiteration of themes, emphasis will be laid upon the period from the Cultural Revolution to the present.

Following Michel Oksenberg's advice on sources, the widest possible range of sources are used for each time period.⁵⁹ Translations of Chinese news sources are used extensively, including Current Background, Survey of the People's Republic of China Press, and Foreign Broadcast Information Service, as well as Beijing Review. Chinese Education was highly useful as a compilation of documentary material from the Chinese press specifically concerned with education. Stuart Schram and Jerome Chen's non-official versions of Mao's speeches are also most illuminating.⁶⁰ Secondary sources have been used to a considerable extent, as a balance to the translations.

The organisation of chapters flows consistently from an attempt to emphasize the more recent period. The first chapter introduces the nature of the Chinese educational system as it had evolved up to the Cultural revolution, especially in terms of problems faced by other developing nations. The second chapter explores the relationship the evolving strategies of development and educational developments up to the Cultural Revolution. The third chapter examines the radical policies of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and the role of education in the new development strategy. Lastly, the evolution of a very different educational policy of the post-Mao era in relation to equally different strategies of development is discussed.

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1. Who Should the School System Serve?

Tensions Leading Up To the Cultural Revolution

Before discussing the advances and retrenchments in Chinese educational policy, it is useful to explore the scope of the achievements of that educational policy outside of the political turmoil in which it developed and was often spurned. This chapter will attempt to delineate the Chinese educational attainments in relation to their developmental peers in Asia. A central focus will be the management of educational policies in their impact upon equitable urban-rural development. Expansion and distribution of schooling will be examined, followed by an investigation of the variety of the educational infrastructure in order to ascertain who is best served by the schools, who controls and funds the schools, and what sort of graduates they produce. Traditional obstacles to rural education must also be analyzed, since they play an enormous role in determining who will have access to the available resources.

First, a brief description of the institutional framework will illustrate the diversity of the educational system in the People's Republic of China. Formal schooling is divided into the three major stages that are found throughout Asia and the West; primary, secondary and higher. Primary schooling has at various times and in various localities since 1949 been divided into three year lower and three year senior primary, four year lower and two year senior primary and integrated five year and six year programs. These structures are far from arbitrary, since

as we shall see, they have considerable impact upon the extent of available rural schooling and the acceptance of the local population. Secondary schooling, with equally important impact, has variously been divided into three year junior middle and three year senior middle; four year junior and two year senior middle; five year combined, four year combined; two year extended primary schooling, as well as hosts of one, two, three, and four year technical vocational secondary schooling. Normal school (teacher's college) is available for primary school graduates and after all levels of secondary graduation. Higher education has been even more varied, ranging from eight year western-style medical training to short-term technical training in basic skills. At all levels of schooling many different options exist, from state-run regular schooling to community and factory run part-work part-study programs, satisfying the educational aspirations of a wider age group than regular school aged youth. The diversity of the educational system in the People's Republic of China provides the base for mass community-based education as well as training a technologically proficient core of individuals. In this respect, China has certainly surpassed many of her Asian neighbours, who are now exploring, often in pilot and experimental projects, systems of non-formal education designed to bring those by-passed by regular education into educational programs.¹

In terms of net enrollment in the educational system, China has certainly supported a massive growth in its educational infrastructure. The raw figures for enrollment are rather mind-boggling. In 1949, approximately 25,192,000 students were

involved in regular formal education. In 1980, that figure has risen to 213,020,000. (See Appendix A) Considerably more people involved in irregular, locally run spare time and full time schools, do not appear in these figures. In 1960, for example, 130,000,000 peasants and workers were claimed to be taking part in spare time education; this is a significantly larger number than those enrolled in formal education at that time.²

Despite the regular cautions concerning reliability of official statistics, it would appear that the People's Republic of China has fared remarkably well in providing some primary education for the vast majority of primary age youth. Beginning in 1949 with a mere 25% of primary youth receiving some primary education, (a level which Pakistan and Laos achieved in 1960) China now claims to provide primary education to at least 90% of school-age youth.³ Only the most successful of Asian nations, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and South Korea can boast of such high enrollment ratios: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and even Iran come nowhere close.⁴

The balance of growth between primary, secondary and tertiary education, as in other Asian nations, has not always been ideal, but differs in that the balance in China has on several occasions been considerably altered in the process of political campaigns. Generally, between 1949 and 1980 enrollment in higher education has increased sevenfold, primary education sixfold, and secondary schooling by a factor of 65. (See Appendix A) This tremendous increase in secondary schooling occurs, for the most part, at the lower middle level, and can be explained

by the pre-revolutionary scarcity of secondary schooling, compensated for by the inclusion of some middle schooling in the primary curriculum, in the period after 1958. While primary and higher education increased more slowly after 1958 (increasing by 64% between 1958 and 1980 for primary schooling, and increasing by only 20% for higher education) enrollment in middle schools increased by 460% between 1958 and 1980. Recent trends, however, have shown an emphasis on higher education, at the expense of lower education. As we shall see in later chapters, the declining primary and middle school enrollment is not solely a result of demographics or improved statistical methodology; but is also the result of political parameters.⁵

While the Chinese educational system has certainly grown at an admirable rate, some imbalances in the availability of education have arisen, between urban and rural areas, and especially between suburban rural areas and more distant, backward areas. As we have seen in the introduction, these imbalances have caused serious developmental imbalances in other Asian nations. By 1973, Thomas Bernstein estimates that primary schooling was universalized in urban China.⁶ By 1977 Chinese media sources were claiming that junior middle schooling was available for all urban students.⁶ Suzanne Pepper reports that five year middle education is available in all the largest cities, while smaller cities and suburban cities can guarantee a junior middle school education. The countryside, Pepper feels, has only just universalized a five year primary education.⁷ Louis Smerling reports being told the same thing by the Minister of Education and several directors of provincial educational bureaus in

1978, but the Ministries would by no means claim that five year primary school has been universalized, instead suggesting that the goal of seven years universal education in rural areas will not be reached for some time to come.⁸

Despite the difficulties in measuring the extent of primary education it would appear that only very slowly is education being extended to the more distant rural areas. As late as 1968, Chinese media were discussing villages in which 96% of the population were illiterate and 80% of the children did not go to school.⁹ One more recent study of sixty-three villages in Guangdong (Kwangtung), a relatively advanced province, found that in one-third of the villages all the children attended primary school, while in half the villages, 90% of the children attended primary school for at least some of the time, but in one-sixth of the villages many children did not attend school, and a large number dropped out very early; villages furthest from urban centers and the wealthier delta regions fared the worst.¹⁰ General nation-wide estimates of primary enrollment tend to obscure the regional and geographic differences between areas. For example, Stewart Fraser, in 1969--perhaps the height of primary school expansion--suggests that 90-95% of primary age students were actively enrolled in school. He further suggests that 100% of urban children and 75% of rural children receive schooling.¹¹ When one considers that 80% of China is rural, Fraser is evidently contradicting himself. Leo Orleans who in 1979 estimates that 80% of rural children attend school,¹² carefully refrains from assuming how many of these children actually complete the primary course.

Chinese statistics also refrain from collecting statistics on completion of primary schooling. Leo Orleans in an earlier report found that 10-50% of students in village schools often ~~w~~¹³ drew in any one year. Dropping out is primarily a rural problem which has bedevilled the progress of rural education in many other Asian nations.¹⁴ Chinese statistics on education may well include rural children who have attended "some amount" of schooling, while urban youth may be much more likely to successfully complete primary school. But, since official statistics do not break down into urban-rural components, the full extent of regional differences is difficult to measure.¹⁵ Without a doubt, though, minorities in outlying areas receive considerably less education. In Tibet, after recent expansion of the educational system, one out of fourteen individuals have some education, including part-time, nonformal, urban, and adult-literacy classes, and in Yunnan, primary schools among the Liqiang (Lich'iang) were recently extended to the "absolute majority" of production teams and villages.¹⁶ Education is certainly not uniformly spread throughout the Chinese countryside; only some areas have attained the same educational levels as urban areas.

But, as we have seen from developing Asia, orientation of curricula is as important as physical availability of education in ensuring both the success of rural students and any positive impact of educated rural youth upon rural development. By examining more closely the three levels of education, we may be able to evaluate the successes of the Chinese in formulating an educational system that serves the majority of the people --the rural people. By discovering who funds education,

who controls the curricula, who attends school, and finally by determining who benefits from the graduates of the schools, we may better evaluate the success of the Chinese school system. It is also worthwhile to note at each stage what innovations could be of particular use to other developing countries in their attempts to improve their own educational system. —

Higher education, more than any other field of Chinese education, has been the subject of heated controversy in China, especially during the period of 1956 to the present. The political arguments of the debate will be examined in detail in a later chapter, but here it must be kept in mind that at any one time differing currents of thought have existed concerning the teaching methods, institutional controls, admissions procedure, curriculum and even the general goal of education. Higher education in China has undergone considerable change.

Between 1949 and 1953 the system of education was reorganized and streamlined. The number of institutions of higher education were reduced from 209 to 182, only 14 of which were comprehensive universities with general arts and science programs, the rest being specialized technical institutes, such as language institutes, agricultural colleges, engineering and geology institutes. 17 Only half of these institutes received state funding from the Ministry of Higher Education, the rest were private, depending upon support from industry, provincial Ministries of Education, or tuition fees. Other schools received support from specific

ministries interested in cultivating the skills of the students (i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports the Peking Foreign Language Institute). Although the structures of higher education were to vary considerably, the Ministry of Higher Education later being subsumed by the Ministry of Education, etc., the principal of diversity in operations and funding has continued at every level of education, primary to higher, allowing for a flexible system of education capable of suiting a wide variety of needs.

Flexibility, however, does not imply a lack of careful central control upon the curriculum. Within the educational system in every institution at every level a dual system of administration supervises the teaching. Every school is run by a revolutionary committee and one high ranking leader in every committee will be a member of the Chinese Communist Party.¹⁸ The Party member often has tended to be less academic and more administrative. In each department of higher education an Office of Teaching and Research (hereafter O.T.R.) is also present. This office, held by a faculty member, was purely academic, unlike the role of the department head and assistant department head who held more administrative responsibilities, and one of whom was also usually a Party member. The O.T.R. developed the content and organisation of the curriculum under the supervision of the department head and revolutionary committee.²⁰ In science subjects the O.T.R. held slightly less responsibility since, especially before the Great Leap Forward of 1956, texts were usually distributed by the Ministry of Higher Education and were often direct

translations of Soviet texts. In less scientific subjects the O.T.R. produced texts as well as lecture notes, fundamentally directing the learning process. Because of the political risks of choosing the wrong texts in the humanities and liberal arts, smaller universities hesitant about preparing their own material would use the texts and lecture notes of the O.T.R. of the prestigious larger institutions. Thus a very small number of academics had a very influential role in the formation of Chinese liberal arts curriculum,²¹ reducing the potential adaptability of the content to local or regional needs, and creating the possibility of the development of a rather academically oriented system of higher education. But in each department in each university a Party member had the opportunity of exercising a more practical and less academic influence, more suited to the practical needs of a developing country.

Nevertheless, whether because of an innate qualitative bent of the academics, and an inability of the Party academics to radicalize the educational system, or merely because of a recognized need by both of the primary need to develop efficient, high quality institutions, many aspects of the system of higher education before the Cultural Revolution of 1966 reflect a rather elitist, and often anti-rural bias.

Perhaps a most striking example of an urban predisposition in higher education can be found in the agricultural colleges and colleges of agricultural mechanics. These agricultural colleges taught agricultural techniques, disease and insect control

animal husbandry, soil chemistry, veterinary science, irrigation methods, tractor maintenance, forestry, and administration at a higher technical level than the agricultural middle schools. From 1958 to 1968 these colleges produced only 10,800 graduates: not nearly enough graduates to have a significant impact on China's overall agricultural development.²² This number represents only a small fraction of the number of graduates of higher education. Most surprisingly, the vast majority of students in agricultural colleges were not rural youth. After the Cultural Revolution agricultural colleges were "encouraged to start specialized classes to admit rural youths and adults"²³ In 1958 Mao Zedong had remarked that in order to reduce the differences between rural and urban, it would be a mistake to set up agricultural universities in the cities. Mao wished agricultural colleges to be located in the countryside.²⁴ As well as better uniting theory with practice - a major goal of Maoist education - agricultural colleges in the countryside could directly serve the needs of local agriculture and increase the knowledge of the peasantry. Nevertheless immediately before the Cultural Revolution all agricultural colleges were still located in urban areas.²⁵ Even as late as 1975 many agricultural colleges were urban and some graduates of agricultural colleges remained in the cities after graduation.²⁶ Progressive agricultural colleges such as Zhaoyang (Chaoyang) College, which moved into the countryside and enrolled students from the communes who were to be sent back to the communes, and which actively engaged students and

teachers in increasing the agricultural production of the commune, were rare among agricultural universities.²⁷ Even agricultural colleges have not been entirely oriented to reducing rural - urban differences. By enrolling primarily urban youth and educating them in urban environments, the agricultural colleges were hardly preparing youth to meet the practical challenges of rural existence. The need to create "special classes" for peasant youth might indicate some oversight of the potential of rural youth to master a higher level of agricultural skill.

Not just in agricultural colleges, but throughout higher education the peasantry has been considerably under-represented, accounting for nowhere near their 80% of the population. Unfortunately the figures for class background that are available lump students of peasant and worker origin together. Also, official statistics, although differentiating between urban classes, rarely differentiate between rural classes. As we shall see, villagers have often complained that the children of rich peasant origin (family status defined at land reform) achieved much higher educational levels.

The proportion of worker peasant students in higher education has gradually increased, however. In 1952 only 20.46% of the students in higher education were considered worker-peasant,²⁸ while by 1958 estimates vary from 36.42%²⁹ to 48%³⁰. Donald Munro has estimated that in 1958 prestigious Beijing (Peking) University, known as Beida (Peita), had only 19.5% worker-peasants while higher education in general was much more representative at 48%.³¹ Statistics for the 1960's,

especially after 1962, are less available. Immediately after the Great Leap, more and more worker peasants were receiving higher education.³² By 1960, in the philosophy department of Beida 66.8% of the students were worker-peasant. But as a result of the depoliticization of the school system and the renewed emphasis upon proficiency, by 1962 the number of worker-peasant students were reduced to the pre-Great Leap period (37.7%). Also between 1960 and 1962 children of the "exploiting" classes (also derived from status of parents at liberation) rose from 8.2% to 19.3% in Beida philosophy classes.³³ Interestingly, as we can see, the philosophy department still had a higher proportion of worker-peasants than the proportion in the rest of the university; worker peasant youth have been estimated to be as low as 20% in the rest of the university.³⁴ Other figures suggest that Beida may be exceptional in its low proportion of lower class students. Sylvia Chan estimates that by 1965 54% of university students were worker peasant in the whole of the university population.³⁵ Zhou Peiyuan (Chou P'ei-yuan), a definite apologist for the pre-Cultural Revolution educational system, insists that 60% of the entire student population of Beida was worker - peasant.³⁶

The interesting question is of course what percentage of the worker-peasant class of students was actually peasant. Certain factors in the educational system could suggest that only a small fraction would be peasants. First and foremost

the admissions requirements would be far more difficult for a rural youth to obtain. Admission was based on senior middle school graduation and success on standard university admissions examinations. As we have seen, senior middle school education is rare in the countryside and is only slowly becoming widely available in small towns. Admissions requirements, especially for the more prestigious universities require good grades in subjects such as English (previously Russian) physics and chemistry. Foreign languages are rarely taught in village schools, and physics and chemistry when taught in rural areas are often far more rudimentary than in comparison to a better urban school. For village youth to attend senior middle school they would inevitably need to leave their homes, entailing considerable direct and indirect costs which will be discussed in depth later.

But the admission requirement that is most disadvantageous for peasant youth is the admissions examination. Entrance to Chinese higher education has always been based on examination results, as had the traditional Confucian education system that culminated in the bureaucratic hierarchy. Developing countries with their transposed European educational system have also used the examination system as a tool for selecting talented youth for the next stage of education, and as we have seen, are only now grappling with the problem of maintaining standards while introducing some degree of affirmative action for those disadvantaged by the regular system. In China, only in

1957 was it specifically stated that, in order to improve the "political" quality, sons of peasants, workers, cadres and demobilized soldiers would be given preference when their academic qualifications - including university admissions exams - were equal to others.³⁷ But the very nature of an examination system encourages regarding marks in isolation from social and political criteria.³⁸ Considerable advantage would be given to children graduating from the elite cadre schools and children of well educated family backgrounds. Examination systems as criteria for entrance and success inevitably create an emphasis upon marks as a measure of academic excellence and technical proficiency, but gives short shrift to social goals. As Peter Seybolt remarks "...the entrance examinations helped to perpetuate class privilege and sharpen class divisions." To say that a rural child from an illiterate family will benefit from selective discrimination only after he has attained the same academic level as an urban intellectual's child considerably underestimates the peasant child's ability.

China, like the Soviet Union, was moving towards a system of higher education in which a strong correlation existed between the educational level attained by the parents and their children. In the Soviet Union, as in China, children of white collar workers were less likely to drop out of school early or enter vocational training programs.⁴⁰ Pierre Bourdieu has developed a theory of cultural capital, showing how the French upper classes in a capitalist society are able to reproduce

their cultural wealth, giving their children highly significant social advantages.⁴¹ But as Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey point out "...where does cultural capital play a greater role in the transmission of inequality than in those societies that have abolished private ownership of the means of production?"⁴² An attempt to overcome the class orientation of higher education was a major objective of the Great Leap and Cultural Revolution. Not surprisingly the examination system which had given such great advantage to the old "exploiting classes" was to be one of the first structures attacked. The radicals of the Cultural Revolution were highly critical of the system of "equality before marks" recognizing that it was "cultural autocracy of the bourgeoisie".⁴³

Some evidence also exists to indicate that peasant youth were not only disadvantaged in entrance procedures, but were also socially disadvantaged once accepted into university.⁴⁴ Peasant students who found difficulties in their studies because of inadequate educational background were, except in the Great Leap and Cultural Revolution, often dismissed or sent to less prestigious schools, since remedial tutoring did not exist.⁴⁵ Professors often grew "impatient, and attacked slow students for their stupidity" for these students were an "obstacle to academic quality".⁴⁶ Some Beida students did criticize the university bureaucracy for stressing academic excellence and the production of experts while minimizing political content and the integration of theory with labour; but especially in the early 1960's those students were often pressured into dropping

out.⁴⁷

A considerable factor in the peasantry's lack of representation in higher education before the Cultural Revolution was the personal expense of higher education. Tuition fees would often be covered by partial scholarships but other expenses such as room and board, books, and spending money were additional. Foregone wages that would supplement a family's income must also be taken into account. Before 1955 fees were a significant expense but boarding was free; after 1955 boarding remained compulsory but had to be paid out of the student's pocket.⁴⁸ The Chinese media reported that in 1956 it cost ¥ 1,200 a year to maintain a student in college.⁴⁹ Nearly all needy university students before 1956 had state scholarships, but these were only partial. Buung-joon Ahn estimates that only those whose monthly income was over ¥100 a month could afford to send their children to university. An average monthly wage of a peasant Ahn estimates to be ¥ 20, a starting salary of a worker would be ¥40.⁵⁰ Tuition fees may then have had some considerable impact upon peasant attendance in higher education; only through considerable family assets, or with collective or state aid could most youth attend higher education.

Perhaps the most fundamental bias of higher education was to be found in course content. Medicine, for example, was a western style eight year program, with three years of pre-medical education and one year internship, producing doctors oriented to working with the most modern technology available

only in the cities.⁵¹ Mao in 1965 was to heavily criticize the Ministry of Public Health for working for only 15% of population, wryly suggesting that perhaps they should change their name to the Ministry of Urban Gentleman's Health.⁵²

The high level of technical training was inappropriate for solving many of the basic level needs of the countryside. Engineering students studied from four to six years, raising questions about the allocation of resources to train the optimal number of high level professionals without diverting resources away from the need for intermediate level technicians. Higher education, more than any other area of education demands very careful balance between the needs of the most technologically advanced sectors of society, without leaving behind undeveloped the talents and abilities of the masses in developing societies. Even within the People's Republic of China, general consensus on how this could be done was difficult to reach.

In the period up to the Cultural Revolution, Chinese higher education had not been remarkably successful in bringing rural youth into the educational system--indeed that does not appear to have been a major objective. Higher education remained an urban phenomenon. Even agricultural colleges remained located in urban areas with urban students. The potential diversity of higher education was somewhat limited by centrally produced teaching outlines which kept quality high but minimized local input into content, most especially in the university stream. Inevitably, it would be difficult

for the institutions to meet needs of rural areas. Increasing the representation of rural youth within the schools all too often was only a short term goal, influenced by recent political campaigns. Centralized examination systems only exacerbated the problem. Without affirmative action policies of positive discrimination the peasantry would remain under-represented.

At lower levels of education the Chinese have had significantly more success, coming closest to urban-rural equality. Universalization of education has long been a goal of the Chinese Communist Party, and despite some geographic shortcomings, universalization is very slowly coming close to realization. But the resources of the state have always been insufficient to support primary education. As Zhang Xiruo (Chang Hsi-jō), Minister of Education in 1957 remarked: "...it is not a question of whether more schools should be built but of whether it is possible or impossible".⁵³ Expansion of primary education has come about through several spurts in which local units were encouraged to form their own "irregular" schools followed by periods of consolidation in which many schools were closed down, while the remainder improved their quality, often under increased guidance and control by the Ministry of Education and local and provincial educational bureaucracies. Thus while these phases will be discussed in later chapters, it is again necessary to keep in mind the diversity of the school system.

Primary schools have been run and funded in widely varying

manners, but are usually distinguished as being either regular or irregular. Regular schools have at various times been run and funded by the Ministry of Education, the provincial bureaus of education, the local municipal governments or communes, or any combination of the above. Irregular schools have been run and funded by factories, and neighbourhood committees in the cities, and by production brigades and production teams in the countryside.

But, differences between regular and irregular schools, especially in the cities, tend to blur. Very often irregular schools have been partially supported by the part-time work efforts of the students, partially by tuition fees, and partially by state funding. During radical political campaigns, labour has also been a major characteristic of regular schools, --but more for the moral value than economic. Factory and neighbourhood schools also at certain times have received state funding, while regular schools have been admonished to become more self-reliant --especially in regular rural schools since the Cultural Revolution.

The diversity of operations of primary schools has significant impact on the schooling received by youth. Neighbourhood run schools have considerable opportunity to satisfy local needs. Factory run schools thus usually include in the curriculum the teaching of skills necessary for factory workers. Irregular min ban (people's run) schools add agricultural skills to the curriculum. Regular schools run by the Ministry of Education or local governments tend to stress more general

academic education, more oriented towards secondary education. Indeed, except for during and immediately following the Cultural Revolution, certain key schools, nearly always urban, have been picked out to train academically superior students in a preparatory program for higher education. Thus considerable tracking -- the differentiation of schools and students, separated according to quality and eventual functioning within society -- occurs within the Chinese educational system, even at the primary level. Chinese education is not to standardize and equalize that first educational experience. Chinese primary schools adjust their curriculum to suit the most likely occupation of the students.

When education has been most standardized, it has often been at the expense of the rural min ban schools. As we shall see, during certain periods in which the government has stressed the need to improve the quality of schools, min ban and part-work part-study schools have been closed often in large numbers (especially between 1960-1962). At the same time remaining schools have been more carefully supervised by provincial and xian (county) educational bureaus.⁵⁴ Thus, tension exists between the local educational committees, who supervise min ban schools and the provincial and municipal educational bureaus; Party education officials have been more concerned with standardization and quality while local committees have been more interested in satisfying local needs first.

Within urban China, differences between regular and irregular schools have been marked, but are now significantly

lessened. The major inequalities have occurred between the municipality, provincial or ministry-run key schools and the local neighbourhood schools. Certain key primary schools used entrance exams to determine enrollment, giving clear advantage to the children of better educated parents.⁵⁵ Access to other key schools was restricted to groups of high social status, such as high ranking Party official's children. In Beijing alone, thirty boarding schools for cadres children existed in 1966.⁵⁶ These schools were of considerably higher standard and better equipped. At the height of the Cultural Revolution, key schools were abolished and all students went to their closest neighbourhood schools. But, the results appeared to have been mixed. Since apartment blocks have usually been built by work units for employees, a natural tendency to ghettoize cadres and professional elites has sometimes occurred: the better schools tend to occur in the areas heavily populated by cadres and professionals.⁵⁷ Since the Cultural Revolution, key schools have again been reinstated, and resources are to be concentrated upon the improvement of key schools.⁵⁸

Funding has exacerbated differences between schools. Since the Cultural Revolution all non-key urban schools have had to contend with demands that they become more self-reliant in funding.⁵⁹ Non-key schools are all now run by neighbourhood committees, but still depend to a large extent on municipal funding. State allocations from the municipality are fixed and do not seem to respond to changes in enrollment. Where state funding is insufficient, schools must find ways of managing;

through funding by local industry, improving the efficiency of the school management or school run industries, or increasing tuition fees. If the school committee wishes to improve school facilities or provide extra-curricula activities, they must increase tuition fees, or find alternate means of funding.⁶⁰ Not all schools can impose higher fees. Estimates from 1978 suggest that 30% of all students in primary and secondary school receive scholarships. Louis Smerling quotes Chinese officials as stating that the average cost of education to a student as ¥7.50 in urban areas. The schools themselves must give assistance to students from urban families who earn less than ¥12 a month per family member. But these school authorities admitted that there are rarely sufficient funds available for all in need. If hardship is caused because of fees the school administration must reduce its budget.⁶¹ Thus a school in a neighbourhood where a high proportion of the parents are willing and able to devote a higher percentage of their income to quality education for their children can provide far superior education.⁶² The urban wage spread is quite considerable. State employees have had income differentials as high as 28:1, reduced to 20:1 following the Cultural Revolution.⁶³ While an apprentice might earn ¥18 a month, an average industrial worker might earn ¥30-100, and university professors from ¥60-300.⁶⁴ Doak Barnett suggests the following monthly budget for a family of five in the mid-1970's: ¥60-75 for food, ¥5-15 for rent, ¥1-2 for education and health plus perhaps ¥22-50 for the cheapest

blanket and ¥10 for the cheapest cotton pants.⁶⁵ Although education is only a minor expense for someone on the higher range of the pay scale, on the lower end of the wage scale, even with two wage earners, a family would have hardly a yuan to spare. Such parents could hardly afford extra tuition fees, but would more likely support reduced school budgets.

Although general curriculum guidelines are set by the Ministry of Education, administrative and financial differences between schools do considerably alter the curriculum. Before the Cultural Revolution, the Ministry of Education had directed that primary schools devote half of the school time to language work, a quarter to arithmetic, two hours a week to physical education, one hour to manual labour, one hour to singing, one hour to drawing and, finally, one hour to moral-political education.⁶⁶ The heavy emphasis upon Chinese language was necessary due to the need to memorize 2,751 characters in the first four years of school. In upper primary school three extra hours of schooling are added and two hours of language deleted.

Instead natural science, geography, history and in rural areas agricultural science are added.⁶⁷ Variations even within full time schools were considerable. Key schools taught English from grade four, and sometimes grade two, in order to give the children necessary background for university entrance.⁶⁸ Hanyu pinyin, the romanized alphabet of Mandarin Chinese, which is the basic language used in Ministry of Education texts is still not taught in some areas of the countryside, and urban teachers often have a poor knowledge of pinyin, especially in the south.⁶⁹

The rural primary school system operates in a very different manner to the urban schools, and must be examined separately. The administrative and economic base of rural education, combined with very significant traditional values, creates a highly distinguishable set of educational problems. Also to be kept in mind, political campaigns concerning education have had far more impact in rural areas, predominantly because in times of educational consolidation it is rural schools that have usually been closed first.

The methods of funding rural education have had great impact on the diversity of operations and the quality of the institutions that follow. As with urban schools, the proportion of state funding (i.e., commune, county, or provincially funded) as opposed to brigade funded schools is unclear and varies substantially over time. Also while the state does give direct hand-outs to some educational institutions, it also funds social services in a more indirect manner: by keeping taxation relatively stable while productivity increases, the state encourages local areas to increase their effort in order to improve their standard of living, including improved health care and educational facilities. But these policies have increased the differences in the quality and quantity of education between villages. In the conflicts between the desire to improve educational facilities, while keeping costs stable, and encouraging local initiative, while increasing access to education, decentralization and the resulting geographical variations in quantity and quality have been accepted.⁷⁰

The direct funding of large centrally located schools out of county budgets has been official policy since 1953.⁷¹ More remote brigades were to fund the establishment and maintenance

of their schools with brigade, and if available, commune funds. Uniformity of schooling, since 1953, has been dismissed as impractical.⁷² Centralized financing and allocations have not been used to increase equality between locations.⁷³ Even during and after the Cultural Revolution, which stressed turning state schools in central wealthy districts over to brigades to run, while encouraging the universalization of primary education, the saved state funds appear only rarely to have been reallocated to poorer areas. Dale Bratton has found only one sparse mention of redistribution in a xian in Shaanxi (Shensi) where primary attendance had been raised to 98%. The local educational bureau had:

...conducted a meticulous investigation on the number of the population, the size of the villages, the production conditions and the financial income of 203 production brigades...we adopted the method of taking from the affluent to help the needy. We took public schools from brigades with better economic conditions along the river and along the plains and supplemented them with private schools, and took from the mountain region private schools and supplemented them with public schools.⁷⁴

Parish and Whyte found that in Jiangsu (Kiangsu) province state funding for education had been diverted disproportionately to poorer localities.⁷⁵ But these examples of redistribution would appear to be abnormal, and more a product of local initiative than Patten policy. Indeed since the Cultural Revolution, policies of redistribution on any lower level have been criticized as "eating out of a common pot" and labelled excessive.⁷⁶

Attempts at universalization of education have tended to concentrate in the more highly populated plains

areas than in the more remote, poorer and less populated areas. Intense effort in plains areas creates the most dramatic statistical improvement with a minimum effort and cost.⁷⁷ Direct funding of education thus only rarely reduces the educational gap between the most and least prosperous villages; indeed it may exacerbate those differences.

But the ability of a village to provide schooling is only in part a function of its ability to receive state funds. An economically prosperous village can well afford to run a good quality school. The economic base of the village economy is thus a considerable factor in determining educational development.

The extent of differences between villages can best be gathered by examining the income differentials between those rural groups that support schools. These community income differentials appear broader than the differentials between urban occupational groups. On the broadest level, only fragmentary figures exist for income differentials between provinces, but these figures are telling, nevertheless; the 1976 per capita income of Jilin (Kirin) province was ¥40 while Xinjiang (Sinkiang), certainly not the wealthiest of provinces averaged ¥85.60 in 1978.⁷⁸ But variations within provinces are much larger. Suzanne Paine estimates that the average village family income is half that of the average city family, while suburban rural families may easily earn wages equal to city wages.⁷⁹ A wealthy commune may easily

have a per capita income four or five times that of a poor commune.⁸⁰ Within a commune the differences can be even more startling. The production teams - until recently the major unit of accounting - have been known to vary in income by as much as 7:1 in the same commune and 4:1 within the same village. Within the same team incomes vary often by 3:1.⁸¹ Thus, a privileged production team in Guangdong (Kwangtung) in 1978 had a per capita income of ¥755, compared to ¥40 per capita in one of the poorest counties in Zhejiang (Chekiang).⁸² Even more extreme income differentials have been reported by other sources.⁸³

For the most part, these differences are a direct result of local natural conditions. Parrish and Whyte have clearly shown the relationship between the availability of land, fertile soil, and water, and the incomes of team members. Where ground is level and water available teams are better able to benefit from fertilizer, new seeds, and mechanization, which allow them to significantly increase their income. Villages located in more barren areas with too many families on too little land and with a large population find it difficult to catch up to the more prosperous villages.⁸⁴

The main strategy of the state in overcoming inequalities within the countryside has been primarily to exhort the peasants to improve their own situation by increasing production, and during the Great Leap, as well as in 1969, by encouraging rich and poor production teams to amalgamate and share income and expenses among the larger

unit.⁸⁵ Peasants have resisted the increase in size of the accounting unit, and these attempts have been short-lived. Productivity appears to be higher among smaller accounting units.⁸⁶ Even the poorest teams within a village often oppose merging with richer units in order not to disrupt personal relations unless gains will be substantial.⁸⁷ Clan and lineage also appear to play some role in this.⁸⁸ Thus the accounting unit has generally remained small, and the standard of living remains dependent upon the natural resources of the village.

Regional income disparities, which could be narrowed by progressive income taxes, grain tax, or state investment, are hampered by attempts to encourage increased production through regressive taxation policies. Brigade grain taxes are set at a fixed rate established on the basis of 1953 production figures, when the tax rate was a heavy 12% of production. But as production has increased, the tax rates have remained stable, thus, on average, constituting 6% of production in 1970.⁸⁹ Brigades that have developed rapidly thus pay relatively less tax than brigades which have been slower to increase production. On top of basic taxes, only basic per capita consumption needs of grain may be kept by the peasantry. Any surplus must be sold to the government at predetermined prices which are set relatively low but slowly and steadily increase according to the size of the surplus--if a brigade has excess grain above the low priced surplus quota it can sell the extra grain to the government at a bonus prices variously reported as running up to

20 to 43% more than low priced grain.⁹⁰ Thus tax policies are used as an incentive to increase rural production, allowing surpluses to remain within the villages. Thus differences between villages resulting from natural resources have remained constant if not increased as a result of taxation policies.

Evidently, the brigade which has experienced the most economic growth will have the largest surplus available to devote to social services, while those brigades which have only kept their heads above water will have a much smaller surplus, if any, to devote to social services. In general, state policies have been content to allow resources to concentrate in advantaged areas which may be most able to further increase their production, while exhorting poorer areas to become self reliant.⁹¹

During times of political radicalism such as the Great Leap and Cultural Revolution egalitarianism and redistribution have been emphasized between individuals -- for example over workpoints -- but not between regions or between brigades. Indeed, during radical phases in the Cultural Revolution especially, decentralisation increased. The direct results of this decentralisation upon the educational system have been discussed by Donald Munro. He points out the advantages of decentralisation: the central government is relieved of any financial burden, the physical and motivational resources of the local areas are used to their

best advantage; because of local initiative, more schools are available for poorer families; and the curriculum is carefully adapted to meet local needs. Two major disadvantages of decentralization recognized by Munro are firstly, that poorer areas are inevitably going to have to make do with inferior schools, and secondly, that schools are going to be controlled by local elites which may or may not be the more progressive elements of the community.⁹²

The centrally controlled educational system, strongest before the Great Leap and between 1961 and 1964, was not without its problems. The regular schools, although better equipped and with better trained teachers, were often ill-adapted to satisfying the needs of the local community. The fixed terms were unrelated to the farming season, the curriculum designed to qualify the students for higher education more than satisfying the educational needs of the community at the most basic levels.⁹³ Only after the Cultural Revolution were the local brigades' school revolutionary committees able to determine school course content and hire and dismiss teachers.⁹⁴ As we shall see, during the Cultural Revolution, schools came under considerable criticism for under-representing the children of poor and lower middle peasants, while tuition fees were often burdensome for a family with many children and few working adults. Thus these schools were easily criticised for being unresponsive to the needs of the peasantry, modelled as they were on the urban schools.

The irregular minban schools, however, grew out of

the tradition of the people's schools created in the communist base areas during the Yan'an (Yenan) period of 1936 to 1944.

In contrast to regular schools, min ban schools were specifically designed to meet the needs of the rural areas. Adults were equally engaged in education--not just youth. Only rudimentary literacy skills and practical knowledge were taught, while increasing production was stressed. Min ban schools emphasized the integration of schooling into the social movements and political campaigns of the time, and gave to the community the responsibility of creating and maintaining their schools in a spirit of self-reliance.⁹⁵

Until the Cultural Revolution the min ban and centrally run schools coexisted in various degrees of harmony. Regular schools, similar to urban schools in curricula and orientation existed in the larger central villages while irregular schools flourished in the more remote areas. Especially in more recent times, distinctions between regular and irregular schooling have become quite blurred. In one brigade in Gansu (Kansu) after the cultural revolution four types of schools were functioning at once; a regular primary school whose teachers were paid for by the state; village schools in which primary students taught in their home villages certain days a week; the "guaranteed" teaching where regular students taught other students after school; and finally a people's school where politics and basic literacy were taught to teens and adults after work.⁹⁶ Irregular schools were often part-work part-study, with students working sometimes for their parents and sometimes for the school or community. In wealthier

communes irregular schooling was almost identical to the regular school system

The irregular school system played a major role in absorbing increased enrollment. One xian in Hubei (Hupeh) recorded the distribution in increase in enrollment between 1956 and 1965 as follows:

% of children in school:	1956	1958	1963	1964
Publicly run full time	34.3%	43.2%	31.3%	41.6%
privately run full time	3.1%	10.7%	11.4%	17.2%
Farm/study schools	---	---	---	20.8%
total % of youth enrolled	37.4%	53.9%	42.7%	<u>79.6%</u>

Irregular schools evidently played the major role in increasing enrollment in this county.⁹⁷ Reports published in Guangdong (Kwangtung) in 1964 and 1965 indicate that part-work part-study schools increased attendance from 69% to 80% in those years.⁹⁸

Irregular schools, especially those set up during campaigns for educational expansion, were often of rather low quality. One report, praising self reliance in education for the poor, described the setting up of a school:

They built two school buildings with self reliance, spared two big sitting rooms and one thatched roof hut and had them renovated, thereby solving the problem of classrooms. There were no desks and benches, but they made some with earthen blocks.⁹⁹

Another school set up classrooms in home compounds, "the space near the iron furnace, and the area under the trees near the river bank. Desks were small boxes, stools, old broken troughs for water buffalos etc."¹⁰⁰ Books and writing materials were often rare, as were teachers.

Often teachers had barely finished primary school themselves. Curriculum, especially before the Cultural Revolution, was identical to regular schools, but much less complete - tending to be rather academic.¹⁰¹ Despite enormous problems of quality, part-work part-study schools did go a long way in providing rudimentary primary education.

More serious than the quality problems of part-work primary schools was the tendency of children of poor and lower-middle peasants to be under-represented in the regular system and over-represented in the half-time system. One survey of a county in Hupeh revealed serious problems immediately before the Cultural Revolution. Out of a total of 62.5% of the students of school age who attended full time schools, only 45.17% of the children were from poor and lower-middle peasant backgrounds. Of the 32.79% of the students who attended part-work part-study schools, 49% were poor and lower middle peasant youth;¹⁰² a fragmentary indication of what was probably a more general trend.

In Qinghai (Ch'ing-hai) province in 1964 300 part-work part-study schools were established in which 90% of the children were from poor and lower middle backgrounds.¹⁰³ Within the regular school system, at other levels, youths from poorer class backgrounds had less success. Again, during the Cultural Revolution, a Heilongjiang (Heilungkiang) village found that during the preceding years the schools had been dominated by the children of the formerly privileged classes. Out of the 12 landlord and rich peasant families

four children went to college and six out of the remaining twelve sons completed or were completing middle school and all were literate. Among the 54 poor and lower middle families, however, not one had attended college and only one youth received any secondary schooling -and that at a technical college. In the 8-12 year old age group not a single junior middle school graduate existed among the poor and middle peasant youth, and 30 were illiterate. Villagers complained that while the son of a rich peasant received free education and merit scholarships after grade five, "44 sons and daughters of the poor and lower middle peasants discontinued their studies because of economic difficulties".¹⁰⁵

Children of poor and lower middle peasants were disproportionately represented among drop-outs and among youths transferred from regular schools down to irregular schools; often because of the "family financial burden and distances from school".¹⁰⁶ Programs such as "soldier teaching soldier" where children of fourth grade and up taught children who could not afford to go to school, after school hours, were specifically designed to help poor and lower middle peasants.¹⁰⁷ Yet were financial reasons alone responsible for the differences between the formerly rich and formerly poor classes? Little information exists that would enable us to carefully study such a question. But we can ascertain some factors that impinge upon the ability of a family to educate its youth, and upon the potential success of its youth. We have seen the potential

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impact of regional variances upon educational attainments, but the dynamics of social and economic interactions at the community level, although more difficult to measure, are at least equally important.

The cost to a family of regular primary schooling before the Cultural Revolution was often high. Subsidies and fee waivers were sometimes available, but not on any consistent basis. Tuition fees in one village school in Guangdong (Kwantung) in 1975 were ¥6 a year, plus ¥2 for books and stationery. In that team, the average per capita cash earning was ¥2-3 a month: thus families with several children could find the fees quite burdensome, especially without the fee waiver that was irregularly available.¹⁰⁸ Supplementary fees have also increased the financial burden of education. Jan Myrdal reported in 1962 that in Liu Ling village fees were a modest ¥1 per pupil per term. But additional fees included ¥.50 a term for gym, ¥1.50 a term for boiled water, ¥1.50 each winter term for wood fuel and ¥.50 per term for paper and pens - totalling ¥10 a year, equal to an average of eight days work per child or the average monthly budget for all the bought groceries for a family of five.¹⁰⁹ Other villages have complained of the extra costs of special clothing requirements in some regular schools¹¹¹

Whether or not fees are a constraining factor in a family's economic ability to educate its children

depends primarily upon the number of working adults in a household. If many members work, extra cash will easily be found to support children in school; where fewer family members work the family may be unwilling to pay for the expense of schooling and also unwilling to forego the potential income the child could bring in to the family by working. In Liu Ling, for example, a larger household with 1,059 work days in a year received ¥1,800 in cash, while a less fortunate household with more children received only ¥195 cash. Myrdal reports the case of the best student in the village school who was forbidden by his father to attend school in order that he could earn money to supplement the family income.

While fees for part-work part-study schools have always been lower than regular schooling, and during the Cultural Revolution were actually made free, fees have not been as much of a deterrent. The loss of potential income from childrens' work has nevertheless not gone unnoticed. Peasants have often taken their children out of part-work part-study schools, arguing that if their children were going to work, they should work at home earning work-points for the family.¹¹² Thus education of children depends not only upon the ability of the family to pay for the cost of schooling, but also upon the willingness of the family to give up the labour of the child.

Where insufficient facilities exist to provide education for all children, parents may choose to not educate all of their children, often despite the pressure of teachers. Teachers, too, may decide that a certain child is not worth the cost of educating.¹¹³ It is in the selection of which children to send to school that traditional prejudices appear most clearly. Girls are consistently under-represented.. In one brigade in Hebei (Hopei) 70% of all drop-outs were girls, while in another county 85% of all the children not in school were girls.¹¹⁴ Leo Orleans estimates that as recently as 1979 girls represented less than 40% of all primary level students.¹¹⁵ One brigade in Gansu (Kansu) during the Cultural Revolution criticised the failure of previous educational campaigns to reach girls. In this brigade only 25% of the children before the Cultural Revolution attended school, and only 3 of these were girls. The brigade leaders condemned the attitude of the peasants that "girls are going to get married sooner or later; what's the use of reading books?" By 1969, the brigade acclaimed success; 114 children of the 160 of school age were in school, and 39 of these were girls (34% of schoolgoers).¹¹⁶

The benefits of educating a girl are still often perceived by the Chinese peasantry as more to the benefit of her husband's family than her own. Besides, a girl's labour is valuable in workpoints, in family agricultural

plots, sideline occupations, and of course in housework and childcare. Attempts to change traditional barriers have included campaigns to change traditional values while attempting to find ways to accommodate both the traditional roles of women and their need for education.¹¹⁷ Separate classes have been encouraged for girls who must bring their younger brothers and sisters to school. Girls have been given the privilege of arriving late and leaving early in order to have time to perform their chores. Classes have been formed for working women and girls in rest periods.¹¹⁸ Part-work primary schools, because of their lower cost and integration into the working season have particularly helped to raise the attendance of girls.¹¹⁹ But still traditional barriers for equal education for women are strong; even since the Cultural Revolution local authorities have been criticised for failing to recommend female applicants for higher education.¹²⁰

A traditional barrier to primary education, creating problems equal to those barriers against rural women, is the conception that education is not necessary for farm labourers, but is only worthwhile if it will lead to higher education. Part-time schools, created specifically to train local agricultural workers, have especially been scorned, creating the need for corrective media campaigns;

...some people who had been seriously influenced by the the bourgeoisie also went all out to downgrade the school saying, 'the school is just like the tail of a rabbit; it cannot grow too much.'¹²¹

Peasants have been noted to downgrade part-time schools, refusing to send their children to them on the grounds that "Youngsters who go to this school will have to spend their lifetime on the farm, digging ditches."¹²² Even where primary school can lead to the possibility of higher education it still may not seem worthwhile to many peasants if it could not lead to higher status urban jobs. Thus some peasants, even after being criticised for believing the "theory of studying to become an official", maintained that "Since graduates from universities and senior middle schools all end up with shovels in their hands, what's the use of children being able to read?"¹²³ Education in China has always been perceived of as a means to escape from rural life into a bureaucratic urban career, in order to better one's family.¹²⁴ As political policy has dampened opportunities of movement to urban areas, educational policies in rural areas have been somewhat undermined.¹²⁵

Traditional attitudes remain quite dominant in the countryside. Dennis Woodward suggests that the countryside is much more impervious to change than the Chinese media would like to suggest.¹²⁶ In the cities the family appears to have little impact upon education. The family is somewhat less important as an economic unit, and has less of an opportunity to put a child to work, while higher levels of literacy, education, and income increase the support of the family in favour of a deferred

reward from education. Since schools are state run, primary education is universal and the fees, where they exist, are proportionally less of a burden, the decision of whether or not to educate a child is rarely difficult.¹²⁷ In the countryside, however, immediate benefits of education may not be apparent, and long term benefits may be thwarted by the few number of middle school and higher education places, and the controlled urban migration. Costs may be much higher in proportion to income, and considerable foregone income must be taken into account.

A final subtly pervasive effect that has hindered the advancement of poor and lower middle peasants in the countryside, with perhaps somewhat less effect among the less educated groups in the cities, is the impact of what Pierre Bourdieu, in examining the French educational system has labelled "cultural capital". Educational systems based on merit or "intelligence", according to Bourdieu's analysis, are really giving preponderant advantage to those children from bourgeois families, which over the decades have built up the ability to reproduce their social hierarchy: cultural capital as used through the educational system is a new substitute for economic capital.¹²⁸ Education within China has always been the traditional method for gaining social prestige, wealth and power. While newer methods of gaining social mobility have arisen through Party and Youth League, memberships in these groups have often been closed to the "bad class elements". Access to education, except for

brief periods during the Cultural Revolution, has generally remained open to all classes.¹²⁹ Since families of rich peasants, landlords, capitalists or intellectuals usually have stronger educational backgrounds, their children will evidently have an advantage over children of poor and lower middle peasants. Only during the Cultural Revolution did class background become a significant factor, surpassing academic merit, in admissions procedures.

Given the academic advantages of the formerly privileged groups, it is not surprising that especially in the earlier days of the revolution, a high proportion of teachers were from classes of the old elite. Their influence in shaping the values of education goes much further than their numbers within the teaching profession now would indicate. Many teachers during the Cultural Revolution were to be criticised for being "bad elements" even despite good class backgrounds. By teaching in a way that stressed academic excellence, teachers often taught to the level of the most studious children to the disadvantage of children from more educationally deprived backgrounds. Teaching methods, despite campaigns of political criticism, remain highly rigid, emphasizing rote learning and memorization.¹³⁰ Finally, urban raised teachers often demand much less of their rural students than they would of urban youth. Obviously where teacher's expectations of students opportunity for higher education is strongest,

study will be more rigorous. Thus a rural teacher remarks:

Of course we memorized more when I was a child, but that was in the city. In a village, the demands are less because the kids have to work in the fields for their parents and do housework in addition to going to school.¹³¹

Where teachers do not expect their pupils to go on to secondary education, their primary schooling may be inadequate preparation, causing later problems for a child who manages to succeed in gaining admission to middle schooling.

Rural primary schooling, in general, is an end in itself. Most rural youth who complete primary school do not go on. The history of rural middle schooling has been to find alternative forms of middle schooling with which to fill this gap.

The divisions between regular and irregular schooling are nowhere stronger in terms of administration, facilities, curricula and goals than in the provision of middle school education. Divisions between rural and urban middle schooling are also most striking. It is here, too, that education has most strongly and consistently been affected by political, social and economic considerations, and as we can see in Appendix A it is middle schooling that has grown at the most phenomenal rate.

By the early 1960's a profusion of types of secondary schooling existed. Generally middle schooling was divided into junior middle schooling and senior middle schooling in

full-time and part-work part-study institutions. Full-time institutions included middle schooling of a general academic nature, designed for further study, and also some junior and senior full-time vocational schools and junior and senior middle teachers' training schools. Most vocational schools, however, were part-work part-study. Part-work part-study middle schools began in rural areas during the Great Leap Forward, and spread to urban vocational schools.¹³² By 1966 parallel part-work part-study institutions existed for all educational levels.

But part-work part-study schools have played their most important role at the middle school level. Before the Great Leap Forward, there were effectively, no secondary schools in the Chinese countryside, except in some larger commune centers.¹³³ Middle schooling had remained a distinctly urban phenomenon. Lu Dingi (Lu T'ing-i), Minister of Culture, responsible for education, before the Cultural Revolution, stated in 1960 that before the advent of agricultural middle schools (half-work half-study) secondary schooling had "failed to penetrate" rural areas.¹³⁴ Those rural middle schools that did exist were usually confined to county seats, small towns, and larger cities. Small towns would often only have a two or three year junior middle secondary school, and more rarely a two year senior middle school. Only in larger cities would six year middle

schooling be generally available.

Entrance to middle schooling was automatic in larger cities where sufficient places exist for all those primary school graduates who wished to continue their education. But where more students sought entrance than places were available, and to attain admission to the better quality "key" middle schools, entrance examinations were instituted. Class background and the political record of the applicant were also to be taken into account, after scores on entrance exams were measured.¹³⁵ It is difficult to know how consistently class background and political involvement were noted, but the harsh criticism of the Cultural Revolution era suggests some dissatisfaction with the criterion for admission. The question becomes much more acute for entrance to senior middle schools, where competition was much more intense. On average, only one out of ten applicants for senior middle school was accepted.¹³⁶ Even in the largest cities senior middle schooling was difficult to obtain: in Guangzhou (Canton) immediately before the Cultural Revolution, only half the junior middle school graduates found places in senior middle school.¹³⁷

The content of urban middle schooling was predominantly an academic education. Vocational schooling, as we can see from Appendix A, grew very slowly in comparison to the more western style general arts and science education,

reflecting a bias against technical education. Thus before the Cultural Revolution, the curricula emphasized first Chinese, and mathematics, then foreign languages, physical education, science followed by politics, history and geography, which took up only one or two hours a week.¹³⁸ Since the Great Leap Forward, all middle school students were required to devote a few hours a week to labour. By 1966, this requirement had often been satisfied by menial tasks such as sweeping the school grounds and cleaning the classrooms. However, schools with more funds, or those sponsored by factories often had simple workshops ranging from simple bottle cap or nail making, to more advanced workshops such as triode transistor assembly shops, which could fulfill a definite role in imparting technical knowledge, and technical initiative as students improvised in the construction of needed equipment.¹³⁹

The academic level of middle schools is dependent upon their designation. A key middle school has ample facilities. Guilin (Kweilin) middle school, a key school with 1,424 students has a library with 15,000 books and 3,528 items of "teaching equipment" in the Physics Department alone. The school runs a farm and factory. Guiyang (Kweiyang) Fifth Middle School, in 1961, had five English teachers, three of whom had majored in English at university, and one of whom had studied in the United States. These teachers had an average of over nine years

teaching experience.¹⁴⁰ Beijing (Peking) Number Twenty-six Middle School, not necessarily noted for its sports facilities, has nine basketball courts, one volleyball court, one football field and five full time and three part time physical education teachers. The above schools are notable for being extremely unrepresentative of the very strained and limited resources of the average middle school. The comparison to agricultural middle schools would be even more stark.

Tuition fees for regular middle school before the Cultural Revolution were high, especially for rural children obliged to pay high costs for boarding in town. Estimates for tuition vary even more than those for primary education, but are consistently much higher. Suzanne Pepper quotes 1960 figures which report annual costs of ¥295 a year for middle schooling, of which the state paid ¥187 and the family ¥108.¹⁴¹ Thomas Bernstein, quotes Renmin Ribao (People's Daily) in 1957 as stating that the costs of maintaining a student in middle school was ¥360 a year, at a time when per capita income was only ¥183.⁴⁷ Evidently, a family would not have to support the entire cost. Other figures for Guangzhou (Canton) suggest very low middle school fees of only one or two yuan a month, plus room and board.¹⁴⁹ Rural full-time middle schools appear to cost slightly less than their urban counterparts, estimates running from ¥76 in 1964

to ¥120 a year in 1956, plus room and board.¹⁴⁴ Like primary schooling, success in middle schooling depends upon some sacrifice on the part of the student's family. But regular middle schooling was not a realistic option for most rural youth.

Agricultural middle schools, after the Great Leap Forward, were the main source of middle school education available in the countryside and were nearly always run on a half-time basis. Although the ideological value of part-work part-study was much flaunted, in practice the emphasis on flexibility and financial considerations often appear to have been paramount.¹⁴⁵ The Ministry of Education carefully noted at the initiation of agricultural middle schools, that the thirteen to sixteen year old students were not full work units, and it would be positive if they could be educated at little or no cost to the state.¹⁴⁶

Agricultural schools were, then, very much a substitute for regular middle schooling.¹⁴⁷ Agricultural middle schools often had no buildings, or facilities, and rarely provided boarding, thus requiring students to come from within walking distance. The schools had an average of three teachers per school for a three year program, and the ideal teachers were senior middle school graduates, while junior middle school graduates, primary teachers, cadres and peasants were often used as teachers. Before 1960, these teachers often knew little of agricultural

production or machinery. After 1960, training of teachers had improved somewhat, and their technical expertise was slightly improved. Often teachers were urban youth, disoriented and often unhappy in the countryside.¹⁴⁸

Schooling took up about twenty hours a week, and the basis of the curriculum was Chinese language, mathematics, politics and agriculture. Dependent upon the skills of the teachers, science and cultural studies were occasionally taught, while history, geography, physics and chemistry were very rarely taught adequately.¹⁴⁸

Since all buildings, farmland, and facilities were provided by the commune, the level of proficiency and quality of learning was often dependent upon the wealth of the commune. Where sufficient resources were available, the agricultural middle school could provide an ideal combination of learning, practice and scientific research, where students could learn about the use of fertilizers and insecticides, the maintenance and operation of tractors or the necessary skills for rural electrification or bookkeeping. Ideally, graduates of agricultural middle schools would have a broad knowledge of as well as the ability to practically apply and innovate the intermediate technology suitable for the development of their region. But, only rarely did the commune have sufficient available skilled personnel and facilities freely available to be used in these schools. As a result, the technical level of the schools was more often than not abysmally low.¹⁴⁹ Agricultural institutes of

higher education were to become the generators of technical innovation, not the agricultural middle schools. Indeed, by the early 1960's, the role of agricultural middle schools was drastically downgraded, and except for a short respite during the Cultural Revolution, has remained so: concentrating on languages - writing letters and reports, and math - for bookkeeping, accounting and wage reckoning. Meanwhile, the school year was adjusted from half-time to seven months straight working and five months studying, reducing any connection between the work and content learned.¹⁵⁰

From a purely financial point of view, work-study agricultural middle schools were somewhat of a failure. Financial self-sufficiency was never attained, and the schools only expanded and improved with government assistance, from the central and provincial governments.¹⁵¹ In 1960 Jiangsu (Kiangsu) delegates claimed that 19% of agricultural high schools in their province were self-sufficient while 18% were "to a large extent" self supporting and 31.8% were only partially self supporting (leaving another 31% totally dependent on outside support).¹⁵² In Fujien (Fukien) in 1960, of the 560 agricultural middle schools, only 55 were able to pay their teachers' salaries and 61 were self-sufficient in food, suggesting that all other expenses were carried by commune or government expenses.¹⁵³

For the students, however, the agricultural middle schools were a bargain, savings were substantial.

In 1964 in Xinhui xian (Hsinhui county) regular full time fees for junior middle school were ¥76 a year, while the state subsidized agricultural high school cost only ¥6 a year. Full time agricultural technical middle school cost ¥350 a year, while the part time agricultural technical school was only ¥140. In Gujing (Kuching) commune full time junior middle school fees were ¥130 while part-time junior middle school fees were ¥14.¹⁵⁴ Interestingly, in a breakdown of the costs for family and state, Barendsen found that the savings for the state were proportionally substantially higher than savings for the family: while regular middle school cost the state ¥187 per pupil and the family ¥108. for a total of ¥324 annually, the agricultural middle school cost the state only ¥13, while the family paid ¥38 a year, plus boarding where necessary.¹⁵⁵

Peasant reaction to part-farming part study agricultural middle schools was definitely mixed. Without a doubt during those periods when rural communities were officially encouraged to expand their educational system, specifically in 1958 and early 1970's, the rural response was tremendous. In fact the growth of middle schooling was so rapid and drained so many resources from the primary schools that the party was forced to launch campaigns criticising the "irrational expectations" for the expansion of middle schooling, followed by periods of retrenchment in which many of the poorer quality schools were closed. Middle schooling was certainly a popular and

sought after commodity in any form in which it could be provided.¹⁵⁶

Agricultural middle schools were also important tools for involving the peasantry in the process of education beyond primary schooling, enabling the peasants to adjust the format of the school to suit their own children. Unlike senior middle agricultural schools, which were tightly controlled and limited in number by the Ministry of Education, the junior middle agricultural schools were led by a committee of peasants and were relatively independent from supervision.¹⁵⁷ Thus considerable flexibility existed in terms of admission standards. Indeed part-work part-study middle schools have been described by one provincial Party Secretary as the only means of giving poor and lower middle peasants education and therefore political power.¹⁵⁸ But, as agricultural middle schools were gradually cut back, it was the children of the peasants who were again predominant among drop-outs. Indeed, by 1965 when forty million students were in agricultural middle schools the movement had actually become increasingly urban. Students from smaller towns, affected by the contraction of middle schooling, were increasingly represented among students in rural half-work half-study schools,¹⁵⁹ a situation perceived by some westerners as a solution for urban unemployment of youth.¹⁶⁰

A further difficulty facing agricultural half-work half-study schools was the often critical attitudes of

cadres, administrators, students and peasants towards the quality of the schools. In 1958-9 propaganda campaigns were necessary to counter the attitude that agricultural schools were "schools for beggars". These campaigns included stories of primary graduates going happily to agricultural schools after failing to gain admission to regular middle schools. Cadres were criticised for treating the schools like temporary and spare time schools. Emphasis upon the primary goal of labour and increased production allowed a neglect of the academic functions of the schools. At the same time, often insufficient land would be allocated to the school to allow it to become self-sufficient through labour.¹⁶¹ Cadres were later criticised for believing that part-work schools were primarily for financially poorer students.¹⁶² Other cadres and teachers felt that part-work schools were inferior to regular schools, and were at best either preparatory for full time schooling, or a meager substitute. As a result, the curriculum and teaching methods used by these teachers were an imitation of a full time program, and not really adapted to the needs of the part-work part-study program.¹⁶³

Evidently, teachers and peasants were more interested in provision of a form of middle schooling than enthusiastic about the ideological goals of part-work schools. Producing agricultural labourers with a higher degree of political and technological consciousness

in order to raise the general level of the countryside - this was the espoused goal of the Party, but did not satisfy the goals of the peasantry. In the early 1960's the government forbade students from agricultural middle schools to continue in or enter into higher education.¹⁶⁴ Instead half-work half-study schools were to educate youth in the proper values of "from the commune and back to the commune". "Working in the countryside with a composed mind" was the attitude to be produced by these schools.¹⁶⁵ The use of education to break out of the countryside -- "marks, college, city..." -- was no longer permissible. As we have seen, many teachers in agricultural schools had, themselves, not been imbued with this attitude, but were instead more oriented to preparing students for further education. Peasant reactions to the newly articulated role of middle schools could not have been enthusiastic.

Of course, it would be beneficial to keep educated youth in the countryside in order to improve the educational level. In 1962 in one county in Shanxi (Shansi) of the 9,975 youth who had graduated from primary school since 1949 only 9 remained in their villages, and of the 1,554 who graduated from junior middle school, not one remained! All had either continued their education or found jobs in urban industry.¹⁶⁶ Agricultural middle schools had the potential of providing graduates with skills immediately

useful to the communes, and keeping the graduates within the community was a natural goal. However, many peasants could not see the benefits of such an education. Students complained of neighbours saying that:

I wouldn't get anything out of it and that no one with a future could attend this kind of school. They said that to both study and take part in labor was nonsense. If you want to learn then you can't take part in labour. If you want to be a labourer then there is no need to go to school.¹⁶⁷

Peasant children who returned home after studying in the city were scorned as "failures" if they returned to the countryside to work. The general attitude was that "There are no good people in the countryside, because no good people come to the countryside."¹⁶⁸ Even well after the Cultural Revolution one agricultural university reported that:

When the first batch of graduates from our institute returned to their respective brigades and communes for farming many of them were besieged on all sides by force of habit. Some said 'How can one be considered a university student if one does not become a cadre after graduation?' Others said 'It is not promising for a university graduate to work as a peasant.' In some families the students' parents even found jobs for them in the city. However they rebuffed this.¹⁶⁹

Ridicule and contempt faced the peasant who returned to farming instead of administration or urban work.¹⁷⁰

By the time of the Cultural Revolution we find carefully concerted propaganda campaigns to support the idea that youth remaining within the community are less alienated from their parents than youth who have left their families for the city-- a curious combination of political expediency

and traditional values. Thus articles relate that:

After four years of higher education, students from the poor and lower middle peasant families become utterly incompatible with the working people. Proven true was the saying that 'In the first year of college they retain their country character; in the second year they become westernized; in the third year they disown their parents; after four years they are unwilling to return home.'¹⁷¹

However, the message of corruption through education is also curiously mixed with the desire for more schooling:

The poor and lower middle peasants said sadly: 'The students studying in the cities are fed up with the countryside. They don't want to speak to us; they steer clear of us if we meet on a path. Our children have been ruined by such an education.'

The masses of poor and lower middle peasants bitterly hate the revisionist educational line, which did harm to them and their sons and daughters. They demanded angrily: 'Why is it that our children get less schooling and why can't they go to college.'¹⁷²

College education was still very much the pinnacle of success in peasant eyes; and agricultural middle schools did not clearly lead in this direction.

Broadly speaking, then, Agricultural middle schools were the final rung on the lower end of a two track system of education, leaving little opportunity in higher education for peasant youth. The emphasis on practical application of basic scientific principles of agriculture, which is so useful and necessary for rural development precludes the chance of academic development. Examinations, an irrepressible feature of Chinese education, were not used in agricultural middle schools, making transition to regular schooling even more difficult. Even when rural

youth did attend regular middle schools they were not usually eligible to sit for entrance exams since rural middle schools were often of shorter duration than urban schools. University entrance required proficiency in subjects rarely taught in rural schools. Since before the Cultural Revolution only one out of every thirty students who graduated from senior middle school would be accepted into higher education, competition was highly fierce -- only very few rural students could make it.¹⁷³

Among urban students, competition was also fierce, and a two-track system was equally pervasive, but chances of success were certainly higher. One out of three Guangzhou (Canton) senior middle school graduates immediately before the Cultural Revolution attained higher education. Although in 1965-66, 60-80% of urban school leavers could not find jobs, many found places teaching or participating in rural half work half study schools.¹⁷⁴ Those fortunate students who attained placement in urban "key" schools had assured futures. One class of students from a collective boarding school of cadres' children reported during the Cultural Revolution that they had been told:

In future, you should become generals, ministers and prime ministers. You are the hardcore of the successors and should not go around selling soy and vinegar.¹⁷⁵

The attitude of elitism fostered among students at these key schools, also known as "little treasure pagodas",

was to be a major source of criticism of the educational system in the tumult of the Cultural Revolution.

In the period preceding the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese educational system, most especially at the primary and intermediate levels, was attempting to satisfy very diverse needs, and therefore developed a diverse system to satisfy those needs. Constrained by limited resources, but wanting both expansion of educational facilities for the masses and a well developed quality educational system to produce well-trained technically proficient individuals -- the requisites of quality education as opposed to a quantitative mass structure -- the Chinese Communist Party, perhaps almost by default, settled for a fragmented, compartmentalized educational system. The diversity allowed for satisfying the widest range of technical needs for the lowest possible price. The decentralisation of the lower track of the educational system, while producing schooling appropriate to the locale, also reinforces differences between regions and may reinforce traditional notions of education which may not be wholly beneficial.

The decision of the Chinese to tie the format of schooling to the most likely vocation of the students, and limit the further growth of secondary schooling, has allowed the Chinese to avoid the problems of other Asian nations where pressure is strong to expand middle education,

to satisfy the desires of the partially educated, even if at the expense of the far less educated groups.¹⁷⁶ Other Asian nations are drawing closer to the Chinese example, becoming aware of the criticism that their educational systems are too "bookish" and separated from the world of work. The Asian group of Unesco notes:

The fundamental issue is whether or not schools can provide effective learning experiences to meet the developmental needs of children and of a kind adapted to their environment and background. This approach implies far-reaching changes in traditional curriculum conceived as a preparation for the next level.¹⁷⁷

As we have seen, far reaching changes must also be made to the attitudes towards education as a means of mobility, especially out of rural areas, before work-oriented education can be accepted by students, teachers and parents, who often are far more interested in the post-primary education which is generally available in the urban areas.

But even within China, the social costs of a decentralized, tracked educational system were not always considered affordable. As we shall see in the following chapters, much controversy existed over the operation of elite schools, the use of exams as criterion for entrance to upper levels of education, the lack of intermediate education in the countryside, and the entire range of values which permeated the entire process of schooling.

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2. From Education for Reconstruction to Education for Social Change

During the first decade and a half of government by the Chinese Communist Party, significant shifts of educational policies occurred in response to changing economic and political goals. This chapter will attempt to outline those shifts, especially as they impinge upon the distribution of education, and the balance between mass and quality technical education. But first it may be useful to examine the educational system which the C.C.P. inherited in 1949--the nature of which was in no small part responsible for later difficulties in management of the educational system.

The school system which the C.C.P. took possession of in 1949 was made up of several distinctly different types of schooling. The way in which these systems were allowed to continue, and the problems involved in adjusting the relationships between these various schools in the earliest days of liberation reflect the long term contradictions which were to plague the Chinese educational system.

By the 1940's the main structures of the traditional Chinese educational systems had already disappeared; the classical examination system, in which at its height over 10,000 students would flock to Beijing every three years to

attempt to gain the highest degree, had died with the end of the Qing (Ch'ing) dynasty.¹ Western style normal colleges in the larger towns had prepared a new generation of primary school teachers. The May Fourth Movement, and the urban social environment which gave birth to it, had created the desire for a new style of political activism based on western science. In the major cities, whole school systems, from primary school to university, run in completely western style, were managed by missionaries and charitable organisations. At the same time, municipal governments also ran schools of a western style.

During the civil war, the Communist Party had developed in the revolutionary base areas a distinctive new type of education, designed to quickly and efficiently train people of varied backgrounds. These schools trained the People's Liberation Army, political cadres, and at the village level provided basic education, literacy and political education for adults and children, as well as being a mobilizing force for social change within the village. These schools were based on the principle of nation, science and popularism.

Wartime schools such as Kangda (K'angda) and Yan'an (Yenan) Universities were developed and were to become future models of egalitarian education created to work within a mass movement. Yan'an University (although not really in the business of higher education) added literacy and vocational training to a fundamentally working environment.

Yan'an educated large numbers of soldiers in a general and political education. The need for intellectuals to labour was stressed. Kangda, a school formed and led by Lin Biao (Lin Piao), trained political and military personnel exclusively for the Japanese Resistance, and stressed concise and practical studies, emphasizing few but essential courses, and through organising students into work teams, encouraged co-operation and self-teaching.²

Mao Zedong was, himself, instrumental in designing these programs, and was continually concerned with formulating a system which could embrace the majority of the population, not merely a small highly educated group. Thus Mao emphasized the advantages of pureness and malleability in the "poor" and "blank" nature of the common people, in opposition to the hierarchical and exclusive nature of traditional Chinese education.³ In pre-liberation China Mao wished to turn the primary schools over to the masses who would run the schools, deciding the form and content of education.⁴ Mao in his 1939 essay "On the Educational Revolution" emphasized political education, the need to change thoughts and attitudes and the need for discipline and labor. He exhorted students and cadres to love peasants and workers and to draw near to them.⁵ Mao advocated a change in teaching methods which would simplify and enliven education. He urged teachers to use colloquial style and gestures to explain new terms simply and to use understandable and interesting speech, beginning with already understood concepts. Mao advocated the use of

outlines, repeating central concepts, and encouraging discussion groups and questioning.⁶ These suggestions for educational style are particularly important in the context of the nature of traditional Chinese pedagogy, in which chanting, and rote memorization were the rule, in a classroom where the teacher remained aloof from the students, more mystifying than clarifying the material to be learned.⁷ Even in the 1960's, Mao was to criticise teachers for their haughtiness and tendencies to make the material more difficult than necessary.

The C.C.P. not only rejected traditional forms of schooling, but during the Civil War period, condemned the New Education system of national education which had been introduced at the end of the Qing (Ch'ing) dynasty, modelled more or less on the western style of education. An article emanating from the base regions in 1944 scathingly criticises the New Education and its inappropriate nature:

...it is the product of capitalist countries at a high level of development and is not suited to China's needs. Second, it is the product of a ruling capitalist class and is not suited to the needs of Chinese democratic base areas. Third it is the product of peacetime and is not suited to the needs of the anti-Japanese war. Fourth, it is the product of large cities and is not suited to the needs of agricultural villages (to say nothing of villages in sparsely populated areas like Shensi - Kansu - Ninghsia and Northwestern Shensi [Shaanxi - Gansu - Ningxia]....

What kinds of people are our elementary schools and middle schools supposed to train? They can train only four types of people. One type is the person who returns home to work after graduation. So-called national education was supposed to be for this purpose. But, at present, education trains people to advance to a higher type of educational level. Therefore if one returns home it is not worth the trouble to have graduated from elementary school, and worth even less to have graduated from middle school. When he returns home he is dissatisfied....

Another type is the public person who does various kinds of work for the Party, government army and popular organisations. But education at present is not for this purpose; study is divorced from application. Furthermore this need has its limits. If there are more than a certain number of public persons, it reduces the necessary labour force....

The third type moves on to the next educational level; but very few advance from elementary school to middle school. Even if all advanced and graduated from middle school, where would they go from there?....

What other way is left? The only other way is to become vagrants and loafers. This is not a joke but a fact. It is evident therefore that a great transformation in lower level education is both necessary and possible ....we certainly must derive the educational foundation from the needs of the broadest masses of the people. One of the needs of the broadest masses of the people is for the broadest mass education; another is for mass cadre education. These two kinds of education that we have at present are fundamentally distinct from the old system....

This kind of mass education should have its present and its future. It is its future to enable every worker to understand higher math, physics and chemistry. It is its present to enable the masses to understand how to participate in guerilla warfare, how to organise labour power, how to get the most necessary cultural knowledge. Cadres must understand how to become leaders. It is wrong to forsake the future for the present; it is especially wrong to forsake the present for the future. 8

Thus, even at such an early date, the decision had been made, for the sake of expediency, to temporarily limit the amount of education an individual would receive to his vocational position. Workers, not peasants, were to learn science, cadres management. The need to develop a dual track of education--one for the masses and one for the "mass cadre" education--is carefully laid out.

In the pre-liberation period, then, the C.C.P. had developed a style of education that was distinctly appropriate for their style of work and political goals, much more appropriate than the western or traditional systems. Informal study groups concerned with literacy, political

education, basic production techniques, and health care were appropriate for the political and educational level of the peasantry. Such institutions as Kangda and Yan'an had shown the feasibility of further developing education along mass lines. This new approach to education was based on the rural and mass based revolutionary thought of Mao, and the intellectual climate that sustained him, in direct contrast to the western style hierarchical system of education predominant in urban areas. Nevertheless, for pragmatic reasons, an undercurrent of separate track educational systems is unmistakable.

The move towards a hierarchy of disparate educational tracks is a considerable jump away from the traditional Chinese approach to education. Confucian education was singularly unified and, on the surface, highly egalitarian. The nature of the schooling, highly literary, was the same for all. Every xian was "supposed to" have a school, although many villages were too poor or too small.⁹ Family background was no bar to schooling or attempting the exams, except for barbers, musicians and porters, etc. Individuals from the most deprived background could acquire the literary education necessary for success. But although education was not directly hereditary or exclusive, the literati were "at least in the main" younger sons of feudal families. Mandarins sons were automatically given the first exam rank as a title

of honour, and descendants of mandarins had preference in vying for the opportunity to be allowed to sit the examinations no small advantage since numbers of examinees were limited by provincial quotas.¹⁰ Despite what Etienne Balaz has called a "monopoly of education" by those scholar-officials who "possessed every privilege, above all the privilege of reproducing itself" through the academic system, the Confucian educational universe had managed to maintain the veneer of an open egalitarian system of free competition between individuals, in which the educational system was the fairest arbiter to determine who should govern.¹¹ The Chinese Communist Party, under the pressure of a war-time situation, had been forced to completely dismantle the appearance of equality of opportunity in education. Instead, those who had been picked by the Party to lead would have the first opportunity to receive education.

The ending of the war found the C.C.P. in the awkward position of directing a national education system that was to a large extent the exact opposite to the style of schooling developed by the Party. Fundamentally urban, especially at the level of higher education where half the universities in China were divided between Shanghai and Beijing alone, and fundamentally a bastion of the privileged classes, the national system also had a monopoly over the technical education that was necessary for national reconstruction.¹² At the same time, the end of the war signalled changing needs for the nation. The essentially rural Party now

was thrust into the position of managing the industrial and urban spheres of China previously dominated by the Japanese and Guomindang (Kuomintang). Their new responsibility for industrial development created no small reliance on the previously established system of technical education.

The Party, from 1949 to 1953, was thus managing a balancing act, attempting to implement its own educational policies, while slowly attempting to adapt and reform the old educational system. Immediately in 1949 the government took control of the nationalist schools, but only in 1952 did private schools, including foreign and missionary schools, come under government control. Attempts were made to win over the intellectuals and co-opt the established educational elite and structures. Major changes were not made in the administration or curricula of established schools. At the same time, new style schools were also established. Thus the diversity common in later Chinese education became well entrenched during this period. Major attempts were made to educate workers and peasants through short-term and part-time education, at all levels of education, and in regular, irregular format. Meanwhile, the old school system remained heavily urban and hierarchical, distinct from the mass education schemes. While the regular system was slowly reformed, the network of short-term schools rapidly upgraded the skills of some workers and peasants, in order that they be integrated into the regular system.

Mass education, while providing some schooling for youths, was more intensely adult oriented, emphasizing after-work spare time education. The old established school system, remained, on the other hand, primarily youth-oriented.

This highly pragmatic approach was to create substantial social and political tensions, the main arguments of which have continued to the present. Later interpretations of these early developments, at the height of the Cultural Revolution, suggest a world view of uncompromising conflict, between proponents of an egalitarian, mass-oriented education (Mao Zedong) and proponents of a hierarchical elite oriented education (Liu Shaoqi). By comparing the interpretations of the Cultural Revolution with what evidence exists, we may be able to distinguish any real ideological differences among the Party elite over the role of education in Chinese development. The "Chronicle of Major Events in the seventeen Years of the Two Line Struggle on the Educational Front" is a classic Cultural Revolution document that, although sometimes rabidly inventive, is invaluable in pointing to areas of potential tensions.¹³ The comparisons between the idealized ideological versions of the "Chronicles" and the actual actions of the Party leaders only further demonstrates their pragmatism.

The Chronicles suggest that between 1949 and 1952 Mao wished to implement the "new educational experiences of the old liberated areas" as the basis of the old educational system which was in need of systematic and thorough reform.

The "Chronicle" relates that:

On the other hand, Liu Shao-ch'i, Lu Ting-i, etc., did their utmost to uphold the old educational system and transplanted the Soviet Union's revisionist educational system to resist Chairman Mao's directive concerning the old educational revolution.

This was the first engagement of the struggle between two classes, two roads and two command headquarters on the educational front

Liu Shao-ch'i and company boycotted Chairman Mao's correct directive on the reform of the old education. Contrary to Chairman Mao's proletarian educational line, China's number one authority taking the capitalist line, Liu Shao-ch'i was bent on leading new China's education on to the sinister road of capitalism.

Although the struggle in education was not over any possible return to capitalism, the Chronicles' use of the two major charges against Liu, that he advocated "all out Sovietization" and obstructed the reform of the educational system, are interesting as they point out the major problem areas in early policy. Even the "Chronicles" mentions that "pursuant to Chairman Mao's directions" the educational system of new China "should make use of the experiences of the Soviet Union", in combination with Kangda-type schools. As early as 1940, in "On New Democracy", Mao had insisted upon the need to selectively absorb any useful aspects of western culture.¹⁵ Any disagreement with other leaders over Soviet influence in education could only be one of extent in application, not principle.

Some obstruction of reform along with some Sovietization was almost implicitly necessary in the purpose that the new school system was to fill, under the guidelines of the "Common Program" as laid out by the Chinese People's

Consultative Conference and accepted as Party policy in 1950. The Common Program overtly states that the goal of education was to serve the needs of national reconstruction:

In order to meet the widespread needs of revolutionary work and national construction work, universal education shall be carried out, middle and higher education shall be strengthened, technical education shall be stressed, the education of workers during their spare time and education of cadres who are at their posts shall be strengthened, and revolutionary political education shall be accorded to young intellectuals and old style intellectuals in a planned and systematic manner....

The main tasks of the cultural and educational work of the people's government shall be the raising of the cultural level of the people, training of personnel for national construction work, liquidating of feudal, compradore fascist ideology and developing the ideology of serving the people.¹⁶

Ma Xulun (Ma Hsu-lun), Minister of Education, proclaimed at a Conference on Higher Education in June 1950 that "The first and utmost point is that our higher education must meet the needs of national economics, politics, culture and national defence."¹⁷ With limited resources and enormously ambitious goals, it was almost inevitable that the need to satisfy economic versus social goals would inevitably conflict.

Mao's position on policies which emphasized economic goals of education over the more social goals is controversial. Julia Kwong suggests that :

...after the establishment of the republic, he saw the aim of education as socialist construction. His emphasis shifted from nationalism to socialism: 'Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a well-educated worker imbued with socialist consciousness.'¹⁸

However, the above statement of Mao appears in 1958 in his seminal essay "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People".¹⁹ In the early 1950's, though, little evidence exists of a disagreement by Mao with the emphasis on education for national reconstruction.

The retrospective criticisms of the educational system in the 1950's which suggests a sinister attempt to subvert education and restore capitalism, opposed only by Mao, is far fetched and unsubstantial. But, by pragmatically responding to scarcity of resources and enormity of need, efficiency in the educational system was certainly stressed, resulting in a failure to politicize education. In this light, criticisms of the leadership, if accurate, are more a reflection of a perceived urgency to produce a technical capability. Thus Liu Shaoqi is accused of stating at a conference in Tianjin (Tientsin) "For the time being, it is important to study culture and technology while politics will be studied in the future."²⁰ Ma Xulun (Ma Hsu-lun) in 1951, based on Liu's "black directive" of "it is necessary to stress pedagogy" criticised the excess of social and political activities which he feared were "detrimental to and even hampers" the teaching of classes.²¹ Statements such as these, apolitical at the time, were to become incriminating evidence in later political rejuvenations.

Mao's only outright criticism of the direction in which education was moving was perhaps characteristically apolitical in the beginning, but indicated what was to become

a long term source of tension. Mao wrote to the Ministry of Education twice in the early 1950's concerning the idea of "health first, study second" in response to what Mao perceived to be an unduly heavy academic burden on students. Only after the second letter did Ma comment issuing a directive saying health first, but omitting study second.²² In later years, this issue was to resurface, with Mao showing concern for the overly academic nature of schooling. Individuals directly responsible for the development of education were understandably dedicated to stressing excellence and achievement, downplaying any influences, including political influences, which could disrupt study.

The old educational system was to continue producing needed students while it underwent reforms. Since revolutionary textbooks were scarce, until more Soviet texts could be translated and Chinese revolutionary texts produced, old texts were to continue in use for every subject except language and history. Education in the old Guomindang (Kuomintang) schools remained relatively untouched, only a few politics courses were abolished.²³

Higher education suffered more than any other area from the contradictions inherent in the need to reform education and still produce the experts and technicians needed in national reconstruction. In attempting to improve the quality of higher education while continuing to reform it, the Ministry of Education stressed a considerable degree of Sovietization. The Kangda (K'angta) style of education was

rejected by many as an inferior prototype for higher education. Lu Dingi (Lu Ting-i) maintained that no universities existed in the old liberated areas.²⁴ Ma Xulun (Ma Hsu-lun), Minister of Education, suggests in a speech in 1950 that the institutions of higher education in the old liberated areas which "have educated thousands of thousands of revolutionary and constructional cadres...but have not yet developed the normal operation of a college or university".²⁵ At any rate, Kangda type schools only accounted for fifteen per cent of the institutions of higher education in China in 1950. The Soviet Union was relied upon to set up modern schools such as the China People's University, which were used as models. Indeed the slogan "transplant first and transform later" became common.²⁶ Within higher education, any reforms that could nurture the quality of the students were encouraged. Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai) in 1951 announced that the aim of higher education was "a high level of specialized education on an overall foundation of general culture and knowledge". Research departments were to be encouraged.²⁷ To maintain quality, class size was necessarily to be limited; competition was fierce to gain entrance. The selection process for admissions was therefore critical, especially given the important role of the first generation of graduates.

Those first graduates of higher education were to become "the backbone of the cadre corps".²⁸ As many as 99.4% of all 1951 college graduates were recruited into state organs and enterprises. Since only 2.2% of the cadre recruits in the

early 1950's had university training, the importance of the role of the graduates can be appreciated.²⁹ The class background of this select group becomes especially interesting.

In admission to higher education, quotas favouring peasant and worker students were not used to the same extent as they were at lower levels of education. But certain steps were taken to increase the opportunities for the educationally disadvantaged majority. Ma Xulun in 1950 stated that higher education must "prepare and begin to open doors for peasants and workers, in order to attract a larger group of intellectuals from peasants and workers."³⁰ But because of "immature conditions" control and regulation of higher education was considered impossible by the Ministry of Education; Regional Education Departments were to take over the leadership of tertiary institutions.³¹ Thus regional variations dominated the higher education scene. Shanghai in the "Decision Concerning the Reform of the Educational system" of 1951, gave preferential treatment, after success on the entrance examinations, to high school graduates of peasant-worker origin, cadres of peasant-worker origin who had devoted themselves to the revolution for three or more years, cadres who were not of peasant-worker origin but were revolutionary for five or more years and 1949 graduates who were involved in revolutionary activity after graduation.³² Generally, admission to higher education was not so politically oriented and was based on the entrance exam grades, fitness, social status and lastly political background. Only if the student or his family had

collaborated with the Japanese or Guomindang would be actively discriminated against.³³ Thus children of the intelligentsia and middle classes still had considerable advantage in entrance to higher education. In 1953 only 20.5% of university students were of worker-peasant origin.³⁴ It would probably be safe to assume that a fairly high proportion of these students were mature cadre-workers.

Still, the system was definitely opened up to the masses to the extent that from 1951 to 1953 there were more entrants to university than secondary school graduates.³⁵ Many workers and soldiers had access to education. But all too often worker-peasant students appear to have been segregated into separate streams from regular students. Ma Xulun directed that "higher education institutions must set up preparatory short term middle schools and take cadres" -- an odd juxtaposition of directives.³⁶ Guo Moruo (Kuo Mo-jo) also announced that 15% of all institutions with 21% of total college students were to be reserved for youths and cadres with less education. Agricultural cadre were specifically mentioned as clientele of the new schools. Eighteen short term middle schools for worker-peasants were established and ten more were to be set up.³⁷ These lower level classes were, in some part, probably a response to the very high number of drop-outs from higher education, many of whom were mature students and students who had entered from outside the examination channels.³⁸ Significant reforms were still to be made if

worker-peasant students were to thrive in regular higher education. Shunting them to one side into a different track of higher education was a convenient short term solution that could provide them with some education without downgrading the quality of the main stream of higher education.

At the lower levels of education, fewer problems appeared with attempts to create a more progressive system. The educational system expanded at a rapid rate; if anything perhaps a little more rapidly than the Party appreciated. The Party was most interested in concentrating resources in middle schooling and technical schooling. Many of the speeches and educational documents of the time give much greater emphasis to intermediate education.³⁹ Nevertheless, enrollment at the primary level mushroomed. In 1950 Guo Moruo, (Kuo Mo-shan) reported that primary school enrollment was only qualitatively superior to Guomindang schools where agrarian reform had been carried out.⁴⁰ More than 24,000,000 primary school students were enrolled in 1949. But, by 1951, over 43,000,000 students were enrolled. (See Appendix A) During the same time period, the state financed the construction of 130,000 square meters of primary school floor space. Evidently schools were spontaneously created by local initiative, overcrowded and hastily organized in makeshift facilities, quality controls difficult to impose, and teachers in short supply.⁴¹ These irregular schools may well have hoped to receive government funding after establishing themselves, but by 1952 the Ministry of Education moved

to limit the further establishment of these irregular schools, by issuing the "Directive on the Rectification and Development of Popular Management Primary Schools". Hereafter popular management schools would have to possess sufficient funds to maintain themselves for three years before receiving government approval thus making it more difficult for people to open their own schools.⁴² Expansion of education to areas that had not previously received education would be slowed. At the same time kindergardens for three to seven year olds were to be established in the cities and gradually extended to the countryside "where conditions are ripe".⁴³ If rural education was to lag behind urban education, that would be a necessary cost of efficient quality education.

Basic adult education, however, was to do much to extend education to the adult sector in rural areas; and was given more emphasis by the Party than youth education. In 1951 peasant winter schools were to be set up with desired enrollment of 30,000,000 peasants, and 5,000,000 were to be enrolled in after work schools. Spare time literacy schools were to enroll 42,000,000 adults and youth who had no opportunity for formal education.⁴⁴ Politics and literacy were the foundations of the curricula. Spare time classes were to be organized into a hierarchical system allowing peasants to move from spare-time primary schools to spare-time secondary and higher education. Thus a framework was evolving which could reduce the differences between educated and uneducated, peasant and worker. But

these changes were perhaps in advance of the economic situation and were not secure.⁴⁵

Within the countryside political change was slow and limited with an implicit impact on educational development. Mao in his 1950 article "We must preserve a Rich Peasant Economy" was advocating a slowing of land reform and redistribution "in order to further the early restoration of productivity in the rural areas".⁴⁶ Without redistribution and land reform, and without the social-political catalyst nurtured by land reform social change within the village would be slowed. Where peasants and cadres were less organized irregular and spare time education could not thrive. Without redistribution of wealth schools could not as easily be funded by the community, and tuition fees could remain a barrier to school entrance for the most disadvantaged.

At the middle school level problems quickly began to appear which were to threaten the ability of the peasantry, especially the poorer peasants, to thrive in the educational system. Double tracking between the regular quality and peasant short term schooling was subtly developing. In 1951 Zhou Enlai announced that entrance exams were to be instituted for admission into regular and spare-time middle schools, giving advantage to graduates of regular schools.⁴⁷ At the same time, to offset the exams it was announced that:

In the effort to keep open the doors of education for workers and peasants, special quotas for the offspring of workers and peasants shall be fixed by various localities in the enrollment of middle school students.⁴⁸

The short term middle schools which were to provide secondary education for revolutionary cadres and workers in order to prepare them for higher education, immediately ran into problems because of the limited academic backgrounds of the participants. Family problems were also a factor; it appears that financial support for the families of adult students was not widely available, causing financial hardship for many families.⁴⁹ Equally harmful was the general lack of acceptance of the value of the new schools and their graduates. Editorials in People's Daily in 1951 charged that the new schools were not being given "their rightful place."⁵⁰ All educational institutions, factories and military units were to establish these three year short term middle schools for workers and peasants, but most peasants wishing to attend these schools would be forced to relocate, if they managed to write and pass the exams and obtain admission.

Even for regular stream, well-educated youth, middle school was very challenging. Teachers and materials were in drastically short supply. Students were studying sixty to eighty hours a week, with few texts and assigned homework during vacations.⁵¹ Competition to get from lower middle to senior middle was fierce--with places for only one out of fourteen junior middle students in senior middle school.

Emphasis was also placed by the Party on the need for vocational schooling. Two to four year courses were

offered for industry, agriculture, communications and transport, and three and four year middle school courses were offered for teachers. But all too often the newly established vocational schools were grossly understaffed and undersupplied. For example, one welding college was located in a dormitory that had no furniture, let alone welding equipment.⁵² At the same time, private schools and university middle schools continued operating at very high, western, levels of education.

The Chinese educational system in the early years, heavily rooted in the already existent structures, was tempered by progressive but gradual reforms, and by the creation of an alternate system of education. The failure to radically reform the school systems have been heavily criticized by western writers with the vantage point of the post-Cultural Revolution era. Julia Kwong, for example has stated that education in the early 1950's suffered from a "pre-occupation with fitting the communist ideology into the existing system".⁵³ But despite the assertions of Red Guards in the mid 1960's, counter-revolutionary groups from within the Party were not responsible. Indeed, even Ma Xulun, later to be criticized for his "conservative" tendencies, expressed concern for the failure of higher education to satisfy the needs of national construction, reform overly theoretical course materials, and increase the representation of worker and peasant students.⁵⁴ Political

re-education classes for professors, control of the curriculum through the central approval of texts and course outlines, and the preparation of the short-term preparatory classes for workers and peasants were all significant attempts to redirect the educational system, for the moment precluding the need for a "revolution" in education.

The introduction of the First Five Year Plan, in 1953, with its new political approach and ramifications in the economic sphere, considerably influenced the focus of education. A highly centralized, Soviet style planned economy was entrenched, with the corresponding goal of rationalizing and directing the output of the school system. The curriculum was influenced as emulation of the Soviet style of education was entrenched. Efforts to improve and expand primary rural schooling were de-emphasized in favour of concentration on technical high schools and higher education directly applicable to technical industrial development.⁵⁵

Rationalisation and reorganisation of the primary school system under the First Five Year Plan meant a reduction of schooling for those who were least likely to continue in school. The traditional system of three year junior and three year senior primary schooling - which had been criticised by Zhou Enlai because it made it "Difficult for the children of the broad working masses to go through a complete course of elementary schooling" and was therefore

replaced by a five year unified program in 1951--was in 1954 reinstated.⁵⁶ Zhou was forced to state that because of "inadequate preparation" of teachers and teaching materials, "it is unsuitable to press for the continued enforcement of a five year straight course..."⁵⁷ A divided four year and two year, and in some areas three year and three year systems were again reintroduced, resulting in an inevitable number of drop-outs after completion of the now shorter first cycle.

The educational policies of the First Five Year Plan also reinforced and institutionalized the duality between regular and irregular schools--to the detriment of rural schooling. Public schools which were to be funded by local xian (hsien) governments were to "concentrate on reorganization and elevation without attempting further development."⁵⁸ To compensate, local people's governments were to advise the peasants in setting up their own irregular schools where the peasants wished and the need existed. Scarce state educational funds were to be concentrated in the cities and industrial areas and only the most central primary schools:

Because of the unbalanced development of our economy the development of primary school education is also off-balance... it is impractical to demand uniformity for all the primary schools in the country. Hereafter emphasis should be given to the successful operation of the primary schools in the cities and the industrial and mining districts as well as the full scale and central primary schools in the villages. In the rural villages... steps may also be taken to operate dispersed and non-regular primary schools.⁵⁹

These measures were in response to the "rapid growth of the urban population" and industrialisation. The Party dealt with the rapid urbanisation by reallocating resources to urban areas and containing the growth of rural schooling. By introducing these measures the Party wished to compensate for the "chaotic state" of schools and contain the unsatisfiable demands for trained teachers. Universal primary education was no longer a reasonable goal and the school system would remain inadequate for a "prolonged period of time"; especially in the countryside.⁶⁰

Key schools were stressed as appropriate for the improvement of the quality of education. Teachers in key schools were to be upgraded by municipal and provincial educational bureaus. Key primary school students were to be channelled into secondary education, while regular schools were to inculcate in their primary school students a love for labour and not encourage their students to plan for middle school education; it was assumed that such students would enter the work force after graduation. Thus divisions between regular and key primary schools were becoming clearly defined in terms of opportunity to continue education.⁶¹

The central route for improving the quality of education under the First Five Year Plan was the concentration of investment, in part saved by holding back on primary schooling, in secondary education. Between 1952 and 1955 39% to 50% of the educational budget went to secondary schools

with only three to five million students, while less than a third of the educational budget went to primary schools with fifty million students.⁶² The concentration of resources in secondary education was a prerequisite for the desired rapid expansion in higher education. Higher education, it was decided, had been limited by the shortage of secondary school graduates.⁶³

Reform of the curricula in any attempt to find any unique Chinese approach to education was postponed, rather quality education was to result from the widespread adoption of Soviet curricula. Russian readers were translated and introduced, sometimes replete with Russian names and settings.⁶⁴ Teaching plans, outlines and texts were all adopted on a wide scale at all levels of education. Even spare time schools, now specifically for workers, not workers and peasants, suffered from a renewed emphasis upon academic subjects, becoming tied to the regular curriculum. Even spare time schools at the middle school level taught ancient history in first and second year middle school, along with zoology, botany, pure chemistry, geometry, physics, Russian geography, language and politics--a curriculum which discouraged and little motivated the average worker.⁶⁵

Politics and extra-curricula activities came under critical scrutiny as forces disruptive to the study habits of students. This was later to be condemned by Cultural Revolution radicals as the "bourgeois educational ideology

of intellect first", based squarely on the introduction of Soviet theory.⁶⁶ Indeed, whether ^{or not} a direct result of the Soviet influence, an article in People's Education in 1953 entitled "Teaching Work is the Central Task which Overrides All" in which social activities were condemned as a "chaotic phenomenon". By November 1953 the State Council issued a directive emphasizing the need for less non-teaching activities within the schools. By June of 1954 the Peking Municipal Committee was issuing the "Decision Concerning the enhancement of Quality and Quantity of Peking Middle and Primary education" in which it was ruled that teachers salaries were to be appraised on the basis of the study records of their students, a directive that was later to be distributed throughout China by the Ministry of Education.⁶⁷ By 1955 the "Rules of Conduct for Middle School Students" and a similar edict for primary school students were announced. The first points of both stressed that students should "endeavour to learn" followed by exhortations to respect the flag, be punctual and tidy, have good posture, be silent in class, and salute teachers when outside of class.⁶⁸ Nothing was to distract the students from their studies.

Politics in the curriculum was considerably diminished. By 1956, the only remaining politics course in most middle school curriculum was one third year senior middle school course which concentrated on the constitution of the Soviet Union.⁶⁹ As early as 1953 the Ministry of

Education announced that the politics course "policy on Current Events" was "very difficult to teach" and was replaced by a "General Knowledge of the Chinese Revolution"- -the only junior middle politics course. In senior middle school, politics was taught only in the "Contemporary History of the Soviet Union" and "Modern History of China" and "World History of the Soviet Union."⁷⁰ Politics and ideology were avoided as subjects to be taught: education was for training technical manpower not inculcating political consciousness. The integration of theory and practice and labor education were not to be taught and practical work subjects were also out of place.

Higher education, even more than secondary, was transformed by the renewed emphasis on academic expertise. Higher education was removed from the mandate of the Ministry of Education and placed under the new Ministry of Higher Education. The Ministry of Higher Education was to respond to very specific manpower needs of a restricted number of industries:

Educational construction should be designed to complement economic construction; the focal point of economic construction lies in industrial construction; and the focal point of industrial construction lies in heavy industries. It can thus be seen that the training of senior and intermediate industrial and mining and communication personnel should be elevated to a position of top priority in our higher education and intermediate technical education.⁷¹

Teachers were to be trained to suit the needs of development, which "must be selective since we shall not be able to accomplish anything should we try to do everything at once."

Thus health personnel were to be trained "to take care of the state of health of the ever/increasing number of cadres."⁷² Agricultural studies were distinctly downplayed; of the nearly 100% increase in enrollment in higher education in 1953, 42.86% of the new students were in engineering and only 4.57% in agriculture and forestry. By 1955, when the importance of agricultural development was slowly becoming recognized, only 9% of higher education was devoted to agriculture.⁷³

Political innovations in education of the Yan'an (Yenan) era were de-emphasized. Worker and peasant enrollment did gradually increase (from 20.15% in 1953 to 34.3% in 1957).⁷⁴ But the worker and peasant short course schools came under attack for being poorly managed, in part because of the "inadequate emphasis and inadequate strength on the part of the leadership authorities of institutions of higher education". The solution was decided to be the closer integration of peasant and worker short term courses into the mainstream of higher education, thus increasing the difficulty for the educationally disadvantaged, but theoretically improving the quality of graduates.

By 1955 the stress on the academic nature of higher education had hardened considerably. Most institutes of higher education had expanded their programs from four to five years in length and some to six. Lu Dingi (Lu Ting-i) himself launched an eight year medical program. At the same time the workers and peasants rapid course middle schools

were suspended.⁷⁶ An added burden on middle and higher education students, which especially hindered the rural poor, was the new fees for compulsory boarding which were to be paid out of the student's pockets; a proportionally heavier burden for rural students since by the mid 1950's the wage differentials and social service differentials between town and country were rapidly growing.⁷⁷ Meanwhile between 1955 and 1956 the budget for scientific development and the secondary and higher education budget increased by five times while the primary school budget was cut by eighteen per cent. The per centage of engineering students was further increased and the percentage of liberal arts students were reduced while agricultural science remained constant at less than the number of students in liberal arts plus economics and political science.⁷⁸ Within the classroom, the Yan'an reforms in pedagogy had been completely ignored: rote learning and regurgitation dominated teaching methods, even in political classes. At all levels regular quality education was stressed, even despite the cost of restricted access universalization of education was foregone in attempts to serve the needs of rapid industrialization.⁷⁹

Whether or not these policies were unanimously supported within the Party in these early years is a point of great contention. The Cultural Revolution interpretations insist that Mao supported the unitary five year primary

as well as the popular management schools, and criticised the State Council's Educational and Cultural Committee which proposed their diminution. Mao, in 1953 Politburo meetings, expressed concern about the strength of cadre leadership in the schools, but was opposed by other leaders in the Politburo who supposedly gave the control over the schools to the "bourgeois intellectuals".⁸⁰ Mao in the early 1950's also stressed the need to emphasize labour education-- something that was to gain acceptance only several years later.⁸¹ Thus Mao may at least have been formulating a direction in educational policy that was not completely in accord with the policies being enacted. But as Joel Glassman asserts, little evidence exists to show that Mao's policies were intentionally subverted. Mao's notions of reform appear somewhat vague and fragmentary. Members of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education may well have agreed with his educational principles but not had the ability to balance and implement Mao's approach and the daily policy needs of national reconstruction.⁸² On daily decision-making they were most influenced by what they perceived to be the nations most urgent need--for a highly trained technical elite. But, differences between Party members of high rank were to become divisive, especially concerning the extent of reliance of the Soviet Union and its pattern of development. In 1954 Gao Gang, (Kao Kang) Politburo member and vice chairman of the Party,

and Rao Shushi (Jao Shu-shih), director of the Central Committee Organisation department, were purged because of their pro-Soviet style which emphasized reliance on a professional style of development. These first signs of factionalism were to complicate the development of an educational policy.⁸³

During the period between 1955 and early 1958, educational policy appeared to be pulled in very different directions, responding to very different, often contradictory pressures. Mao became more vocal about his ideas of development. At the same time, a definite move away from the Soviet model and towards emphasis on the countryside can be found in many sectors. Political education, combining labour and study, community run schools, and efforts to universalize education all received renewed emphasis.⁸⁴ But 1956 and 1957 also saw the development of a heated debate between proponents of the Second Five Year Plan, which was heavily based in style and content on the Soviet style, hierarchical First Five Year Plan, and those who desired a more indigenous mass based development. Education was further thrown into turmoil by the Hundred Flowers movement of the same period, in which the Party first encouraged the open discussion and criticism of recent development, but then quickly suppressed the movement because of the unexpected hostility expressed by the educated elite, both students and professors. In response anti-rightist mass movements and educational campaigns were established to purge the schools and society

of anti Party elements.

The *position* of the educated elite and those with technical knowledge was slowly shifting throughout these years. Until 1958 bureaucratic centralization and the emergence of a new professional elite had made expertise the major qualification for Party membership. Untrained rural cadres were dropped from the Party.⁸⁵ But in 1955 the emphasis changed, partially because of the demobilization of the army and the increasing power of the young rural cadres in the countryside. This shift of power to the village corresponded with an increase in educational activity at the village level, spurred on by the formation of the Agricultural People's Co-ops, based on the natural villages. Special educational programs for villagers, rural "red and expert universities" were set up, in part to train the peasantry for cadre recruitment. But by late 1955 and early 1956 Party leaders felt that large numbers of Party members well trained in the new technical fields were necessary in order to better control higher education - as a response to the Hundred Flowers movement. Thus the number of intellectuals in the Party increased, chosen because of their general sympathy to the aims of the Party and their academic excellence and positions of leadership. This group was unlikely to be open to the radicalisation of education that was to be proposed in the Great Leap or Cultural Revolution. Thus by 1957, rural cadres were becoming weaker within the Party: thirty to

fifty per cent, and in some areas up to sixty-six per cent of all rural cadres were dropped from the Party, while over one million redundant urban cadres were shipped down to factories and the countryside, from urban bureaucratic positions. By the 1960's Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p'ing), a great advocate of increasing the number of intellectuals in the Party, was favouring limiting the number of Party members enrolled from the countryside.⁸⁸ By 1956 one third of all intellectuals, 18% of all workers and 1.4% of all peasants were Party members, while the vast majority of all peasant cadre who were recruited during and after 1955 were serving at a sub-village level where their chances of promotion were virtually nil.⁸⁹

During the same period the standard of living in the city was increasing at a far more rapid rate than in the villages, with an understandable impact on peasant aspirations to relocate to urban areas as a measure of success. The urban population had nearly doubled to ninety-two million in the first eight years since liberation.⁹⁰ Differentials between rural and urban wages soared from an 83% difference in 1952 to a 95% difference by 1957, while urban consumption of such luxury items as "fine" grains, pork, eggs, cotton and sugar were two to three times higher in the city, and social services such as health, welfare and education were far more accessible in urban areas.⁹¹ Even Mao felt obliged to answer these concerns by stating that indeed some urban workers and government

officials were overpaid, but that the peasants were in a good position due to increasing production and stable prices, while workers faced higher costs and at any rate produced more.⁹² Nevertheless, unconvinced peasants continued "voting with their feet", and migration continued until 70% of the urban population were dependents, 5% were involved in service industries, and only 25% were the actual workforce.⁹³ Control of migration to the cities became a major government concern in 1953, 1954 and 1957 with the imposition of such policies as household registration, food rationing, prohibiting urban institutions from employing peasants, checkpoints at railway stations and highways into cities and the rounding up and escorting home of peasants. As employment opportunities in the cities shrank, due to migration and natural increase, it became difficult for industry to employ the annual graduating student urban entrants to the workforce, let alone rural folk too.⁹⁴ These problems were accentuated by the streamlining of the management and bureaucracy and sending down of urban cadres to lower levels, and also by the increase in the number of graduates from general middle education. The impact of these demographic patterns on the educational system were understandably strong.

Short term solutions to the employment problems were found by reorienting the educational system. Mao in 1955 began suggesting that rural educated youth return to the countryside to work after graduation from urban schools:

All people who have had some education ought to be very happy to work in the countryside if they get the chance. In our vast rural areas there is plenty of room for them to develop their talents to the full.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, despite Mao's optimism, we have seen the rather dismal outlook for advancement through rural work. Despite the policy of returning educated rural youth to the country, in practice, many youth found opportunities to remain in the city, aided in part, by village and urban opposition to the policy. The goal of intermediate education for much of the peasantry had become gaining an urban job. Education in rural areas was attracting attention, slowly, partly as a response to rapid urbanization, while the heavy unemployment in urban areas was slowly resulting in a return of educated youth to the countryside.

But, strong forces within the Party were not yet willing to accept more rural oriented development strategies, and were not willing to forego the technical industrial hierarchy approach to development. The Eighth National Congress re-emphasized the key role of heavy industry in economic development. As a result, a one hundred per cent increase in quality middle schooling, vocational and higher education was called for. The universalization of basic education, a goal of the 1949 Common Program, was further postponed.⁹⁶ The political report of the Central Committee indicated that primary schooling was not a major concern: "financial resources permitting, we must gradually expand

our primary education with a view to introducing in different areas and by stages, universal compulsory primary education within twelve years."⁹⁷ The need to train intellectuals and enlist the services of bourgeois and petty bourgeois intellectuals to the service of the Party, was stressed. Intellectuals of labouring origin were not expected to succeed within the regular school system but were to be educated by means of the spare time education system for cadres - suggesting perhaps a further limitation of workers spare time schools.⁹⁸ The Eighth National Congress, formulated to develop the Second Five Year Plan, was not heading in the direction of mass education.

At the same time, Mao was issuing policy statements that were heading in very different directions. In his 1956 article "On the Ten Great Relationships", written to provide suggestions for the Second Five Year Plan, Mao discusses the need to emphasize and promote light industry and agriculture, in order to create a stronger base for heavy industry. To attain greater and faster development, increased accumulation and production was necessary. Mao also suggested that caution be exercised in order that the burden on the peasantry not be too high. Overcentralization was also a negative influence to be overcome by increasing autonomy at lower levels in order not to undercut local initiative, and ensure that policy was responsive to local conditions and needs (in direct contradiction to the rather

rigid centralization of the Five Year Plans). Mao also expressed concern for the need to continue political education.⁹⁹

Mao's educational theories were a clear reflection of his developmental approach. In his article "On The Ten Great Relationships" Mao suggests that the shortage of technical cadre should be eradicated by "training workers and technicians from the coastal industries":

Technical cadres do not need to come from literary families. Gorki only had two years of elementary schooling. Lu Hsun was not a university graduate. In the old society he could be a lecturer not a professor. Comrade Hsiao Chu'nu never went to school at all. You must realize that skilled workers have learned through practical experience and can make very good technical cadres.¹⁰⁰

Mao recognized no special value in higher education, but saw great value in continuing worker education programs. Mao also advocated the expansion of basic education for children and adults. Mao in January 1956 proposed to the Supreme Council the elimination of illiteracy within five to seven years and compulsory primary education in seven to twelve years; more stringent proposals than those of the National Congress. Mao also suggests that rural schools expand to give some middle school classes. Whether or not as a result of Mao's policies, primary enrollment was up 19.4% and middle school up 32.3% for the 1956 school year, in a considerable bloom of lower level education.¹⁰¹ In a further flourishing of mass education, the State Council in March 1956 announced the

establishment of schools to teach illiterates in co-operatives, factories, and neighbourhoods--more or less modelled on the spare time primary schools of 1949-1951. They were to teach two or three hundred characters appropriate to the needs of the peasantry and workers.¹⁰² By June 1956 the Ministry of Education announced that the educational level of the populace was to be raised to the level of primary school and that "in accordance with local conditions", primary education was to become universal within seven to twelve years and junior middle schooling was to be made universal in the cities. Still, the Ministry of Education felt that it was secondary education that was "to meet the needs for the fostering of national construction personnel...".¹⁰³ Other policies within the Ministry of Education were also in direct opposition to Mao's approach. Thus, between 1955 and 1956 the educational budget for scientific development increased by five times, while the primary school budget was cut by 18%, at a time when Mao was advocating expansion of primary education. In higher education while the percentage of engineering students from 1949 to 1958 climbed from 25% to 40% of total enrollment, the enrollment for agriculture remained steady at 8%, hardly reflecting any new emphasis on rural production.¹⁰⁴ Educational policy was certainly in a period of flux, responding to many different tensions. The Hundred Flowers Movement was to act almost as a catalyst, throwing urban schools

into turmoil, and eventually resulting in their loss of favour by those in the Party previously predisposed to supporting academic education.

The Hundred Flowers movement appears to have grown out of the discussions surrounding the drafting of the Second Five Year Plan. Zhou Enlai, one month before the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party talked at a conference about the "question" of intellectuals, stressing previous mistakes made in the treatment of non-communist intellectuals, and indicating a new leniency and readiness to co-operate. Three months after the Twentieth Congress, Lu Dingxi gave a speech entitled "Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom and a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend". Proponents of the Second Five Year Plan may have hoped to gain the confidence of the professional classes through their moderation, but must have been taken aback by the hostility of outpourings from the students and their professors. Anti-Marxist wall posters appeared throughout the school system, especially in middle school and institutions of higher education. In Chengdu (Chengtu) students were battling police and charging that the Party was "incompetent at running schools". In Hongyang at the height of the Hundred Flowers, students in the First Middle School rioted when told that only 5% of them would enter higher education. With the support of their professors, the youth kidnapped cadres and demonstrated in the streets.¹⁰⁵

Educational bureaucracies within the schools also became highly vocal during the Hundred Flowers. Party school committees came under heavy criticism. Zhu Mingbi (Chu Ming-pi), principal of the Hubei (Hupei) Medical College stated:

Many problems that exist in the institutions of higher education today are attributable to the innappropriateness of the Party committee system. The Party committee monopolizes everything, insisting on having a finger in every pie and yet knows very little about the business of teaching.¹⁰⁶

Zhen Mingshu (Chen Ming-shu) "hoped that unqualified Party members would be removed from their present positions in institutions of higher education".¹⁰⁷ Indeed some of the criticisms of education were taken to heart by the Ministry of Higher Education. Departmental outlines for courses were made more general after 1956, increasing responsibility for course content on the academic staff.¹⁰⁸ Party committees were less responsible for academic affairs. Professors were appointed as vice-presidents in many institutions, but by 1957 many had been purged as 'rightists'. Generally, grave doubts arose in some sectors of the Party as to the political orientation of the educational system.

Mao himself became highly disillusioned with students and the educational system. Mao in 1955 showed a great exuberance towards what he thought to be the revolutionary nature of youth:

Youth is one of the most active and vital forces in society. Young people are the most anxious to learn,

they are the least conservative in their thinking.¹⁰⁹

But by 1957, in his famous article "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" Mao appears disillusioned with youth, stressing the need to increase political education:

Recently there has been a falling off in ideological and political work among students and intellectuals and some unhealthy tendencies have appeared. Some people seem to think that there is no longer any need to concern oneself with politics or with the future of the motherland and the ideas of mankind. It seems as if Marxism was once all the rage but is currently not so much in fashion. To counter these tendencies, we must strengthen our ideological and political work. Both students and intellectuals should study hard....they must make progress both ideological and political, which means that they should study Marxism, current events and politics. Not to have a correct political viewpoint is like having no soul.¹¹⁰

Mao carefully defines what he believes should be the goal of education: to "enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually, and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture."¹¹¹

Most crucial in Mao's reshaping of his ideas on education was the evolution of his ideas on class struggle, shaped perhaps as much by the uprising in Hungary as by the Hundred Flowers movement. In "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" Mao goes considerably further than his 1955 remarks on the necessity of peaceful class struggle among poor and middle peasants.¹¹² Mao classifies the degree of contradictions within the working class, peasantry, intelligentsia, and also between these

groups, as well as between the people and the government, between collective and individual interests, democracy and centralism and bureaucracy and individualism. Mao relates that these contradictions are contradictions among the people, are non-antagonistic, and can be resolved to further socialism. But, Mao warns that certain contradictions, such as between the national bourgeoisie and the working class are by nature antagonistic, and between the people and the enemy. Only if properly handled can these contradictions be transformed into non-antagonistic contradictions and thus be resolved. Otherwise such antagonistic contradictions may work to the detriment of socialist development. Class struggle must continue and political vigilance was continually necessary, especially in regard to the bourgeoisie and intellectuals, whose class ideology was still rooted in the old society. Education was thus a central arena of the class struggle, which intellectuals could not be allowed to dominate. Not only was politics to be taught in the schools, the prime function of schooling was to create "workers with both socialist consciousness and culture", to remold people in a socialist form.

An educational system imported wholesale from abroad could not possibly fulfill Mao's objectives. Mao therefore began encouraging the development of a Chinese style of education, and scorning those who supported reliance on

foreign models of development:

Some people follow the prevailing wind. Today the north wind is blowing, so they join the north wind school. Tomorrow there is a west wind, so they join the west wind school. The day after tomorrow the north wind blows again so they switch back.... They haven't a single idea of their own. They are absolutists, going from one extreme to another....¹¹⁴

Mao suggests that it is wrong to be "one-sided and copy everything which comes from abroad, and introduce it mechanistically", instead; learning from abroad must be combined with Chinese ideas.¹¹⁵ By 1957, Mao was blatantly critical of the Sovietization of Chinese education. One account quotes Mao as stating: "Does the Ministry of Education belong to China or the Soviet Union? If it is the Soviet Union's Ministry of Education then we must abolish our Ministry of Education."¹¹⁶ At the same meeting of directors of educational departments Mao is also quoted by other sources as stating "Why don't you then use the things of the old liberated areas as the blueprint of teaching materials."¹¹⁷ Mao's vision of education was slowly sharpening into a policy oriented form.

At the same time the educational system continued to stress quality higher education and downplay mass education. Liu Shaoqi became highly vocal in putting forward significantly different directives than Mao's. Liu, in 1956, criticised the sudden increase in enrollment resulting from the padding of primary schools now offering some middle school courses in areas where middle schooling

was not available.¹¹⁸ Liu also issued a 1956 directive to the Ministry of Education suggesting that "universal education is still not too urgent now; the question now is still higher education and the need for specialists."¹¹⁹

While Mao was advocating that village schools spontaneously increase middle schooling, the Ministry of Education was actually reducing the availability of middle schooling.

The rate of drop-outs, especially in rural areas soared to up to 50% of the students withdrawing within one year, in part because of the need for their labour, but more

importantly because of the rising costs of education as funding was changed from subsidies according to need to scholarships according to academic merit.¹²⁰ One production brigade complained that in 1956, of the fifty-one poor and lower middle peasant families only four entered junior middle school after 1956, and all students attending middle school in that year dropped out because of the higher fees.¹²¹

While rural schools suffered some setbacks, then, elite urban schools reached new heights. Urban boarding schools, ordered abolished in 1955 by the State Council, remained untouched until 1967.¹²² Schools such as Peking Number 2 Elementary School provided special classes for children of very high ranking Party members such as Liu Shaoqi, Yang Shangkun (Yang Shang-k'un) and Bo Ibo (Po I-po). Mao, Zhou and Gang Sheng (Kang Sheng) argued repeatedly during these years that elite schools should be absorbed into the regular schools system, because of their expense and

because they produced "new aristocrats", but were successfully opposed primarily by the Party Committee of Peking which argued that Peking was a special case.¹²³

The Peking Party Committee evidently was able to muster considerable support among upper ranks within the Ministry of Education and Politburo to maintain its position.

Tension within the Party ranks was evidently mounting over divergent strategies of development in education. Liu, stressing that "without educational national salvation there can be no industrial national salvation", was leading in very different directions to Mao.¹²⁴ Despite any suspect political view-points held by the intellectual elite, Liu was still determined that they were essential to development, at a time when Mao was increasingly sceptical. Liu's reliance on development through a technological elite--despite the excessive criticism of the Cultural Revolution--was to Liu, essential for the development of socialism:

We must further expand and strengthen the ranks of our intellectuals... we must enlist the services of bourgeois and petty bourgeois intellectuals in the building of socialism and learn from them. However we must not allow the bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas which they bring with them to corrupt the ranks of the proletariat.¹²⁵

Mao's desire to emphasize mass rural education and rejuvenate class struggle could only be disruptive to Liu's desire to co-operate with the intellectuals in the institutions of higher education in a striving for technological development. Educational reform had done little to alter the

class composition of institutions of higher education: 2,474 professors and assistant professors at 46 institutions came from landlord or bourgeois class origins.¹²⁷ At Beida in the 1950's 90.8% of the professional staff were educated before liberation, and the majority were working in the university before 1949.¹²⁸ Even with these vague figures, it would seem reasonable to accept Julia Kwong's assertion that: "The educational system at the implementation level remained a bastion of the traditional elites that had been ousted from political power."¹²⁹ Nevertheless, to Liu, this educational elite should remain unhampered by political issues. In a tour of five provinces in 1957, Liu is said to have consistently told students to study hard and ignore those things not directly related to their schooling, (i.e. politics) suggesting that they would have glorious career paths if they were to succeed in school.¹³⁰ But Liu's attempts to keep an elite of students calmly studying, sheltered from political storms were, for the moment to be futile, as the Great Leap Forward was to break onto the scene.

The Great Leap Forward, a momentous optimistic mass movement centered around the formation of communes made up of several natural villages in order to effect a rapid transformation from socialism to communism. Emphasis was upon rapid development of agriculture and industry through low level technology and mass mobilization on a vast scale in the rural areas. To a considerable extent

it was highly spontaneous. Edgar Snow reports that approximately half the countryside was already organized into communes before the official directive was formally announced.¹³¹ Mao, himself the major proponent of the Great Leap, early in the movement warned consistently of the dangers of advancing too rapidly and problems of excess (this to be taken with a touch of salt since Mao was speaking to worried cadres).¹³² The Great Leap successfully made redundant the Second Five Year Plan and its hierarchical planned development, in favour of spontaneous mass organized small scale development, but because of the extent of disruption and poor coordination of the Great Leap, it was doomed to an early death.

Nevertheless, in the educational sphere, the impact of the ideas promoted during the Great Leap was considerable. A philosophy of education based on the principle of combining education and productive labour, theory and practice, with politics in command and the mass line in education was formulated and new types of schooling instigated. None of these ideas were particularly new, all were in the pre-liberation educational theory - but none had been properly implemented within the regular school system. The Great Leap turned **education over** to the masses in a considerable effort at decentralisation. Every institution, factory, and commune were to form their own schools, and every school was somehow to engage in production. Education was to

expand at an enormous rate.

The Great Leap and its educational policies were motivated by the continuing need, as perceived by Mao, for strengthening the ideological basis of society, and furthering the class struggle. Education remained an important arena for this struggle. Debates were encouraged within educational institutions over the "red and expert" question; how can an intellectual specialize in his field, concentrating on academic matters, remain politically conscientious and aware of his responsibilities to the masses. Manual labour for academics was encouraged under the slogan "Broken Palms, Transformed Stand, Sun Blackened Faces and Trained Ideology".¹³³ But ideological improvements among the educational elite was only a small part of the educational reforms. Mass education to provide further opportunities for those deprived of education was essential to change the class orientation of education. Literacy classes and spare time peasant and worker classes, along with widespread expansion of rural education through work-study schools were to break down class differences, including specifically the differences between city and country.¹³⁴

The increase in educational activity was to be achieved without increasing state funds, but through work-study and the formation of schools funded and run by factories, communes and offices, and the schools in return were to aid

the units in increasing their production. Within eight months middle schools and colleges had established 151,608 small factories and workshops and 10,319 farms producing 36,000 machines and 1,930,000 tons of fertilizer.¹³⁵ Students from agricultural areas were to return to their villages to work during vacations. All schools were to actively engage in production; labour education, previously only adopted in fits and starts and considered temporary, was institutionalized.¹³⁶ Schools ideally were to become financially self-reliant, while increasing national production and at the same time creating the correct attitudes to labour among the students.¹³⁷

While concerned with spreading the base of education, Mao shows remarkably little respect for the potential benefits of education, rather stressing the importance of the correct political attitude and revolutionary fervour. Mao in his Chengdu (Chengtu) talks remarks:

From ancient times the people who have created new schools of thought have been young people without great learning. Confucius started at the age of twenty three; and how much learning did Jesus have?... In history it is always those with little learning who overthrow those with much learning.... When young people grasp a truth they are invincible....

Of course some things can be learnt at school: I don't propose to close all the schools. What I mean is that it is not absolutely necessary to attend school. The main thing is whether your direction is correct or not, and whether you come to grips with your studies.¹³⁸

With such an attitude, inevitably Mao was little concerned with the specific content of schooling, but was

much more concerned with the political role of education, and the strengthening of Party control over education.¹³⁹

Education was to stress socialist values, middle school courses in socialist education and primary and middle school courses in agricultural knowledge were to be taught. Love of physical labour and the labouring people, good work habits and self discipline were to be stressed. Theory and practice were to be integrated as students learned the basic knowledge of production and technology.¹⁴⁰

But the most far-reaching changes were to occur not in the regular schools, but in the irregular sector. Within communes kindergartens sprang up, accommodating thirty million children. Fifteen thousand primary schools were set up in Jiangxi (Kiangsi) within the first four months of the Great Leap, while primary school enrollment increased by 34% to eighty-six million.¹⁴¹ A substantial proportion of the increased enrollment was made up by one room minban schools set up in villages previously without a school.¹⁴² Middle school enrollment also increased by 36% over pre-Great Leap figures, while the perhaps previously neglected vocational middle schooling increased by 89%.¹⁴² Many communes increased middle schooling by establishing central boarding schools often with free tuition.¹⁴³ The great majority of these new middle schools were irregular, part-work part-study. At the same time thirty million adults were now attending spare time schools.¹⁴⁴ In more developed areas, such as Shanghai, highly innovative middle

school programs appeared; such as self study radio groups in which fifteen to twenty students of varied backgrounds would study communally, sending one representative to attend classes with a teaching assistant in order to ask questions for the group.¹⁴⁵

The agricultural part-work part-study schools were without a doubt the Great Leap educational innovation with the most impact on rural education. Agricultural middle schools had been established before 1958, but were first publicly recognized and held up for emulation in Jiangsu (Kiangsi) in March 1958. Within two weeks, 3,000 agricultural middle schools were set up in Jiangxi alone. Within two months 6,404 had been established and by July Sichuan (Szechwan) had more agricultural middle schools than Jiangsu.¹⁴⁶ Some of the agricultural colleges were technical schools, teaching agriculture and basic technology, while others were general agricultural schools with almost the same curriculum as regular schools, but with substantially more labour. By far the majority of agricultural middle schools had only a limited curriculum, taught elementary courses in politics, language, arithmetic and production knowledge.¹⁴⁷ The agricultural middle schools were often formed from the base of the "red and expert universities" which were commune organized adult education programs, usually of very low quality. On an average the schools had three teachers for a three year program and ideal

teachers were senior middle school graduates, but schools often made do with junior middle school graduates, primary teachers, cadres and peasants. Often the teachers were urban students who knew nothing of agricultural production and were ill at ease in the countryside.¹⁴⁸

Financially, agricultural middle schools and work-study schools created inexpensive education at great savings to the provincial and central governments. Scholarships to cover the tuition fees for poorer youth were no longer necessary and maintenance costs were covered by the commune production team or production brigade. Agricultural middle schools generally had no buildings, were held outdoors where possible, did not provide boarding, and any necessary facilities, or land were provided by the commune. Costs to the students were lower, varying from province to province, depending upon the degree of provincial subsidization. In some areas, where fees for regular agricultural middle schools were as much as ¥350 a year for full time senior middle agricultural schools, ¥140 a year for part-time agricultural middle schools, ¥76 a year for full time junior middle schools and ¥6 a year for state subsidized agricultural part-work part-study.¹⁴⁹ In other areas agricultural middle schools cost the student ¥38 a year, while the state subsidy was only ¥13 per head. In that region state costs per student at regular junior middle school was ¥187, while the family paid ¥108. The modest subsidies

for agricultural middle schools, where available, were only given on the understanding that they were short term: agricultural middle schools were supposed to be self sufficient. However, this self-sufficiency was never attained. While 30% of Jiangxi's agricultural middle schools remained wholly dependent on state financing, only 19% were completely self supporting. In Fujian (~~Fukien~~) in 1960 out of 560 agricultural middle schools only 55 were able to pay their teachers salaries and 61 were self sufficient in food.

Evidently the agricultural middle schools faced some serious problems, due in part to their rapid creation. Lack of facilities, teaching materials, and trained teachers (except in Jiangxi where a four month teacher training program provided some minimal training) all limited the effectiveness of the program. Agricultural middle schools were often unpopular among cadres and peasants; making necessary propaganda campaigns to criticize people who called agricultural middle schools "schools for beggars" only good for "teaching farmers to farm". Campaigns lauded those primary school graduates who happily enrolled in agricultural middle schools after failing to gain acceptance in regular junior middle schools (giving some indirect evidence of the status of the schools). The media further censored the idea that work study was primarily for slower students and to others who found regular fees too expensive. Campaigns against "bourgeois pragmatism" (doing the right thing for the wrong reason) attempted

to convince the public of the merits of work-study for all youth, not just the needy.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless teachers of agricultural middle schools felt lower in status and some students were reported to be too ashamed to wear their school badges on the street.¹⁵¹

If the peasantry felt that agricultural middle school was second rate, it may well have received that opinion from the bureaucracy, despite the efforts of media propagandists. The essence of the strategy of "Walking on Two Legs" inevitably implied that one leg was more modern and more advanced than the other. Agricultural middle schools were, in some respects, "dead end" schools. The Party and Ministry of Education firmly limited any attempts to extend part-work part-study schools to senior middle level.¹⁵¹ In many areas local initiative attempted to merge the regular middle school system with the agricultural part-time, but these efforts were frowned upon for "walking with one leg" and hindering "improvement of the quality of ordinary middle school."¹⁵² "Walking on Two Legs" formalized the hierarchy between the levels of schooling. Eventually, part-time schools were to attain the level of part-work part-study schools, but only in the distant future were part-work part-study schools to attain the level of regular schools: the State Council suggested this could be attained when production was increased, working hours therefore reduced and more public funds available in order

to reduce tuition fees --all under the principle of "elevation on the foundation of popularization" and "popularization under the guidance of elevation". Spare time and work-study schools were for "enhancing the technical level in industrial and agricultural production", while the other, regular schools, were:

...charged with the task of raising the educational level. These schools must have complete courses and pay attention to raising the quality of their teaching and scientific research.¹⁵³

Any lowering of standards in those elite schools was said to "...have a harmful effect on the cause of education as a whole."¹⁵⁴ It was for good reason that agricultural middle schools were more often seen as rural substitutes for middle school education than equals.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, several western critics have suggested that agricultural middle schools were most effective in absorbing unemployed urban youth who could not find places in urban middle schools.¹⁵⁶ Even during the radical period of the Great Leap a dual educational system was present, and even formalized in order to protect the interests of the quality stream at a time of popularization and expansion.

At the level of higher education, the elite track of education came under the heaviest attack. The Ministry of Higher Education was effectively abolished, and of the fifty-three institutions that it had controlled, all but seven were sent down to be administered by the provinces, under careful direction of the provinces.¹⁵⁷ College

entrance examinations were abolished in favour of evaluation based upon political background. Curricula reforms stressed the integration of theory and practice, and whole departments, such as the Philosophy department at Beida were sent down to the countryside, to gain practical life experiences. Massive ideological campaigns were introduced to reform the political outlook of academics.

The longstanding separation between the "intellectuals" and workers was no longer to be tolerated. Mao in his speech at Chengdu (Chengtu) remarks:

Professors --we have been afraid of them ever since we came into the towns. We did not despise them, we were terrified of them. When confronted with piles of learning we felt that we were good for nothings. For Marxists to fear bourgeois intellectuals while not fearing Imperialism is strange indeed. I believe this attitude is another example of the slave mentality.... We must not tolerate it any longer. Naturally we cannot go out tomorrow and beat them up. We have to make contact with them, educate them and make friends with them.¹⁵⁸

Mao was battling traditional attitudes towards the accepted innate superiority of educated men which were still immensely strong in Chinese society. Even in 1958 issues of such magazines as Chinese Youth alarmingly elitist statements can be found such as "scientists have large brains and small hands and are fit to invent and create while the workers and peasants have small brains and large hands fit only for manual labour."¹⁵⁹ Magazines aimed at teachers, also in the Great Leap contained such assertions as "men of low cultural standards cannot lead those of a higher cultural standard."¹⁶⁰

The role of intellectuals in a socialist society was still something of an enigma. Significant portions of public opinion felt that it was asking too much to expect intellectuals to achieve political consciousness; their technical contribution was sufficient.¹⁶¹

Central to Mao's educational policies during the Great Leap was a determination to integrate political awareness and technical knowledge. Reform was needed, not just among the intellectuals, but also among the cadre:

The relationship between redness and expertise, politics and vocation is a unity of two pairs of opposites. We must criticize two different political tendencies. On the one hand we must oppose empty headed politicians; on the other we must oppose directionless practical men.

There is no doubt that politics and economics and politics and technology should be unified. It will always be so. That is what it means to be 'red and expert'.... Ideological and political work guarantees the completion of economic and technological work. They serve the economic base. In addition ideological and political work are the commanders, the soul. If we relax our ideological and political work even slightly, our economic and technological work will go astray.¹⁶²

For Mao, it was essential that workers and peasants gain their own intelligentsia. Mao, in his "Sixty Points on Working Methods" announced:

All the departments of the Centre, provinces, special regions and counties should foster 'hsiu-tsai' [young people of intellectual potential]. It will not do to be without an intelligentsia. [But] the proletariat must have its own intelligentsia which knows more about Marxism and has achieved a certain cultural, scientific knowledge and literary facility.¹⁶³

New forms of schooling were established to allow workers and peasants to gain specialized knowledge. Part-time

medical classes were established for peasants from villages where medical care was not available, a precursor to the "barefoot doctor" program of the Cultural Revolution. Mao and Zhou Enlai (Chou Enlái) gave active support to initiatives such as the Jiangxi (Kiangsi) Communist Labour University which, established in 1958, became a model for other agricultural labour universities. Based on Kangda (Kang-ta) the Communist Labour universities were half-work half-study and enrolled workers, peasants, uneducated cadres and ten per cent junior middle students, on the basis of common knowledge entrance examination. Courses were given in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, social science and separate departments for math, physics, chemistry, and teacher training. By 1959 55,000 students were enrolled in the Jiangxi Communist Labour University.¹⁶⁴ The goal of the Communist Labour University was "intellectualizing workers and proletarianizing intellectuals" by exposing the staff to a combination of teaching, production, and scientific research in a part-work part-teaching program, in a self sufficient environment, where students would come "from the commune" and return "to the commune".¹⁶⁵ Similar programs were developed in the industrial sphere by the Industrial Labour University which taught metallurgy, coal technology, electricity, geology, and construction.

Unfortunately despite the tremendous need for rural technical personnel, teachers and health care workers,

the communist labour universities came under heavy fire for their poor quality. Like the agricultural middle schools, equipment and facilities were lacking, many "teachers" had little or no formal education or practical experience. Schools such as the Zhejiang (Chekiang) half-work half-study teachers colleges began the school year by building the school. But despite the often dismal conditions, and quality probably pathetic even in comparison to Chinese urban schooling, the agricultural university graduates probably were more able to satisfy rural needs than the small number of regular senior middle school or higher education graduates that ventured into the rural areas.¹⁶⁶ This is especially evident when one compares the rural based agricultural labour universities with the regular agricultural institutes of higher education. The agricultural institutes of higher education were so urban that in 1958, one of Mao's educational reforms was to order the universities to relocate to the countryside. Enrollment in the agricultural colleges was minute. Between 1958 and 1968 the agricultural colleges graduated only 108,000 agricultural technicians, trained in insect and disease control, soil chemistry and improvement, agricultural mechanization, animal husbandry, irrigation or forestry.¹⁶⁸ Students in the agricultural colleges were probably mostly urban, since during the Cultural Revolution, agricultural colleges were encouraged to "start specialized classes to admit rural

youth and adults".¹⁶⁹ The agricultural labour universities were thus in a position to provide some amount of needed technical skills to the rural population, filling a specific gap not satisfied by the higher level institutions.

The problems of the agricultural labour universities and part-work part-study agricultural middle schools reflected the contradictory problems involved in expanding education through spontaneous grass roots development, without the financial support behind them that they needed. Self-sufficiency could only be attained after some initial investment was required. Some of the major costs, such as land for the school farms, was only met at the expense of the local community, often causing some local resentment.¹⁷⁰ The rapid nature of the mass campaign sometimes led to the desire for quick success and expansion, where physical and human resources could not support the project. Schools were organized where teachers and teaching materials were not available and projects foundered as a result of disillusionment with the quality of the project.¹⁷¹

The vast expansion of educational facilities was brought about under considerable decentralisation. Central government spending in 1958 decreased by fourteen per cent, while provincial government spending increased by fifteen per cent.¹⁷² The central budget for education decreased from ¥637,000,000 in 1957 to ¥599,000,000 in 1958, while the number of institutions of higher education grew from

227 to 839 and the number of students enrolled in higher education grew from 403,000 in 1956 to 955,000 in the fall of 1960.¹⁷³ The perhaps "quixotic" Great Leap Forward call for higher education for all within fifteen years would suggest that the financial burden for education would continue to grow, and with central government revenues down from forty to twenty per cent of collected government revenues, the lower levels of government would be bearing more of the responsibility for higher education, as well as lower level education.¹⁷⁴ The decentralization, on the one hand encouraged local units to innovate and create schooling appropriate to local conditions, and encourage discussion of the goal of education within the community.¹⁷⁵ Decentralization certainly created efficient use and management of schooling. On the other hand several studies have shown that decentralisation of financial resources and program management during the Great Leap Forward benefited the most developed provinces, at the expense of the less developed provinces, creating what has been called a "highly dualistic" economy.¹⁷⁷ No matter the possible constraints of decentralisation inter-provincial and perhaps also intra-provincial equity, the mass mobilization strategy in terms of educational construction was not without its problems. Time spent in political campaigns, adult education and mobilization put constraints on production, while production was further hampered by poorly planned

development projects. The Great Leap policies were to be, for the moment, laid aside.

By July 1959, Mao was having to accept responsibility for some of the excesses of the Great Leap, while defending the principle to dismayed cadres, and critics within and without the Party. Mao, in his speech at the Lushan Conference remarks "...I have taken sleeping pills three times but still I can't sleep."¹⁷⁸ Talking of the Jiangxi (Kiangsi) Party school, Mao says "...whenever they speak, they say we are in a mess."¹⁷⁹ Divisions and disagreements within the Party were widening. Within literary circles, the use of metaphorical novels to attack the Party, and Mao in particular, in the years immediately following the Great Leap became widespread.¹⁸⁰ Mao responded by continuing to stress the learning value of Great Leap policies, in the face of his harshest opponents:

We are now under combined attack from within and outside the Party. The rightists say: 'Why was Ch'in Shih Huang overthrown? Because he built the Great Wall. Now that we have built Tien An Men we shall collapse....

But, where else can we find such a school or intensive training course which will enable a population of several hundreds of millions as well as several millions of cadres to be educated?... Is it mainly a failure. No its only a partial failure. We have paid a high price, a lot of 'communist wind' has blown past but the people of the whole country have learned a lesson."¹⁸¹

But despite the tangible benefits of some of the Great Leap reforms, the stigma of defeat was strong.

Whether his position was weakened by the criticism of the Great Leap, or whether he pragmatically withdrew

to encourage successors, in 1959 Mao retired as State Chairman in order to spend more time on theoretical issues. Lowell Dittmer suggests that no evidence exists to indicate that Mao disagreed with other leading cadres over the Great Leap Forward, and its retreat. Dittmer indicates a more flexible attitude among the Chinese leadership.¹⁸² Another interpretation is held by Julia Kwong, who interprets Mao's relinquishing of power as a consequence of the economic difficulties arising from his policies.¹⁸³ The complete realignment and reversal of Great Leap policies in the early 1960's considerably exceeded the needs of pragmatism and economic constraints, suggesting far deeper differences in ideological approach to development, but were highly consistent with some of the more common criticisms of the mass approach during the Great Leap.

Since the beginning of the Great Leap, many cadres had been uncertain of the benefits of the mass movement approach, belittling it as out of date. Mao in September 1958 had been forced to comment:

There are still a few cadres who are unwilling to undertake a large scale mass movement in the industrial sphere. They call the mass movement on the industrial front irregular and disparage it as a "rural style of work" and a "guerrilla habit". This is obviously incorrect.¹⁸⁴

Franz Schurmann, in his theory of "interest groups", suggests that cadres tended to oppose changes that might inhibit the development of their own particular area of responsibility.¹⁸⁵ Cadres involved in the military, or industry, or education

could all be expected to feel some conflict between a mass campaign and its policies, and their duty to improving efficiency in their own area of concern. Peng Dehuai (P'eng Teh-huai) Minister of Defence, was dismissed immediately after the Great Leap, for his opposition to the introduction of mass style campaigns within an army which he felt should remain professional.¹⁸⁶ Peng strongly defended the Soviet model of development, stressing economic development and hierarchical structures, and downplaying the role of politics.¹⁸⁷

Within the educational sphere, cadre suspicion and disapproval of the radical style of the mass campaigns was also common. As we have seen in the discussion of agricultural middle schools, new style schools were often looked down upon by cadres. Educational reforms were consistently adjusted by certain cadres in such a way as to limit any potential negative impact on the established urban-favouring, quality-oriented school system. Central to this policy was the attempt, especially by Lu Dingi (Lu Ting-i) and Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p'ing) to stress the need for popularization and elevation, not at the same time, within the same schools, as some claim Mao desired; but within two very different school systems.¹⁸⁸ Lu Dingi in his article "Education Must Be Combined with Productive Labour", develops the idea into formalizing the separation between regular high standard schools, part-work, part-study schools and spare-time schools. As the economy grows, Lu suggests that spare-time schools may catch up to the level of part-

work part-study schools, but gives no indication that they will attain the level of regular schools. As Lu explains:

Some of the full time, the part-work part-study and the spare time schools undertake the task of raising educational levels at the same time as education is being spread extensively through part-work part-study and spare time courses.¹⁸⁹

Lu carefully notes the economic advantage of stressing extensive education through the irregular system. The 1958 "Joint Directive by the CCPCC and State Council even more clearly gives to full time schools the role of "elevation" of education and part-work part-study schools the role of popularization.¹⁹⁰ At the same time Liu Shaoqi (Liu Shao-ch'i) has been accused of attempting to slow the growth of part-work schools, for fear of decreasing the quality of education.¹⁹¹ By 1959, as the Great Leap reforms came under heavier criticism Yang Xiufeng (Yang Hsiu-feng) called for the need to "reorganize, overhaul and improve new schools", while county and provincial governments were to pick full time schools for "selective development".¹⁹² By 1962, as the new policies became entrenched, directives were sent to all provincial and municipal governments to select key primary and secondary schools on which to concentrate their resources. The policy of "Walking on Two Legs" developed to expand educational access was redirected to uphold a dualistic hierarchical educational system.

After the demise of the Great Leap, for the next few years, major reforms were made to improve the academic standards of full-time regular education while severely

cutting back on the irregular streams of education. The reforms of 1958 were denounced by cadres such as Li Jingchuan (Li Ching-ch'uan), First Secretary of the Sichuan (Szechuan) Party as "a frightful mess that has lowered the quality of education".¹⁹³ Scholars such as Jiang Nanxiang (Chiang Nan-hsiang) Zhou Yang (Chou Yang) and Yang Xiufeng (Yang Hsiu-feng), all known for their academic bent, were organized to submit proposals that were to be formulated into the "Sixty Points on Higher Education". The extent of the proposed changes is startling, and founded on a very different view of the role of education. The need for professional competence and serious academic study was stressed. Liu Shaoqi ~~was said to have~~ remarked that the main problem in industrialization was predominantly lack of engineers.¹⁹⁴ "Save the nation through education" and "Save the nation through industry" were to be the new battle cries.¹⁹⁵ Scholars, not political cadres, were to have the final control over running schools. The Ministry of Education was given renewed power and used scholars to draft new texts to replace the locally produced radical texts of the Great Leap. Teaching outlines were reintroduced and were to be rigidly followed.¹⁹⁶

Central to the Sixty Articles emphasis on renewed academic excellence was the need to limit class struggle and reintegrate intellectuals into the Party. Zhèn Boda (Chen Po-ta) is said to have quoted Lenin:

Lenin said... 'we have won Russia... now we must learn to administer Russia, and to do that we must learn to be modest and to respect the efficient work of experts in science and technology'.... According to Lenin a scientist or an engineer will come to accept communism through the data of his own science and in his own way. This is an important revelation for us.¹⁹⁷

Political consciousness was to be attained through study, and class struggle against bourgeois intellectuals was formally disapproved of. Students were again to learn with humility from their professors:

All those professors, associate professors, lecturers, assistants and others with specialized knowledge should be united with and all positive factors should be mobilized.... an attempt should be made to learn with humility from old teachers.¹⁹⁸

Lu Ding-i was said to have remarked:

The bourgeoisie in China is the most cultured; if we don't study from the bourgeoisie, it will be impossible to realize the intellectualization among the worker and peasant masses.¹⁹⁹

Academic honours and titles were reintroduced and wage scales within academic ranks were widened considerably.

Not surprisingly, the political and labour content introduced into schools in the Great Leap was reduced. Even at the height of the Great Leap, Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-ping) was suggesting that the introduction of labour into schools should not be introduced too far or too fast, in order not to weaken academic work.²⁰⁰ Yang Xiufeng (Yang Hsiu-feng) also had suggested that the introduction of labour was a "long-term task", while theoretical knowledge and indirect experience should be emphasized.²⁰¹ Excessive

production, research, social activities and any other activities which lessened educational work were to be reduced.²⁰² All schools were to reduce labour, and key schools were to reduce labour even more. By 1962, limits were placed on the maximum amount of time which could be devoted to labour (two weeks yearly in secondary schooling and even less in higher education).²⁰³ The political goals of reducing the Three Great Differences through labour were obviously no longer considered worth the cost.

Within rural areas the reforms in education were a considerable product of changes in the rural political economy. Retrenchment in the countryside took many forms. Work teams, and in some areas Households, instead of the larger production brigades became the unit of account, and personal incentives and private plots were again stressed. Political study periods were cut short, except for meetings to improve techniques and assess bonuses to reward increased efficiency.²⁰⁴ Commune adult education programs were disbanded in busy seasons. While all these reforms were the product of considerable economic hardship, due to problems of rapid collectivization, natural disasters, and loss of Soviet assistance, the response was a result of hard political choice to pull back on rural radicalization.

The impact of the new approach to education and development on rural education was enormous. The very goal of universalization of education was, for the moment,

abandoned. Lu Dingi (Lu Ting-i) in 1960 asserts:

What is compulsory education? According to this system the labouring people are, on the one hand, coerced into receiving some education, while on the other hand they are prevented from receiving higher education. Thus they will have enough knowledge to run the machines of the capitalists without wrecking them, and yet not enough education to place themselves academically on par with the intelligentsia of the bourgeoisie....

The goal of our educational system is entirely different... we want to extend education of high standards to all our people and to raise our communist consciousness and moral standards to much higher levels in order to eliminate the differences between mental and manual labour. This goal is, of course, much more glorious than that of the "compulsory education" system.²⁰⁵

With this policy in place, primary schooling was decimated.

On the ground that much of it was "irregular" and "poor quality", primary schooling dropped by seventeen million between 1959 and 1963, at a time when the post-liberation "baby boom" should have been increasing the number of school age children.²⁰⁶ In Sichuan (Szechuan) primary school enrollment dropped by 48% while all literacy and spare time schools were dropped. By the end of 1961, in some areas less than 30% of primary age children attended schools and state subsidies for tuition fees were dropped.²⁰⁷ Part-work part-study schools and the agricultural middle schools came under the most severe attack, because of their irregular low quality nature. In Sichuan (Szechuan) Shanghai and Kiangsu (Kiangsu) only one-third of the middle schools remained. On a national average, one agricultural middle school remained for every commune, but some communes retained six or more agricultural middle schools, leaving

many communes with none.²⁰⁸ By 1961 Giangsu (Kiangsu) which once had over 6,000 agricultural middle schools, had only 1,500 remaining. In Sichuan (Szechuan) only two of the 6,000 agricultural middle schools were not closed.²⁰⁹ Patrick Tissier estimates that at the height of 1960 30,000 part-work schools had 2,960,000 students but by 1962 only 3,715 schools remained with 266,000 students.²¹⁰ One Cultural Revolution account of the reduction in schooling in one county following the Great Leap echoes these figures suggesting that rural areas suffered most from these cut-backs. During the Great Leap, the county, with a population of 850,000, had 560 schools, of which 40 were agricultural middle schools. After the Great Leap, 42% of all the full time schools and all of the spare time schools were closed because of their "irregular and poor quality" character. The remaining schools were located in towns and commune headquarters, and many communes were left without middle schools and 40 out of 247 brigades had no primary schools.²¹¹

The methods of running the remaining agricultural middle schools also changed drastically. Students studied during the slack season and worked full time during the busy season. Their tuition fees were deducted from their work-point wages, and remaining wages were given to their families. The integration of work and study through combining study and practice was foregone. The schooling became increasingly practical, stressing such things as letter writing, and

bookkeeping, rather than attempting a general education. Within the media, agricultural middle schools received virtually no support in the early 1960's, but were quietly ignored. Only after the above reforms were made, by the middle of 1962, did discussion of agricultural middle schools receive favourable press.²¹²

Local attempts to expand middle schooling were not encouraged. Lu Ding-i (Lu Ting-i) suggested that half day senior middle schooling in the countryside was impossible because of the cost to the economy of the commune, but spare time senior middle schools, supported by local resources were acceptable. In the cities educational reforms were made to streamline schools in a five year primary and five year middle education, in order that youths could graduate with ten years of education to be available for the work force at sixteen.²¹³ (At the same time it has been estimated that most rural youth received an average of four years primary education.²¹⁴) With the end to the division between junior and senior middle schooling in urban areas, urban middle schooling continued to grow, increasing by 17% between 1959-60 and 1960-61, a time when rural agricultural middle schools and primary schools were being reduced. By 1962-63 middle school enrollment was only slightly lower than 1959-60, suggesting to Tissier, that urban middle schooling was being encouraged to grow at the expense of the rural schools.²¹⁵

At the very least, Party educational authorities were willing to allow economic difficulties to erode the gains made in rural schooling; indeed central demands to consolidate and improve rural schooling became pretenses to diminish rural schooling while the regular school system was carefully nurtured.

Regular state operated middle schooling was perceived of as central for the training of students of high enough caliber for higher education. Lu Dingi, in a conference for cultural and educational Party secretaries from all provinces challenged the secretaries to raise their educational standards enough to beat Fujian (Fukien) and Fuzhou (Foochow) First Middle School in having a record number of graduates enter higher education. "Catching up with Fujian" was to be the latest slogan.²¹⁶ Meanwhile, the central government forbade students from agricultural middle schools to continue on to higher education.²¹⁷ Instead agricultural middle schools were to speed up the universalization of junior middle education and provide technical vocational education.²¹⁸

Higher education was the only educational sector with higher enrollment in 1962-63 than 1959-60. But, again, the irregular schools set up during the Great Leap were disbanded or under attack. Hundreds of decentralized research centers set up for technological experimentation were to be reorganized and consolidated, and run only at a provincial level.²¹⁹ By 1961, most of the new colleges

were dissolved or reorganized into secondary vocational schools and part-work part-study colleges were to be disbanded. The part-work part-study colleges, were however, saved from complete elimination by Mao's successful intervention, in an open letter in praise of the Jiangxi (Kiangsi) Communist Labour University, in which Mao stated that he hoped that other provinces would set up similar schools.²²⁰

Great Leap reforms within the regular higher education programs were also dismantled or minimized. Special students admitted during the Great Leap were separated from the regular students into slow classes.²²¹ Between 1959 and 1963 over fifty per cent of the special students transferred from agriculture, industry and the army into one institute of higher education were removed.²²² Within regular universities half-work half-study departments were often closed and professors who supported the Great Leap reforms were sometimes transferred.²²³

As in primary and secondary education, extensive new reforms to standardize and improve the quality of education were introduced. Age limits for entrance to higher education were lowered from thirty in 1962 to twenty-seven in 1964.²²⁴ Enrollment was again based primarily on grades, with no quotas set for the children of workers or peasants; based on the principle of "guaranteeing quality and rather having less than unqualified applicants".²²⁵ Universities in an attempt

to raise their standards again began imitating western schools. The China Medical University increased its program to an eight year course in 1959, in which students were expected to study fifteen hours a day. At Beida (Peita) the popular phrase was to aim to become "Einstein the Second".²²⁶ Political study, therefore was de-emphasized, along with any political or social activities that could detract from study.

As John Gardner has carefully shown, the reversal of the Great Leap reforms had a distinct negative impact on the ability of workers' and peasants' children in the competition for education. Children of workers and peasants were disproportionately represented among drop-outs as educational opportunities became limited.²²⁷ At the same time elite schools for cadres' children actually expanded. In 1961, a foreign language school was set up by Lu Dingxi and was encouraged to accept cadres' children, who made up 85% of the student body. In 1964 Beijing Number Two Elementary school, whose entrance was tightly controlled by admissions examinations, had only one child who came from a worker's family. Within this elite school, children of top Party officials were further separated into special classes.²²⁸

The elitism that at lower levels such as primary school seem less painful because of the relatively widespread availability of some form of primary education, at the level of higher education has somewhat more ominous consequences. The use of the examination system in isolation

from social and political criteria had been discouraged during the Great Leap and worker-peasant children had been given some advantage. The reintroduction of the examination system in 1960 and 1962 resulted in a sharp increase in the number of children from landlord, rich peasant and bourgeois backgrounds while worker-peasant children declined in number. 229

Institutes such as the Shanghai Institute of Mechanical Engineering which had been established to educate proletarian students, in 1960 began a system of "equal opportunity" through the examination system. Only seventeen worker-peasant students were admitted, of whom fourteen were forced to leave because of poor standards - a situation that was to remain unchanged until 1966. In Beijing (Peking) institutions of higher education 5,000 students were expelled, and 5,000 repeated a year. At the Beijing Technical college, 800 out of 919 cadres and military men were removed and at Beijing Commercial College 108 students were expelled, of whom 94% were worker-peasant. The China Medical University student body was only 5% worker-peasant but 30% children of "top intellectuals", 55% children of cadre and non-proletariat 5% bourgeois and 5% children of "bad elements". Again, one-third of the worker peasant students enrolled in 1958 dropped out within two years. 230 Not only did worker-peasant youth suffer in representation among enrollment in higher education, The type of highly specialized educational programs created only a minute number of graduates

who could have little impact upon the standard of living of the masses. Again the China Medical College provides a perfect example. By 1967 the college had produced only 50 graduates, all of whom found employment in major urban hospitals.

The reforms of the early 1960's were not merely pragmatic attempts to increase the efficiency of schooling. The attack upon the study of politics, and especially upon Mao's literature in the schools, indicates a deeper animosity among educational elites towards Mao's ideology. Many officials in the Ministry of Education opposed the study of Mao's works in the middle school political courses.²³¹ Zhou Yang at an educational conference in 1962 is said to have denounced the study of Mao's works as "oversimplification, vulgarization, and dogmatism"²³² and declared that:

Mao Tse-tung thought has been applied recklessly in some places. This means that higher Party schools should use Mao Tse-tung thought as the outline in teaching classes; it does not mean that all disciplines should use it recklessly. Reckless use is not commandship, it is rather for recruiting soldiers.²³³

Individual institutions placed restrictions on political study. The China Medical University forbade the reading of newspapers or Mao's works in times set aside for private study. Only 3.5% of study time in the fifteen hour day, eight year program was devoted to political study, but even this centered around "self cultivation" and did not include the study of Mao's works.²³⁴

In the early 1960's specific educational reforms

proposed by Mao were stonewalled. Mao's wish to condense academic content was vocally reiterated by Lin Biao (Lin Piao): "School education must implement two principles: one is simple but essential, the other is brief and to the point. It is necessary to reform the curriculum, and the time should not be too long." Lu Dingxi had said of reducing the curriculum:

As to chopping off half the curriculum, how to do it?.... We are studying the question of chopping off half the curricula. We will do some of the things that can be done but we must be careful in doing it. It's no good to let lower echelons do the chopping by themselves. Don't do the chopping haphazardly....

Our Party has always insisted that everything must pass through tests. The agrarian reform and the agricultural co-ops were projects that had been spot tested first and then gradually promoted for implementation. Therefore they have helped to increase production. Only the People's communes were promoted for wide implementation without spot testing; resulted in a decrease of production and losses. [sic]²³⁵

It was at this rather apocryphal level that criticism of the radical line in education was made. At the same time the defenders of radical policies praised Great Leap reforms, rather than criticise new policies. Thus, a 1962 article by the Director of the Hubei (Hupei) Provincial Educational Bureau charted the "winding course of min ban schools". He criticized the negative impact of the 1952 tendencies to centralize in comparison to the flourishing growth of education which resulted from Great Leap reforms. The author, also citing the principle of "walking on two legs", justifies the extension of min ban middle schools, because of their accessibility and adaptability--all

at a time when the educational system that he was defending was being considerably curtailed.²³⁶

If discussion within the educational establishment was rather apocryphal, on the ideological front, views were becoming openly contradictory, most especially within the educational sphere. Liu Shaoqi's booklet "How to Be a Good Communist" was reprinted during an ideological campaign which stressed the orientation of the book: the Party needed to be strengthened, along with technical expertise and self discipline; Party organisation was everything; and political activism and social consciousness were to be downplayed. Party directives in 1960-62 told officials not to subordinate organisational principles to ideological ones.²³⁷ This was to apply particularly to education, where Party leadership was to be strengthened, but Party cadres were made self-consciously aware of their need for professional competence and study.²³⁸

But Maoist strategy in the early 1960's, just as Schurmann has demonstrated for the Great Leap and Cultural Revolution, was not to challenge the intransigent bureaucracy and professional ranks, who dominated the State Council and middle level organisational ranks, but rather to go over their heads and use pure ideology to appeal to the masses.²³⁹ Campaigns such as the movement to "Learn from Lei Feng", the popularization of the study of Mao thought, the socialist educational movement and lastly the intensification

of the 'red' and expert debate all brought, an emphasis on ideological and political thought in every day work to the masses.

The red and expert debate was the debate which had most impact within the educational system, despite the efforts of the educational authorities who attempted to limit the political discussion. Chen I (Ch'en I) told graduating students of higher education that their political task was to work hard at their specialization, since China needed some specialists in industry, agriculture and geology, thus political activities were not to interfere in academic study. Chen I asserted that gentle gradual ideological reform would best serve these goals, meanwhile the state should not discriminate against the children of exploiting families since their class status was an accident of birth.²⁴⁰ Lu Dingi went even further by stating that "It isn't possible to train one person in both politics and an occupation, it can't be done."²⁴¹

Nevertheless, large numbers of students within a wide range of institutions became actively critical of the political orientation of education. Students of the Beijing Institute of the Petroleum Industry, for example, firmly declared that the red and expert question required the unity of two opposites, technology and politics, and in all circumstances, politics must command technology, and not be separate. These students were also highly critical of the

political attitudes of their peers:

Under no circumstances did they [the radical students] think that they were above others. However some of our students do not adopt the same attitude toward this problem. They said: 'Intellectuals are bound to lead, direct production and command the workers' and 'university students are trained men and they are capable of taking up leadership and technical work. The labouring people are ignorant, and they can engage only in heavy physical labour.' 242

The emphasis upon professionalism in education coupled with the reduction in political education and labour could only serve to accentuate the elitism that was already present in traditional attitudes towards the moral superiority of the well educated. Thus, the direction of the ideological campaign in the early 1960's was to stress the necessity of manual labour to reaffirm political values, at a time when the educational administration was attempting to curb the intrusion of political campaigns and labour upon valuable study time. Within the debates of the red and expert campaigns strong criticism arose against those students who had accepted the prevalent attitude within the Ministry of Education that labour was most useful as a complement to their academic studies.

Some students only wish to perform labor linked to their specialization and do not wish to perform labor not linked to specialization, and in particular, do not wish to perform farm labor. They consider that no knowledge can be acquired from performance of unspecialized labor. Thus they regard performance of labor merely as an additional means of acquiring knowledge and fundamentally overlook the prime task of remolding their thought through labor. 243

The red and expert campaign forcefully supported the moral

value of labour as a prime tool in ensuring political consciousness.

But the students of the early 1960's, like the educational bureaucracy would not go so far as to suggest that labour for intellectuals was a means of breaking down the division of labour. Lu Dingi, for example, insisted that:

There are all sorts of labourers and within any one type there are different occupations and levels. There are engineers and there are workers; and this idea of training them all to be the same kind of labourers is practically speaking just not possible. To have everybody the same just can't be done. The gentleman who sees all students being the same is just guilty of bureaucratism. 244

Even some of the more radical students, such as the Qinghua (Tsinghua) Communist Youth League, which was active in the red and expert debate did not see the breakdown of the division of labour through manual labour as an immediate goal:

Once the intellectuals go amongst the workers and peasants and form a combination with them, a number of important problems are easily solved. Yet this is achieved without putting an end to the difference between mental and manual labour; merely a combination of workers and intellectuals has given a strong impetus to technical revolution.... The so called division of labour in society through separation of mental labor and manual labor is contrary to the law of objectivity and is not in keeping with the demand for development of social production. 245

Other Qinghua (Tsinghua) students asserted that the estrangement of intellectuals was "an obstacle to the high rate of development of socialist construction today" but was an historical phenomenon which could only come to an end "with the end of the class society." 246 Thus, although the

views of the students were relatively moderate--suggesting the end to the division of labour at some future point in the transformation to socialism--it was nevertheless a considerable challenge to the views of the educational bureaucracy, at a time when class struggle was being heavily down-played.

The next considerable offensive of the ideologically radical left came in the form of a resurgence of rural class struggle in the form of the socialist education movement. In the fall of 1962 at the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the C.C.P. Mao announced that the Party must "never forget class struggle" and the socialist education campaign of 1963 and 1964 was launched, in which the "four clean ups" of politics, ideology, organization and the economy were to be purified. Mao appears to have been intent upon thrusting China into a new radical phase, insisting that where the political leadership was not sufficiently dedicated to the values of socialism, land reform alone was insufficient to guarantee the political colour of the revolution.²⁴⁷ Within rural areas, political study groups and self-criticism campaigns were to renew the vitality of the Revolution. Central to Mao's thought at the time was a renewed emphasis upon the central role of the countryside in China's development, and the need therefore to reduce the differences between the urban and rural areas, between the workers and the peasants:

Don't crowd into the cities. Vigorously develop industry in the countryside and turn peasants into

workers on the spot. This way there is a very important question of policy. This is that rural living standards must not be lower than in the cities. They can be more or less the same or slightly higher than in the cities. Every commune must have its own economic centre and its own institutions of higher learning to bring up its own intellectuals. Only in this way can we resolve the question of an excess of population in the rural areas.²⁴⁸

An end to the differences between workers and peasants was again on Mao's mind, and education was to be a major factor.

But, Mao's major concern, for the moment, was the problem of guaranteeing that the Party would not "change its colour". But even this has ramifications in the educational sphere, since Mao expresses concern for the existence of vested interest groups, and their potentially negative impact on the development of socialism:

...there are still conservative strata in socialist society, still something like "vested interest groups". Division between mental and manual labour, between town and city, between worker and peasant still exist. Although these are non-antagonistic contradictions, it is still only through struggle that contradictions can be resolved.

The children of cadres cause great concern. They lack life experiences and social experiences, but they put on airs and have great feelings of superiority. We must teach them not to rely on their parents, or on revolutionary martyrs, but to rely completely on themselves. ²⁴⁹

Mao's juxtaposition of cadre's children and "vested interest groups" in terms of remaining divisions within society is certainly indicative of a fear in Mao of an emergence of a new privileged strata of youth uncurbed by the educational system. But Mao was not merely concerned with the privileged youth. By 1964, he was openly criticizing cadre, saying that "one third of the power is in the hands

of the enemy" and "at present, you can buy a [Party] branch secretary for a few packets of cigarettes, not to mention marry a daughter to him".²⁵⁰ Eventually Mao was to redirect the whole of the socialist education campaign towards rectification of the Party: in January 1965 in the Twenty-three Directives, Mao was to announce that "The important point in this campaign is rectifying those people within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road."²⁵¹

True to form, developments in the political field were very closely followed by developments in the educational system. Especially after 1964, Mao showed increasing concern for formal education. Early in 1964 Mao complained to cadres that "...the present state of affairs won't do. In my opinion the line and orientation in education are correct but the methods are wrong and must be changed".²⁵² In the same year Mao told a visiting delegation of Nepalese educationalists:

Our education is fraught with problems, the most prominent of which is dogmatism. We are in the process of reforming our educational system....

The children learn textbook concepts which remain textbook concepts; they know nothing else....The period of schooling is too long and there are too many courses of study. The method adopted is the feeding type and is not the spontaneous one. The method of examination tackles the students like enemies and launches surprise attacks against them....Therefore I advise you not to have blind faith in China's educational system. Don't regard it as good....

Any drastic change is difficult many people would oppose it. At present a few may agree to the adoption of new methods, but many would disagree. ²⁵³

Mao stresses again and again the need to cut the syllabus in half and the harm inflicted through excessive study, insufficient

recreation and the danger of rote and lifeless teaching methods which stifle initiative: "The present method of education ruins talent and ruins youth".²⁵⁴

Mao continually stressed the need to integrate youth into the working world. He actively encouraged students to become active in the socialist education movement, working with people and participating in the class struggle. "Only in this way can they learn about revolution."²⁵⁵

Mao in the summer of 1964 told his nephew, an engineering student, who defends his engineering schools as being more in touch with society than pure science, "That is wrong; the class struggle is your most important subject." But even politics should not be studied too dogmatically, but should allow for personal creativity and initiative. In a discussion with cadres on educational reform, Mao announced:

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 books we can move towards our opposites, becoming bookworming dogmatic revisionists. ²⁵⁷

Clearly for Mao education to be effective required much more than the absorption of written knowledge, but was predicated upon practice. Thus in 1964, Mao in an attempt consistent with current political campaigns remarked that "University students should also learn from the Liberation Army. They should make full use of their successes, set up models for emulation, praise them extensively."²⁵⁸ In combination with the Socialist Education Campaign, and the campaign to learn from the army, students were to thrust themselves into the

outside world, engaging in field work and labour.

But, perhaps to forestall criticism from those who stressed the importance of technological professionalism, educational reforms were carefully excluded from such fields as engineering. Thus Mao in 1964, when advocating that students be sent down to the countryside to study, carefully specified:

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 studying humanities -- history, political economy, literature, law -- every one of them must go. 259

Mao had evidently developed rather a critical attitude towards students, that increased according to the degree of abstraction of their studies:

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 specialise in arts subjects.... Students of history, philosophy and economics have no concern with studying reality: they are the most ignorant things of this world. 260

But even engineering and applied science students, if not sent to the countryside, were to receive practical work experience after finishing middle school. Mao by 1965 was suggesting that a five year university program be reduced to three years practical work and two years study, while all teachers should be required to spend time in practical work at the same time as teaching, for all scientific fields.²⁶¹ Mao suggested that the engineering schools should reckon with their failure to come to grips with class struggle and politics.²⁶²

A central theme in Mao's critique of the state of education in the mid 1960's was the heavily urban-oriented direction that professionalism engendered. Medical education was the object of Mao's most virulent attack, an easy target given the heavy emphasis on western style eight year post-secondary programs. But Mao's criticism is equally valid for much of post-secondary education, and is thus worth quoting at length:

Tell the Ministry of Public Health that it only works for 15 percent of the entire population. Furthermore, this 15 percent is made up mostly of the privileged. The broad ranks of the peasants cannot obtain medical treatment and also do not receive medicine. The Public Health Ministry is not a people's ministry. It should be called the Urban Public Health Ministry or, the Public Health Ministry of the Privileged or even the Urban Public Health Ministry of the Privileged.

Medical education must be reformed. It is basically useless to study so much.... Medical education does not require senior middle school students, junior middle school students or graduates of senior elementary school. Three years are enough. The important thing is that they study while practicing. This way doctors who are sent to the countryside will not overrate their own abilities, and they will be better than those doctors who have been cheating the people, and better than witch doctors. In addition the villages can afford to support them. The more a person studies, the more foolish he becomes. At the present time the system of examination and treatment used in the medical schools is not at all suitable for the countryside. Our method of training doctors is for the cities, even though China has more than 500 million peasants.

A vast amount of manpower and materials have been diverted from mass work and are being expended in carrying out research on the high-level, complex and difficult diseases, the so called pinnacles of medicine. As for the frequently occurring illnesses, the widespread sicknesses, the commonly existing diseases, we pay no heed, or very slight heed to their prevention... It is not that we should ignore the pinnacles. It is only that we should devote less men and materials in that direction and devote a greater amount of men and materials to solving the urgent problems of the masses....

We should keep in the cities those doctors who have been out of school for a year or two and those who are lacking in ability. The remainder should be sent

Mao was determined that intellectuals not lose sight of rural life and the masses. "Sending down" intellectuals to rural areas was to instill in them humility and political consciousness, a vital need of students sheltered by the school system. In 1965 Mao declared his fear for youth:

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 become more and more stupid. Please uncles and aunts brothers and sisters, be my teachers. I want to learn from you. 264

Within a few months Mao was to advocate that all urban youth could benefit from political re-education at the hands of the peasantry.

Meanwhile Mao was also advocating the rejuvenation of rural education. In 1964 while advocating the strengthening of peasant associations Mao directed that "As far as schools being run by communes or production brigades is concerned, if they have the resources they are permitted to do so." 265

Despite some considerable opposition from within the communes and within the educational bureaucracy, rural min ban

schools which had been under attack in 1963 were, by 1964, flourishing. 266

Enrollment began to soar in rural primary schools, increasing in one county from 42.7% of school age children enrolled, to 79.6% in one year. In Guangdong

(Kwangtung) attendance rose from 69% in 1964, to 80% in 1965,

due to increased enrollment in part-work part-study schools. 267

Naturally the resurgence of min ban and part-work part-study schools saw the development of the same problems that had previously hindered the irregular schools, including poor quality. But the direction of the new irregular schools was a little different. Irregular schools were not to attempt to imitate regular curriculum, but were to teach basic skills to satisfy local needs. The schools worked on the principle of "from the commune, back to the commune" and "working in the countryside with a composed mind". This orientation was certainly necessary if rural education was to benefit rural development, since rural youth who had received education rarely remained in the countryside; one county in Shanxi (Shansi) found that out of 9,975 youth who had graduated from primary school since 1949, only 9 remained in the villages in 1962, and of the 1,554 junior middle school graduates, not one remained.²⁶ But even with the new attempts to keep educated youth in the countryside, talented youth were to be selected and recommended to agricultural schools and universities, and were to receive financial support from communes.²⁶⁹ At the same time, to satisfy the educational needs of primary school and middle school graduates who remained in the rural areas, campaigns were begun to supply rural areas with study rooms equipped with small libraries of technical and agricultural texts.²⁷⁰

As in the earlier phases of expansion of part-work part-study schooling, irregular schooling appeared to accentuate class divisions in rural education by

renewing dual tracking in education. Studies of a Hubei (Hupeh) province county level educational bureau showed that while the new farming-study schools indeed did boost enrollment, the children of poor and lower middle peasants were proportionally under-represented among rural full day regular school students, and over-represented among the part-farming part-study students.²⁷¹ Meanwhile, the part-farming middle schools tended to have a disproportionate number of youth from smaller towns as opposed to larger cities or rural areas.²⁷²

Those authorities who supported part-work part-study schools recognized the difficulties with irregular schooling, but felt there was no other alternative for expanding rural education. Thus Ou Meng-jue (Ou Mêng-chueh), Guangdong (Kwantung) Provincial Party Secretary argues for the necessity of providing some means of education to the poor and lower middle peasants in order to ensure that they retain political power:

The chief aim of universal rural education is to enable the children of poor and lower middle peasants to receive an education. However, under the current economic conditions, there are still many children of poor and lower middle peasants who are prevented by various difficulties from entering full-time schools. It will be impossible to satisfy their demand for schooling if half-farming half-study schools are not established. As time goes on many children of poor and lower middle peasants will have no culture, and it will be impossible to establish the cultural predominance of the poor and lower middle peasants in the countryside. This will affect their power to lay their hands on economic and political power, and there will be danger of the proletarian dictatorship being weakened or even destroyed. 273

Ou Meng-jue did not fail to stress the role of work-study in breaking down the differences between mental and manual labour, and fully criticized for their lack of class feeling those who believed that education could be universalized only through establishing state run full time schools.²⁷⁴ In a much more cautious tone, but along the same line of thought, Zhou Enlai also suggested that part-farming schools nurtured a new type of worker versed in culture and technology, "creating the conditions for the gradual elimination of the differences between mental and manual labour. These schools provide the direction for long range development of socialist and communist education".²⁷⁵ The educational debate had now entered the stage whereby the class nature of any program could no longer be easily ignored.

By December 1965, in the warning shots of the Cultural Revolution, Mao was acting upon the only course which could sharply and quickly reduce the differences between rural part-work part-study schooling and urban regular education, and between mental and manual labour, as well as integrating education and practical labour at the same time. Half-work half-study was to be made universal and applied to all full time schools so as to produce workers with culture.²⁷⁶ This was perhaps the most strongly opposed radical proposal for educational reform. Liu Shaoqi (Liu Shao-ch'i) three months after Mao's Spring Festival Directive, which called for universal work-study, launched a massive campaign in support of "two kinds of educational systems", visiting nineteen provinces in two years.²⁷⁷ In an attempt

to head off Mao's more radical reforms Liu stressed at Party conferences the need for two levels of education, one work study, the other full time.

Liu, and a substantial proportion of the educational bureaucracy were not unhappy with rural part-work part-study. Liu advocated a rural part-work track acknowledging that "the money to run a full time school can run four to five work study schools".²⁷⁸ But even so, caution in implementation was stressed. Several government departments in a joint statement in 1965 announced that:

The related departments therefore expressed the view that to enforce the labour system of work and farming by rotation it would be necessary first of all to go through an ideological revolution, to put the Thought of Mao Tse-tung persistently in command, to organize the broad masses of the workers, to study earnestly the instructions of the CCP Central Committee on two labour systems and to increase their ideological consciousness. ²⁷⁹

He Wei (Ho Wei) formerly Liu's aide but newly appointed Minister of Education suggested in October 1965 that half-work half-study schools should be renewed for half of the schools.²⁸⁰

At the same time educational reform, especially within key schools was opposed by many Party members and educators.

At a 1966 meeting of the Central Committee Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p'ing) was said to have advocated, along with Beng Zhen (Peng Chen) that Beida University remain a full time school, while part-time schools need not enroll as many students as full time schools.²⁸¹ Jiang Nanxiang (Chiang

Nan-hsiang), secretary of the CCP, vice-minister of higher education and president of Qinghua (Tsinghua) University

also stressed the dangers of rapid change: "If everything leaps forward in education but the students studies, that will be too bad".²⁸²

Specific reforms such as reducing curriculum were carefully scuttled by university administrators and bureaucrats. Lu Dingi (Lu Ting-i) in a meeting of the Central Cultural and Educational Groups, two weeks after the Spring Festival Directive of Mao, remarks:

What to do when the curriculum has been cut by one half?... We are now studying this problem of cutting one-half and will do what we can, but it must be done carefully. If the lower echelons cannot cut the curriculum properly, they must not do it recklessly. ²⁸³

Jiang Nanxiang (Chiang Nan-hsiang) decided that Mao's Spring Festival Directives were not at all relevant to science and engineering, and thus proceeded to increase his courses to nine years for good students.²⁸⁴ He Wei (Ho Wei) in a direct challenge to Mao, in October 1965 responded to Mao's proposals by issuing a "Report on the Question of Reducing Student Burdens and Encouraging Student Health" which stressed that teaching materials should not be reduced but recommended the reduction of political, militia and labour activities, as well as the study of Mao Tse-tung thought and study of emulation of the PLA in small groups.²⁸⁵

Reforms to introduce a part-work part-study track into institutions of higher education faced considerable stonewalling. At Wuhan University, where a part-work part-study experimental class was established, based on independent study, professors refused to let visiting professors or educational conferences have information on the classes,

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insisting that the experimental class write the same exams as the regular stream, and generally obstructed the development of the program.²⁸⁶ Other academics, such as Kuang Yaming (Kuang Ya-ming), head of Nanjing (Nanking) University, appeared to have welcomed the opportunity to reduce overcrowding by sending down a second stream of usually less qualified students to experimental half-work half-study camps where, it appears, ex-army men and other irregular students were over-represented.²⁸⁷

Evidently the renewed emphasis upon part-work part-study, while meant by Mao to end inequalities in the educational system, led to the promulgation of a dual system of education, one track which continued to stress quality technical education, the other for less able students and rural youth. Liu Shaoqi was to be vilified, along with Lu Dingi, for their responsibility in this development:

He divided the younger generation into two categories of people. The majority were to be trained as tillers of the land and factory hands with elementary education in reading and writing. In other words, they were to be 'people who governed by others'. On the other hand a small minority of so called 'elite' were to receive more advanced education and be trained with great care into intellectual aristocrats having 'profound knowledge' and able to 'govern people.' He said: 'It is inevitable that the differences between mental and manual labor will continue. Therefore some people will inevitably go in for more advanced studies. You cannot keep them down. 288

Liu and Lu's intentions, to nurture a high level of technical experts in order to achieve rapid development, were surely honourable. But in a society where agricultural labour was held by some to be the "fourth grade" of labour with the lowest prestige, and in which prejudices still lead "some individuals"

to believe that "one can only learn to use a plow and cannot reach a higher level" in the countryside,²⁸⁹ and where discrimination against the children of the workers and peasants was still a continuing problem.²⁹⁰ A dual system of education could only formalize the disparities between the educationally advantaged and deprived. Mao certainly did not believe that all schools should be run in the same manner, he continually emphasized the need to walk on two legs, and in the mid-1960's stressed the need for diversity in education,²⁹¹ but Mao, by the mid-1960's also recognized that the regular educational system could no longer be relied on to produce politically and ideologically correct youth who were truly committed to best serving their society, and had little knowledge of the population that was 80% rural.

But Mao's attempts to change the educational system were stymied by the devolution of control over education out of the Party into the hands of academics. In an attempt to increase the expertise of those responsible especially for higher education, the government ministries had transferred considerable responsibility down to individual institutions. Even within the Ministry of Higher Education, with Jiang Nanxiang (Chang Nan-hsiang) as minister, of the four vice-ministers, not one was a Party member. Within Lu Dingi (Lu Ting-i)'s Ministry of Culture, of the ten vice-ministers six were Party members.²⁹² Despite Mao's disapproval, by the eve of the Cultural Revolution a considerable proportion of the educational bureaucracy, what Joel Glassman refers to as the "right wing built into the educational system", at

the very highest levels of the administration were not responsive to Mao's populist demands, which challenged the legitimacy that they had acquired through the pursuit of academic excellence.²⁹³ At their most benign, as Glassman points out, this educational bureaucracy's greatest impact was "not to monopolize educational opportunities for children from bourgeois backgrounds, as often was alleged by Red Guards but rather to serve as role models for worker and peasant children who had been successful participants in the educational system."²⁹⁴ Mao, however, was highly conscious of their obstruction of his ideas of reform. We have seen in his speech to the Nepalese delegation his dissatisfaction and indignation with his inability to convince the Ministry of Education to change: "Any drastic change is difficult, many people would oppose it."²⁹⁵ By 1965 Mao was complaining to André Malraux "I am alone with the masses. Waiting."²⁹⁶ By October 1966 Mao was complaining that high Party officials "...have set up independent kingdoms."²⁹⁶ Mao felt thwarted and opposed, across the board, on educational policy, but also on many other aspects of development.

Despite Mao's disgruntlement, his radical policies had made considerable headway immediately preceding the Cultural Revolution. By 1966 worker and peasant youth made up more than 60% of the entire student population at Beijing University, in comparison to 48% in 1958 and 54% in 1963 of the total student population in higher education. In the Beijing Engineering Institute open book exams had been

introduced and marks de-emphasized.²⁹⁷ In many schools rote learning had been discouraged and the work load decreased. In some colleges students and teachers discussed exam questions before the exam, students vetoed questions before the exam, and students even marked their own papers with help from model answers and class discussion.²⁹⁸ The history and philosophy departments of Beida - but note, not the engineering or science departments - had been sent down to the countryside to state farms where they were to build their own houses and classrooms in a half-work half-study program.²⁹⁹ Mao's reforms were certainly filtering down to schools, and considerable educational change was already underway.

But these reforms made little impact on the use of schooling as a tool to differentiate between those who would receive a professional education and those less capable, for whom education would prepare them for more menial occupations. Indeed, the manner in which Mao's educational reforms were implemented, rather than reducing the differences between mental and manual labour, actually accentuated those differences. Half-work half-study was not implemented across the board, as desired by Mao, but remained a selective process, in which key departments in key schools appear to have been left segregated and relatively untouched. A two track system of education was firmly entrenched, preserving some measure of academic excellence while other schools were allowed to reform.

The return to part-work schools must have also been

inviting to Party bureaucrats, not just because it could take some of the "heat" off the key schools, satisfying some of Mao's radical demands, but also because it could help ease some of the unemployment that was becoming a major political as well as economic difficulty. Under the Third Five Year Plan five million workers were anticipated to be employed in industry, but by 1964 eleven million workers were filling those jobs, in a classic example of hidden unemployment. Peasants employed as temporary contract workers, who earned considerably less than regular workers and did not have standard benefits such as health insurance, pensions, or housing rights, were forming 30-40% of the total non-agricultural work force.³⁰⁰ Not surprisingly, immediately before the Cultural Revolution, 60-80% of school leavers could not find jobs.³⁰¹ Evidently higher education could not be expanded to accommodate all of these youth, but as Liu Shaoqi is said to have noted:

If junior middle school graduates are always asked to go to the countryside to be peasants, they would be unwilling to go. If after arriving at the countryside, they can go to school, say the part-work part-study or part-work part-farming schools then they may be willing to go....³⁰²

Thus, Adie may well be justified in suggesting that a prime motivation in reinstituting work-study was to prevent youth from "dropping out" and "simply keeping young people busy 'on fatigues' and out of mischief".³⁰³ Both Adie and Gardner would suggest that a major outcome of the dual track system was the resentment fueled in many young people who

were dissatisfied with a lot in life that they perceived to be unequal to that of youth in the full time system, and those youth were to exercise their frustration against the "privileged" in the struggles of the Cultural Revolution.³⁰⁴

In the sixteen years leading up to the Cultural Revolution, the contradictions between the need for 'national reconstruction and radical reform within the educational system remained unresolved. Attempts to radicalize education by expanding the mass base considerably improved access for the rural population, but mass education provided little access to the better tracks of senior middle and higher education. Higher education remained a means to Party position and social success. The consolidation phases of 'national reconstruction' during the First and Second Five Year Plan and following the Great Leap consistently emphasized educational centralization and regularization, favoring professionalization and hierarchy, at the expense of rural mass education.

Rather than the shifting and redefining of educational goals and objectives leading to a more improved approach, all too often change was built upon a complete rejection of the reforms of the preceding phase. Ideas that perhaps were poorly implemented, but nevertheless held promise, were rejected out of hand, usually by the 'reconstructionists' as 'unorthodox' or the 'radicals as elitist'. Thus the integration of work-study through streamlined curricula and workshops, despite evident economic benefits, as well as

political and social benefits, was disfavoured by many educators and bureaucrats for its disruption of the school system. Likewise, irregular schools which could expand the base of education almost cost free, rather than supported and encouraged to improve their programs, were instead regularly closed for their 'low standards'. Radical reforms of the Great Leap, on the other hand, while politicizing schools and increasing mass education, often launched drastic assaults on specialized professional education. Only during the Great Leap and in 1964-65 were attempts towards synthesizing the mass and regular approaches, by "Walking on Two Legs" openly discussed alternatives. After the Great Leap, however, "Walking on Two Legs" was undermined by educational centralization and regularization. By 1965, Mao was no longer willing to accept the educational bureaucracy's version of "Walking on Two Legs" and was instead pushing for a complete redefinition of the parameters of education in society. Resolution of contradictions in society demanded tumultuous change in order to break down the revisionist bureaucratic tendencies that were appearing and approach the goals of socialism.

Despite the inevitable misadventures in a decade and a half of educational development, China had made some remarkable innovations in adapting education to the needs of a developing nation. Inclusion of middle school classes in primary school allowed for rapid expansion of middle schooling for minimal expenditures. Integrating theory

and practice, work and study, tremendous changes from traditional practice, ensured that education was appropriate to the needs of a growing economy and students remained integrated into the working world. Emphasis, especially in early years on an adult education, served to mobilize and integrate the masses into the development process, and worker-peasant middle schools, despite their lower track nature, helped working people understand the changes occurring in the society around them. Education 'from the commune, back to the commune', although limiting the career paths of brighter rural youth, was a unique solution to the rural 'brain-drain'. But perhaps most instructive was the failure to develop efficient multi-track education that could satisfy goals of social equity. The higher track of education, for the radicals and excluded youth, had become an elitist privileged institution geared to professional success, urban careers, dominated by children of the already well-educated and divorced from the realities of working class and peasant life. Lower track education remained stigmatized as rural, inferior and low quality--a substitute for regular schooling.

Footnotes

- ¹ Miyazaki Ichisada, "The Civil Service Examination: China's Examination Hell", Chinese Education, Vol. 7, 3 (Fall 1974) pp. 6-64.
- ² Revolutionary Education in China, Peter Seybolt (ed.) (White Plains, New York: International Arts and Science Press, 1973) pp. 333-348 and pp. 349-354.
- ³ Etienne Balaz, Chinese Civilisation and Bureaucracy, Variations on a Theme (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 11.
- ⁴ John Hawkins, Mao Tse-tung and Education (New York: Lennet, 1974), p. 88.
- ⁵ Mao Tse-tung, "On Educational Revolution", Chinese Education Vol. vi. 4 (Winter 1973-74) pp. 6-47.
- ⁶ Ibid., pp. 12-13.
- ⁷ Max Weber, The Religion of China (Glencoe: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1951), p. 130.
- ⁸ "Transformation of General Secondary Education in the Base Areas" in Seybolt, supra fn. 2, pp. 349-354.
- ⁹ Weber, supra fn. 7, pp. 123-4 and A. Smith, Village Life in China, (London: Greenwood Press, 1899) pp. 70-110.
- ¹⁰ Weber, supra fn. 7, pp. 108, 123-4, 131.
- ¹¹ Balaz, supra fn. 3, p. 16.
- ¹² Julia Kwong, Chinese Education in Transition (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1979) p. 70.
- ¹³ "Chronology of the Two Road Struggle on the Education Front in the Past Seventeen Years" from Chiago-yu ke-ming, May 6, 1967, in Seybolt supra fn. 2, pp. 5-63.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Mao Tse-tung, "On New Democracy", in Stuart Schram (ed) The political Thought of Mao Tse-Tung (New York: Praeger, 1969) p. 357.

- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Mao Tse-tung, "On New Democracy", in Stuart Schram (ed). The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung (New York: Praeger, 1969) p. 357.
- ¹⁶ "Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference" in Current Background No. 9, September 21, 1950 pp. 1-3.
- ¹⁷ Ma Hsu-lun, "Speech Made by the Minister of Education, Mr. Ma Hsulun at the Conference of Higher Education on June 1, 1950" in Towards a New World Outlook a Documentary History of Education in the People's Republic of China 1949-1976, Shi Ming Hu and Eli Seifman (eds) (New York: AMS Press, 1976) pp. 12-15.
- ¹⁸ Kwong, supra fn. 12, p. 45.
- ¹⁹ Mao Tse-tung, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People", Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-tung (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971) pp. 431-480.
- ²⁰ "Chronology" in Seybolt, supra fn. 13, p. 13.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid., pp. 9-10
- ²³ "Report of the Ministry of Education" and "Temporary Plan of Pedagogy for Middle Schools" in Hu and Seifman, supra fn. 17, pp. 27.
- ²⁴ "Chronology" in Seybolt, supra fn. 13, pp. 10-11.
- ²⁵ Ma Hsu-lun in Hu and Seifman, supra fn. 17.
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3. The Cultural Revolution - - Education for the Masses

The Cultural Revolution was Mao Zedong's last major attempt to redirect Chinese society and its path of development towards a renewed revolutionary purpose, and away from the bureaucratization that had slowly begun to harden after fifteen years of administration. In this reshaping of Chinese society, the role of youth was drastically altered. Students were mobilized to attack ideologically and also physically the Party hierarchy and educational elites, while at the same time acquiring a revolutionary consciousness that Mao was so determined that they eventually attain. Students organized themselves into factional groups of Red Guards, criticized their teachers and school administration, often criticized local governments, travelled the country learning and discussing Mao's thought, allying themselves with and against factions of workers and peasants, and before the end of the Cultural Revolution, often engaging in and becoming subject of a considerable amount of violence. Schooling was totally disrupted after the spring of 1966, resuming in primary schools first, in the spring of 1968, while higher education only slowly reorganized, with some universities remaining closed until the early 1970's.

As the schools reopened, a system of revolutionary education emerged that was organized along very different principles to the system dominant in the early 1960's. But the basis of the new system was present in essence in the 1940's and discussed by Mao in the early 1960's, or was present

in the educational reforms of the "Great Leap".

The reforms were aimed at creating an egalitarian mass education for a society in which students were to no longer be a privileged class separated from the workers and peasants. Instead their education was to be directed by the workers and poor and lower middle peasants, to best serve the interests of those groups.

Before discussing the nature of the educational reforms of the "Great Leap" it may be worth while to discuss conflicting interpretations of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution among western authors, since they shed great light on the ambiguities and complexities involved in Mao's actions. Various authors have perceived the Cultural Revolution to be merely a power struggle between Mao and Liu Shaoqi, while others have stressed the primacy of ideology and class, and others the need to curb bureaucracy and Party control over social development that was threatening to engulf the ability of grass roots mass development. Controversy also exists over the extent of Mao's control over political developments leading up to and during the Cultural Revolution, and also the scope of revolutionary reforms, especially within the countryside. This is not the place to attempt to evaluate the validity of each interpretation, merely to demonstrate the confusion and diversity of opinion, but certainly none of these points of view stands alone.

It is the political and psychological motivations of Mao that have come under the most critical scrutiny.

Franz Michael has suggested that the Cultural Revolution was primarily a power struggle between Mao and the moderates who had seized power after Mao's failure in the Great Leap. He scathingly attributes the Cultural Revolution to:

...the desperate comeback attempt of an aging and mentally declining man who would not accept the loss of his real political power in China and the defeat of his grandiose ambitions for world communist leadership. Rather he would himself lead the attack to lay down the very structure of which he had been the chief architect. 1

Robert J. Lifton echoes this idea in a psychological study in which he accuses Mao of fomenting a new revolution solely to seek revolutionary immortality by establishing himself as the essence of revolutionary orthodoxy.² Richard Pfeffer, on the other hand, interprets the cult of Mao established in the Cultural Revolution not as a means of self-aggrandizement, implied by Michael and Lifton, but more as a highly tactical manoeuvre establishing a "new standard of legitimacy and correctness" by which Mao and his theories could not be attacked. Moral values previously associated with the Party and which had given the Party legitimacy were co-opted by Mao and the groups and institutions of which he approved, transferring legitimacy away from those in the Party who Mao opposed.³

No one would disagree that the Cultural Revolution was promulgated by Mao. Phillip Bridgeham suggests that each successive stage was initiated or at the very least approved by Mao.⁴ Richard Baum, however, would suggest that by 1967 a momentum had developed that no individual or group could

hope to control.⁵

The Cultural Revolution was not solely a political movement. As Richard Baum points out, the motivations of the elite were mixed and a product of conflicting interests. The Cultural Revolution was neither purely a self-serving power struggle nor purely ideological, but a combination of the two.⁶ The role of ideology and class struggle to some spectators appear paramount. Gerald Tannenbaum interprets the Cultural Revolution as a class struggle between those with proletarian and those with bourgeois outlooks.⁷ Pfeffer recognizes that the Cultural Revolution was indeed a fundamental revolution which sought to transform culture and the Party in order to prevent members of the ruling elite from becoming entrenched as an actual class.⁸ Hong Yung Lee describes the Cultural Revolution as an attempt to resolve the contradictions:

...between the egalitarian view of Marxism and the elitist tendencies of Leninist organisational principles. By drawing the Chinese masses into the political process, Mao wanted to reverse the trends towards restratification caused by the bureaucratization of the Party, and he also wanted to build a mass consensus on the future direction of society. 8

Mao's ideological goals, according to Pfeffer, were to train a revolutionary generation of successors, create a new morality and superstructure, propagate equality and mass participation and to transform the Party. Purging individuals and shaking up the bureaucracy to Pfeffer were only minimal goals.⁹

Most western scholars do recognize that the core issues of the Cultural Revolution involved choice of developmental priorities between the demands of modernisation and Mao's

egalitarian ideals. Some authors such as Pfeffer would cynically suggest that this is a tension "between reality and ideals", ideological revisionism and acceptance of pragmatic goals being a necessary prerequisite for development.¹⁰

As every major social revolution became institutionalised, egalitarianism and mass participation have been substantially sacrificed in favor of other goals such as national power or modernization. 11

Baum, too, suggests that Maoist thought may be incompatible with modernization in a post-revolutionary society, since the imperatives of modernization by nature corrupt the values of ideological puritanism which are no longer perceived of as relevant to the solution of social and economic problems.¹² Arend Van Leeuwen and Lowell Dittmer would also agree that "revisionism" is a latent function of modernization.¹³

To others, the Maoist strategy is perceived as reasonable and desirable approach to development. John Grey interprets the Cultural Revolution as a struggle over economic strategies and lauds Mao's decentralized, balanced agricultural strategy as opposed to Liu's centrally managed industry oriented approach.¹⁴ Of more direct concern to us, Martin Whyte in his interpretation of the Cultural Revolution, argues that in the field of education, the Maoist line cannot be dismissed as utopian or harmful to development, but instead is more suitable to China's needs and problems than the western or Soviet model.¹⁵ Suzanne Pepper insists that the egalitarian educational strategy formulated by Mao

during the Cultural Revolution responded specifically to the needs of the peasantry and reduced the Three Great Differences, between mental and manual, urban and rural, and worker and peasant; and therefore was no less rational or pragmatic than the hierarchical approach to education.¹⁷ But, no matter the reasonableness or appropriateness of Mao's Cultural Revolution educational strategy, because of problems in its application, it was never thoroughly implemented throughout the educational system, especially at the level of higher education.

Reforms in education were often confused and unevenly applied. Higher education only began functioning again on a modest scale in 1970, and by as early as 1972 the tenets of the radical system were subtly being challenged: no longer were to politics unquestionably dominate the curriculum, examinations slowly returned and manual labour was being diminished. But these "revisions" of Maoist education shall be discussed in the next chapter. It is enough to remember here that many of the "newborn things" in education were hardly tested before they were moderated. Evidence also exists to suggest that in some areas the Cultural Revolution was contained and limited, most especially in institutions that held strategic value, such as scientific and technical institutions. (Nuclear research continued and appears to have been carefully protected by the Center throughout the Cultural Revolution.)¹⁷ Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai) personally discussed

with the teachers of the foreign languages at Beijing University the dangers of disruptive excesses, due to the influence of Liu Shao-chi.¹⁸ Thus the Cultural Revolution reforms never flourished completely unhindered.

Central to Mao's educational reforms for higher education, but also education at all other levels, was the section on education of the "Sixteen Points of the Central Committee of the CCP", issued on August 8, 1966 to lay the groundwork for mass activities during the Cultural Revolution. Point number ten of the sixteen points, concerning educational reform, directs:

In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution a most important task is to transform the old educational system and the old principles and methods of teaching.

In this Great Cultural Revolution, the phenomenon of our schools being dominated by the bourgeois intellectuals must be completely changed.

In every kind of school we must apply thoroughly the policy advanced by Comrade Mao Tse-tung of education serving proletarian politics and education being combined with productive labour, so as to enable those receiving an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically to become labourers with socialist culture and consciousness.

The period of schooling should be shortened. Courses should be fewer and better. The teaching material should be thoroughly transformed, in some cases beginning with simplifying complicated materials. While their main task is to study, students should also learn other things... 19

Education was to be simplified, streamlined, and heavily politicized. Higher education was perhaps almost an antithesis to the simplified education that Mao was calling for. Indeed, the very necessity of some types of higher education was being questioned by Mao, who, in his Directive

of July 21, 1970, stated:

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 of schooling to revolutionize education, to put proletarian politics in command.... Students should be selected from among workers and peasants with practical experience and they should return to production after a few years study....

Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and to become workers with both socialist consciousness and culture...

Education must serve proletarian politics and be combined with productive labour....²⁰

Mao continued that although the "main task" was to study, it was not to be the only task; manual labour, politics, physical education and military training were not to be forgotten. Mao also directed that working class leadership of work teams made up of workers and peasants, the People's Liberation Army and students were to restore order and direct the reopening colleges, and "should stay permanently."²¹ The whole orientation and organization of university education had been changed.

Changes in the curriculum of higher education were radical, mainly in the extent of their application; most of the reforms had been suggested during the Great Leap and in 1964-65, but curriculum was adapted in one particularly new way; it was revised to meet the needs of the new students many of whom were peasants and workers with little educational background. Courses were reduced to "fewer and better". Industrial training and farming techniques as well as military techniques were taught and stressed at the college level. Thus one agricultural college reduced its course load from

twenty-nine to six courses and textbooks were reduced by eighty-five percent. An engineering college that previously taught thirty courses now taught seven. Medical colleges began training peasants in short term courses as barefoot doctors.²²

Manual labour was thoroughly integrated into programs as a means of integrating theory and practice. All schools and colleges were to run on the "three thirds" system; one-third of the teachers work in the factories and communes, one-third perform manual labour and one-third teach.²³ Colleges of science and engineering were to reintroduce workshops and agricultural colleges were to run farms. Labour was often performed for a half day each day. Labour was also to fill an ideological role, ensuring the integration of intellectuals and working people.

Professors were heavily criticized and sometimes abused. Their rehabilitation involved self-criticism sessions in which they admitted their bourgeois tendencies and reliance on western theories. Some of their self criticisms are quite revealing. One vice-president of a university who was an "expert" in plumbing and draining wrote texts on pumps and draining stations but was so lacking in practical knowledge as to be unable to start a pump. Another professor, an expert on bridge building, designed a bridge based on a model in a French journal. Several months and ¥400,000 later the bridge was declared impossible to build -- the model

was later found to be a theoretical design and had never been built.²⁴ Another professor, in his self-criticism admitted:

I write textbooks not to serve the people but to display my talents and demonstrate my learning. I used all those formulas and those foreign quotes to inspire admiration, to show how able I was. Simple problems that could be explained with a few well chosen sentences, I made complex. An able worker who had made a number of inventions lost confidence in himself after he heard me explain Ohm's law. He felt he could never understand electricity.²⁵

These professors were encouraged to simplify their course texts, removing extraneous information and foreign content not adaptable to the Chinese situation. Blind faith in foreign techniques was heavily criticized and innovation encouraged. Education was to relate to the practical needs of the working people, and educators, under the direction of workers, peasants and soldiers were to change their style accordingly.

Humanities, which as we have seen, were the object of grave doubts by Mao, were much less amenable to the reforms applied in the science subjects. But, eventually the humanities department did reopen. Mao suggested that they should "regard the whole of society as their factory" and that "their teachers and students should make contact with the peasants and urban workers, as well as with agriculture and industry".²⁶ Humanities departments used Mao's works as teaching materials while students were sent to factories and communes to be re-educated by workers, and to give courses for workers, and investigate the exploitative pre-1949

industries. History courses concentrated upon background readings for Mao's works.²⁷

These changes in curriculum orientation, especially in scientific fields, were to have significant impact upon technological development. Between 1970 and 1975 it has been estimated that 60% of the research undertaken by colleges was of direct service to improved technology in agriculture and small and medium scale industry.²⁸ Where most research designs done in science and engineering before the Cultural Revolution had tended to be obscure and theoretical, or oriented towards heavy industry, after the Cultural Revolution students went into local factories looking for problems for which they could design solutions.²⁹ Even peasants with very limited educational backgrounds were able to make contributions to rural development after some higher education. An accountant from Dazhai (Tachai) with only three years primary school education, after attending Qinghua (Tsinghua) University was able to implement a water conservation project on his return.³⁰ Certainly, critics could, and did, claim that the quality of education had been reduced, but higher education had also been significantly adjusted to meet the basic needs of industrial and agricultural development. The Cultural Revolution succeeded in turning the universities outward towards solving the daily problems of Chinese society. Perhaps the quality of the work was reduced, but the utility of the work was heightened, and the impact on a developmental scale was considerable, due

not just to the simplification of curricula and the integration of theory and practice, but also due to the affirmative action policies which assured significant representation among the student body of those people previously bypassed by higher education.

Admissions policy in universities and colleges was drastically changed. The examination system was rebuked as a tool for bourgeois domination of the schools which encouraged the pursuit of excellence, judging students in terms of grades, which gave unfair advantage to the children of previously privileged families. Louis Smerling, reporting on discussions with school administrators in the late 1970's notes:

Our hosts repeatedly emphasized that the pre-1966 practice of using exams as the exclusive criteria for selection had unwisely favoured students who for reasons of family background or level of environmental sophistication were better able to take examinations. Specifically we were told that this meant the children of workers peasants and minority races were too easily made victims of 'examination discrimination'. Because they had fewer advantages, these students were almost automatically unable to compete on a par with those students whose backgrounds were more privileged. In this way, the Chinese told us, a gap had developed between China's urban and rural areas and also within the urban areas where children of cadres, army personnel and members of the former bourgeois predominated. 31

New educational policies were designed to overcome this innate tendency of the examination system to discriminate against worker-peasant youth. From now on priority was to be given to workers, peasants and soldiers with practical experience who had been involved in productive labor for two to three years, Entrance to university direct from senior middle school was no longer possible. "In 1970, at least, no students went directly from middle school graduation to university.³² Workers

would have to be recommended by their fellow workers who would assess their social and political attitudes towards labor and political study as well as life-style. After receiving recommendations from the masses, the worker needed to attain approval from the local leadership and then the university. The duty of the new students involved not just study, but also active involvement in reforming higher education,³³ in order that it better represent the needs of the working people and be transformed into the bastion of the working classes.

The recommendation system, although opening up new opportunities for workers and peasants, was quickly plagued with some practical problems. In the work place, many unforeseen factors limited the efficiency and justice of the system. Often recommendations for higher studies were used as rewards for previous loyalty, without regard for intellectual capacity. By 1974, ten percent of enrollment was comprised of veteran workers who were "much older than our ordinary students."³⁴ Suggestions have also been made that factories and communes were reluctant to release for higher education their most talented workers, for fear that they would not return, leading to disillusionment among those youth who had worked hard to receive recommendations.³⁵ The media were consistently demanding that the recommendation system be improved. One article described the hesitancy of units to recommend workers:

At the present time, units which choose candidates for the universities have three kinds of fears: that the

students will not come back after university education, that the students cannot be put to work after they return and that the students will be corrupted by bourgeois ideas.³⁶

A 1974 editorial in Renmin Ribao (Jen-min Jih-pao) suggests that education was necessary to ensure that the best candidates were not ignored and that the masses were truly responsible for choosing the students, rather than rubber stamping local cadres' favorite candidates.³⁷ Still, despite the problems of discrimination according to political favoritism, the recommendation system did succeed in opening the doors of universities to those previously bypassed, most especially workers.

The recommendation system was far less effective, however, in increasing peasant enrollment. At best, any new opportunities were now limited by traditional village prejudices which quickly surfaced. Sexual discrimination in rural areas occurred as local authorities continuously failed to recommend any female applicants.³⁸ Political influence was also a factor. In rural Shaanxi (Shensi) in 1971 many of the recommended youth were sons of brigade leaders.³⁹ Also, in some cases only youth from the predominant claim were selected, and even more commonly, youth from remoter villages in hilly areas were overlooked in favor of their counterparts in more central brigades.⁴⁰ Thomas Bernstein suggests that university entrants were disproportionately represented by urban youth who had been sent down to rural villages to work.⁴¹ As we shall see campaigns resulting from

scandals in the mid-1970's were to show that many sent-down youth with well-connected parents were quickly found places in universities, "through the back door". Perhaps most damning to the chances of rural youth to enter higher education was the new system of class classification, whereby young urban youth of all class backgrounds who had worked for one to three years in the countryside were considered, by the mid-1970's, to be workers or peasants when they entered college. Under this system, as Marianne Bastid-Bruguère points out, "the democratisation of higher education has become fairly theoretical".⁴² Thus any apparent increase in the number of peasants enrolled in higher education (for example from 32.7% to 38% from 1970 to 1975 in the philosophy department of Beida) cannot be seen as any substantial measure.⁴³ Suzanne Shirk, in private interviews with Chinese professors in 1971 was told that they had taught more peasant youth before the Cultural Revolution than after.⁴³ One academic when asked if cadres' children were predominant replied "Oh yes, almost all."⁴⁴ Dale Bratton suggests that the recommendation system improved the class composition of the university but did little to increase representation of rural youth. At the same time he carefully notes that any positive impact of the improved class background was negated by the drastically reduced number of university places available.⁴⁵

Thus the extent to which the recommendation system favoured workers and peasants is still debatable. While

examination model had been unfavourable to less privileged youth, especially those rural youth who had no access to middle schooling, the recommendation was open to rampant favoritism.

In terms of political attitudes, the recommendation system often provoked a curious reaction highly incompatible with Mao's goals. Since students had received political approval before being admitted, and since they usually came from good political backgrounds, many students thought it unnecessary for them to study politics. In contrast to the political attitudes of many students in 1964-65, they simply wanted professional training.⁴⁶

Interestingly, the origin of many of the reforms of admissions, as well as curricula and organisation promulgated during the Cultural Revolution were not original Chinese innovations, but were almost identical to reforms made by Nikita Khrushchev in the mid 1950's. While in the early 1930's, political considerations were emphasized in the Soviet Union to determine university entrance, by the late 1930's achievement tests were used the proportions of worker and peasant students dropped from almost three quarters to slightly over half the student body, after which time figures were no longer published and the proportion probably dropped even further. Between 1940 and 1956 tuition fees were imposed and the educational system became even more hierarchical. It was during this conservative phase that the Chinese adapted the Soviet style of education.

But, under Khrushchev, the Soviet educational system was again radicalized. Khrushchev criticized the small representation of worker and farming origin students (30% by 1956) in higher education. Admissions procedures had become corrupted by parents hiring private tutors, attempting to buy exams, and offering bribes to ensure their children's entrance to colleges. Khrushchev's solution was to integrate labor into secondary schooling, in the form of practical production work. Recommendations from union and Party members were to be stressed in university admissions. Four out of five students entering higher education were to have worked for at least two years. By 1964, these reforms had already been rejected in the Soviet Union, where students were now entering higher education straight out of secondary schools on the basis of entrance exams. Khrushchev's reforms had been rejected as too expensive in terms of lessened academic standards to be worth the political advantage.⁴⁷ The Chinese reforms, evidently patterned on the above experiences, were also to suffer the same fate.

The Cultural Revolution reforms of primary and middle schooling were to be slightly more durable, and have far greater immediate impact on the masses, especially the rural masses, for whom the reforms of higher education may have seemed rather obscure. Reforms of primary and middle schooling included considerable decentralisation; putting poor and lower middle peasants in complete control over their schools. In the cities, all schools were to

become neighbourhood schools, reformed by worker-army teams -- changes which had most impact upon the key urban primary and middle schools, and only more minor influence upon regular urban schools. The two-track system of education was attacked by the decentralization of operation of the schools and introduction of work study programs into all schools.

Although the decentralization of lower schooling may have had a negative impact upon the quality of education, it greatly increased the general access to education and ability of the school system to respond to local needs. While in 1965, even min-ban schools had been increasingly under the scrutiny and regulation of provincial bureaus of education, the Cultural Revolution was marked by an amazing diversity and deregulation of schooling. No longer was education most available to those who might be best able to succeed in higher education. In lower schools teachers travelled with nomadic Tibetan tribes or taught herding boys who took turn in attending schools. Classes were adjusted to the tides, in fishing villages, rather than central schedules. Where necessary part-time teachers taught part-time schools; older poor peasants taught class struggle, cadres taught politics, peasants explained farming techniques and bookkeepers taught arithmetic. Schools were to be a product of local needs involving the community in organisation, operation and content of the schools.

But the extent of application of Cultural Revolution reforms in the countryside is somewhat of an unknown

variable, and should be discussed before we can deal with the nature of the reforms in lower education. Mao in his "Sixteen Decisions" specifically excluded the countryside from the tumult of the Cultural Revolution, suggesting that the Socialist Education Movement should continue:

The socialist education movement now going on in the countryside and in enterprises in the cities should not be upset where the original arrangements are appropriate and the movement is going well....

In some places the great proletarian cultural revolution is being used as the focus in order to add momentum to the socialist education movement and clean things up in the fields of politics, ideology, organisation and economy. This may be done where the local Party committee thinks it appropriate. 48

Thus Cultural Revolution reforms would only be slowly adopted within the countryside. Dennis Woodward suggests that considerable delay occurred between the publicizing of models in the media, and their acceptance as rural practice.⁴⁹ Gordon Bennett and Ronald Montaperto have suggested that many reforms of the Great Leap Forward were reintroduced; such as the amalgamation of local units, the transfer of private plots and large machinery back to the commune, workpoints for political merit, and the Dazhai (Tachai) workpoint system.⁵⁰ But these accounts of peasant radicalism,⁵¹ echoed by other scholars, strikingly contradict the massive campaigns in the Chinese media, felt necessary to combat peasant "economism". Peasants in some areas reportedly distributed grain and slaughtered livestock meant for the state. Red Guards reported that some peasants, at the height of the Cultural Revolution, did not know what a Red Guard was, and some peasants reportedly thought that

Mao was in heaven, watching over them all.⁵¹ When peasants did become involved in factional struggles, their motives were often not political. In Fuzhou (Foochow) one faction organized thousands of peasants to march on the city, after promising them two packs of cigarettes, a small amount of cash, and a hat. Once in the city it was difficult for the faction to convince the peasants to return to the countryside. The peasant motto had become "Eat Fuzhou city clean".⁵² These tidbits can only suggest a healthy scepticism for the degree of ideological and institutional reform that was supposedly carried on in the countryside.

Thus when revolutionary committees sprang up very suddenly in 1968 in the countryside, which were to lead, among other things, educational reform, the degree of ideological commitment to the Cultural Revolution's "newborn things" can be questioned. In many places, the existing administration appears to have merely changed names.⁵³ But, in other areas, reforms may have been thorough.

Certain reforms, such as the ideological reforms of teachers, and reorientation of the goals of schooling, were especially difficult to apply evenly. Other changes had significant impact on every previously state-run school. Decentralization meant that every school would be financed at the local brigade level. Some state financing was available where necessary to cover the teachers' salary, but state financing was limited and highly arbitrary.⁵⁴ All new teachers, and an unknown proportion of old

were to be paid by the brigades, on the basis of work-points. Evidently teachers would now be far more accountable to the brigade,⁵⁵ while state expenditures were reduced.

Local financing could only serve to increase intra-village and intra-provincial disparities in education. In Jiangxi (Kiangsu), for example, state funds appear to have been disproportionately diverted to poorer localities.⁵⁶ In Guangdong (Kwangtung)⁵⁷ and Shanxi (Shansi)⁵⁸ educational resources continued to be concentrated in wealthier areas, where state funds were spent to pay teachers' salaries in central state schools, and where campaigns to increase enrollment concentrated in central plains areas.

At the same time as local financing was instituted, movement occurred in many areas to reduce school fees. Jan Myrdal and Gun Kessel in a village study reported that in 1969 village school fees were reduced from ¥5.50 to ¥1 and obligatory schooling was introduced.⁵⁹ In other areas poor and lower middle peasants were exempted from school fees and subsidies from the production team's welfare fund were reallocated to students from households with "special difficulties". "Mass mutual aid" was used to supply students from families "having difficulties" providing the necessary clothing, shoes and hats for school.

If the goal of the educational reforms was merely to create equality of opportunity within education, the reforms could not be considered particularly effective.

William Parrish and Martin Whyte have concluded that the educational reforms, in turning education over to local administration and funding was less effective at promoting equality than centralized administration:

...we see changes in rural education as reducing the inequalities in access within villages somewhat, and perhaps also those between city and countryside, but probably having less effect on intra-village differences. A policy that combines a commitment to increased equality, with centralized financing and allocation could have reduced differences still further, but, here as elsewhere, the Chinese opted for a more decentralized pattern.⁶⁰

But, during the Cultural Revolution, "equality" of education was not the central theme, control of schools by the poor and lower middle peasants was that theme.

At the same time, the unequal differences between tracks of schooling were reduced. The elite schools came under considerable attack. They were variously accused of putting professionalism in command, allowing bourgeois intellectuals to control the schools, increasing the gap between mental and physical labour and nurturing the "slough of revisionism".⁶¹ The introduction of manual labour, and the transformation of these schools to neighbourhood schools, enrolling students who lived in the vicinity rather than on academic merit served to reduce the advantages of the "key schools".

Even non-key urban primary schools faced reforms which caused some difficulties in operation, but served to reduce differences between the rural and urban schools. As in the countryside, decentralization was also financial,

urban primary schools were expected to become financially self reliant, causing some financial difficulties for most schools. Control of schools was taken from academics and given to work teams and street committees, later replaced by retired workers. But these reforms were stifled by some serious problems. Workers were replaced by retired workers since experienced workers with leadership skills were often quickly missed at their place of work. At the same time integrating work and study was more difficult in many urban areas. Much of the manual labor had to involve cleaning the school etc., rather than work which integrated the students with workers, especially in cities like Shanghai where there were more students than workers.⁶² And key schools still possessed the better teachers and facilities, and often the better students, since key schools were often established in heavily cadre and professional neighbourhoods, due to the construction of housing units by work units.⁶³

But perhaps the most significant development which influenced the distribution of educational access was the drive for universal primary enrollment. Universalization was to become a priority goal for rural administrations, providing it not cause the reordering of finances for development, or assignment of educational personnel.⁶⁴ Thus all new schools in accordance the Cultural Revolution reforms were to be brigade run, aided only by the organisational skills of county administrations. Inevitably, much of the emphasis on expansion, due to the limited financial and personnel resources, was to ensure that all children within

an area with a school were enrolled. This attitude in some areas may have severely curtailed any attempts to provide education for more remote areas. Dale Bratton reports of a xian (hsien) in Shaanxi (Shensi) where 70% of all the villages had less than twenty household scattered throughout the mountains, with low population density. Even though the county administration asserted that it was "...entirely in line with revolutionary needs for the peasants... to live scattered in mountainous areas" during the Cultural Revolution county administration asserted that it was unnecessary for villages with less than twenty household to have a school -- a policy that was only changed in 1972. County administration preferred to boost statistical enrollment by increasing schooling in the smaller plains area.⁶⁵

As usual, attempts to quickly expand education were hampered by supply problems -- especially of teachers. School enrollment in one brigade school jumped from 587 to 1,034 students, but with no increase in teachers, while other areas reported increases from 70% before the Cultural Revolution to 90% after.⁶⁶ Evidently teachers could not be trained rapidly enough to fill village needs. A Shanxi (Shansi) commune reported that 90% of its teachers were inexperienced, while another commune opened over 100 new schools with 2,000 new students staffed by twenty urban youth who had been relocated in the countryside.⁶⁷ One rural thought propaganda team in the early 1970's demanded that "the majority of university and institute graduates

should be sent to rural schools to engage in teaching".⁶⁸

But, until there were enough educated youth to teach in rural areas, less educated youth would have to suffice.

One young teacher was described thus:

In Tatsung County (Kiangsu Province) Chou Ming-hua was invited to be a teacher. She had completed primary schooling and attended junior middle school for just one month, then she did farm work in her own village. ⁶⁹

Teachers were a rare resource to be utilized to their fullest. A common complaint especially of teachers in mountainous areas was exhaustion due to the need to walk to several part-time schools during any one day.⁷⁰

The rapid expansion of primary schooling also affected the growth of junior middle schooling, which was in considerable demand by the peasantry. Educational authorities attempted to contain the growth of too many new middle schools which would compete for teachers with the attempt to universalize primary schooling, and at the same time meet some of the demands of the peasantry by allowing primary schools to include one or two years of junior middle schooling. According to the needs of local areas middle schooling was also reduced to a unified four or five year program, split into two plus two, or three plus two year segments. The resulting expansion in service was enormous. In Honan (Honan), for example, where before the Cultural Revolution 731 state run middle schools were in operation, by the mid-1970's 8,258 primary schools were including junior middle classes. While in one xian of twenty communes in

Fujian (Fukien) only 13 had junior middle schools before the Cultural Revolution, but by the 1970's 258 units were offering junior middle education, and senior middle schools had expanded from 7 to 59.⁷¹ To solve the inevitable problem of teacher shortages, experienced primary school teachers were pushed up to teach middle school, and replaced by soldiers, peasants or urban youth living in the countryside.

Morale of the teachers was often very poor. New teachers were unsure of teaching methods or course content. Older teachers were often demoralized by the abuses they were subjected to at the height of the Cultural Revolution. Female teachers who had previously worked for the state but were now earning workpoints often faced considerable drops in income. Some teachers from "bad class elements" had been dismissed, but more often their experience was needed and they were reformed under the guidance of the poor and lower middle peasants. Older teachers were expected to engage in self-criticism in order to reform their attitudes to education -- a process that must have been quite painful for many. One teacher, admitting his past errors confided:

...my work had had the wrong goals. I'd been trying to educate my pupils to become book-worms. Behind my error lay a conviction about which I had never been really clear. It lay within me. The notion that the educated man is superior. That the scholar must lead... I'd been driving my students towards a false ideal... which belonged to a feudal world of learned officials and oppressed masses. And this had been the real source of pride I'd felt at being able to lead certain pupils on until they were accepted to Yen'an middle school. 72

The measures of success for teachers, the primary goals of

education that they were to instill --these had changed in mid-stream for the older teachers.

The newer teachers, although sometimes far less qualified were better able to adapt curricula and school organization to local needs, and the simplified curriculum that they taught was far less demanding of academic background.

Attempts were made in many areas to upgrade the new teachers, through short term upgrading training programs, evening and correspondence programs, and buddy system matching inexperienced teachers with older more experienced staff. Still, media accounts recounted problems with attitudes of new teachers. One Party Committee complained that:

Some young teachers who had good family backgrounds thought that they had bright futures politically so they did not pay attention to studying professional skills. Some even said 'the more expert they become the worse their situation would be'...

Teachers of people run schools tend to cherish the idea that the work of a teacher is not promising and they do not have a firm dedication to their profession.⁷³

The Cultural Revolution, without a doubt, was partially responsible for the tendency towards anti-intellectualism and lack of glory associated with the teaching profession.

Still, Cultural Revolution reforms, by breaking down the "mystique" of schooling did much to make schooling open and accessible to those who were previously unexposed to education. Age limits for attending school were abolished. Students were allowed to begin school at any time of year. Primary school was usually reduced to five years, and failing students or making them repeat years, customs highly unpopular with the peasantry because of wasted time and cost, were abolished. Entrance exams for middle school

were abolished in favor the recommendation system: The school year was to be planned around the agricultural busy seasons. Younger brothers and sisters were welcomed, freeing girls who would otherwise remain at home baby-sitting. In some areas, marks and homework were abolished and cooperation between students stressed.⁷⁴

Reforms of the curricula were often radical, especially of the lower primary level, where half-work half-study was most implemented. In Taitsung, where the new teacher had only attended one month of junior middle school, the main course was Mao Zedong thought and class struggle.⁷⁵ The 1967 Directive for the reform of primary education had called for Mao's thought to be "in command". Primary schools were to organize "Little Red Soldiers" and in years one to four were to study the Quotations of Chairman Mao, learn to read and sing revolutionary songs" and students were also to be taught "some general arithmetic and scientific knowledge".⁷⁶ The Directive for Middle Schools called for short term military and political training, the study of the Works of Mao, and the repudiation of bourgeois thought. Immediately after the Cultural Revolution, primary and middle schools were limited to teaching political theory and practice, language, mathematics, military and physical training, and industrial or agricultural production. Only mathematics and languages were retained from before the Cultural Revolution, and even they were transformed to include Mao's thought. Thus, math questions after the Cultural Revolution

read:

Chairman Mao is the reddest "red sun" in our heart; it is most fortunate to be able to see Chairman Mao. In 1968 on the national birthday there were 150 representatives of capital workers, Liberation army, Maoist propaganda teams, and the poor, lower middle class peasants to visit Chairman Mao; there were also 67 representatives of Red Guards and revolutionary public. How many representatives in total were there to visit Chairman Mao? [sic] 77

The heavy political content, it has been suggested, was an attempt to restore ideological discipline after the more anarchical tendencies of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.⁷⁸ By 1969, however the "Draft Program for Primary and Middle Schools in the Chinese Countryside" was announced, school curriculum was to become more academic. Primary schools were to teach almost the same program including languages, arithmetic, revolutionary literature and art, military and physical culture, and productive labour. Middle schools were to teach "education in Mao Zedong Thought" which was to include Modern Chinese History, Contemporary Chinese History and History of Struggle Between the Two Lines Within the Party, basic knowledge of agriculture which includes some mathematics, physics, chemistry, economics and geography, revolutionary literature and art, military training and physical education as well as productive labor. Politics was to be the most important subject but was not to dominate most of the students time. Representatives of the poor and lower middle peasants were to supervise, review and make decisions on school management "in their spare time".⁷⁹

Still, schools remained more responsive to the community,

despite the slight diminution of the role of peasants within school administration. Students were encouraged to teach Maoist thought outside of school, and schools remained adult centres for political study that was central to the Cultural Revolution reforms in the countryside. One county had reported that during the Cultural Revolution, in six months in schools within three brigades, twenty-four meetings were held to study Mao thought and eighty meetings were held to "fight self and revisionism".⁸⁰ Poor peasants, for perhaps the first time, had become intimately involved in running schools, editing teaching materials and setting admissions guidelines that often discriminated, usually for the first time, against "bad class elements" entrance to higher education.⁸¹ Media articles suggested that the peasants were completely in accord with the new reforms of the cultural revolution:

Now that schools are run by the poor and lower middle peasants they are production teams and centers for scientific experiments as well as schools. Poor and lower middle peasants say with elation: 'The students trained in the past were not of one heart with us and would not think, act and speak with us. Now they are both students and commune members and really are reliable successors.'⁸²

Problems that appeared within the new style schools were attributed to the sabotage of bourgeois intellectuals who slandered the ability of poor and lower middle peasants to run schools. Still, some new schools complained of the number of students incited by these disruptive elements to drop-out --presumably as a result of disillusion with the quality of the schools.⁸³

A final reform of the Cultural Revolution which had enormous impact upon urban and rural education, in a myriad of ways was the tremendous acceleration of the program to send educated youth down to the countryside to work after graduation from middle school. Mao had announced his desire to see youth educated by the peasantry in a working environment. This "rustication" was to end the separation between intellectual and labourer, urban and rural. Urban intellectual youth were no longer to remain isolated from their society -- which to Mao was the essence of egalitarianism. Mao had told André Malraux immediately before the Cultural Revolution:

Equality is not important in itself; it is important because it is natural to those who have not lost contact with the masses. The only way of knowing whether a young cadre is really revolutionary is to see whether he really makes friends with the workers and peasants. 84

Thus, rustication was to ensure that educated youth were not isolated from rural life.

The ideological implication of rustication was profound. Working class youth, not just bourgeois urban youth, were to receive education at the hands of the peasants. Veteran railway workers were publicized for stating:

We of the working class follow Chairman Mao's teaching faithfully... encouraging our own children to settle in the countryside to be re-educated by the poor and lower middle peasants so that they can temper themselves into reliable successors of the revolutionary cause of the proletariat. 85

Stuart Schram suggests that the assertion that peasants can teach children of the working class proletarian revolutionary values was the "ultimate symbolic expression of Mao's

reversion to the moral and intellectual universe of his childhood".⁸⁶ Revolutionary purity was now a peasant attribute --and the countryside the heart of the revolution.

Rustication was also a useful tool in rural development while responding to urban unemployment. Indeed, sending down youth from 1957 to 1965 was a decentralized, provincially run voluntary program that centered around those largest cities that suffered most from youth unemployment.⁸⁷ Meanwhile the central focus had remained to convince peasant youth to return to their communes after education. Between 1962 and 1966 rustication was confined to approximately one million urban youth who could not find employment and were not accepted into higher education or senior middle school. Thomas Bernstein has stressed the economic motivations of rusticating youth, linking their sending down with the encouraging of women to return to the labour force in low paying neighbourhood workshops and development of the use of cheap peasant contract labour, saving the state the expenses involved in providing urban services and benefits to youth who would eventually settle down and raise families.⁸⁸ Youth sent down before the Cultural Revolution were not always particularly well treated, John Lewis suggests, because of the animosity resulting from the dual labour system, and peasant perceptions that sent down youth were "failures" who could not make it in the city. Party attempts to give the youth legitimacy by recruitment into the Party only increased the unpopularity of the youth.⁸⁹

During the most active phases of the Cultural Revolution large numbers of sent down youth returned to the cities and were extremely active in the Red Guard movement. Some reports suggest that local units encouraged the youth to leave, perhaps to rid themselves of the financial burden and potential source of political activism, and also as a result of parental pressure.⁹⁰ On the other hand, some have suggested that rusticated youth remained inactive until provincial committees announced that rustication was permanent. At least in Heilongjiang (Heilungkiang) sent down youth were among the most radical Red Guard.⁹¹

By 1968, perhaps as an attempt to dampen student violence and activism, the rustication movement attained significant momentum. Previously rusticated youth were to return to the countryside and between 1968 and 1970 five to six million youth were sent down. By 1975, twelve million, or ten percent of the urban population were rusticated.⁹² The day following the order for workers to enter schools to crush factional struggles 40,000 middle school students were sent down.⁹³ Lin Biao (Lin Piao) was later criticized for slandering the program when he implied that it was "a disguised form of labor reform".⁹⁴ But unemployment was still a major factor in rustication: rustication was far more common in the older, larger industrial areas such as Shanghai, than in the newer industrial boom towns.

The influx of educated urban youth into villages had considerable educational benefits, but the potential

of the youth was often not realized, especially in 1968-70, when rustication was carried out in great haste and without significant preparation. Emphasis was placed upon the need for re-education of the youth by the peasantry, with little or no mention of the potential contribution of sent-down youth.⁹⁵

Peasant animosity towards the students was to some extent inevitable, given the financial burden the peasants were left to bear. State funding was limited to a small amount of initial aid. Otherwise youth were to live off the local economy, integrated into village life. In very poor or sparsely populated frontier areas, the youth lived apart from the villagers in state farms and PLA farms. Housing, especially within the villages, was a major problem; if youths did decide to settle in the villages, urban males would be considered undesirable marriage partners because of their lack of family home and the prohibitive cost of building a home.⁹⁶ Life for the sent down youth was often difficult, as indicated indirectly by Mao in 1970, when he issued a directive urging that sent down youth receive equal pay for equal work, adequate housing, full grain rations, and participation in health care benefits. Mao further stressed the need for harsh penalties for rape.⁹⁷

Direct impact on rural development through rusticated youth was also limited by the fact that villages most in need of skills offered by rusticated youth were also those villages least able to support sent down youth. Bernstein

suggests that available evidence, although not conclusive, would indicate that urban youth were concentrated in the more developed countries; that were lower in altitude and in areas accessible by rail, and closer to major centers. In Guangdong (Kwantung) urban youth were certainly over-represented in the more wealthy villages. In Shanghai, although many youth were sent to frontier regions, nearly half remained in the very prosperous suburbs. Rusticated youth were always welcome where the labor situation was tight, and extra labor was often most needed in areas where the land-labor ratio was already high, because of the extra labor needed for double and triple cropping, sideline occupations, workshops, rural small scale industries and landscape modification, all predominantly found in the more advanced brigades.⁹⁸

The direct benefit of sent down youth on the educational level of the village was mixed. On the one hand, many rusticated youth were profoundly disappointed when denied higher education and spent much of their time in the countryside in a state of anxiety, wondering whether they would gain admission to higher education after a few years of work.⁹⁹ Disillusionment of the youth, and their relocation in the countryside after finishing senior middle school also set an example for those peasants already sceptical of the benefits of education. Suzanne Pepper in interviews with rural cadre reported:

...rural officials have even complained that the 'study is useless' attitude on the part of sent down youth reinforced traditional peasants inclinations and undermined efforts to expand education in the countryside.¹⁰⁰

But rusticated youth were a potential source of introducing intermediate technology into the countryside. Indeed, by the early 1970's emphasis was no longer upon youth learning from the peasantry, but was rather emphasizing the role of educated youth in instilling Marxist political consciousness in the peasantry--a turnabout resulting from the concern of the Party over the emergence of "economism" among the peasantry, and perhaps the misuse of youth who were no longer politically dangerous.¹⁰¹ Media accounts began effusively praising the role of the "cultural and scientific knowledge" of educated youth in changing the "outdated habits and customs" in the "poor and blank countryside".¹⁰² But the sent down youth could have little impact upon village life. Too isolated to challenge local customs, and often mistrusted by the villagers unless they married a local youth--which would reduce their chances of returning to the cities--sent down youth were often excluded from commune membership necessary to work as an accountant, teacher or barefoot doctor. These positions and even more especially political positions, were often reserved for returned educated village youth, who usually had completed junior middle school.¹⁰³

By 1973 an educational infrastructure had been built up to serve rusticated youth. Books on agricultural development for self study, aimed at sent down youth appeared, and

commune reading rooms of technical books were renewed. Texts on raising livestock, fertilizers, leadership, economics, water control, field reconstruction, and agricultural mechanization were produced and distributed in vast numbers and aimed specifically at rusticated youth. These resources too though were most available in the wealthiest communes.¹⁰⁴ Correspondence courses and extension courses appeared and by 1975 were highly developed. Shanghai universities in 1974 offered extension courses to 28,000 sent down youth.¹⁰⁵ General knowledge of subjects such as rice breeding, disease prevention and the broad principles of agricultural research increased markedly. Benjamin Stavis has estimated that by the mid-1970's two to three million youth were involved in rural scientific research.¹⁰⁶

In implementing the reforms of the Cultural Revolution, the radicals were faced with the paradoxes inherent in attempting to institutionalize revolutionary practice within an educational system. Some reforms were definitely consistent with the prerequisites of development and modernization and were easily implemented. Other reforms, based on equally central ideological values, when implemented, failed to produce the desired results. Revolutionary educational reforms per se were not in contradiction with the needs of modernisation; rather, some specific policies were less effective than others.

The reforms which best satisfied ideological and modernization goals centered around ending the separation

between education and the lives of the masses. Turning management of schools over to peasant and neighbourhood communities encouraged flexibility and adaption to local conditions and needs, while instilling in the community a sense of involvement and ability to direct education. Unnecessary and arbitrary regulations were removed, opening access to schools, most especially in rural areas. Within higher education, paring courses to a bare minimum, encouraging short term peasant courses and directing university programs to satisfying immediately practical goals--all served to focus education towards solving immediate problems and technical needs in the urban and rural working world, and ensured that peasant youth with little academic training could participate in higher education. Manual labour and mandatory work requirements for admission were to ensure the correct orientation for staff and students. These reforms were all to ensure that the educational system not lose sight of the immediate economic, social and political needs of a developing society. Nevertheless, they were to come under increasing criticism for their failure to suit those very needs.

7

Footnotes

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4. Red Flags or Satellites?

As the revolutionary turbulence of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution dispersed, and the call for stability renewed, almost inevitably the "newborn things" of the Cultural Revolution came into contradiction with the needs of a quality educational system needed to satisfy the goals of national reconstruction. The educational bureaucracy had been purged. By 1969, of nine vice ministers in the Ministry of Culture only one remained, and the Minister, Lu Dingi (Lu Ting-i) was also purged, while three-fifths of the leading members of the Ministry of Higher Education, and four-fifths of the Ministry of Education were removed.¹ The remaining officials, one could presume, should have been somewhat more predisposed to the "newborn things". Nevertheless, with surprising speed, many of the Cultural Revolution reforms were quickly undercut.

A major political factor may have been the disgrace of the People's Liberation Army after the Lin Biao (Lin Piao) affair. The PLA, which had come out of the Cultural Revolution with considerably more political influence than before, after playing a leading role in re-establishing order, was completely undercut by the failed attempt of its leader, Lin Biao to seize power in 1971.² The PLA and their involvement in school work teams was one of the "newborn things" that had furthered the radicalization of school organization

and content. But the work teams were quickly reduced to one soldier and one worker per university, and largely eliminated from lower level schools, in favor of Party Committees.

The replacement of work teams was but one example of the re-assertion of direct Party control over education. But the Party was to show itself to be no less divided over the direction of education than it had been before the Cultural Revolution. Debates over the educational line by the mid 1970's were to have broken down into factional struggles, especially after the deaths of Mao and Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai), which were finally resolved by the extinction of the radical faction. Once again the educational system was to be overhauled, but not to the benefit of rural mass education.

As early as the fall of 1971, the movement later referred to by the radicals as "an evil wind" in education was well under way. Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p'ing), and Zhou Rongxin (Chou Jung-hsin) were all concerned about the "ultra leftism of Lin Biao", which in education resulted in overemphasis upon political study and manual labor, leading to lower academic standards especially in science and engineering and foreign languages.

Their concern for "ultraleftism" leading to reduced academic standards was to some extent justifiable. Zhang Chunqiao (Chang Ch'un-ch'iao), member of the radical "Gang

of Four", had made rather extreme anti-intellectual statements such as:

Bring up exploiters and intellectual aristocrats with bourgeois consciousness and culture, or bring up workers with consciousness but no culture: which do you want?³

Academic work had been seriously damaged by the political attitudes of the Cultural Revolution. Since 1969 articles such as "How to Bring Proletarian Politics to the Core in the Revolution in Education" which was produced by a worker - PLA propaganda team, had recognized the need to arouse revolutionary enthusiasm to counter the notions that "it is useless to go to school" and "it is a misfortune to be a teacher".⁴ Criticisms of the educational system during the Cultural Revolution had to be balanced somewhat in order to instill self-respect in those involved in the educational process.

But under the influence of the "evil wind" in education, reforms were introduced that profoundly challenged the values of the Cultural Revolution. Articles were published criticizing the recruitment and pedagogical reforms which were felt to be undermining the quality of education.⁵ A renewed emphasis on foreign languages and especially English appeared, purportedly supported by Zhou Enlai, but was quickly repudiated.⁶ By 1973, entrance examinations were under consideration at Beijing University and at Fudan (Futan), for entrance to certain courses.⁷ Even the previously radical Shanghai Machine Tool Plant was implementing old style closed book examinations.⁸

And, on the political front, an indication of the strength of the anti-radical faction was the rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p'ing) in April 1973.

On an ideological level, 1972-73 saw a vigorous campaign to stress the need for theoretical knowledge, which had been denigrated in favour of practical knowledge during the Cultural Revolution. No longer was the idea that "theory is useless" acceptable. By early 1973 scientific research of a non-applied nature was encouraged, and practical training at the expense of theoretical knowledge denounced.⁹

Lack of a theoretical foundation and teaching only applied subjects were denounced as one sided and fragmented, threatening the long term development of knowledge.¹⁰ Other moderate voices cautioned the total retreat away from practical knowledge. One 1972 editorial read:

If we exclusively grasp intellectual education and not moral education, we shall lead the students down a wrong track politically and shall again commit the mistake of taking the revisionist line in education; if we exclusively grasp moral education and not intellectual education the students will be unable to acquire practical skills for serving the people. For this reason we must grasp moral education and intellectual education together.¹¹

In a rather new twist to defend the need for theoretical knowledge, theory was deemed necessary to ensure that education be practical and serve people's needs--the same argument used in the Cultural Revolution to down-play theoretical knowledge.

By 1973-74, educational policy seems to have slipped

in focus, due to the shifting, rather confused political scene. The Tenth Party Congress was critical in ensuring the survival of radical policies. In rather a compromise in terms of the political power structure, Zhang Chunqiao (Chang Ch'un-ch'iao) remained Secretary General of the Presidium but was not appointed to the Central Committee, and Wang Hongwen (Wang Hung-wen), also a member of the radical Gang of Four, was elevated to third position in the Party, but only he and Wang were representatives of the left on the Standing Committee of the Politburo. While many members of revolutionary mass organizations were appointed to the Central Committee, many members demoted during the Cultural Revolution were also appointed. While some perceive of these changes as a victory of the left and an attack upon moderates such as Zhu De (Chu Teh) and Zhou Enlai,¹² others have characterised the Congress as a compromise for the left.¹³ But the tone of the Congress certainly favoured the left. The Cultural Revolution was supported, the need for future revolution re-emphasized, along with the reaffirmation of the leading role of agriculture and mass movements--all touchstones of the left.¹⁴ Even more importantly given the attacks on "ultra-leftism", Zhou Enlai in his "Report to the Tenth National Congress" labels Lin Biao as an "ultra-rightist" in nature with a "bourgeois-idealist world outlook" who had made "rightist opportunist errors" in representing "capitalist roaders in

power working for the interest of the minority".¹⁵ The left, for the moment, was vindicated, but the victory was not a clear one.

Following the Tenth Congress emerged a peculiar mass movement which dominated political debate within the schools, called the Campaign to Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. This campaign ranks as perhaps the most elusive campaign, its complexities paralleling the equally nebulous power struggles of the time. On the one hand, the campaign appears to have been led by the left. Parris Chang has suggested the campaign was aimed against the reappointment of cadre criticised during the Cultural Revolution.¹⁶ By December 1976, the campaign was attacked as a "tool of the Gang of Four" aimed against Zhou Enlai.¹⁷ Peter Moody, who before 1976 had suggested that the campaign was a pro-Zhou attack on the radicals, a "rational modernist criticism" — later co-opted by the radicals, now expresses confusion as to the fundamental nature of the campaign.¹⁸

At any rate, within the schools, the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius entailed a renewal of the study of class struggle and the "struggle between the two lines".¹⁹ Within the educational bureau in the province of Shandong (Shantung) the debate evolved into a defence of the "newborn things" and criticism of those who diminished the value of the irregular universities, or the need to emphasize practical knowledge over book knowledge. Students were once again to love the working class and be "labourers

who have socialist consciousness and culture".²⁰ But the debate did not seem to disrupt the schooling to the extent of earlier campaigns, and schools remained rather more separated from the political process than in the past. The decentralization of the period allowed those schools concerned with increasing the standards of education and work-study schools aimed at mass elevation to coexist, each interpreting differently the ideological positions of the time.²¹

By 1975, a crisis was developing as different groups attempted to influence the direction of the school system. The more conservative forces had found predominance in the Ministry of Education, while the radicals had considerable strength within the media, where they continued their ideological campaigns. The Party was becoming thoroughly polarized, pulling in two very different directions. In January 1975 the moderates had gained control of the political front. Zhou Enlai had been reappointed Premier and Deng Xiaoping Chairman of the Party and senior vice president of the State Council and PLA chief of staff, all supposedly to Mao's displeasure. The ramifications of these changes in the educational sphere were enormous. The Ministry of Education was formally abolished during the Cultural Revolution and replaced by the Science and Education Group, whose deputy head Chi Chun (Ch'i Ch'un) was a prominent leftist.²² But in January 1975, the Ministry of Education

was formally reinstated and the new Minister of Education Zhou Rongxin (Chou Jung Hsin) previously Zhou Enlai's personal assistant began a reassessment of education policies.

With the open support of Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, the latter who blatantly had declared that "the Cultural Revolution had created a mess in political, economic and social life", Zhou Rongxin (Chou Jung-hsin) was encouraged to overturn many of the Cultural Revolution reforms in education.²³ He questioned the placing of class background and ideology ahead of academic qualifications for entrance, the maintenance of a high level of ideological content in education, the two year work requirement before college, and the time involved in manual labour activities.²⁴ Zhou Rongxin expressed his concern that the main problems of education was that students were not studying and that university standards were now at the level of the old technical schools. Insufficient time was devoted to research and theoretical science. Zhou criticized the policy of sending youth back to their units as wasteful.²⁵

Zhou Rongxin's ideas on education were based on the strategies of Deng Xiaoping who, between May and October of 1975, attended at least six national conferences on the steel and defence industries, agriculture, education, science and technology and military affairs, spreading his idea of the correct path of development for China. Deng's ideas will be discussed later at length, as they have substantial impact on the present educational system.

But Zhou's educational policies were complementary to Deng's strategies, aimed at recreating an educational system that would best serve economic development and rapid modernization. For this purpose, politics would have to be unified, not in competition with professional competence, and the role of intellectuals improved.²⁶

But Zhou Rongxin had little chance to implement his educational policies. By November 1975, when Zhou was in Africa, Chi Chun (Ch'ih Ch'un), the radical deputy head of the defunct Science and Education Group launched a wall poster attack on Zhou. Zhang Chungqiao (Chang Ch'un-ch'iao) later ordered the Ministry of Education to form a provisional group to criticize Zhou Rongxin, and within a few months Zhou died, in disgrace.²⁷ This little parry of the moderates had been so short-lived, and control of the media by the radicals so complete that some western observers failed to even recognize it, until some months after.²⁸ But, the radicals had been aroused, and the level of the debate had considerably heightened.

On an ideological level, the debate between Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping sharpened. Mao, in February 1975, had announced a new campaign to study the theory of dictatorship of the proletariat and reaffirmed the need for class struggle. In direct response, Deng in his "Three Directives" interpreted Mao as suggesting that developing the economy and creating stability and unity, two points mentioned by Mao, were on par with studying the theory of

dictatorship of the proletariat.²⁹ Mao angrily retorted:

What 'taking the three directives as the key link'.
Stability and unity do not mean writing off the
class struggle; class struggle is the key link
and everything else hinges upon it.³⁰

Mao and the radicals were not willing to see the role of class struggle diminished, while more and more major articles written by moderates were suggesting just that. An October 1975 report entitled "Learn from Dazhai (Tachai)" which Hua Guofeng (Hua Kuo-feng) reportedly was involved in writing, had emphasized the need to wipe out the few remaining "saboteurs and swindlers" who were nearly all outside the Party, and then commence modernization and increasing production. The Cultural Revolution, for the moderates, was over. Not surprisingly Yao Wen-yuan (Yao Wen-yuen), member of the radical "Gang of Four", quoting Mao in opposing conservatives in the 1950's, responded that "at present the major danger is empiricism".³¹ Mao also instigated a campaign to criticize the elite in the Party center. In his criticism of the Water Margins, a Chinese classical novel, Mao echoed the danger of a leader turning the peasants over to the enemy camp. Whether this campaign was aimed at Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, as suggested by Raymond Lotta, or Zhou alone, as suggested by Bill Brugger or even against Hua Guofeng as Peter Moody now believes, the campaign served to remind the masses and Party members that future Cultural Revolutions would always be possible, and

the Party elite could not always be counted upon to be revolutionary.³²

Bolstered by the political campaigns, the radicals became aggressively vocal on educational issues by the autumn of 1975. Big character posters and debates were set up at Beijing and Qinghua (Tsinghua) Universities to criticise the "rightist wind in education".³² When members of the Qinghua revolutionary committee complained to Mao about declining standards in education, Mao sent back documents and called for a large-scale debate to resolve the issue, stating that "The question involved at Qinghua is not an isolated question but a reflection of the current two-line struggle". Zhang Chungqiao addressed the university in defense of working class leadership in education and the reform of exams and combining study and practice.³³ The debate quickly spread throughout all the universities.³⁴ Supported by the media, the d e b a t e became an ideological campaign to strengthen and clarify the goals of the left by critisizing the opponents of radical education. The polarization of education slowly began in the 1950's had now lead to two completely different interpretations of the development of education within China. The Gang of Four and radical left believed, or was accused of believing, that the revisionist line had held firm for seventeen years before the Cultural Revolution, shaping a world outlook in most students and teachers that was bourgeois. One

Shanghai Middle School which put forward this line, suggested of the development of their school up the Cultural Revolution:

Thought it was run under the signboard of socialism, it pursued the same old road of 'placing intellectual cultivation ahead of everything else' and 'putting marks in command of study'. The torrent of the Cultural Revolution purged the school of its filth and garbage and rekindled this old institution with revolutionary vitality.³⁵

The radical left was obliged to defend utterly all educational reforms of the Cultural Revolution, and criticize all aspects of the pre-Cultural Revolution educational system.

Thus one mass criticism group of Quinghua and Beijing University declared:

Recently an absurd idea has been circulating in educational circles. It asserts that the revolution in education has been fraught with problems since the Cultural Revolution. The question of the orientation of education, it insists 'has never been solved well' and 'adjustments must be made'. This idea actually implies that the revolution in education overshot its mark and gotten into a mess so it is necessary to 'adjust' its orientation by turning back. Clearly the point at issue is whether we should adhere to the orientation that 'there must be a revolution in education... or whether we should allow... the old educational system to be restored so that the bourgeois intellectuals can dominate our schools again!... 36/

Clearly polarization between the educational points of view was becoming renewed, reflecting very different approaches to development.

The left was most sensitive to charges that their educational policies would hinder development of the four

modernizations, in agriculture, industry, science and defence. While reaffirming the danger of separating politics from education--"We must never forget the lesson 'the satellite goes up to the sky, the red flag falls to the ground'"--the left insisted that the only meaningful economic development depended upon correct political orientation. Education and the four modernizations were interpreted as an aspect of the relationship between the superstructure and economic base. Education prior to the Cultural Revolution, because of the domination of revisionists, hindered the development of the socialist economic base. The newly reformed system of education would encourage economic development in a much more direct fashion; students of physics now produced semi-conductors--something they previously could not do.³⁷ The endeavour for intellectual cultivation was asserted to be desirable, providing it not become the top priority, but be carried out under "the command of proletarian politics". Intellectual education was necessary to educate workers so that the working class could "deprive the bourgeoisie of its superiority in knowledge and techniques...".³⁸ Intellectual development in order to fare well in society was, however, retrogressive.³⁹ Educational "quality", according to the Party Committee of Chaoyang (Ch'aoyang) Agricultural College, a model revolutionary college, was a function of the orientation of the schools' politics. Schools should be judged by the class

they serve, which class of revolutionary successors it creates, and whether it takes class struggle as the key link. A model agricultural college should take students from communes and return them to communes, be part-work and part-study and integrate theory and practice.⁴⁰ To serve proletarian politics, revolutionary schools were to be "open door": contact between the schools and agriculture and schools and industry was not to be diminished. The content of each subject was to be related to the outside world.⁴¹ Any change in these basic educational principles, according to the radicals, would diminish the quality of education and endanger progress of the revolution. Those who supported modifying the educational reforms of the Cultural Revolution would only be class enemies.

The left was again arguing that proposed reforms in education would renew the oppression of the working and peasant classes at the hands of the bourgeoisie. Yao Wenyan declared that the "Lin Biao anti-Party clique's special hatred" for the policy of taking university students from among workers and peasants and returning them back to the work units after education was evidence of the clique's "antagonism towards the labouring people":

This clique's programme was aimed at widening the gap between town and country, and between manual and mental labour, and turning educated young people into a new elite stratum.⁴²

Letters to Mao from graduating students were reprinted in

People's Daily announcing the students' fears that "Without the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and without the revolution in education, we children of the poor and lower middle peasants basically cannot attend university..."⁴³

The renewed emphasis on class struggle was occurring in an increasingly disrupted society. ~~Strikes had broken out~~ in twenty-five factories in Hankou (Hangchow), suppressed finally by the PLA while in the rural sector controversy was mounting over the National People's Congress January 1975 affirmation of the right to private plots and income according to labor, which according to Yao Wenyan could only increase the power of the rural bourgeoisie. Media articles were reflecting a fear among youth of the threat of renewed civil war and bloodshed.⁴⁴

The renewal of the factional violence in 1975-76 was, in the end, averted, but only as a result of the rapid defeat of the left. The death of Zhou Enlai marked the beginning of the struggle. The moderate and popular Zhou, described by Lotta as the "consummate bourgeois politician", had been a major actor in the attempt to build a consensus between the factions. The death of Zhou left Deng Xiaoping, who had been Acting Prime Minister in the most advantageous position to become Premier: an appointment highly unsatisfactory to the left. Thus immediately after the death of Zhou, criticism of Deng began. By April 5, 1976 the Tien An Men (Tien An Men) incident

occurred, in which thousands of mourners of Zhou demonstrated, chanting slogans such as "the time of Ch'in Shih Huang has gone already" (against Mao) and "down with the Empress Dowager" (against Jiang Qing) and "long live the four modernizations". Deng, who had always been associated with placing the needs of the four modernizations of agriculture, industry, defense and science and technology over the needs of politics, was implicated in formenting the demonstration. Two days after the incident, the central committee declared the situation was now one of "antagonistic contradictions", of danger of the development of socialism. Deng was dismissed, and Hua Guofeng (Hua Kuo-feng) appointed vice-chairman. Hua, although implicated in the writing of one of the "Four Poisonous Weeds" (so-named by the Gang of Four), which advocated the need for qualitative education and technical improvements, was nevertheless a compromise candidate, since he was well known to be a faithful admirer of Mao and in his prior position in charge of public security he had suppressed the Tien An Men incident.⁴⁵

Thus in the spring of 1976 the position of the left appeared relatively secure. The campaign to criticize Deng was used by the left to criticize the policy of the moderates in every field, including and especially education. The campaign suggested that the desire of the right to minimize class struggle was an indication of their character as "bourgeois democrats".⁴⁶ Deng was accused of "peddling

the slavish comprador philosophy" in attempting to increase the presence of foreign learning and technology:

He nonsensically said 'the backwardness of scientific research' had held back the entire national economy'. He advocated seeking aid from the 'foreign overlords' 'introducing foreign technology' wholesale and relying on foreign countries for the supply of complete sets of modern equipment. He vilified self-reliance as 'presumptuous self conceit' and 'isolationism'...⁴⁷

Self reliant development, the touchstone of the Cultural Revolution, was re-emphasized. Any overdependence on foreign technology necessary for the four modernizations was put into question, at least within the media.

But by September of 1976, ideological campaigns were of little use to the radicals. With the death of Mao the Gang of Four lost its strongest claim to legitimacy. In October, the moderates acted quickly--the Gang of Four, along with their left-wing Minister of Education, Zhou Hongbao (Chou Hung-pao) were arrested. But the impact of the victory of the moderates was not immediate. Until June 1977, Party offices reported being under frequent attack, strikes and massive absenteeism were reported in some institutions because of the reinstatement of pre-Cultural Revolution rules and regulations. The universities, too, underwent considerable turmoil.⁴⁸

The new administration was relatively slow to criticize and replace the educational policies of the "Gang of Four" and Cultural Revolution, but by the middle of 1977 the criticisms and proposals for restructuring education

began, in a predictable direction. Deng Xiaoping, in his "Speech at the National Educational Work Conference", reaffirmed that "First we must improve the quality of education and raise the level of teaching in science and culture so as to serve proletarian politics better".⁴⁹ Deng reaffirmed his belief that only through improving the quality of education and raising the intellectual level of the workers could socialism be possible:

Lenin repeatedly emphasized that workers could not for a minute forget their need for knowledge, that without knowledge the workers are defenceless. This truth has become even clearer today. We must train workers with high attainment in science and culture and build a vast army of working class intellectuals who are both red and expert if we are to master and advance modern science and culture and the new techniques and technologies of all trades and professions; if we are to create higher labor productivity than that under capitalism and transform China into a powerful modern socialist country and what is more, ultimately defeat the bourgeoisie in the sphere of the superstructures.⁵⁰

For Deng, the educational system "must keep pace with the requirements of national economic development". Education should be adjusted to satisfy the projected needs of the labour force and all aspects of government should work together with the Ministry of Education.⁵¹ By May of 1978 in a conference on education Deng announced four points for the development of education: first, the quality of education should be raised; second, revolutionary order and discipline should be strengthened; thirdly, education should keep pace with the needs of economic development;

and finally, the work of teachers should be respected.⁵²

Deng's approach was fundamentally utilitarian. Ideology that did not serve the needs of the four modernizations was not good ideology. Thus by February of 1979, an article appeared in the media entitled "Putting the 'Black Cat White Cat' in perspective" which defended Deng's earlier much vilified statement - "Black cat, white cat, as long as it catches mice it's a good cat".⁵³ Pragmatism had become the new ideology.

The Gang of Four was bitterly vilified for all of their social policies including education, where they were charged by Deng with "sabotage" which "seriously debased ideological and political education in schools, undermined school discipline and contaminated the revolutionary atmosphere of socialist society":

The Gang of Four talked glibly about politics but in fact they went in for counter-revolutionary, anti-socialist politics and used the most decadent and reactionary ideology of the exploiting classes to poison the minds of young people, trying to make them 'illiterates plus hooligans'.⁵⁴

The Ministry of Education held a meeting with 5,000 cadres involved in education "to expose and criticize the crime of the Gang of Four in promoting a counter-revolutionary revisionist line in the educational field".⁵⁵ Mao's reputation for the moment was to be saved, and the Gang were charged with "frenziedly opposing Chairman Mao's proletarian line on education".⁵⁶ According to the Ministry of Education

the Gang of Four:

...tampered with Chairman Mao's educational policy, publicized the need to train 'labourers without' and advocated that 'it is honourable to turn in a blank sheet'. They vilified the teachers who seriously taught the socialist cultural lessons of 'giving first to intellectual development' and 'putting culture above all else' and demanded that 'the greatest victory would be if all were turned into illiterates'.... Their disruption of the quality of education was more serious in consequence than the loss of several dozen million tons of steel. 57

The radical model of all work study universities, the Jiangxi (Kiangsi) Communist Labor University, probably to their later embarrassment, recounted their struggles against their series of class enemies who threatened the survival of the school - Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao and the gang of four (to their embarrassment, because Liu was soon after fully rehabilitated).⁵⁸ The ideas of the radicals in the educational field had become political poison.

Discussions of the new role of education were well under way by 1978. In July and August of 1978 provincial educational work conferences were held in no less than six provinces. People's Daily editorials echoed the need to emphasize book learning and the teacher as a tool for transferring knowledge, in order to train "a greater number of competent people who are both red and expert for the Four Modernizations".⁵⁹ Hubei (Hupeh) educational work conference suggested "It is imperative to get a good grasp of improving the standard of education.... We must focus our attention on meeting the needs of the rapid development of modern economy and technology."⁶⁰ The integration of

technology and education, and the intense demand to raise the standards of education were constant themes in discussion on education.

But rebuilding education was not seen as an easy or rapid task. The Gang was credited with causing "great losses" that would take decades to overcome.⁶¹ The radicals had certainly wreaked havoc on the public image of education and the educated. Ideological campaigns against studying to gain prestige, the rustication movement, high urban unemployment and negative social images of intellectuals all served to act as a disincentive for parents and students to struggle to achieve in school.⁶² Constant reference was made to the dispirited and anxious teachers, ready to ward off criticism in any new radical campaign.

The "decline" of standards had more concrete results too. Less schools and students existed in Shanghai in the mid-1970's than before the Cultural Revolution, and many institutes of higher education are still only slowly raising their enrollment to pre-Cultural Revolution levels.⁶³ Recent middle school tests given to college graduates who had been given urban technical jobs (and therefore presumably were the better students) produced rather dismal results: 68% failed math, 70% failed physics, and 76% failed chemistry.⁶⁴ Universities, especially between 1973-1975 were engaged rather heavily in providing remedial education.⁶⁵ Beijing university offered six month basic preparatory classes for all students in

math, physics, chemistry, languages, culture and politics, while Fudan (Futan) arranged special classes for those students with limited educational backgrounds.⁶⁶ These courses were certainly necessary where schools were concerned with broadening the nature of their student population, but for those concerned with educational efficiency they were redundant.

Before educational reforms could be implemented, it was necessary to reorganize the educational bureaucracy. The provincial educational conferences were used to indicate the direction in which the new education was to lead. In general the Ministry of Education appeared conciliatory towards radicals within the educational bureaucracy. Statements appeared suggesting that upper comrades, not lower comrades, were responsible for the mistakes of the Cultural Revolution and Gang of Four.⁶⁷ But, many of the educational conferences were not so magnanimous. Considerable opposition resulting in bitter debates resulted from the new proposals.⁶⁸

Especially within institutes of higher education, struggles against the supporters of the radical policies continued into 1978. The Party Committee of Qinghua University declared in February 1978 that after "heated and complicated struggle" it had destroyed the Gang's clique at Qinghua. A day earlier Beijing University had announced that the pernicious influence of the Gang amongst students and faculty had finally been destroyed.⁶⁹ Radicals in leadership

positions had been purged:

The leadership ranks of many scientific and technical institutes and some higher academic institutes have been adjusted, replenished and strengthened. Those who closely followed the Gang of Four in their destruction and sabotage were cleaned out. Some who were not suitable for leadership work have been transferred to other posts. ⁷⁰

The leadership of the schools had again fallen on the Party Committee, with school custodians often playing the role of representative of the "masses" on school committees. ⁷¹

Student participation in running schools was also labelled an aberration of the Gang of Four, and withdrawn. ⁷² The Chancellors and vice-chancellors in institutes of higher education were to be responsible for academic administration, under the guidance of a school Party committee which was to select "experts" to lead the political work -- a system that Deng had praised for its ability to give specialists a free hand. All efforts were made to improve the status of teachers. Almost all professors removed during the Cultural Revolution, at least at Qinghua, were reinstated. ⁷⁴ Those teachers who suited the requirements were to be admitted to the Party, and media articles expounded on the glory of teaching. ⁷⁴ The system of academic ranks and titles was reinstituted, and medals of citations provided for model teachers. ⁷⁶

In terms of reform of curriculum, not surprisingly politics was considerably de-emphasized in favor of academic subjects. Deng Xiaoping proclaimed in 1979 "There is no doubt that schools should always attach primary importance

to a firm and correct political orientation. This, however, does not mean devoting many classroom hours to ideological and political education."⁷⁷ Teaching methods no longer encouraged discussion and creativity, or individual study, but stressed the traditional rote learning and strict discipline.⁷⁸ Centralized texts were reintroduced and liberal arts and social science subjects again encouraged.⁷⁹

The new curricula also reversed the radical trend to stress indigenous learning. The left had argued that use of foreign models of technology stifled initiative, and were all too often adopted blindly. The new education, on the other hand, declared that without mastering foreign technology, China could never catch up to foreign technology.⁸⁰ Even some western literature, and economics and finance were now acceptable subjects of study.⁸¹ In order to obtain an optimal amount of foreign technology, it was announced in 1978 that 20,000 students were to be sent overseas by 1985 - goals that since then seem to have been somewhat reduced.⁸²

The integration of labour into the school curriculum, for the most part was rejected. Only in the countryside does labour still play a major role, in part-work part-study schools. The "open school" concept has also been diminished, no longer are schools to disrupt the course of study to come in contact with industry and farms.⁸³ Since 1972 many colleges had been closing workshops and reducing the amount of manual labor. One of the earlier "poisonous weeds" had

suggested that:

Some research cannot be conducted outside and must be conducted in laboratories - we must not abolish this type of research. We must not demand that all research work 'take the factory and countryside as the base' and indiscriminately shout the slogan: 'open the doors to conduct scientific research.' 84

The Ministry of Education in 1979 suggested that scientific and technical personnel must devote five-sixths of their time to professional work.⁸⁵ Indeed, the one-fifth of the time devoted to labour has been said to include such things as maintenance of daily equipment, administrative work and "problems of daily life".⁸⁶ Within primary schools, reports vary from four days labour and four days military training a year to three weeks manual labour.⁸⁷ Middle school labour appears to vary even more. Some schools appear to devote two to three days to military drill but two periods weekly of manual labour to other schools where labour occupies eight weeks a year.⁸⁸ But, labour in senior middle school was to be a teaching aid, not "pure manual labour"; foreign language students engaged in translation work for their manual labour, and chemistry students made dacron from oil residues.⁸⁹

Central to the new educational system and its policy of increasing standards in the most efficient manner was the reinstatement of key school, considered during the Cultural Revolution as "treasure pagodas". The new key schools were to be run by the Ministry of Education, the technical Ministries, municipalities, prefectures and counties. The most highly trained teachers, newest materials and ablest

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students were to be concentrated in the key schools.

The Shanxi (Shensi) educational bureau in defence of key schools suggested:

First of all this suits the need of the Four Modernizations which require that we educate a large number and variety of construction personnel in as short a time as possible. Second, it is based on the reality of our country's present situation in teaching resources, equipment, budgets and so on. Limited by such conditions, it is impossible for us to equip all the schools we have at one time. We must concentrate our limited personnel materials and finances at those places where they are most needed in order to solve those problems which are presently of greatest urgency. Third, this is the method which Chairman Mao promoted: grasp key points and sum up experiences, mobilize the general and push forward the overall situation. 90

Within the key schools, streaming according to ability is sanctioned, teaching plans are increasingly theoretical, and the new standards for teachers are to be implemented first. Teachers of high standards who had been assigned to decentralized schools were returned to the central key schools.⁹¹

Not surprisingly, and in accordance with the principles of concentration of resources, key schools appear to be predominantly urban. At the pinnacle, of the twenty schools run directly by the Ministry of Education only one is an agricultural middle school, six are located in Beijing Tianjin (Tientsin) or Shanghai, and the rest are nearly all urban.⁹² Most of the prestigious pre-liberation schools which were all urban and designated as key schools before the Cultural Revolution have retained their key ranking.

In higher education, 89 out of 598 institutions are designated as key, including 60 that were so designated as key in

the mid 1960's.⁹³ Eight of these schools were in Shanghai alone.⁹⁴

Within the urban areas responsibility for running key schools is multifaceted. Urban educational bureaus can run key schools on an "all-city" basis for the "best" key school as well as within individual districts. Two or three key middle schools and five or six key primary schools can be run within one city district, exact numbers left to local discretion. Provincial educational bureaus may run key schools on an all province basis and within prefectures and counties. Prefectures and counties can also run their own key schools, but Ministry of Education guidelines suggest that two or three key middle schools and six key primary schools per county are sufficient.⁹⁵ Thus the distribution of key schools within rural areas is probably somewhat limited. Where a commune contains a key primary school, or perhaps even a key junior middle school, that key school is most likely to be located in the commune center. Other schools within the countryside are likely to be half-work half-study.⁹⁶

The key school concept can only diminish the resources and prestige of non-key rural schools, in comparison to their centrally located counterparts in commune centers and county seats.

With the return of hierarchical educational structures new admissions procedures are necessary. These new regulations do little to nurture the educationally disadvantaged, but are based firmly on the principles of equality of opportunity and

failure as the responsibility of the individual rather than function of class background.⁹⁷

At the primary level, even key schools were to enroll students on the neighbourhood principle. But visitors to China have reported receiving evasive answers when asking about admissions selections to key primary schools, and were told that "in other places" primary school entrance exams had been reinstituted.⁹⁸ Shanghai has announced the reinstatement of primary school entrance examinations, and in Guangzhou (Kwangchou), although the neighbourhood principle was to prevail, students for key primary schools were to be interviewed along with their parents to assess the child's "performance, intellectual quality and health".⁹⁹

Entrance to all middle schools is now conditional upon entrance examinations. Deng Xiaoping announced that secondary schools and colleges should enroll "only those who are outstanding".¹⁰⁰ Recent tours of educationalists have been told that entrance to middle school is automatic where sufficient places exist (in larger cities) and only where the potential student population is greater than school capacity will entrance examinations be instituted for a preliminary screening, followed by an inquiry into political standing and physical health.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, Nanjing (Nanking) Beijing and Guangzhou have all implemented city wide junior and senior middle school entrance exams in order to assign students to provincial, all-city, district or ordinary secondary school, according to grades. In Shanghai, those

students who failed a year were held back.¹⁰²

Entrance to key secondary school has almost become a condition for entrance to higher education. In 1978, urban key school graduates had a ten times better chance of obtaining entrance to higher education than ordinary rural senior middle school graduates (and we have seen that only very few rural youth have the opportunity to attend senior middle school). Students attending vocational and factory schools no longer have the right to apply for the new national college entrance exams.¹⁰³ Indeed the Ministry of Education in 1977 has directed that "To select good students, the institutions of higher education must give priority to those from key schools."¹⁰⁴ Those rural youth who do attain access to regular senior middle schools are usually ineligible to write the college entrance examinations since they usually have nine rather than the required ten years of education.¹⁰⁵ In the past, rural youth with only junior middle school education but strong "life experience" were eligible to enter college, but the Ministry of Education has also closed that path.¹⁰⁶

The first college entrance exams were held in December 1977 and were set and administered by the provinces. Bookstores and libraries were flooded with students in the two months preceding the exams. Only 5,700,000 of the eligible 20-25,000,000 who had finished senior middle school, were under thirty and were single wrote the exam, suggesting some prior screening process. Out of the 5,700,000 million,

only 278,00 were finally admitted, 30% of whom entered directly from senior middle school.¹⁰⁷

Since 1977 standard national exams have been given annually. The range of those students entitled to write the exams has been progressively narrowed. The 1979 age limit was 25, with some exceptions for extraordinary youth up to the age of 28. Working people are being discouraged from writing the exams, and are expected to obtain permission from their work units.¹⁰⁸ Each province is allotted a fixed number of college seats in key and regular universities, nationwide and within their own provinces. Different institutions have different minimum scores for entrance, and the grades, medical and political evaluations of students who fall within the range for specific institutions are sent to the schools for the schools to make their selection. The Ministry of Education has directed that:

When people are equal morally intellectually and physically, it is necessary to give priority to admitting workers and poor and lower middle peasants and their sons and their sons and daughters, PLA candidates and sons and daughters of martyrs... as well as Taiwanese, Hong Kong and Macao youth, rusticated youth and women.¹⁰⁹

Priority given to high achieving peasant youth was largely nominal since, sent down youth were reclassified as peasants when applying for university entrance. Visiting Americans at the Beijing Teachers Training College were told that the majority of students were sent down youth, not peasants.¹¹⁰ Indeed official figures of student class background are even more vague than those of before the Cultural Revolution. The 1977 figures indicate that 87% of the 1977 entrants

entrants to higher education were from worker, peasant, soldier, cadre or intellectual background.¹¹¹ Beijing University was slightly more specific; out of a total enrollment of 17,000, of which 7,700 came from Beijing, and 24% were female, family background was 34% worker-peasant (and sent-down youth) 39% were cadres and military, and 11% intellectuals.¹¹² Another description of the class background of 36 students in an agricultural technical college recounted that 1 came from a capitalist background, 19 were from working class families, 8 were sent-down youth, 8 came directly from senior middle school and one from the government.¹¹³ None were peasants.

Although the examination system must be distasteful to those who supported the Cultural Revolution reforms of placing politics ahead of marks, opposition to the examination system appears to be more concerned with fair application of the system rather than ideological opposition to the fundamental principles of the system. Thomas Bernstein reports of wall posters in the interior protesting the high rate of college admissions from culturally advantaged areas such as Shanghai.¹¹⁴ The media, especially in 1978, have been stressing the severe punishment accorded to those who cheat on exams or use political pull to "get in through the back-door". Thus, the favoritism that had marred the Cultural Revolution recommendation system is no longer so easy.

One Shandong (Shantung) head of a commune education bureau, was dismissed from the Party and removed from his job, after

smuggling his daughter's examination papers out of the exam hall and giving them to a teacher to write.¹¹⁵ Another common complaint was the assignment to institutions which the students did not appreciate, such as the Shandong (Shantung) Mining College and Electrical Machinery Dynamics Institute; students were much more desirous of places in the liberal arts and science universities.¹¹⁶ The students in Peking in 1979 demonstrated in the streets after many of them received passing grades but were not admitted to college because all the colleges to which they had applied had been swamped by applicants with higher grades and they had not stated on their application forms that they were willing to accept arbitrary assignment.¹¹⁷ The concerns of the students are understandable -- they had realized that education was to be the key to their future position in society, and with the age limits imposed on higher education, they may never have the chance to so decisively shape their futures again.

The emphasis on quality professional education was inevitably to work against the needs of mass schools, created to satisfy quantitative goals in the Cultural Revolution. These schools, designed to universalize basic education, regardless of qualitative problems were an anathema to the new educational bureaucracy. Efficiency and maximization of resources were the new touchstones.

The major change in lower levels of education was the reintroduction of levels of centralization, according to the level of development of the schools. In order to

improve the quality of education, the Ministry of Education was to directly guide the curriculum and program of all schools in the full day ten year program; that is all schools with complete courses and facilities and receive state funding. Those schools which are outside the regular ten year full time program such as nine year combined agricultural middle schools and all work-study schools which were predominant in rural areas were either to convert to the ten year regular system, if resources were sufficient, or to become irregular work study or agricultural middle schools, depending on the level of local funding. The irregular schools were to follow provincial not Ministry guidelines. Daily management of irregular schools was to be removed from the brigade and commune and returned to the county educational bureaus and above.¹¹⁸

An immediate impact of centralization at the county level was that since the county bureau was responsible for administering the concentration of resources in certain key schools, and the county was now controlling min ban resources, an inevitable flow would occur away from the irregular schools to local key schools. This is immediately apparent in the reallocation of experienced teachers. Under the direction of county bureaus, teachers transferred either into labour or down to min ban schools in the past were reappointed to their former schools. and irregular teachers found to be lacking in intellectual background were to be returned to production.¹¹⁹ Indeed, interviews with some county educational

bureau officials indicated considerable bitterness towards min ban teachers and in one county, at least, exams for the teachers were to be especially difficult in order to remove them.¹²⁰ The irregular teachers appear to represent to these educational bureaus the final symbol of the radicalism of the Cultural Revolution and the indignities they received therein. In another county where during the Cultural Revolution eighteen senior middle schools were created, one in every commune, and a junior middle school in every production brigade, the county official stated that now the system was returning to the pre-Cultural Revolution level pattern of two senior middle schools in a county and ten junior middle schools -- less than one per commune. All the best teachers were to be reconcentrated in the two senior middle schools.¹²¹

Cutting back on rural mass education and other social services was to free resources to increase production -- a key step in the new strategy for development. In what almost appears to be a trickle down theory of education, the Minister of Education Liu Xiyao in a 1978 interview argued that increasing educational quality would accelerate modernization and thereby raise living standards in the countryside, eventually decreasing the rural-urban gap.¹²² Education was reflecting the general impetus of the development policies. Sideline industries and small free market production was being allowed to flourish. Dazhai (Tachai), the radical model of agricultural development was denounced, and labelled "ultra-left".¹²³ Material incentives, bitterly

opposed by the left, have been reinstated. All "excessive" redistribution for social services or political considerations are under attack. Indeed, the very unit of account has been changed, and the production brigade diminished. Contracts for fixed quotas of production in 80% of the production teams in China are now assigned to groups varying from five to six households in central areas, to individual households in more remote areas. Any amount produced above the contracted quota after taxes and grain reserves, is divided between members of this smaller unit.¹²⁴ Not just the reforms of the Cultural Revolution, but the reforms of the Great Leap and rural reforms of 1956 had been erased. Self-sustained min-ban schools would no longer have the base of support provided by the economic strength of a production team or brigade.¹²⁵

By necessity, the universalization of primary schooling now claimed only for the cities is considered a long term goal. American educators reported recently that the Ministry of Education and several provincial educational bureaus:

...informed us that ten years of education is universally available in most of China's major urban centers but that the length of schooling in the countryside is very uneven. According to Minliu, some rural areas have achieved the goal of seven years of universal education, but most have not; this remains a target that will not be reached for some time to come.¹²⁶

The theory group of the Ministry of Education has asserted in a typical statement "We must insist on conducting education in various forms and we should pay attention not only to the popularization of education, but at the present time, more to its improvement."¹²⁷ Evidently the universalization

of the most basic educational opportunities within some rural areas is considered to be not worth the cost. At the same time girls and minority groups continue to be under-¹²⁸represented in rural education. The reduction of the effort to expand education could only further hinder those groups. Likewise, the centralization of meager rural educational resources could most harm those furthest from the center, in the outlying areas where education has a long way to go before becoming universal at the most meager level; for these are the areas that most depend upon the min-ban schools that now appear to be under attack.

If efforts to expand primary school are diminishing, the condition of middle schooling is hardly very different. Access to middle schooling, especially senior middle schooling is being restricted, not just as we have seen in the centralization of rural areas, but also within the cities. In part, this diminution of secondary schooling must be seen in the light of the rapid expansion of middle schooling in the Cultural Revolution. By 1979, 65.4 million students were enrolled in middle schools -- 63 times the number in 1949, while primary schools had increased to 146 million -- only six times the 1949 figure.¹²⁹ In 1977 interviews with the Ministry of Education, Suzanne Pepper was told that enrollment in middle schools was four times that of immediately before the Cultural Revolution.¹³⁰ The Cultural Revolution, in bringing junior-middle schooling to the commune, was fulfilling a strong popular desire for accessible post-primary education,

but with the renewed emphasis on quality education, the cost could no longer be justified. Seven year education could only be continued where conditions are favourable, and should not put any strain on basic primary education.¹³¹ Provincial educational bureaus chided those who considered primary school as a stepping stone to further education, suggesting that primary schooling should indeed be considered an end goal for large numbers of people.¹³² Consolidation of rural middle schools have been reported in Honan (Henan) Hebei (Hopei) and Guangzhou. Suzanne Pepper reports that in a 1978 trip to Guangzhou the education bureau informed her that since the quality of middle schooling was too low, the universalization of middle schooling should no longer be an immediate goal. Pepper also reports that recent issues of People's Education quote the Liaoning provincial education bureau as praising the "golden age" of the mid-1960's where junior middle schools were only run in communes where conditions were adequate, rather than in every brigade. The bureau further suggested that the number of middle school students be reduced from 3.8 million to 3 million within three years, by allowing communes to run only one junior middle school and county levels to run only a few senior middle schools.¹³³

At the senior middle level, the changes are even more restrictive. Hua Guofeng (Hua Kuo-feng) in his February 1978 "Report to the Fifth National People's Conference" reaffirmed the goal of universal senior middle schooling in

the cities, and universal junior schooling in the countryside by 1985.¹³⁴ More recent reports, however, considerably downplay, if not contradict, any effort made to achieve that goal. Beijing Review in September 1979 announced that:

The rapid development of senior middle schools in recent years has spread financial resources thin and aggravated shortages of qualified teachers. As a result the quality of education has declined.¹³⁵

Current official estimates are that more than 50% of junior middle graduates will not enter senior middle school.¹³⁶ The Cultural Revolution emphasis on general education has been denounced in favor of more specialized vocational education. The pre-Cultural Revolution ration of one ordinary middle school for each specialized senior middle school has been reaffirmed as desirable, and the post-Cultural Revolution ratio of 12 to one in Beijing and five to one in Tianjin (Tientsin) in favor of general middle schools has been criticized as counter productive on the grounds that graduates from general senior middle schools need further training to be productive, while only four percent of general senior middle school graduates can be accommodated in higher education.¹³⁷ Difficult entrance exams to senior middle schooling are being used to remove substandard students. In Hangzhou (Hangchow) where the universalization of middle schooling had been announced in 1977, Chinese visitors told Pepper that only 60% of junior middle grads could enter senior middle school.¹³⁸

A return to the dual system of education, apparent in the institutions of key schools is even more evident in

the divisions of middle schooling. On the one hand, while quantitative restrictions on middle schooling are occurring, at least in part, because of the limitations of resources, the qualitative divisions are being deepened between levels of schooling. The specialized vocational schools and agricultural middle schools downplayed in the Cultural Revolution for being a "lower track" imbalanced kind of schooling are now being restored in many parts of the country.¹³⁹

The Ministry of Education has suggested that in opposition to any regular curricula schools, the agricultural and technical high schools should be part-work part-study.¹⁴⁰

These schools are on a separate track to regular schools and their students may not write the college entrance exams--even though these exams are required for entrance to higher technical colleges.¹⁴¹ Meanwhile, the expansion of educational opportunities in vocational middle schools appears to be only very minimal, and certainly much less than the quantitative drop in availability of regular middle schooling.¹⁴²

Another renewed aspect of the tendency to dual track can be found in the encouragement of factory schools, which are to be run by petroleum, metallurgy, coal and geology enterprises and institutes. These schools are to emphasize basic knowledge needed by those industries,¹⁴³ and are specifically to enroll children of the employees of those industries. These children will thus be directed into the same industries as their parents upon graduation.¹⁴⁴

The return to a kind of hereditary determinism can also be seen in the apparent renewed emphasis on agricultural middle schools in rural areas. Meanwhile, access to key middle schools in the academic track is limited to those with innate intellectual prowess or superior early academic training, a result of the use of entrance examinations to primary and middle key schools.

Streaming according to ability within schools, again a practice vilified during the Cultural Revolution, has re-emerged in schools from Beida University to regular primary schools.¹⁴⁵ In Hangzhou, local residents complained to foreign visitors that only the best students were given extra help to prepare for senior middle entrance exams, while those who failed were transferred down to a different track staffed with irregular teachers in order to repeat their year. Foreign visitors discussing the advantages and disadvantages of streaming with educators in Guangzhou (Kwangchow) were told that rather than deprive the "slower" students of the intellectual stimulation of the brighter students, they decided against a "slow" class and instead group each grade into "fast" and "average" classes. But in Guangzhou, individual schools are given the power to decide how to stream students.¹⁴⁶ Streaming, within the classroom, and between tracks of schooling, when based primarily on academic achievement, can only serve to limit the potential achievement of the educationally disadvantaged - acting as a dangerous means of social differentiation.

Where education is the prime determinant of mobility within society, this can only be more true, furthering the social division of labour.¹⁴⁷

To replace some of the opportunities lost in the centralization and restriction of education, the Ministry of Education has emphasized the need to promote night schools, television and radio schools, and correspondence education. Through spare time colleges, rural "returned" educated youth and urban youth sent down to the countryside can sit regular standard university examinations, and gain the same diploma as regular university students if they pass the locally given exams.¹⁴⁸ The extent of this program at present is unclear, but the orientation of spare time education to those who cannot attend regular schooling is indeed valuable. Enthusiasm for spare time education has apparently soared among working youth eligible to write the entrance exam. One factory culture class found enrollment increase from 30 to 300 after the announcement of national entrance exams.¹⁴⁹ More general workers education, on the other hand, appears to be less emphasized. The July 21 Workers Universities run by factories are now enrolling through entrance examinations at the senior middle school graduate level, rather than taking politically advanced workers off the shop floor.¹⁵⁰

Rustication, as we have seen, a highly unpopular and volatile issue, has been dealt with by the new government in a manner consistent with (their other) policies. Political ramifications of the program, such as reducing the urban

rural gap have been de-emphasized in favor of reducing the program wherever possible, limited only by economic constraints of urban unemployment.¹⁵¹ The rustication program is no longer to disrupt the educational system since work requirements before entrance to university have been dropped, and 20-30% of university spaces are reserved for students entering directly from middle school, and rusticated youth must compete on entrance exams as equals with senior middle school graduates.¹⁵² Even the goals of furthering rural development and encouraging urban youth to learn from the peasantry have been diminished as youth are to be sent increasingly to small towns, in order to reduce the "burden" on the rural areas. Those youth who are sent down to the rural areas are to be:

...gradually shifted to those collective farms where they can get double the amount of pay than hitherto. This will enable them to maintain the same living standards as in the cities. ¹⁵³

Popular opposition to the program, and the civil disobedience caused by the illegal return of many youth to the cities almost certainly caused reduction of the program. By 1979 Shanghai, Zhejiang (Chekiang), Guizhou (Kweichow), Shaanxi (Shensi) and Shanxi (Shansi) were all limiting their rustication program, with the aim of phasing it out.¹⁵⁴ Disruption caused by the rapid return of five million sent down youth to the cities (half the total number in the countryside in 1979) has slowed the phasing out of the program.¹⁵⁵ By September of 1979, rustication was declared to be a policy of Mao and Zhou, and if tainted by the Gang of Four, should be cleansed

and improved.¹⁵⁶ But dedication to the original principles of rustication --that urban youth needed more education than could be provided by formal schooling and needed exposure to the peasantry to overcome their negative class tendencies -- was no longer a central theme. If ideology was at all a motivating factor, it was a very different ideology.

Despite the trial of the Gang of Four and the reversal of many of the Cultural Revolution policies in education, the new government has been very slow and cautious to explicitly denounce Mao, his policies or his ideology. Rather, a policy of selective interpretation has been followed. Deng Xiaoping, for example has quoted Mao's statement that "Education must serve proletarian politics and be combined with productive labor" in order to justify the need to train a "large contingent of working class intellectuals".¹⁵⁷ The Shaanxi (Shensi) Bureau of Education in discussing problems of "the relationship between popularization of education and educating experts" (down-playing the notion of red and expert) quotes Mao's "elevation to us is elevation on the basis of, popularization and popularization is to us popularization under the guidance of elevation."¹⁵⁸ But Mao's position is being constantly eroded, he is far from considered infallible, and his position as a theoretician is all but abandoned. Shanghai Teacher's University in its "Selected Readings from the classics of Marxism Leninism" makes no mention of Mao whatsoever.¹⁵⁹ The campaign on the Criterion of Truth became a direct attack on those who followed Mao's ideas too

closely. One editorial criticized those people who:

Proceeding from a blind faith in books, a small number of people inside the Party maintained that truth was everything that was written in books, inscribed in monuments or said by leaders, without regards to changes in time, place and condition. The view that 'nothing of the past can be changed, even a little but must be followed mechanistically in the future' severely hampered the smooth progress of the campaign of bringing order out of chaos. Thus a series of discussions of Marxist principles arose concerning the question of whether the practice of millions of people, or the books or quotations or remarks of leaders should be used as the criterion of testing truth. 160

To create order, the new government was more than willing to follow popular practice at the expense of Mao's ideological principles.

Class struggle, and Mao's tenet to 'Never Forget the Class Struggle', is certainly one of the most fundamental principles that has been challenged by the new government, with perhaps the greatest implication for the educational field. According to People's Daily, Hua Guofeng has:

...pointed out that with the elimination of landlords and rich peasants as a class and the non-existence of capitalists as a class themselves, the intellectuals have become socialist intellectuals. While the assertion has received the people's support, some comrades cast doubts on it and even disavowed it.

What will be the consequences of negating Comrade Hua's assertion? The conclusions will be: First it is improper or erroneous to shift the focus of work to the four modernizations; instead large scale class struggle should be conducted to eliminate the landlords, rich peasants, the bourgeoisie and bourgeois intellectuals. Second, it is incorrect to concentrate on the criticisms of the ultraleftist trend of thought; instead rightist thinking should be primarily criticized. 161

Naturally it is wrong to arrive at such conclusions...

The texts asserts that continuing class struggle could only decrease and lower the standard of living to the detriment

of the four modernizations. Socialism "in the main" had been completed in 1956, asserts the article, but was disrupted by the "leftist wind" of September 1956 that continued into the Cultural Revolution.¹⁶²

The implications for education are of course tremendous. No longer is education to be a means of reducing the differences between mental and manual labour. An editorial in Guangming Ribao declared that "the social division of labour between mental and physical labour as well as various professions and trades are unavoidable".¹⁶³ Even the children of former capitalists are to be given equal standing in education, Party membership, communist youth league membership and job placement.¹⁶⁴ In a much publicized "model case", a young teacher with good entrance exam grades received entrance to post graduate study, despite a father who was a Guomintang (Kuomintang) official, and relatives in Taiwan in "high places".¹⁶⁵ Intellectuals are now "mental workers" and part of the working class, certainly not the bourgeoisie as declared by the Gang of Four.¹⁶⁶

These changes in the official ideology can only slowly filter through the educational system. In Beida University, in 1978 at least, conflict between the worker-peasant students and the new exam entrance senior middle school graduates was bitter. The worker-peasant students had to defend their position as part of the revolutionary levelling of classes, while the new students accused them of receiving the patronage of the Gang of Four and not being

real intellectuals.¹⁶⁷ And, at the 1978 National Conference on College Enrollment "some people", most especially the Anhui (Anwei) delegation, were strongly protesting the change in admission policies which favoured the urban intellectuals over peasants and workers.¹⁶⁸ But, opposition to educational change and the diminution of class struggle is under considerable, if not insurmountable pressure.

Footnotes

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¹³²Bratton, supra fn. 104, p. 64.

¹³³Pepper, supra fn. 72, pp. 12-13.

¹³⁴Hua Guofeng, "Report to the 5th National People's Conference" Beijing Review 10 (February 26, 1978) p. 28.

¹³⁵"Stress Secondary Technical Education" Beijing Review 37 (September 14, 1979) p. 7-8.

¹³⁶Pepper, supra fn. 72.

¹³⁷He Zuo, supra fn. 78, p. 18.

¹³⁸Pepper, supra fn. 72, p. 12.

¹³⁹"Stress Secondary" supra fn. 135.

¹⁴⁰Liu Xiyao, supra fn. 76, p. 19.

¹⁴¹Shirk supra fn. 48, p. 198, and Pepper, supra fn. 72, p. 16.

¹⁴²See Appendix A.

¹⁴³"With the State" supra fn. 92, p. 160.

¹⁴⁴FBIS January 26, 1978, E6 and May 17, 1979, L17.

¹⁴⁵Robin Munro, "Settling Accounts With the Cultural Revolution at Beijing University 1977-78" China Quarterly 82 (June 1980) pp. 308-333.

¹⁴⁶Pepper, supra fn. 72, pp. 13-14, 37-58.

¹⁴⁷Samuel Bowles, "Unequal Education and the Reproduction of the Social Divisions of Labor" and Pierre Bourdieu, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction" in Power and Ideology in Education, Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey (eds.) New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) pp. 137-152 and 487-510.

- 148 Liu Xiyao, supra fn. 76.
- 149 "This Years National Entrance Has Ended Victoriously" (from Guangming Ribao) Chinese Education (Spring 1979) pp.76-80 and "Properly Arrange Spare Time Study for the Vast Masses of Youth" Chinese Education (Spring 1979) pp.156-58.
- 150 Munro supra fn. 145, p.315.
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166 "China's Intellectuals - Part of the Working Class"
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167 Munro, supra fn. 145, p.311-12.

168 Pepper, supra fn. 72.

Conclusion

Educational policy in the People's Republic of China has consistently been adopted as a mechanism of growth and development, adjusted to the political, social and economic goals of any one period. But as any one policy has been implemented or any one set of goals or objectives reached, new tensions have arisen, demanding further changes. The outcome of any reform becomes the preconditions for the need for new reforms.

Educational policies have shifted back and forth between expansion and radicalisation, and retrenchment and reconstruction. In the 1950's the radical mass based strategies of the base areas were downgraded as inferior in favor of more orthodox educational approaches supposedly better suited to the goals of 'national reconstruction'. Education was to build a well trained technical elite to lead the revolution in development. But the plans of the First Five Year Plan fell short as the Hundred Flowers campaign laid bare the political inadequacies of the educated elite. Dissatisfaction with the dominant strategy of development, characterized by its urban, industrial, hierarchical and technical orientation, led to the Great Leap and its mass style of development. Agricultural part-work part-study schools and locally run irregular schools flourished and at higher levels courses were simplified and streamlined. Work and study, theory and practice, were to be integrated.

Education was to serve a fundamentally political, not just instructional goal. But hardly before the reforms were in place, tensions arose over feared academic inadequacies of the program. At a time of economic hardship, the decision was made that the political value of the educational reform, and the economic benefits of enhanced rural development, were no longer considered worth the cost of a reduction in the number of highly proficient skilled technical professional graduates. Reversion to emphasis on higher education at the expense of primary--especially rural primary--was once again complete. But the return to hierarchical education, again created tensions that for some were unbearable, as the gap between the highly trained and the working masses increased. Within the educational field, the Cultural Revolution saw a return to the radical mass education of the Great Leap, with some aspects borrowed from recent radical Soviet policies. Politics was again to the fore. Education was once again to be reintegrated into a mass strategy in tune with the needs of the working world. Hardly surprisingly, again before the new policies were completely in place, tensions once again arose, the reforms were to be reversed, lower levels of education cut back, politics and work-study de-emphasized, higher education expanded and quality of education once again stressed.

The decisions to curtail mass-oriented strategies

of education were not purely a result of economic constraints, since the potential impact of the strategies on rural economic development could have been enormous. Maoist educational strategies, far from being economically or politically utopian were effective strategies for promoting grassroots participation in rural development. Agricultural work-study schools were capable of introducing appropriate technology to rural areas, while encouraging youth with some education to discover solutions for local problems. Turning schools over to management by neighbourhoods and brigades forced communities to actively discover what they wished education to achieve and gave them the responsibility to guide their childrens' education in that direction. Meanwhile these 'irregular' schools could be expanded at virtually no direct cost to the state. Simplification of higher education and tying higher education to specific needs of the working world effectively directed the focus of education away from singleminded concern for high technology. Radical strategies were certainly economically rational in satisfying Maoist goals of development. Opposition to the radical strategies goes beyond purely economic goals to differing perceptions of development and growth intrinsic in the dichotomy between quality hierarchy and mass based egalitarianism.

Perhaps the central problem of Chinese education has been the inability of either development strategy to gain ascendancy over any length of time, causing continual

fundamental change. The pragmatic strategy of 'Walking on Two Legs', which recognizes the dual ongoing need for both mass irregular schooling and centralized specialized education, although espoused by most leading figures in education at some point in time, has never been fully implemented as an educational strategy, except for short periods during the Great Leap and in 1964-5. Educational policies have swung back and forth. These swings of policy have perhaps most affected the rural schools, since these are the schools that have been closed and reopened. 'Walking on Two Legs' would, at least, have guaranteed continued minimal support for irregular schools, under which they could slowly improve and develop. But 'Walking on Two Legs' is no panacea for educational problems rather it can reinforce those qualitative differences that caused such resentment between students in work-study schools and regular schools immediately preceding the Cultural Revolution. Only by 'Walking on Two Legs' can education satisfy both the egalitarian and rural development goals while satisfying the professional manpower goals which could only in the long run benefit the masses. But this approach requires conscious compromise between qualitative and quantitative, vertical and horizontal. For the moment, the CCP appears once more motivated by the desire for qualitative hierarchical education. Whether this policy will arouse sufficient tension to create renewed radical backlash, in the short term

appears unlikely. In the long term, a return to rural-oriented egalitarian strategies will always be possible.

Appendix A: Estimated Enrollment

	Primary students (Institutions)	Secondary students (Institutions)	Vocational Secondary students (Institutions)	Tertiary students (Institutions)
1949	<u>24,000,000</u> (a) (346,000) (c)	<u>1,000,000</u> (a) (5,000) (c)	<u>220,000</u> (b) (76,000)(a)	<u>116,000</u> (a) (209) (d)
1951	<u>43,000,000</u> (e)	<u>1,960,000</u> (e)		<u>155,000</u> (e)
1956		<u>4,000,000</u> (f)		<u>403,000</u> (d) (227) (b)
1957-58	<u>64,300,000</u> (e)	<u>7,000,000</u> (c)	<u>2,030,000</u> (P.W.)(g) (22,600) (P.W.)(g)	<u>441,000</u> (e) (839) (d)
1962			<u>266,000</u> (P.W.)(g) (3,715) (P.W.)(g)	
1965-66	<u>116,000,000</u> (h)	<u>15,000,000</u> (d)		<u>674,000</u> (h)
1972	<u>127,000,000</u> (i)			
1977	<u>150,000,000</u> (i)	<u>68,900,000</u> (j)	<u>760,000</u> (a)	<u>584,000</u> (j)
1980	<u>146,240,000</u> (a)	<u>65,400,000</u> (a) (162,000) (a)	<u>530,000</u> (a) (1,700) (a)	<u>850,000</u> (a) (598) (a)

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