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Reporter

75¢

**BUILDING A
SOCIALIST
EDUCATIONAL
SYSTEM IN CHINA**

CHINA'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN EDUCATION

By Rewi Alley

OBSERVATIONS OF AN AMERICAN
EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT

Annie Stein

THE ONGOING BUILDING OF CHINA'S
SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

*"The old educational system has been shattered
to smithereens*

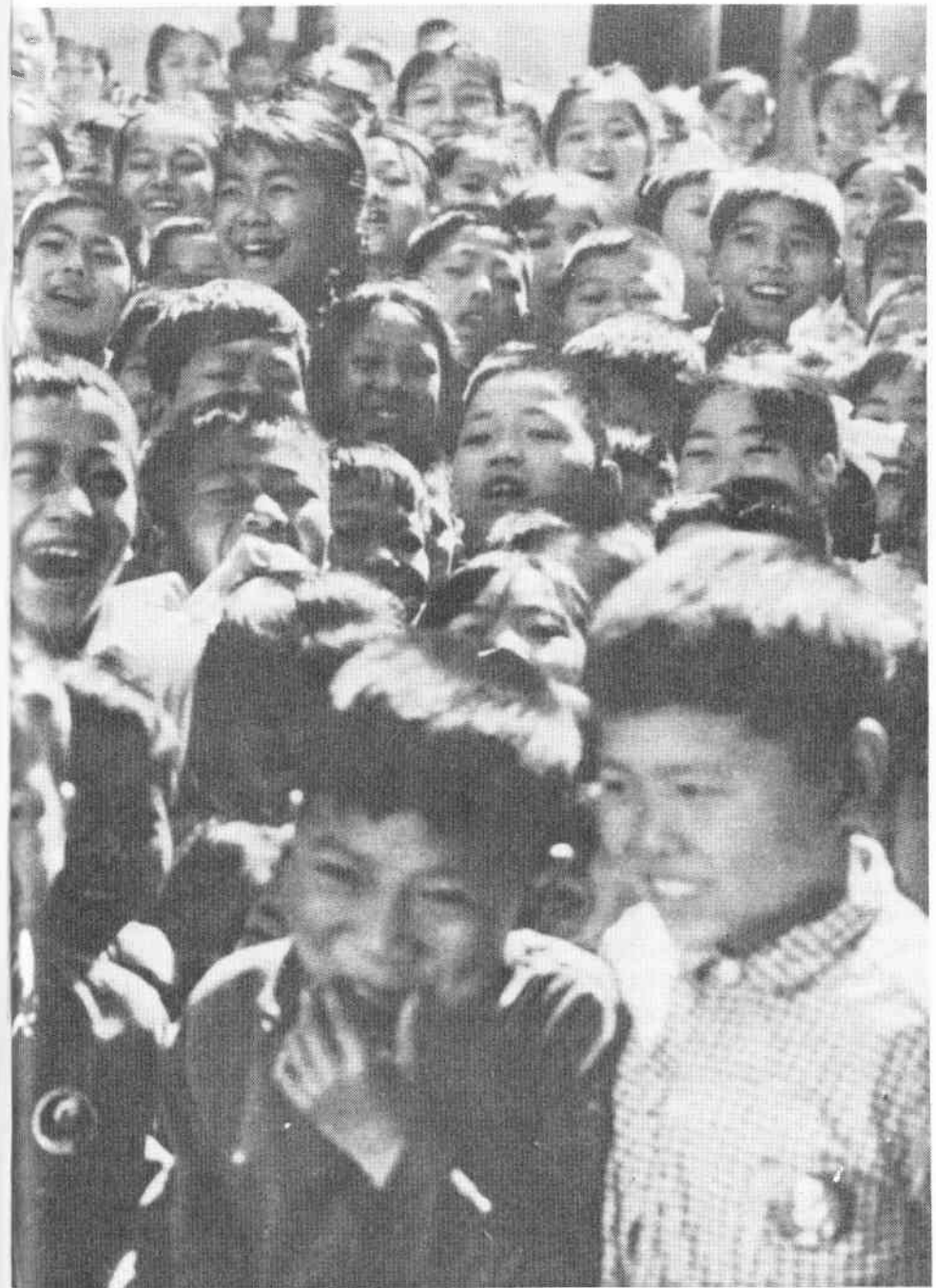
and

*A new educational system is being courageously
and thoughtfully built"*

"The present developments are experimental"



Rewi Alley is a New Zealander who has lived in China for almost half a century. He went to Shanghai in 1927 and, serving first in the Shanghai Fire Department and then as Inspector of Factories, became intimately aware of the suffering of Chinese workers exploited by imperialist owners. In the early 30's he became known overseas for his work in famine and flood relief. He helped found and was Technical Advisor for the world-renowned Chinese Industrial Cooperatives. Traveling over China's vast land, from one end to the other, from year to year, he knows what pre-Liberation China was; and he has seen, in detail, the changes - the enthusiasm, the set-backs, the new efforts, the general trend: the building of the new, the people's China. Millions throughout the world know about China through his dozens of books. Millions more, in China, know his living and warm humanity. The publisher of Far East Reporter first met Rewi in 1927; he was visiting in Changsha for a day or so, and spent a coffee-hour with her at the YWCA temple headquarters where she was living. What an impression he made, in that one hour, on her Chinese colleagues! Whenever she went to Shanghai one of her colleagues who could not speak or understand English, always sent a message - "Greetings to Ai Li - tell him we remember him with love".



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Annie Stein

Visited China in 1972

The Ongoing Building of China's
Socialist Educational System

As reported in Hsinhua News Agency
and China Reconstructs

1974

Annie Stein, with thirty five years of experience as a research analyst, has had long association with the New York City Public School System, serving as consultant, curriculum evaluator, community advocate and staff aide to Dr M A Galamison when he was vice-president of the New York City Board of Education. In 1972 Mrs Stein had the privilege of observing education in the People's Republic of China.

Rewi Alley's "Travels in China 1966-1971" with 588 pages and 130 photographs can be obtained from China Books & Publications at their stores in San Francisco, Chicago and New York. Paper-back \$3.95

FAR EAST REPORTER INTRODUCTION

Education has always had a priority in China - in old China and now in the new, the people's China. Rewi Alley in "Travels in China 1966-1971" brings us up to date-through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution on the process now going on to build the new, the socialist, educational system.

In pre-Liberation (1949) China education was in terms of schooling and was limited to a tiny section of the population - the ruling elite of China's semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. "Education in China from time immemorial has been in the hands of the exploiting class, stressing the individual rather than the collective."* And, education then served the interests of that class only.

When Liberation came in 1949 the new socialist-oriented society quickly made schooling available "for all" - from part-time literacy classes for the uneducated through all the regular academic levels. The new China did not begin by scrapping the already established academic system - a system taken over from Western bourgeois society; rather, it proceeded to steadily change and gear it into an educational system that would serve a socialist society - that would serve all.

In the process of gearing education into socialist forms, elements of bourgeois education still existed. This was unavoidable since practically all teachers and instructors were themselves the product of bourgeois education; and, too, there were those who deliberately preferred the familiar non-socialist education. "The older group of the teaching profession had itself been educated in the old way - accustomed to a rigid syllabus, memorization, cut and dried textbooks....It rather

* This quotation and all others cited in this Introduction are from "Travels in China 1966-1971"

took it for granted that the best in education was to be found in a combination of the Confucian school and the European one brought in by a century of Missionary schools on the China coast, revamped again and again - and then streamlined after Liberation, although without completely altering the basic nature."

"The old educational system has not produced the kind of person adequately fitted with working theory and working practice, immediately able to better production. If there is no proper relation of theory to practice the results will be study for study's sake, art for art's sake, theory for theory's sake - poets and writers without roots amongst the people."

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-1968 wrenched the whole educational set-up. It brought into sharp focus the poisonous bourgeois elements still at work in socialist China. It made clear the distinction between education and schooling; for instance, Red Guards deprived of schooling when universities were closed during the period were, on the contrary, getting invaluable, useful and related education as they participated in the intense ideological and political contests of the revolution. Education was in social struggle, not in classes, during that period.

So today in socialist China education is not confined to semesters and classes. All education, including academic education, has as its primary function to train successors to the revolution. "A revolutionary is always a learner, always going to school." "The whole society is a school."

"Education gives a basis for self-education that will go on after the student graduates. There will no longer be a one-sided emphasis on academic achievements, but more on an all around development which enables the trainee to serve the people better in line with China's socialist development. The new education China is now striving to build brings "an entirely new kind of youngster to the fore - one who can create and make and who understands the need for work and study in terms of his duty to society...Practice accentuates the political

line that teaches the dignity of work, the greatness of the person who can sacrifice most, the emptiness of personal heroism, the value of the collective, the sin of waste and the need to keep in close contact with the masses."

"Teachers no longer prepare lectures behind closed doors; instead, they go to the construction site and discuss various points with workers there, no longer relying entirely on books. The teacher, the administrator, the professional man of the future will have learned through work to feel as the masses of the people feel."

"Education always serves a class and in China that class is the working class."

No one in China claims that the process of building a socialist educational system is finished. "But one thing is sure and certain: the old educational system has been shattered to smithereens, and a new one is being courageously and thoughtfully built."

"The picture is a changing one." And who are making the changes? And who are experimenting? All over China, in communes, in factories, in schools, in neighborhoods, in governmental departments, it is the people who are experimenting, making changes as situations develop. The people are the educators. The people - all the people - are being educated!

Every intellectual a worker and every worker an intellectual! - a goal that is a far cry from the old feudal and the rejected bourgeois society of the West!





Education
In the field

The Cultural Revolution in Education

From

TRAVELS in CHINA 1966-71

Rewi Alley

Prior to the Cultural Revolution the part-work, part-study agricultural and industrial middle schools had been set up in deference to Mao Tsetung Thought, but these had not been extended in any serious way, and were looked down on by the educational pundits as being rather second-rate education. At the beginning of this chapter an account is given of some of the best of these seen in the late spring and early summer of 1966.

As the Cultural Revolution went on, however, it began to be seen that this dovetailing of theory and practice was the way all education should go, from that of primary schools on through universities and still further into cadre training. A revolutionary is always a learner, always going to school. Society is a factory, and the whole of society is a school, too. So here we have part-work, part-study starting in the lowest grades and going right on through to the May 7th Cadre Schools now a feature throughout the whole country. The selections I have made of places visited try to reflect some of the things tried out in various educational institutions on these lines. Needless to say, the picture is a changing one. One thing, however, is sure and certain. The old educational system has been shattered to smithereens, and a new one is being courageously and thoughtfully built.

First Steps Towards Part-Work, Part-Study Schools, 1966

The Chinese revolution is like a great river, sweeping onward. When something gets in its way, waves surround it and, little by little, the difficulty is washed away. Such an obstacle has shown up in the old educational system which, it can be seen now, has not produced the kind of person adequately fitted with working theory and working practice, immediately able to better production whatever sphere he or she is assigned to. If there is no proper relation of theory to practice the result will be study for study's sake, theory for theory's and art for art's sake, poets and writers without any roots amongst the people, engineers who do not want to work in factories but only in technical institutes, doctors who do not want to

dirty their hands on patients and the growth of a new class of the privileged, who will want those who dig and hew to support them as superior beings. In other words, the emergence of a new class, instead of the abolition of classes. So in these days there has been much stress on promoting the part-work, part-study school as a basic revolutionary task. Not so easy as it sounds, for the older group of the teaching profession has itself been educated in the old way — accustomed to a rigid syllabus, memorisation, cut and dried textbooks and all the rest. It rather took for granted that the best in education was to be found in a combination of the Confucian school and the European one brought in by a century of Mission schools to the China coast, revamped again and then streamlined after Liberation, though without completely altering its basic nature.

The part-work, part-study school brings an entirely new kind of youngster to the fore. One who can make and create and understands the need for work and study in terms of his duty to society as well. Practice accentuates the political line that teaches the dignity of work, the greatness of the person who can sacrifice most, the emptiness of personal heroism, the value of the collective, the sin of waste and the need to keep in close contact with the masses. A political line that takes into account the need for class struggle as long as there remain classes, and relates every human effort to the struggle for socialism and a socialist and communist ideology. In consequence, one looks at every attempt of the part-work, part-study school these days as an expression of the true pioneering spirit, venturing out on an entirely new path. I felt this when accepting the invitation, while visiting Hangchow in Chekiang province in 1966, to go and see one of these pioneer schools in the old city.

Hangchow Handicraft School

One could feel it was a good school the minute one stepped inside and watched the youngsters at work. They were happy, poised and keen, quite evidently doing the thing they wanted to be doing. Not much of a school building to look at, in these days of splendid new educational plants. But equipment, spit and polish do not necessarily make a school. The place had once been a local command post of the Japanese gendarmerie during enemy occupation, but since that time a broad modern boulevard has swept through the old city, leaving this house on a cobbled lane well below its level. It has some big, brightly lit rooms, however, as well as courtyard space at the back where classrooms for the students have been built. Then again it is not a big school, nor has it been running for long. Just 64 lads and lasses, graduates of a lower middle school who showed proficiency in drawing or handicraft work, sons and daughters of city workers in the main, only 15 percent of them being from the once privileged class. They work and study together for four years and then go out to the handicraft factories of Hangchow as all-round workers capable of gaining new ideas and of putting them into practice. The school started up in 1960 and does not aim to enroll more than 200 students in the future. At present it is divided into several classes for work — wood carving in the rich Chekiang

style, stone carving, basketwork and over-all design, which entails a high standard of drawing. In classroom work which students do one week off and one week on, in rotation with their practical tasks, they study politics, literature and applied arts. The staff consists of 20 teachers and technicians. All technicians work with the students at the same benches, hard to distinguish from their pupils as they, too, are young folk, graduates from this school and various other art schools. In the early 'fifties, when China began to pull in all the old handicraftsmen and get them to train others, most of the old-timers were already well over 50 years of age. Now those of that gallant old band who still wish to work spend their time in the quiet of the Research Institute for Applied Arts, just coming to their benches when they feel like it, yet being useful even after the end of their working days.

The field is now open to the new youth. In this school, trainees go through all four practical sections to get an all-round knowledge, since it has been found that all of the first graduating class have been able to fit in well in all places they were sent to, and that all have been able to help increase production in no uncertain way. In some instances they have been able to organise and help with an extension of the work their unit was engaged in. Factories welcome them and value them more than graduates of art colleges who do not have such all-round training. In its teaching, the school has to prepare its own practical work lesson sheets, for there are no textbooks which are suitable as yet. After the school was set up certain difficulties amongst students arose from a widespread wish amongst them: they wanted to be great artists, not just handicraft workers. Then too, many thought that so small a school was second rate, operated under poor conditions and would not have much to offer in the way of teaching. Some of their family folk backed the youngsters in these views though they later came to understand better. Hard as it was to retain good students, it was still harder to get teachers, for at that time very few were available. But with a great deal of stress on political study, the first group was gradually welded into a good working whole. The school has two terms a year, with a total of six weeks' holiday in between.

Like everyone else, students go at times to join in farm or other work in the countryside, to keep them in touch with reality and raise their creative urge. There are now similar schools in that particular line in both Shanghai and Soochow, so that the experience of these can also be drawn upon. One difficulty is that commercial orders given the school are too often for just one line and do not allow diversity in creating new forms needed in the training process. But the part-work, part-study school is a new thing, and ways and means have still to be found to meet such situations as they arise. That there has been success in doing so is evident from the fine general spirit obviously prevailing. With politics in command, the main objective is teaching and learning, and this has been made a first requirement, with the school contributing as much as it can to its own support, and not relying on public funds more than absolutely necessary.

Agricultural Middle School, Wusih

In many parts of the world, there has been a steady drain of the best brains of the countryside into the cities. Country folk are supposed to be stupid "country bumpkins" unable to enjoy the finer things of life, their task being simply to go on producing food, silk and cotton in the same old way for city use. And this supposition is in a feudal or bourgeois society in essence mostly true. But in China today, the "same old way" will no longer do. By and large it was the man in the countryside who fought the revolution and on him the success of the revolution still depends. As the revolution inherited a semi-bankrupt countryside, it is a government policy not to build up too comfortable a life in the cities, which would easily lead to constantly growing standards in town life while those amongst the primary producers would slip back. Such a way would be the sure way to chaos and would lead to the emergence of a new middle class.

These things were in my mind as I walked out over the countryside with friends one fine afternoon in the outskirts of Wusih in Kiangsu province, to see the agricultural middle school of Hsinan Commune, which operates on a part-work, part-study basis. We crossed bridges, wound through village paths, went alongside canals until we came to what was once an ancient temple. To the original buildings four classrooms had been added, three for the three classes of the junior middle course, and one for the senior middle-school course, recently started. Everything here was simply done. There were around 100 lads and 68 girls studying. They learn about wheat, rice and barley, mulberry culture and silkworm rearing, animal husbandry in outline, including some veterinary general knowledge, farm implements, soils and fertilisers, bookkeeping, health and political economy. They do around 170 days a year in classes, and the rest in practical work during the busy seasons of rice transplanting, wheat harvest, mulberry picking, and so on. The longest period they are away from their classwork is in May and June, which is the busy time. They get workpoints for their practical work, income from these going into school upkeep, so that the government has to meet only around 30 percent of the operating cost. The rest the students supply through their work. There are no summer or winter holidays, as city middle schools have. Classes run for six full days a week. There is a staff of ten, some of these are graduates of agricultural, some of other schools.

I watched one class for a while. It was studying plant diseases. There is no lack of new textbooks in these fields, but the students' notebooks were beautifully kept, it being very evident they all wanted to learn and were deeply interested in their subject. Another class was busy with seed selection, the technician going from desk to desk, pointing out the mistakes made, as the little piles of food seed were finalised. Along the walls of the classroom was a row of baskets of herbs cut for pig feed by the students on their way to school in the morning. On the way home in the evening they would fill them to the brim. Only 20 lads lived in the school, since they were from communes some distance away. The others went back home to evening jobs and to preparing their next day lessons afterwards.

The school is equipped with a dozen good microscopes, and students bring in many kinds of specimens to the research desk maintained in one of the staff rooms. There is a warm, comradely atmosphere about the place. It was set up in 1962, starting with 30 youngsters on a short course, then going on for three years with 120 students, who were given a junior middle-school course. Those who have graduated from the first groups have gone to work, and have been received gladly by their home brigades, production teams and different organisations. I asked what they were all doing and learnt that four had gone to the Wusih Agricultural Development Station as technicians, two had become heads of production teams, one had gone as a student assistant to a veterinary station, seven were brigade bookkeepers, six worked in health clinics, two were technicians for the distribution of electrical power, while six have become leaders in Communist Youth League work and six take part in the militia. Ten had gone on to senior middle school for training elsewhere. The rest were highly thought of commune workers, it being felt that their know-how had raised the general knowledge of the whole community, for the whole family is interested in "our boy" or "our girl" and listen to what he or she has to say with a respect they would give no one else. The youngster has books, but they are written in understandable terms and treat of things that have to do with daily livelihood. The home folk are fascinated.

After school is over, I noted, the students do not stay around very long. They play a game or practise long jumping, which they seem to especially enjoy, and then pick up their bag of school books and their baskets of fodder, and with an occasional stop to wrestle, cut fodder, laugh and sing a bit, are off. Two of the girls swung past us. They had put their fodder baskets on a carrying pole and then, with it on their shoulders, stepped fast and lightly. It was a pleasant group to have spent an afternoon amongst, and really a most significant one, for here was a preview of the way education will go in future.

Factory School in Wusih

While in Wusih I went to a third part-work, part-study school. This was a very modern establishment well laid out and with all facilities, set in the industrial part of the city. It was under the leadership of the nearby Wusih Diesel Engine Factory, a large establishment of over 3,000 workers.

I found it to be a school of 900 students doing a four-year course, all having come as around 16-year-old graduates from lower middle school. Soon another 100 students will come, and it will be the 1,000 it expects to maintain as its regular number. It has a working staff of 202, these being teachers, cadres, technicians and workers. It teaches the ordinary school subjects — politics, mathematics, physics, Chinese language, mechanical drawing, and then the technique of the plant the students will go to. Sixteen percent of the time in class work goes to political studies. The school does one week at practical work, and then one week in the classrooms, an arrangement that is being experimented with still. The only long holiday is the two weeks at Spring Festival. The off-day comes on

the Tuesday of each week, as does that of the parent factory. Payment for the work the students do in their eight practical work sections is enough to operate the school. Students provide their own clothing, except the work overalls the school supplies. The school also gives free medical service and entertainment such as cinema shows, etc. Classrooms are modern, light and airy. The 14 well-tooled workshops likewise. There is a complete absence of any kind of artificial speed-up, the whole place seeming to go with the precision of the sets of wheels in the diesel gear boxes some students were assembling in one of their shops. Another line they were making were pumps for the diesel engines.

Twenty percent of the students are girls. Practically all students come from town homes including those of workers' and cadres' homes in the city. The son of the leading cadre of Wusih is one of the students busy here with his hands and mind, learning how to become a good worker. When they graduate they will have reached the standard of a third-grade technical worker, though to begin with they will only get second-grade status. Their basic education, however, will help them a great deal to rise to become technicians or engineers if they wish to continue their studies. They are an important part of a generation of educated workers stepping into the new industry for tomorrow. Watching them busy over their drawing boards and at their machine tools, there could be no doubt of their interest in their task and in life in general. Watching their faces as the teacher in politics spoke, it was evident that they were following intently. At times when there is rush work or something special to be done in the parent factory, some of those on practical work go to assist there. They get up at six a.m., do exercises or running, and then at seven have breakfast. At 7:30 they start classes or practical work, going until 11:30. Afternoon classes are from one to three o'clock. Then preparation, games etc., and another 50 minutes' prep after supper. Lights out at 8:30 p.m. Usually on their weekly holiday they like to do something useful for the community. Plant trees, work on city improvement or do something else of the kind. They learn all the time that a real person's purpose in life is to be of service to others. Their daily work demonstrates the necessity of combining theory with practice.

Yangchow Industrial Middle School

In Yangchow, in northern Kiangsu, we went in mid-1966 to a part-work, part-study school which had newly been set up, in September 1965. It has a staff of five and a student roll of 60, a number which it plans to raise to 160. At first it did two weeks' study, then one week's work in its parent factory which is the Yangchow Ferro-Concrete Boat Factory. Then it changed its system to one week on the job alternating with one week in class. It is realised that half a day at work and half in the classroom is probably the best system, but so far it has not been possible to experiment with it. Students are graduates of local lower middle schools.

When they first came they were disappointed with the simplicity of the school buildings, the smallness of the student body, and wondered whether

it would not have been better for them to simply become workers, rising to the second or third grade in the four years they would otherwise spend in the school, and moreover getting their wages themselves for that time. Then as these questions were faced in the light of reality and of political theory, they realised that, with their better knowledge, they would help to raise the level of their class, and also be better able to meet the new demands that industry would be making in the future. Soon too, they found that between them and their teachers a new relationship was growing, for the teachers worked along with them in the factory. By working together, everyone felt closer to each other, and studies took on real meaning. The whole 60 of them were doing drawings of ferro-concrete boats and boat parts when I called. The precision of machine-drawing is one of the essentials in making the change from the old peasant mentality to that of the modern industrial worker who must work to fine exactitude. The student group was clearly absorbed in their task.

Other subjects taught are the usual upper middle school ones of politics, mathematics, physics, language. But some technical courses are added that deal more specifically with their daily work. They have one hour at preparation each evening, one day off a week, two weeks in mid-summer and three weeks in mid-winter. The factory manager acts also as headmaster, the full-time dean of studies being the actual leader in the school. Of the 60, 15 are from the villages, 19 are girls, and the rest boys from Yangchow city. The factory that gives them leadership is a rapidly expanding one, of the kind that will be duplicated elsewhere. Students on graduation will be allocated to work by the Ministry of Construction of the provincial government of Kiangsu. Students eat with the 800 or so factory workers in a big mess hall, the school buildings being part of the factory premises. They are well-lit and airy and with plenty of space around. Most of the big plants around Yangchow have now started similar schools so that there is much experience that can be drawn upon.

Commune Middle School, Yangchow

While in Yangchow, I went to see another one of the rural schools. This one was in Ssuchao Commune in Hankiang county. It has 220 students and 14 teachers. It took in upper primary school graduates for a three-year junior middle school course, and in addition had an upper middle school course of two years. Started in 1958, it has already had 700 graduates who have been very well received by the communes around, not a few of them having become brigade or production team leaders. Communes say they are more precious than gold to them. Certainly they have been responsible for some startling production rises.

The school is simply built by the students themselves. A row of new classrooms in grey brick has recently been added, but with paper or plastic sheet windows and tamped earth floors. Approximately the same as the homes of the farmers around. Forty mou of experimental land belongs to the school, on which different wheat strains are tried as well as other crops. While we were there, the only students remaining at school were

a group working on a bed for rice seedlings. The others were on a tour of production teams explaining some of the newer technique they had learnt. Students who come from nearby villages live at home. Those from more distant places stay in the school. They work for 178 days a year with their communes, do 153 days in class, and have 24 holidays, which are those of the old lunar calendar observed by the farm folk. Their classes include politics, language, mathematics, bookkeeping, statistics and problems of agriculture, and some chemistry and applied physics to go with it. In the senior classes, more is learnt in these things, with courses on plant diseases, soil and fertiliser, seed selection, elementary meteorology, problems of irrigation and so on all having their place. Teachers work 120 days a year on practical work with the students and live in the same dormitories. A nice touch was the clothes-mending shop the students operate themselves, and a barber's shop, in which they not only cut each other's hair, but also the hair of many of the village children around the school. They also keep 30 pigs.

In all, the impression I had after visiting them was that this group of youngsters acquired knowledge which would be of immediate use to their communes and brigades and would help to bridge the gap between the educated and the common man in China. It will be quite some time, of course, before a new system of education evolves a universally accepted road. Most teachers have been educated in the old way, and it is not possible for all of them to change the whole of their thinking immediately. In their heart of hearts some do cling to traditional forms, ever waiting for the chance to say: "We have tried part-work, part-study and it does not really work, you know!" They may perhaps still prefer a set curriculum with examinations that allow an easy classification, one more based on aptitude for book learning than on aptitude for, and attitude to, work. Then too, there are perhaps some people who will wonder if, from the immediate factory production aspect, the apprentice system is not as good as the part-work, part-study plan. But this attitude is based on the long-standing division of labor into physical and mental. Way back in pre-history, the potters and other manual workers were exploited by the chiefs and wizards who decreed that only their own sons were fit to be chiefs and wizards in turn, and that the common folk must work with their hands. In early historical times in China, the Confucians elaborated on this, and became great supporters of feudalism. It is only in our day that we have leaders who believe that theory and practice interwoven together can make a new man and woman capable of working practically in every field of endeavor. The part-work, part-study school is one of the expressions of this belief.

The Need for Change

Ordinary middle schools and universities have so much inherited prestige, fine buildings and so on, that they cannot just be dismissed as of no longer any importance, but after a visit to a part-work, part-study school it becomes quite clear that here is the way for the future. For anyone who

believes that a school is made up of students and teachers working together, and does not simply consist of buildings, that its function is to prepare youth for a future in which much change will have to be met creatively, there is a lot to be learnt from a close scrutiny of the part-work, part-study school.

Many of the school leaders I spoke to agree that the part-work, part-study school on the industrial side will probably be at its best when practical work is done for half a day and study the other half. Four hours work a day does not tire the active, growing youngster. He is happy to sit in class the other half, and his mind is more ready for evening preparation work than it would be if he has done a full day at the machine. The daily impact of both work and theory helps the mind in its formative stage. Progress is usually in this way faster even in theoretical studies than in a full old-time middle school. But again, this system has yet to undergo more trial. Different places have different conditions. In the commune rural school, naturally, production must fit in with rush periods and the classwork must be concentrated during the slack seasons. Here, however, the problem of integrating theory with practice is easier. As a rule, the student lives at home, daily taking back newly acquired school knowledge and daily doing some practical work around the house and fields from which everyone benefits. If he lives in the school, he works on the school experimental plots and is in touch all the time with farmers around, where topics of discussion always centre on things he is learning. Progress in this way is fast and makes the youngster avid for more knowledge all the time.

One important aim of the part-work, part-study school is to keep growing youth from contempt for manual labor, and to avoid the artificial division of the working class into a white- and a blue-collar group, a division which allows in the old society the capitalist to perpetuate the exploitation of both groups and would in the new society give occasion for the rise of a new bureaucratic exploiting class. Once education is thought of as a ladder towards personal progress and a means to avoid physical labor, a new distinction between a "higher" and a "lower" type of labor must of necessity arise. And special privileges, city flats, country summer cottages, face, fame and fortune will become demands of those who are feeling that they are doing the "important" work of society. The part-work, part-study school teaches that both types of work, physical labor as well as brain work, are equally "important" and equally meritorious. The new society demands of its citizens the willingness to serve in any position when needed, and from its schools to prepare their pupils for service and not for personal advancement.

Combining work with study is now being advocated throughout the whole of China. It is possible to see already a qualitative change. One does not clear away the inheritance of traditional Confucian thinking in one day or even in one year. A friend who worked in the educational field 50 years ago once told me how impossible it was for his students to take off any clothing while working hard to plant trees in their forestry school. Even after Liberation, for a long time students would try to keep

looking like correctly dressed students when they worked. Even by the way they handled their tools it was easy to see that they were not workers. In the summer of 1966, in the first stages of the Cultural Revolution, out in a Peking park with a friend, we came across one school digging an irrigation ditch to carry water to newly planted trees. They were of upper primary or lower middle school grade. The boys had their shirts off, looked like workers, worked like workers, and evidently wanted to be that way. They now handled their tools expertly, throwing the weight of their shoulders on the point of the shovel, and they obviously enjoyed the sunbath as they worked. The teacher, the administrator, the professional man of the future will have learnt through work to feel as the mass of the people feel.

The part-work, part-study school faces another challenge, namely to create more technical workers and progressive farmers who will be free of the old tabus, who will be able to apply theory and who will be able to meet new situations, new machines, newer methods with clear minds and able hands. Who will not be scared of hard work, tough living conditions or bitter struggle. The speed with which better ways are now being evolved will demand much from the youth which now steps in to continue the revolution in China. It is not going back to Confucius. It is, in the spirit of the teachings of Mao Tsetung, looking forward into and preparing for the brilliant future that can be theirs. The development of the part-work, part-study school in China will be observed with both sympathy and interest by all concerned with the basics of education for life in our world of tomorrow.

Chekiang University

Some years passed. In 1969 I spent an afternoon in Chekiang University. The chairman of the Revolutionary Committee there was an old professor, and with him were both lecturers and students. The chairman outlined the five stages of the Cultural Revolution as they affected the university with its body of 8,000 students. A technical university, it has five faculties, and its Revolutionary Committee was finally set up in April 1968 after quite a period of struggle between two of the rebel groups. In the past two years, horizons have widened. The students have gone from a beautiful university campus back into factories and communes, taking part in work and study, realising better where their future lies, and naturally criticising the defects of an educational policy that had divorced them from the life and realities of China. "We stay so long at school, study and memorise, trying to pass examinations but getting farther and farther away from the daily life and toil of the people with whom our future should be bound up. We come out shortsighted and often with a student's stoop, the white hairs of worry already showing in our hair — little old men," one said.

"Three years is enough for what we need — maybe only two and a half," said another.

"What has happened to all that stuff I learnt at middle school? I have forgotten most of it already!" said a third.

A lecturer said, "Of one whole class we sent to the hinterland frontier to work, no one stayed there. They all ran back!"

Another said, "I worked and worked. Slept four hours only. Studied, studied, then studied more. But it was all unrelated to the needs of the people. It was simply related to passing well, to social status, and in helping to enlarge the group of privileged people, who in turn would bring up children who would demand more privilege, more 'freedom' at the expense of working people. Then we would be like the USSR after 50 years. Our people would still be poor and backward, for they would have to support us in big cities."

A young student said, "When I went home after being a while in the university, I was shocked at how dirty the village was. In so short a time I had grown apart from it, and was already beginning to look down on it. Chairman Mao has made it plain as to what our duty is in serving the people. How can we serve them if we are conditioned to look down on them? How many of us have been thinking of better villages, how best to help them with constructive change? Learning mechanical engineering from books is one thing. But to see a machine pulled down and made to work again teaches in a clear, concise way. We go to school at seven years of age. Then, at 25 we emerge and go out to work, having to start learning from the practical beginnings. We were not taught the necessity of class struggle at school, for in actuality we were becoming part of a new privileged class. After we have been through all the ritual of the memorising grind, all that is creative in us is flattened, battered out. . . How, then, can we meet the needs of a changing world, catch up with the most highly industrialised countries? We must be able to create, able to analyse. Education in China from time immemorial has been in the hands of the exploiting class, stressing the individual rather than the collective. So much in the old textbooks we studied was already out of date. If we have the tools of learning and the freedom of spirit that does not inhibit our creativeness, then we can really serve the people."

From these and similar ideas the students brought up as the afternoon wore on, it was evident that all felt the need for change, but exactly how to go about it, how to bring practice and theory together to enable them all to live up to their potential and give leadership was still in the experimental stage. They were all sure however, that working in the spirit of determination and sacrifice, they would help to build a new educational system based on Mao Tsetung Thought.

Schools in Wushan

My main reason for coming to Wushan Commune in 1969 was not so much to look at its economic improvement, but rather to see for myself the results it has gained in its efforts to put new educational theories into working practice. I talked with four former poor peasant teachers, a regular professional teacher who had come to a brigade primary school, the

commune cadre in charge of educational affairs, and a middle-school boy of 13.

All of these, except the middle-school boy, were mainly concerned with primary education. There are two commune-run middle schools, with 42 regular teachers. The commune primary schools have 220 teachers. Their students have gone up in numbers from 880 in 1966 to 2,100 now. The chief reason for this has been that the peasants now realise that education will not drain their children away from home to the cities, that the education given will help everyone in the struggle for living and that now, also, education is necessary for a revolutionary. The principle of bringing in older poor peasants as "barefoot" teachers and to have the control of the schools vested in the brigades, has also helped to make the schools more popular with the commune members.

Chen Ching-teh, a middle-aged former poor peasant of Tumen Brigade, was the first to tell me about himself and his work. Quite a few commune members here are from families who have been refugees from Honan province, mostly from the once famine-stricken counties of Lushan or Kunhsien. They managed when they came to make a sort of living growing vegetables on patches of waste hillside land, and somehow bring up their children. When he was nine, Chen Ching-teh, who was from one of these families, was given to a landlord to be a buffalo herd. He had never been inside a school until he came to teach in one. But he knew as did others who were determined to follow the Mao Tsetung line that, out of seven brigade schools in the vicinity, six had been in the hands of people who came from the families of rich peasants or landlords, and that Liu Shao-chi ideas were prevalent in all of them. What, he argued, was the use of schools if they did not bring the main issues to the understanding of the pupils? Do we educate for the revolution or do we set out to produce ambitious place seekers? So he felt it important not to refuse the invitation to come at times and teach about class struggle to the new generation which needs to know about it as they join in the battle of life.

Li Sheng-fen is a poor peasant from the hilly section of the commune, his brigade having the same name as that of the commune, "Wushan". He talked a while on the old idea prevalent amongst poor peasants that they and schools had nothing in common. "Best to keep clear of them. How can we with hands stinking of compost possibly go to school? But then, especially in this stage we are forced to ask ourselves, are our schools going the Marxist-Leninist way? Are we watching our children to see on what principle they stand? Are we at one with the teachers, helping them with their problems of livelihood and understanding? Then too, what can poor peasants do to teach what they know so well? How can we in a practical way help the work of the teachers, keep close to them, encourage them so that they go along with their task with a quiet mind? As ever the questions rise, what do we work for, do we have unity of purpose, and what is our plan for living? Then what do we require of teachers? We first want to be sure that they follow Mao Tsetung Thought. That they are practical and not scared of hard labor. We also want them

to have a good style of work, carrying the people along with them. Have they cleared their minds of old ideas and are they ready to go the people's way? Can they help to produce the new educational material needed for the new age? When we say prepare against war and against natural disasters, what does this entail in teaching? Now our poor peasants meet with teachers three times a month, on the 1st, the 11th and the 21st, so that ideas can be exchanged. Poor peasants themselves take classes twice a week. In our brigade there are eight of us who do this work, so that we are able to do our part in succession, not boring the students with too much reiteration."

The next I spoke with was the regular teacher who had come to take charge of the Tumen school. She was a woman named Wu Ai-tze, aged 31, a graduate of Huchow Normal College. She had felt that she was sacrificing a lot to go back to the village. Coming back to a brigade school is different from being a secure salaried staff member of a city school. The brigade may have no proper school buildings, and her income comes only on workpoints like that of any other commune member. She is married and has three little children, one of whom, the smallest, is a cripple, unable to walk. Her husband is a middle-school teacher in the city and could not come with her. However, she bravely made the step, never dreaming how good things would be for her in her new job. The first inkling came when she was met at the Tumen jetty, the brigade school youngsters with drums, cymbals and banners to escort her to her new home. And when the brigade fell to and cleared a piece of waste land of ancient graves, building a bright new school on it, as well as two light, airy rooms for herself and her family. People took a positive delight in bringing things to her, so her place was furnished in no time with simple but useful peasant furniture and kitchen equipment. Water and fuel were never a problem. Someone always brought them in. What folk had, they shared with her. Never had she felt so much a part of the community around her or had so full a life.

At the first Spring Festival she lived in the village, she and her family were invited to the home of Chen Ching-teh, the former poor peasant teacher. Her husband had come to spend the holiday with her, so that the family was five in all. They rather expected that their host would put on a bit of a spread for them, but when dinner was brought in it was found to be bran cakes and bitter vegetables, in memory of the other days when such was the best food a poor peasant could have at that time of rejoicing. The two youngest children did not like it, but their eldest and both parents saw the point, and took the lesson in the good spirit with which it was given. After the meal, all went to the school and joined in mass building work. An unusual Lunar New Year's day, but a meaningful one. She had many stories of personal sacrifice members had made to help both her and the school, all of which obviously touched her a great deal, for she wiped an emotional tear or two from her eyes as she told about them. "One gets the feeling here," she said, "that we are on the first steps of a long march to world revolution, when we shall be

really free of the threat of imperialism and all the devilry of the old society."

Cheng Tien-ping, a grey-headed man from Hungshan Brigade, took up the story. "Our children were quite badly poisoned by the Liu Shao-chi line in education. They looked upon going to school as a kind of a race. The clever memorisers who won would go on to middle schools and then to colleges. We asked the local school to train us some production team bookkeepers. But the youngsters did not want to go back to production teams. They wanted to escape from country life. They were struggling for an education which would enable them to enter a different world from that of their parents. They did not believe that we could make a better world right here. They did not include service to ordinary working people in their scheme of living. Rather did they think it better to wear pretty clothes and strut around and be important.

That they knew and cared little for the work of peasants was shown in our locality when a number of school boys started playing with the irrigation system and ruined some crops with flooding. They felt that they should be allowed to do anything they liked if it amused them. They had grown quite apart from their own people, and did not want to even understand farm technique. Even down to thinking that it was beneath them to understand such. Now we want our children to do good things, but not to boast and be conceited about achievements. We want them to help the old people in the brigade simply and naturally, as a thing they ought to be doing, cutting fuel for them, carrying in water. We want them to be vigilant politically and not allow abuses to creep into our life. To maintain a good class attitude. One of our boys was going to school the other day when he saw the line leading to the brigade loud-speaker had fallen and had broken. Knowing that if this was not fixed, people would not get the news, he went back to the brigade office and asked for someone to come and help him fix it properly. This made him late for school. The teacher criticised him for not coming on time, but he did not speak back. It was only when other boys spoke up and told what had happened that the teacher said, 'I was wrong. I should have investigated the thing better before scolding you.' People speak about these things at home, and all take lessons from them. In our brigade we too have built a new tiled-roof school. We had but 49 pupils in it before the Cultural Revolution. Now we have 147. Today no youngster thinks that being a student absolves him from working. Teachers and students all work together on collective tasks, and school holidays are geared to the busy seasons when there is always a great deal for everyone to do."

Fang Sze-ying is a first year pupil in middle school. Just 13, he is a sturdy chunk of a boy, friendly and natural. He is a good speaker, direct and unaffected. He was proud that he was a Red Guard now. He commented on the vast difference between the two lines, and criticised the old education with its many stories of ancient heroes, most of which were designed to make intellectuals feel as though they were a cut above ordinary people. "We got tired of hearing that old story about Ssuma

Kwang breaking the jar of water to save the boy inside. It is better to hear about the revolutionary heroes of our today," he said. In his own family there was no one who could read or write. Once he and his family thought that things like war and peace were all something very distant and had nothing much to do with them. Now he has realised that such things are a part of life and have to be met by everyone. "Today, if war does come," he declared, "we young people will fight along with our Liberation Army. When we criticise the Liu Shao-chi line, we must know very clearly what it is, where it would lead us. Now it is good that former poor peasants come to our school to tell us more of class struggle. We all go to work in the fields for half a day regularly every week, and also take part in mass work during the busy seasons."

The commune cadre in charge of education mentioned that commune teachers were actually better off than they were on salaried posts before. He said that teachers were integrated with their pupils and their pupils' families as never before and that new methods were being worked out as new situations were faced. He said in summary, "The main object, an object which is being achieved, is no less than a new education for a new countryside, a countryside that has gigantic tasks to face."

I spent an afternoon going around the fields that were being harvested. The middle-school teachers and students were working hard. One group of teachers and peasants worked cheerfully together at a rice-threshing machine. The primary students' "Little Red Soldiers" force had planted its spears alongside their work place and were reaping with a practised hand. Teacher Wu Ai-tze was working along with a class, hoe in hand, on another field being prepared for late autumn planting. She came over to the school with me where only the infant classroom was in use, other classes being out in the fields. Two of her children, the crippled little one and a sister two years older, were sitting together in one seat. The class sang us some songs with great gusto, and we went off with some of their spirit and warmth. With considerable pride the teacher showed me her two nice rooms, and then I went visiting some of the ex-poor peasant homes together with her and others. They were of people who either taught or else helped with the running of the school — now their very own school, a part of their community in a new way. So did one marvel at the way that so much has now come right down into the basis of society as a result of the application of Mao Tsetung Thought. Everyone is learning, and a new appreciation of what change can bring is coming home to all as new results are obtained. Certainly no one is going to meekly submit to any reversal to old conditions. For it is no longer the same countryside, and the people are not the same.

A Shanghai Primary School, 1970

In the eastern industrial area of Shanghai I paid a visit to a famous primary school in Szeping Road. In the pre-Liberation period it was called Ping-ming School, was privately operated and had 200 pupils in six classes. Naturally enough, it grew swiftly after Liberation. In 1965 a new, modern

building of three floors was erected, where 81 teachers now teach 2,350 children organised into 40 classes. Seeking tasks on communes and in industry, the school gives practical as well as scholastic training.

The leader of the Revolutionary Committee told how, before the Cultural Revolution, the teachers were mainly concerned with examinations, marks, memorisation, and so on. Actually what they were doing, although they did not realise it, was educating youth away from their class, holding out all kinds of material incentives in the shape of honors, awards, degrees for the successful, and never caring what the child's thinking was, how to prepare him to better serve the people, or carry on the revolution. To give but one, and almost unbelievable, instance of attitudes. There were two very poor illiterate people, a man and wife who had married quite late in life, people of the kind the revolution had been fought for. They had a son, and when he was nine they brought him to the school asking for admittance. He was not well dressed, and his parents did not know how to speak nicely, but they wanted him to have some education. He was refused admittance with the excuse that rolls were full, but for seven years afterwards, once each year when new students were being taken, the old couple brought him and each year they were again refused. By the time of the Cultural Revolution the boy was already 16. The rebel group in charge of the school immediately took him in, arranged for special teaching, and the lad's progress has been so fast that he is already in the fourth class. The capitalist roader headmaster of earlier days did not like poor, what he considered dirty, badly clothed pupils. The new stage taking the Mao Tsetung line welcomes such pupils with both hands.

On the school committee I met were some of the teachers led by the young chairman of the Revolutionary Committee, a worker representative from factories around, several old retired workers of the locality, who had had a lifetime's experience in work — a white-bearded man of 76, another of 63, and a retired woman worker. There were also two local housewives and four school pupils. They all take an active part in school life, and have regular meetings. The whole school was organised in the way of the People's Liberation Army, and can turn out in quick time when necessary. The last directive from Chairman Mao came late one night. Without being told, children of the propaganda group jumped up from bed, dressed, assembled from lanes around and were marching with drums and cymbals in a very short time. We ourselves had an experience of how swiftly the school can assemble when we went out on to the playground to see a "prepare against war" practice. The whistle sounded, and suddenly the dust began to fly and there, suddenly drawn up in correct ranks, was the whole school, some of the older classes with wooden painted spears and red tassels, others with wooden guns, tree leaves as camouflage around heads. An air raid siren sounded, and everyone was flat on the ground as imaginary bombs fell. Then the call to say that planes were in range, and everyone fell into groups aiming anti-aircraft fire at attackers. Other manoeuvres were done very realistically. Wriggling under obstacles, jumping over hurdles. Imaginary wounded were being given first aid and carried off the field, then all kinds of mass-drill movements followed.

After we had seen all of this, we went back into the school, where the propaganda corps put on items for us which were fresh and full of spirit. In one of them the dancers wore the red turbans of Taiping fighters of the last century. One could not help thinking back to old days at Yen-an, for here was the spirit of Yen-an so much alive again, right down to the youngsters with spears and the good patched clothes of working people.

Chenhsien Primary School in Nanking, 1970

The Chenhsien primary school is an ordinary Nanking city school with four kindergartens and 22 primary classes, 1,100 pupils in all. There is a staff of 50, and it was set up in 1957. A workers' propaganda team lends assistance in school affairs and has its representative on the school's Revolutionary Committee. Buildings are modern, and the playground large. Five subjects are taught. Mao Tsetung Thought, socialist culture, military and physical training, revolutionary art and literature, and lastly labor. Socialist culture comprises Chinese language, arithmetic including the use of the abacus, a foreign language, geography and history. Before the higher grades finish school, they must have put in time amounting to one year in either industry or agriculture. Lower grades must spend 10 percent of their time on this. Pupils are taught to follow the good points of a soldier in the PLA for they, too, have their Little Red Soldiers organisation which today replaces that of the Young Pioneers. Qualifications are: to be good in political ideology, good at carrying on the revolution in education, good in mutual aid and forging unity, good in the three rules of discipline and eight points of conduct of the PLA, and good in daily life. A good deal of practical political education is gained by excursions to the countryside, helping with harvesting and in other busy seasons. Sitting in at commune meetings they learn much of the class struggle in a down-to-earth way. The fundamental problems of purpose in life, whom to serve, can then be brought forward in a living way. There are six classes a day, each class lasting 45 minutes. If a pupil cannot catch up, he or she can stay in the class for another year.

We went around the classrooms, fascinated by the youngsters at their studies. The teachers let the pupils participate by calling them up to take over the class lesson. In the kindergarten classes, old folk stories such as those about Br'er Rabbit and the like have given place to those about modern heroes in struggle, those who have worked and sacrificed for the people. The ideology of the teaching staff has undergone a great remoulding in these years, and a much better understanding now exists of the place of education in the life of working people. Education always serves a class, and in China that class is the working class.

After we had gone the rounds, the school propaganda group of pupils staged a lively concert for us, which we all enjoyed. The youngsters put their whole heart and soul into the performance, which speeded ahead with laughter and melody — the orchestra of Chinese violins ("er hu"), guitars, flutes and drum music being remarkably effective.

Nanking Engineering College

In the afternoon of the same day we went out to a construction site for blocks of flats, where students of Nanking Engineering College were doing the building themselves. They had drawn up the plans and were now carrying them through. College lecturers and staff who welcomed us were dressed in the same overalls as the workers. They showed us a new style hollow brick they had devised. Two bricks do the work of three, and can take a heavier load. Students, teachers and ordinary workers helping out with the job were indistinguishable. All were builders together. After watching work swinging along apace, we went to the college itself, which has 2,500 students. Some have entered in the usual old way through examinations, but now a growing number come in after having been workers in the field of construction, picked because of their political understanding and practical ability. We spoke to some who had been workers for 15 years. Consequently there are now a number of older men learning. Ages, one learnt, ranged from 22 to 43 in the student body. Lecturers have had to alter their style of teaching. Be more direct, able to accept criticism as it comes, and learn from the practical experience of the students as they all advance together. Many of the new students have had but a primary education; only some have gone through middle school. Yet, here they were over their drawing boards producing complicated plans for new buildings most efficiently. "When we started," a lecturer confessed, "the new students sat glumly and simply said they did not understand me. Then they asked me questions I could not answer. The more tense I became, the more difficult it was. Then I asked some who had understood what I had said to explain it to the others. The others saw the point immediately. After that I re-shaped my teaching methods. Same content, but given in practical terms as used by workers. I now enjoy teaching, and do so with ease."

Those of the student body who have gone through regular schooling in the old way, are a different set now. They have been toughened up by work in mine, factory and commune, and now return to their classrooms with new ideas and great vigor.

Sun Mei-kun, a lecturer in mathematics, in talking about his experiences in the new type of education, dubbed himself a "typical three-door cadre" meaning that he had gone out of the home door to school, then from school through the door of an organisation, without a period of practical training in between. He did not think that he had been sufficiently remoulded yet, but he was trying hard and learning a lot from his students. He had once loved to fill the blackboard with formulas which were hard for anyone to understand. Now with the new look he tried to adapt his teaching material so that it could be easily understood, rather than showing off his own brilliance. He spoke appreciatively of the way physical labor had helped him to re-evaluate things, and to see workers in a new light. At first, the lecturers were inclined to sneer and say that worker students had so little education that nobody else but they themselves were to blame for their slow progress. But the real trouble was

that the lecturer was liable to "talk down" to his new students, not see things from their point of view. Yes, he had tried to remedy the situation. Once he compiled a whole lecture, had it printed and distributed amongst the workers in class. He thought it clear, concise, with good working plans attached, and that the workers would be very happy with the effort taken, would praise him and ask for more like this. But actually, they were not at all satisfied, and gave him a lot of criticism that left him with a red face and feeling unhappy. The upshot was that lecturers had many meetings with the worker group, who did not apologise for their lack of understanding one whit. Their criticism in the main was very simple, surely they had not been taught as old intellectuals had been, for the old educational system had barred them, but if a thing was said plainly enough, there was no problem of understanding. "So we rewrote the lecture with their assistance and, following it, many others so that there was in the end general satisfaction," Sun Mei-kun said.

"We were once held down by force," said the workers. "What force was it? This is a thing we must all understand together." Others spoke in somewhat the same vein. A woman lecturer in structural design caused a good many laughs when she described her experiences. Yes, she had found that there was a class line in architectural design too, but had not seen it until the workers she taught pointed it out. She no longer prepares her lectures behind closed doors. Instead, she goes to the construction site and discusses various points with workers there, no longer relying entirely on books. Workers encouraged her, asking her to keep on with her struggle as they needed her, and that her lectures were just what they wanted. So with all of this she took heart. She now realises that, before, she had pretended to know things that she did not really know, but now this whole period has been a bright new one of learning and teaching together, she feels, on the solid basis of Mao Tsetung Thought.

The New School Emerges

Many of Peking's primary and middle schools are now running little factories, so as to put into action Mao Tsetung's thinking of coupling theory and practice in education. From April to the middle of July 1970, over 160 middle and 90 primary schools in the city had set up industrial work. Amongst the things produced are machinery, hardware, textiles, electronic equipment and optical instruments. There are, too, printing, carpentry and handicraft shops. Reports from other cities show that in middle schools new insecticides, transistors, and many other products have been turned out. In all, this change in education that now takes shape so rapidly is of immense significance to opening out young minds, and thus making for scientific development as it sweeps across the land.

It was a wet afternoon in September 1970 when I went to visit one of the Peking middle schools. It was Middle School No. 31, situated in buildings that were once used by Chungteh School, an English Christian mission school of pre-Liberation days. It now has 1,500 students, and a staff of 138. There are 30 forms.

Before the Cultural Revolution, there was a lower and upper middle school, each giving a three-year course. Now there is a straight four-year course for everyone. Instead of 33 classes a week there are now 24. The 11 subjects now taught are politics, mathematics, literature, a foreign language, physics, chemistry, geography, history, basic agriculture, physical training and revolutionary culture. Each year during the busy seasons, students go for one month to a commune production brigade in Shunyi county, ten kilometres outside the city. Each student spends another month in the school factory, and two weeks on military training in addition to classroom work each year. The school factory works in two four-hour shifts, one in the morning, one in the afternoon, and each student works only one shift.

Sitting in with us in the discussion at the school were members of the school Revolutionary Committee, including two Red Guard students. One of these latter, in explaining the difference between the present education and the past, said, "Before, we did study, but we did not apply. Then only the staff took part in political activity. Now it is no longer just them, but students and staff together. Our aim is to become more able to serve the people, and to carry through Chairman Mao's ideas about education."

An older teacher in explaining the present said, "People, now that they see the new way and how well it works, are amazed at the blindness and obstinacy with which the old road was so closely followed before. Now, since the new system has been working, over 200 students have graduated from the school, going to various factories, communes, border regions; some join the PLA. All are much better equipped, politically and practically, for the tasks which face them. After they have become workers, farmers or soldiers, those who study and work well will be selected to take university courses, but in front of all will lie a revolutionary life, with much scope for service to the people."

We went through the various workrooms of the school factory, amazed at what has been done. Taking off our shoes and putting on slippers before entering one set of workrooms, we found students working with delicate parts under microscopes, operating electrically controlled small furnaces, in well-lit, airy rooms. They were making parts for transistors. In another workroom the students were making printed circuits. The camera they were using was a home-made one for which they had simply bought the lens — a second hand one — for 30 yuan, making the rest of the camera from wood in their own shop. Mounted on a little trolley line, it works very well. In the machine shops the machine tools were cast-offs from modernised factories, but with some adaptation they do their task quite efficiently. Besides the transistor parts, the school also makes two parts for the Peking two-ton delivery truck, now a common sight on the streets as well as being exported to some half dozen foreign countries. The parts are the oil line from the oil pump, and the wiring for the electrical distribution system. The different wires are covered in different colored plastic. Models and blueprints are on the walls, while each work bench where the wires are bound together and connections added has the diagram done in the specific colors of the wires. Students are proud of

an innovation they have made for soldering on the U-connection. It does the job better than the soldering iron, with less risk of damaging the plastic of the wire. Whatever the number of trucks a year the parent factory produces, the students say they can produce the same number of wiring systems ready for installation. They are thrilled to know that some of their work goes to foreign countries, giving them a practical hand in the promotion of proletarian internationalism. Whenever they see a Peking two-ton delivery truck running down the street they look at it and feel, "some of our work is in that!" Which means a lot to all.

Many of the staff of the school also take part in factory work. Forty-eight of them, to be exact. "See him? He teaches history. That one? A Chinese language teacher," and so on, they said as we went around the shops. Working together with the students bridges a great gap, and there are also always staff members working with students out on the fields of the commune production brigades.

When students first started going to the commune, they had no knowledge of the countryside at all. Patiently commune members showed them which were the weeds in the cornfields, and which were the corn shoots. Yet imagine the chagrin at the end of the first period of work when it was found that corn shoots had been pulled up in many places, and weeds left. Patiently again, the commune members got the students together and showed them once more, explaining how every corn shoot pulled up meant the loss of one jin of grain to the commune, and what one jin of grain meant in the struggle for livelihood. Now, the whole of Middle School No. 31 knows the various crops as well as their weed enemies; knows how crops are grown, what has to be done with fertiliser and working the ground, seed selection, irrigation and pest control, before a harvest is gained. Then, back in schoolroom classes, problems in arithmetic and other subjects can be related to both politics and production. How much wheat, how many tons of sweet potatoes, bushels of peanuts, winter vegetables does a mou of this land produce as compared with a mou of land with less compost, and less irrigation. Comparisons in production figures before and after Liberation. The difference between rice production on some low-lying marshy land, and the production it gained before rice was introduced four years ago. In physics classroom work also, the operation of the more complicated factory machines is explained, so that each and every one understands how they work.

Actually, factory work was started in the school during the Leap Forward of 1958-59. Then came the Liu Shao-chi line, very much against Chairman Mao's thinking on education. "A school is a school. A factory is a factory. You cannot mix them," said the followers of Liu. So, in consequence, most schools halted their industrial work, though No. 31 kept its factory on in embryo all the way through until the Cultural Revolution, when work was enlarged.

"Since Marx, the educational problem has not really been solved," the chairman of the Revolutionary Committee said. "The ideas of Soviet revisionist educators we reject completely. We must build an educational system based on the needs of our people. The old student, through the

way he was educated, was liable to leave the correct road forward, to leave production, and leave the people. Now our school propaganda group, with its songs and musical instruments, knows better what to propagate. Each and every member of it has already dovetailed much theory with practice. In the chemistry textbooks we used to have was a picture of a foreign scientist of great fame who got the Nobel Prize worth so much, and so on. We do not want to hold such a person up as an example to students. To worship those who strive after money, profit and credit for themselves. Now that education is in the hands of working people, what do we do with this great power? Certainly we will not use it to educate for landlords or revisionists!"

Work on the industrial side of the school is made easier because of its connection with outside industry. There is no problem of distribution or of looking for raw material. Factory technicians come in to teach the process and help to get things started. Some of the workrooms are already too small, and rebuilding will be necessary before long. Students all live in the locality and come to class each day. When they go to work on the commune they live in peasant homes, each group marching out there carrying its own bedding, Army style. It is certainly a very different school from the one which existed before the Cultural Revolution, and one felt after seeing it that here was truly a beginning of the worker, farmer and soldier school of the future.

Labor University at Hsinchien, Nanchang, Kiangsi, 1970

In Nanchang I went to see the Communist Labor University in Hsinchien county. In order to get there one had to cross the Kan river bridge to the west of the city portion of the municipality. This university, an institution with 5,000 students, is the centre for the whole network of the Labor University of Kiangsi, branches of which have been set up on waste land or in distant forested valleys. Students come from every county in the province, and are of poor or middle peasant origin. They may be graduates of middle or primary school, or even illiterate, and their age varies from the earliest 'teens to the late twenties. The youngest I met told me he was 14. But the majority appeared to be in their late 'teens or early twenties. They study intensively for a year in six subjects that are of the greatest use to them, the first, of course, being politics and the remainder technical. They have recovered a large area of waste ground in the vicinity on which they raise enough grain for themselves and even a surplus to give to the state. They have piggeries and orange groves, pear orchards and vineyards. But what they are perhaps most proud of at the moment is their industrial side, in which students under worker leadership have turned out 15 large-sized jeeps during the past year and have now made all preparations to produce 150 this year (1970). After that, they say, they hope to be really able to expand. We went through classrooms, listening a while to one lecture on cotton raising, another on diseases in rice, and yet one more on politics. Quite a number of the students were working on digging a new irrigation canal, working every

bit as well as do the peasants in the counties they have come from. The school course is a concentrated one, there being none of the old-time regular school holidays. The spirit is evidently quite high, with all out to gain everything possible from this opportunity of learning together.

Peking University in November 1970

It was a calm, cool autumn day, with the leaves turning gold in the beautiful campus of Peking University. A group of us were meeting in what was once the home of the former president of Yenching University, now amalgamated with "Pei Da" as Peking University is called. The purpose of the visit was to catch up with what is being done now in the university, after four years of the storm of the Cultural Revolution. We had been to visit at various stages of the Cultural Revolution, so knew something of what these entailed, from the first poster to the downfall of the Lu Ping administration, and the rise of the rebel groups.

The quiet voice of the narrator of events told how before Liberation the university was used by the reaction to educate their willing slaves, and was out to make a bridgehead to suppress the revolution. How progressive students and staff had started to rebel, and how Mao Tsetung had come to the university in 1918 and 1919, contacting Teng Chung-hsia and other progressives, adding to the student ferment that led to the May 4th Movement with its anti-imperialist slogans, and its burning down of the house of the traitor official, Tsao Ju-lin. Then how, through all subsequent years until Liberation, its rebels remained a force to be reckoned with. Not only did many take part in the Wars of Resistance and Liberation, but also in the Korean War of the early 'fifties. Students also went to the provinces during Land Reform. All this was the prelude to the great change inaugurated by the Cultural Revolution which led to the complete smashing of the old educational structure. The students however formed two separate groups and, hoodwinked by bourgeois factionalism, for a time lost a clear idea of who was friend and who enemy, and spent their time attacking each other, both verbally and physically, instead of going on with their real task of struggle, criticism and transformation.

This situation was corrected by the arrival on August 19th 1969, of a worker propaganda team which, with the team of the PLA, now brought the opposing forces together. After some 50 good talks together, the students could see how little they could do by themselves, how important it was to have practical, down-to-earth workers helping them. Now the process of struggle, criticism and transformation could go ahead easily. On September 27th 1969, the new Revolutionary Committee was set up with 39 members, seven from the PLA, six from the workers' team, nine of teachers, six revolutionary cadres, seven of students, three of workers in the university factory, and lastly one of the dependents of the university staff and workers. In shaping the new educational road, there was already the experience of an adjoining university, that of Tsinghua, which had already taken the first steps. But the educational line of Mao Tsetung Thought was clear enough, arousing teachers and students to mass critic-

ism of the old feudal and bourgeois system, and to an understanding that now all must serve proletarian politics, setting out to advance morally, mentally and physically to become workers in a developed culture, training successors to the revolutionary cause. How the university should become an outpost for the Mao Tsetung revolutionary line against imperialism and revisionism, and bourgeois culture. How students should be inculcated with loyalty to the revolutionary line of Mao Tsetung and struggle to uphold it, ever serving the people wholeheartedly. With the leadership of the working class, with practical work on both factory and farm, and with a student body that have come up from the "doers" rather than from the pure "talkers".

It is an exciting change, in which revolutionary staff join in with enthusiasm. Feng Yu-lan, a well-known professor, now over 70, does not want to retire. He feels he has grown in understanding and wants to keep abreast. The staff now rotates, one third being on the school May 7th farm, becoming tempered in work, one third in factories and communes, and one third on the job teaching. This entails a larger staff than formerly, a need which has been met by the taking on of some 300 old students. In June and July 1970, the first batches of new students began to come in, replacing the 8,000 old ones who went out to work. At present they number 2,667, all being workers, peasants or soldiers with practical experience. Twenty-nine percent are women; 21 years is the average age, most being activists in the study of Mao Tsetung Thought; 90 percent coming from the working people. The steps to gain enrolment are for students to voluntarily ask for it, then to gain the recommendation of the masses in the places where they have come from, with the leadership of the local organ of power agreeing, and then sending the application on to university leaders, who will re-examine it and make the final decision. Examinations are out.

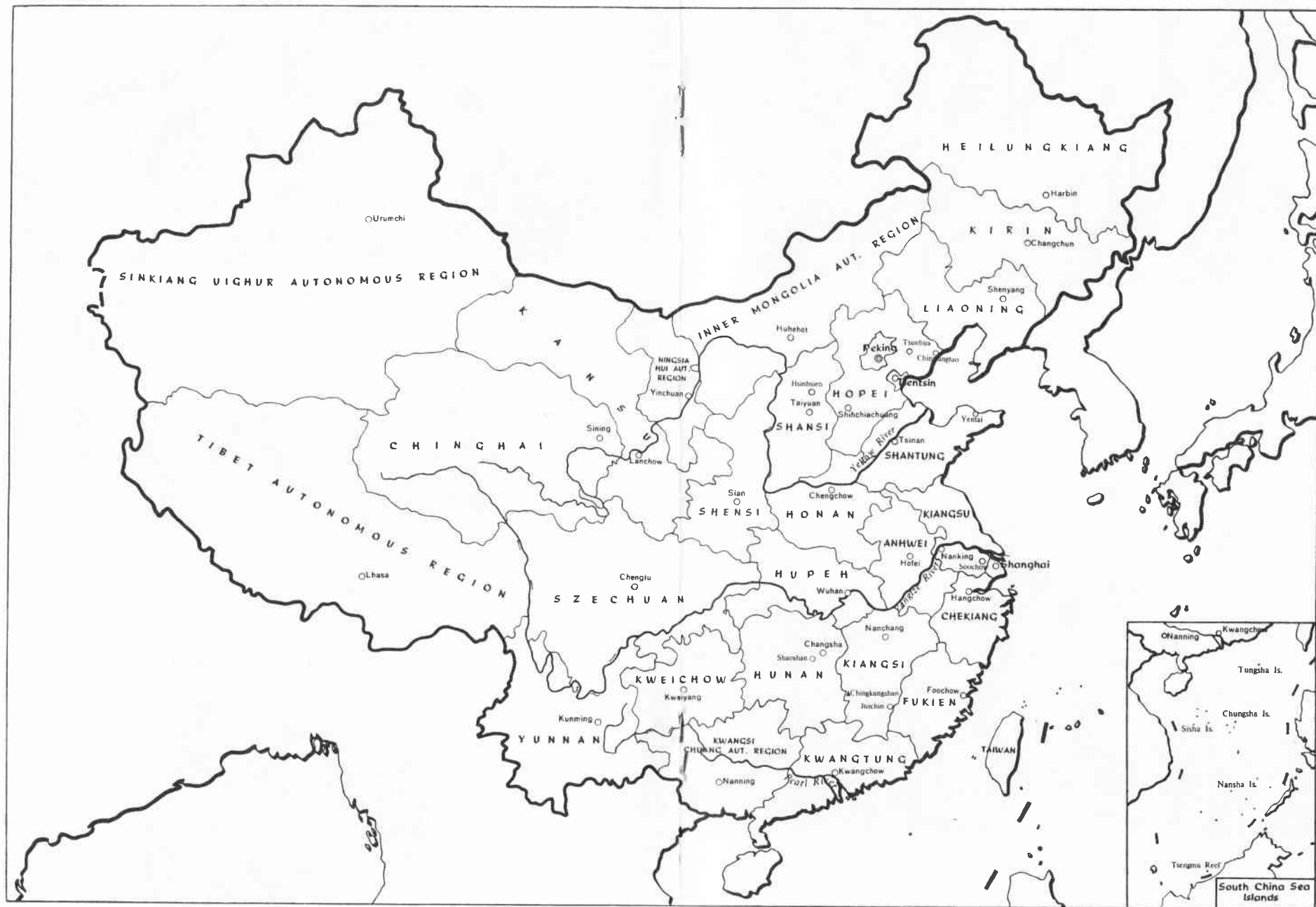
The university now reaches out into society in a new way. Society itself becomes a factory. Students and staff go out to help in running classes in factories, hospitals and schools. In August-September 1970 they set up a study group in the Peking Knitwear Factory, studying "On Contradiction". More than 200 attended, from old workers in their forties and fifties, down to a 12-year-old Red Guard. When the university folk find someone who has an outstanding grasp of problems, he or she is invited to the university to give a lecture there.

Today in the university there are 18 departments on the literary side, including those for philosophy, Chinese literature, politics, history, international politics, Eastern languages, Western languages, library training and law. On the science side there are eight departments including physics, radio, hygiene, geology, geography, biology, mathematics and mechanics.

The working people, from whom 90 percent of the new student body is drawn, are from the families of former poor or lower-middle peasants. Only 10 percent of the places are reserved for the children of cadres who, however, must have shown in a period of physical labor in factory or farm, the same as the others, that they follow Mao Tsetung Thought wholeheartedly.

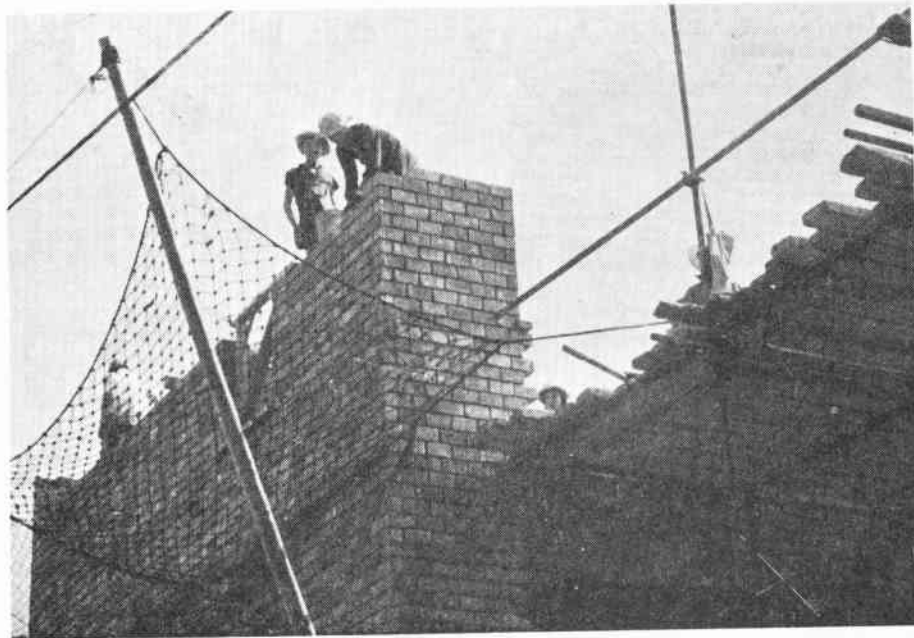


Practical Education
in the classroom





Nanking primary school drama group doing an African dance.



Construction college students at work, Nanking.

Photos by Rewi Alley



As Yu Tzu-yu helps an old commune member who suffered in the old society to study, she learns from him too.

JANUARY 1974

SEPTEMBER 1973

Workers learn mechanical drawing in the mill's night school.



Photos From

CHINA RECONSTRUCTS

SEPTEMBER 1973



A veteran miner lectures to scientists and technicians.



People's Liberation Army
Soldiers Are Students



Education
For National Minorities



Education in the Factory
Pupil and worker
Both students



Workers on the Job
Are Students

We went to one of the factories operated by the university. It is one that turns out pharmaceuticals by quite a complicated process. The students get a great deal of satisfaction from being able to get good results. On the floor of one of the factory shops a chemistry class was sitting around in a circle on little stools, while a teacher explained the chemical equations used in the process. All eyes were on the blackboard and on him, none giving so much as a glance at the passing visitors.

On the literary side, the young students who go out to factories and communes now feel that they have plenty to write about. More material than they can use, actually. Now, the more all go the road of revolution in education the more preposterous does the old system seem. The kind of classroom education that set out to solve everything but actually very often solved nothing, only helping to produce minds like tape recorders which at examination time would scoop all the prizes, yet really understood so little. Workers coming into the picture make a lot of difference. An article written in the old days using 15,000 words is much improved, workers say, when it is cut down to 3,000 written in direct, easily understandable language. The college course is now cut to two years, and then graduates go back to the organisations they have come from, whether commune or factory, unless they are needed elsewhere. In teaching method, the discussion form is now widely used and the stress laid on giving a basis for self-education that will go on after the student graduates. There will no longer be one-sided emphasis on academic achievement or high technique which have to do with individual advancement, but more on an all-round development which enables the trainee to serve the people better in line with China's socialist development. The school too, is a factory, they say. Its task is to produce the kind of people who can fit into a swiftly evolving society. It was stressed, however, that present developments are experimental, and that there will be many changes as they are needed and as the situation develops.

One of the old professors, Chu Teh-hsi, told how his 20 years of teaching experience had amply demonstrated that the past system was divorced from practice. Now, since the storm of the Cultural Revolution and the great mixing that has taken place, he has come to a new realisation of the needs of working people. He spoke of the need for constant study, constant learning from which no one was absolved.

Canton Deaf-Mute School in 1970

We went some 15 kilometres outside Canton (Kwangchow), and drew up at a modern school building. It was a deaf-mute school, originally planned for 500 pupils and a 10-year course. Now the stress is laid on getting the deaf and mute children to speak and hear when possible, and then on getting them out into society to mix normally with other people. Now too, the acupuncture methods used are also common in the rural counties around Canton, so that treatment can be given there, and there is not the same need to bring a large group together. At present there are only 300 in the school, and these will graduate when they gain speaking and hearing

ability, and pass into ordinary schools. We found the teachers and the PLA medical team intensely interested in their work and full of optimism about the results they were gaining.

In the Cultural Revolution the deaf-mute students here divided into groups and struggled against each other, as happened in other schools. Then in came unity, and with it the medical team of the PLA. Cures began to be effected with the new-type acupuncture treatment, amongst those whose hearing was not permanently impaired. They were taught to speak and, indeed, went out in concert teams and gave many performances. As in all schools, only the common language is taught, so that the cured child often goes home and criticises the family for being able to talk only in the Cantonese dialect. As far as is possible, youngsters are not sent out to work in factories with handicapped people, but rather to those where normality is the rule. Some learn lip-reading but the main help comes from the acupuncture course and, later, speech training. The acupuncture especially assists the majority of the deaf-mutes, whose disability has come through such childhood illnesses as measles or polio. The needling is not painless, and sometimes youngsters complain that it is hard to open their mouths and eat normally for a time. But all encourage each other to keep on with the treatment, especially as good results begin to come. The idea that the youngster must struggle to help himself and not give in to his disability is always kept to the front. Medical workers who give the acupuncture treatment all have tried the needling on themselves first. It is a fighting process. When hearing first comes, just what do all those sounds mean? Teachers have to speak slowly and in a high voice, using the sign language at times as an assistance to understanding. But results are being gained, and more and more graduates are going out into the world to fight their battles there.

The school concert group put on several items for us, singing and dancing. Then they did some little one-act plays. One about a boy who was reluctant to be needled, scared of the pain. Another about a doctor of the other day who, with a great show of superiority, would simply tell the boy that his case was hopeless. We left as evening came in, with the strong impression of having been with a courageous and happy group.

Red Torch Primary School

Situated in an industrial area of Canton city, Red Torch Primary School is a modern, well-built facility with 1,500 pupils. The buildings were constructed in 1958. Before that time it was quite small, 400-500 pupils in all, classrooms being in converted dwelling houses.

We visited it in November 1970, first going to the office and sitting in front of well-scrubbed desk tops set in scrupulously clean and simple surroundings. The vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Committee gave us quite a long talk, describing how the present school differed from the previous one, how well the dangers of the Liu Shao-chi bourgeois line in education were understood now and avoided, how the emphasis now was not so much on strict order and discipline, or on the "Peking duck" type

of education. (For those who might not understand this image, the Peking duck is force-fed, with ever additional food being pushed down its throat.) The main aim now is to give pupils good, new ideas, not just those of eating and dressing well, once discussed so much, but ideas of work and struggle, why we live, how we can serve the people. The school now sets out to change the pupil's world outlook radically and to bring it close to life. With the help of members of the working class and the PLA as well as from the families of school children, much has been done in this respect already. More still remains to be done. By going out into the rural communes to work with the people and by going to city factories, valuable lessons in class struggle have been learnt.

The PLA itself is a good model, with officers teaching soldiers, soldiers teaching officers, and soldiers teaching each other, all becoming political activists in Mao Tsetung Thought, keen on physical education and ever trying to bring theory into practice. One very big problem, the speaker felt, was how to continue to raise the political level of the teachers. The worker propaganda team members who come in from factories help a good deal with this, as does actual physical work.

In school, children are encouraged to mend broken furniture, both at school and at home. Cut each other's hair, mend clothing and set up physical culture groups. Some pupils form groups to go out and do public service, cleaning at the railway station, sweeping lanes, helping in people's homes where help is needed, and so on.

Some of the pupils who had joined our meeting gave their impressions. How good it was to march out to the Ershatou production brigade of Meipu Commune and work there. How many things they found out that were not in lesson books. Care of fish, how to feed animals, how peanuts and water chestnuts grow, and so many other things a city child does not have any knowledge of, but at Ershatou can be learnt through practice!

After listening to the children telling us their side of things, we went together to look over the various small workshops the school maintains, watching the youngsters managing tools and machines, some evidently with considerable understanding, others who went more slowly.

Back in the office after making a tour of the classrooms and listening in to the various subjects being taught, we were entertained by some of the pupils putting on vocal items for us. It is a seven-year school, the last two years corresponding to the junior middle course of the last period. Eight hundred of the 1,500 pupils are boys. There are 62 teachers and usually around 50 pupils in a class. Children do two weeks a term in the school workshops, half days only. Primary classes do one week a term at the Ershatou production brigade, and the middle school classes two weeks each term. There are two terms a year.

Middle School No. 32, Canton

Middle School No. 32 in Canton (Kwangchow) was the next school visited. When arriving, we were met by the vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Committee, an old teacher, and some boy and girl students. It is a school

of over 4,000 students and 160 teachers, first set up in 1954 and greatly enlarged in 1958. In the Cultural Revolution, it was the first school in Canton to set up its three-way Revolutionary Committee. This was on February 20th 1968. From that time until November of the same year, studies were done outside the school, in communes and with the PLA. Then a branch school was set up in the countryside and a small factory established in the school for turning out chemicals and parts of electrical equipment. In this way it was possible to have class work, production and scientific experiment run together.

As things are at present, classroom studies take up 70 percent of the students' time, and practical work the remainder. The course is a four-year one, two years for lower middle school and two for the upper, replacing the old six-year course. Boys and girls are about the same in number here. The branch school is out in Huahsien county, has 30 mou of paddy and 70 of hill land, with three fish pond reservoirs.

In the chemical workshops the students work over material discarded from factories in the city, extracting valuable chemicals from it. Material that otherwise would have been dumped, making for a pollution hazard. They also make alcohol by distilling fruit waste.

We watched the students at play and then, too, at militia work, for military training is one of the school subjects, in line with the idea of preparation for any emergency. It was stressed, however, that what has been done so far is by no means considered perfect. Everything is more in the nature of experimentation, on the way to carry through Chairman Mao's directive for future education.

Tungfanghung May 7th School in Peking

After the first two years of the Cultural Revolution, it began to be seen that throughout China for many cadres, old and new, a general remoulding was necessary, so that all would clearly understand the correct way forward and, in line with Mao Tsetung Thought, thoroughly identify themselves with the people. In many organisations a more rational system of administration led to the possibility of sending cadres to other places where they were needed, a process which required much preparation. Those allocated to communes had to learn how to do manual work again. Chairman Mao said that a good way for cadres to remould themselves would be to work along with ordinary poor and lower-middle peasants, learning from them.

In consequence, 1969 saw the rapid spread of May 7th schools throughout the land. Most organisations have their own, usually situated on wasteland that can be reclaimed through work. In most of these places cadres have, under the guidance of local commune members, built their own housing and other facilities. All manual work is done by trainees whose families, in most instances, remain back in the cities with the cadres' usual salaries being paid them, so that no financial hardship is entailed.

It was a cold February morning in the spring of 1970 when I went with a group of foreign friends out of Peking city by bus south to Tahsing,

a county which belongs to the Peking municipality. An hour and a half later we entered the area of Tungfanghung (The East is Red) commune, once frequently affected by summer floodwaters of rivers coming through the eroded mountains of Shansi. These floods had left many sand dunes and quite a fair amount of wasteland, on some of which Tungfanghung May 7th School is situated, and which its trainees were reclaiming.

The trainees gave us a warm welcome, and soon we were sitting in a long warm room in one of the sturdy, newly erected blocks of buildings, listening to the leader of the school Revolutionary Committee, Liu Jen-san. He was a man with a strong, weather-beaten face with a good deal of kindness and understanding in it, a veteran of the old revolutionary wars. I asked him later where he had originally come from, and he said, "Fuping, Hopei," which was once part of an old Eighth Route Army base. Then I asked him if he had ever seen Dr. Bethune, who had worked there, and he replied that indeed he had, twice.

But to get back to the meeting. Liu Jen-san invited us all to sit down, and then big bowls of peanuts and glasses of tea were brought in. "Our own peanuts," he said proudly. "Eat up!" Then going on to tell us how 1,400 cadres had come here on October 30th 1968, for remoulding, 600 of them Communist Party members and 100 more members of the Communist Youth League. Trainees ranged in experience from veterans of the anti-Japanese war with 30 years' experience behind them, though the bulk were those who had become cadres in the 'fifties. Another minority were the younger cadres of the 'sixties. Most had been administrative or Party functionaries in the county, only a few from further afield. Coming to the school, they had been first organised on army lines into six companies, with one additional unit directly under the school leadership. On arrival, they first simply lived with the peasants, but construction of the school started right away, many of the bricks having been carted into the countryside from the old city walls of Peking, now under demolition to make for expansion. At the same time, work was started on land reclamation. Moving sand hills into marsh and building up land that could be tilled. Already they had reclaimed 1,000 mou and produced good harvests from this land, 400 mou producing high-yielding rice, while the rest has grown corn and peanuts. To increase the supply of animal manure for compost the school has gone into pig-breeding with considerable success, as well as doing some duck-raising.

They have set up agricultural implement manufacture and repair shops, making the implements they need, such as threshing and winnowing machines, machines for rice hulling and chaff cutting. "Our support has come from the May 7th directive of Chairman Mao, and then from the help on the spot by the PLA and the farmers of the local communes," Liu said, going on to tell how old peasants who had lived through the hard times would come and tell of their experiences under the cruel exploitation of that society. "As this area was once inhabited chiefly by the very poor, there are still many such stories current that are good education for the student of politics. We have also followed the practice of having some of our trainees always take part in the work of production teams in the local

brigades, the school having already given them 20,000 workdays. None of the land we cultivated for ourselves was brigade crop land. We simply demanded grain from the wild sandhills and surly saline marshes," Liu said, "and they gave in, faced by our determination. Always we had the example of the anti-Japanese "Kangta" University of Yen-an, and the production brigade of Tachai before us as models for our work. So despite all, and even when the surface of the land was frozen, we went on with levelling and other work. The wind blew sand in our faces and we thought of Chiao Yu-lu in Lankao in Honan who, by his leadership, tamed a whole county of wild, ever-moving sandhills, and made its alkaline marshes bear well."

The first productive activity trainees went through was the weaving of baskets for carrying earth. Next came the making of carts and wheelbarrows, then the school furniture and so on, and even agricultural implements, using waste materials from big city factories. "We have planted trees and amongst them a vineyard and an apple orchard we expect to be bearing by 1972. We have dug drainage ditches, sunk wells, grown our own vegetables that at first we had to buy. Wondering what to do with our surplus of rice straw we have devised machines to twist straw into rope to sell as packing material in the city."

These are all things that can be reported on with facts and figures. Not so easy, however, to report on matters that affect the spirit, except to say that all trainees do one hour's study of Chairman Mao's works each day, and two full halfdays each week as well. In addition, poor and lower-middle peasants come in as lecturers, and trainees go out among the communes to help in mass criticism meetings, in propagating the results of important Peking meetings like the Ninth Party Congress, directives and other matters which are of concern to all. "We try to help get the idea over to the people still more deeply that all are farming for the success of the revolution." Then also 18 months have passed in which to judge the effect of the May 7th School on cadres. Certainly all have improved in health and strength. Old ones realise how, by being enclosed in offices, they had been isolated from the people and could no longer meet them in the same way as before. How now in the May 7th School the old spirit of fighting the enemy together returns, and life takes on new meaning again. One such old cadre, now in charge of the piggeries, has put so much devotion and care into his work that the project became a great success. Six hundred of the first group of trainees have gone out into the communes to take part in regular commune and production brigade work and help to raise political consciousness amongst the people. The 800 left in the school are able now to do much more than when they first came. For instance, Lin Yun, a girl, learnt how to use one of the big rubber-tired wheelbarrows the school made, which can carry 100 jin of compost across paths between the fields. Over a distance of not much more than three li, or a mile, back and forth she could manage but three trips a day with it in the beginning. Now, she can do 21 trips a day with the same load, pushing the wheelbarrow in all something over 70 li, or 23 miles, and still having plenty of energy left.

After we had gone out of the meeting room and faced a cold north wind which drove the sand from big dunes still standing scudding over the frozen earth, we watched trainees working with shovels, throwing themselves into the task with a will and a way. Then we saw some of the 800 ducklings and specimens of the 100 piglets, visited the tailoring department where clothing was repaired, the cooperative marketing and supply shop, the implement shops, then looked into the spick and span dormitories, finally finding ourselves comfortably seated in the big assembly hall. Here an excellent meal cooked by the trainees and served by them appeared promptly in front of us which we, being somewhat hungry, all set to and consumed with great relish. Then tables were cleared away, and we watched a performance of the school's propaganda team that goes out amongst the brigades to give performances.

They put on a rapidly moving show full of spirit, singing some of their songs pleasingly to the air of Hopei opera — "Hopei Bangtze" — that local peasants love so well. Next, we all went back to the meeting room in which we had spent much of the morning and listened to the careful accounts which two of the trainees gave of how the training given over the past 18 months had affected them.

The first was a man, Liu Ju-ken. He told how he came of a poor family in this area. How from six to 13 he lived the life of a beggar on the streets of Peking. How at 13 he was taken as apprentice by a shopkeeper, but was beaten so much that he ran away at 15, and had finally made his way to the Eighth Route Army, which he joined in January 1939. After being sent to a training school in Yen-an he worked with self-supporting groups, spinning and weaving cloth, growing millet and vegetables, helping peasants with their work, and digging caves in hillsides for living quarters. Then, everyone worked hard. Manual work in the daytime, office work and study at night. Sometimes when office work accumulated, it actually went on all through the night. He was so full of spirit in those days that he was cited as a labor hero. When the call came to go to the front he was always in the van. With his comrades he then felt that the greatest thing to do was to knock down the old world of oppression and build a new one on its ruins, as the words of the "Internationale" had it. He became a Communist Party member in 1940, and maintained a strong spirit of solidarity with the people amongst whom he worked and lived.

Then after the liberation of Peking he returned there. Chairman Mao had warned that this was but a first step in a great new Long March. All should beware of the sugar-coated bullets that could be more deadly than the nickel-coated ones of the enemy. "But like others," he said, "I changed over from the old system of livelihood in which what was needed was supplied, to that of a salary. At that time, many Liu Shao-chi ideas were circulating. We had won the revolution. Now was the time for construction. A cadre ought to be successful. He should achieve fame and a place for the future. I looked around me and found that cadres who could write well most easily became famous. So then I tried to find ways of getting a quiet position that would give me time to write more and become a theorist. I finally managed to be included in a course at the higher Party

school. At that time, the revisionist Yang Hsien-chen was one of the leaders there. The school encouraged students to write articles that were divorced from reality. I, like others, had memorised many passages in early Marxist classics as my stock in trade. Now, I had but to fit them into passages I would write. More and more I became divorced from reality. I came to admire many old middle-class intellectuals, and especially thought that Liu Shao-chi's writings pointed out the way ahead. Without realising it, I had left the people and was actually working against them!"

Liu Ju-ken, as he said this, became a little emotional and his voice shook. Then, recovering himself, he went on, "The Communist Party had saved me, but I had not understood properly and now I was leading people back to the vicious old society." He realised that he had not been true to the pledge he had given on becoming a Party member, and that he had to start over again. He had not lived up to the expectations of the people from whom he had sprung. The Cultural Revolution came and all of this became crystal clear to him, giving him much bitterness of heart. Then came the May 7th School, and a second chance for him to re-dedicate himself for service to the people.

Living in a dormitory of comrades together, a whole flood of memories of Yen-an days came over him. Listening to the old peasants who, too, had been beggars on Peking streets, he was greatly moved. How well he understood them! This was reality! This was not playing for fame, or for self! This was something that had happened to them and to himself too and, unless the right way ahead was taken, would happen again. "Now as I look back," he went on, "I despise the way I sat in comfort in Peking while so many things were waiting to be done everywhere. In consequence, my advance has taken a zig-zag course instead of the straight one it should have. I can only say how grateful I am to the thinking of Chairman Mao for the strong help it has been in catching me up in time and making a new revolutionary out of me," he said. It was evident that now he was for the revolutionary road, and that the one of peaceful evolution had ceased to have any appeal for him, despite its allurements of material comfort for the enterprising.

The next speaker was Hsu Kwang-hua, a woman in her early thirties, who told how she was a "May 7 fighter" now. How she had been an office worker in educational administration since Liberation, coming from a rich landlord family and being a university graduate. She had never worked much with her hands. In revolt against the criminal old society, she had joined the Communist Party at the liberation of Peking. Despite the fact that her work was connected with country schools, she had never learnt how to distinguish the different crops, or mastered any of the knowledge of what went into making them grow. She had applied to come to the May 7th School, and had been accepted with the first batch. When she came she suffered a good deal with blisters on her hands, sore back and sore legs, as well as from the sand and dust. Most of the others in her group were from a peasant background and so did not have all the difficulties she had, but she would say grimly to herself that this was part of the price she had to pay for having been brought up in a home where

there were 22 maids and hired workers, and where everything was done for her. She said, "If one comes over from the exploiting class to that of the working people, the transition must cost something. This is just part of the process of transformation. So I stuck to it. The blisters healed, the palms became hard and horny, the legs and back stopped aching, and I could keep up with the others quite easily. I forgot my dislike for the sand that filled ears and nostrils on windy days, and no longer wrapped my head in a silk scarf."

She then gave some amusing accounts of how she had managed to get over her distaste for country smells, and what she had been brought up to regard as dirt. She had a strongly inbred aversion to many of the things that the working person accepted quite simply as part of the task to be done. She also had to break with old landlord family attachments, reminding herself that now she had joined the working class and that the class struggle was still being fought. "I needed to remember always," she said, "that in the old days everything we ate, used, or wore came to us at the expense of people who were dying for want of such. Now that I have joined the revolution, I must be thorough in my joining, not ever looking backward. So I turned more and more to the people, and with their help transformed my outlook. I began to really understand that the group meant more than the individual so that, when my team was able to pull 92 carts of earth in one day, instead of the high target of 85 set, I felt that this was really something, even though each of us was tired and dirty, with hair and ears full of dust.

Old habits, however, die hard. Continually I have to pull myself up in many a little thing. To take just one instance. We were at a meal eating bean sprouts. Everyone but I ate the whole thing, skin and all. But I carefully removed the black skin from each bean, and when the dishes were cleared away, there stood a little hill of black skins on the table by my place. No one said anything, but some certainly looked as I swept them up hastily and took them away. It was not that they tasted bad but only that they were black in color and that put me off. But for poor peasants to throw away any edible skin was waste. And now I was one with the poor peasants. Even in small things like this we must take our stand."

Hsu Kwang-hua came from a class in which the ability to talk well was common, so that she made her statement with considerable effect. Most of the trainees, however, were from the class that expresses itself simply, not wasting words, or thinking so much of the impression it is making on the audience. In this school, there must be many good stories of cadres who have changed their outlook since the years of the Cultural Revolution. Now in the May 7th School they go ahead quietly and thoughtfully after they have been faced with a clear demonstration of the difference between the two lines, the two roads. The atmosphere they have created together is a happy one. The work, dealing as it does with real things, and done in conjunction with the farm folk around, is satisfying. To recapture the old Yanan spirit is a real challenge, and the sense of mission amongst the trainees is high. They all crowded around our bus as we pulled out in

the evening dusk. Three of the women cadres had small babies hoisted on their shoulders, fat, laughing little ones, whose faces left a pleasant memory with us. For it is to help the children of the oncoming generation that all this struggle is taking place. The victory of Mao Tsetung Thought will affect many generations of the once poor and exploited not only in China, but also the whole world around.

Conclusion

The main aim of the Cultural Revolution has been to keep the Chinese quarter of humanity sturdily on the revolutionary road. To do this, it was necessary to expose trends towards restoration of capitalism and modern revisionism that had arisen, and to demonstrate the necessity of continuing the class struggle in its various forms under the dictatorship of the proletariat. One consequence of all that has been done is a start in bridging differences, those between town and country, between the relatively highly paid and those on low wages, between the worker and the intellectual, with this general idea becoming paramount: "We are all in the revolution together to serve the people." The superstructure has been drastically reshaped and streamlined to fit its socialist base; bureaucracy is under heavy attack, and the potential of the ordinary working person is more and more being given a way to express itself. Scientific experimentation and creative innovations are the order of the day. Representative Revolutionary Committees replace the former administrative organs.

The Cultural Revolution has been essentially a high tide of the class struggle, and during this time the slogan in effect has been, "Get out amongst the working people, study their needs and build on what they know, live along with them and each day learn from them, go over their problems with them in all humility, take them to your heart and give them all your love . . . these things lead to a beginning of understanding." With the Soviet experience before their eyes, Chinese revolutionaries try and take the long view. They have come to understand well how important is the training and education not only of the present generation but also of the second and third, the "successors to the revolution". Revolutionising the rising generation has become an overwhelmingly important task.

But the old educational system was built to measure for the old order, and so it had to be pulled down and a new one erected that would educate for life, not for "education". All learning had to be tied with practice.

Another important new feature is to teach the rising generation how to create and analyse, and not simply enforce memorisation of book learning, in the realisation that knowledge acquired by rote can well become a trap. Education must teach "why" as well as "how" and "for whom", so that down-to-earth service to the people becomes more possible, and the part-work, part-study principle becomes universal from primary grades right on through university. Education must promote revolutionary aims in the spirit of Mao Tsetung Thought. As a result of all this, the youth of the whole of China now takes a new look at itself, with oncoming generations leaping to the challenge. It has not been a question of peaceful transition, but one of revolutionary method.

Chinese provinces are as big as the greater European countries. Szechuan with its 68 million in the west, Kiangsu lying along the lower reaches of the Yangtze with its 44 million, then the plains of Hopei with 41 million, Kwangtung on the south China coast with its 42 million, and then Heilungkiang on the northeast frontier, these and all the great provinces that lie in between have all during these last five years had their centres of intense revolutionary struggle. China, with the motto put into action by the Cultural Revolution, now makes self-sufficiency possible at all levels. Indeed maximum self-sufficiency in all that is needed has become a way of life. With the idea of doing things themselves, multi-millions of children are growing up more sure that they can make their land produce all that is needed to support their work and future.

The strengthening of the organisation of working people on the land, brought about by the continuing success of the people's communes, which have given a lead in educating people to put out of their minds the profit incentive and to work for the common good, makes it possible to bring socialist morality into the tens of thousands of villages throughout the country. The new production brigade schools play a good part in changing the pattern of thinking away from the old and into the new, so that Man To Be begins to emerge in no uncertain manner. Who can say that this is not a victory for all mankind?



OBSERVATIONS OF AN AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT Annie Stein

Frederick Douglass, in his autobiography, tells how his mistress began to teach him to read when he was a seven-year-old slave in her home. The master became furious when he found them out. "Reading," he said, "will unfit him to be a slave."

One hundred and fifty years later, here in the U S the children of the poor, the Blacks, Chicano and native Americans are still systematically deprived of their right to learn. In New York, the richest city in the world, 85 percent of the schools for minority-group children and the poor have an average 5th-grade reading level - the Army calls it "functional illiteracy" after 8 years of schooling. Any better education would "unfit" them to labor in the restaurant kitchens, the hospital orderly jobs, the hand-trucks and workrooms of the garment district, the unskilled port jobs.

When a delegation of community activists from New York City, visiting China in 1972, met with Tsai Te-chi of the Revolutionary Committee of the Shanghai Educational Bureau, we told her of our children's plight. "Schools," she said, "reflect the class struggle. Which-ever class has the critical power has the power to control culture and education. Before Liberation, education here was monopolized by the landlords and the bourgeoisie. Laboring people could not get to school or were expelled if they got in. After Liberation the laboring people had the power and their children can now enter school and be trained to be the successors of the Revolution."

Our delegation traveled thousands of miles, talked to hundreds of ordinary people. My hope was that I could find some clues to help destroy the evils I see in our schools.

Deeply imbedded in the American schools are these unspoken goals of the ruling power:

1. TO SEPARATE those chosen to be undereducated--

some to be manual and unskilled workers; others to be granted moderate literacy, enough to fill the skilled jobs and the offices of commerce; and those few white males who may enter the executive offices of business and government through the portals of the best universities. Tracking (separation into "ability groups")--from kindergarten to college achieves this. Even those educators who earnestly believe in the American tradition that all men are created equal are taught to believe that tracking is fair because the children of the poor and the Blacks are inevitably and permanently inferior in intellect. "Look who wants to be a doctor!" I heard one guidance counsellor say to an eager 11-year old Black child.

2. TO TRAIN THE STUDENTS TO OBEY instantly and without question any order given by an adult in authority, no matter how irrational, confusing or meaningless the order may be. Students learn, too, that they must search for the answer the teacher wants, not for the truth as they know it. A Head Start class of 4-year-olds I visited drew pictures of boats they had just seen on a trip to the East River in New York. All of them drew the familiar toy sailboat. Astonished, I asked the teacher, "Were there sailboats on the river today?" "Well, no." she said, "that's the boat I drew on the blackboard." What the teacher says is reality; what you see and know does not count.

3. INCULCATE RACISM and contempt for other nations. Blacks are segregated in separate inferior schools, nineteen years after such schools were declared unconstitutional. In mixed schools, Blacks and Puerto Ricans are separated by "ability grouping" into isolated classes with a sharply reduced curriculum - an object lesson for Black and white alike as to their permanent status in society. Spanish-speaking children are condemned for speaking Spanish. "No Spanish in classrooms, halls or grounds" is still the general rule and was only recently removed from the local codes in some Southwestern states. If a child cannot understand the teacher's language it's the child's disability, not the teacher's.

4. TO INSTILL DOMINANT MALE - SUBMISSIVE FEMALE roles. Boys are forced from earliest years to be "all

boy" at any cost; girls are trained to be dependent and conforming. In high school girls must not show how bright they are or "boys won't like you." Early training is perfectly suited to produce the coffee-toting "girl" in the office and the loving wife in the kitchen.

5. TO COMPETE with and distrust classmates, and to cherish individual possessions above all virtues. "No cheating!" I heard one teacher shout across the classroom to the small second-graders who were helping each other understand their work. Much too often early childhood classrooms are models of consumerism, glutted with equipment. Most of the games and toys (all supposed to be educational) must be played exactly according to the company's instructions; the initiative and creativity of the child are stilled and he is trained to play by the rules.

6. TO KEEP THE PARENTS OUT. The reactionary New York Teachers Union leadership actually demanded, in a recent contract negotiations, that no parents be permitted in the classrooms. Only professionals who "understood" were to be admitted. Parents may attend carefully controlled parents conferences to become instructed on their obligations to the school. They may join Parent Associations to buy more TVs for the school. And twice a year at "Open School Day" they may enter the classrooms and watch quietly. Otherwise they must come to the school only to help discipline their children.

IN CHINA, instead of separation of manual and intellectual labor, the Chinese strive for the truly liberated man and woman, skilled in the manual arts, creative and knowledgeable, intellectually and culturally advanced and curious. Instead of humble, unthinking obedience, young people are trained to criticize, to explore, constantly to renew themselves with the help of their comrades, to be self-reliant and resourceful.

Instead of chauvinism and bigotry, all peoples are loved as brothers and sisters, struggling together for freedom from oppression. Even the littlest children

applauded our American delegation and many spontaneously sang "Workers of All Countries Unite" to welcome us. The minority groups in China are encouraged to bear many children "because there are too few of them," we were told in the National Institute of Minorities in Peking.

Instead of submissiveness little girls who only 25 years ago might have been sold into slavery are today taught that "women hold up half of the sky."

"Serve the people whole-heartedly" is the dominant theme in every classroom, from nursery to university.

The Chinese classroom when you enter it, looks just like every old-fashioned classroom one has ever seen in America. Fifty or so students at fixed desks, and a teacher at the blackboard. But there the similarity ends. Teacher and student are political equals. The class together decides upon its work, helps the lagging student, criticizes to strengthen the teacher, bears full responsibility for its own progress. The principal of the school is the chairman of the three-way revolutionary committee of the school; elected representatives of the staff, the students and the workers or peasants who send their children to the school constitute the revolutionary committee: community control in action! Labor and study are intimately integrated so that each advances the other

EVERY STUDENT WORKS
EVERY WORKER STUDIES

IN THE UNITED STATES schools seek to produce as their elite the Watergate man - ruthless, self-seeking, dedicated to the authority figure, distrustful of and ready to bug his closest associates, and full of contempt for the ordinary American.

Yet despite this training, millions of American students revolted in the last decade, questioning and rejecting the values of our class society, trying to undo their schooling and remake themselves into more generous, more decent human beings.

Parents, students and awakened teachers formed a great movement in the sixties to fight these evils.

First and foremost, they demand accountability from the schools - accountability, not to the upper structure of the oppressive school administration, but accountability to the parents and the children themselves. They demand an end to unequal education - all must be taught so that they learn; an end to racism and sexism in the classroom, in the teaching staffs, and in textbooks; and bilingual teaching for children who do not know English. The growing demand is for community control, the power to determine school policy, staffing and curriculum.

To all these Americans - parents, students and earnest teachers - news of China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution comes as a stunning revelation of what schools can be.

How do the Chinese do it? How much of their method can we bring into our schools to strengthen our struggle for a more profound change in the power that controls all our culture? Rewi Alley, in this chapter "Cultural Revolution in Education" from his "Travels in China", guides us through the schools in China, in communes, in cities, through nurseries, primary schools, middle schools, universities, part-time and adult education classes. As we follow him in his travels and learn with him the problems that were met, the errors and the triumphs made, it is up to each of us to catch perhaps the single spark that can light up our way - in our own nation, our own community, and in our own child's school.

THE ONGOING BUILDING OF CHINA'S

SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

As Reported By
Hsinhua News Agency

August 23rd 1973 Spare Time Education

A people's commune in Hupeh puts great stress on giving its adult members spare-time education - raising the educational level of the people in a remote hilly area. A total of 4350 adults are attending the 77 evening schools in the Sunchung People's Commune. It also has more than 2000 pupils studying in primary and middle schools. More than 60% of the population is now studying. In pre-Liberation days the poor and lower-middle peasants were deprived of the right to schooling, with those who could read and write being less than one percent of the population.

While opening full-time schools for the younger generation, the Party and People's Government, after Liberation, have paid great attention to the development of spare-time education in the rural districts-to train new-type peasants with both socialist consciousness and culture and to speed-up farm mechanization. The advent of people's communes created favorable conditions for this effort. To strengthen leadership over educational work the Party committee of the Sungchung Commune set up a peasant spare-time educational committee under the Party secretary. A group consisting of teachers, commune members and cadres was set up to compile textbooks on Chinese language, technical subjects, farm planning and culture. It also compiled technical material to meet the needs of production and material to help in criticizing revisionism and help in rectifying the style of Party work.

The school schedule varies with the seasons. In the slack seasons the schools are open once every two days. Fewer lessons are given in the busy seasons. Varied and flexible teaching methods are used.....Some couples who have small children go to evening school by

turns. Study groups are set up for those commune members who live in cottages scattered in the hills. For those who find it inconvenient to attend school, tutors go to teach them in their homes. Each evening school has a literacy class and three other classes on different levels... Students of the literacy and elementary class learn to read and write and study some basic viewpoints of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. Those in the intermediate class receive some general education and study some selected readings from Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Chairman Mao. Students of the advanced class study "On Practice", "On Contradiction", "Manifesto of the Communist Party" and other works.

December 12th 1973 New Teaching System
At East China Agricultural College

The Kiangsu Agricultural College, while running its own farm and stockbreeding centers on the campus, has set up seven teaching bases in the countryside. It has also established ties with 12 rural production brigades and two factories as well as with two veterinary stations and a horticulture center. The students spend one third of their time each year in these teaching bases where they continue their studies, do productive labour and carry out research work. Before giving lectures on feeding animals and treating animal diseases, the teachers take the students to a veterinary station in Tungta County to gain practical knowledge. Theories about sterilization of pigs and swine vaccination are taught at a pig farm where the students, under the guidance of peasants and teachers, can promptly apply what they have learned.

Transforming old teaching material is an important aspect of the revolution in education... Many teachers have gone to the villages in most of the counties of Kiangsu Province and edited 43 new teaching texts: linking theory with practice and stressing the new experience gained by the peasant masses. "Crop Cultivation" is one of the new texts edited in the course of doing productive labour in the countryside. Revisions of the texts were made on the basis of the opinions solicited from the peasants.

Peasants with rich practical experience are invited to serve as part-time lecturers at the agricultural college or in the teaching bases outside the school.

December 19th 1973 New Educational System In China

A new educational system that combines teaching, productive labour and scientific research is taking shape in China's colleges of science and engineering; this is in line with Mao's teaching: "education must serve proletarian politics and be combined with productive labour."

Figures from 67 colleges show that they have established links with 2825 factories, mines and people's communes...When the teaching requires it, the students and teachers go to apply what they have learned and conduct related scientific research. This integrates theory with practice and college education with revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experimentation in society. The students are no longer divorced from proletarian politics, the worker-peasant masses and productive labour.

Establishing a base in a people's commune on the northern outskirts of Shanghai, the students of the entomological speciality of the Biology Department of Shanghai's Fudan University did research on a number of the most harmful insects in the locality. They made reports to local production teams when any insect was threatening the area. They studied the growth of the boll weevil by observing 2000 cotton plants in the field and breeding the insect under laboratory conditions. After three months of study they got sufficient information and worked out an effective way to kill the insects. Over the past two years they studied the morphology and habits of a hundred other insects.

The 830 undergraduates of the 21 Departments of Science and Engineering of Peking University went to factories, mines and people's communes to conduct 345 items of scientific research related to their specialties and practical production problems.

Under the guidance of two teachers, fourteen undergraduates of the Machine Building Department of Kirin Engineering University went to a hydraulic valve plant in Szeping City and in 56 days designed 6 pieces of special equipment, including a hydraulic broaching machine and a screw broach grinding machine which have already been trial-produced and are now in use. The high pressure valves processed by the new equipment have a precision twice as accurate as that turned out by other equipment.

An electronic meters and instruments factory run by Peking University designed and trial-produced, in cooperation with other units, a large, integrated circuit digital electronic computer that can do one million calculations per second...In cooperation with technicians of the factory they compiled a text dealing with electronic digital computers.

Factories run by Tsinghua University, Tientsin University and Hopei Engineering Institute are turning out such new products as program-controlling milling machines, high precision coordinate boring and milling machines and electronic machine tools.

Thirty two worker, peasant and soldier students of the Civil Engineering Department of Shanghai's Tungchi University went to a paper mill, a steel plant and two other factories this summer to make designs for eight buildings with a total floor space of five thousand square metres.

In cooperation with the Maanshan No I Iron Works and Nanking Petro-Chemical Plant, the Chemical Department of Nanking University studied molecular sieves as highly effective drying agents and catalysts and made advances in theory and practical application. They used clay as the main material to synthesize A-and-X molecular sieves, reducing cost by 75 to 80 percent. This

paved the way for large-scale industrial application of molecular sieves. They went on to synthesize Y-molecular sieves with three kinds of inexpensive raw material and used them to produce XYLOL, an important raw material for polyesters.

The Biology and Chemistry Departments of Peking University worked with the Chinese Academy of Sciences to determine the crystalline structure of insulin. Co-operating with other units, the Geology Department made a study of underground heat and built a power station that has 32-degree Centigrade underground water as its energy source.

As Reported By
China Reconstructs

June 1973 Primary Education

— Interview with the Revolutionary Committee of Wenhshing Street School

Who attends your school?

Our school, like other primary schools in Peking, takes children from the neighborhood, in our case, 20 streets with 1,300 families. If they move out of the area they transfer to another school. We take children at about the age of 7. This last term we had an enrolment of 1,040, about an equal number of girls and boys, in 23 classes.

After graduation at the end of grade school they are accepted into the local junior middle school without an examination. Each year the children have two vacations of about a month, generally beginning in January and July.

Do the children have to pay tuition fees?

Children in the city's primary schools each pay a fee of 2.50 yuan plus 0.40-0.80 yuan for books and stationery each term. This is a relatively low fee, within the reach of all. Gone are the days when a family could not send their children to school for lack of funds. The major expenses of the schools are paid out of the national budget.

What do the children study?

Every child takes Chinese, arithmetic, music, drawing and physical training. Beginning in the third grade, every child in our school studies English. Some other schools offer French, Spanish or other languages. In the fourth grade a course in political studies is added. The reading material for it is mainly selections from Chairman Mao's writings and stories of revolutionary struggles of the past. Thus from quite early, the children are exposed to Marxist-Leninist thought and learn to appreciate the traditions of the revolution. Another course added in fourth grade, entitled "general knowledge", deals mainly with natural science. The school day begins with setting-up exercises in the morning and has six 45-minute periods, four in the morning and two in the afternoon.

From the third grade on, pupils at our school often go with their teachers to visit factories and rural people's communes, to work in them and absorb the working class attitudes of the workers and peasants. This is to help them relate their book learning to life and to learn a correct view of labor. When there is a lesson on wheat, for instance, the pupils go to a commune, on papermaking, to a paper mill. Ten workers, peasants and members of the People's Liberation Army serve as permanent after-school activities counsellors.

How many years does a child spend in primary school now?

Primary schooling used to last six years, but we have found that it is not really necessary for it to be so long. If the repetition in course material is cut out, the same amount of ground can be covered in five years. The plan is to change all primary schools in the Peking municipality over to the five-year system. The textbooks we have been using since 1970 are geared to the five-year course, and we are changing to it step by step. The children will finish the equivalent of six years' study in five years and leave primary school at 12.

How about grading?

The guide for our work and for evaluating our pupils is Chairman Mao's directive on education: "Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture."

At the end of each term every pupil takes home a report card which is an all-round record of his progress, including both his scholastic achievement and character development. The latter is reported in a commentary written by the teacher and takes into consideration the child's attitude toward study and labor, adherence to

discipline, the way he unites and co-operates with other children, his concern for the collective and his care of public property. In judging pupils in the upper grades, we also consider whether or not they are consciously studying for the revolution and have an interest in national affairs.

Pupils receive a grade for each course. These are based on a combination of examination results, the record of homework and attitude toward study. Pupils who fail in some subjects can get help from teachers and classmates during vacation. Before the new school term begins they can take a make-up exam. If a pupil fails again in two major subjects (political study, Chinese or arithmetic) or one major and two minor subjects, the school reviews his situation to decide whether he should repeat the same grade. If the failure is due to poor health or other unavoidable reasons, he usually remains with his class and gets help from teachers and classmates in order to catch up. If the pupil fails because he has not studied well, he will be held back a year with his parents' consent. Such cases are rare, only seven in our whole school this year.

Is there an organization for children?

Many pupils in our school, like others throughout the country, belong to the Little Red Guards. Any child between the ages of seven and thirteen may apply to join. His home room Little Red Guards group and their teacher discuss whether the applicant has suitable moral, intellectual and physical qualifications and his admission is approved by the school. The Little Red Guards wear a red scarf — red, the color of revolution, symbolically, a corner of the national flag.

About 700 of our school's 1,040 pupils are Little Red Guards. The units are divided by brigade (the school), teams (grades) and small groups (home rooms). Leaders of each are democratically elected. The committee of brigade cadres gets direct guidance and help from the Communist Youth League group in the school. The Little Red Guards hold after-school activities to which applicants not yet approved are welcomed. The Little Red Guards must see to it that they set a good example for others in whatever they do. They should be honest, courageous, lively and promote unity among their classmates.

*In the old society
poor workers, poor farmers
had to pay taxes
to send the children
of the rich to school,
universities, for they
were of the class the poor
were privileged to care for.*

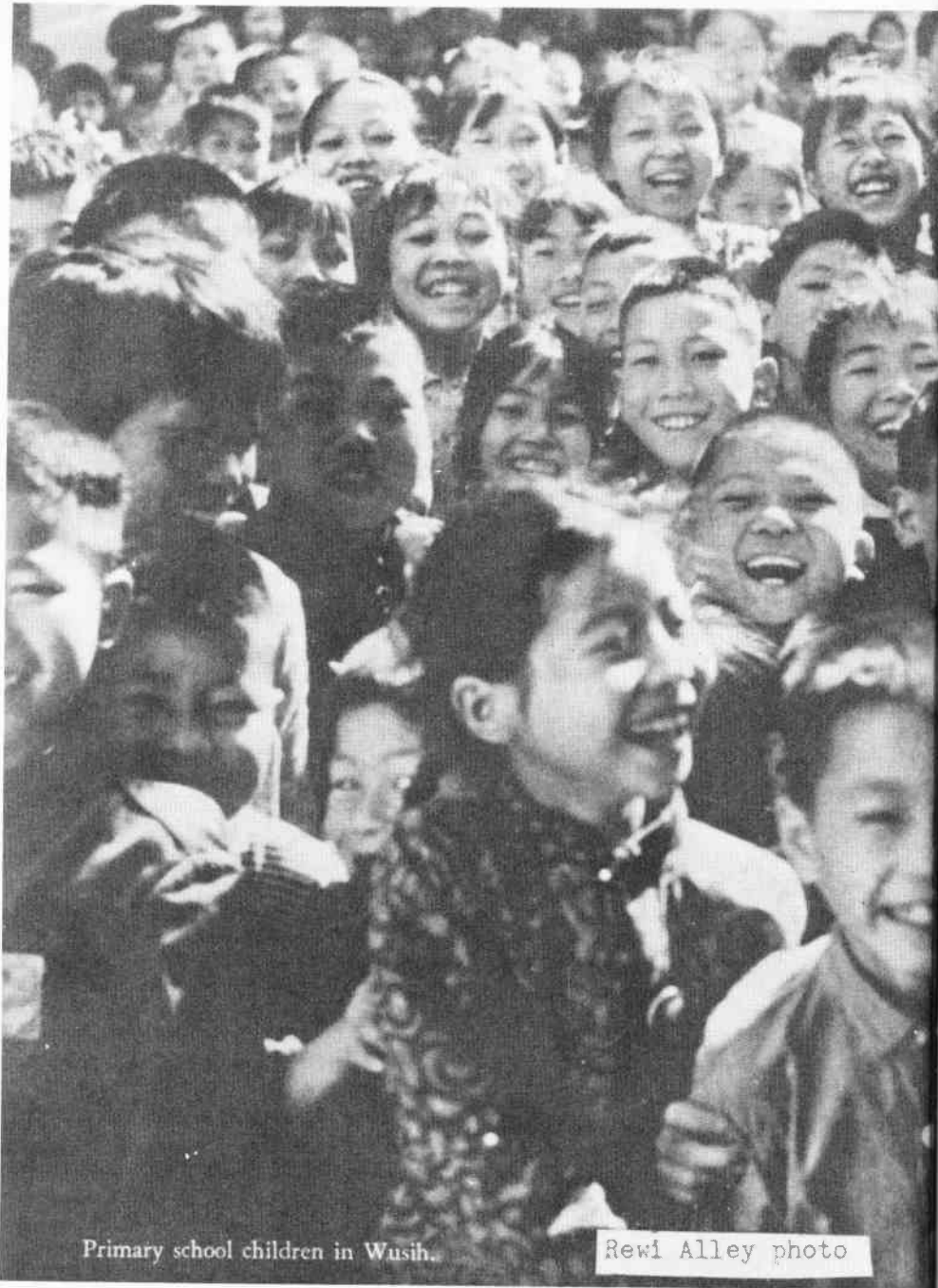
*So were produced, as
the brains and apologists
for their class, the learned,
the scientists, the intellectual
pundits, some just proficient
in memorising, others even
cheating or buying diplomas,
for cash counted heavily;
the cream went on to more
universities around the world;
got well-paid jobs abroad;
the less fortunate joining in
the rat race at home, slick brains
angling for privilege and profit . . .*

*"I was trained an engineer," slyly
said one old society Shanghai comrade.
"And I as a scientist"
laughed his fellow. "But as no one
would pay enough for our skills, we are
here in business, doing quite well, ha, ha!"*

*Today the people of China
still pay, but now they are out
to get full value from their investment
in bringing help to working hands
helping puzzling minds to catch up; they
deciding on what must be taught, and how;*

*who shall be trained and why; education
along with doing, not just pie in the sky
but education becoming an essential part
of the total living of a people who will
be ever learning, ever on the move out
into the unknown, bending nature to
their destiny.*

By REWI ALLEY



Primary school children in Wusih.

Rewi Alley photo

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