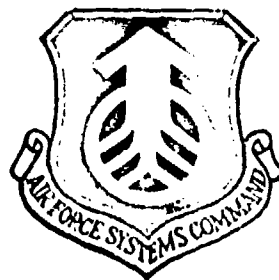


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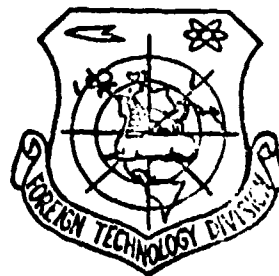
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REFORM OF CURRENT HIGHER EDUCATION IN COMMUNIST CHINA

by

Wang Xuewen



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REFORM OF CURRENT HIGHER EDUCATION IN COMMUNIST CHINA

Wang Xuwen

I. Fluctuations of Higher Education in Communist China

During three decades only 2,946,000 students were graduated from colleges in Communist China; only 4 percent Chinese workers have received a higher education. These educational levels were too low to rapidly spur productivity. An average of 300,000 students enrolled in colleges per year over the three recent years. As estimated by Chinese educational circles, the insufficient number of specialists will persist until 1990 [1] if the present trend continues. Therefore, the Chinese Communists stress that higher education is not only being carried out on a national scale but also with perseverance. However, power struggles and Party line disputes long caused difficulties in universities. Many problems are beyond solution; not a single educational system has been established during this entire time.

For 17 years before the Great Cultural Revolution, colleges and departments of Chinese higher education were reorganized three times; degrees were awarded to 1,550,000 all-day-system college students (The number becomes more than two million if half-day-system graduates are included.), and more than 16,000 graduate students. In addition, there were 138,000 college teachers; this is more than seven times the number in 1949 [2]. However, the Chinese Communists stressed

learning from the experience in the Soviet Union while reorganizing colleges and departments. Thus, higher education became sovietized especially in science and engineering colleges. This was not appropriate to conditions in China [3]. It was said that many undesirable consequences existed in reorganizing the colleges and departments at that time: duplication in departments and specialties, scattered teachers, too narrow a field of knowledge gained by students, an overdetailled division of specialties, difficulties in developing marginal and new branches of science, and restrictions in enhancing professional specialties [4].

As reported by the Shanghai WENHUI DAILY NEWS, during the decade of the Great Cultural Revolution universities had prolonged difficulties; these included institutions where egotism ran rampant. In addition, there were also a mountain stronghold mentality, sectarianism and individualism. To solve an university's problem is much more difficult and complicated than physical violence in a factory. As reported by the All-China Higher Schools Scientific Research Work Conference, for five years no students were enrolled in colleges; this was equivalent to a cutback of over one million college graduates and about 20,000 students with master's and doctor's degrees. This opened a big gap in trained personnel, impeding the Four Modernizations. A large number of teachers were victims of dictatorship; they were purged and suppressed. Thus, teachers' initiative was considerably curtailed. A large number of higher schools were disbanded, merged, moved and dispersed. Damage occurred to large quantities of instruments, equipment, books and data; in particular, the agricultural and forestry colleges were on the brink of collapse. Under this situation, scientific research was stagnant. Compared with the advanced world level, the narrowing gap in science research again widened [5].

For several years following the Great Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Communists stressed science and technology as key factors, and education as the foundation in order to carry out the Four Modernizations. The Chinese again intended to reform the chaotic education scene. In December 1978, at the eleventh session of the Third Central Committee plenum, it was announced that starting from 1979 the emphasis in Party work would be shifted to socialist construction of the Four Modernizations. Because of this policy, higher education was required to be a center of teaching as well as scientific research for

the task of training personnel and developing science. At the All-China Higher School Scientific Research Work Conference (in February 1979) jointly sponsored by the State Scientific and Technological Commission, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Chinese especially stressed that (in order to cope with a shift in work emphasis) first of all the Party committees at the higher schools should shift their leadership ideology and attention should be given to teaching and scientific research [6].

At present, in Chinese higher schools although there are about 10,000 professors and associate professors, nearly 100,000 instructors, and a large number of teaching assistants and graduate students, yet the teaching equipment and the scientific level are still backward. Therefore, many schools and people were concerned with (and studied) the problem of building two centers to upgrade quality [7]. The Ministry of Education followed up several decisions to restore and establish more higher schools. For example, 55 schools were restored or established in a decision made in April 1978. A January 1979 decision restored 16 schools and established 153 schools, for a total of 169. Classified by college categories, there were 46 engineering colleges (and schools), 13 agricultural and forestry colleges (and schools), 77 normal colleges (and schools), 18 medical and pharmacological colleges (and schools), 10 finance and economics colleges (and schools), 3 physical culture colleges (and schools), and 2 fine arts colleges (and schools). Classified by territories, there were 28 schools under the national and regional administration, as well as 141 schools under the provincial, municipal and ward administration [8]. Moreover, due to insufficient school buildings and funds, the Chinese educational circles proposed some straightforward solutions:

(a) Establish day-student universities. Most Chinese college students at present are boarders, occupying an average of 40 m² (square meter) of school building per student. However, the average for day students is only 5 m², one-eighth of that for boarders. Day students not only economize on floor space in school buildings, but also require a smaller number of staff, workers and facilities.

(b) Expand correspondence universities and television universities, which can economize on financial and material resources compared with conventional universities.

(c) Propose trial operation of self-sustained universities. At present, all Chinese college students are supported by the state or organizations. A trial operation of self-supported schools can save funds. Vice President Yang Chengzong of the China University of Science and Technology acknowledged that the system of self-supported students not only can lessen the burden on the state, but also can modify the "ironclad rice bowl" system. The self-supported system can complement the scholarship system. Self-supported students with good grades can be shifted to government support while government-supported students with poor grades can be shifted to the self-supported category.

(d) Encourage local governments to operate with universities. There are a total of 636 universities in China. Basically, these universities are funded by the state. Some educational personalities proposed to encourage local governments and industrial (or mining) enterprises to operate spare-time universities and half-day-work and half-day-study universities [9] if available resources can be spared from these local governments and enterprises.

We can see from the foregoing that the Chinese Communists are actively taking new measures to again reform higher education. This article briefly studies and analyzes the new measures, new progress, and new trends.

II. Chinese System of Higher Education

Due to damage suffered in the Cultural Revolution, China's system of higher education was in a state of deficiencies and facilities in wreckage. Recently, the educational system began to be restored and rebuilt in order to carry out the Four Modernizations. The Chinese advanced several opinions and policies with regard to systemwide reform. In the first issue of (Chinese publication) RENMIN JIAOYU (PEOPLE'S EDUCATION) in January 1977, it was stated that the development of socialist education requires activities throughout the Party for whole-scale planning and carrying out of the policy of "Walk on Two Legs."

In addition, three combinations are needed: between universality and advancement, between key and general points, and between unity of educational system and variety forms in school operations. On 18 March 1978, at the All-China Science Conference Minister in Charge Fang Yi of the State Scientific and Technological Commission stressed the following: "Modernization of educational facilities should be gradually carried out; educational films should be made; school-based laboratory facilities should be generously provided and improved; communism work universities, 7-21 workers' universities, and 5-7 universities should be operated in good order; television universities, correspondence universities and night schools should be actively operated; and day-student, guest-student and point systems should be tried out in higher schools. In short, many forms should be adopted and various approaches tried in attempting to increase student enrollments [10]."

As for the current higher educational system in China, generally the following measures have been attempted and evaluated:

(1) All-day system and half-day-work half-day-study system

Before the Cultural Revolution, there were disputes over the educational system within the Party between the half-day-work half-day-study system and two educational systems. The Mao Zedong group consistently advocated half-day-work half-day-study as well as diligence in work and frugality in study. The Liu Shaoqi group advocated operating two categories of schools; one was the all-day school and the other half-day school. Since the Mao group was in authority during the Cultural Revolution, then the system of half-day-work half-day-study schools was generally operated. After the Cultural Revolution, only a single mode of operating higher schools was carried out--the all-day system under which the government provided funds for all study and boarding facilities. Recently, the Chinese stressed adherence to the "Walk on Two Legs" policy in adopting various forms of managing schools. For example, in Beijing Municipality classes at the night university and television university began to be held since August 1960. Among the students who attended but failed to pass the higher-schools entrance test in the Beijing area, more than 2000 day students were enrolled. During the study period, the students received no scholarships. Instead, students furnished their own meals, transportation, medical treatment, and textbooks.

Each student attending science or engineering college paid 25 yuan per semester as tuition fees and miscellaneous expenses; for those attending fine arts colleges, each paid 20 yuan per semester. Subsidies were provided by the school administrations or their supervisory organizations to cover any deficits in school management. It was said [11] that this level of tuition and miscellaneous expenses was a big burden to families earning 50 to 60 yuan per month.

(2) School year system and point system

At present, many higher schools in China have experimented with the point system. The Chinese saw the following advantages in it: (a) each course has its systematic features. Among compulsory courses under the point system, generally the fundamental theories are studied first under the principle of beginning from shallow and easy texts and then to deep and difficult areas. This conforms to the study rule of making gradual progress. According to individual characteristics, each student makes up his (or her) own study schedule. This is much more flexible than the rigid system of the school year. (b) Optional courses can be studied in the student's own major department or other departments. Or else a student can study courses at other colleges or schools for a broader field of knowledge.

However, the Chinese acknowledged the following disadvantages in the point system: first, insufficient guidance will easily lead to overliberalization. A student may intend to study easily passed courses in order to accumulate credit points; this trend does not lead to the acquisition of knowledge and ability. Secondly, enough teachers and classrooms should be made available in carrying out the point system; otherwise difficulties will crop up [12].

Obviously, the Chinese Communists clearly understand the above-mentioned disadvantages; however, they still experiment with the point system. The purpose is to speed up the training of personnel in science and technology.

(3) Boarding system and day-student system

Most higher schools in China have adopted the boarding system for easily controlled administration. In recent years, in order to educate as many students

as possible, the Ministry of Education and the State Planning Commission jointly announced that starting from the 1977 student enrollment, day students would be enrolled on a trial basis in conventional higher schools in order to increase the number of college students enrolled. It was also stipulated that a day student would be treated as a boarding student during his study years in school and after graduation. Specialties in which the number of student enrollments would be allowed to increase should be those conventional ones and those urgently required. Consequently [13], many higher schools in China have enrolled day students.

At present, in Shanghai there are 48 (all-day system) higher schools with 266 specialties, more than 17,000 full-time teachers, and more than 67,000 students. It was claimed that 322,000 students could be educated if Shanghai's college graduates were assigned jobs (50 percent in the central government and 50 percent in local governments). However, over the past three decades Shanghai's higher schools graduated only a total of 223,000 students. So the only outcome in expanding Shanghai's higher education is to put into effect the day-student system (in addition to the boarding-student system) and to operate schools under different policies. In July 1980 [14], 22 higher schools in Shanghai including Jiaotong University, Fudan University and Shanghai Foreign Language College enrolled nearly 3000 self-supported day students (in addition to achieving the 1980 student enrollment plan) among Shanghai's student applicants, who failed their entrance examinations. A day student will pay 25 yuan per semester for studying conventional courses, or 20 yuan per semester for studying special courses [15].

One problem from the Communists' viewpoint is the difficulty in inculcating ideological education in day students because they leave the facilities after classes. Many universities gave this problem particular attention after day students were enrolled. For example, in Xian Fundamentals University it was required to cooperate among cadres, teachers and students' parents by adopting multiple measures in students' ideological education [16] while meeting the distinctive requirements of day students.

(4) Degree system and instructorship system

On 5 August 1955, the State Council passed a temporary regulation regarding graduate students (at universities) in the Chinese Academy of Sciences. It is stipulated that the Chinese Academy grant degrees of doctoral candidates to graduate students upon completion of their assigned studies. However, it was said that this stipulation was not carried out due to interference by the ultraleft movement (at the time) that viewed the degree system as a system of the capitalist class or revisionism. Later, the degree system was swept into the restricted area. This was true until 12 February 1980 [17] at the 12th session of the Fifth National People's Congress, when the People's Republic of China Degree Regulation was passed; it took effect on 1 January 1981. There are 20 clauses in the regulation; clause no. 3 stipulates that there are three classes of degrees: bachelor's, master's and doctor's.

At present in China, many higher schools and science research organizations have restored the instructorship system. Ratings were given to a number of new instructors, associate professors, professors, assistant research fellows, associate research fellows, and research fellows. However, these new ranks were considered as "promotions without salary increase," "heavier duty but not higher grade," and "empty praise without real benefit." Some associate professors in universities have only a monthly salary of 60 to 70 yuan, equivalent to a teaching assistant's salary [18].

From the foregoing, the higher-education system in China (since the Cultural Revolution) has changed dramatically as whether it was restoration or new establishment. The main purpose consists of concentration on time and speed to leap forward in educational challenges through vigorous activities. However, there have been no good results as viewed from the current situation.

III. Quality of Higher Education in China

(1) Key schools and ordinary schools

In June 1979, the State Statistical Bureau issued an official announcement, "Results of Implementing the 1978 National Economic Plan," stating the statistic of 598 higher schools in China. At present, the number of higher schools has climbed to 636, including 88 key higher schools that the Ministry of Education

decided (in March 1978) to restore and establish. At present, the number of key higher schools has gone up to 96. Moreover, there are now 72 (conventional) higher schools in China with correspondence education, and 30 (conventional) higher schools operating night universities, with a total of more than 240,000 students in attendance [19]. In addition, there are now 753 university branches, fundamentals universities, and teaching sites. There were more than 115,000 students, including enrolled students in 1978 and 1979 as well as the number of students planned to be enrolled in 1980. The Chinese regarded university branches as "eggs" laid by the university proper; this becomes a way of developing higher education in local areas. However, it was admitted [20] that university branches exist in name only; actually, they are junior colleges.

The Chinese Communists stressed that key universities should be viewed as the main strength of a new system in building teaching centers and scientific research centers. However, a current problem at key universities is the word "key" existing in name only. It was said that some of key schools did not have all conditions worthy of the "key" category; hence, these key schools did not exercise these proper functions. As for the facilities of teaching and instruments of scientific research, even the key schools lacked enough facilities; existing facilities were inadequate, old and backward. Even a few best-known key universities still lagged far behind the advanced world levels [21].

As for ordinary higher schools, they have more problems, with poorer quality. Since many leading cadres have duties but no authorities, most administrative affairs have to be passed on by higher authorities; a number of staff are busy in paperwork all day long. Since there are no rules, regulations, system, and guidelines, everything depends on the leading official's wishes or it is studied and decided on in meetings [22].

Based on these situations, on 10 June 1978 a commentator in GUANGMING DAILY NEWS (in China) stressed that the enhancement of teaching quality should center on key points. The commentator continued that a hundred problems should be solved on the educational front, but it is impossible to obtain a hundred solutions within a short period. If the available manpower, material resources, and financial resources are evenly distributed, the resources will be dispersed

to no avail with these hundred problems. As long as educational quality cannot be raised high enough, qualified personnel cannot be trained. This will impede progress with the Four Modernizations.

(2) Colleges of fine arts and colleges of science and engineering

Over the past three decades, the educational front in China was stricken by the ultraleft movement for several times; colleges of fine arts received major blows. Sociology, jurisprudence and demography were removed from academic curricula once these courses were criticized. Psychology was evaluated as false and aesthetics, as capitalist belongings. Economic management was considered marginal. As a result, courses of fine arts became fewer and fewer with less and less specialties and more and more restricted thinking. Many school administrations went further than stressing science and neglecting the arts, to even stressing science and intimidating the arts. During the time that Lin Biao and the Gang of Four were in power, it was a problem of whether or not the fine arts should be academic subjects [23]. As a result, there was not a single university of fine arts in China besides the China People's University, which was some kind of cadre training school. The fine-arts curricula were just afterthoughts in consolidated universities (of science and fine arts) and normal colleges; this trend often squeezed out fine arts development with science curricula [24].

The Chinese Communists stressed that not only science and technology personnel as well as administrative cadres for Four Modernizations were required to be trained by colleges of science (broadly speaking, colleges of science, engineering, agriculture and medicine) but also large numbers of highly cultured (with a high scientific level) administrative cadres should be trained by colleges of fine arts (broadly speaking, colleges of fine arts, history, philosophy, economics, politics and law). Moreover, the Chinese Communists considered the combination of science, engineering and fine arts as an important problem in the structural reform of higher education [25].

(3) Normal and agricultural colleges

According to statistics, by the end of 1979 there were a total of 161 normal colleges in China (at more than 25 percent of the total higher schools) with

more than 310,000 students attending (at more than 30 percent of the total students at higher schools). Since normal education is the "machine tool" of educational tasks at the bedrock foundation, the Chinese decided that beginning in 1980 students enrolled in key provincial normal universities or colleges were to be included in the first group like other key higher schools in China [26].

Among the Four Modernizations, agriculture is considered as ranking first. However, according to 1978 statistics, there were only 50 higher agricultural colleges with more than 50,000 students in attendance. There were only a little more 80,000 students attending secondary vocational schools majoring in agriculture and forestry specialties. The above-mentioned number of agriculture technical personnel dispersed among 800 million peasants is like sesame seeds in a vast sea. In Shandong Province with tens of millions of population, there were only two agricultural colleges, one of which was established just a short time ago. In Shandong Agricultural College, just over 100 students of animal husbandry specialty graduate each year. At this rate, 600 years are required to provide one graduate for each of the 80,000 production brigades in the province. Therefore, recently the Chinese stressed adopting various measures to vigorously develop agricultural education in considering education as the foundation. Thus, agricultural modernization can be carried out [27]. Generally speaking, the Chinese admitted that it was difficult to lift the quality of higher education in the China of today.

IV. Teachers and Students in China's Higher Schools

During the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Communists conducted the most thorough and the most violent struggle, critique and reform of teachers of higher schools. At times, students were used as the main force of the struggle. For example, the Chinese Communists raised a slogan, "Enroll in a University, Control the University, and Reform the University." This means not allowing teachers to give instruction to students, but allowing students to control teachers. Students are part of the proletarian class while teachers are part of the capitalist class. The teacher-student relationship is a relationship of class contradiction. Although the Cultural Revolution was concluded, yet the Chinese are still puzzled and aware of resistances to the reform mentioned.

(1) Teachers' restoration of position and employment

In recent years, with respect to various categories of school teachers the Chinese Communists discarded the policy of simultaneous reform and employment and applied the policy of restoration and employment. For example, since August 1977 the Qinghua University Party Committee reexamined 1228 cases in their files. All unjust cases, false cases and mistaken cases initiated by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four were thrown out. Meetings were called to restore good names and positions to those under suppression. However, as revealed by a GUANGMING DAILY NEWS commentator in an article "We Have to Adhere to Facts in Carrying out the Policy Faithfully" published on 6 August 1978 [28], some units only reexamined those cases during the violent period of the Gang of Four, not as in Qinghua University where all cases of the decade were reexamined on a factual basis. The reason was a concern over the accused defaming the Cultural Revolution and settling old grievances and injustices; these actions would impair unity. Some units only reexamined simple (but not complicated) cases in contrast to Qinghua University's daring to overturn all invalid findings. Some units made qualifying comments while reexamining cases, unlike Qinghua University's emphasis on main causes and facts in cases, without leaving any unfinished business.

Although the Chinese Communists generally restored positions of suppressed teachers in the higher schools, yet the policy has not been thoroughly carried out since not all cases have been reexamined. The teachers with their positions restored still have nightmares so most of them have negative attitudes of shying away from teaching students. It was said that there was a serious shortage of university teachers but available personnel were not adequately used. For example, in Beijing there are 49 higher schools under the administration of the central and municipal governments, totalling more than 24,000 teachers and more than 62,000 staff and workers, while the students numbered about 55,000. The ratio is 1:2.3 for the numbers of teachers and students, and 1:0.88 for the numbers of staff (and workers) and students. This is quite an alarming waste. In Shanghai [29], at present there are 48 (all-day system) higher schools with some 67,000 college students and some 17,000 full-time teachers; the ratio is 1:3.9 between the numbers of teachers and students. According to statistics prepared by Fudan University, at present teachers (who actually teach) account

to only one-half of the total number while in some departments only one-fifth of teachers give instructions in the classes. These teachers with instruction tasks only average three to four class hours a week; some teachers only average two class hours per week. This is because evaluations of professors or associate professors depend mainly on academic theses and less on teaching results. There are awards for outstanding scientific research, and awards for overfulfillment of production quota, but no awards for teaching excellence. In Guangdong Province [30], there are generally no adequate numbers of qualified foreign-language teachers but the policy of universal English teaching is carried out throughout the province as elsewhere in mainland China. Among more than 3000 English-language teachers in Guangdong, only one-third are qualified; the other one-third can be qualified only after making up the lost language lessons while the remaining one-third are unable to be qualified whatever the remedy. Schools lack the power to employ teachers, who are assigned by higher authorities. No matter what language a teacher learned (such as Russian or French), he or she has to teach English. This is not scientific. It appears that English teaching is propagated but actually large numbers of students learn English the wrong way [31]; it just did not worth the effort.

The Chinese did not completely solve the teacher problem, as the foregoing shows. Recently, for better utilization of teachers, they were publicly required to teach both course textbooks and ideology. During teaching and scientific research, politics is in command and the students' political ideology is also the responsibility of teachers.

(2) Student enrollment and graduation

In June 1966, the Chinese decided to abolish student entrance examinations at higher schools because of the start of the Cultural Revolution. In October 1977, at Beijing the Ministry of Education sponsored an All-China Higher Schools Student Enrollment Work Conference to decide on restoring student entrance examinations. In December 1977, the first student entrance examinations began. Consequently, one enrollment examination is held in July of each year. There are many students taking part in examinations each time, but few are enrolled after going through screening process of political investigation, physical examination, and cultural test. The Chinese Communists admit that this contradiction

will remain for a long time. At present, there are only 1,020,000 college students, about 0.1 percent of Chinese population on the mainland. The rate of secondary-school students entering higher schools is less than 4 percent [32].

In May 1980, at Xian the Ministry of Education sponsored a higher schools student enrollment work conference; it was stipulated that screening would be conducted (before the unified examination throughout China Mainland) in provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions that have many student applicants for college enrollment. During graduations from senior middle schools, provincewide unified final examinations were held. Numbering three to five times the planned number of student enrollment, students with higher grade-point averages were selected to take part in the unified examination. In July 1980, more than 3,310,000 applicants took part in the unified examinations of the higher schools. Among them, 2,300,000 applicants were graduates of that year's senior middle schools' graduation classes; the number was 69.7 percent of the total number of applicants. Screenings were conducted in seven provinces and regions (Sichuan, Shanxi, Hunan, Hubei, Gansu, Xinjiang, and Heilongjiang); more than 1,950,000 applicants took part in the screenings while some 570,000 were selected to take part in the unified examinations [33].

In the past four years since the Chinese restored the student enrollment examinations for the higher schools, there have numerous miscellaneous problems. These main problems are enumerated below:

(a) Middle schools are rated by admission rates to higher schools. Recently, trial unified examinations were held in some areas of China; students' points in the unified examinations were used to rate teaching quality of middle schools and teachers. In some areas, students' admission rates to higher schools were used to rate middle schools. Schools with high admission rates to higher schools were considered as good ones. By seeking high admission rates, many schools neglected ideological and political work, did not have winter and summer vacations, and suspended classes in physical education. These schools only focused on a few outstanding students while neglecting the majority [34].

(b) Students with high points are difficult to enroll in universities. On page 1 of GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 27 October 1978, two letters from readers were

printed. Both letters mentioned a student Zhu Ling who graduated from Middle School No. 35 in Beijing Municipality. Last year and this year, the student took part in two college entrance examinations; last year's total points were 337 while this year's total points were 408. In both cases, the points exceeded the qualified level; however, Zhu Ling was rejected because he failed the political investigation. An editor's comment was published in GUANGMING DAILY NEWS. One of two letters was written by Zhu himself; the other letter was signed by 20 teachers of Middle School No. 35, addressing to the Party leadership. After investigations by GUANGMING DAILY NEWS and related authorities, these two letters were proved to be factual. Recently, leading cadres of the Ministry of Education and the Beijing Municipal Party Committee made official decisions to have Zhu Ling enrolled in the Beijing Medical College. The editor's comment continued, "Even now residual poisons still exist among leading cadres of some areas and departments; these cadres shy away from their responsibility in students' political investigations, which do not focus on the subject's personal conduct but on whether or not serious historical and political problems existed among his (or her) family and relatives. The cadres are accustomed to seek data (with a "magnifying glass") in the file to find faults rather to the left and not to the right. If this situation is not changed, the goal of more talents at an early time cannot be reached."

(c) Applicants indulged in corruption during examination. There were many instances of seeking private gains and indulging in corruption in student enrollment examinations in China's higher schools. For example, an applicant Wang Xiaoping of Guangling County, Shanxi Province, conspired with Wang Guanggui (and others), concurrently director of the county student enrollment office and county education bureau chief in November 1977. They schemed to write answers to examinations outside the test classroom, and then the answers were passed on to Wang Xiaoping. This case was repeatedly investigated for nine months to prove a case of examination corruption. The conspirers were punished. Wang Xiaoping's enrollment in Beijing University was cancelled; his Party membership was also revoked [35].

(d) Young men are restless. In present China, it was said among society circles, "One is a professional if the examination is passed; otherwise, one is just a bum." In addition, parental pressure was quite heavy so that young students

generally sensed fear and restlessness. For example, there was a girl student in Shanghai. She was quite diligent; her parents sought favors in succeeding to have the girl attend a unified examination preparatory class of a university. No television viewing was allowed; the girl was often goaded in conversations. Finally, she committed suicide on the eve of the examination. There have been several similar incidents [36].

In today's China, young men and women generally consider entering a university as their only prospect. However, after graduation many annoyances are encountered. Nobody can have freedom in seeking a job; a student's parents are helpless because they are barred from seeking favoritism in job assignments. In July 1979, the State Planning Commission presented a report on this year's job assignments of higher school graduates in China. The report stressed that in assigning jobs for graduates, emphases should focus on industries, mines, rural villages, the lowest levels, and border areas in conforming to the policy of strengthening the production front. Personnel departments should encourage graduates to comply with their job assignments and go to places needing the most help. These four emphases [37] amount mainly to assignments to countryside. As reported by the Shanghai JIEFANG (LIBERATION) DAILY NEWS on 9 June 1980, most of this year's graduates of higher schools in Shanghai refused to accept the job assignments (by authorities) to the countryside.

As for job assignments of graduates of key higher schools in China, they generally get city jobs; however, their employment fields are usually outside their major academic subjects. It was said that about one-half of Shanghai's college graduates in the past several years had professions not matching their subject majors. So they had to change their professions. For example, 40 to 60 percent of graduates from Shanghai University of Science and Technology had to change their professions acquired during their school years. For three years in a row, graduates of oceanography and geology specialties of Shanghai University did not get their jobs in their specialties. About 50 percent of Fudan University's graduates did not have employment in their particular fields of study. About 80 percent of graduates (from Shanghai Foreign Language College) majoring in Arabic were assigned other jobs. Therefore, even Party Secretary Deng Xuchu (of Shanghai Jiaotong University) sighed, "The current system of employment is so inflexible. If a talented student is assigned to a wrong job and no transfer

follows, his (or her) talent will be wasted. Obviously [38], the job assignments of higher school graduates in China did not produce good results."

V. Higher School Curricula in China

During the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese policy regarding reform of curricula and text materials was to tear down vigorously and to build up vigorously. As the Cultural Revolution was concluded, China's higher schools again rearranged curricula and recompiled text materials.

(1) Strengthen curricula in political ideology.

In various grades of schools, education in political ideology is consistently placed as first in priority. It was said that the current curricula of political practice and theory in colleges, secondary, and primary schools have not exploited the due educational results; their upgrading is stressed. Regarding the contents and methods of political ideology education, the Qinghua University Party Committee advocated an approach of "three-story building" or "three-step terrace", which means to apply patriotic education, socialist education, and communist education. At present, students' ideology and practice should be combined to enhance "three-story building" education. The educational system of Zhongshan Medical School in Guangdong [39] only covers three and half years with many curricula and tight schedules; however, considerable time for political activities was assigned. In a week, there are four hours of politics, one afternoon of political instruction, one afternoon of activities for the Party and Youth League, one-night meeting on class affairs, and one hour of learning about Mao Zedong's work; sometimes the remaining night-study time is used for activities. Thus, only two-thirds of time still remain for subject-matter specialties. Students do not have enough time to fully understand one day's lesson while new studies come up the next day. Teachers face difficulties because relatively more lessons have to be lectured on within a short time. Thus, teaching is rushed through while fine points in lesson are only roughly explained [40].

For some years, the Chinese Communists insisted on teaching political ideology (especially philosophy) from primary school through college. In conventional secondary schools, there is an average of three hours a week given

to political lessons; there are four hours a week in a fine arts college and two hours a week in a science college. Under such an arrangement, disadvantages include repetitive content, waste time, lessons given pro forma only, and loss of interest by students. Moreover, addition of new subject matter is restricted by the total number of available classroom hours [41].

(2) Matching of fundamental courses and specialty courses

The fundamental courses in Chinese higher schools include common fundamental courses, specialty fundamental courses, and fundamental laboratory courses. Among total classroom hours, three-quarters are allotted for fundamental courses, while only one-quarter for specialty courses. School traditions in China stress scientific research while detracting from teaching; even in teaching, specialty courses are stressed more than fundamental courses. In higher schools, a view has been formalized to stress first scientific research, second the teaching of specialty courses, and third the teaching of fundamental courses. After downfall of the Gang of Four, payments were granted for publishing theses; awards were bestowed for results in scientific research; and those well experienced in foreign language were sent abroad to study. These policies and trends delivered mental blows to fundamental-course teachers because they could afford no time for scientific research, writing theses, and learning foreign languages. These teachers are not likely to win promotions even with teaching excellence. Some fundamental-course teachers lamented, "Good teaching is not appreciated as much as a thesis [42].

Recently, the Chinese Communists stressed improving fundamental courses of higher schools; these fundamentals were made to coordinate with specialty courses. However, changes were few, with little effect. Most intellectuals acknowledged that scientific research can be considered a "golden rice bowl" with a good future and high status while teaching is just a "broken rice bowl" without any future and mediocre status.

(3) Recompilation of text materials

After the conclusion of Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Communists again recompiled text materials. The Chinese enumerated two problems in recompiling

the current text materials of higher schools: one was the serious gap existing between supply and demand in text materials, which should be quickly compiled, approved and published; the other problem concerned the rapid pace of modern science development for requiring quick updating of text contents and higher quality [43].

Consigned by the Ministry of Education, the educational departments of Shanghai, Zhejiang and Guangdong organized the compilation of 18 kinds of textbooks in four courses of History of Chinese Communist Party, Political Economics, Philosophy, and History of International Communist Movement. These textbooks were published and distributed before the fall semester in 1980. However, new textbooks of modern science and technology are relatively difficult to compile and print. For example, most of 137 higher-school textbooks for the 1979 spring semester were delayed in publication. These textbooks should be available before classes began but actually they were distributed too late, after classes had concluded. This held teaching back considerably [44].

VI. Teaching at Higher Schools in China

In the current teaching reform of China's higher schools, generally there are following measures and areas of emphasis:

(1) Restore the original "three centers."

The so-called "three centers" are book center, classroom center, and teacher center. The "three centers" were damaged by the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution. Now the Chinese advocate restoring these centers. They stressed that schools should maintain teaching as the main function. Books should be considered the main source of knowledge; classroom teaching should be the major form of teaching; and teachers' main guiding function should be sufficiently exploited in teaching. However, in carrying out these "three centers," social practice and learning from other available sources should be maintained.

(2) Prepare to build new "two centers."

The so-called "two center," are teaching center and scientific research center. The Chinese Communists stressed operating "two centers" in higher schools. In scientific research, the Chinese Academy of Sciences should emphasize fundamental science and theoretical research; production departments should stress applied science and technical research; and universities and professional colleges should stress both those aspects. However, the Chinese did admit to lagging scientific developments in Mainland China by ten to twenty years behind the average world level. There are certain difficulties and resistances in scientific research.

(3) Expand teaching of foreign languages.

The Chinese considered that the key points in carrying out the Four Modernizations should focus on science and technology. Most personnel engaging in scientific research and teaching foreign languages did not have enough knowledge of science and technology; so they will confront difficulties in work. An expanding and intensifying education in foreign languages will serve Four Modernizations well.

(a) Improve the quality of foreign language instruction; study theories of foreign language instruction; try new teaching techniques; utilize the most modern teaching equipment; and train high-quality teachers of foreign languages (including generally used foreign languages, such as English, German, French, Japanese and Russian) in secondary schools to achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results.

(b) In comprehensive universities, intensify the teaching of commonly used foreign languages in science and engineering courses.

(c) Help teachers of science and engineering courses to master foreign languages as quick as possible. In addition, help teachers and students (in their preparation for study abroad) to master the specific foreign languages they require.

(d) Closely cooperate with teachers of science and engineering courses to translate foreign materials in science and technology and to compile textbooks

and dictionaries in various fields.

(e) Compile foreign-language journals in science and technology.

In short, there are a variety of tasks in teaching foreign languages; these are very difficult tasks [45].

VII. Problems in China's Higher Education

Because of many residual problems of the Cultural Revolution in China's reform of higher education, reality and historical problems still exist in carrying out reforms. These following problems are difficult to remedy and solve:

(1) Limiting school authorities

Generally, guidance by educational administrative departments should only center on policy and guidelines in regard to higher schools; however, the Chinese high authorities consistently administer and control everything. Therefore, responsible officials at four universities in Shanghai recently called for some autonomous authority (to be granted by the Party) to higher schools.

President Su Buqing of the Shanghai Fudan University said, "Key schools under direct administration of the Ministry of Education do not have any authority at all. All power is concentrated in the ministry, which stipulates which foreign scholars are to be invited to lecture, which teachers or students are to be sent abroad, the number of students to be enrolled, and which specialties are to be established. As a university president, one only executes what the ministry stipulates. As a result, all schools are the same."

Party Secretary Deng Xuchu of Shanghai Jiaotong University said, "In teaching, all schools are required to be the same: unified textbooks, unified outlines, and unified test questions. Funds cannot be flexibly expended, such as specially-allocated fund for exclusive use. Without approval from higher authorities, qualified personnel cannot be employed while unqualified ones cannot be dismissed. At present, things are very inflexible; those should be unified but they are not unified."

President Liu Fulin of Shanghai Normal University said, "Educational departments should use more proposals and assistance in administering schools, not solely by administrative means."

President Li Guohao of Shanghai Tongchi University said, "Today a school has no authority to initiate. The Party secretary or president of a university has no authority to enroll graduate students. Approval depends on higher authorities, which do not understand the real situation. This is nonsense [46]."

(2) Slow pace of quality upgrading

In carrying out Four Modernizations, naturally there is a quantitative increase and a qualitative enhancement in the reform of higher schools. However, problems exist both in quantity and quality.

As revealed by the Chinese Communists regarding the quantitative increase, if the population growth rate still continues at a rapid pace, all educational funds are sufficient only for universal lower education, unable to cope with higher education. Then the training of specialists is difficult to develop on a large scale [47].

As revealed by the Chinese Communists regarding the qualitative enhancement, one serious problem in today's higher schools is big organizations with more people than vacancies. Work efficiency is real low. This is disadvantageous to carrying out Four Modernizations. A policy of "picked troops and efficient government" is needed. Quite a few schools were assigned training missions but policy directions were not clarified; teachers were dispersed or operations were backward. If these situations do not quickly remedied, work will be passive and efficiency lowered [48].

(3) Students are in depression.

The Chinese Communists have a complete set of measures in taking over all aspects of university student life; this approach is disadvantageous in developing

higher education in its various forms. Not only is a university student's present life taken care of, but also his (or her) future job assignment as well. Just by entering a university, a student's future wage and fringe benefits are fixed. College students' learning is inflexible and regimented. During enrollment application, all of one's life is fixed after one picks a specialty. One can neither change his specialty, nor take optional courses of personal interest. Students with excellent grades cannot complete courses in advance; neither can these talented few graduate in fewer years. There is no selective process; all teaching follows a regimented plan, outline and standard textbooks. Finally, students graduate in a definite span of time and receive employment at one unified standard wage. This educational system of "cutting flat with one knife" and this educational method of "flat top haircut" restrain the development of talented students and are disadvantageous in training outstanding talents [49].

For the reasons given above, some students in Mainland China gradually fell into a depression; they had no ideals. For example, a student of Liaoning University committed suicide by lying on some railroad tracks. This student had studied the specialty of environment protection with average points of over 93; he was champion of several events in his department sports meeting. His parents were Party cadres. As another example, a group of university students [50] in China recently wrote to BOOK CRITIQUE JOURNAL in New York, expressing their disappointment in the current educational system, which was liberated from Gang of Four's control. In the first week after they enrolled in a university, they had to receive a political education. Different report meetings, discussion meetings and ideological education meetings are sufficient proof that the sole purpose of education in China is for revolution. The so-called revolution becomes very vague when there is too much talking about it. Finally, all the meetings are only pro forma [51].

FOOTNOTES

- [1] Lin Xintao: "China's University System Will Be Reformed," WENHUI DAILY NEWS, Hong Kong, 29 June 1980.
- [2] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 8 February 1979; also refer to editorial of PEOPLE'S DAILY, 17 May 1979.
- [3] Refer to GONGFEI WENJIAO WENTI LUNJI (COLLECTED THESES ON COMMUNIST PROBLEMS IN CULTURE AND EDUCATION), pp. 154-159, by Wang Xuewen. First edition of the COLLECTED THESES appeared in March 1973, published by International Relationship Research Institute, Republic of China.
- [4] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 1 August 1980.
- [5] and [6] same as [2].
- [7] "How Two Centers Can be Erected in Higher Schools?" (1-6), GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 7, 8, 14, 16, 18 and 23 February 1979.
- [8] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 11 January 1979.
- [9] same as [1].
- [10] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 29 March 1978.
- [11] New China News Agency Beijing dispatch dated 21 August 1980.
- [12] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 21 June 1979.
- [13] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 3 March 1978.
- [14] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 22 July 1980.
- [15] New China News Agency Shanghai dispatch dated 29 July 1980.
- [16] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 9 July 1980.
- [17] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 27 May 1979.
- [18] ZHONGGONG JIAOYU YANJIU SHUANGYUEKAN (EDUCATION RESEARCH BIMONTHLY IN CHINA), p. 7, issue No. 2, 1980.
- [19] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 16 August 1980.
- [20] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 14 August 1980.
- [21] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 9 November 1978.
- [22] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 5 January 1979.

- [23] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 29 July 1980.
- [24] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 16 August 1980.
- [25] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 6 June and 15 July 1980.
- [26] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 3 July 1980.
- [27] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 15 June 1980.
- [28] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 14 August 1978.
- [29] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 14 June 1980.
- [30] same as [14].
- [31] WENHUI DAILY NEWS, Hong Kong, 26 August 1980.
- [32] Cao Zhiwu: "Urgent Development in Higher Education Tasks," PEOPLE'S DAILY, 5 June 1980.
- [33] New China News Agency Beijing dispatch dated 3 July 1980.
- [34] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 27 June 1980.
- [35] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 11 August 1979.
- [36] WENHUI DAILY NEWS, Hong Kong, 18 May 1980.
- [37] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 4 July 1979.
- [38] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 26 July 1980.
- [39] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 11 April 1980.
- [40] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 5 July 1978.
- [41] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 4 May 1980.
- [42] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 12 September 1979.
- [43] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 8 February 1979.
- [44] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 22 May 1979.
- [45] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 9 November 1978.
- [46] PEOPLE'S DAILY, 6 December 1979.
- [47] DAGONG DAILY NEWS, Hong Kong, 16 May 1979.
- [48] GUANGMING DAILY NEWS, 5 January 1979.

[49] same as [14].

[50] WENHUI DAILY NEWS, Hong Kong, 28 September 1979.

[51] CENTRAL DAILY NEWS, Taipei, 5 September 1980.