



—Marc Riboud (Magnum).

University students singing "Socialism Is Good"—"The achievement of ideological correctness and the acquisition of technical expertise cannot be complementary at all times."

## THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY

# TARGET OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

By C. T. HU, *professor of comparative education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and a leading Chinese scholar.*

UNTIL THE ADVENT of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution last summer, the term "higher education" in China referred to that phase of education which came after approximately twelve years of primary and secondary education. This phase had a duration of between four and six years, with a few fields lasting up to eight years. The major objective of higher education was proclaimed to be the training and supply of socialist workers, mastering the advanced knowledge and techniques necessary for national reconstruction. In order for the socialist workers with higher education to be both Red and expert, the fundamental approach has been the combination of

education with productive labor. By 1958, after years of readjustment and reorganization, the institutions of higher learning fell into two general categories: about twenty comprehensive universities in centers of population concentration, in which most of the academic disciplines were represented—humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and some professional schools—and approximately 250 higher technical and teacher training institutes with one or more fields of specialization, such as agriculture, geology, petroleum industry, and the like.

Although not rigidly differentiated, the two types of institutions were entrusted with different educational tasks, the former for the training of theoreticians, advanced research personnel, and candidates for teaching positions in higher institutes, while the latter trained high-level technicians and practitioners. In terms of types of institutions estab-

lished and number of students enrolled, both were subjected to rigid state control in accordance with the overall plans for national and especially economic development. In addition to the teaching institutions, there also existed in the early 1960s close to 900 research institutes devoted to the study of science and technology.

With the launching of the Great Leap Forward movement in 1958 there began a period of educational expansion on all levels at what appeared to be a breakneck speed. Almost overnight the number of schools on the higher education level was reported to have increased more than five times toward the end of that year. Like many similar claims of impressive progress in other aspects of the Leap, the gains in higher education later proved to be more fantasy than reality. By 1961, a full retreat was called along the entire policy line, and higher education underwent another phase of

readjustment and reorganization. Imaginary statistics no longer appeared. But on the basis of available data, the number of higher institutions in mainland China today seems to be in the neighborhood of 300, enrolling slightly over 1,000,000 students, of whom the overwhelming majority are found in engineering, agricultural science, medicine, and other scientific and technical subjects.

Events on the mainland of China since the Communist accession to power have followed a pattern of alternation between radical and practical approaches. To use the Communists' slogan, it is an alternation between "Redness" on the one hand and "expertness" on the other. Although both are declared to be the ultimate goals of education, the achievement of ideological correctness and the acquisition of technical expertise cannot be complementary at all times. Consequently, there have been times when Redness is emphasized, inevitably at the expense of expertness, while at other times the reverse has been the case.

During the period immediately before the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of mid-1966, the emphasis in education was clearly on expertness. This period, lasting from the latter part of 1961 to the middle part of 1966, was one of relatively stable development. This era had in turn been preceded by one which stressed Redness, the period of the Educational Revolution which began with the launching of the Great Leap Forward in 1958 and placed highest priority on political activities and productive labor. The students were required to spend an enormous amount of time on political and labor activities, resulting in the neglect of their studies and the serious undermining of the teachers' role. The effect of such disturbances in the educational field became manifest in many ways, but most significantly it affected the training of scientific and technical personnel. This, coupled with withdrawal of Soviet experts and the ending of cooperative arrangements between China and the Soviet Union, created a number of technical difficulties for the proper management of economic and, especially, industrial enterprises.

By 1961, more than two years after the launching of the Great Leap Forward, the party hierarchy had begun to acknowledge the excesses and the disruption of education caused by this radical approach. Consequently, there began a switch from the earlier policy position, and the treatment of intellectuals underwent a series of modifications. The first sign of the policy shift came in June 1961 when Vice Premier Chen Yi stated in a speech to the graduating classes of universities in Peking that, whereas Redness is important for the

preservation of ideological purity, expertness must also receive adequate attention so as to ensure that the nation has an adequate supply of technically competent individuals. He further expressed the hope that, in the future, participation in productive labor by both faculty and students in secondary and higher institutions of education would follow a more rational line, and that the physical well-being of the students would be properly looked after, in order to make certain that productive labor and participation in political activities would not affect their progress in academic pursuits.

If Chen Yi's speech marked a turning point in the direction of liberalizing educational policy, the specific and concrete measures were contained in a document known as *The Seventy Articles Concerning Education and Cultural Affairs*. Briefly, the articles called for the re-establishment of normal teaching processes, noninterference with academic work by party cadres, the shortening of periods for productive labor, encouragement of scientific experiment, proper respect for scholars, and the steady improvement in the quality of education.

Taken together, it is quite obvious that both Chen Yi's speech and the *Seventy Articles* represented a reversal of the earlier position of ideological rigidity. They were aimed primarily at correcting some of the serious mistakes during the period of the Educational Revolution, and at creating a healthier environment in which scientific and technical personnel could be trained. The swinging of the pendulum in the direction of normalcy and ration-



—Marc Riboud (Museum).

Student at a fine arts school in Peking—"Both Redness and expertness are declared to be the ultimate goals of education."

ality was accompanied by a general relaxation in the government's policy in the fields of art, literature, and cultural affairs. As a result of this policy shift, conditions in education and other fields improved markedly, and a feeling of "contentment and satisfaction" generally



—China Pictorial.

"Big-character posters went up in many parts of Peking University all harping on the same central theme: that the principles of the Educational Revolution had been violated by campus party authorities."

prevailed on all campuses. During this period of relative stability, conditions in general in China were also improving, as can be seen in the overall improvement in agriculture, the expansion of foreign trade, industrial growth, and in science and technology with a successful series of atomic explosions.

Toward the end of 1965, however, the ideologically more radical elements began to show their deep dissatisfaction with the state of affairs at that time. The campaign to purify ideology and to rectify rightist or revisionist tendencies was launched with the publication of an editorial in the Liberation Army newspaper under the title "Raise High the Great Banner of Mao Tse-tung's Thought and Actively Participate in the Great Socialist Cultural Revolution."

In retrospect, these straws in the wind signaled the beginning of an approaching storm. Up to that point, the party functionaries in charge of educational affairs were still following the earlier and more rational policy of educational reconstruction. It seems clear that, while the period of moderation had brought considerable satisfaction to a large portion of the students in the major universities, at the same time the new policy disillusioned and antagonized a small number of what was later described as "proletarian revolutionary elements." On June 1, 1966, with the personal approval of Chairman Mao, the Central People's Broadcasting Station of Peking broadcast the entire text of a big-character poster put up on the campus of Peking University by seven "revolutionary" students.

This broadcast, coupled with the reorganization of the Municipal Party Committee of the city of Peking and the dismissal from positions of authority of Lu P'ing, president of Peking University, marked the beginning of the Great Cultural Revolution on the campuses of the universities and colleges and, later, at secondary schools throughout the country. As usually is the case in party

purges and reforms, the Great Cultural Revolution in educational establishments began with a destructive or negative phase, during which the leading personalities were accused of a variety of crimes and acts detrimental to the Communist cause. Inasmuch as Peking University in many essential respects represented the highest educational institution, the kind of attacks made upon its leading officials typified the accusations later flung at the authorities in other institutions of higher learning.

The ascendancy of the revolutionary faction in Peking University gave rise to an entirely new situation in which the earlier policy of steady progress was subjected to the severest of criticisms and re-examination. Big-character posters went up in many parts of the university, all harping on the same central theme: that the principles of the Educational Revolution, which stressed the pre-eminence of politics and productive labor, had been violated by the campus party authorities. Lu P'ing and P'eng P'ei-yun, secretary and deputy-secretary respectively of the party committee at Peita (Peiching Tahsueh, or Peking University), were held responsible for "bourgeois revisionism."

**T**HE major "crimes" of which they were accused included, first of all, discriminatory actions against students of worker and peasant backgrounds who, upon close examination, proved to be the very elements responsible for the Cultural Revolution within the university. The "rebels" claimed that the percentage of students from peasant-worker backgrounds had steadily gone down from 90 per cent in 1961 to 52.8 per cent in 1963. This was accomplished, according to the "rebels," by a variety of means. By raising academic standards for admission, the university authorities rejected increasingly large numbers of peasant-worker students; by subjecting those admitted to a series of rigorous examinations and unreasonably rigid requirements, the university managed to

expel some on grounds of unsatisfactory performance and discouraged others from continuing their studies.

Such practices became known as "induced diarrhea" among the students. Of the more than 200 students transferred to Peita from agricultural, industrial, and military organizations for advanced education in 1959, the majority failed to complete their courses of study because of the academic demands made upon them, resulting in some students being kept back in their classes longer than the normal length of time and others dropping out. When the 1963 academic year began, less than 100 remained. The regulations required that any student failing one course in his major field and two in his minor field would not be allowed to advance to the higher class, while those who had failed during two consecutive years would be dismissed from the university altogether.

Rigid observance of this and other regulations resulted in higher academic standards, but usually at the expense of peasant-worker students, who, by and large, are not as well prepared academically as the "bourgeois" but culturally more advantaged students. As examples, the "revolutionary" students cited the fact that the Department of Mathematics and Dynamics kept back forty students in 1961, thirty-eight of whom were of peasant-worker origins. In 1962, the same department disqualified eight of the ten advanced research students who had been admitted the previous year on the strength of their party membership and party recommendation. More revealing, President Lu P'ing was quoted as having made the statement that "refined floral designs simply cannot be applied to coarse china." "Coarse china," in this case, referred obviously to students of proletarian background.

The second "crime" of which Lu P'ing and others were accused was said to be their deliberate violation of the principle of combining education with productive

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—Photos by Marc Riboud (Magnum).

**In a university dining hall (left), students read about the explosion of a Chinese nuclear bomb (1965); in a laboratory (right), students work to become technicians—"During the period immediately preceding the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of mid-1966, the emphasis in education was clearly on expertness."**

# LEARNING IN A LONELY PLACE

By ANNE FISCHER, *graduate of Teaneck, New Jersey, High School who will enter Brandeis University in September. Her article, written in a course in advanced composition and rhetoric taught by Mrs. Marion Shelby, is based on the author's work in a Head Start project in Hackensack during the summer of 1966.*

AT SEVENTEEN I believed in the world. The troubled children in our Head Start program were sensually and intellectually starved; we needed only to find the right foods and methods of feeding. We stocked our room with blocks, paints, a doll corner, books, and musical instruments. We learned that our children were suffering not from starvation but malnutrition. They were experienced. They knew how a man acts when he is drunk, that a thirteen-year-old girl can become pregnant. They knew about adultery, illegitimacy, and welfare, and they brought their education to school. Our job was not to negate it and leave them empty, but to help them express the violent feelings engendered by these experiences and make them usable.

Education is experience, and the most important experience is feeling. We learned to handle emotion: anger, pain, hatred, confusion, grief. But its absence left us groping. Sandra's family was Puerto Rican; she was five years old, had been born in America, and spoke no English. She lived in "the project," an apartment building for families (and half-families) on relief. Sandra had one older sister and four younger, and the mother was again pregnant. All the children had the same dull, tangled hair, the same undernourished bodies and dark, empty eyes. Their father kept them shut in, but on rare visits to the street the mother walked several paces behind her husband, the children clutching her skirt.

Sandra did not *come* to school, she was brought like a piece of property. A social worker had convinced the parents that the child needed exposure to English and an extra meal. Even when there was food, the mother often forgot to serve it. She was a child herself, given to fits of giggling and tears.

The child appeared inanimate. She seemed deaf, her eyes fixed, and she moved only when led or gently pushed.

Through a frilly, dirty dress, we could see her bones.

On the first day, her hunger worked for us. She ate slowly and continuously. She was still clutching a half-full milk carton when her mother came with her sisters. They did not greet each other. Sandra put the carton down, grasped a free fold of skirt, and was led away.

For two weeks Sandra sat quietly in the corner. We had placed her at a table close to puzzles and table toys, quiet games that a child could play without frightening herself with undue activity. The children ignored her; she joined them only to eat. We gave her breakfast, lunch, and extra milk cartons to take home. Every day seemed the same for her. But I was a seventeen-year-old utopian and expected, *demanding* miracles. Sandra became the test of our program, our good intentions, my faith. We could not help seeing her invisible struggle as a symbolic verdict. Her success would be our justification; her failure, ours. We continued against all evidence to believe in that struggle. The child seemed tentative rather than inert. She had been defeated by repression and fear but we, in our confidence, offered her something better—ourselves.

On Wednesday of the third week, rowdy Alfred left a puzzle (a simple, ten-piece affair such as a three-year-old in a middle-class family might have had) on her table. She reached out to touch it, then stroked it as if it were alive. All morning she worked at those ten pieces; we diverted her only for lunch. The next day she remembered and finished the puzzle easily before starting another. This became routine. When she had exhausted her immediate resources, she moved on, touching, exploring. We had a miniature kitchen in one corner; in the fifth week she discovered it. Thereafter, when that corner was empty, Sandra bustled about between stove and sink, playing solitary, silent games.



She ignored people. All her precious energy was concentrated on things. She never spoke, never smiled. When inactive, she drooped. Yet one felt that tentative struggle in her. We saw her running to school, but she entered our room listlessly, her face empty. We had to hurt her to find what lay behind that emptiness. Interrupting her play, we took the children for a walk to the library. On the street she began to cry silent, wrenching tears and I took her back to the room.

TEARS should have prepared us for the eventual explosion. But we never thought the last day would be a beginning. Our reports were written, our judgments made; we had ended without a miracle and I no longer believed in utopia. It was a sensible disillusionment.

She stood with me on the playground, motionless as ever, by a new piece of equipment: two vertical ladders with a horizontal ladder fastened between them at the top. On impulse, I lifted her to the second rung. She climbed to the top and I lifted her off. She climbed again, jumped, and I caught her. Teachers watched incredulously; everyone took turns catching her. She stumbled over her dress, ripped the hem, and giggled. She was laughing as she climbed and launched herself joyously. She darted into the school, danced into the room, chattering in English and Spanish. She caught every child by the arm and peered into his face. Suddenly she wanted words, names. Her exuberance was uncontrollable; she ran down the hall and back, spun around the room, launched herself at me, and collapsed against me in exhaustion. For the first time she would not eat. She waved her milk in the air, spilling it, and circled the table. Dazed, we watched the miracle: her eyes and mouth laughing, her body in constant motion as she circled again, hugging each of us as she passed.

We were so absorbed we did not see her mother standing in the doorway. Having brought her so far, we did not want to let her go. I looked for response in the mother's face, for surprise, pleasure, delight. There was nothing—but another Sandra as she had been yesterday and might be again tomorrow. The child saw her and came to a stop in the middle of the room. Her body contracted, her shoulders slumped, her mouth thinned, her eyes grew dark, stormy—and empty. I had to take her hand and lead her, resisting, to the door.

We sent her back to "the project." In the beginning she had seemed permanently anesthetized; we had coaxed down her defenses and given her nothing. There had been a promise in our room for Sandra and now it was forfeit. We had taken a child out of limbo and exposed her only to pain.