

ardless of his age."

At the Kweiyang electric motor plant old and new cadres made a serious study of Chairman Mao's latest instructions and reached the conclusion that to maintain close ties with the masses, it is imperative to go among the masses in the "fight self, repudiate revisionism" campaign and put oneself under the supervision of the masses. They attend classes for the study of Chairman Mao's works with the masses, and expose and criticise their own selfish ideas. Wherever they take part in physical labour, they join with the masses there in fighting their own "self." They fight self at their own workshop meetings, and at meetings of the whole factory. They publicly expose their own selfish ideas and tell others how they overcame them. In heart to heart talks with people they also fight self, frankly admitting their own thoughts based on self-interest and seeking the help of other people in combatting them.

They are carrying on ceaseless revolution, constantly remoulding their world outlook in the interest of the proletariat so as to prevent revisionism, combat the class enemy which vainly hopes for the degeneration of China's third or fourth generation and ensure that China's political colour will never change.

The new kind of relationship growing up between cadres and masses is indicative of the excellent situation in the Great Proletarian

Cultural Revolution. The revolutionary masses are ideologically aroused. In every field of activity, they are learning to use Mao Tse-tung's thought in the solving of problems. Successors to the proletarian revolutionary cause are steadily maturing, and the ranks of the cadres are being purified. As a result of all this the collective economy has been greatly consolidated, production is leaping upward and the socialist state is firmer and stronger.

Of all the characteristics of the present excellent situation in China, the most outstanding and fundamental one is the fearlessness of the people, the communist spirit generated by selflessness. The masses fear nothing. They are fully confident that armed with Mao Tse-tung's thought, they can overcome any obstacle or difficulty on their way ahead. With the growing comradeship in the revolutionary relationship between the cadres and the masses, the several hundred million people of China are becoming united as one man in the single purpose of destroying what is bourgeois and fostering what is proletarian. As the Shanghai workers say: "Let the class enemy tremble and wail in despair, we'll make the leap, as Chairman Mao has said, from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom, and, under the brilliant guidance of Mao Tse-tung's thought, go forward from victory to victory."

## Revolution in Education

Letter From China by Anna Louise Strong, No. 54, Dec. 23, 1967

Every school system in history has aimed to train its new generation to serve the interests of the ruling class. The contradictions of education under capitalism produce among American students a rising discontent that I shall not here discuss. Mao Tse-tung has many times stated the aims of education for China under the dictatorship of the proletariat; a recent book of quotations by Mao on education gives over 500 on this subject alone. The shortest and simplest may be unofficially translated: "Our educational policy must give moral, intellectual and physical education so that those receiving it become working people with socialist consciousness and with culture."

This is so simple and brief that its full meaning becomes clear only by contrast to the

opposite view which it challenges. China's education had been based on a feudal, dynastic past in which education, tested by examinations, produced a governing elite. This system was modified by importations from the capitalist West and patched over with ideas from the Soviet Union. Even after Liberation the schools had to rely on "bourgeois intellectuals" for teachers. These were reinforced by people in high authority who sabotaged Mao's ideas for years. His view, for example, that all education should be combined with productive labor, was twisted to apply to a second-rate education for peasants and workers, while "the real education" still aimed to produce a governing elite by pushing ahead a "bright minority", usually of "bourgeois" or intellectual origin, and test-



ing them by examination marks. Such ideas drew strength from the past and from the school authorities and challenged Mao's ideas down to the time of the cultural revolution. They are now called "revisionist ideas."

Mao breaks definitely with any idea that education should produce a governing elite. It should reduce, not widen the gulf between mental and manual labor and develop an entire generation fit for socialism, in which workers, peasants, army-men, intellectuals are all-round human beings, working-class in ideas, armed with science and culture. Nobody has ever yet made consistent attempts to create such an educational system. Lenin included education in his 1917 "Party Program" which proposed "free and compulsory general and technical education to the age of 16", adding that "it should be closely associated with the performance of socially productive labor." Lenin did not live to carry out this view. Mao did.

When classes in colleges and secondary schools closed down in China in summer of 1966 and remained closed for a year, this was not seen by most of the Chinese people as a catastrophe but as a period of preparing a new system. The school buildings did not close when they ceased to have classes. Enough students always remained to carry on the cultural revolution locally and to act as hosts to visiting Red Guards who were accommodated by millions in all main centers and chiefly in the schools. For these revolutionary students were touring the country by tens of millions, working in factories, helping peasants with sowing and harvest, learning camping and military drill from army-men, exchanging "revolutionary experiences" with students from other schools and provinces. They were declaring that they got more education from this year of roving than from any previous year of school.

It was being said and indirectly attributed to Mao's authority that a child gets a "really useful education" in his first six years, when he learns his relation with father, mother, water, fire, food and other realities. He then spends the next twelve or more formative years shut up in a room getting a secondhand education from books. All knowledge must be tested by practice in real life.

Part of the knowledge picked up by the travelling students was the story of Kangta, one of Mao's achievements in education in Yen-an days, the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College that prepared leadership for the resistance to Japan. An exhibition of Kangta, set up August 1, 1966 in Peking, was visited by millions of Red Guards in following months. Friends living near the hall told me lines of thousands queuing up to see Kangta often snarled traffic for blocks.

Kangta, with Lin Piao as president and Mao himself as occasional lecturer, lasted from 1936 to 1945, giving birth to twelve branches in different parts of China as these were liberated. Together these colleges turned out 100,000 graduates from courses of six to eight months. They linked teaching with research and practice, combined study with productive labor. The students built their own classrooms and dwellings, grew their own vegetables and wove their own cloth. Then they went to the front where they beat Japan and Chiang Kai-shek and established socialism in China. What magic in that six or eight months' course produced such leadership?

Chinese who studied there tell me that they used Mao's works plus current events as teaching material and that they "put politics in command." This means nothing in the West where "politics," especially in the United States, has become a dirty word. One goes back to Aristotle for the meaning of "politics" as the science of organizing and directing mankind's collective affairs. This was what they studied in Kangta. They began by making a "class analysis" of China's society in relation to the emergency of war with Japan. Who are the forces of revolution? Who are the enemies? Who are the allies, actual or potential, temporary or permanent? Next they learned "the mass line," how to draw out the ideas and will of the masses—the workers, peasants and soldiers—and work these over into organizational forms which the masses would accept as their own. That, in Kangta, was the basic learning of "politics".

Learning this, they spread swiftly over the land to organize resistance and later to build the new China. To this basic knowledge all special knowledge could later be added when needed. For instance, when the People's Liberation Army took their first big city, they had already prepared for weeks to administer it. They set up a camp of refugees from that city plus skilled administrators from smaller towns and worked out through joint discussion the future operations and the personnel responsible for them street by street. When they finally took the city, their advance forces came in with posters that told the population their intentions and asked everyone to stay quietly on his job. Kangta graduates organized this, having learned "politics". The story of Kangta was part of the knowledge the Red Guards got in Peking.

When they finally assembled for classes in summer of 1967, they were eager and full of ideas. They were told that, in creating the new education, the teachers were a "crucial force" because of their experience, and the workers and peasants were "masters" of the country who must be consulted but they themselves, the



revolutionary students, were "the main force" in developing a new education. So they promptly set to work and produced many "pilot plans" in many parts of China. These may be viewed with scorn by some professional scholars in the West but will probably be hailed by many Western students with startled delight. I shall give some samples here.

### A College in Shanghai

Tongji, the College of Civil Engineering in Shanghai, is a university of long standing which this year is 60 years old. From 1,000 students on a 25-acre campus at the time of Liberation in 1949 it grew to its present 7,000 students on 260 acres of land. Its students achieved their "Revolutionary Committee" in June. This consists of 45 members, 35 of whom are students, the chairman being a senior student aged 23. This is the active body that runs the university, the president having been "thrown out" and the eight previous faculties abolished.

A group of the students told their plans to Sol Adler on his recent trip to Shanghai; he describes them as "very intelligent and articulate." Until the cultural revolution, they explained, "the college was dominated by bourgeois intellectuals. They disdained students from worker and peasant families as 'stupid' and preferred students of bourgeois origin, especially pushing 'prodigies' who might make records and later shed honor on their professors. They glorified foreign examples. In architecture they taught us how to build law-courts in London, government buildings in Berlin or Washington, Notre-Dame in Paris. They also taught China's feudal architecture, such as the design of the building in 'Dream of the Red Chamber.' We were not told to learn masonry or carpentry but to become 'great artists with a painter's eye, a musician's ear, a philosopher's brain and a poet's feeling.' We were told that architects are not ordinary workers but 'conductors in an orchestra.' After five or six years of this we needed two years practical work to get our feet on the ground."

Students had disliked this kind of learning for a long time. In 1958 Mao called for a "revolution in education" and there was some "revolution in design" in Tongji but "bourgeois elements" in the administration sabotaged it. In 1966 the cultural revolution revived tendencies that had long existed. Revolutionary students formed a Red Guard organization called "The East Is Red"; it began with 700 members. "Conservatives" formed an opposing group which started with 4,000 students; it disintegrated fast when its nature became clear. By December 1966 "The East Is Red" was the strongest mass organization in the college. It

took active part in Shanghai's municipal revolution in January, and also formed its own "grand alliance," which later progressed to its "three-in-one alliance" and its Revolutionary Committee.

When classes reopened in July 1967, the students wanted more serious and permanent changes than those made in 1958-60. They therefore chose an "inspection team" of 100 students to visit factories and construction sites around Shanghai to get opinions of workers, peasants, and construction men on what kind of education was needed. They spent the two months of August and September in this kind of consultation before making their present plans. They were also guided by Mao's "May 7th Directive" on education contained in a letter he wrote to Lin Piao in 1966 in which he said that the students' main task is to study but they should also learn industrial work, farming and military affairs and concluded: "The period of schooling should be shortened, education should be revolutionized; the domination of our schools by bourgeois intellectuals should not be allowed to continue."

Tongji University and its eight faculties have been replaced by a new organization called the "May 7th Commune" in honor of Mao's May 7th directive—this must not be confused with the rural communes engaged in agriculture. It combines the university with a designing organization and a construction organization and carries on tuition, designing and construction all at once. Courses that formerly took five or six years are now reduced to three years with a liberal mixture of physical labor which is not merely token "practice work" on the campus but actual production on a construction site where veteran workers give instructions; if a student operates a crane, he does it under a man who is a crane operator. Subjects like mathematics and physics are taught in classrooms but also combined with problems of construction on the spot. Such is Tongji's present experimental status.

### Sample of Middle School

We next glance at No. 6 Middle School in Shanghai in a working-class district with 2,000 students from 12 to 19 years of age. One group of them quickly gathered around Adler and the talk was lively. "It gives you a lift to visit such schools," says Adler. These students had also visited factories and communes and discussed education with workers and peasants. Many had visited Peking and seen Chairman Mao in a review of Red Guards.

Chief characteristic of this school is their plan to combine with a primary school and cut the total twelve years to nine years of general



education for pupils from six to 15, after which they will take a full-time job in factory or on a farm for two years. Future decision will be based both on scholastic abilities in school and the standing the youth wins among his fellows in work; he may return to special schools for special types of education. Many middle schools are suggesting this nine years' schooling to the age of 16 followed by two years' full-time job.

"It is better for the students," they said in Shanghai. "You don't know what you want to do until you try a job. Sixteen is a good age to begin deciding. Twelve years is too long for unbroken attention to books."

The students here discussed many details of method. Their comments on examinations were clearly derived from Mao's statement that present examinations are "surprise attacks" on students. Some subjects, they said, don't need examinations; in others the students should be allowed to bring their notes and reference books. In any case they should be tested for reasoning ability not for memory. History textbooks will all have to be rewritten. "In discussing agriculture we invite an experienced peasant to talk; in physics we ask a worker or technician."

More important than all methods they considered the question of "world outlook". The former teaching "poisoned even working-class students," they said. They instanced a student whose mother was a street car driver. The boy was ashamed of this. One day it rained hard and his mother brought him an umbrella. When other boys asked who she was he said that she was a neighbor. "This kind of world outlook," judged the students, "must go."

Accounts from many colleges and middle schools appear in China's press. In one Peking middle school students do the teaching while the teachers assist. In others they invite an experienced peasant or worker to lecture. In some the students hold debates. In one school the students first met, decided what information they wanted and invited the teacher of their

choice to come and give it.

At first some teachers were afraid when the classes opened; they had been subjected to criticism by students and feared they had "lost their dignity" and could not "enforce discipline." One of these consulted the PLA man who was helping the school get started. He told her she was thinking too much in terms of "self" and advised her to tell the students how she felt at her first class. She did so by basing her talk on Mao's article about Bethune. She confessed that she herself had been afraid of her students and had not lived up to the standard set by the Canadian doctor of selfless devotion.

The students listened with rapt attention and later gathered around to say: "We didn't know you were like this. If we had, we would not have criticized so hard."

A new type of student-pupil relation is growing up, based on mutual comradeship rather than awe.

### Based on Mao

All these activities are based on Mao's teachings about education. I end with what Mao said over thirty years ago when he wrote "On Practice" as the test of truth. "In the present epoch ... the responsibility of correctly knowing and changing the world has been placed by history ... on the proletariat and its party. This process of changing the world ... in accordance with scientific knowledge has already reached an historic moment in the history of the world and of China, a moment unprecedented in human history ... that is the moment for finally banishing darkness from the world and from China and for changing the world into a world of light such as has never previously existed."

These are the ingredients stirred by the cultural revolution into the making of a new education, created by students and teachers on consultation with workers, peasants and army-men. All present forms are experimental; but the forces at work inspire hope.

# CHINA REPORT

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