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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

POLITICAL IDEALS, ECONOMIC DEMANDS, AND EDUCATIONAL  
REFORMS OF CHINA, 1949 TO 1976

BY

KAYAU WONG

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
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OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION  
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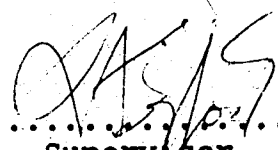
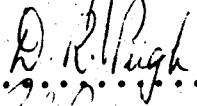
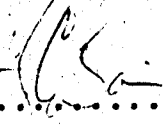
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In Memory Of

Dr. Norman Bethune

1890 - 1939

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore the educational reforms in the People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1976, with particular reference to the political and economic contexts.

Education in China had witnessed tremendous changes and shifts in this period. These educational changes were the consequences of the ideological and political struggles between the two dominant political cliques of Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi. The conflicts between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi were rooted in their different persuasions in socialism. Mao Zedong, adhering to Karl Marx's notion of ideological superstructure supremacy in social formation, emphasized the importance of human and ideological factors in socialist construction. Liu Shaoqi, on the other hand, believing in economic determinism of Orthodox Marxist, stressed economic development as primacy. These divergent interpretations of socialism led to conflicting political and economic policies, and education was manipulated to meet the conflicting ideals and demands.

In the twenty-seven years' period between 1949 to 1976, there had been several educational shifts and twists

in correspondence to the political and ideological struggles. These educational changes, however, were evolving in two models of education, namely, the egalitarian model advocated by Mao Zedong and the efficacy model promoted by Liu Shaoqi. The egalitarian model emphasized the expansion of educational opportunities, while the efficacy model of education focussed on enhancing quality of education by supplying technological manpower for economic growth. The interplay of the two models of education dominated the educational reforms in China in the period in question.

In examining the evolution of educational reforms in China from 1949 to 1976, the following general conclusions were reached. First, education in China had never been an independent entity, but always a pawn of the political and economic structures. Second, education, as an ideological superstructure, was an arena where political struggles took place. Third, all educational reforms were either political- or economic-centered, and development of the individual never received appropriate attention in education. Educational policies ignored the human potential as an agent of social transformation; rather, the individual was treated as an object of it. Failure in recognizing the importance of individual was the major defect in Chinese education in this period.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The traditional educational system of China was distinctly elitist. It was characterized by a series of competitive civil service examinations, and was intended for the production of a small corps of scholar-officials serving the imperial administration. The curriculum was based on Confucianism and a certain number of classical texts, it was academic in nature and moral in orientation. Learning emphasized memory; any deviations were discouraged. Theoretically, the education system was open to the public; in practice, only the well-off gentry class could afford the long years of study to succeed in the series of rigid examinations. Success in the examinations bestowed life-long power and privileges unavailable to commoners. The system remained unchanged for two thousand years and was implemented from dynasty to dynasty. It was conceived as an indispensable tool in perpetuating imperial rule.

The invasion of China by the European imperialists since the 19th century shook Chinese politics drastically, and finally led to the fall of the last imperial dynasty,

Qing, and to the establishment of a new Republic in 1911. Under the new Republican government, Western ideas and systems were introduced to modernize the country. Education was reformed by modelling it on Western system. Unfortunately, the Republic was crippled by decades of foreign invasion and internal turmoil. The success of the new educational system was limited. In 1949, the year of the establishment of the People's Republic, about 85 per cent of the population were illiterate (Lofstedt, 1980:68).

When the Chinese Communist Party was establishing its influence in the 1930s, education was used as a means for building up political power. Extraordinary education programs were implemented in various communist regions. Gunther Stein, an American correspondent who visited the Yanan Border Region in 1944, described the area as "a big elementary school in which almost everybody, young and old, is eager to learn and if possible, to teach" (Stein, 1945:208). Formal primary and middle schools and universities were only a small part of the educational network. Education also took place at workbench and field-side discussions. Wall newspapers, literary study groups, evening classes, and drama groups were all used to put across educational messages (Stein, 1945:208). In a real sense, education was combined with work and life.

Various types of educational provisions were created for children and adults. Education was "brought on all levels into harmony with the actual conditions of the people" (Stein, 1945:213). Education, in the eyes of the Chinese Communist Party, was an essential instrument for economic production, political power, and class struggle.

The Chinese Communist Party unified China in 1949, and the Common Program (1956) was adopted as the educational guideline. Emphasis was placed on the practical aspect of national construction, in which education was to serve the people and promote the people's spirit of patriotism and love of labour.

When the Common Program was put into practice, the three ascending levels of elementary, secondary, and higher education were retained. Pre-school education was instituted in nurseries and kindergartens. Elementary schools were to be for five years. Secondary education was divided into a three-year junior middle school and a three-year senior middle school. Vocational middle schools, agricultural schools, normal schools, junior technical schools, polytechnical schools, and a variety of specialized schools such as medical schools, trade schools, and business schools were set up. On the tertiary level, there were universities, technical colleges, professional schools and research institutes.



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In addition to the regular schools, informal education such as short-term schools for workers and peasants and spare-time schools for adults were set up. With the attempt to combat widespread illiteracy, 'spare-time' schools came into existence. They offered educational opportunity to all adults who were not eligible for admission into regular schools.

The multifarious and multi-dimensional educational policies thus created by the Chinese government had two basic premises: more educational opportunities for more people in order to construct a new socialist society, and not less important, to provide the knowledge and technology base for the needs of economic developments of the country.

In practice, however, educational policy often has to cope with the specific needs of society in a particular period of time. Given the conditions of limited resources and economic underdevelopment, the primacy of economic demand may mean the pursuit of educational quality rather than quantity, and education for some - rather than for all - in order to supply a competent technology base for economic development. Worse still, pursuit of educational quality may mean the promotion of an elite class which would be divorced from the interest of the masses. It contradicts the humanitarian ideals of equality of human

society and full development of the individual. The 'Red and Expert' debate, which stood for the controversies between political consciousness and professional competences, in China from 1949 to 1976, were the results of the dilemmas of educational policies in facing political ideals and social realities.

THE PROBLEM

- Being a socialist country, committed to the ideology of Marxism, the People's Republic of China, since 1949, has striven to build a new form of society and to forge a new type of socialist humanism. Education for the masses was thus considered as a tool for socialist construction. It was also to inculcate a socialist consciousness and the egalitarian values of Marxism. As an underdeveloped country, with a huge population and limited resources, the role of education was often constrained by economic considerations.

The research is intended to examine educational changes in China, from 1949 to 1976, in relation to the political ideals and economic demands. Equal emphases are put on the formal and informal educational system, especially those educational provisions for peasants and workers. Changes in Chinese education are, to a great

extent, good indicators of changes in political ideology and economic structures. The changes of educational policy are seen as outcomes of the relationships between education, economic situations and political structures.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is divided into three parts: (1) the changes of the dominant political ideology in China during the period of 1949 to 1976; (2) the changes and consequences of various economic development strategies over the period; (3) the kind of responses as reflected in the educational provisions and policies during this period. Specifically, the research is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the dominant political ideals contending in China during the period from 1949 to 1976?
2. What are the rationale, aims and objectives underlying these contending political ideals?
3. What are the different economic development strategies in China during the period?
4. How are the changes of these development strategies related to the contradictions of

- the competing political ideals?
5. What are the policies of economic development and educational reforms advocated by the contending political ideals during this period?
  6. What are the subsequent changes in educational policies during the period?
  7. How are these educational changes related to the shifts of political ideals and economic demands?

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF THE PERIOD  
FROM 1949 TO 1976

The period is marked by the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the death of Mao Zedong in 1976. Within this period, Chinese politics were overwhelmingly dominated by the influence of Mao Zedong. As the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao's political ideals exerted great influence on every aspect of the political, economic and social policies in China. But it does not mean that China under Mao Zedong's rule was a monolithic society governed by a political party with a unified ideology. As a result of the differences in the interpretation of Marxian ideology and different

political priorities, Mao's political ideals and policies were challenged by other political leaders. It was often referred as the 'struggle between two lines', between the proletarian revolutionary line represented by Mao Zedong, and the line of economic primacy represented by Liu Shaoqi.

The struggles between the two ideological lines gave rise to the cyclical shifts of ruling leaders with different ideological preferences. Economic and educational policies changed correspondingly.

#### METHODOLOGY

This study is based on analysis and discussions of certain documents. A wide range of literature concerning China, including Marxism, Maoism, sociological theories of education, political ideology, and economic development will be examined. Government policy papers, case study reports, and official statistics are also consulted. The major methodological framework of the study is to identify historically the educational changes from 1949 until 1976, and, sociologically, to relate them to the economic and political situation in China.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Educational reform. Educational reform denotes the change and transformation of the goal, structure and curriculum of the educational provisions in both formal and informal educational systems. Formal education is the regular system of schooling and training that are implemented on a full-time basis. Hierarchically, this educational system is composed of primary schools, secondary schools and higher education. Each level has prescribed courses of definite length and content. The informal educational system, on the contrary, embraces all organized provisions and social processes that enable men and women to enlarge and interpret their own living experiences individually and collectively. In China, informal education is designated as 'education for peasants and workers'. In the research, it is often referred to as 'adult education'. The educational provisions include small study groups, literacy classes, night schools, in-service training programmes, part-time education, propaganda through mass media and mass mobilization campaigns.

Political ideals. These are patterns of beliefs, general values, and goals which purport to explain complex social phenomena with a view to directing political

choices facing individuals, groups and nations. They are often viewed as parameters within which to understand social choices and actions.

Economic demands. This refers to the kind of social phenomena which have resulted from the process and consequence of economic production. The process and outcome of economic production derive certain adaptations from human aspects and other social organizations. Adaptations in human aspects include changes of behaviour, cognitive and technical skills, and psychological readiness of individuals. Social organizations include demographic structures, educational systems, public health provisions, class structures, government organizations and political structures.

#### DELIMITATION

The study is confined to an examination of China's educational policies in relation to the political and economic contexts within the period from 1949 to 1976. The study is focussed on the formal and informal educational system. No attempt is being made to compare the case of China with other countries.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter II is a review of related literature which includes: (1) Karl Marx's theories on human nature, society, the relationship of human consciousness to social formation, and the implications of these theories to education; (2) Orthodox Marxist theories of education in relation to political ideology and economic productions; (3) the theories of Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, and Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis will be examined to further explore the relations between education and the political-economic structures of the larger society.

Chapter III is an examination of the two major political ideological lines prevailing in China from 1949 to 1976. Mao Zedong was the dominant political figure during the period concerned. His philosophy on politics, economic development and education will be studied in some details. In addition, the contending political ideals and policies of other political leader such as Liu Shaoqi will be discussed.

Chapter IV is a study of Chinese education of the three periods: 1949-1957, 1958-1965, and 1966-1976. Analyses are focussed on the two perspectives of educational change, namely, educational policies and their implementation. The inter- and intra- relationships of



education with political structure and economic production will then be explored.

Chapter V is 'The Conclusion'. An overall review and some comments will be indicated.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The legacy of Marxist theory has prompted much research on human beings and human society, which enriches our understanding of epistemology and of education in relation to other structures in the larger society. Marxism has become a very influential approach both in political studies and academic research. However, it does not mean that the interpretation of Marxism in theory and practice is monolithic and without controversy. On the contrary, debates have long been waging on certain Marxist interpretations.

Great controversies arise from the core premises of Marxian theory, that is, the problematic issue of base structure - superstructure relations. The question of whether social formation is a result of active participation of the individual in ideological superstructure, or, whether social formation is solely determined by the material base structure has long been debated. And educational policies have been contentious issue in the midst of this debate.

The divergent interpretations of this aspect of Marxism has evolved into the debate of 'Red or Expert' in

China, which was also the predominant force in political and economic changes of China since 1949. Educational policies witnessed changes and shifts in conformity with ideological and political debates.

The objective of Karl Marx's social theory was a concern for human interests. The 'active' role of human beings in social construction was a basic premise in Marx's social theory. His active notion of human beings was expressed in his base structure - superstructure model, in which reality was perceived as not only shaped by the material base structure but also by the active intervention of human beings. It was the endeavouring mind of man that called for social transformation and changes. The part played by human consciousness was of utmost importance. Owing to this belief, Marx advocated polytechnic education for the all-round development of man. Polytechnic education, according to Marx, allowed human beings not only production competence but also the realization of self. This idea of the role of man in social formation was not always agreed to by others. Many of his compeers, especially Friederick Engels and later, Vladimir I. Lenin, had different views which stressed that the economic base was the determinant factor.

When Marx died in 1883, the notion of the active human element in Marxian theory was gradually eliminated

by the so-called Orthodox Marxists, from Engels onwards. Orthodox Marxists downgraded the importance of individuals in history making, and advocated instead the transformation of human society by a law-like development independent of individual participation. To Orthodox Marxists, social reality and development were determined by material production alone and human consciousness became the handmaiden of the material world. With the success of Orthodox Marxists in various communist movements, material determinism became the sole and official interpretation of Marxism. Under the ideology of economic supremacy, all-round development of human beings became subordinate to vocationalism. Marx's idea of polytechnic education was interpreted as vocationalism, which was to serve the goals of economic development.

The domination of Orthodox Marxism was strongly challenged in the 1930s. Antonio Gramsci (1971) revived Marx's concept of human ideology in his notion of 'hegemony', which was a more complete explanation of Marx's notion of ideological control. Louis Althusser (1970; 1971) further developed this concept of ideological superstructure in his works. Education, according to Gramsci and Althusser, was seen as a form of hegemony, a state ideological apparatus functioning to extend ruling class domination and perpetuating class society. Adhering

to this Marxian approach, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) illustrated in their works these functions of state educational systems in class society and develop the so-called 'correspondence theory.' They had highlighted the deterministic aspect of Orthodox Marxism by documenting how the changes of the educational system in capitalist America were in correspondence to the changing needs of the economic system.

The review of literature in this Chapter will include three sections. In the first Section, I shall explicate the theoretical arguments and educational implications of Karl Marx and Orthodox Marxists, mainly Engels and Lenin. The difference in the ideological orientation between Marx and Orthodox Marxists is the fundamental theoretical framework in understanding the political debates and struggles in China during Mao's period. Section 2 is an analysis of Antonio Gramsci's notion of 'school as hegemonic' and Louis Althusser's notion of education as 'state ideological apparatus'. This section explicates in a further and deeper way how education can be a function of political and economic forces. Section 3 is intended to examine the 'correspondence' theory of Bowles and Gintis. Through Sections 2 and 3, it is hoped that the nature of education in relation to political ideology and economic demands

will be reflected, as in the case of China, which is the major research concern of my study.

#### HUMANISM, ECONOMIC DETERMINISM, AND EDUCATION IN MARXIST THEORY

Marx and Engels were the two great founders of Marxist theory. Of their enormous number of volumes, only a few were specifically concerned with education. Though they always proclaimed that education played a vital role in human society, Marx and Engels never dealt with education in isolation from economic, social and political phenomena because they regarded education as a living part of the totality of the social structure.

Marx and Engels had very different conceptions of education, especially in terms of social formation. This difference derived mainly from their distinct views on humans in relation to material factors. Marx maintained that human ideology had an active role in interpreting and shaping social reality while Engels' conception of human beings was subordinate to material conditions. Engels' view was a kind of economic determinism, sometimes referred to as economism, emphasising the supremacy of material production. In contrast, Marx's active model of human beings was sometimes called 'humanism'.

Humanism, Social Transformation,  
and Polytechnic Education of Karl Marx

Marx's social and political thought was based on a transformation and synthesis of two different philosophical traditions: German idealism as exemplified in the works of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and the philosophical realism of Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach.

Hegel was an idealist who believed that any explanation of social reality must be in terms of mental causes. He held that ideas rather than objects were of greater importance. Thought, according to Hegel, was equivalent to reality. One of the central characteristics of Hegelian thought was the notion of dialecticism, which referred to a statement or a condition such that thesis and antithesis were at work together. The contradiction or conflict then produced a synthesis which itself became a new synthesis at a more advanced level. Hegel also asserted that it was according to this dialectical process that human history could be understood. Hegel saw that there was an absolute spirit in human beings that struggled to achieve self-realization. In each stage of the world's development, the absolute spirit strived constantly to overcome or resolve the dialectics of thesis and antithesis by higher synthesis until the absolute

spirit was ultimately actualized in the human subject. When the absolute spirit achieved actualization, it reached its completion. The cosmos would then be a completely coherent entity.

Hegelian dialectic was basically a metaphysical process. For Hegel, only mind was real and only mental activities could form a basis for understanding the world. Another important feature of Hegelian dialectic was that it denoted the immediate appearance of a thing which was not yet its true form. What one saw, according to Hegel, might be a negative condition of the phenomenon and was not the real potentiality. It is through the reasoning mind that its "internal contradictions are resolved in the dialectical process, whereby the potentialities of all things unfold in a pattern of self-transcendence to a higher unity" (Lichtheim, 1969:8). This dialectical process, mirrored in thought, was the objective history of the real world, which arrived at self-consciousness in philosophy. Hegel's dialectical method had great impact on Marx, though Marx critically assessed the Hegelian idealism from a Feuerbachian perspective.

Whereas Hegel saw reality as derived from spirit, Feuerbach argued that human spirit was an illusory product of the reality. It was being or existence that preceded thought, and not the other way round. Human beings did



not reflect upon the world prior to acting. Here Feuerbach set out to develop materialistic philosophy as an inversion of the idealistic premises of Hegelianism. He transformed the subject of idealistic philosophy, thought, into a predicate; and man, the traditional predicate, into a subject. This 'transformative method' turned the Hegelian idealism upside down. Feuerbach went on to argue that if one started with the concrete existence, human beings could be liberated and freed from the mental creation of alienation:

Only the perception of objects and experiences in their objective actuality can free man from all prejudices. The transition from the ideal to the real takes place only in the philosophy of praxis (Avineri, 1968:12).

Feuerbach's materialistic viewpoint and transformative method were used by Marx to criticize the abstractions of man's idealist metaphysics. Based on synthesizing certain elements of Feuerbach and Hegel, Marx's social and political theory was developed.

From Hegel, Marx derived his view that reality was not an objective datum that was external to people, but was shaped by man through human consciousness. Marx extricated the active elements of Hegel's doctrine, and combined it with a materialist epistemology. In Thesis on Feuerbach, Marx said:

The chief defect of all materialism up to now (including Feuerbach's) is, that the object, reality, what we apprehend through our senses, is understood only in the form of the object or contemplation; but not as sensuous human activity, as practice; not subjectively. Hence in opposition to materialism the active side was developed abstractly by idealism which of course does not know real sensuous activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really distinguished from the objects of thought: but he does not understand human activity itself as objective activity (Marx, 1960:197).

Marx's epistemology denoted a middle position between the classical idealism and Feuerbach-style materialism. It purported to transcend the classical dichotomy between subjects and objects. Marx saw human beings as shaping nature, and in turn, being shaped. To Marx, reality was always human reality not in the sense that human beings existed within nature, but in the sense that human beings shaped nature. This act was a total process, implying a constant interaction between subject and object:

The production of life, both as one's own in labour and of fresh life in procreation, now appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relationship.... For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is therefore from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all. Consciousness is at first, of course, merely consciousness concerning the immediate sensuous environment and consciousness of the limited connection with other persons and things outside the individual who is growing self-conscious. At the same time it is consciousness of

nature.... man is only distinguished from sheep by the fact that with him consciousness takes the place of instinct or that his instinct is a conscious one (Marx, 1960:18-20).

Obviously, Marx's epistemology denied the mechanistic view of materialism which never considered that human consciousness had philosophical significance. Marx believed that the weakness of Feuerbach's philosophy was its mechanistic materialism which ignored the active mental elements of human beings. Marx never reduced historical development to linear causal terms of material factors. In one sense or another, Feuerbach 'naturalized' human beings while Marx 'humanized' nature:

The practical construction of an objective world, the manipulation of inorganic nature, is the confirmation of man as a conscious species-being, i.e. a being who treats the species as his own being or himself as a species-being.... It is just in his work upon the objective world that man really proves himself as a species-being. This production is his active species-life. By means of it nature appears as his world and his reality. This object of labour is, therefore, the objectification of man's species-being (Marx, 1964:127).

Marx argued that human beings could satisfy and actualize themselves through interaction with nature. It was through the interaction between mind and nature that human beings achieved their consciousness of the world. People did so through the practical activity which transformed the external nature. At the same time, humans

modified their own selves and realized their existence. Here we could begin to see how Marx viewed the relations between production forces and production relations as well as those between the material basis of production and the superstructure.

For Marx, production forces were not objective or economic facts that were external to human consciousness. Rather, they required the mediation of human consciousness for their emergence and existence. They represented the organization of human consciousness and human activity. Consequently, the distinction between material base and superstructure was not a distinction between 'matter' and 'spirit', as Orthodox Marxist such as Engels puts it. To Marx, the material base or production force were seen as the conscious human activity aiming at the preservation of the conditions of human life. The superstructure or productive relations is seen as human consciousness which furnished "reasons, rationalizations, legitimizations, and justification for the specific forms that activity takes" (Avineri, 1968:76). Human consciousness, the genesis of which was in social relations, created and changed the social reality continuously. This constructive quality of human consciousness was important to Marx because human beings were not seen as biological entities but as

creators of the human world, the state, society (Marx, 1963:43).

According to Marx, human beings were truly themselves in so far as they were able to recognize themselves in the human-made universe which surrounded them. This power of realization was not a passive object of perception determined by material conditions. Rather, it was a dynamic activity in relation to the object perceived and in relation to the perceiving subject. This self-recognition was again achieved through participation in production work, in which human beings could realize their potentialities. Human beings were alienated from the reality when failing to attain this self-realization. Education, which dealt with the ideological and conscious aspects of human, was seen by Marx as a very creative and dynamic tool for self-realization. It was under this ideological commitment that Marx saw that circumstances could be changed by men so that "the educator himself must be educated" (Marx, 1960:197).

The core idea of Marx's theory on education, as mentioned above, was 'education for the all-round development'. Since Marx considered that production and work could enhance the self-realization of man, education was therefore related to the development of human capacity in mastering the production process. The ability to

control production relations, which was so vital for human emancipation from alienation, must be regarded as the ultimate function of any form of education. For this reason, Marx advocated the notion of 'polytechnic education':

[E]ducation will in the case of every child over a given age, combine production labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings (Marx, 1976:614).

The importance of combining education with work was emphasized in various parts of Marx's writings. In criticizing the capitalist form of production, Marx explained that polytechnic education could provide free scope to man's natural powers and thus yield full-developed individuals. Marx asserted that "when the working-class comes into power, as inevitably it must, technical instruction, both theoretical and practical, will take its place in the working-class schools" (Marx, 1976:488). The importance of human consciousness and actions in realizing social transformation was discussed in detail in his book, Holy Family:

[I]t is education, by which.... not only education in the ordinary sense but the totality of the individual's conditions of life, which forms man, if a reform is necessary to abolish the contradiction between particular interests and those of society, so, on the other hand, a transformation of consciousness

is necessary to carry out such a reform (Marx, 1975:133).

In the Poverty of Philosophy, Marx stated more explicitly the need of education for social change. According to Marx, the change of economic conditions has transformed the mass of the people in the country into workers. The capitalist economic system which was characterized by the domination of bourgeois capital had created for the working mass like situations and common interests. But the workers were not immediately aware that they shared common interests because of the social systems which dominated them. The working mass had formed as a group in itself but was not aware of how to act for the group as a whole. However, the conscious understanding of workers' conditions coupled with political education provided by the revolutionary party would gradually bring workers to an awareness of unjust social conditions. Political struggles educate the working mass and finally bring the working class into unity. The constitution of the working class as "a class for itself" came when the working class called for actions to change the injustice of all kinds (Marx, n.d.:173).

With the above consideration as the theoretical context, education for the sake of identifying class consciousness and enforcing class interest was more

important than any other function. The primary role of the revolutionary party was educational so as to facilitate the proletariat to understand the historical development of societies and to be aware of the possibilities for social betterment. Education was to enable human beings to become effective masters for themselves rather than passive products of social conditions.

Economic Determinism, Social Transformation,  
and Educational Theory of Orthodox Marxism

With the death of Marx in 1883, his humanistic concerns became interpreted as materialist determinism, which were antagonistic to his appreciation of human beings' role in social formation and history. Ironically, it was Marx's devoted colleague and collaborator, Friedrich Engels, who laid the foundation of Orthodox Marxism that emphasized a material deterministic worldview.

Marx's theory of history was based on the idea of interaction between individuals and the external circumstances in society. Effective freedom of human agency was the starting point and the final hope. For Marx, the creative role of the human mind in interpreting



and shaping circumstances presented to individual consciousness was the essential heuristic perspective in his theory of history. Originally a method of historical inquiry, Marx's theory was christened as 'historical materialism' by Engels. Humanistic Marxism became converted into a comprehensive worldview with law-like validation as positive science.

The dialectical understanding of reality by Marx included the conscious understanding of nature, in which the ideological setting was combined with a materialist epistemology. Engels reduced this dialecticism into three laws: the laws of the transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa; interpenetration of opposites; and the negation of the negation (Engels, 1960:26). Engels believed that the three laws were applicable to both the human and natural worlds, and dialectical laws in history were as valid objectively as dialectics in nature. Since motion was the mode of existence of matter in the natural world, Engels employed this analogy in positive science and applied it as valid in human society and thought. He compared dialectic thought to the law of motion, amassed an exact representation and reflection of the natural world, in which the dialectics of the brain was only "the reflection of the forms of motion of the real world, both of nature and of history" (Engels, 1960:153).

The essence of Engels' dialectic materialism was that matter historically preceded spirit. The material world, according to Engels, was the cause and the source of the evolution of individual consciousness while human consciousness was merely the reflection of the objective world. Marx's active element of human beings was thereby eliminated. Human beings had become a passive product of the natural world. Human knowledge was just a perfect reflection of the world's evolving matter in motion. People could only know under the conditions of their epochs and as far as these reach (Engels, 1960:160). Based on a Darwinian evolutionary version of positivism, Engels stressed the primacy of materialistic development in history. Instead of the original Marxian dialectical view of history and praxis, in which critical thought was validated by human action, the logic of history in Orthodox Marxism was read as a causal process of production development. Little room was left for the notion that history might be created by human action directed towards the attainment of a truly human society.

According to Engels, social transformation was presented as wholly external to individual consciousness. The endeavour and creative mind of human beings in Marx was devalued as reflective and subordinate, rather than a constitutive factor of social change.

Societal change was seen as being governed by the 'objective' law of societal transformation stages from primitive society to feudal society, to capitalist society, to socialist society and finally, to communist society, depending on the modes of production. Material production became the real actor in history. History was interpreted as self-contained and independent of creative human intervention, and human beings were assumed to be the subordinate and passive products of social relations (Engels, 1939:293).

When Marx commented on French materialism in his work, Thesis on Feuerbach (1960), he was aware of the social consequences of de-valuing human elements in a mechanistic epistemology. He underlined the internal contradiction of a reflectionist theory of consciousness that combined a passive view of human existence with a social optimistic progress of human history. The mechanistic view of French materialism was denounced by Marx as "philosophically quietistic (sic), apolitical and conservative" (Avineri, 1968:67). Ironically, many of the theories of Engels on social theory and history were identical with the mechanistic materialism that Marx strongly criticized. However, Engels' ideas were echoed by many leading Marxist revolutionaries such as Georgy Valentinovitch Plekhanov, Karl Kautsky, and most notably

Vladimir I. Lenin, the first Chairman of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Following the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Orthodox Marxism was established as the authoritative interpretation of Marxism. Orthodox Marxists, especially Lenin, saw the development of human history as law-governed. They developed these laws into a comprehensive worldview in both theory and social practice. Human consciousness was further downplayed:

[S]ocial being is independent of the social consciousness of man.... The highest task of humanity is to comprehend the objective logic of economic evolution (the evolution of social life) in its generalized fundamental features, so that it may be possible to adapt to it one's social consciousness and the consciousness of the advanced classes of all capitalist countries in as definite clear and critical a fashion as possible (Lenin, 1927:337).

Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without, that is, only outside of the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers (Lenin, 1966:112).

Instead of placing the human being at the foundation of history as Marx did, Orthodox Marxism theorists had accented material production as the undeniable power in history. This position had important ramifications for their educational theories and practices. The fact that the superstructure was viewed as a mechanical reflection of the economic base led to a

notion of ideological superstructures as epiphenomena which played no part in the historical process.

Superstructure, as it existed, was to be determined by the position of the subjects in the relations of production.

The economic supremacy and human subordination of Orthodox Marxism would imply educational goals and policies that are totally different from those advocated by Marx.

When Marx emphasized the combination of education and production, the core premise of Marx was the optimistic expectation of human nature. Through the promotion of human capacity in mastering the environment, human beings not only improved their material lives but also avoided alienation and worked toward self-realization. The all-round development of human beings was the goal of Marx's polytechnic education. When Orthodox Marxists replaced Marx's subjective human intervention with law-like historical developments, human consciousness lost its creative elements and became a subordinate part of social reality.

It was therefore not surprising for Lenin to say that education played a secondary role in effecting social change. Lenin asserted that organized political action was the most essential in realizing social changes. Political ideology would continue to control educational institutions in order to secure workers in gradual

internalization and to direct common efforts toward the attainment of planned social goals. Lenin maintained with perfect consistency that political action in accomplishing change of the base structure had to be made first. Base structure, according to Lenin, could create the conditions for the ideological superstructure, that was, education. Marx's polytechnic education was thus interpreted by Lenin as vocationally-oriented, the purpose of which was to promote economic development.

In an educational policy paper in 1921, Lenin's idea of education was clearly expressed. Lenin proposed that the second division of the general school (ages 12 to 17) be transformed into professional and technical schools unconditionally and immediately. In the same paper, Lenin clarified the objectives of these polytechnic schools as to prepare one who knew his business completely and was fully capable of becoming a master, distinct in his own profession:

One should orient himself polytechnically and have the bases of a polytechnical education, ie, a basic understanding of electricity; the application of electricity to mechanical industry; to chemical industry; the electrification of the R.S.F.S.R.; one to three visits to an electrical station, factory, or sovkhz; basic knowledge of agronomy and of similar matters (Shore, 1947:149).

## POLITICS, ECONOMICS, AND EDUCATION:

## THE NEO-MARXIAN PERSPECTIVE

Traditionally, education has been viewed as an independent institution free from any social interference, benevolent to all individuals in the society at large. This kind of notion has been strongly held by so-called functionalists who hold that education is neutral and apolitical, acting as a 'great equalizer' of the society. The view becomes increasingly challenged by educationalists of various persuasions. Among the various schools of educational thought, the neo-Marxists have exerted the strongest impact in the reconceptualization of the functions of education.

Positing the analysis on the unequal social relations in class societies, the neo-Marxists see education closely linked with the larger society. It cannot be understood when divorced from the politico-economic context. The education system is seen as an integral part in the process of reproducing fundamental social relations. The notion of 'reproduction', in terms of its implications in culture, ideology, politics and economics, has become the essence of the neo-Marxian approach. Among these neo-Marxian theorists, Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser had the

honour of reviving the ideological aspect of Marxism in education.

Gramsci had developed Marx's concept of ideological superstructure into his theory of hegemony, and had elevated human ideology to an important position in social formation. Louis Althusser had further expanded Gramsci's work and had accented the role of ideology in class domination. Gramsci and Althusser thus explored a new dimension in understanding the deeper meaning between the relations of education and the larger society, which had had enormous influence in the sociology of education.

Adhering to Orthodox Marxian view of economic determinism, the works of two political economists, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, analysed the functions of education in capitalist society in terms of economic factors. In their 'correspondence theory', they had expounded a kind of correspondence between education practices and relations of economic production.

#### Antonio Gramsci: Hegemony, Ideology, and Education

The success of the Russian Revolution in 1917 consolidated Orthodox Marxism as the official version of Marxist theory. Since Orthodox Marxists emphasized the causal relationship between productive activities and



social reality, material determinism, therefore, became the official epistemology and interpretation of Marxism. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian marxist, rejected this view and revived the ideological dimension of Marx.

While accepting the base structure as primary in social formation, Gramsci expanded Marx's concept of ideological superstructure and developed his theory of hegemony. The basic premise of this theory of hegemony was that individuals in society were not ruled by political force alone, but also by ideas. The ruling class gained leadership based on the consent of the people, which was secured by the diffusion and popularization of the ruling class ideology on the masses. Education was utilized as one of the important ideological superstructures by which the ruling class extended their predominant values and norms over the subordinate class.

Gramsci emphasized the importance of the ruling hegemony in civil society and saw it as a crucial theme in explaining social domination. According to Marx, each period of historical development was characterized by ruling class ideology. The class which was the ruling force in society, was at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which had the means of material production at its disposal, had controlled at the same time of the means of mental production; and, as such,

the ideas of those people who lacked control of the means of production were subject to those who owned them (Marx and Engels, 1960:64).

The ideological superstructure as controlled by the ruling class was sufficiently stressed by Gramsci in his theory of hegemony. Civil society was the realm of economic relations and played a decisive role in forming social relations. The political state was subordinate to it. Civil society, according to Gramsci, did not belong to the base structure level but to the superstructure. Gramsci divided the superstructure into two great parts, civil society' and 'political society'.

Civil society was composed of all those private sectors such as schools, churches, journals and so on, which were formed of ideological and cultural relations. Political society, or the state, was composed of public institutions, such as the government, courts, police and army, which exercise direct domination by the ruling class over the society. The ruling class, having controlled the means of production, exerted its power in controlling the society in two ways. It "rules the allied classes and dominates the opposing classes" (Gramsci, 1971:57).

Gramsci assigned the political society and private society in the superstructure important roles in exercising the ruling class's domination. The ruling

class exerted its power over society on both of these levels of action with very different methods. Civil society was the arena of ideas, where the ideology representing the worldview of the ruling class was extended to the masses so as to secure law and order. When the intellectuals representing ruling class interests failed to create hegemony, the ruling class fell back on the political society, which was the state's coercive apparatus and disciplined those who did not conform. The coercive force of the state was used when the rule by consent failed.

Gramsci elevated the ideological predominance of the ruling class's values and norms over the subordinate classes. In order to perpetuate class domination, control of consciousness was as important as control of production forces. Political struggle was not only taking place in base structures, but also in ideological superstructures. The state, as an instrument of ruling class domination, must strive for hegemony in the arena of consciousness. It was the role of intellectuals and educational system to develop the hegemony over the subordinate classes. The state acted as a system of enforcement in this ideological domination.

Intellectuals were important actors in Gramsci's theory of hegemony. Gramsci defined two types of

intellectuals: the traditional professional intellectuals and the organic intellectuals. These two types of intellectuals existed in every social group, in either the dominant or subordinate.

Traditional professional intellectuals were those people, such as scholars and scientists, theorists, non-ecclesiastical philosophers, etc. (Gramsci, 1976:219). Because of their knowledge and ability, these traditional professional intellectuals helped in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class they originally belonged to. These traditional intellectuals were not class-based. They were not always loyal to their original social classes, but would move to serve the interests of other classes.

The second type of intellectual was the 'organic' intellectual. An organic intellectual was any person that possessed a particular technical capacity. It was the 'think tank' and organizing element of every social class. The organic intellectual "carries on some form of intellectual activity,.... participates in some conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring it into being new modes of thought" (Carnoy, 1981:250). The worldview of these organic intellectuals was class-based. They were loyal to

their own classes and thus directed the ideas and aspirations of their own classes.

When the dominant class attempted to develop power over society, they would try to weld together the traditional professional intellectuals, both from the dominant and subordinate classes. It was a major function of the educational system to weld together the intellectuals. According to Gramsci, the educational system was class-divided and class-structured.

In the capitalist society, the state schooling system was part of the ideological apparatus of bourgeois state. It represented the interests of the ruling class and was a contributor to bourgeois hegemony. That educational system produced intellectuals that perpetuated ruling class interests in political, social and economic fields. It developed 'organic' intellectuals from the bourgeois class with homogeneity in worldview and self-awareness of class interests.

The knowledge that was taught in schools was class-biased and represented the ruling class interest. Through education, the ruling class reached into subordinate classes for additional professional intellectuals. Therefore, social transformation or class struggle must take place not only in the political and economic arenas but also in the struggle in controlling

the educational system. It was in this ideological superstructure that the ruling class extended their ideological hegemony, consolidated and perpetuated their domination.

Louis Althusser: Education as Ideological State Apparatus

While Gramsci expanded and highlighted the Marxian conception of ideology, it was Louis Althusser, a French philosopher, carried forward the Gramscian idea and accented the ideological aspect of class domination as being as important as the economic structure. In his essay, Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus, Althusser related ideology to the reproduction of the conditions for production, and in particular, the reproduction of the relations of production.

Althusser basically accepted the Orthodox Marxist viewpoint that the superstructure was determined by what happened in the economic base (Althusser, 1971:135). He went further to argue that the social whole was not simply determined by economics:

[C]onstituted by a certain type of complexity, the unity of a structured whole containing what can be called levels or instances which are distinct and 'relatively autonomous', and coexist within this complex structural unity, articulated with one

another according to specific determinations, fixed in the last instances by the level or instance of the economy (Althusser, 1970:97).

It was precisely through the combination of the concept of the relative autonomy of the superstructure with respect to the base structure, and the interactions between the superstructure and base structure that Althusser's theory of ideology was formulated. According to Marx, the state was made up of forces of repression, functioned to maintain the interests of the ruling classes in social control. Althusser defined the functions of the state into two levels: the state apparatus which was repressive in nature, and the ideological state apparatuses which functioned to justify the status quo. The repressive state apparatus included government, administration, law and police force etc. The ideological state apparatuses (ISA) were distinct and specialized institutions, which included:

[The] religious ISA (the system of the different churches), the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'school'), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties), the trade union ISA, the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc), the cultural ISA (literature, the arts, sports etc) (Althusser, 1971:143).

While there was only one state apparatus, there

was a plurality of ideological state apparatuses. What distinguished the ideological state apparatuses from the state apparatus was their ways of functioning. The state apparatus functioned by 'violence', whereas the ideological state apparatuses functioned 'by ideology'. But both the state apparatuses, whether repressive or ideological, could function by violence and by ideology.

Althusser said:

[The state apparatus functions] massively and predominantly by repression (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology.... In the same way, but inversely, the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is attenuated and concealed, even symbolic (Althusser, 1971:145).

While the ruling class controlled the state power and had the repressive state apparatus at its disposal, it still needed to control the ideological state apparatuses. It was because no class could hold state power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over the State Ideological Apparatuses (Althusser, 1971:146). Thus, the function of the superstructure was to secure the reproduction of the relations of production and perpetuate the class structure, through the operation of the repressive state apparatus and the ideological state apparatuses.



According to Althusser, for every society to function and survive, it must reproduce the productive forces such as labour, capital and knowledge, in order to be able to continue production. The reproduction of labour as production force was ensured by material conditions such as wages, which guaranteed the basic needs of the labour force. It was "indispensable for raising and educating the children in whom the proletariat reproduces himself as labour power" (Althusser, 1971:131).

In addition to material conditions, it was necessary to have the ideological state apparatuses reproducing the labour force. The educational system was the dominant ideological state apparatus which reproduced the labour force. The labour force had to be reproduced or trained to be competent and prepared to work in the complex production process. As division of labour was the norm of complex production process, labour power had to be "diversely skilled and therefore reproduced as such... according to the requirements of the socio-technical division of labour, its different 'jobs' and 'posts'" (Althusser, 1971:131).

The educational system had become more important in a complex economic production system. The reproduction of the skills of labour power tended "decreasingly to be provided for 'on the spot' (apprenticeship within

production itself), but is achieved more and more outside production: by the capitalist education system"

(Althusser, 1971:132). What schools taught were techniques and culture that were directly useful in production. Accordingly, instructions were given separately, i.e. "one instruction for manual workers, another for technicians, a third for engineers, a final one for higher management, etc" (Althusser, 1971:132). The hierarchical production system needed not only appropriate technique and knowledge but also appropriate attitudes and behaviour. It was important for schools to teach appropriate attitudes and behaviour:

[T]hat should be observed by every man in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination (Althusser, 1971:132).

Obviously, these skills and rules of behaviour that were taught in schools reflected the interests of the ruling class. Here, skills for production were reproduced, and also the social relations of production between the employer and the employee were reproduced, through the inculcation of rules of 'good' behaviour and attitude that were submissive to the established order.

In the words of Althusser, what schools taught was the perpetuation of ruling system by:

[A] reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and expression, so that, they too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class in words (Althusser, 1971:133).

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis: The Political Economy of Education

The ideas on the political economy of education are best exemplified by the works of two American political economists, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis. They argued that ideological forces were insufficient in state functions because the state had to depend on the economic production process as well. The production process not only produced economically, but also reproduced a whole set of social realities. The educational system, in articulating its forms and contents, reproduced the social relations and ideology that were in correspondence to the production process.

Inheriting the material deterministic viewpoint of Orthodox Marxism, Bowles and Gintis showed with empirical arguments that in societies of unequal ownership of production such as the United States, the educational

system was determined by the demands of economic production. In their book Schooling in Capitalist America, Bowles and Gintis stated that the liberal ideals of education for integrative, egalitarian and developmental functions had never been achieved. The failure of progressive education stemmed from the contradictory nature of the liberal educational ideals in a society governed by the institutions of corporate capitalism, which required a rigid stratification system of dominance and subordinancy. Alienated work was the norm of the workplace under the unequal relations of production.

They believed that there was a correspondence between the production relations and the educational system. Schooling could be an integrative mechanism that allocated individuals to economic positions. The main role of educational institutions was to produce an adequate labour force for the hierarchically-controlled and stratified capitalist production system:

[T]he systemic needs for producing reserve armies of skilled labour, legitimating the technocratic-meritocratic perspective, reinforcing the fragmentation of groups of workers into stratified status groups, and accustoming youth to the social relationships of dominance and subordinancy in the economic system (Bowles and Gintis, 1976:56).

Corresponding to these economic demands, developmental needs of individuals were ignored, and the illusion of the educational system as a 'great equalizer' of economic status and opportunity was destroyed. The root of the problem lied not in the educational system itself but in the hierarchical nature of capitalist economy. They said:

Hierarchical division of labour affects inequality not only through wage differentials, but also through the divergent patterns of consciousness and motivation to which it gives rise. These patterns, impose severe limits on the functioning of the educational system (Bowles and Gintis, 1976:96).

The social elites who controlled the production process would seek to perpetuate the social relations of production. Education was powerless to correct economic inequality but it reflected the structure of privilege in society at large. Accordingly, skills and personality traits were important aspects that were trained in schools in preparing future workers for profitable production. Schooling produced many of the technical and cognitive skills for adequate job performance. And through rewarding and penalizing, schools produced personality traits and forms of consciousness which integrated students into the existing social hierarchical forms:

It is clear that the consciousness of workers, beliefs, values, self-concepts, types of solidarity and fragmentation, as well as modes of personal behaviour and development - are integral to the

perpetuation, validation, and smooth operation of economic institutions. The reproduction of the social relations of production depends on the reproduction of consciousness (Bowles and Gintis, 1976:127).

Because the capitalist production process was hierarchical, different positions in the hierarchy required different behaviour patterns. Therefore, lower class jobs required rule-following and docile workers, while higher class jobs required independence and self-direction. Thus, different socialization patterns in schools emerged according to the attending pupils' social class backgrounds:

Lower levels (junior and senior high school) tend to severely limit and channel the activities of students. Somewhat higher up the educational ladder, teacher and community colleges allow for more independent activity and less overall supervision. At the top, the elite four-year colleges emphasize social relationships conformable with the higher levels in the production hierarchy.... Even within a single school, the social relationships of different tracks tend to conform to different behavioural norms (Bowles and Gintis, 1976:132).

The streaming mechanism of schooling was important because it fed students of different levels of education into different levels within the occupational structure. In this way, the social relations of education replicated the hierarchical division of labour. The educational system worked to justify economic inequality and to produce a labour force whose capacities and consciousness

fit the production structure. Through the myth of meritocracy, inequality in educational opportunity was justified and failure was attributed to individual factors.

In arguing that there was a correspondence between the social relations of production and the social relations of education, Bowles and Gintis showed that historical changes in the structure of production had preceded changes of the schooling structure. They further pointed out that the basic underlying contradiction of the capitalist economy was not in the ownership of the production means but in the control of the means of production. They considered that socialist countries, though they had passed from private to social ownership, would replicate the relationships of economic control, dominance and subordination, all of which were characteristics of capitalism. Under these unequal economic conditions, correspondingly, education "can make little contribution to facilitating the egalitarian and humanistic project of progressive educational reform" (Bowles and Gintis, 1981:227).

## SUMMARY

In Chapter II, the literature review has been divided into two parts. The first part reviews the arguments between Marx and Orthodox Marxists over the question of human consciousness or economic base as the determinant factor in social formations. In the second part, I have reviewed the functions of education in relation to political structure and economic demands as expounded by Gramsci, Althusser, Bowles and Gintis respectively.

The review has shown that Marx emphasized the human being's active role in interpreting their environments and in creating social realities. On the other hand, Orthodox Marxists, represented by Engels and Lenin, emphasized the primacy of material production in societal development, and the role of human beings in social formation was secondary and subordinate to the material base.

Since Marx considered that consciousness of individuals played a decisive part in social change, education, therefore, was regarded as important in facilitating the individual's realization of self and social change.— Thus, Marx advocated polytechnic education that combined both study and work for full development of human being. Orthodox Marxists saw economic development



as primary in social transformation. The central role was played by organized political actions, led by the Communist Party as vanguard, rather than by the consciousness of the proletariat masses as Marx proclaimed. Education, to Orthodox Marxists, was focussed on vocationalism so as to enhance economic production and strengthen the material base.

The functions of education in relation to political and economic contexts are illustrated in the second part of the review. Gramsci and Althusser argued that education had never been a neutral social institution but always an agent for the domination of ruling class ideology. They had implied that class struggle was not confined to the economic arena but that it also took place in the ideological arena of education. It is in this context that we can understand why education policies in China had shifted several times in accordance with political struggles.

Bowles and Gintis contended that education was closely linked with the economic structure. The structure and content of education was often formulated in correspondence to the demands of economic productions. Schooling was so structured as to provide students with skills and knowledge of different workplaces. The school system fostered and legitimated, in a very subtle way, the

social and economic relations of the larger society. Given that the workplace was hierarchical in structure, students were channelled into different positions in the hierarchy through the streaming mechanism of the educational system.

The literature reviews of Marx and Orthodox Marxists are important because they highlight the reasons for political struggles, economic debates, and conflicts in education policy between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi in China. Many features of the political ideology of Mao resembled the human-oriented ideas of Marx, whereas the policies of Liu reflected those of Orthodox Marxists.

The reviews on the theories of Gramsci and Althusser have illustrated the 'instrumental' role of education as social institution in accordance with political domination and class struggle. Although China is a communist society, nevertheless the works of Bowles and Gintis are relevant. When the clique emphasizing economic supremacy gained ascendancy in power, as during the period from 1953 to 1957, and from 1959 to 1965, instrumentally, education was tailored to the needs of economic development. It was precisely the kind of correspondence at work that saw education become elitist and meritocratic, which was strongly criticized by Mao.

The subordinate and instrumental aspect of education in relation to political ideals and economic demands is essential in analyzing the Chinese educational system in the past decades.

## CHAPTER III

### MAO ZEDONG AND LIU SHAOQI: CONTENDING POLITICAL, -ECONOMIC, AND EDUCATIONAL IDEOLOGIES

For well over two decades after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi were the two most powerful persons in Chinese politics.

Mao Zedong was the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and supreme leader of the state from 1949 to 1976. During this period, Liu Shaoqi had been the General Secretary of the Central Committee Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Party, first Vice-Chairman, and then Chairman of the Central Government. While Mao had enormous impact on overall government policies, Liu acted as de facto supervisor of the routine administration of domestic affairs.

Although Mao and Liu had a long history of co-operation, their coalition was a 'marriage de convenance', lacking any basis in principle. They held very different interpretations of Marxism, both in theory and practice. Their divergence in beliefs could perhaps best be revealed in the supremacy they put on the relationship between superstructure and base structure,

which had long been a contentious debate between Karl Marx and Orthodox Marxists. This political divergence became the major force of the fluctuating politico-economic policies in China during the period in question. In addition to the political struggles between the two leaders, this divergence precipitated different campaigns and movements in economics and education, and finally culminated in the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Liu was ultimately purged in the Cultural Revolution.

This Chapter intends to examine critically the two Chinese leaders in terms of their ideologies and policies in shaping Chinese politics, economic development, and educational reforms. Brief sketches about the personal background of Mao and Liu, discussing their family history, educational aspirations, and revolutionary experience will be attempted in section 1. Sections 2, 3, and 4, focus on the contending ideologies of Mao and Liu in terms of their political views and ideals of communism, economic policies and strategies, and the functions and characteristics of education in Communist China.

#### MAO AND LIU: THE PERSONS

Mao Zedong (1893-1976)

Mao was born of a well-to-do peasant family, at the village of Shaoshan in Hunan Province, a central province in China. He was brought up in a traditional Chinese family environment where the father exercised almost dictatorial power over the family. Mao showed rebellious character in his early childhood. At the age of thirteen, he organized his mother and brothers into an opposition to challenge his father's authority (Snow, 1938:111-167). He studied the Confucian classics extensively but enjoyed more the romantic literature depicting heroic adventures, especially those about peasant revolutions.

At sixteen, Mao went to the provincial capital of Changsha for his secondary education. During that time, China was experiencing great chaos and transformation, and was frequently humiliated by Western imperial powers. Many of the Chinese intellectuals, especially the youths, who were, ironically, influenced by Western political ideals, had become revolutionaries to save China from Western invasions.

During the 1911 Revolution, Mao joined the revolutionary army. After half a year, he was discharged and entered a school of commerce. One month later, he transferred to a middle school but withdrew from the school after six months. He then spent all his time studying independently in the provincial library. These

six months of 'self education', according to the memoirs of Mao, were extremely influential.

In late 1912, he entered the Hunan Provincial First Normal School, which was a kind of teacher college for primary school teachers. Mao was a diligent student and while there, he read a number of books on politics, especially about Western philosophies and politics. He especially enjoyed discussing current affairs with a study group called 'New People's Study Society' which he helped to establish. The experience he received from this laid down "the ground work of knowledge and scholarship which was good" (Chu, 1980:11). In May 1918, he graduated from the Normal School and became a teacher in Changsha. He taught evening classes organized for workers. The night school was well received by the workers. In the words of Mao, the workers resembled the "wailing of a baby to be fed" in their eagerness to learn (Li, 1977:62).

In 1918, Mao went to Beijing, the capital and cultural centre of China, where he worked as a librarian in Beijing University. It was in the University that Mao developed a special interest in Marxism, which was first introduced as a system of thought by the progenitor of the Chinese Marxism, namely, Li Dazhao. In 1919, Mao returned to Changsha to teach, at the same time, and to help in the organization of revolutionary movements among workers and

peasants. In 1920, he took political leadership of communist movements in Changsha, and was made responsible for organizing political groups of workers of the Hunan Branch of Socialist Corps. At the same time, he established the Cultural Bookstore for propagating Marxism.

In 1921, Mao participated in the First National Congress of the Chinese Marxists in Shanghai, in which the Chinese Communist Party was established on July 1, 1921. Mao returned to Changsha and worked as the secretary of the Chinese Communist Party of Hunan. There, he founded the Self-study University, spreading culture to the common people and diffusing learning throughout society (Li, 1977:171). From 1921 to 1924, Mao worked primarily with workers and students in the cities, and organized many successful night schools for them. The experience he had with workers and peasants during this period was of tremendous influence to his later political theorizing. He once said that "if one wants to be the teacher of the people, one must first be the student of the people,.... if we do not learn the language of the masses, we cannot work well" (Li, 1977:183).

Before 1925, when the Guomindang Party was under Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the 'Three Big Policies' were adopted. These policies referred to the alliance with Soviet



Russia, accepting communists into the Party, and policies of supporting peasants and workers. This was the period when the Chinese Communist Party displayed a united front with the Guomindang Party. At this time, Mao moved to work with peasants in the rural areas and began his lifelong faith and revolutionary relations with the peasants. When Dr. Sun Yat-sen died in 1925 and Chiang Kai-shek came into power, he launched various anti-communist policies and encirclement campaigns against the Chinese communists. Mao and many of the communist leaders were then under the purge of Chiang's government. After the failure of a peasant uprising in Hunan Province, Mao fled to Jiangxi Province and started organizing political and military revolutionary bases. The revolutionary bases were further consolidated in by Mao's political education policies, which trained the illiterate peasants into relatively competent soldiers in terms of combative power, discipline and cultural background (Snow, 1938:231).

Under the massive military encirclement campaigns of the Guomindang, Mao and his revolutionary army were forced to withdraw from the revolutionary bases which were sometimes called 'Jiangxi Soviet Regions.' This was the beginning of the famous Long March of 1934. In the course of the Long March, an important meeting of the Chinese

Communist Party Politburo was held in Zunyi, in which Mao was elected as the undisputed leader of the Chinese Communist Party. The Zunyi Conference thus marked the beginning of Mao's supremacy as the political and military leader of the Chinese Communist Party. By October 1935, the Long March came to an end, and Mao established revolutionary bases in Yanan. During the period in Yanan, the Chinese communist movement expanded at an amazing rate. As Mao claimed, "the Party organization has stepped out of its narrow confines to become a major party of national scope" (Mao, 1967a:285). By 1949, the Chinese Communist Party finally succeeded in wiping out all Guomindang forces in Mainland China. On October 1, 1949, The People's Republic of China was formally founded under the auspices of the Chinese Communist Party. Being the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao was elected as Chairman of the Central People's Government.

One of the most prominent personal characteristics of Mao was his prolific mind with its abundance of ideas. Mao was always conceived as a strenuous revolutionist, an ideological writer, a poet, and an educator. He had been measured by Western intellectuals as a philosopher, a Marxist theorist, a political leader, an economist, a political statesman and innovator (Wilson, 1977). In China, Mao was honoured by millions of his followers as a

great teacher, leader, commander and headman, but Mao himself preferred to be called a 'teacher' (Chu, 1980:400). Many people who had interviewed him testified that he was a good conversationalist and was remarkably well informed. Jack Chen, a journalist, remarked that interviewing Mao "is a hazardous operation as the interviewer often finds himself the interviewee". Mao was also described as having "an insatiable curiosity for knowledge and has no hesitation or false pride when it comes to asking questions" (Chen, 1975:48). Mao was also seen as a "man of decisive action, great energy, and increasing aloofness" (Pye, 1976:23).

The personality of Mao, undeniably, was attributed mainly to his peasant origin and revolutionary experience. The peasant origin could best be revealed in his simplicity offset by shrewdness, earthiness in humour and habits, and a preference for plain speaking and plain living (MacFarquhar, 1974:4). Stuart Schram, in commenting on the personal characteristics of Mao, pointed out that Mao's thought bore the imprint of the historical situation in which he grew up, the intellectual currents he was exposed to, and also of his own very strong personality (1963:3). His peasant family background, his long time revolutionary experience with rural peasants, and the education he received from formal schooling and

self-study all contributed to Mao being one of the most distinctive revolutionaries in modern China.

Liu Shaoqi (1898-1973)

Liu Shaoqi was born in 1898 in Hunan, the same native province of Mao. His father was a primary school teacher from a moderately well off peasant stock. Relatively, very little is known about Liu Shaoqi's early lifehood and family background.

After junior secondary schooling, Liu attended the Hunan First Normal School, from where Mao also graduated. Liu also joined the 'New People's Study Society', which was originally set up by Mao. In 1917, Liu joined the 'work-study' program of the New People's Study Society and was sponsored to have vocational training in Hebei Province, which would prepare him as a work-study student in France. Owing to unknown reasons, Liu was unable to go to France and was sent to study in the Soviet Union instead. Liu reached Moscow in 1921 and studied for about seven months at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East.

In 1922, Liu returned to China and was appointed as the Secretary of the Hunan Labour Union. He therefore began his long revolutionary relations with workers, which

proved Liu Shaoqi to be an outstanding labour organizer. In the same year, Liu helped in organizing "the most notorious strike in the annals of the Chinese labour movement" at the Anyuan Coal Mine, and Beijing-Hankou Railway involving an overwhelming body of 20,000 miners and 1,500 railway workers (Dittmer, 1974:15). In 1925, he was elected one of the vice-chairmen of the All-China General Union.

Following the collapse of the united front between the Guomindang Party and the Chinese Communist Party, and the suppression of the communists and Communist movement in 1927, Liu went underground and continued working in the labour and student movements. In 1928, he was assigned the leader of labour movements in Northern China. In the summer of that year, he was appointed head of the Central Committee of the Labour Department. By 1929, he was named Party Secretary for Manchuria.

During most of the time, Liu worked underground in directing labour unions and student movements. From 1932 to 1935, Liu was called back from Manchuria and appointed the Labour Commissioner in Jiangxi Soviet regions. He became a close comrade to Mao when he supported Mao in his struggle to attain absolute leadership of the Party during the Long March. In 1936, Liu was appointed as the Secretary of the North China Bureau of the Chinese

Communist Party's Central Committee, in charge of the affairs of the Party of Northern China. Gradually, he moved up the Party ladder under the auspices of Mao. In 1937, he was transferred to the Central Planning Bureau and became the Secretary. From 1945 onwards, Liu was the General Secretary of the Party Central Committee and acted as de facto supervisor of the routine administration of domestic affairs. In 1949, he was elected the vice-chairman of the newly established government. In terms of invested power and influence in government administration and policies, Liu was just second to Mao. He was also recognized formally as Mao's successor (Dittmer, 1974:26).

#### MAO AND LIU: DIVERGENT IDEOLOGIES CONCERNING POLITICAL AND SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION OF CHINA

The polemic issue of the supremacy of mind-matter or superstructure-base structure marked the controversial difference between Karl Marx and Orthodox Marxists, for example, Engels and Lenin. This issue was also the watershed in dividing the Chinese political leaders into two cliques, one represented by Mao Zedong and the other by Liu Shaoqi.

As mentioned above, Stuart Schram had pointed out that Mao's thought bore the imprint of the historical situation in which Mao grew up, of the intellectual currents to which he was exposed, his revolutionary experience and also of his own very strong personality. To a great extent, the historical, intellectual, and personal factors also held true for Liu. Mao's revolutionary experience had long been associated with the peasant masses, while that of Liu's was with urban workers and intellectuals. It was understandable why Mao always put peasants and the agricultural sector as the first priority in effecting socialist reconstruction while Liu put greater emphasis on urban workers, intellectuals, technology and industry.

#### Mao: Politics in Command

The remarkable success in the communist movements organized by Mao from the 1920s to 1949 induced him to think of human factors as the primary means and ends of political movements. Material bases, according to Mao, were less important in comparison to human initiatives and efforts. Like Karl Marx, Mao interpreted dialectical materialism with emphasis on the decisive role of the ideological superstructure and human consciousness. In

contrast, Liu was allied with Orthodox Marxian perspective which stated that material forces determined human consciousness. The different interpretations regarding dialectical materialism between Mao and Liu were best exemplified by Mao's notions of 'mass line politics' and 'permanent revolution'.

The concept of 'mass line' is the heart of Mao's political theory, which can be summed up in Mao's own words: 'from the masses, to the masses'. The concept specifies that any policy is good only if the idea of the policy originates from the masses, whose interests are reflected by that policy. The implementation of a policy, if it is for the real good of the masses, must have the wholehearted support of the masses. Mao elaborated his idea of 'mass line' as follows:

In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily 'from the masses, to the masses.' This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas), and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are preserved in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time (Mao, 1967b:119).



Obviously, the 'mass line' concept emphasizes the important role of masses as the means and ends of political policy. The concept also addresses the relations Mao conceived between humans and the nature of knowledge, which will be discussed in more detail in a later section. But it may be worth mentioning Mao's intellectual voluntarism, namely, that he saw human will as the determining factor in social transformations. Mao believed that human nature was changeable. The capacity to change was the will of humans, the will power of vision, persistence, patience, and diligence. He believed that each human individual had the potential for the conquest of the physical environment and social problems. As such, any forms or stages of socialist reconstruction should take human initiatives as the first priority. Mao's conception regarding this was evidenced in his often quoted folk tale about Yu Gong - the foolish old man who removed the mountains. The tale reads as follows:

Two great mountains obstructed the view of the doorway of Yu Gong - the foolish old man. He wanted to clear the view and dig away the slopes. A neighbour ridiculed the old man for expecting that he could dig up an entire mountain. Yu Gong replied: "When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be grandsons and their sons and grandsons and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher, and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?" So Yu Gong went on digging everyday. God was moved by this, and had the mountains carried away.

In concluding the story, Mao stressed that "today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese Communist Party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we, too will touch God's heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people" (Mao, 1967c:272).

This fable conveys Mao's idea of the human will in shaping and changing reality. Mao believed that each person had the ability to change the physical environment and the social world. The emphasis on human will, stresses human consciousness or the supremacy of ideological superstructure in social transformations. This aspect had been deeply explored in the notions of hegemony by Gramsci, and by Althusser in his notion of state ideological apparatuses.

Very often, in the writings or speeches of Mao, we can easily detect his emphases on self-respect, confidence, and above all, self-reliance of human beings. Mao once said:

Of all the things in the world, people are the most precious.... As long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed under the leadership of the Communist Party (Mao, 1967d:454).

On the other hand, according to Orthodox Marxist, there was an 'objective' law of social evolution

determined by the powerful economic base structure. Human consciousness was conditioned by the material base. The voluntary aspect of human being was neglected by Orthodox Marxists. They considered that socialist consciousness had to be imposed on the proletarian mass by a highly centralized and disciplined communist party composed of an elite of revolutionary intellectuals. Mao rejected this interpretation that dehumanized people in terms of their ability and identity. He attributed socialist endeavour to people's own consciousness. To Mao, the proletarian and peasant masses possessed spontaneously revolutionary energies. His faith in peasant masses and human consciousness was based upon his successful revolutionary experience with the peasants, which finally brought forth the establishment of communist China in 1949. It is, therefore, understandable why Mao repeatedly urged the cadres to "merge with the masses, learn from the masses, and to become students of the masses" (Cited in Meisner, 1971:19).

Mao's excessive faith in the masses, especially the peasants, was also accompanied by his attitude toward the structural inequality which he considered deleterious to peasant masses, politically and economically. This led to his distrust of intellectuals and technocrats, his anti-urban and anti-industry bias, and his profoundly

anti-bureaucratic orientation as evidenced in his political, socio-economical and educational policies from 1949 onwards.

When Gramsci and Althusser dealt with Karl Marx's notion of ideological superstructure in social transformation and social reality, they saw class struggle taking place both in base structure and ideological superstructure. The decisive role of ideological superstructure in social formation was further stressed by Mao in his idea of 'permanent revolution'.

Mao's theory of permanent revolution began with the assertion that society was full of an endless series of contradictions. Social changes were possible, in the eyes of Mao, because of the juxtaposition or struggles of these contradictions. The origin of this notion of contradictions can be traced back to the dialectics of Hegel and Marx.

'Permanent revolution', which Mao strongly advocated and was committed to, was one of the most important reasons why the People's Republic of China, from 1949 until Mao's death in 1976, underwent numerous 'revolutions'. According to Mao, 'Permanent revolution' was a social fact, because any changes in the base structure did not necessarily or automatically imply corresponding changes in the superstructure. Even when

the transition from a capitalist to a socialist society was completed and class differences between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' had been completely abolished, "ideological and political struggle among man and man as well as revolution will definitely still continue to exist, and moreover cannot fail to exist" (Schram, 1971:228). By putting forward the notion of 'permanent revolution', Mao stressed the looseness of the link between ideological superstructure and material base; thus highlighting the on-going conflicts in superstructure in socialist societies. In an essay, On Contradiction, Mao stated that:

the universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a twofold meaning. One is that contradiction exists in the process of development of all things and the other is that in the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end.... There is nothing that does not contain contradictions; without contradiction nothing would exist (Mao, 1968a:30-31).

Prior to the socialist stage of societal evolution, Mao saw class conflict existing between peasants and landlords. In capitalist society, class conflicts existed between proletariat and bourgeoisie. Mao stated:

Some naive ideas suggest that contradictions no longer exist in a socialist society. To deny the existence of contradictions is to deny dialectics. Society at all times develops through continual contradictions. Socialist society also develops through contradictions between the productive forces and the relations of production (Cited in Starr, 1971:617).

In extrapolating the struggle between 'proletarian outlook' and 'bourgeois outlook', the ideological aspect, to Mao, constituted the most important criterion of class struggle. Economic considerations were the sole determinant of class, according to Orthodox Marxian theory. But Mao saw political and attitudinal criteria, in addition to the economic ones, as being equally important determinants. Starr (1971) commented on these ideas, saying that Mao had a very broad concept of 'class':

Class is not only an economic concept: more important it is a political concept.... Class struggle manifests itself in different forms - political, economic, and ideological. In the political and ideological fields the struggle is far more acute and fierce than in the economic fields (p.623).

Owing to the broad conception of class, class struggle, to Mao, was not only a matter of controlling the economic base structure, it was also a matter of the struggle in the ideological superstructure. The problem of class struggle in any socialist society was a complex and permanent issue:

The class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the different political forces, and the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and bourgeoisie will continue to be long and tortuous and at times will become very acute. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the

bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of who will win out socialism or capitalism, is still not really settled (Mao, 1968b:115).

Behind Mao's theory of permanent revolution was actually a kind of innovative thought that "development need not necessarily be unidirectional, that history may witness examples of deviations as well as progress"

(Starr, 1971:624). The deviation view was applicable to society at large as well as to individuals. Mao stated:

[U]nder specific conditions, a certain contradiction among the people may be gradually transformed into an antagonistic contradiction when one side of it gradually goes over to the enemy (Cited in Starr, 1971:624).

Specifically, what Mao believed was that a bourgeoisie ideology could appear in a socialist society, one which was antagonistic to the interests of the proletariat. Ideology was decisive in the nature of society. The decisive role of ideology, as Mao contented:

Ideological work and political work are the guarantee that economic and technical work will be carried through, they serve the economic basis. Ideology and politics are the supreme commander, they are the soul. Whenever we are slightly lax in our ideological and political work, our economic and technical work will certainly take a false direction (Schram, 1971:228).

This is precisely the rationale behind Mao's advocacy of an integration of politics with professional efficiency, which is the policy of so-called combining

'redness and expertness'. On one hand, Mao opposed 'empty-headed' politicians who only stressed political theory and did not understand reality; on the other hand, he opposed 'pragmatists' who lacked political practice and had no sense of direction in their works.

The ideological dimensions were so important to Mao that he considered that socialist relations of reproduction combined with economic development did not by themselves assure the realization of a socialist society that served the interests of the proletariat. He saw contradictions still existing in the socialist stage of social transformation. Social development was not solely unidirectional -- there could be deterioration in development both in society and on the individual. In order to perpetuate the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialist relations of economic bases must be accompanied by continuous processes of the transformation of social relations and the transformation of consciousness. Thus, Mao advocated the theory of permanent revolution which aimed not only at eliminating any social and ideological elements that ran counter to the proletarian interest. It also served Mao as "an ideology which continuously stimulates the enthusiasm of the cadres and the masses" (Schram, 1971:238). This had been apparent since 1949, when waves of social campaigns had been launched one after



another to transform the ideological aspects and relations of production in China. The launching of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 saw Mao's theory of permanent revolution implemented in its fullest extent.

### Liu Shao-chi First in Socialist Development

Adhering to Orthodox Marxist viewpoint, a working class leadership over the peasantry in social transformation was indispensable to Liu. Liu had different constituencies in mind regarding 'mass line'. When Mao spoke of masses, he meant peasants whereas Liu referred primarily to industrial workers. The important role of industrial workers in social transformation was made explicit in a speech by Liu in 1944:

Of the one and a half million people in the border areas, the majority are peasants. Only a little more than ten thousand are workers; but their future is the brightest. For several thousand years, the peasants up to this day still remain peasant, almost without change. What about in the future? There will be fewer and fewer peasants. Industrial tendency will be universally applied to agriculture. By then the peasants will be the same as the workers driving tractors and operating a tremendous role and their strength is great. But . . . only the proletariat and industry have the brightest future (Schram, 1971:277).

Mao, on the contrary, always placed the peasants in the first priority. He once recalled the experience he had with the peasants, saying:

I have spent much time in the rural areas with the peasants and was deeply moved by the many things they knew.... Their knowledge was rich. I was no match for them (Cited in Meisner, 1971:20).

In commenting on the workers, Mao considered that their numbers were small, that they were still young in age, and that their cultural standard was low (Dittmer, 1974:180). It had been recorded in that Mao's Selected Works and Selected Military Writings, the word 'peasant' appeared on 287 out of a total of 2,022 pages, while the word 'workers' appeared on only 51 pages (Mehnert, 1969:45).

Mao believed that political policies should be 'from the mass and to the mass'. Mao believed in the spontaneous collective actions of the masses and he deplored bureaucratization. Liu, on the other hand, emphasized party organization with order and discipline as the leading force. Liu believed in the use of disciplinary organizations to lead the masses. He said:

Every party member, whatever his capacities, his activities, and his influence, is mostly one of several hundred thousand Party members, he is merely one element of the contradictory structure which constitutes the Party. He must place himself within the Party in order to lead to urge forward the Party as a whole, and not outside the Party or above the Party in order to lead it.... Comradé

Mao is the leader of the whole Party, but he too, obeys the Party (Cited in Schram, 1972:278).

Mao saw that there were still conflicts in the ideological field even in socialist societies. Also, the danger of capitalist restoration was always there. Permanent revolution was necessary to perpetuate the interest of the proletariat. On this point, Liu's view was of an orthodox material deterministic fashion. He considered that there was a non-existence of class contradictions in socialist society. When the socialist relation of production was achieved, the ideological superstructure would automatically be changed. Liu stated:

Landlords and rich peasants who rise to exploit the peasants are being reformed. They are making a fresh start in life and becoming people who live by their own work. The national bourgeois elements are in the process of being transformed from exploiters into working people (Liu, 1956:16).

Liu contended that after the elimination of capitalists in the urban areas and of landlords and rich peasants in the rural districts, class struggle should be regarded as basically concluded in the economic base structure as well as in the ideological superstructure. Contrary to Mao's idea of permanent revolution, Liu believed that there was no need to carry on class struggle in socialist China when no class conflicts existed. In a

speech delivered in 1957, Liu stated that "class struggle has in the main ended.... From now on, the most important task of the state is to organize social life". In the same speech, he also declared China was now in a "state of the whole people" in which all people "live together in peace, each respecting one another and getting what he wants" (Dittmer, 1974:222).

#### MAO AND LIU: DIVERGENT IDEOLOGIES CONCERNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA

Policies on social construction and economic development of Communist China were closely related to the political ideals as expounded by Marxism and Maoism before Mao's death. Very often, political and economic policies are complementary to each other. With a view of organic relations between economic policies and political values, divergent political and economic ideologies between different leaders may give rise to conflicting views on economic development strategy as well as political struggles. Economic development, as it was the case in China, was the field in which contending political ideology and political struggle between Mao and Liu emerged.

### Mao: Supremacy of Political Aspiration in Economy

According to Mao, political construction was prior to and more important than economic development. In his own words, politics was and should always be the soul of economic production. Economic wants, in whatever circumstances, should complement political aims.

Mao held the firm belief that human power, and especially the political consciousness of humans was the prerequisite of economic development. He strongly believed that "matter can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter" (Chen, 1975:165). Given the condition that the masses could master or achieve correct political consciousness, it could be a mighty force to transform the world.

Mao's conception of economic development was a broad definition of political economy, contrary to the narrower definition of the business of resources allocation. Economic production or development was important not only in terms of the economic growth but also to the consequences of all relevant social relationships. Mao never saw economic development as mere changes confined to the base structure. He always thought of the organic relations in the changes and contradictions of the superstructures. In Mao's eyes, economic

development, as important as it might be in China, was only a part of the grand strategy of social revolution and development. It was in this context that Mao always insisted that ideology and politics were the supreme commander and that ideology and politics were the soul of economic works (Schram, 1971:228).

From the public speeches and other writings of Mao, it is apparent that Mao held a strong faith in moulding China into a new socialist state with a new political structure, economic system, and culture. His ultimate aim in doing was to transform China from a socialist state into a communist one. The major obstacle to this transformation was the transition from collective property to the property of the whole people (Schram, 1977:54). To bring about this transition, Mao saw rapid industrial development as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for building socialism, not to say communism.

The over-emphasis on industrial development of the Soviet Union under Stalin was strongly criticized by Mao. The alternative for Mao was to put sufficient and equal stress on political or superstructural changes. In the course of engineering economic growth in China, Mao was very cautious not to commit what he saw as the failure of the Soviet Union which had a one-sided bias on material incentives and a preoccupation with technology and

expertise. Furthermore, Mao saw that the Soviet Union's economic development model failed to recognize the contradictions between the forces and relations of production; and thus failed to reconcile the social disparities between mental and physical labour, industrial workers and agricultural peasants, and urban and rural regions.

Mao argued that the transformation of society did not simply take place in the economic base structure. Transition to communism involved many revolutions and went through many stages, including technical revolutions and cultural revolutions (Levy, 1975:105). In support of his case, based upon his observations of the socialist movements of many European countries, Mao argued that historically, the transformation of the relations of production preceded the full development of the corresponding production forces. The uni-dimensional development of the economic sector was a limitation in effecting complete and authentic socialist transformation:

The history of all revolution proves that new productive forces need not be fully developed first before backward relations of production can be transformed. Our revolution began with the propagation of Marxism-Leninism. This was to create public opinion to push the revolution ahead. In the course of the revolution, after the backward superstructure had been broken down, it was then possible to wipe out the old relations of production. Once the old relations of production were wiped out, new relations of production were set up. This paved the way for the development of

the productive forces of the new society. At this point we were to organize a technical revolution vigorously so as to develop society's productive forces on a big scale (Cited in Levy, 1975:106).

The importance of superstructure in social transformation was made explicit in Mao's view of the relations of production as a precondition for development of production forces. The transformation of the relations of production; i.e. communization, induced the changing of ideology and the development of socialist consciousness which made possible the psychological readiness of the people for social change, and the exploitation of better knowledge and technology. This economic thought was incorporated with his notion of permanent revolution that one struggle follows another, to arouse the enthusiasm of the cadres and the masses for social change (Schram, 1971:238).

Collectivization of production relations, according to Mao, could yield economic development and precede agricultural mechanization. This was in line with his theoretical beliefs of wave-like economic development policies by mobilizing the masses for structural and ideological changes. The Land Reform Movement started in 1949 was engineered upon this belief. Mutual agriculture production teams were set up. Then came the different stages of setting up 'agricultural producers'



co-operatives', and finally 'communes' in the period of the Great Leap Forward Movement in 1958. The series of structural changes transforming the relations of productions into collectivization were striving to achieve social equity in economic distributions, as well as to release the production force for economic efficacy.

In terms of economic growth, the Great Leap Forward Movement proved to be a failure. In terms of political conscientization and other structural changes, the Great Leap Forward Movement was of considerable importance and had a great impact on future politics of China. The need for ideological changes was carried forward by Mao and led to the launching of the Socialist Education Movement in the early 1960's and finally culminated in the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

Another distinctive feature of Mao's economic thought was his emphasis on the priority of humans and human endeavour over materials as the forces of economic development. Being deeply affected by his own revolutionary experience of guerilla warfare, and the success of the ill-equipped Communist army in defeating the modernized Guomintang army, Mao was strongly convinced of human willpower as the decisive force in socialist construction and transformation. He recognized and admitted the historical backwardness of China in terms of

economic and social development. On the other hand, he valued very much the huge population of China and considered that human resources could compensate for material inadequacy. It was around this context that Mao advanced his theory that it was human, and not material matter, was the most powerful force in economic development. Mao's obsession with human volition was explicit in his own saying:

Of all the things in world, people are the most precious. So long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed under the leadership of the Communist Party (Mao, 1967d:454).

It may be of special importance to examine carefully Mao's meaning of 'people'. When Mao spoke of the 'people', very often he meant to refer particularly to the peasant mass who were culturally and materially deprived. It was the backwardness of the rural mass, according to Mao, which served as an advantage for revolution:

China's 600 million people have two remarkable peculiarities; they are, first of all, poor and secondly blank. That may seem like a bad thing, but it is really a good thing. Poor people want change, want to do things, want revolution. A clean sheet of paper has no blotches, and so the newest and most beautiful words can be written on it, the newest and most beautiful pictures can be painted on it (Cited in Meisner, 1977:213).

Mao built his faith on the will of the rural proletariat mass. He believed that each human individual

had the will and power for the conquest of the physical environment and social problems. Mao said explicitly that the will of change, conquest and endurance, when inculcated of social ideals and values, could master the production technologies by themselves and produce unlimited grain/growth and steel output by which the "world will be shaken" (Cited in Howe & Walker, 1977:196).

Owing to the trust of human will in economic reconstruction, various mass mobility campaigns through mass media such as newspapers, radio broadcasts, wall posters, and also study groups and mass rallies were conducted to stimulate the enthusiasm of the masses in innovating and mastering production technology by themselves, rather than relying on the expertise of technocrats. Mao also emphasized indigenous self-reliance and self-sufficiency in production. The political spirit of the people for production, in a comparative sense, was more important than material incentives. Egalitarian caution which put too much emphases on expertness would lead to unequal class formation made Mao prefer 'redness' to 'expertness' as far as political and economic ideals were concerned.

In macro economic development, Mao favoured and advocated strongly a balanced approach among the three sectors: heavy industry, light industry, and agriculture.

To "drain the pond to catch the fish" was Mao's metaphor for the Soviet Union's economic strategy of developing heavy industry at the expense of light industry and agriculture (Levy, 1975:102). In effect this amounted a suffocation of the resources supply for economic development which resulted from a failure to recognize the sectoral relations of the economy. Mao believed a balanced approach would then eliminate any disparities between industrial and agricultural sectors, urban and rural regions, industrial workers and peasants. In a 1956 document On the Ten Great Relationships Mao stated:

In dealing with the relationships between industry and agriculture, heavy industry and light industry, it must be admitted that heavy industry is the key sector which must be given priority (Mao, 1974:62).

Mao contended, however, that if undue emphasis was put on heavy industry, and the development of light industry was undermined as had been the case in some socialist countries, it would result in inadequate goods on the market, shortage in supply of daily necessities, and unstable currency (Mao, 1974:62). To overcome these consequences, Mao remarked that appropriate adjustment to the proportion of investment between heavy industry, light industry and agriculture must be made. Moreover, considerable increase in the proportion of investment in

light industry and agriculture needed to be appropriated as far as China was concerned (Mao, 1974:63).

In discussing the relationship between coastal industry and industry in the interior, Mao opined that it was necessary to have even distribution of industrial development all over the country. As the coastal regions of China were traditionally better-developed economically than interior provinces, Mao remarked that in future, the greater part of heavy industry should be set up in the interior so that industry might become evenly distributed and rationally sited over the whole country and be in a better position to serve the whole mass (Mao, 1974:66).

Even today the interior regions of China are mostly agrarian. The living standard of the peasantry was lower than that of industrial workers. The intention of Mao in setting up industries in agrarian interior regions was to provide industrial production opportunities for the peasants, who comprised the majority of the population. The balanced development strategy, adhering to Mao's mass line policy, was aimed at reducing the disparity between the peasants and the workers, rural and urban.

The idea of 'mass line' policy, the belief of production relations as pre-condition for development of production force, and his faith in the human will and consciousness in shaping realities induced Mao to

underestimate, and to a certain extent, ignore the importance of material prerequisites in economic development. Mao's idea of 'politics as the soul of economic works' was greatly different to the economic thoughts and practices of Liu Shaoqi.

#### Liu: Technological Rationale in Economy

The economic thoughts of Liu Shaoqi, to a certain extent, were in greater conformity with those of Orthodox Marxists, who saw economic construction as primarily based upon certain 'objective' economic laws. They believed that politics could never be substituted for economic calculations. Liu's heavy emphasis on economic construction, his comparative tolerance of ideological heterodoxy, his low priority on political consciousness as a force in socialist transformation, had constituted the conflicts in ideology and political struggle between him and Mao.

According to Liu, the primary task of socialist construction was to develop the economic base and technology was the key factor in economic development.

Liu stated:

Technical work gives one the brightest future. After the enemy is wiped out and no more fighting is to be done, technical work will become the

central task.... When we build a new China,.... [t]echnical work will then assume the primary importance. The military commanders will go to factories to work at that time. Technology will decide everything (Cited in Dittmer, 1974:205).

Contrary to Mao, Liu was more tolerant of social differences. He saw people were different and had different qualities; some were clever and some were stupid (Dittmer, 1974:191). Under this premise, division of labour in social reality was necessary. Expertise of certain people in economic production was inevitable. Liu elaborated this view:

Production is always in a state of constant development and change and new production are always replacing the old ones. Therefore, in all times and in all departments there are always a minority of pioneer workers who adopt comparatively more advanced production techniques and create comparatively more advanced working norms. Following them more and more workers will come to learn their techniques and reach those working norms until at least, the production level of the few advanced workers become the level of the whole of society (Cited in Dittmer, 1974:190).

The advocacy of division of labour in economic production as necessary and his reliance on the expertise of certain people, led Liu to direct conflicts with Mao's 'mass line' politics. Liu saw technological expertise as a more effective means of production. For administrative efficiency and expertise management, Liu promoted the policy of centralized factories at the provincial level. This brought Liu into conflict with Mao's policy that

factories be decentralized and placed in countries or district level. Liu's rationality of objective economic laws was that the material incentives - not the moral incentive - be the main inducements to production and productivity. Liu advocated an orderly, planned economic development in contradiction to Mao's political consciousness-oriented and wave-like development strategy. Liu was quoted to have said:

In a real technical problem putting politics in command alone will not do. There must be advanced technique (Cited in Dittmer, 1974:270).

Liu opined that under the socialist ownership of the means of production, ideological deviations would not endanger the socialist development and thus could be tolerated. Furthermore, with economic efficiency in mind, Liu saw the politically and economically powerless dissenters as being useful to the socialist cause. In particular, Liu recognized the powerful economic entrepreneurship of the bourgeoisie. In a talk with the Minister of Commerce, Liu further elaborated his idea:

It is also good to have some bourgeoisie in a society. These people are most energetic, and they are capable of crawling through cracks.... They are able to crawl through a crack to make money because they have discovered our shortcomings in planning. Our cracks are thus filled. When they start anything, we should also start the same thing (Cited in Dittmer, 1974:249).



When seeing the bourgeois ways of economic management as a complement to the shortages of the centrally planned economic system modelled on the Soviet Union, Liu favoured reviving the market mechanism as part of the economic structure to use price and profit as index to allocate means of production and to adjust consumer demands. In agricultural policy, Liu did not agree with the overall collectivization of production means and distribution advocated by Mao. Liu allowed for more individual autonomy and initiatives in farming, which could be exemplified by his agricultural policy of "San Zi Yi Bao - Three Selves and One Guarantee" (Chen, 1975:141).

The 'San Zi Yi Bao' policy enabled the enlargement of the area of the private farming plots, extension of the scope of free markets, increase of small free enterprise such as handicraft workshops for their sole responsibility for their own profits or losses, and fixed output quotas of various products based on individual households rather than collective units such as the commune production teams. These measures were primarily aimed at promoting production efficiency rather than equity in allocation of resources as in Mao's idea of farming collectivization. And it was probably due to Liu's general ignoring of political equity in his economic thought and policy that Liu was denounced as a 'capitalist roader' by the Maoists.

MAO AND LIU: DIVERGENT IDEOLOGIES ON  
EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN CHINA

Education is another arena that finds the divergent ideas of Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi crystallized into conflicting policies. While economic policies were the main features that contributed to conflicts in the period of the Great Leap Forward Movement in 1958 and aftermath, educational issues were, among other factors, mainly responsible for the political conflicts in the early 1960s which ultimately led to the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. This section is intended to compare and contrast the divergent educational ideas of Mao and Liu.

Dialectically, education is part of the ideological superstructure which has close relations with the economic base structure. Changes in the base structure would be expressed and manifested by corresponding changes in the superstructure. Simultaneously, changes in the superstructure would affect the base structure. In the chain of relations between ideological superstructure and base structure, education plays an essential role. Neo-Marxians like Gramsci and Althusser had elevated the roles of ideological superstructure in social transformation, and saw education as an indispensable tool

in the course of political perpetuation and domination (Gramsci, 1971, 1976; Althusser, 1971). —

### Mao: Education for Proletarian Socialism

Mao Zedong, being a professionally trained teacher and a devoted Marxist, tended to place education in an important role. Education was an instrument to build new 'communist man' and a new socialist society, through the inculcation of appropriate values, beliefs, norms, and knowledge. Though Mao did not make clear or explicit what kind of values, norms, beliefs, and knowledge were considered as 'appropriate', he did elaborate very much on his notion of 'communist man':

The communist man would fear no hardship, not even death, and would eagerly perform any task assigned (Mao, 1967a:292).

The 'communist man', in Mao's words, possessed very unique characteristics. First, he had the capacity for total self-denial as well as a whole-hearted willingness to overcome natural limitation. Second, the 'communist man' was a moral creature with emancipatory interest and endeavored to do things benefiting the common people. The spirit of selflessness and devotion to common well-being was as follows:

We must learn the spirit of absolute selflessness. With this spirit everyone can be very useful to the people. A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has the spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people (Cited in Chu, 1980:119).

The political nature of education in Maoism extended beyond the need and function of building 'communist man'. More importantly, the ultimate aim of education was to guarantee the possibility of proletariat domination in politics in Communist China. As Mao believed that ideological superstructure was as important, if not more so than the material base structure in social development or transformation, the cultivation of ideological superstructure was a very important task for political struggle. Mao stated:

Anyone wanting to overthrow a political regime must create public opinions and do some preparatory ideological works. This applies to counter-revolutionary as well as to revolutionary classes (Schram, 1974:195).

Owing to the fact that education is so much intertwined with political ideals and economic demands of societies, socialist and others, it is not surprising to find that Mao's concept of education was a very broad one. He often used the term 'culture' and 'education' interchangeably and indiscriminately. Education or culture, according to Mao, was part of the ideological

superstructure and the outgrowth of the economic and political system:

A given culture (culture as an ideological form) is a reflection of the politics and economy of a given society.... This is our fundamental view on the relation of culture to politics and economy.... Hence in the first place a given form of politics and economy determines a given form of culture, and only then does the given form of culture have any influence and effects upon the given forms of politics and all economy (Cited in Chu, 1980:65).

Mao saw education was essential in accomplishing an appropriate ideological outlook and technological competence with which to help socialist construction. With the twin goals of socialist construction and economic development as the national targets since 1949, any educational policy under Mao was planned for the pursuit of these two goals.

Within this context, it is easier to understand the 'red' and 'expert' issue, one of the most important educational policies and reforms during Mao's time. While the economic and social backwardness of China had induced many Chinese leaders to stress the primacy of 'expertness' in the educational system, Mao considered the mastering of both 'redness' and 'expertness' as equally important and complementary to each other.

The equal emphasis on 'redness' and 'expertness' adhered to Mao's idea of 'mass line' policy, and permanent

revolution. It also reflected Mao's idea of the dialectical nature of education in relation to the larger society. In expressing this dialectical nature of education, Mao stated:

Politics and professions form a unity of opposites, in which politics is predominant and primary, and while we must fight against the tendency to ignore politics, it won't do to confine oneself to politics and have no technical or professional knowledge (Mao, 1977:488).

By saying that 'politics and profession form a unity of opposites', Mao implied that professional competence as the sole educational aim would formulate an elite social group divorced from the interests of the proletariat masses. Politically, it contradicted the 'mass line' policy as it would create social disparities among the people. To avoid expertise knowledge being a condition that contributed to social inequality, the solution for Mao was to have 'experts' be united with 'red', and to prevent the educational system from being a social ladder for certain people that did not serve the interest of the mass.

There are multifarious ways to implement and practise both 'redness' and 'expertness' in the education system. One way which was strongly advocated by Mao was to emphasize the indoctrination of political consciousness through the form and content of education. Another way

was to adopt 'mass line' education policy, i.e., all educational provisions were opened to the masses. Through formal and informal education at all levels, it aimed to form a new class of intelligentsia from the ranks of peasants and workers. The aim of 'mass line' education, as Mao stressed from time to time, was to serve the masses:

The source of [our] strength is the masses. If a thing does not represent the people's wish, it is no good. [We] must learn from the masses, formulate our policies, and then educate the masses. Therefore, if we want to be teachers, we have to be pupils to begin with. No teacher begins [his career] as a teacher. Having become a teacher, he should continue to learn from the masses in order to understand how he himself learns (Chen, 1970:22).

From the above paragraph, Mao made quite clear his view about the role of a teacher. To Mao, teacher-student relationship was not that of the conventional kind in which the teacher was the master and the student was the follower. Neither was the teacher the one who took up all teaching and the student merely the one to receive information from the teacher. Rather, teacher and student were always in a dialogical relation in terms of their discovery of knowledge.

It can also be inferred from the above paragraph that Mao held a concept of 'total education'. He did not regard education as something confined within classroom

walls, or practised only for a certain period of a person's life. He believed that any learning activity and working experience could be educational. Society itself was a 'big school' in Mao's eye. As such, villages, cities, farms and factories could be an "educational lab" (Snow, 1938:168).

The 'total education' and 'mass line' policy of Mao can best be highlighted in his ideas on adult education. Adult education for industrial workers and peasants was of equal importance as formal education in Mao's educational thought and policy. Owing to the fact that China is and will still be an agrarian country by the end of the twentieth century, and more important, that peasants constitute the majority of the whole population, it is understandable why Mao stressed educational opportunities for the rural masses. Education for adult peasants was to promote socialist values and beliefs among the people so as to complement the institutional changes of relations of production such as collectivization of agriculture. Also, education for peasants could provide basic literacy for mastering production technology and allow technological innovations by the masses themselves.

To Mao, it was not only the rural masses who needed to be educated. Educated people had to learn from the masses. Sending educated people, especially the young



generation, to the countryside to be educated and re-educated by the rural masses and participate in production was a distinctive element of Mao's educational ideology. The original idea of sending people to be educated by the rural peasants was related to Mao's ideal of solving, through education, economic and social disparity between the urban and rural areas, differences between the physical and mental labour, and the possible gap between peasants and intellectuals. The policy was also a manifestation of Mao's interpretation of Marx's 'polytechnic education', supposed to combine education with production. Moreover, the policy reflected Mao's ideas on the nature of knowledge.

To Mao, any kind or form of knowledge was political and not neutral. Knowledge never existed for the sake of knowledge itself. The ultimate nature of knowledge, if anything, was its practical use, especially in guiding action. In a more explicit way, Mao explained that knowledge was for changing the natural environment, promoting resources for more production, leading the proletarian revolution to destroy the old class society, winning the class struggle, and building a new nation and a new world. Mao believed that knowledge was an instrument for the two social practices of production and class struggle. He contended:

From ancient times down to the present, there have only been two types of knowledge: one type of knowledge is the struggle in production, and the other type is knowledge of the class struggle. Knowledge of the national struggle is also included in these. What knowledge is there aside from this? There is none. Natural science and social science are nothing but the crystallizations of these two types of knowledge. Philosophy is then a generalization and summary of natural science and social science. Aside from these, there is no other type of knowledge (Cited in Chu, 1980:135).

Following Antonio Gramsci, Karl Marx's idea of emancipatory interest in human nature aided or hindered by social practices is revealed in this paragraph. The revolutionary practice of the proletariat also helps to manifest the active function of knowledge. As the proletariat come to understand the essence of capitalism by fighting it, people grow through practice to know their historical tasks and thereby change from being members of a 'class in itself' to members of a 'class for itself'. In this sense, theory is united with practice in transforming social reality through class struggle. Epistemologically speaking, Mao believed that the acquisition of true knowledge presupposed constant interaction between theory and practice, which implied that human development was a result of combining productive labour with education. Mao expressed his concern for the need of combining production with learning in a directive on education in 1958:

All secondary technical schools and schools for technicians should, if possible, experiment in setting up workshops and farms to attain complete or partial self-sufficiency by engaging in production. Students should do part-time study and part-time work. Under favourable conditions, these schools can take on more students but should not at the same time cost the country more money (Chen, 1970:73).

The principle of half study, half work were put into practice in primary, middle and tertiary schools, both in rural and urban regions. Politically speaking, these principles were levied to eliminate differences between manual and mental work. At the economic level, combining education with production prepared students for future production roles and made education self-sufficient and enabled students to attend schools while engaging in economic production. As a result, it would reduce the cost of education and allow more people, especially those rural masses, to benefit from the educational provisions.

#### Liu: Education for Socialist Economic Development

As far as education was concerned, Liu held a completely different set of ideas from that of Mao's. Liu had onced stated the following:

To be only red without being an expert cannot accomplish good work (Cited in Chi, 1969:575).

Liu believed that a constant increase in economic productivity was the only assurance of future improvements in popular welfare of socialist development. It was upon this belief, according to Liu, that technical work gave one the brightest future (Dittmer, 1974:205). He saw scientific-technological innovation as the fundamental and determining force for economic progress. This scientific-technological breakthrough, according to Liu, could not depend on the political enthusiasm or mass mobilizations such as Mao advocated. On the contrary, Liu believed that objective scientific-technological knowledge was the prime motor in economic development, and that the scientific-technological knowledge could only be cultivated through specialized institutions such as research institutes and formal schooling systems.

Mao's attitude to education can be characterized as a holistic approach dominated by political and social considerations. In comparison, Liu seemed to be more tolerant of problems in the superstructure and less concerned with the social problems that conventional educational systems entailed. Liu showed a functional attitude to society and assumed that different social sectors had different demands and contributions. In one way or another, Liu showed tolerance of the independence of the educational system from politics. Students and

intellectuals would be allowed to engage in studies and research independent of any political entanglements. He was quoted to have said that "in a real technical problem putting politics in command alone will not do; there must be advanced technique" (Cited in Dittmer, 1974:270).

Liu considered the fact that the relatively underdeveloped economy of China needed a highly trained technocratic manpower, and advocated schooling system which primarily focussed on enhancing technology level rather than an educational system which stressed that learning be directly combined with political visions. In order to achieve technological aims, according to Liu, schooling must be academic-oriented:

The study of theory is always indoors. This is student's important task and it is not right to call him a schoolman [that divorced from reality],.... those who have learned Marxism-Leninism would show they needed to go through a period of staying inside and reading books (Cited in Dittmer, 1974:276).

Favouring academic meritocracy, Liu did not agree with Mao's educational policy of converting all schools into the half study, half work system instantly. Liu opined that the complete conversion could "be affected in from fifty to one hundred years; this length of time is necessary because the present full-time system is still necessary" (Cited in Dittmer, 1974:272).

Liu's overwhelming concern with the inculcating of scientific and technological personnel made him emphasize the academic aspect of education and neglect the political aspect. Mao, on the other hand, was too concerned with 'mass line' politics and the political implications of education and tended to neglect the academic side of education. These ideological differences between Mao and Liu led to political conflict and struggle. In the days of the Cultural Revolution, Liu's policies on politics, economics, and education were criticized by the Maoists as counter-revolutionary. Liu was propagated as a 'capitalist roader' who cared more for the interest of the bourgeoisie rather than that of the proletariat.

#### SUMMARY

In this Chapter, I have discussed the divergence between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi. In section 1, I tried to compare and contrast the two leaders in terms of their family background, life history, and personality. Edgar Snow, a renowned journalist acquainted with the Chinese Communist leaders, said that Mao was "emotional and of considerable depth of feeling with eyes moistened once or twice when speaking of dead comrades or recalling incidents in his youth" (1938:70-78). Dittmer, on the

other hand, said that Liu was "emotionally withdrawn - a cold fish" (1974:174). According to MacFarquhar, Mao was comparatively "expressive and powerful in words while Liu seems to be somewhat bookish, thoughtful, rather taciturn, but clearly persevering" (1974:5). Liu was extremely industrious and possessed great ability in organizational and administrative works. Zhang Guotao, a one-time Chinese Communist leader who later defected to the Guomindang, had commented about Liu Shaoqi:

In practical work, Liu Shaoqi not only obeyed the decision of superiors and carried them out but also proposed his own ideas in proper ways.... At that time, there were over a dozen young leaders in the Shanghai labour movement working under Liu Shaoqi. They all got along with him very well, and their programs were orderly arranged (Cited in Dittmer, 1974:28).

In terms of the style of leadership, Mao and Liu were very different. Mao was episodic and provocative while Liu's way of leadership was formal and routinized. Liu adhered to organizational procedure and rules, and preferred organizational devices. The differences in personality can somewhat be traced back to their different family backgrounds and life history, which have also been investigated in section 1.

In section 2, I attempted to examine the ideological differences on socialist construction between Mao and Liu. It was the question of the supremacy of

superstructure or base structure that caused the ideological conflicts between Mao and Liu. The differences in interpreting socialist construction could be traced from their revolutionary experiences.

Whereas Mao worked mostly with the rural peasants, Liu remained closely associated with the revolutionary works of the urban labourers and students. Just as most of the Chinese communists who worked with the labours were 'returned students' from the Soviet Union, Liu also had studied in Moscow. He was influenced by the ideas of Orthodox Marxism. Liu believed in economic determinism, and believed that revolutionary works were necessary to have the working class as vanguards in the revolutionary party. Once socialist production relation was achieved, according to Liu, class conflicts would be eliminated. These two main political ideas of Liu were in contradiction to Mao's belief of the decisive role of ideological superstructure, the mass line politics, and the theory of permanent revolution.

Although Liu was a faithful disciple of the communist movement, he exhibited tolerance of ideological difference when compared to Mao's insistence on upholding 'politics as the soul of all works'. Liu's policies were more flexible and task-oriented. He had been quoted as saying that "In guiding the Party's policy, it is



necessary to go to the left for a while, and then to the right for a while, and just as in flying an airplane, this is the only way to reach one's goal" (Cited in Schram, 1972:288-289).

The differences in economic theory and policy between Mao and Liu can best be reflected in the superstructure -- base structure dispute. The controversy was again rooted in Mao's belief of the zeal of the masses who could be mobilized by campaign movements. Liu, on the contrary, had faith in technocracy and social order led by a centralized administration. With a belief in technological rationale, Liu advocated industrial development as the primary task of socialist constructions. He believed in economic efficacy rather than political enthusiasm as upheld by Mao.

In comparing the educational ideologies between Mao and Liu, it is very apparent that the two leaders held conflicting ideas. While the central theme of Mao's educational thought was 'politics in command', Liu placed high priority on the inculcation of scientific and technological knowledge in education. Overwhelmed with political concerns in expanding educational opportunities to the masses, Mao stressed the quantity in education while Liu stressed the quality of education to enhance science and technology. Obviously, as though Mao and Liu

held conflicting ideas about the form and content of education, they both had an instrumental thinking of education. Both Mao and Liu wanted education to serve political or economic ends by different means.

With the comparison and contrast of the ideas between Mao and Liu on political, economic and educational matters, we can better understand the ideological conflicts and political struggles occurred in China during the past decades. In the next chapter, the educational reforms in China from 1949 to 1976 in relation to the different political ideals and economic demands will be discussed.

## CHAPTER IV

### POLITICAL IDEALS AND ECONOMIC DEMANDS AS REFLECTED IN THE EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN CHINA FROM 1949 TO 1976

Human societies are always in a dialectical flux of change and stability. At one point in time, societies evolve around different structural fluctuations. At another point, societies will remain comparatively stable when societal structures are in a stage of equilibrium. Education in any society, be it stable or fluctuating, always has a subordinative and supportive role to societal change. The role is rendered possible primarily through the provisions of specific cognitive and manual skills, as well as ideological values and attitudes that sustain the prevailing economic and social order (Althusser, 1971; Carnoy, 1974). Implicitly or explicitly, changes in education are always a kind of response to changes in the larger structures. The relations between education and societal structures are dialectical and reciprocal in that changes in the former would result subsequent changes in the latter which, in turn, reshapes the former.

The history of China over the last forty years was one of remarkable changes. Political campaigns and mass movements were launched one after another. While some

people may consider these campaigns and movements inevitable for socialist development, some people may regard these social movements political turmoil. Whatever its nature, contemporary China is a society which underwent great changes in its social, political, economic, and cultural life.

Chapter IV is intended to investigate the educational changes of contemporary China with reference to the political, social, and economic structures.

The question of educational reform and its relation to societal development has always been a controversial issue. Educationists put forward different arguments about the relationship according to different theories. There are great arguments concerning education issues even among Marxian disciples. The controversy had been a prominent one in the Chinese Communist Party, especially between the two contending cliques of leaders as represented by Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi. The major ideological split in education between the two leaders, as discussed in Chapter III, centered around the priorities they placed on achieving socialist developments.

The ideological split, though evident before 1949, was submerged under the primary aim of unification within the Chinese Communist Party. After 1949, however, when the Guomindang was dethroned and the Chinese Communist

Party gained control of the country, ideological divergences intensified and evolved into power struggles. The educational system fluctuated and swayed from one extreme to another when political power shifted from one group to the other.

This Chapter will examine the 'what' and 'how' of educational changes of China from 1949 to 1976, with reference to the societal context of change such as political power struggle, economic development strategies and social re-construction policies. In addition to the context of change, emphases will also be placed on the source, extent, and nature of those educational changes.

Chronologically, this Chapter is divided into four sections. Section 1 will be focussed on the education of China before 1949. Section 2 is primarily concerned with the period from 1949 to 1957, which was a period of re-orientation and re-organization from a semi-feudalistic, semi-colonial and capitalist society into a socialist one modelled on the Soviet Union. Section 3 will be an analysis of educational change from 1958 to 1965. During the year 1958, Mao Zedong launched the Great Leap Forward Movement, which was essentially an economic movement based on mass mobilization of human labour and development of rural communes. Upon the failure of the Great Leap Forward Movement, Mao was

criticized and receded from active leadership. Liu Shaoqi came to power and resumed the Stalinist model of economic development and social policies, which annoyed Mao very much. Mao, with the support of some military leaders, initiated the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Top-down reforms were imposed on every social sector and individual. Educational changes were devised at all levels from 1966 to 1976, which will be discussed in Section 4.

#### EDUCATION, ECONOMY, AND THE CHINESE SOCIETY BEFORE 1949

The century before 1949 in China was one of foreign invasions and civil wars. What the Chinese Communist government inherited in 1949 was a nation characterized by backwardness and underdevelopment with a low level of production and per capita income. The situation was one of economic dualism, with both modern and traditional economic forms, which were divided sectorally and regionally, with no appropriate integration and or common goals.

China before 1949 was essentially an agricultural country. Agriculture amounted to 60 per cent of the gross national product, involved over 80 per cent of the total working population; and it had to feed a huge population

of about 538 million (Cheng, 1982:21). 10 per cent of the gross national product was shared by the small light industry and handicrafts sector. The remaining 30 per cent was the industrial and commercial sector, which was primarily concentrated in coastal areas and mostly controlled by foreign capitalists (Kraus, 1982:16-17).

The structural weakness of the Chinese economy was further crippled by institutional factors. In a traditional agricultural society, the problem of land concentration deepened the hardship of the farmers who accounted for 80 per cent of the national population. A study showed that prior to the establish of the Chinese Communist government, only 7 per cent of the farm land was owned by the government. Of the other 93 per cent privately owned land, landlord families, which amounted to about 3 per cent of the farm households, owned approximately 26 per cent of the total cultivated land, while poor peasants, who represented 68 per cent of the farm households, possessed only 22 per cent of the cultivated acreage. The remaining 52 per cent of the land was owned by wealthier peasants, and accounted for 29 per cent of the farm households. Moreover, good quality land was largely owned by the landlords and rich peasants, while that owned by the middle and poor peasants was usually marginal (Cheng, 1982:18).

In addition to primitive traditional farming methods, farms were too small for efficient operations. In the pre- Second World War period, government statistics showed that 33 per cent of the farm covered less than 1.6 acres, 25 per cent had 1.6 to 3.3 acres, and only 8 per cent were larger than 8.4 acres. Compared with an average of 40 acres in Denmark and 155 acres in the United States, there was on the average only 3.7 crop acres per farm household in China (Cheng, 1982:18). High rate of land concentration and low acreage of farm land drove the peasants to rent additional land. With the growing pressure of a rising population, the rental rate of farming land rose to an equivalent of about 40 to 70 per cent of the annual crop, and occasionally the prepayment of half the year's crop as rent was required (Kraus, 1982:17). This perpetuated the vicious circle of poverty and increasing dependency among the rural population, as many peasants were forced to sell their land and join the steadily growing number of tenants.

The small proportion of relatively modernized industry, trade, and banking, could neither contribute to further development in agriculture nor independently lead the economy to expand as the Industrial Revolution did in West in the 18th Century. Industries and other commercial business were exclusively located in the coastal big



cities such as Shanghai and Tianjin. The structure of industry was also biased towards the production of consumer goods, which were intended either for the consumption markets of the big cities or for export. Neither the majority of the rural population nor the economy could benefit by these specialized economic sectors.

This demoralizing situation was compounded by the fact that a decisive proportion of the industrial and commercial sectors of economy in China was directly or indirectly under the control of foreign capitalists. It was estimated that, in the 1930s', foreign enterprises controlled 42 per cent in cotton spinning, 57 per cent in public utilities, 58 per cent in shipbuilding and repair, and 63 per cent in the tobacco industry. In 1933, about half of the industrial workers in Shanghai were employed by foreign firms (Kraus, 1982:17). It is no wonder that China was seen by informed Chinese nationalists as a semi-colony, and Chinese industrial economy was a kind of peripheral economy, in which foreign capital was used to promote industrial developments by utilizing Chinese resources and labour geared to the domestic markets of countries like America, France, Britain, Germany and Japan. It is obvious that the foreign-controlled

industrial sector was to exploit the overall Chinese economy.

The economy was further aggravated by the Sino-Japanese war, 1937 to 1945, and the four years of civil war, 1946 to 1949. The fiscal situation was worsened by the undermining of the Chinese currency during wartime. The Guomindang government's huge military expansion, which had risen to about 70 per cent of total expenditure, with the massive corruption of the government officials, monetary chaos and runaway inflation had, for all practical purposes, ruined the Chinese economy prior to the 1949 Revolution. For example, the extent of inflation in the period from September 1945 to August 1948, starting with an index value of 100 for 1945, had reached an index of 296,784 by 1948. Over the period, wholesale prices increased 1,368,049; the gold price advanced 1,080,784; and the exchange rate for the American dollar advanced 1,207,422. In August 1948, the Guomindang government instituted a currency reform with the 'golden-yuan' as the new base unit convertible at the rate of 3,000,000 to 1. But within eight months, the wholesale price index in Shanghai and Guangzhou had risen from 157.4 and 146.1, respectively, to over five million (Kraus, 1982:20).

## The Problem of Education

Apart from the problem of the impaired and backward economy, wide-spread illiteracy among the huge population was another problem that the new Communist government had to cope with. According to a survey, 85 per cent of the population were illiterate and less than 40 per cent of the school-age children could go to school (Lofstedt, 1980:68). Though students had long been sent abroad to learn advanced technology and other administrative to modernize the country, most of the Westernization efforts were unsuccessful. Despite the various reforms in the school structure and curriculum, the educational system remained elitist. It was Western-oriented and very divorced from the majority of Chinese people and their problems. A mission of experts from the League of Nations commented on the situation in 1931:

Not only are the majority of books studied by students in a foreign tongue, but... the examples employed to illustrate a principle, and the subjects to which the students's thought is directed by their teachers, are, to a great extent, of western origins. A visitor who examined the plan, or of work in history, political science, or economics in some universities in China might be pardoned if he felt uncertain whether it was for western students who were studying China, or for Chinese students who were studying the West. In the natural sciences, the exotic character of much of the teaching was even more noticeable (Cited in Wang, 1966:372).

The many Chinese students who studied abroad, according to Wang (1966), found that what they learnt while abroad was unrelated and largely irrelevant to the Chinese situation. Wang also surveyed groups of students who studied abroad, their subjects of study, and what were jobs taken on their return. During the whole period from 1872 to 1947, engineering was the most popular subject, followed the natural sciences. Ironically, agriculture, which was the dominant economic sector of production as well as urgent issue of the time, was the least popular field, attracting only 4 per cent of students who went to study in the United States between 1905 and 1953. (Wang, 1966:169). The most popular human science subjects were economics, political science and education. On their return to China, however, very few of these students went into employment related to their fields of study. On one hand, there was the waste of talent through misemployment. On the other hand, many intellectuals were isolated or alienated from the masses and paid no attention to pressing national needs. In 1926, a missionary educator commented on the situation:

I don't know of a single graduate of an American college of agriculture who has returned to a strictly rural community and made himself an important factor in the life of that community (Cited in Wang, 1966:170).

As the majority of the new intelligentsia class were from the mercantile class and lived in the big cities, their attachments to the rural mass were remote. This was evidenced in a speech delivered in 1933 to a meeting of Western-educated persons in Shanghai by Pearl Buck, the Nobel prize writer. She made an appeal to "all modern men and women to put aside their comforts and settle in the towns and villages of the interior" (Cited in Wang, 1966:170). In sum, the Chinese education system before 1949 was a chaotic potpourri of elitism and alien interests. It simply could not respond to the dire needs of China.

#### THE PERIOD OF 1949 TO 1957:

##### FROM RE-ORGANIZATION TO STRONG RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

In 1949, for the first time, the Chinese Communist Party was given a free hand to establish a new social order. This new social order, as perceived by Mao Zedong, aspired to remarkable reforms in political structure, economic system, social conditions, and cultural life. In 1940, Mao clearly stated the envisioned new social order in his On New Democracy:

For many years we Communists have struggled for a cultural revolution as well as for a political and economic revolution, and our aim is to build

a new society and a new state for the Chinese nation. That new society and new state will have not only a new politics and a new economy but a new culture. In other words, not only do we want to change a China that is politically oppressed and economically exploited into a China that is politically free and economically prosperous, we also want to change the China which is being kept ignorant and backward under the sway of the old culture into an enlightened and progressive China under the sway of a new culture (Mao, 1967e:340).

According to Mao, the new social order was to be a democratic state led by the proletariat. Economically, it was to be state-controlled and would be capable of achieving advancements both in industry and agriculture (Mao, 1967e:353). To achieve this twin goals of socialist development, in Mao's opinion, it required a culture of socialist value and also a competent technological manpower. It was the task of education to accomplish this new culture.

#### The Need for a New Social Order and the Changes of the Formal Educational System

In 1949, a series of educational reforms were proclaimed. The Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference was adopted (Common Program, 1976:9-11). Education was reformed so as to make it national, scientific and popular. The Common Program

outlined three important educational projects, namely, the raising of the cultural level of the people, the training of personnel for national reconstruction, and the liquidating of the vestige of feudal, comprador and fascist ideology (Common Program, 1976:10). Universal education was proposed. Secondary and higher education were expanded while technical education and political education were emphasized. Spare-time education was instituted and the provision of educational opportunities for cadres was expanded (Common Program, 1976:11).

There were structural changes in the three levels of formal education, which were brought under direct government control. In elementary education, the two level system of four-year junior and two-year senior was abolished. In the eyes of the reformers, that system created unnecessary difficulties for children of the working class to go through a course of elementary schooling (Implementation of New Educational System Promulgated, 1976:30). An integrative five-year elementary schooling system was instituted. Elementary schools admitted children at the age of seven. The government also put effort into setting up kindergartens in cities, to be gradually extended to rural localities.

Secondary education preserved the two levels system: three-year junior and three-year senior.

Vocational middle schools, which included technical schools of industry, agriculture, communications, and transportation, were established. These vocational middle schools offered courses ranging from short term make-up technical training classes to three or four years of study. Many normal schools were built in order to meet the demand for teachers in kindergartens and elementary schools. On the tertiary level, provisions of educational opportunities in universities, polytechnic, and specialized colleges were increased. Research departments in specialized fields were set up in universities and specialized colleges.

#### Informal Educational System and Spare-time Schools

Informal education underwent changes which in some ways, were greater than in formal education. Adult education was organized in two tracks: the short-course schools for workers, cadres, and peasants, and the spare-time schools. The short-course schools were of two types: the elementary and the secondary. It was two to three years duration for elementary and three to four years for secondary. Graduates from these short-course secondary schools could be admitted into higher



institutions should they pass the required examination (Implementation, 1976:31-32).

Spare-time schools were established primarily for combating adult illiteracy. They were organized so as to not interfere the learner's production work. In addition to the literacy lessons, emphases was put on political education and technical training. There were three levels of spare-time education: primary level, secondary level, and post-secondary level. The years of attendance for primary level were not fixed. Graduates from the elementary level could be admitted into the secondary level by passing an examination. Attendance at the secondary level was for three years in the junior program and for four years in the senior program. Graduates from the senior secondary program could then be admitted into higher institutions. Many of the spare-time classes were instituted with the co-operation of factories or other production units. The spare-time educational program for rural peasants was implemented in the slack winter months. Literacy classes, reading circles, and other forms of study groups were organized. Some of the study groups were expanded to winter schools which in turn could be gradually extended to become year-round spare-time schools when there was sufficient response from the masses.

In seeing the tremendous educational reform in this period, it is obvious that most, if not all, were related to the political and economic movements of the time. Spare-time education is illustrative this argument. During the Land Reform from 1949 to 1953, many study classes were set up. In the classes, current affairs were discussed, especially those about the way and the reasons for confiscating land from big landowners and re-distributing the land to poor and tenant peasants. Political education was emphasized to enhance class consciousness and eradicate "feudalistic vestige of the peasants" (Chen, 1981:17).

The educational reforms also showed that for the Chinese leaders, at least, education should never be separated from politics and economics. The prime consideration for increasing the provisions of educational opportunities in formal and informal education, was to eliminate illiteracy which, according to the government, was a big hindrance to social and economic development. It was hoped by the government that, through the educational system, prominent persons from the rank of workers and peasants could be streamed out to serve as either skilled professionals or politically-minded cadres. As such, technological and political studies were given new emphases. In the words of the Party, political

education based on Marxism and Leninism was taught because it was necessary for eradicating feudal, comprador and fascist ideologies (Chen, 1981:10).

) Political indoctrination, as Bowles and Gintis called it, was accepted and justified by the Party. Political education was given primary attention in formal and informal education, from literacy classes to universities. Alongside the popularization of education were a series of other cultural reforms. For example, efforts were made to simplify the Chinese characters. Proposals were also made to adopt a Romanized alphabet for written Chinese. All in all, the changes were instituted to popularize learning among the masses (Chen, 1981:26).

Another important educational policy, which resulted in curriculum change, was the emphasis put on the unification of study and work. In response to the criticism toward traditional Chinese education, Mao strongly urged that the content of education should not be dissociated from reality and lived experience. Any transmission of knowledge must be practical and useful in life, and learning must be made appropriate to the concrete problems of national reconstruction. School curriculum was thus changed with more emphasis on technology and engineering rather than on theoretical sciences or humanities. Statistics (Orleans, 1961:69)

show that in the year of 1952 to 1953, of a higher education institutes enrolled: engineering 34 per cent; science 22 per cent; political science and law 6 per cent; finance and economics 8 per cent; literature and arts 13 per cent.

The parallel development of both formal and informal education reflected the harmony between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi in this period. Mao Zedong, since the Yanan period onwards, had always made explicit his emphasis on informal education as a way to revolutionize and modernize the country. Liu Shaoqi, on the contrary, relied on the formal educational system to produce a highly competent pool of professionals to serve social reconstruction. It would be fair to say that Mao Zedong put emphasis on the 'quantity' of education while Liu Shaoqi paid more attention to the 'quality'. The divergence in educational priorities between Mao and Liu was played down and a consensus in policy was achieved during this period from 1949 to 1957. Remarkable increases in educational enrollment in this period could be charted by the following figures: enrollment in elementary schools increased from 24,391 thousand in 1949 to 64,279 thousand in 1957, secondary school enrollment increased from 1,268 thousand in 1949 to 7,059 thousand in 1957, enrollment in higher education increased from 117

thousand in 1949 to 441 thousand in 1957, enrollment in literacy class rose from 657 thousand to 7,028 thousand in 1957 (Orleans, 1971:368-371).

In the first eight years of the Communist rule, China was facing a fundamental but urgent situation, namely, the rebuilding of a country which had experienced decades of war, internal corruption and external humiliation. Despite the ideological divergences between Mao and Liu, a certain harmony among the Chinese leaders was maintained as they put aside their ideological differences and worked together on the common national aim. Furthermore, many of the policies proclaimed from 1949 to 1957 were new and yet to be tested. The consequences of these policies had yet to invite any appraisal or criticism. The situation at that time, as Mao admitted later, was that the Chinese policy makers "did not understand those things [about socialist construction] and had absolutely no experiences, and all we could do in our ignorance was to import foreign methods" (Schram, 1974:98).

The Adoption of Soviet Union's Development Strategies  
and Educational Changes

After 1953, China began to adopt the Soviet Union's economic development model. The First Five Year Plan modelled on the Stalinist strategy of economic development was declared. There was the popular saying at the time that "Soviet Union is our best teacher and we must learn from it" (Chen, 1981:34). To a great extent, Chinese education was also influenced by the Russian system. Essential characteristics of the Stalinist model of education included narrow specialization, mechanical learning, and political conformity (Castles & Wustenberg, 1979:110). All these characteristics were evident in Chinese education, especially in higher education. Soviet textbooks were used and the Russian language was made the most important second language in schools. It was estimated that about 190 million copies of 12,400 Russian authors were translated and distributed in China between 1950 and 1957 (Orleans, 1961:13).

'Learning from Soviet Union' was adopted as national policy in 1949. The Soviet development path was taken by the Chinese Communist government because there was no other socialist development model hitherto except the Soviet one. Furthermore, the Russian developmental model was a successful one. In 1953, with the completion of state control of the economy and the conclusion of the Korean war, the First Five Year Plan modelling on the

Soviet Union's industry biased strategy was launched with unanimous support from the Chinese Communist leaders. It was estimated that during the period, 48 per cent of China's capital investment was allotted for industry, while only 7.6 per cent of the state capital investment went into agriculture (Cheng, 1982:262). The performance of the heavy-industry biased development strategy was quite impressive, and the capacity of heavy industry expanded rapidly. The output of steel rose from 1.35 million tons in 1952 to 5.35 million tons in 1957. The output of electric power increased from 7.26 billion kilowatt-hours to 19.3 billion. The annual growth rate of the Gross National Product was 7 per cent (Cheng, 1982:263).

Owing to the fact that the First Five Year Plan emphasized the development of heavy industry, technical education and research in other technological sciences were expanded. Corresponding to the demands of industry personnel with a technological background, education policies were manipulated to favour the urban middle schools and higher education. Between 1953 and 1956, an average of 7 per cent of the total national budget was allotted to the regular full-time primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools while only 2 per cent was spent on other mass education provisions (Orleans, 1961:17).

In spite of its considerable success in industrial developments, the First Five Year Plan created differences among the Communist leaders. Mao Zedong, who was convinced of the importance of balanced development and mass line policy over the urban and industry biased development, was increasingly dissatisfied with the Plan. The Plan, according to Mao, gave rise to inequalities between cities and countryside, industry and agriculture. In a series of writings and talks in 1956, Mao began to directly criticize the Sovietization policies. Employing the Stalinist model indiscriminately without considering the Chinese situations, according to Mao, meant "follow blindly" and being "unable to distinguish good from bad". Mao admitted that the Plan signified a kind of dogmatism. It was a big mistake to have adopted Soviet ways of development indiscriminately:

With the result that I could not have eggs or chicken soup for three years because an article appeared in the Soviet Union which said that one should not eat them (Schram, 1974:98).

In counteracting the Stalinist model, Mao proposed a balanced approach to replace the one-sided policy, which was expressed in his speech entitled 'On the Ten Great Relationships' (Schram, 1974:61-83). He called for a balanced approach to rectify the disparities between industry and agriculture, heavy industry and light



industry, development in central areas and rural regions, and other problems created by the Stalinist model.

Regarding the relationship between heavy industry and agriculture, he recognized that heavy industry was the key sector and must be given priority. However, this must not to be done at the expense of the light industry or agriculture.

Because of his conviction that human effort was more important than material conditions in the development of the rural and urban economy, Mao began to reject the Stalinist model on the ground that rapid development in industry would necessarily lead to a sluggish transformation of the agricultural sector. Instead, Mao favoured a policy of communization in agriculture to speed up production. This transformation would, according to Mao, promote social and technological revolution simultaneously. It would also stress that mechanization was only one aspect of the necessary application of modern techniques in Chinese agriculture (Schram, 1973:38).

Mao attacked the slow pace of co-operativization in agricultural production. He organized campaigns to motivate the active zeal of peasants to hasten the process of collectivization. Mao stood firmly on his belief in permanent revolution. Mao believed that it was time for an economic revolution after the political revolution. He

accused those who defended incremental co-operativization of tottering along like a woman with bound feet and constantly complaining : "You are going too fast" (Cited in Selden, 1979:342).

Mao's dissatisfaction with the prevailing economic, political, and social tensions, which derived from the First Five Year Plan, heralded a demand for a transition to a new policy for the construction of socialism. With Mao's strong political power and control of the Party, a new phase of policies and reform movements were launched in 1958.

#### THE PERIOD OF 1958 TO 1965:

##### THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD MOVEMENT AND ITS RETRENCHMENT

The launching of the Great Leap Forward Movement in 1958 marked the first attempt of China, since her establishment in 1949, to deviate from the Soviet Union's development model. The new development strategies of the period from 1958 to 1959, coined by the slogan of 'great leap forward', was the brainchild of Mao Zedong. The rationale of the Great Leap Forward Movement was rooted in Mao's two long time beliefs, one, the supremacy of the will of human being, especially the rural masses; two, his theory of the need of permanent revolution to accomplish

the social transformation. These ideas of Mao were in great contrast with those underlying assumptions of the First Five Year Plan period from 1953 to 1957.

In 1958 when Mao gained control of both the Communist Party and the government council, Mao proposed publicly that the Soviet model of the Stalinist development plan was inadequate to Chinese conditions. The Stalinist approach was urban and industry biased. This imbalanced development approach ignored the development as well as the interests of the rural peasants. Mao rejected the belief of Orthodox Marxism that material forces were the pre-condition for social transformation. Instead, he stated that it was the human that was the decisive factor and could replace technological factors in carrying out social transformation from socialism to communism.

Owing to the fact that China was still an agricultural country, the prime source for achieving the goal of socialist development was, therefore, the rural peasants. The 'poor and blank' peasants, were believed by Mao to be pivotal to the change process because they had boundless creative powers and inexhaustible enthusiasm for socialism. Mao contended that the urban and industry biased development strategy of the former period, if continued, would create and perpetuate social inequality.

and thus became an obstacle to the formation of a classless society.

The Launching of the Indigenous Development Model:

The Great Leap Forward Movement, 1958 to 1959

Mao envisioned that the communization of the social organization could pool the human potential together and release the human power in realizing social change. While it was Mao's firm belief that the economy could not be separated from social and political realities, and that politics was the guarantee for the completion of economic work to serve the proletariat, education should then be changed in both its structure and content in order to serve larger societal needs.

The policies of the Great Leap Forward Movement reflected Mao's belief that there was a holistic as well as a dialectical relationship between revolution and societal development, between politics and education, between base structure and superstructure. Changes in any one pole would inevitably involve changes in the other. The aims of the Great Leap Forward Movement were to achieve both developmental and revolutionary goals of egalitarianism.

Although Mao was very vocal in criticizing the heavy industry biased development strategy of the First Five Year Plan, the development of heavy industry was still regarded by Mao as the key to the successful technical transformation of all other parts of the economy. It was a kind of balance among heavy industry, light industry, and agriculture that Mao maintained to be important. The policy then proposed by Mao was more often referred as 'walking on two legs', which emphasized balanced developments between industry and agriculture, inland and coastal, and by utilizing both modern and traditional technology (Ahn, 1976:26).

The major underlying rationale of the Great Leap Forward Movement strategy could be summarized in a few points. First, it did not reject the development of heavy industry, but assumed that heavy industry could be developed more rapidly by being balanced with other sectors and not at the expense of the development of the agriculture and light industry. Second, while the investment for urban industry was not reduced, Mao saw that the large rural labour population could be raised as capital formation for rural development without diverting the capital from industrial development. Third, because of the fact that China has abundant manpower, the new approach was based upon the assumption that the industrial

sector could continue to use capital-intensive techniques and large scale methods of production while the traditional light industry and agriculture would adopt labour intensive and small scale methods. Using surplus labour power to replace capital in agriculture and light industry, the rural sector could be developed without diverting the investment from the urban industry. Fourth, Mao believed the transformation of the relations of production could also release the production forces, rather than merely depending on technological power.

Based on these beliefs, three mass campaigns were engendered by Mao and his followers to mobilize the zeal of the peasants for rural development. The first campaign was the drive for water conservation, the second was the drive to build rural small scale industries and the third was the establishment of rural communes. These three mass campaigns were implemented simultaneously.

In early 1958, more than 100 million peasants were mobilized to build large scale water conservation projects which were considered the most needed for agricultural capital construction. It is estimated that about 11,000 new irrigation projects were built in 1958 alone, as compared with the previous five-year total of 14,000 (Prybyla, 1970:263). These irrigation projects were built - basically by primitive human labour with limited

mechanization and in round-the-clock activity. Millions of peasants were also organized to reclaim land. Flood control works were also instituted.

The mushrooming of millions of rural small scale industrial plants all over the country was the other important aspect of the new policy. The rural small industrial plants were developed basically relying on local materials and by applying more human labour where equipment was lacking. Propagations were also made to appeal the rural mass to master technology and became capable of technological invention and innovation. With the goal of rectifying the urban biased industrial development of the First Five Year Plan, these projects made industrialization of the countryside seem possible.

The significance of these indigenous industries was that they could supply technological and industrial goods to meet developmental needs of local agriculture. They could also reduce dependence on urban industries. The establishment of rural industries helped train peasants to master basic technology and thus become red and expert at the same time. The result was to be socialist-conscious cultivated labourers who were capable of engaging in scientific and cultural undertakings as well as physical labour.

In responding to the drive to build local industries, hundreds of thousands of small scale industries were built all over the countryside and townships. These industries produced chemical fertilizers, cement, electricity, and agricultural tools, etc. Inspired by the official slogan, 'steel production as the core and achieving a comprehensive leap forward', in 1958, millions of backyard furnaces were established all over the country which engaged the labour of some 60 million people (Cheng, 1982:266).

The magnitude in carrying out the backyard steel production, water conservation, and other rural development projects demanded mass mobilization of manpower, which was soon found to be beyond the capacity and ability of existing local administrative units and agricultural co-operatives to handle. The agricultural co-operatives, which were small in size, meager in items of production, were inadequate to the further development of the production forces. In order to have total mobilization of manpower throughout the country for the simultaneous development and co-ordination of a variety of tasks, a commune system, which had multipurpose units of management, in co-ordinating agricultural, industrial, commercial, political, educational, and military affairs, was thought to be the answer.



On August 29, 1958, the government directive, On the Establishment of the People's Communes in the Rural Areas, advocated agricultural co-operatives be merged into communes. By the end of September 1958, 98.2 per cent of the total number of peasant households had joined the 26,425 rural communes all over the country (Cheng, 1982:99).

The communes were to become the basic unit of the social structure of the country, combining all regional affairs on industry, agriculture, trade, education, military; etc.. At the same time, the communes were to serve as the basic organization of socio-political power. Because certain aspects of control were on the hands of the local commune, the commune system represented a certain decentralization of power. The communization movement was a part of the mass line policy which emphasized the releasing of the spontaneous initiatives of the masses and mobilizing the labour of the people for socialist construction.

Egalitarianism was also to be a central principle of the commune system. Private property was confiscated and transformed into commune property of collective ownership. The system of distribution in communes was to combine wages with supplies of goods and based on each according to his need (Eckstein, 1975:287). Wage

—distinctions between peasants and workers were diminished. The commune system, instituted to mitigate social disparities between urban and rural areas, workers and peasants, mental and manual labour, was envisioned by Mao and his followers, as the 'ladder to communist paradise'.

#### Educational Reforms during the Great Leap Forward Movement

The year of 1958 can be considered as the watershed for Communist China in terms of economic policies and educational reforms. In responding to the needs of the economic strategy of 'walking on two legs', education was reformed with the goal of meeting the need of the new social order. While the harmony among the Chinese leaders was still prevailing, it saw a compromise policy that the traditional academic stream of education was preserved in the cities as one 'leg', and a new school system was set up as the other 'leg' in the countryside..

The educational system before 1958, as Mao saw it, was inadequate because it separated studies from production, which resulted in the disintegration of theory and practice. Furthermore, the academic stream of schooling was elitist in nature. Quality of education was achieved at the expense of the quantity. In other words,

the interests of the proletarian masses were sacrificed to the interests of a few people. Developments were also emphasizing urban formal schooling while neglecting rural education, which, to Mao, meant not merely abusing the ideal of egalitarianism, but also hampering rural development.

In January 1958, Mao issued an educational directive, the Sixty Articles on Work Methods (Chiao-yu Ko-ming, 1968:28). In it, Mao advocated the integration of education with production. A new school system called 'half study, half work' schools was promoted. Production units such as farms or factories were attached to every half study, half work schools.

There were many advantages of this new school system. First, ideal of combining study and work, theory and practice, was realized. Second, the production work carried on by the students would make the school almost self-sufficient in terms of school budget. Consequently, a more decentralized system of school administration, which adhered to the mass line policy, was made possible. Third, half study, half work schools helped the process of popularization and universalization of education. More educational opportunities were thus available to the people. Finally, this model of education was one of the ways to actualize Marx's ideal of education for 'all round

'development' because mental and physical labour were equally emphasized. As such, the disparities between mental and manual labour could be bridged and a classless society could, theoretically, come into being.

In the Sixty Articles, Mao also advocated the equal importance of 'redness' and 'expertness' as the principle of school curriculum development. While 'redness' referred to the cultivation of political orientation favourable to socialist revolution, 'expertness' referred to the development of necessary technological knowledge. Political ideals and economic demands were both clearly manifested in the new educational policy. In combining education with production and achieving self-sufficiency in school budget, it allowed further expansion of education in lieu of public spending on education. The expansion of education to the general public was the main concern as in 1957, there were some 150 to 200 million children of elementary and secondary school age in China, of whom about 71 million were receiving full-time education (Gardner, 1971:243).

#### Compromise in Education Policies

While Mao Zedong was wholeheartedly engaged in the expansion of half study, half work schools, Liu Shaoqi was

proposing another stream of educational reform. Liu maintained that quality education was more needed at that time for China to become a developed socialist state. Half study, half work schools, according to Liu, was a good idea. However, ordinary and formal schools should not engage in developing half study, half work courses while the informal educational system and rural schools could be re-oriented toward the study-work model. Liu Shaoqi, therefore, advocated a two-track system of which full-time schools were in one track and half study, half work schools in the other track (Chiao-yu Ko-ming, 1968:32).

In September 1958, another directive, Concerning the Educational Work, was issued by the State Council and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. It could be seen as a kind of compromise policy between the two groups of leaders. This new directive declared a two-track system of education as the most favourable policy. Education was to form a force of 'red experts', that is, proletarian intelligentsia, for the advancement of the socialist revolution. One directive was a critical evaluation on the pre-1958 educational system, which was seen as failure because of the separation of teaching from productive labour, through alienation from reality, and to

a certain extent, through neglect of politics and disregard for guidance by the Party (Lofstedt, 1980:89).

The new system consisted of three sectors of educational provisions: full-time regular schools; half study, half work schools; and spare-time schools. Specifically, it stated that some of these schools, presumably the full-time schools, had the specific task of raising the quality of education. It reasoned that "any lowering of the standard of achievement in these schools will have a harmful effect on the course of education as a whole" (Lofstedt, 1980:99). Regular full-time schools were to be spared the over-emphasis on political indoctrination. This education directive became controversial by advocating the integration of education with production, and popularization of educational provisions on one hand, and the importance of educational quality on the other.

Despite its controversial and compromise nature, education in this period was actually a balanced system with the co-existence of three sectors comprising both formal and informal educational provisions. Accordingly, each educational sector was endowed with recognition of importance and had developed extensively on its own course.

Regular full-time schools pursuing academic excellence still prevailed. Examination-as-a-mechanism-for-selection, admission, promotion, and graduation, were given an important role. Curriculum of the full-time schools was designed to prepare students for higher education. These full-time schools emphasized the mastery of fundamental and theoretical knowledge basic to advanced study.

Special elementary and secondary schools as well as universities were established with better teachers and facilities to cater to the needs of the so-called gifted and brighter students. This special schools were called 'key point' schools. As the universities and colleges were the crown of the full-time educational system, expansion was nevertheless evidenced when 148,000 new students were admitted in the regular universities and colleges in the autumn of 1958. That was 40,000 students more than in 1957 (Lofstedt, 1980:99).

Informal education also expanded rapidly. Half study, half work schools and spare-time schools were increased to produce tens of millions of both 'red and experts' from the working class. Spare-time education was the major vehicle for adults engaged in full-time production or worked as cadres. These spare-time classes, schools, and institutions were attached to the production

units such as factories, communes, government agencies, and neighbourhood organizations. Most of these spare-time educational classes existed before 1958 but were given more impetus during the Great Leap Forward Movement. There was even the official goal of establishing in communes and factories a complete system of spare-time education from the primary level to the higher level (Chen, 1981:74).

Among the many forms of spare-time educational provisions, anti-illiteracy classes attracted the largest enrollment. There were many reasons for this. First, there because was a push to eliminate illiteracy in Great Leap Forward Movement, which was propagandized by the Communist Party. Second, anti-illiteracy classes were comparatively cheap and easy to handle. Third, anti-illiteracy classes were conducted closely with political campaigns, as it was very useful in mobilizing the masses. It has been reported that about 40 million students were enrolled in anti-illiteracy classes in 1958 as compared to 7 million in 1957 (Orleans, 1961:49). And in 1958 alone, 100 million people were reported to have become literate through attending anti-illiteracy classes (Prybyla, 1970:274). Although the success rate of these literacy classes seemed doubtful, the enthusiasm to eradicate illiteracy was evident.



The guiding principle of spare-time education, as laid down by the government, was 'studying what is needed' and 'studying what goes on in work'. In accordance with that principle, most of the spare-time educational provisions were technology-oriented and adhered to production needs of the organizing factories or communes. The development and expansion of these educational provisions, to a large extent, depended on local initiatives and managements. There was a mushroom-like growth of various types of classes, institutions, and schools for working adults all over the country. In 1958 alone, 26 million students were reported to have enrolled in spare-time primary schools as compared to 6 million in 1957. About 5 million people were enrolled in spare-time secondary school in comparison to 2.7 million in the previous year (Orleans, 1961:49).

The most drastic expansion of spare-time education was the proliferation of spare-time institutions of higher education. It was reported that in 1958, 17,000 spare-time schools and colleges enrolling 1,170,000 students had been set up by factories and 320 run by communes enrolling 22,200,000 students. Spare-time universities jumped from 229 in 1957 to 1,408 in 1958 (Chen, 1981:74).

These spare-time universities were reported to offer a wide range of courses such as agriculture, engineering, economics, medicine, iron and steel technology, metal fabrication, powder metallurgy, and animal husbandary. However, it is worth mentioning that though the titles of the courses offered were impressive, the quality of many of them was questionable. As most of these courses were set up rapidly with limited local resources, plus the fact that the teaching personnel were short of formal trainings, the quality of these spare-time institutions could not be compared to those full-time regular schools. A study by Chen (1981) on the spare-time schools pointed out that in practice intensive political education remained the central facet of the spare-time education (p.73).

Half study, half work schools were usually a kind of part-time education in which students spent their time half in study and half engaging in production. There were many kinds of half study, half work schools. The first kind established in 1958 were agricultural middle schools. The agricultural middle schools were mostly junior middle schools which were run by the rural communities for the purpose of providing education for young people of thirteen to sixteen years of age after their graduation from elementary schools.

Work study allocation varied from school to school depending on the local conditions and production needs. At first, most of these schools were half day study and half day work. Some were arranged on an every other day basis but this was later changed to full day school during the slack season, and full day work in the fields at busy time. During the busy season students carried on their studies on their own in small groups. Besides a general education of the Chinese language, mathematics and political studies, students also received a curriculum of basic agricultural knowledge comprising of farming knowledge, pest control, water conservation, animal husbandry, agricultural machinery and fertilizer application; etc. (Baredsen, 1967:349).

The production work of the agricultural middle schools were basically of two kinds: agricultural and industrial. Each school had its own crop farms, a part of which were experimental plots. Some even had livestock and poultry farms, orchards, tree nurseries or fish ponds, depending on regional conditions. The industrial factories run by the schools were generally small and most of them were made handicrafts, fertilizers and insectides. The production plans of the schools were incorporated into the overall production plans of the communes, and were

helped by the communes in material supply and marketing of production.

These half study, half work schools were ideologically desirable to the Maoist view of combining theory and practice. More important, they helped train a large number of rural youths to serve the communes in a variety of technical and administrative jobs. Furthermore, most of these schools could achieve a certain level of self-sufficiency which could reduce state financial burden while achieving education expansion. It was estimated that the agricultural middle schools cost 13 yuan per student per year to the state in comparison to 187 yuan for the full-time junior middle school (Baredsen, 1967:353). There was a sharp increase in the enrollment of students in junior middle schools, from 4.34 million in 1957 to 7.34 million in 1958, the increase was mostly due to the expansions of the half study, half work schools (Orleans, 1961:35). The low cost of operating half study, half work schools was really a great breakthrough for a poor country like China in expanding educational opportunities for the rural masses.

The half study, half work idea of schooling was also attempted at the higher education level. The most publicized effort being the Jiangxi Communist Labour University, which was established in 1958. It recruited

workers and peasants of high political consciousness and rich labour experience. Age and previous academic qualifications were not emphasized in the admission to the University. This University had more than 100 branches all over the province of Jiangxi. Each branch offered programs closely related to local needs. By 1961, the enrollment exceeded 500,000 and their 120,000 graduates had become "basic level cadres of book-keepers, weather forecasters, technicians, agro-mechanics, and barefoot doctors in their communes and production brigades and teams" (Chen, 1981:72).

This study-work movement also inspired the establishment of factories in schools and schools in factories. In 1958, a total of 490,000 small factories and 400,000 farms were established by the elementary schools in the country, and 7,240 factories, workshops, were established in colleges and universities throughout the country (Chen, 1981:72).

### The Failure of the Great Leap Forward Movement

In spite of its innovative policies and inspiring slogans, the Great Leap Forward Movement proved to be a failure in economic development. It brought China to the verge of serious crises. The failure was mainly due to

the collapse in agricultural production which crippled one 'leg' of Mao's 'walking on two legs' development policy. In the course of the mobilization movement, in which Mao thought that mental zeal could replace capital and technology in realizing economic development, many of the movements were beyond the capability of the masses. For reasons of spiritual well-being, it was a good thing to emphasize the supremacy of the people, especially the rural masses whose thousand-year-old self-fulfilling inferiority image was in due need of change. As Arno Louis Strong had pointed out, the Great Leap Forward Movement "invoked a new type of peasant, conscious of his power to bind nature to his will" (Cited in Prybyla, 1970:270).

But it is precisely the over-emphasis of the human factors and the negligence of objective material conditions that brought the rural development to a state of chaos. For instance, in the campaigns to build local industries, steel production was seen as the core industrial project. Hundreds of thousands of backyard furnaces mushroomed and engaged millions of people. Scrap iron, ore ware, pots and pans, and other household utensils were secured as raw material for steel production. This mass mobilization of labour power had not only distracted the labour from agricultural

production but also destroyed the production equilibrium in the rural sector. The backyard furnaces were able to produce 10 million tons of pig iron that year, of which 4 to 5 million tons were not suitable for steel making (Prybyla, 1970:277).

The same situation happened in large scale labour intensive campaigns of irrigation, which were implemented without adequate scientific research or technical backup. As a consequence, the new irrigation systems were either useless in agricultural production or raised the underground water level and turned much good soil into alkaline or swampy soil (Prybyla, 1970:265). Another adverse effect of this mass mobilization movement was that the collectivization of commune lowered, if not destroyed, the initiatives of individual farmers in production.

The total relentless and total exploitation of all human and ecological resources by the Great Leap Forward Movement was also, tragically, accompanied by natural calamities which resulted in further reduction in agricultural crops. It was reported that the 1958 output of grain was 175.4 million tons, a decline of 9.6 million tons from the 1957 level; 1959 crops decreased to 30.6 million tons from the 1957 level; and by 1960, it dropped to 55 million tons below 1957 (Prybyla, 1970:295).

Reductions resulted in other industrial crops such as cotton growing. The reduction in the output of industrial crops, grains and subsidiary products was so serious that it affected production in both light and heavy industries, commodity supplies, and most of all, people's livelihood.

Food shortages which began in 1958 became more serious in 1960. Per capita food supply dropped from 203 kilograms in 1957 to only 163.5 kilograms in 1960 (Cheng, 1982:267). Malnutrition became widespread and disease rampant in many parts of the country in the winter of 1960 to 1961. Chinese demographic records showed that the number of deaths in 1957, the year before the Great Leap Forward, was 7.5 million. In 1960, the number of deaths suddenly jumped to 17.8 million (Cheng, 1982:268). The 10 million increase in mortality was probably due to the widespread famine caused by the agricultural failure in 1959 and 1960. The Great Leap Forward Movement, rather than moving forward, brought the economy to the brink of collapse.

The economic difficulties caused by the Great Leap Forward Movement led to increasing opposition to Mao Zedong. In 1959, Liu Shaoqi replaced Mao as the President of the People's Republic of China while Mao still retained the position as the Chairman of the Chinese Communist



Party. Mao was criticized strongly in the Lushan Conference in July 1959. Reluctantly, he admitted personal responsibility for the failure of the Great Leap Forward Movement.

The Retrenchment after the Great Leap Forward Movement:  
The Beginning of Conflicts, 1960 to 1965

After the Lushan Conference 1959, Mao stepped down from active leadership. Liu Shaoqi resorted to a stabilization policy which replaced the ambitious policy of the Great Leap Forward Movement. With a view to respecting the supremacy of economic laws rather than the subjective enthusiasm of the masses, the mass mobilization development strategy was called off. The communes lost their tasks to production brigades as the basic units of ownership and production. Private plots were redistributed to individual households. Private cultivation was once again allowed and farm markets were reopened. Production was now being encouraged by material incentives rather than by political motivations.

The new strategy in 1960 was a departure both from the industry biased growth of the First Five Year Plan (1953-1957) and from the labour intensive strategy of the Great Leap Forward Movement (1958-1959). The new policy

gave equal importance to both agriculture and industry developments. Recognizing agriculture as the foundation and industry as the leading factor in economic development, the rate of industrial growth would now be determined by and co-ordinated with the amount of marketable grains and industrial raw materials made available by agriculture. Investment was diverted to industries which could aid the growth of agriculture. It was aimed to have both agriculture and industry develop simultaneously. As a result of this economic policies, agricultural output began a slow steady recovery. In 1964, grain output regained the 1957 level, and by 1965, most of China's industrial output had attained the level of 1958 and 1959 (Cheng, 1982:270).

#### The Educational Reforms from 1960 to 1965

Mao's idea of popular education was called off. The policy of training better experts and scientific and technical personnel to meet developmental needs now received top priority. Educational policy after the Great Leap Forward Movement was re-directed to raising educational standards. This emphasis on educational quality was a kind of remedial measure to correct the deterioration of educational quality due to the excessive

productive labour and political activities since 1958. The need to build up a pool of scientific and technical manpower became particularly urgent when the Soviet Union withdrew 1,390 Soviet experts and technical aids in various fields from China in 1960 (Lofstedt, 1980:105).

The need to raise educational quality was stressed in a speech made by the Minister of Education Yang Xiufeng in 1960. Yang emphasized the importance of raising educational standards by advocating serious academic study to update curriculum in mathematics, physics, chemistry, and other subjects to "incorporate the contributions of contemporary science and technology" (Cited in Chen, 1981:78). While slightly maintaining the importance of participation in productive labour and political activities by students, Yang stressed that it was absolutely necessary and possible to raise significantly the standards of various courses in middle and elementary schools.

Another speech in 1961 by a supporter of Liu Shaoqi, the Foreign Minister Chen Yi, further clarified the new educational policy initiated by the government. Explicitly refuting Mao's idea of the primacy of politics in education, Chen stated it was more important to pay attention to the training of specialists in industry, agriculture, science, art, and culture and other fields

needed in socialist construction. Redness and expertness were one and the same thing, according to Chen, and it was the "political duty of the student to learn his specialized subject, and it was the political duty of the school to bring up a large number of experts" (Cited in Chen, 1981:79). Lu Dingyi, another supporter of Liu, had also spoken explicitly on the new educational policy that "we should foster full-time middle schools and primary schools, then like building a pagoda, apply the system, step by step to higher education so as to turn out various experts" (Cited in Lofstedt, 1980:110).

A series of concrete educational proposals and directives were issued by the Central Government in 1961, 1962, and 1963 respectively to raise the quality of education. Among the many directives, the role of teachers was emphasized, classroom instruction was stressed, political studies and productive activities in education were downplayed (Lofstedt, 1980:109-111).

In the 1963 directive, Temporary Work Regulations for Full-time Middle and Primary Schools, three aspects were highlighted as basic components of school curriculum. The three basic components were: a core of fundamental theoretical knowledge; an emphasis on classroom teaching and book learning rather than learning through practice; the emphasis on individual excellence

rather than mass policy of collective achievement. Specifically, it stressed the importance of examinations and tests as ways to "understand the state of the students' studies, to spur students to review their lessons, and to consolidate the knowledge acquired from study. At the same time, the examinations facilitated the work of investigating and improving teaching" (Shirk, 1973:532). The new policy could be summed up as 'intellectual first' and 'examinations in command'. Clearly, Mao's ideas of political education and combining study with production were ignored.

With the overall concern to produce better technological and scientific personnel to meet developmental needs, educational development in the period beginning in 1960 was characterized by a great expansion in full-time regular school provision. The increases were mainly at the secondary and higher education levels. It had been reported that the enrollment in middle schools increased 16.57 per cent in 1960 in comparison to enrollment in 1959. In the same period enrollment in higher education in 1960 was 17.9 per cent higher than the previous year (Prybyla, 1970:449). In the ensuing two years 1961 and 1962, however, the rates of enrollment declined. Owing to the concern over consolidating and upgrading the educational provisions to raise the quality.

In the elementary education level, enrollment had been decreasing steadily after 1960. The level of enrollment in 1963 was only about 81 per cent of the total enrollment in 1959. The considerable neglect of elementary education was probably due to the great efforts supporting developments in secondary and higher education. While elementary education had always been the most accessible to the masses, the decrease in elementary provisions reflected the policymakers' primary concern with providing better technological experts rather than education for the masses.

The shift to establish educational quality was best illustrated by the efforts to re-establish special 'key point' full-time schools. Responding to Liu Shaoqi's proposal to develop certain full-time schools to function like a pagoda to enable the students to gradually enroll themselves in higher institutions as well as to train experts, provincial and municipal authorities were instructed to select some well-established schools which were to receive a disproportionately large share of public resources and better staffings and to select some academically outstanding students.

The half study, half work schools, especially the agricultural middle schools which were viewed as the main track of the school system, and were highly praised and

widely publicized in the Great Leap Forward Movement were gradually reduced after 1960. With the overall concern of quality of education, enrollment in agricultural middle school was reported to have declined drastically from 2.3 million students to 260,000 in 1962 (Gardner, 1971:246).

Spare-time education was increased during this period, but the expansion occurred mainly in the main industrial cities such as Shanghai, Tianjin, and Shengyang (Kwong, 1979:124). In February 1960, enrollment of workers in spare-time schools was 19 million, at the end of that year, the number rose to 25 million (Price, 1970:197). In addition to wiping out of illiteracy, the training of technological manpower for industrial development was the prime goal of spare-time education during this period.

#### The Conflicts Emerged: Mao Criticized the New Policy

As a strong follower of the egalitarian ideals of socialism, Mao believed that the social policies after 1960 were increasingly deviating from the socialist road. The major disagreement between Mao and Liu remained their different conceptions of the relationship between base structure and superstructure. The reforms under Liu, according to Mao, were revisionist and conflicted the

interests of the masses as it allowed 'bourgeoisie thinking' revived in the superstructure.

While stressing the importance of ideological apparatus in perpetuating political power, Mao wanted to transform and consolidate the superstructure, especially through education, to correspondent to the socialist economic base in order to facilitate socialist development: While the old ideas, culture, customs, and habits of the bourgeois were overwhelming in the ideological apparatus, to Mao, the exploiting class was due to stage a come back politically.

Education, which was concerned with the inculcation of ideology, was the focal point of Mao's critique of Liu Shaoqi in the early 1960s. To Mao, educational policies after the Great Leap Forward Movement were geared to the vested interests of the few rather than promoting a proletarian outlook. Education for a few, which emphasized quality, tended to ignore egalitarian goals of socialism.

On several occasions, Mao openly expressed his grievances over the educational policies of Liu Shaoqi. At the Spring Festival round table conference convened by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1964, Mao criticized:

The line and orientation in education are correct, but the methods are wrong and must be changed....



The period of schooling should be shortened.... The syllabus should be chopped in half (Schram, 1974:201). Our present method of conducting examinations is a method for dealing with the enemy, not a method for dealing with the people. It is a method of surprise attack, asking oblique or strange questions (Schram, 1974:207).

In that talk, Mao named some successful emperors in Chinese history who were good emperors in one way or another but were either illiterate or only knew a few characters. Some highly educated rulers, on the contrary, ruined the country. By giving those historic examples, Mao hoped to illustrate to the Party members that educational elitism stressing quality was not definitely good. Rather, "to read too many books might be harmful" (Schram, 1974:204).

In a conversation with a Nepalese delegation of educationalists, Mao further argued that the Chinese education system was dissatisfactory in many ways; for instances, the school years were too long, courses were too many, and method of teaching were uninnovative. The method of examination was "to treat candidates as enemies and ambush them". Education was separated and alienated from practical realities, as students learned "textbooks and concepts which remained merely textbooks and concepts; they know nothing else" (Chen, 1970:21-22).

In another talk entitled Questions of Philosophy, August 1964, Mao further criticized the academic biased educational system, especially higher education. He said:

The way they go about it in the universities at present is no good, going from book to book, from concept to concept. How can philosophy come from books? The foundation (of philosophy) is social science, class foundation.... University students should start going down this winter. If they go to the countryside for five months, or to the factories for five months, they will acquire some perceptual knowledge.... To get some experience of class struggle - that's what I call university. Only in this way can they learn something, learn about revolution (Schram, 1974:213-215).

The talk with his nephew Mao Yuanxin in the summer of 1964, also demonstrated Mao's philosophy of education and his opposition toward the prevailing educational system. Mao told his nephew that if one only burrowed into a pile of books, "the more one studies, the less knowledge one will have" (Schram, 1974:246). Mao emphasized that class struggle was the most important subject in school and it should be a compulsory subject.

In these speeches and talks, Mao expressed his great dissatisfaction with the educational system under Liu's administration. He attacked the elitist educational policies on the ground that they ignored the need for revolution and that the majority of the proletarian class were not well served by the educational system.

In spite of Mao's vocal criticism of Liu Shaoqi's policies, Mao met more opposition than support (Chen,

1981:89]. Realizing that his political influences had been curtailed since the failure of the Great Leap Forward Movement, and that there were many leaders did not share his political views, Mao concluded that the only way to have his political ideas prevail was to resort to political struggle to remove those 'capitalist roaders', and change the structure of the power hierarchy. With the support of the People's Liberation Army which was controlled by his protege Lin Biao, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966. The nationwide mobilization of students to form a Red Guard to purge diviationists at all levels of the bureaucratic establishment, to give way for cultural changes, was Mao's clarion call.

#### THE PERIOD OF 1966 TO 1976:

##### THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND DRASTIC TRANSFORMATIONS

The period of the Cultural Revolution was an era of drastic transformations. The Cultural Revolution was a nationwide movement which involved the whole population, and encompassed reforms in politics, economic, social and cultural affairs. One of the most popular slogan of the Cultural Revolution, 'destruction before construction', indicates the nature, extent and means of conducting of the social movements during this period.

The political purge during the Cultural Revolution was unprecedented in Chinese history. At the outbreak of the Revolution, Liu Shaoqi along with many important leaders, were criticized and dismissed. Thousands of officials were purged, from the State Chairman down to district cadres who were viewed to be in opposition to Mao's policy line. The old power hierarchy was totally torn down. It was estimated that 68 per cent of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee members were purged and removed. Of the 29 first secretaries of provincial Party Committees, 25 were purged (Cheng, 1982:43).

Mao Zedong's thought and policy guidelines became the primary and dominating ideology in all aspects of life in China. Politically speaking, the collective leadership style which existed before 1966 was replaced by the paternalistic style of Mao. Mao's personality was expanded to the extent that he was enshrined as the 'great helmsman' with his thought seen as invincible.

A series of political, economic, social, educational and cultural reforms were propagated. The strategy of simultaneous development of industry and agriculture from the Great Leap Forward Movement was resumed. The principle differences between the Great Leap Forward Movement and the Cultural Revolution period was

that the large scale mobilization of labour in the Great Leap Forward Movement was replaced by fanatical, ideological based mass cult; and economic production was carried out in more schematic and sequential ways.

Once again, the development of the rural sectors received primary concern. Commune system stressing collective production and distribution was revived. Private plots and free markets were abolished. Small scale industries utilizing domestic technology were promoted to achieve regional self-sufficiency and independence from urban industries. In 1969, Mao Zedong decreed that "each locality should endeavour to build up an independent industrial system. When conditions permitted, co-ordination zones and then provinces should establish their own relatively independent and varied industrial system" (Cheng, 1982:271). By 1970, more than 90 per cent of the rural areas had erected networks of small plants that could produce products to supply local agricultural needs. It was reported that in 1973, 1,400 small chemical fertilizer plants produced more than 50 per cent of China's chemical fertilizers, and some 2,400 small plants turned out 50 per cent of the total cement output (Cheng, 1982:271).

## The Proletarian Control of Education

Mao knew the importance of ideology in political control. Thus he wanted the education system to inculcate socialist outlooks in order to perpetuate proletarian rule. According to Mao, the existing educational system was controlled by the 'capitalist roaders' and served bourgeois interests. In order to have the educational system to serve proletarian interests, it was necessary to purge the people in the establishment and destroy the existing power hierarchy. Accused as 'bourgeoisie', 'capitalist roaders' and 'rightists', the Minister of Education along with many university presidents were attacked and dismissed by the revolutionary Red Guards. Many professors and teachers were attacked physically and mentally for carrying out 'bourgeois education'. The Red Guard students were encouraged by Mao to destroy the hierarchical establishment, to eradicate bourgeois and feudalistic vestiges. In order to carry out the Cultural Revolution nationwide, the Red Guard students were provided with free food, accommodation and transportation.

In June 1966, all classes from senior middle upwards were suspended nationwide by Party orders to let students 'carry out the Cultural Revolution'. Students were encouraged to participate in class struggle against

political leaders, school administrators, intellectuals, and their teachers. The whole educational system was paralyzed by the resulting turmoil. Schools only recovered gradually and marginally between 1967 and 1969. Some universities resumed enrollment in 1970; others reopened only in 1972. The political struggle and so-called cultural reform had totally torn down the previous educational system, and the new system was reinstated with no specific goals or plans. But the political aims were always there: to "smash the old revisionist educational system, exactly implement Chairman Mao's educational line, establish a brand new educational system of the proletariat" (Chen, 1981:93).

The educational directives Mao issued in 1968 became policy guidelines for educational reform. The directive issued in August 1968 was especially important:

In carrying out the proletarian revolution in education, it is essential to have working class leadership; it is essential for the masses of workers to take part and, in co-operation with liberation army fighters, bring about a revolutionary 'three-in-one' combination, together with the activists among the students, teachers, and workers in the schools who are determined to carry the proletarian revolution in education through to the end. The workers' propaganda teams should stay permanently in the schools and take part in fulfilling all the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation in the schools, and they will always lead the schools. In the countryside, the schools should be managed by the poor and lower-middle peasants - the most reliable ally of the working class (Mao, 1968c:1).

As the directive suggests, Mao considered that control of the ideological apparatus, namely, education, was decisive in political power. This idea had been earlier expounded by Gramsci and Althusser. The leadership of workers and peasants in schools was designed to replace the domination of intellectuals and professionals who were either 'bourgeois' or 'counter-revolutionary'. The exclusion of intellectuals and the replacement with proletarians in school leadership was to guarantee that education would serve the interests of the working class. With the control of the ideological superstructure by the proletariat, the perpetuation of proletarian power could therefore be secured.

The instituting of Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Teams in schools was an important mechanism through which the proletariat gained control of the educational system. All school administration was manned by workers in the cities and peasants in the countryside. This working class representation in the schools, which was called the Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Team, helped disseminate the thought of Mao.

Also, in each school, there was a 'revolutionary committee' formed and chaired by workers, peasants and Party representatives. These revolutionary committees were to replace the school principals in taking up



responsibilities for the day to day administration of schools (Pepper, 1978:855). Whether rural or urban, schools were taken over by the local production units such as communes or factories and administered by peasants or workers.

The integration of schools with communes and factories had significant implications for educational reconstruction, according to Mao. Financially, it could reduce the state's burden because the production units were made responsible for the expenditures of the schools. The production units would then try to link production activities with schooling activities. Ideologically, the combination of school management with production agencies provided the right conditions to carry out Mao's ideas of integrating study with production. The representation of the working class in the student population and in the school administration was to further destroy the tradition of intellectual domination.

After the so-called intellectual domination was destroyed, the control of the educational system was seized by the proletariat working class. Tremendous changes were administered in the content and structure of education at all levels. The goal was to eliminate the 'three major differences', namely, the differences between

urban and rural, workers and peasants, mental and manual labour.

### The Revolutions in Education

The universalization of primary education was an important aspect of educational reform during this period. The universalization of primary education was accomplished by a policy of decentralization, which meant that local production units were allowed to control and expand the schools. The efforts to universalize primary education during the Cultural Revolution achieved such amazing results that in 1976, about 150 million students were enrolled. That was approximately 94 per cent of the age group (Lofstedt, 1980:140).

The length of the primary school program was shortened from the previous six years to five years, and the number of courses offered was reduced accordingly. The contents of the curriculum were re-organized with emphasis on four areas of study: language and mathematics; military and physical training; production work in industry and agriculture; and politics. Articles, sayings, talks, and speeches by Mao were compiled into The 'Little Red Book' cited in virtually every school subject. Maoism became the most essential component in the school

syllabus of the primary, secondary, and higher education levels. Political indoctrination such as 'serving the people', 'obedience to Chairman Mao and the Communist Party' were the general and constant themes in the curriculum.

A few examples of the school curriculum would give us more vivid idea on how political indoctrination through education took place. A elementary language textbook started with Mao's saying: "You should concern yourselves with affairs of state and carry through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to the end" (Castles and Wustenberg, 1979:126). Even in mathematics, the most traditional curriculum in terms of logic and knowledge, were laced with political indoctrination. An arithmetic problem from a primary school textbook reads:

Chairman Mao is the 'red sun' in our heart; it is most fortunate to be able to see Chairman Mao. In 1968 on the national birthday, there were 150 representatives of capital workers, liberation army, Maoist propaganda teams, and the poor, lower-middle class peasants, to visit Chairman Mao; there were also 67 representatives of Red Guards and the revolutionary public. How many representatives in total were there to visit Chairman Mao (Hu and Seifman, 1976:196)?

Political education was further strengthened by the organization of 'little red soldiers' from grade two onwards. Around 50 to 90 per cent of elementary school

children became little red soldiers (Castles and Wustenberg, 1979:126).

To promote the integration of study with labour, practical learning and manual labour were emphasized. While manual labour was carried out in lower elementary classes, students of senior elementary schools were required to carry out production labour in the school workshops, factories, or farms associated with their schools. They were required to spend a week of each term working in the factory and one week on a farm. Although the time for production labour varied considerably from school to school and depended on the local situation, it was made as a compulsory subject in all schools.

Popularization of secondary education was also promoted during the Cultural Revolution. Expansion was made possible by reducing the length of schooling in order to accommodate more students and reduce operating costs. Schooling was shortened from the previous six years middle schools to three years junior and two years senior. After ten years of expansion, enrollment in secondary education had reached close to 60 million in 1976, a figure almost four times that of 1966 (Lofstedt, 1980:140).

Secondary schools were re-organized in both their structure and curriculum content. Subjects were reduced and the content of curriculum were restructured. One

example of the educational reforms in a Guangzhou middle school was quoted in an American newspaper in 1969:

Here more than a quarter of the formal curriculum is dedicated specifically to studying the thoughts of Chairman Mao, and the political contents of the school's total program is much higher.... The new curriculum as outlined by Mrs. Chen, a Chinese language teacher and head of the teachers group, was as follows: politics (the thought of Mao), eight periods a week; mathematics, six periods; physics and chemistry, two; Chinese, five; English, two; history and geography, one; military training, two; agricultural knowledge, two; and revolutionary literature and arts, one.... This is not all. The school week is six days long and there are seven 45-minute periods daily. Time not spent on the formal curriculum is given over to further study of revolutionary literature and arts, criticism, and repudiation of the 'revisionist education line'.... (New York Times, December 2, 1969:15).

The degree and extent of political education during the Cultural Revolution is well evidenced in that report. In another report about the curriculum of a secondary school in Guangzhou, it was observed that 58 per cent of the lessons were devoted to Mao thought study and class struggle; 21 per cent to learning from the workers, peasants and soldiers; and the final 21 per cent to basic subjects (Chen, 1981:144). Although the curriculum varied from region to region, the emphasis on political education and the general negation of academic learning was a nationwide policy. Grades and academic excellence, which were viewed as 'bourgeois educational lines' were generally de-emphasized by teachers and students.

Production activities played an even larger role in middle schools than in primary schools. Many schools operated their own campus farms and workshops. Pupils were required to participate in regular production work as part of their school requirements. Workers and peasants were invited to give lectures on political issues and supervise production work. In urban middle schools, it was reported that students were required to spend one month of production labour in factories and another month in rural communes (Castles and Wustenberg, 1979:429). In addition to the participation of labour arranged by the schools, students from the rural middle schools were also required to participate in production in their own communes or production brigades. Production work was viewed as not only improving production and technical skills but also furthering political education by raising 'students' respect for manual labour.

Full-time academic schools of the previous period were effectively abolished. Schools for the privileged, such as schools for cadres' children and 'key points' schools, which received special facilities for quality education were eliminated. All middle schools were converted into work-study schools with curricular emphasis on political knowledge and production labour. The emphases on politics and production was so transcendent

that, as Chen (1981) commented, these schools were in reality "half politics, half work schools" (p.92).

Another policy to integrate manual and mental labour was that almost all of the students from cities or urban areas were 'sent down' to rural areas to engage in manual labour after finishing middle schools. This campaign was more often referred to as the 'up the mountains and down villages' movement. These campaigns had ideological as well as economic considerations in that by sending students down to the rural regions, knowledge and technology then transmitted from the cities to the villages. The gaps between the cities and villages, mental and physical labour were to be thereby bridged. It was reported that between 1968 and 1977, a total of 12 million middle school leavers were sent from the cities to settle down in the countryside (Pepper, 1978:862).

In contrast to the great expansions in elementary and secondary education, higher education had been suffering from equally great restriction. Enrollment in higher education was only 300,000 in 1973, as compared to about 1 million in 1960 (Lofstedt, 1980:137). Maoist ideologues, with their primary concern for egalitarianism, had been very enthusiastic in expanding the base and intermediate portion of the educational pyramid and

cutting off its top. According to Mao and his followers, higher education institutes were academic learning centres of bourgeois ideology, intended to perpetuate class privileges. Therefore, higher education was curtailed because, in the words of Mao, "to read too many books is harmful", furthermore, "if one reads too many, he or she can become book-worms, dogmatists, revisionists" (Schram, 1974:19). University education had to be reconstructed in accordance with the political situation and demands. The July 21 directive issued by Mao in 1968 expressed this idea more concretely:

It is still necessary to have universities; here I refer mainly to colleges of science and engineering. However, it is essential to shorten the length of schooling, revolutionize education, put proletarian politics in command... (and take the road of the Shanghai Machine Tools Plant in training technicians from among the workers.) Students would be selected from among the workers and peasants with practical experience, and they should return to production after a few years' study (Mao, 1968d:3).

Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Teams were also set up as supervising bodies in universities and other higher institutes. As a result, Mao's thought became the studied subjects in these institutes. Undergraduate course work was cut from four or five years to three years. Admission to colleges or universities depended primarily on labour experience. And so, a large proportion of peasants and workers without formal



educational qualifications could be admitted to the universities. There were no entrance examinations. A process of recommendations by the Party and the revolutionary committee of candidates' working locality was the mechanism through which university students were selected. The selection method was considered to be fair and reasonable by the Maoist, as workers, peasants, soldiers and educated youths who had gone to the mountains and rural areas, could benefit from the policy (Pepper, 1978:865). Children of those people who were branded as counter-revolutionary were largely excluded from higher education. The restrictions on admission enabled Beijing University to announce that during the Cultural Revolution, 90 per cent of its students were drawn from workers and peasants and soldiers (Pepper, 1978:870).

Mao's works formed the basis of the curriculum materials, which were supplemented with other specialties. The importance of Mao's work in the curriculum could best be reflected by the following plan released by Hangzhou University:

The basic task of the arts faculty of a socialist university is to study and publicize Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, repudiate the bourgeoisie, and train revolutionary public-opinion fighters fighting for the consolidation of proletarian dictatorship. The arts faculty must take Chairman Mao's works as basic teaching materials (Chen, 1981:98).

Political education was not merely stressed in the arts faculty. All university students were required to make political ideology and class struggle as the focus of studies. Students were also required to participate in political campaigns so as to raise their ideological consciousness and remold their world outlooks. In Beijing University, for example, about two thirds of the class periods were allocated for students to carry out "social investigation to learn from workers, peasants and soldiers" (Hu and Seifman, 1978:187). In the faculties of science and engineering, practicality was the main concern of teaching. Knowledge was linked to application, and teaching and learning were adjusted to practical use. A report by Castles and Wustenberg (1979) revealed that students studying in the chemistry department in polytechnics were required to do laboratory work after going into the theory, and then go to work in a plastic and chemical fibre or rubber plant. (p.131). Many universities and colleges operated factories or workshops on campus, or hooked up with factories and mines.

The establishment of the Chao Yang Agricultural College was another significant characteristic of the educational reform during this period. This college was built in the mountain region and students were both recruited from the communes and sent back to the communes

after a period of training. The college had no set curriculum and the programs of study were flexible and constantly adjusted to meet the production needs. Labour occupied centre stage in the curriculum. It was reported that in 1975, 6,000 graduates had left the Chao Yang Agricultural College and returned to the communes served as agrotechnicians, school teachers, leaders of production teams (Lofstedt, 1980:133). The Chao Yang Agricultural College was so successful that in 1975, the College was officially promoted as a model Socialist University. A nationwide campaign to study the Chao Yang experience was ordered.

### The Revolutions in Informal Education

Adult education, which was often referred as worker-peasant education in China, was greatly expanded during the Cultural Revolution. Adult education was largely expanded so as to provide more educational opportunities for the working class. It was hoped that, a proletarian intelligentsia could thereby be formed, which would help in the actualization of proletarian rule in Communist China.

Adult education for workers had been an important non-formal education provisions in China long before the

Cultural Revolution. But it was basically a technological training program. During the Cultural Revolution, however, adult education was identified closely with political struggles by emphasizing the raising political consciousness. Mao stated clearly his vision on adult education for workers and peasants in the 1968 directive: "they should study military affairs, politics, and culture.... They, too, should take part in the socialist education movement and in the criticizing of the bourgeoisie" (Mao, 1968d:3).

At the advanced level of adult education were the July 21 Workers' Universities. These universities emerged from Mao's July 21 1966 directive. In the directive, Mao strongly praised the experience of the Shanghai Machine Tool Plant, where technicians and workers were trained in workshops and classes by veteran workers and were supposed to be educated to university level (Colletta, 1983:140). The response to that educational directive was so enthusiastic that within one year, Liaoning Province claimed an increase of from 52 to 270 such colleges, with a total student enrollment of 25,300. Heilongjiang Province had 333 such institutions, with an enrollment of 17,800 students (Wang, 1980:227). By the end of 1975, there were over 5,160 July 21 Workers' Universities all

over the country with a total enrollment of 250,000 worker-students (Lofstedt, 1980:140).

July 21 Workers' Universities selected experienced workers from the plants, and recruited capable students from the middle schools administered by the factories. The curriculum at these workers' universities consisted of political education, military activities, mathematics, mechanical engineering, and related technical subjects. The workers' universities were encouraged to design machinery plants. But, with the advent of the Cultural Revolution, the July 21 Workers' Universities began to emphasize political indoctrination. 'Redness' replaced 'expertness' as the prime goal. Political education replaced technical trainings and political goals replaced production targets.

The other important kind of adult education, in response to Mao's May 7 directive, in 1968 was May 7 schools. These schools were primarily established for political reasons. People who were regarded as lagging behind in political consciousness and need ideological reforms through manual labour and learning from the peasants were sent to the May 7 Schools. Many professional experts, intellectuals, and opposition party members were forced into the May 7 Schools.

Alongside the political struggle and the purges of the Cultural Revolution, hundreds of these May 7 Schools appeared in different parts of the country. Millions of civil servants, technicians, teachers, trade and commerce personnel, office workers, artists, writers, nurses, doctors, university graduates and other intellectuals were 'admitted' to the May 7 Schools to receive ideological rejuvenation. A report in 1973 reported that in the prestigious Qinghua University, "all faculty and administrative members, without exception, were sent down to May 7 Schools. There, most of them spent years living a peasant life, digging in the fields, planting rice, driving night-soil carts, studying Marxism-Leninism and the thoughts of Chairman Mao" (Salesbury, 1973:36). Accompanied by intensive political studies, group sessions of criticism and self-initiating, the 'students' were supposed to be re-educated and to serve the interest of proletarian revolution.

#### SUMMARY

Chapter IV was an investigation of the educational reforms in China from 1949 to 1976. With references to the political and economic contexts, the discussion was divided chronologically into four sections. In Section 1,

I described the general historical background of the Chinese society and its educational system before 1949. The pre-revolutionary society was characterized by poverty and backwardness, while education was decidedly elitist.

Section 2 discussed the new China from the period of 1949 to 1957, during which both formal and informal education were reconstructed to meet the twin goals of revolution and development. Education was expanded to both the urban and rural population. With the goal of rectifying the century-old mentality and practice of the separation between education and reality, political education and the integration of study and work were the new educational policies.

In 1953, the First Five Year Plan was launched and the policy of popular education was gradually replaced by policies that were concerned with educational quality. The latter policy was actually a result of an adoption of the Stalinist model of industry-biased development. Mao Zedong, who was strongly dissatisfied with the Sovietized development approach, was ready to stage an entirely different program of reforms.

Section 3 was a discussion of the period from 1958 to 1965. In this period, the first two years were dictated by Mao's policies of the Great Leap Forward Movement while the remaining six years were characterized

by the retrenchment policies of Liu Shaoqi. The Great Leap Forward Movement from 1958 to 1959 was a watershed in the development of the economy and education. It was marked by a retreat from the Soviet model. The new approach, which was often referred as the 'walking on two legs', was the simultaneous development of industry and agriculture, relying on capital-intensive and labour-intensive strategies respectively.

Mao's political influences in this period was evidenced in the engendering of educational reforms. Great efforts were made to popularize education to the masses. Expansion was made possible primarily through the unfolding of spare-time schools and half study, half work schools. The co-existence of academic-oriented full-time regular schools and the half study, half work schools, represented a political compromise between Mao and Liu.

When the Great Leap Forward Movement proved to be a failure, Mao admitted personal responsibilities and was replaced by Liu in active leadership. Policies under Liu were reverted to Soviet development model and education became academic and elitist. These policies annoyed Mao, who launched the Cultural Revolution to change the power structure and cultural vestiges.

Section 4 was an analysis of the period from 1966 to 1976. During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution,



there were tremendous changes in education. The previous education system was torn down completely. The new education system was dominated with political considerations. The traditional role of intellectuals in education was replaced by workers and peasants. Form and content of education were restructured according to political wants. Political education dominated all levels of education, in both formal and informal education.

Clearly, education had never assumed a neutral place in China in the period in question. Rather, education always played a subordinate and supportive role to the political and economic demands. Despite the conflicting educational ideas held by the two leaders, and the different policies in educational reforms during their time, education was always conceived as a handmaiden to politics and economics.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Education as a social system has never been an independent entity. It has always functioned as a pawn of the dominant political and economic forces of the larger society. The instrumental nature of education has been well articulated by the works of Gramsci (1971), Althusser (1970; 1971), Bowles and Gintis (1976). Gramsci and Althusser argued that education was enlisted to perpetuate political control and ideological domination. Bowles and Gintis, on the other hand, contended that education, in terms of its form and content, was formulated in correspondence to the demands of economic production.

In this study, I have tried to analyze Chinese education from 1949 to 1976, using the above neo-Marxian perspectives of education. Educational reforms in China were found to be highly correlated with political and economic changes.

The period from 1949 to 1952, was a period for political consolidation and economic re-construction. A political consensus among the leaders, Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi, was attained. Educational policy was a compromise

in that the formal and informal systems, educational quality and quantity, serving urban and rural, were equally emphasized.

From 1953 onwards, when the influence from Soviet Union was increasing, education gradually shifted to become urban biased and academically oriented. After the First Five Year Plan, an indigenous model of development, the Great Leap Forward Movement, was promoted by Mao in 1958. Education was popularized, adhering to Mao's egalitarian ideals. When the Great Leap Forward Movement proved to be a failure, Mao was replaced by Liu. Policies of development were reverted to industry-biased model again. Education was shifted to an academic orientation emphasizing quality.

When Liu and his followers were purged and Mao regained political power in 1966, education was once again revolutionized according to Mao's ideal of egalitarianism. Many of the policies of the Great Leap Forward Movement were revived on a even larger scale. Political education dictated all levels of the formal and informal educational system. These policies reigned until the death of Mao in 1976 when the Cultural Revolution came to an end.

The reforms in Chinese education over the 27-year period in question evolved around the political context of the times. They had a certain repetitive pattern. The

pattern, is mainly a shift between two educational models, namely, the egalitarian model and the efficacy model. The egalitarian model of education was dominated by the ideals of egalitarianism and thus emphasized the expansion of quantity to provide more educational opportunities for the people. The efficacy model of education was overwhelmed with economic concerns and the quality of education was stressed in order to supply technological manpower for economic growth.

The Chinese educational system, as analyzed in Chapter IV, shifted from the efficacy model of 1953-1957 to the egalitarian model advocated by Mao in the 1958-1959, and once again reverted to the efficacy model advocated by Liu from 1960 to 1966. Finally, the education shifted back to the egalitarian model again from 1966 to 1976. The pattern of changes, if examined with the larger societal context, would demonstrate to us that they coincided with the political struggles between the two cliques of leaders who held entirely different conceptions regarding socialist constructions.

True to Orthodox Marxism, the aim of the efficacy model of education, propagated by Liu, was the concern with promoting economic development and modernization. In the course of the socialist transformation, according to the efficacy model, economic development was the most

decisive factor. As such, the efficacy model advocates were committed to the training of technological manpower. They believed that class struggle ceased to exist in socialist society at a certain point, and it was not necessary to have education involve too much political activity. The training of experts through the school system, moreover, would not necessarily lead to class conflicts. The conventional schooling system, with the three levels of formal education as the core and the informal sector as the periphery, was an ideal system in itself. The imbalance between formal and informal education, between those school systems in urban areas and rural areas, between the elementary and tertiary level, was seen as inevitable.

As far as the school curriculum was concerned, the efficacy model focussed on the pursuit of academic excellence. Middle school curriculum was geared toward university preparation. Political education or production labour were comparatively less important. The methods of teaching and learning, however, were basically archaic in that bookish teaching and rote memorizing were emphasized.

The principle of 'quality first' remained the outstanding guideline in all educational activities. In order to maintain and elevate educational standards, a selective mechanism based on rigid and competitive

examinations and tests was instituted. With scarce financial resources and shortage of teaching personnel, the efficacy model adherents advocated the operation of special 'key point' schools to provide high academic quality education for the few academic outstanding students.

In school administration, the policy of centralization was pursued. Full-time academic schools were all put under direct control of a central government agency, the Ministry of Education. Schools themselves were the centres of educational activities, and intellectuals and teachers were respected. Informal education was given attention to those workers in industrial production. The general masses, especially the rural peasants, were ignored.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming concern with elevating the quality of education, was criticized for espousing educational elitism. The highly competitive examination system led to unhealthy cramming, and owing to the keen competition for university education, middle schools became a kind of preparatory schools for universities. The fact that middle school was primarily concerned with sending students to universities or colleges induced middle school curriculum to become academically oriented. But more often, the curriculum was

criticized as irrelevant to practical use, since the majority of middle school leavers became ordinary workers and only a small number of graduates could enter universities or post-secondary institutes.

The efficacy model of education met significant opposition. Even in many other developed or developing countries, the efficacy model is criticized for its elitism. In the 1960s, Julius Nyerere, the President of Tanzania, once commented on the disadvantages of such an approach for developing countries:

The education now provided is designed for the few who are intellectually stronger than their fellows; it induces among those who succeed a feeling of superiority, and leaves a majority of the others hankering after something they will never obtain. It induces a feeling of inferiority among the majority, and can thus not produce either the egalitarian society we should build nor the attitudes of mind conducive to an egalitarian society. On the contrary, it induced the growth of a class structure in our country (Nyerere, 1968:47)

Mao Zedong strongly attacked the efficacy model of education. He believed such elitist education was merely serving the interest of bourgeoisie. It was counter to the ideals of socialism, inadequate for the building up of an egalitarian society. Mao favoured an education that could serve the general masses and realize the ideals of egalitarianism.

Mao believed that class conflict resulted from unequal wealth ownership as well as from ideological

inclinations. Class conflict would continue to exist even in socialist society. Therefore, permanent revolution was inevitable. Education, as an essential means of inculcating proletarian outlooks and changing counter-socialist ideological inclinations, was the place where class struggle took place. In order to have education serving egalitarian goals, traditional administrations of school system were replaced with control by workers and peasants. As such, the interests of the masses could be observed. Education was also decentralized in that local production brigades or units were encouraged to run their own schools. As a result, more educational opportunities were provided for the masses. Contrary to the elevation of quality in the efficacy model, the target of the egalitarian model was universal education. Primary and secondary education was expanded while the tertiary level received a low priority in order to make education more available to the general public. The elitist and academically oriented 'key point' schools were abolished under this model.

The curriculum of the egalitarian model of education was overwhelmed with political concerns. Comparatively, course content was more flexible and the period of study was relatively short. Knowledge of politics and production were emphasized. This model



emphasized learning through participation and doing in order to realize Marx's ideal of polytechnic education.

Informal education enjoyed special status under the egalitarian model. Factories and communes were encouraged to set up training programs for their workers and peasants. Higher education for workers and peasants were promoted to break the myth that tertiary education was for intellectuals only.

The egalitarian model of education was dominated by political ideals, and it was this overemphasis on politics that had prevented the model from becoming a truly workable system. For political reasons, intellectuals, professionals, educators and various fields of expert were condemned for their 'expertness'. Peasants and workers, who replaced the 'expert' in the school administration system, often had no educational background or vision necessary to develop a workable curriculum other than to dogmatically emphasize political indoctrination. They also turned the schools into working camps for implementing the idea of combining education with labour.

Whether reforms were carried out under the efficacy or egalitarian model of education, it should be noted that all the educational reforms in China over the past three decades were initiated outside the schools. Reform plans were formulated at the national level and passed on to

regional levels. The Maoist egalitarian model of education was initiated by Mao's sketchy ideas and directive outlines, and implemented by local interpretation. Given the rigorous political atmosphere and the fact that local peasant-worker school administrators were generally lacking in educational background, there were hardly any innovations other than dogmatically following the sketchy official guidelines. The efficacy model was more carefully planned by the central government and guidelines were detailed to regional educational functionaries or schools, which were asked to follow closely and were allowed little variations. Clearly, the source of change in both models was from the central political leaders rather than educators. While the political leaders were pre-occupied with political and economic considerations, the objectives of educational were merely tied in with political and economic goals.

In addition, all the educational changes were carried out drastically without any pilot studies, field testings, or evaluations. For example, during the Great Leap Forward Movement in 1958, when the Maoist egalitarian principle was launched, in the course of a month, 9,000 agricultural middle schools were opened in the province of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Hunan, and Liaoning, and more

than 400 such schools were set up in Shanghai in just a few days, as a result of the drive to implement the principle of "work while you learn" (Lofstedt, 1980:98).

On the other hand, in 1962, when the efficacy model was in vogue and quality of education was the main concern, agricultural middle schools were reduced from 22,600 with 2,030,000 students to 3,715 schools with only 266,000 students just in the course of a single year (Munro, 1971:277). Also, the total number of July 21 Workers' Universities rose suddenly from 1,200 with 90,000 enrollments in 1975 to 15,000 with 780,000 enrollments in 1976. The sharp increase in enrollment was used as criticism of Deng Xiaoping, who was alleged to have looked down upon these workers' universities saying that they were only "colleges in form" (Lofstedt, 1980:141).

With the centre to periphery or top-down process of educational reform, and with education goals designed to meet political and economic ends, rarely were the educational reforms oriented to the needs of individuals. Streaming, competitive examinations, and heavy academic workloads were the norms for the efficacy model to produce better experts. Political indoctrination, class struggle, and production labour dictated the egalitarian model of education. Efforts were made only to have education changed in response to political or economic

needs. The subject of education, the human being, was generally ignored.

The primary concern in Marx's theory of polytechnic education was totally-developed individuals, persons with full practical and theoretical knowledge of the technology of production, and the corresponding social and political relationships. Clearly, individual's consciousness and the ability to control the world they live in was the foremost concern in Marx's educational theory. But socialist education in China since 1949, was either dominated by economic considerations in one model, or political struggles in the other one. Initiative, creativity, and independent problem-solving ability of individuals seemed to be less important than the cultivation of appropriate political mentality or technical skills. Concerns of individuals were downplayed in the process of education, development of human was neglected to give way to material and political goals. Individual was made not a subject of social transformation but rather a 'tool' of it.

In the days of the Cultural Revolution, millions of students followed the instructions of Mao to carry out the so-called cultural revolutions. Fanatically, millions of youth participated actively in the movements. Responding to some idealistic slogans and directives, without

hesitations, students rose up to struggle against any people who was branded as counter-revolutionary or 'opposed Chairman Mao'. Many people who had participated in the 'destructions before constructions' movements now admitted that they were misled by the directives and could not judge the political situations at that time. The lack of independent thinking and judgement, was probably the result of decades of educational practice that emphasized conformity and docility to political authority and discouraged independent thinkings. In this respect, education in contemporary China was not different from the traditional feudalistic education, as they both emphasized, and succeeded, in the training of individual to be docile and conformable 'tools', rather than a person with independent thinking.

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