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**SPARE-TIME EDUCATION
FOR WORKERS IN
COMMUNIST CHINA**

by
PAUL HARPER
Cornell University



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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Foreword

This analysis of the important industry-centered spare-time school system in Communist China is a substantially revised version of a paper originally prepared for oral presentation at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in March 1963. The author is specializing in the study of Communist China at Cornell University, where he is completing a doctoral program.

In the absence of impartial firsthand observations by qualified outside observers of the arrangements for spare-time study under the present regime, the author has of necessity been forced to rely mainly upon a discriminating use of materials published in Communist China. While the reliability of these materials is not subject to independent verification, the body of data contained therein is generally believed to be sufficiently indicative of the prevailing situation on the Chinese mainland to enable qualified researchers to derive from it an informative basic picture of major developments.

This study is being published as part of a continuing research program designed to contribute to a clearer understanding of significant educational developments in Communist China.

ROBERT D. BARENDSEN
Specialist for Far Eastern Countries
Division of International Studies and Services
Bureau of International Education

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PAUL HARPER
Cornell University

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword.....	III
Acknowledgments.....	IV
Introduction.....	1
Political Education: The Keystone.....	3
Cultural and Technical Education.....	9
Organization and Control.....	18
Effectiveness of Workers' Education.....	22
Prospects for the Future.....	28

Introduction

The structure and content of education in Communist China have undergone radical changes in recent years. These changes were a part of the fundamental reorganization of the society and economy which accompanied the period of the "Great Leap Forward" (1958-60), and they also reflect the more recent efforts to contend with the subsequent series of national crises. This coincidence of a general revolution in education and a prolonged period of crisis has been marked by increased attention to the subject of education in Communist China by Western researchers.

But this inquiry in the West has only recently begun, and many aspects of Chinese education are still relatively unknown. One of the least explored of these fields, and yet one of the most important educational networks for national development, is the industry-centered spare-time school system. The present study is an exploratory analysis of this little-known part of the Chinese educational complex. This review of workers' education will indicate the allocation of priorities in time spent and the content of workers' education in periods of crisis and of relative calm. It will also explore the problems and accomplishments of a dozen years of industry-centered learning, as well as the organization, conduct, and control of the schools. Such an examination should lead to a better understanding of the functions, nature, and progress of this segment of education in China.

The Chinese Communists, recognizing that raising the technical levels of the working force is a necessary adjunct of industrialization, have long given priority to workers' education in their plans for national development. In theory, industrial workers and employees constitute the leading class in Communist China, the nucleus around which socialism is being built. In a letter to the *Kung-jen jih-pao* [Workers' Daily] in late 1959, Lu Ting-yi, a Vice Premier and concurrently Director of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), explained the tasks of industry in providing workers' education and declared that socialist enterprises must not only raise material output but also "produce" new personnel. To achieve communism, "all the people" would have to heighten their political consciousness, and universal education for "the entire population" must become a reality. Lu

added: "Here, of course, 'all the people' and 'the entire population' refer first of all to employees and workers."¹

The leading role of the working class on the road to communism, however, cannot be realized without great changes—indeed, a revolution, insofar as China is concerned—in the levels of production and productivity. The transformation of China into a socialist state, with the requisite fundamental change in the economic base and relations of production, was more or less accomplished by 1957. The transition to communism requires an even greater continual rise in the level of productivity of the workers, which can only be achieved through raising the low level of China's technology. Therefore, "a task of decisive importance" in strengthening the socialist base and moving toward a fully Communist system is "to change the backward state of the cultural level and scientific and technical level of [China's] working class."²

¹ "Comrade Lu Ting-yl's Letter to the Editor of Peking *Kung-fen jih-pao* on the Question of Workers' Education," *Kuang-ming jih-pao* [Bright Daily; hereafter cited as *KMJP*], Dec. 26, 1959, in *Survey of the China Mainland Press* [hereafter cited as *SCMP*] (Hong Kong: American Consulate General), No. 2210 (1960), p. 8.

² Lai Jo-yu, "The Permanent Development of the Movement for Advanced Workers," *New China News Agency* [hereafter cited as *NONA*], May 2, 1956, in *Current Background* [hereafter cited as *CB*] (Hong Kong: American Consulate General), No. 389 (1956), p. 11.

Political Education: The Keystone

Worker's education has been conducted largely in spare-time schools within the factories, mines, and other industrial enterprises in China. Inasmuch as practical considerations would not allow many industrial workers to leave their jobs to attend full-time schools, a system of spare-time education is the most useful method of advancing the knowledge of the workers. The Chinese Communist regime officially recognized this situation in June 1950, when the Government Administration Council issued the "Directives on Developing Spare-Time Education for Workers and Staff Members."³ In a land short of professional teachers, the reservoir of knowledge and techniques within industry itself was utilized to facilitate the program set in motion by these directives.

Under the 1950 directives, a period of fundamental political education was to be followed by literacy classes. A literacy standard of 1,000 characters was to be attained by all workers within 3 to 5 years. The directives also envisioned spare-time primary and middle schools, which were established during and after 1951. The prescribed curriculum included cultural studies "similar to the main courses in regular primary and middle schools,"⁴ as well as systematic political and technical studies.

The trade unions, the mass organization for the workers, were assigned the task of organizing the workers for education and implementing the program. This followed naturally from the major educative efforts of the trade unions during and immediately after the final period of the civil war. The All-China Federation of Labor reported on May Day 1950 that "the most urgent problem facing the trade unions following the liberation of each city" during 1949 had been raising the political consciousness of the workers by class education.⁵ The immediate need in this early period was to give the workers a rudimentary education in the doctrine of "class struggle" and their role in the new society. This intensive political education in industry preceded the implementation of systematic workers' education in all fields, and has remained the central facet of industry-centered spare-time education.

³ Text in *Labour Laws and Regulations of the People's Republic of China* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1956), pp. 81-88.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁵ "All-China Federation of Labor Report on the Work of the Past Year," *Chung-kuo kung-jen* [China Worker], May 15, 1950, in *CB* No. 24 (1950), p. 2.

A brief look at a "model factory," the Wusan industrial works in northeast China, will serve to indicate the nature and proportions of workers' education in its early years.⁶ During 1953, the union in this plant received wide publicity as a general guide for trade unions in Communist China, with emphasis on its educational program. The All-China Federation of Labor directed all unions to study the manuals and press reports distributed on the factory's work and to draw up plans for "popularization of Wusan factory experiences."⁷ All workers at Wusan adhered to the following weekly (Monday through Saturday) training schedule: 1 hour of inspection and discussion of the work of trade union production "small teams"; 3 hours of instruction and discussion on the current political mass movement (for example, the "Resist America-Aid Korea" campaign of the Korean war period); and 2 hours on Marxist-Leninist ideology. This weekly political study was organized and conducted by the trade union cadres,⁸ who also set up and assisted in the mandatory cultural education classes held 4 nights a week for 1½ hours. In addition to their training and educational duties, the Party, trade union, and administrative cadres of the factory met together each evening, after classes for the workers were dismissed, in a separate program of collective study. Although no systematic technical education program was instituted, master-apprentice contracts and occasional lectures and campaigns were used to promote advanced techniques at the Wusan factory.

Political education of the workers persisted at a priority level at Wusan as late as 1952. Under a regimen such as that developed at Wusan, the workers undergo a weekly minimum of 5 hours of systematic political education. As the student progresses, his study rises perhaps to more sophisticated levels; it may, upon occasion, slacken off, but only under exceptional circumstances does it cease. During the initial stages, the trade union cadres endeavor to instill a basic knowledge of "class struggle" in China, and an awareness of the position of leadership held by the working class in the socialist state; thus the unions begin to function as a "school for communism."⁹

⁶ For the following paragraph, see the All-China Federation of Labor release, "Basic Experiences of Wusan Factory Trade Union Work," *NCNA*, January 3, 1953, in *SCMP* No. 488 (1953), pp. 10-16.

⁷ "ACFL Decision on Promoting the Experiences of the Trade Union of Wusan Factory," *NCNA*, Dec. 25, 1952, in *SCMP* No. 488 (1953), p. 9.

⁸ The term "cadre" is used by the Chinese Communists to mean a functionary or official. It is used in the singular form to refer to one individual, or in the plural form (cadres) to refer collectively to a group.

⁹ For typical examples of cadre manuals concerning political education and the lines to be followed in teaching, see: *Kung-hui te tao-yung yu jen-wu* [The Functions and Duties of the Trade Unions] (Peking: Kung-jen ch'u-pan she, 1954), especially pp. 5-9, 21-26; and *Kung-hui hiao-tao cheng kung-tao* [The Work of the Trade Union Small Group Leader] (Peking: Kung-jen ch'u-pan she, 1954), pp. 10-12.

The next stages of political education are a challenge for both the worker and the cadre. In his workaday world of realities, the worker must face inconsistencies between what he has learned concerning his position in society and the problems with which he struggles in his daily work. Intensive "shock" drives to meet production quotas can be exhausting, both physically and mentally, and follow one upon another; or the workers' income may drop through a state reorganization of workers' grades or salaries, or through the institution of such systems as "half-wage half-supply" (i.e., payment half in money and half in kind). The state, in which the worker is declared to be the leading element, makes its decisions on the basis of the development of the nation as a whole. The immediate material interests of the workers are rarely, if ever, wholly consonant with the interests of the state. To resolve such apparent contradictions between the expected prerogatives of status and the actual conditions which the workers experience, the Party seeks to teach the working class to "consider all problems from the point of view of all [of China's] 600 million people and not only those of a section of the people."¹⁰

Party and trade union cadres must persuade the workers that the development of China—equated with the advance of socialism and socialist construction—requires them to accept the priority of long-term interests and the interests of the state. As the worker's political consciousness and education advances, the cadres seek to make him understand the ultimate necessity, under Marxism-Leninism, for the individual to bring his interests into total accord with the interests of the state. The politically advanced workers are encouraged to devote more time to ideological study, searching into the more complex tenets of Marxist-Leninist theory.

At all stages, political education also involves study and discussion of current affairs and Party lines. When the Party launches mass movements or embarks on a new line, it calls for more intensive political study. This extra educational effort among the workers becomes a primary task for the trade union cadres. During the Great Leap Forward, an even greater demand that the workers devote more time to political education intensified existing difficulties and strains in meeting production quotas. As the economic crisis deepened after 1959, many enterprises responded to the stresses and pressures of high production goals by reducing the number of hours for spare-time education. For example, in April 1961, *Kung-jen jih-pao* called for a flexible, "unified arrangement" for production, education, and rest. It cited the practice of the Nanking Quilt and Garment factory as the

¹⁰ Liu Shao-ch'i. "Message of Greetings on Behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China." in *Eighth All-China Congress of the Trade Unions* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1958), p. 18.

correct approach to be followed in arranging the workers' day. In this plant, time spent in production tasks had rapidly displaced the time available for spare-time education and, as a consequence, the total number of hours per week scheduled for spare-time education was drastically reduced. However, the time spent in political education rose an additional 2 hours weekly. This was accomplished by simply reducing the classes for cultural education from 6 to 1½ hours per week, while, at the same time, the 2 hours per week previously devoted to Young Communist League and trade union meetings were to be used as additional time for political studies. *Kung-jen jih-pao* declared that this policy "provided an answer to an important question." The needs of production and rest must be met, it said, and *political* education must be heightened.¹¹

Although political education is a continuous process for the workers, the trade union cadres cannot concern themselves solely with advancing the political consciousness of the original groups of workers in a plant. The cadres must continually conduct elementary political education for the new recruits in the industrial working force. These newcomers may be peasants coming directly from the farms or they may be the urban poor, that is, those who migrated to the cities earlier and worked in the traditional sectors of the urban economy, before securing employment in modern industry. With such diverse backgrounds among the new workers, the time and effort spent on their political education varies, and cadres may be conducting such education at several levels in any particular plant. If an industrial enterprise hires a limited number of new workers periodically in the course of a planned expansion, a smoothly functioning spare-time education program in the plant could presumably integrate these newcomers with no great difficulties.

There has been a sizable increase in the ranks of China's industrial working force since 1949. During the First Five-Year Plan (1953-57), the number of workers and employees in industrial enterprises grew from 5.3 to 7.9 million.¹² The growth during this period was relatively steady and, although industrial organizations were lax in fulfilling their educational responsibilities prior to 1956, the influx of new workers would not have been so great as to strain the capabilities of the educational programs. But the opening of new enterprises on a vast scale at the outset of the Second Five-Year Plan (1958-62) was accompanied by so immense an increase in the size of

¹¹ "Make Overall Arrangements to Insure Smooth Progress in All Tasks," *Kung-jen jih-pao* [Workers' Daily; hereafter cited as *KJJP*] editorial, Apr. 28, 1961, in *SCMP* No. 2497 (1961), p. 17.

¹² John Phillip Emerson, "Manpower Absorption in the Non-Agricultural Branches of the Economy of Communist China, 1953-58," *China Quarterly*, No. 7 (July-September 1961), p. 74.

the industrial working force that the progress of spare-time education could not be maintained. During the first year of the Great Leap Forward (1958), the number of industrial workers almost trebled, rising from 7.9 to 23.4 million persons.¹³ Other groups in the modernized sector of the economy in which spare-time education systems have been established, such as capital construction or transport workers, underwent similar but lesser increases in this period.

Trade union cadres as well as old and new workers expended almost all their energies in attempting to meet huge increases in production plans during 1958-59 and, as a result, the usual political education to instill proper Communist attitudes toward labor and the state was neglected or poorly provided in some places. As the initial enthusiasm generated by the Great Leap Forward slackened through 1959, while production goals remained high, the apolitical attitudes and values of these workers began to create problems for management and the unions.

Ch'i Ko (Chairman of the General Union of Workers in the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region and concurrently Alternate Secretary of the CCP Sinkiang Party Committee), writing in *Kung-jen jih-pao* in August 1959, stated that 50 percent of the workers in Sinkiang's industries, transport, and capital construction were new personnel. Only a few of these, mostly demobilized soldiers and urban poor who were transferred by plan, had any appreciable degree of political consciousness. The great majority were peasants who migrated to Sinkiang industry from the east; they intended to work for a limited time, earning better wages than could be obtained in the cooperatives or communes and sending these earnings home. By mid-1959, their lack of political training was viewed by the Communist leadership as a crucial factor impeding the fulfillment of CCP plans for the rapid development of Sinkiang. Ch'i Ko characterized Sinkiang workers as follows: They were self-interested and downright selfish; they were willing to learn machine work but not foundry work and refused to become apprentices; they were always changing jobs, drifting from factory to factory and avoiding those plants which paid a lower wage; they argued and bickered interminably with the unions and management for better wages, better treatment at work, and better living conditions; and they maintained very poor safety standards and working techniques.¹⁴

In light of the pressures of the unrealistic production plans for 1959, it is understandable that Party, management, and trade union cadres would try to place the blame for nonfulfillment of production quotas

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁴ Ch'i Ko, "Nurture New Workers into Loyal Fighters in Building Up the Border Country of the Fatherland," *KJJP*, Aug. 7, 1959, in *SCMP* No. 2097 (1959), pp. 44-46.

upon the large numbers of workers who were said to hold these non-complaisant and non-Communist labor attitudes. It is not surprising, therefore, that in his article Ch'i called for an immediate crash program of political education for these new workers: The trade unions would give them 2 to 3 months of intensive political indoctrination, after which the newcomers would join the older workers in attending regular political education classes.

The problem of uncooperative new personnel was not confined to Sinkiang alone. It appeared more prominently in areas where a large proportion of workers were probably drawn directly from a peasant milieu.¹⁵

Political education at both formal and informal levels may still be considered the backbone of workers' education in Communist China. The trade union cadre in his educative role, conveying and elucidating the Party's lines to the workers, can and often does become the central actor in the resolution or attempted resolution of the contradictions between policies of the state for national development and the immediate material welfare of the workers. The demands of the state generally take precedence, however, and when a choice must be made—as during the Great Leap Forward and in subsequent crisis years—cultural and even technical education may be drastically curtailed in order to give the workers a few more hours of rest or production time. Yet political education increases in such periods of stress, for the state must not only generate enthusiasm to meet the intensified pace towards national goals but must also provide an apologia for the relative worsening of the workers' material welfare.

The content of workers' education, then, is so designed that the Communist leadership can utilize it as a means of persuasive control over the workers and as a continual reinforcement of their loyalty to the regime. The ready recourse of the leadership to intensified political education during periods of stress suggests that uncertainties still remain regarding the wholehearted cooperation and discipline of the class in Communist China which has consistently received the best possible treatment—the working class.

¹⁵ See, for instance, "Political and Technical Education for Newly Recruited Workers Strengthened in Anhwei, Kansu and Other Areas," *KJJP*, May 19, 1959, in *SCMP* No. 2025 (1959), pp. 1-2; Yang Shang-k'uei, "Care for and Educate New Workers, Strengthen and Raise the Ranks of Workers," *KJJP*, July 14, 1959, in *SCMP* No. 2069 (1959), pp. 2-5; or Li Ming-shin, "Pay Attention to All Aspects of the Training of New Workers," *KJJP*, Aug. 9, 1959, in *SCMP* No. 2097 (1959), pp. 37-39. These all deal with industrialising areas and emphasise problems attributed to the great numbers of peasants recently joining the industrial labor force. On the other hand, conferences held in large cities and already industrialised areas on the east coast in this period barely mention new peasant workers as a production problem.

Cultural and Technical Education

The development of the spare-time school system in industry as envisaged in the 1950 directives progressed unevenly and more slowly than planned. Although the trade unions moved political education forward under the press of political events, the expansion of cultural and technical education was comparatively sluggish. The factories mainly emphasized literacy and the lower primary school classes, and established only a few middle schools. Spare-time technical education developed slowest of all and, until 1955-56, few plants conducted specialized technical courses. Most technical education for the workers was the "popular" type conducted by the unions, consisting of master-apprentice contracts or mutual study with a master, as well as lectures and forums by engineers, specialists, or Soviet experts.¹⁶

During these early years, individual workers were sometimes sent to full-time technical schools, to evening schools at local technical institutes, or to short full-time courses at other institutes. Such non-factory schooling was perhaps more important in the long run than the courses and lectures of the factory-run technical courses, which concentrated more on teaching such immediately practical matters as the use of new techniques and new machinery. To indicate the extent of technical training before 1956, some comparative data are available for 1954. Of the 3,050,000 workers attending all types of spare-time courses in 1954 (see table on p. 24), 953,000 were in technical courses.¹⁷ During the same year, 109,000 workers took part in some sort of full-time technical study.¹⁸ The practice of sending workers from production lines to attend full-time schools decreased after 1956, being supplanted by spare-time study in the plants as more complete factory-based spare-time technical education programs evolved.

The mining industry developed one of the more comprehensive educational systems during the early years of the Communist regime. By November 1955, each mining center on the mainland had at least

¹⁶ See Lai Jo-yu, "Strengthen Trade Union Construction and Improve Connections Between Trade Unions and the Masses" (Report to Third Plenary Session of the Seventh All-China Federation of Trade Unions Executive Committee), *NCNA*, Aug. 30, 1955 in *CB* No. 363 (1955), pp. 14-15. See also, *Chinese Workers March Towards Socialism* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1956), pp. 69-70.

¹⁷ "The Development Made in the Chinese Labor Movement in 1954," *KJJP*, Apr. 29, 1955, in *CB* No. 363 (1955), p. 62.

¹⁸ *Chinese Workers March Towards Socialism*, p. 72.

one spare-time school, and there was an industry-wide total of 349 schools.¹⁹ Some 140,000 miners and employees were attending these schools during the fall term of that year, with the emphasis still on literacy courses. Short spare-time technical courses concerned with the new mining methods being adapted from the Soviet Union were numerous, and some miners also were sent to technical institutes. The Ministry of the Coal Industry operated full-time middle schools for workers designated for administrative advancement. Those sent to full-time schools drew 75 percent of their pay, a practice also followed in principle by other industries, though at varying rates.

Generally, however, spare-time cultural and technical education for workers "lagged far behind the needs of [China's] industrial construction, agricultural cooperativization, and technical reform" until 1956.²⁰ A National Work Conference on Spare-Time Education for Industrial Workers was held by the Ministries of Education and Higher Education and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) in December 1955. Yang Hsiu-feng, then Minister of Higher Education, outlined the problems facing industrial spare-time education at that time: inadequate speed in establishing a complete spare-time education system from primary school through university levels; no guarantee of study time for the workers; inadequate numbers of qualified teachers; low qualifications of the students; and lack of funds.²¹ The conference declared that the major cause for the lack of development of workers' education was the "rightist conservative thought" held by some cadres of all levels. The cadres of the local governmental education departments tended to ignore or deprecate spare-time schools and respected only the work of conventional schools and teachers.²² The trade union, administrative, and New Democratic Youth League cadres were also accused of a negative approach. These non-Party cadres felt that too great an antagonism existed between production and study. Being realistic, they were aware that the fulfillment of immediate production tasks was considered to be their central responsibility, and they knew that they would be criticized if these tasks were not fulfilled. On the other hand, a significant future increase in productivity would require a substantial prior effort to raise the workers' technical levels. Therefore, the demands on time and energy could create a contradiction between production and study.

¹⁹ This paragraph is based upon "Educational Facilities for Coal Miners," *NCNA*, Nov. 23, 1955, in *SCMP* No. 1177, p. 12.

²⁰ "Overcome the Rightist Conservative Way of Thinking. Vigorously Develop Regular Spare-Time Education for Workers," *KMJP* editorial, Jan. 20, 1956, in *SCMP* No. 1221 (1956), p. 18.

²¹ "National Work Conference on Spare-Time Education of Workers and Employees Opens," *NCNA*, Dec. 19, 1955, in *SCMP* No. 1202 (1956), p. 14.

²² "Overcome the Rightist Conservative Way . . ." *loc. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

The key to solving this contradiction, said a *Kuang-ming jih-pao* [Bright Daily] editorial on the 1955 conference, "lies in strengthening and improving the business management of the industrial and mining enterprises" More specifically, the cadres should cease their reliance on extra shifts and overtime to meet production quotas and drop "the retrogressive method of having responsibility in large and small matters determined by conferences."²³ The most important results of this conference, and of subsequent directives from various ministries, were that spare-time primary and middle schools were more rapidly established by industrial enterprises, and more study and classtime for the workers was scheduled in a realistic manner. Three months later, the CCP Central Committee and the State Council jointly promulgated the "Decision Concerning the Elimination of Illiteracy," which reinforced the increased attention of the trade union and management cadres to workers' education.²⁴ Throughout 1956, trade unions at various levels within the ACFTU were busy drawing up 12-year plans for spare-time education.

In 1958, China's educational systems underwent tremendous changes, the consequences of which may not be fully apparent for many years. Students in conventional full-time schools, under the dictum that education must be combined with productive labor, have spent varying portions of their time since that year laboring in the fields or factories or on construction projects; that is, all able-bodied students in China are now part-time laborers. In addition, "half-work, half-study" schools were established throughout the countryside, and peasant youths who formerly found it impossible to go to school began receiving at least the rudiments of an education.²⁵ Spare-time schools, largely for literacy classes, also spread into the rural areas. Spare-time universities and technical schools were set up profusely, with less than adequate attention to the technical studies designed to make the students expert in their chosen fields. But the inability of the spare-time industrial educational system to expand as rapidly as the industrial working force continued to pose problems for the regime.

Following on the heels of the confused course of the Great Leap Forward in 1958 and before the industrial educational system had

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁴ Text of the decision in *NONA* release, Mar. 30, 1956, in *SCMP* No. 1266 (1956); see especially pp. 3-5. The literacy standard had become more demanding by 1956, particularly for workers. In the 1950 directives, the literacy standard was mastery of 1,000 characters; the 1956 decision here cited (p. 4) set a new standard for literacy of 1,500 characters for the public in general, but, at the same time, set a mastery of 2,000 characters as the literacy standard for workers.

²⁵ For further information on these institutions, see Robert D. Barendse, *Half-Work, Half-Study Schools in Communist China; Recent Experiments With Self-Supporting Educational Institutions*, U.S. Office of Education Bulletin No. 24, 1964. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964.

accommodated itself to the new masses of workers, the economic crisis since 1959 has further disrupted workers' spare-time education. The uncertainty and dislocation of production finally disorganized the educational programs and created confusion and problems from which workers' education has not yet recovered. A review of one plant's experiences with spare-time education from mid-1959 until the early months of 1962 will not only highlight the difficulties encountered by industrial educational programs in this period, but will also indicate the increasing importance the leadership ascribed to workers' education.

The experiences of the Harbin United Meat Processing Plant typify the problems which spare-time education faced in China's industries during the peak of the economic crisis. The educational work of the CCP Committee and the trade union in the plant in meeting those difficulties has been praised in *Kung-jen jih-pao* as a model for other plants to emulate.²⁶ The crisis undoubtedly affected this plant more than those in heavy industry, since meat processing is directly dependent on agricultural production. However, most of the plant's experiences were probably common throughout China's light industries and some of the problems would have appeared in all enterprises.

The Harbin United Meat Processing Plant began spare-time education in 1948 and, by 1959, it contained a complete range of schooling, from literacy classes through university classes. In 1958, the plant, the workshops, the teams, and individual workers separately drew up plans for a projected educational program. The workers and management envisioned similar targets and rates of progress, but the attitudes and priorities of the two groups differed significantly. The plant and shops made plans "in the light of concrete conditions of production and the workers"; the plans of individual workers, however, were "essentially guarantees for study"; and team plans combined various targets and measures from the individual plans.²⁷ After several collective discussions, a 10-year plan for spare-time education was drafted by the plant. A campaign for education among the workers accompanied the early stages of implementation of the plan and, by October 1959, 98 percent of the younger workers had enrolled in classes, maintaining a 95-percent attendance record since 1958.

²⁶ The experiences of the Harbin plant are related in three articles, on which this section is based. They are: "Make Out and Enforce a Scheme for Promoting Workers' Education," *KJJP*, Oct. 6, 1959, in *SCMP* No. 2154 (1959), pp. 11-14; "Workers' Spare-Time Education Consolidated and Elevated in Harbin Meat Processing Factory," *KJJP*, Mar. 28, 1961, in *SCMP* No. 2491 (1961), pp. 22-23; and Chou Yun-ping, "The More Difficult to Operate Schools Require a More Strengthened Leadership," *KJJP*, Jan. 18, 1962, in *Joint Publications Research Service* [hereafter cited as *JPRS*] report No. 12000 (1962), pp. 171-175.

²⁷ "Make Out and Enforce a Scheme . . ." *loc. cit.*, p. 12.

The immediate goal was to develop the plant's future needs in technical and administrative personnel from its own workers through spare-time education. The plan called for the training of 45 veterinary surgeons, 110 refrigeration and processing technicians, and 28 administrative cadres.²⁸ The quality of teaching presented the greatest problem in 1959: 5 full-time and 127 part-time instructors composed the teaching staff, but only 9 of these could teach courses at a university level and only 16 were capable of teaching senior middle school (10th through 12th grades) or technical courses. Despite this serious shortage of trained staff at the upper levels, the plan aimed for all workers "to be trained to be university graduates."²⁹

This portion of the plan had been revised by 1961, and all workers were called upon to attain a minimum educational level of junior middle school (7th through 9th grades) graduate. The graduation target for 1960 classes was 90 percent of the students, but only 80 percent passed. A detailed investigation belatedly brought the realization that students' learning progresses at differing speeds. Following the investigation, three levels of classes were set up for each school year through junior middle school, with the workers permitted to choose their class on the basis of aptitude and amount of spare time available. Although those having long distances to commute, poor health, children to watch or household chores to perform were at an obvious disadvantage under these arrangements, nevertheless in March 1961, *Kung-jen jih-pao* lauded this plan as a model scheme for flexibility in adjusting spare-time education to the conditions of the workers.³⁰

Later in 1961, however, the plant was beset with a profusion of great difficulties, which "almost caused the regular order of spare-time education to fall completely into confusion."³¹ Agricultural disasters reduced the feed for pigs and fowls, thereby causing continual variation in the plant's products, which, in turn, necessitated frequent transfers of the workers. For instance, 150 workers were transferred in June from shop #1 of the plant to shop #4, whose workers rose from 100 to 500. Three months later, shop #4 personnel were cut back to 200. Inasmuch as classes were organized on the basis of teams and shops (a standard practice and in keeping with the primary emphasis on the "small group"), such transfers critically disrupted the organization of workers' education. Shift work was instituted, which also interfered with regular class scheduling. In the summer

²⁸ Apparently none of these personnel had finished their training by January 1962.

²⁹ "Workers' Spare-Time Education Consolidated and Elevated . . ." *loc. cit.*, p. 23.

³⁰ "Consolidate and Heighten the Good Experiences of Workers' Spare-Time Education," *KJJP* editorial, Mar. 28, 1961, in *SCMP* No. 2491 (1961), pp. 24-26.

³¹ Chou, *loc. cit.*, p. 172.

and autumn, many workers were transferred to rural areas for farming and flood prevention work. And with the workers facing increasing difficulties in securing the means of subsistence, a substantial proportion of the time previously spent in attending class or studying was presumably reallocated to tending one's garden or searching for some scarce commodity.

The cadres began to grumble that they could not even successfully maintain production, let alone find excess energy or time for educational tasks, and the teachers wanted to wait until labor organization became stable once again before continuing classes. At this point, the CCP Plant Committee turned its attention to the problems. Teaching shifts were made to correspond with production shifts, a change in teachers and courses followed a change in job, and teachers were sent to the rural areas with the workers in the summer. With these adjustments, despite all the chaos, the factory managed to offer an average of 5 hours of education per week for 40 weeks during 1961. However, only 70 percent of the young workers enrolled in these classes and their attendance rate was only 68 percent. These are significant and major drops from the 1959 hours and attendance figures. That spare-time workers' education had fallen into general confusion throughout the nation in 1961 is indicated by a *Kung-jen jih-pao* editorial of January 20, 1962: "The giving of spare-time education with perseverance and without interruption is our most fundamental and rudimentary demand. A spare-time school cannot be run by fits and starts . . ." ³²

The Chinese Communist press remained silent on workers' education throughout the remainder of 1962 and, indeed, no overall figures have been published since 1960. In the spring of 1963, however, a few articles appeared as the spring term for workers' spare-time education started in the cities. When compared with earlier data, these articles indicate the extent of deterioration and slow pace of reconstruction in the system. In February 1963, the Municipal Trade Union Council and Education Bureau of Sian called a special meeting for cadres, to start a concerted drive for enrolling workers in spare-time classes in the factory schools. The stated goal was an enrollment of a mere 30 percent of the young workers, a considerable drop from the high enrollment percentages sought throughout China during the period from 1958 to 1960. ³³ In Tsinan, the motor repair shops for municipal transport had only 2 hours of instruction 1 evening per week for the workers' education program during the 1962 fall term. This was to be increased to 3 hours of class on 2 evenings each week for the 1963 spring term. ³⁴

³² "Exert Active Efforts Aimfully in Conducting Workers' Spare-Time Education With Better Results," *KJJP* editorial, Jan. 20, 1962, in *SCMP* No. 2673 (1962), p. 16.

³³ "Various Localities Actively and Aimfully Conduct Spare-Time Education for Workers," *KJJP*, Mar. 12, 1963, in *SCMP* No. 2963 (1963), p. 8.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Perhaps the sharpest illustration of the course of workers' education in recent years may be seen in the reported figures for workers' enrollment in spare-time classes in Tientsin. This largest industrial city in northern China has stressed workers' education for several years and has apparently been more successful in obtaining results from its programs than most other industrial centers. In the spring term of 1958, somewhat more than 200,000 Tientsin workers were enrolled in spare-time classes. Then the Great Leap Forward gathered momentum, and over 420,000 workers enrolled for the 1958 fall term in the city's enterprises.³⁵ The peak was reached in mid-1960, when over 800,000 were in class.³⁶ Then the same sort of problems which enmeshed the Harbin plant struck Tientsin's industries. No figures have been released for workers' education in Tientsin through 1961, but disorganization there must have been fairly complete, for the number of workers enrolled in 1962 (whether in the spring or fall term, or both, is not stipulated) had plummeted to less than 70,000. In the 1963 spring term, however, the number of enrollees rose to 130,000, almost double that of 1962, indicating that workers' education programs in Tientsin were beginning to function again with some semblance of their former capability.³⁷

One of the major problems posed by the period of nationwide chaos was that most enterprises which had hired many new workers in 1958 lost these workers as well as older employees in the transfers to agriculture after 1960. Consequently, many factories no longer employ sufficient workers to warrant complete schooling programs. This problem has been met in some areas by setting up schools run jointly by a number of enterprises. During the Great Leap Forward, industrial-spare-time schools already in existence were directed to train the personnel in the many small or newly established commune industries. The industrial plants complied by sending teachers to classes organized in the new or smaller factories, or by arranging for the scattered workers to attend expanded classes in the major plants. But this pattern was also disrupted by the years of crisis, and a general reorganization of the whole system finally began in 1962. The emphasis now is on establishing schools to be run jointly by smaller industries. For example, Hengyang in late 1962 had 6 such consolidated workers' spare-time schools, while all factories in the city with more than 1,000 employees set up their own schools.³⁸ And in Hofei municipality in

³⁵ "Conference on Developments in Workers' Education," *NCNA*, Nov. 1, 1958, in *SCMP* No. 1889 (1958), p. 13.

³⁶ "Tientsin Workers Advance Through Spare-Time Education," *NCNA*, Aug. 10, 1960, in *SCMP* No. 2318 (1960), p. 17.

³⁷ "130,000 Workers in Tientsin Join in Spare-Time Studies," *Jen-min Jih-pao* [People's Daily; hereafter cited as *JMJP*], May 15, 1963, in *SCMP* No. 2992 (1963), p. 14.

³⁸ "Workers' Spare-Time Schools Opened Successfully in Hunan," *XVJP*, Oct. 30, 1962, in *SCMP* No. 2862 (1962), p. 16.

Anhui, 80 percent of the factories offering spare-time education facilities to their workers do so by participating in jointly run schools.³⁹

The record of spare-time cultural and technical education in industry for Communist China's workers has been uneven in its first dozen years. The programs moved slowly until 1956; most efforts were directed to the eradication of illiteracy. This was essential in a work force which was mostly illiterate, a necessary first step before substantive instruction could be introduced. Yet the conference held jointly by the ACFTU and the two government education ministries in 1955 reflected the feeling that industry had been remiss in developing its educational program so slowly, difficulties notwithstanding. This was the first time since the 1950 directives that the leadership evinced a concerted and sustained effort on behalf of workers' education. It might be pointed out that this drive for workers' education coincided with those few months in which the state took over almost all industrial and manufacturing enterprises which had previously remained under private or joint public-private ownership. Since 1955, it has become clear that, under the continuous pressure for rapid industrialization and the even more demanding pace accompanying the Great Leap Forward, production and study have emerged in serious competition for the workers' time and energy. This conflict has not been resolved and has, in fact, been heightened during the economic crisis since 1959.

Industry-centered education continued to expand through 1960, reaching its peak in that year. But the nationwide crisis of 1961, reaching into all phases of life and the economy in mainland China, halted and almost destroyed workers' education. Even the best spare-time education programs in China's industry suffered nearly complete disarray as a result of major changes in production, massive shifting of workers within industry and to the farms, and, it would appear, an attitude of antipathy toward educational duties among the cadres as organizational confusion and production demands rose. However, skeletal cultural and technical education programs were maintained throughout this nadir, and workers' education is now being slowly and laboriously rebuilt.

While the regime noticeably reduced the place of workers' spare-time education in its list of priorities after 1960, this activity was returning to a position of some importance in 1963. However, there was no indication that the leadership intended to press this program to the wide extent held feasible until 1960. In 1963, workers' education occupied a lesser role in the plans for industry than in the period

³⁹ "Various Localities Actively and Aimfully Conduct Spare-Time Education . . ." *loc cit.*, p. 7.

of the Great Leap Forward, although this may rapidly change as national conditions change. Furthermore, the poor response by the workers to the 1963 efforts to enroll them in spare-time classes indicated, as did the intensified political education during the mounting economic crisis, that the CCP exercised considerably less than complete control over the workers, and that they were somewhat less than wholly loyal and cooperative insofar as the Party was concerned.

Organization and Control

The 1950 directives assigned responsibility for all phases of education in the plants to the ACFTU and clarified the educative and administrative roles of the unions, management, and local governmental education departments. For example, local committees on spare-time education were usually organized with a representative from the local government's education department as chairman and a trade union representative as vice chairman. Under the leadership of such committees, the trade union organization in each factory, mine, or enterprise organized and implemented the plant's educational program. Management's role was limited at the outset to supplying facilities for the classes, but, as the schools were slowly set up, the responsibilities were split: The unions retained responsibility for political education, while cultural and technical studies were turned over to management.

Much of the cultural education work in the early years of the 1950's was conducted by full-time and part-time teachers assigned to a plant's spare-time school by the local education department.⁴⁰ Educated cadres and workers served as teachers in the literacy classes. As noted previously, technical education at first was largely a matter of lectures for popularization of techniques or the guidance of apprentices. As technical classes were instituted at higher levels, plant technicians or engineers assumed teaching chores. At the beginning of 1960, approximately 430,000 persons were teaching in industry's spare-time schools; these included workers, union and administrative cadres, engineers and technicians, and 60,000 professional teachers transferred full-time from the conventional school system.⁴¹

Political education has always been the responsibility of the trade union cadres. A large part of the initial stages of such education is actually conducted in the trade-union-organized "small group," supplementing the classroom studies, with Party cadres giving special lectures or classes. The unions have general tasks in the other parts of the educational program. Union cadres perform most of the propagandizing and organizational tasks, and since 1958, have also handled the administrative chores for workers' educational programs. Even

⁴⁰ Lai Jo-yu, "Strengthen Trade Union Construction," *loc. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

⁴¹ "Spare-Time Education for Workers Continues to Leap Forward," *NCNA*, Jan. 25, 1960, in *SCMP* No. 2768 (1960), p. 13.

before 1958, much of the administrative work in factory education fell on the trade union cadres.

The unions are thus the key group in workers' education. This is wholly in keeping with the role of the unions as seen by the Communist Chinese leadership. China's trade unions have two major tasks: to develop production, and to function as a transmission belt between the CCP and the working-class masses. At any given time, the central task assigned to the unions is to increase production and fulfill or over-fulfill the current production plan, whether the emphasis be on heavy industry, all facets of industry, or aiding agriculture. Workers' education is a primary long-range means of effecting this task, although it comes into conflict with the short-range means of labor emulation or shock drives when competing for the workers' time and energy.

The work of the unions in spare-time education, particularly their duties and responsibilities for political education, is the major element in the performance of their transmission-belt role. The trade union cadre must endeavor to bridge the gap between the interests of the workers and those of the state; to do so, he must succeed in transmitting the ideology of the Party to the working masses. Insofar as the Party is concerned, the purpose of political education is to bring about acceptance of Party leadership and goals by the workers.³

Under the general decentralization of control of education in 1958, overall control of workers' education passed to the Party committee of each enterprise. The Party committees had usually held some degree of leadership over spare-time education in industrial enterprises before this decentralization. In a plant of any size, some of the leading trade union and management cadres would also be leading members of the plant CCP branch. Such leading cadres would almost invariably be on the plant Party committee. The local governmental education committee, which held formal control over workers' education until 1958, would also very likely have included one or more members of the Party committee from any sizable local factory or mine. Thus the system of concurrent posts for CCP cadres insured an indirect control over workers' education even before leadership passed directly into the hands of the plant Party committee.

Management was relieved of its responsibility for cultural and technical education in the 1958 reorganization. This responsibility returned again to the trade unions, and they have subsequently retained formal responsibility for all types of workers' spare-time education. But formal responsibility has not necessarily been accompanied by trade union control. How much control or even influence the unions have exerted over policy decisions, such as those regarding content or pace of the courses or allocation of time for each type of education,

is not clear. The possibilities for the exercising of influence are available: Teaching political studies, organizing other classes, and especially performing the day-to-day administrative tasks all offer the union cadres opportunities to wield not inconsiderable influence over the direction of workers' education. However, the assertion of any initiative by the unions would depend on the degree of active leadership displayed by the plant Party committee.

The conduct and content of cultural and technical studies have been determined by management or the Party. In the early years, the plant and shop directors and, to some extent, the plant CCP committee held the responsibility and authority for formulating and carrying out plant policies. Part of the blame for the slow development of industrial education in the early 1950's might be assigned to the influence of the prevailing system of having a single factory director—the director would be interested in immediate production, rather than the long-range effects of workers' education. A factory Party committee, on the other hand, has a much wider spectrum of interests, with a greater ultimate stake in education for the working class. By 1955 the factory Party committee began to reassert command in plant management.² After the Eighth CCP Congress in 1956, the authority of the Party committees was extended more deeply into all phases of factory life, including the educational realm. By 1958, when ultimate control over workers' education was formally transferred from the local educational committee to the plant Party committee, the latter committee was already deeply embroiled in management functions and problems.

To understand the apparent lack of clear lines for responsibility and control in workers' education, it is first necessary that one be aware of the complex relationship of the CCP and the trade unions at the lower levels. The union is ultimately subservient to the Party; in educational work, the trade union factory branch is directly responsible to the factory CCP committee. However, the CCP committee, exercising leadership over all phases of life and work in the enterprise, does not assume direct control of education. The Party, declared Liu Lan-t'ao, member of the Control Committee of the CCP Central Committee, must stand "in the forefront of the masses of the working class" and not confuse its functions with those of other organizations. Mass organizations such as the trade unions must accept CCP committee leadership in carrying out Party lines and policies, but this "does not mean that the Party should take over the routine running of such non-Party organizations as state organs and the people's organiza-

* For an account of the role of the factory CCP committee in industrial enterprises from 1949 through 1960, see H. F. Schurmann, "The Dialectic in Action—Vicissitudes in Industrial Management in China," *Asian Survey*, 1, No. 3 (May 1961), pp. 5-11.

tions and so blur the distinction, which is a matter of principle, between the Party and non-Party organizations."⁴³ Thus the CCP committee retains indirect control, while formal responsibility and routine administration of workers' education are assigned to the trade unions.

Despite this theoretical division of labor between the Party and the union, one can discern an essential identity in many of the tasks delegated to members of the two organizations at the working levels; in such a matter as educational work, Party and trade union cadres and activists frequently engage in the same activities.⁴⁴ To counteract the Party members' aversion to trade union work and their frequently supercilious attitude towards trade union cadres,⁴⁵ the CCP leadership stresses the obligation of the individual Party member to participate in trade union activities under the precepts of the "mass line."⁴⁶ At the same time, trade union influence is exerted upward. The plant CCP committee will always have some members who are leading trade union cadres; in fact, these union cadres often hold leadership positions at factory, *hsien* (county), municipal, and provincial CCP committee levels. Therefore, the role of the CCP committee in education is reflected down to Party small group work in production teams, while the influence of the trade union cadres in educational work may be reflected up to organizations wielding direct control over the plant CCP committees. Thus the actual control of workers' education and influence on the factory program is not clearly to be identified with either the union or the Party in the enterprises. It is quite clear, however, that most of the work done in the plants' educational programs, other than actual teaching of cultural or technical classes, is performed by trade union cadres.

⁴³ Liu Lan-t'ao, "The Communist Party of China Is the High Command of the Chinese People in Building Socialism," in *Ten Glorious Years* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1960), pp. 291-292.

⁴⁴ See, for example, "Strengthening Leadership Is the Key to Successful Operation of the Workers' Education," *KJJP*, Oct. 8, 1961, in *JPRS* report No. 11864 (1961), pp. 118-122; also, "How the Party Committee Strengthens Its Leadership Over the Labor Union," *KJJP*, Sept. 19, 1961, in *JPRS* report No. 11188 (1961), especially pp. 140-143.

⁴⁵ On Party members' reluctance to join the trade unions and Party-trade union-cadre relationships, see Lo Yu-wen, "Distressing Contradictions," *KJJP*, May 22, 1957, in *SCMP* No. 1851 (1957), pp. 21-22. According to H. Arthur Steiner, only 4 percent (450,000) of the total ACFTU membership in 1952 were also members of the CCP; those persons holding membership in both organizations represented only 7.2 percent of the total Party membership for that year. See Steiner, "Trade Unions in Mao's China," *Problems of Communism*, V, No. 2 (March-April 1956), p. 27.

⁴⁶ See, for instance, "How the Party Committee Strengthens Its Leadership . . ." *loc. cit.*, p. 142.

Effectiveness of Workers' Education

An analysis of workers' spare-time education in Communist China is not simply a history of general difficulties. On the contrary, the cumulative results of industry-centered schooling indicate that this type of schooling, while not the only factor responsible for such gains as have been recorded, has nevertheless made a substantial contribution to the achievement of political and economic goals. The average educational level of the industrial workers—and, therefore, their potential technological level—has apparently risen markedly. In 1949, between 75 and 80 percent of China's workers were illiterate. At the beginning of 1959, according to Lu Ting-yi, 20–30 percent of the total number of workers and employees were illiterates, over 50 percent were at the primary school educational level, another 20–30 percent had achieved a middle (secondary) school level, and 1 or 2 percent had college or specialized technical education.⁴⁷ More precise figures from the end of that year listed the illiterates at just over 20 percent of the total; many of these had had literacy courses, but had fallen back into illiteracy in the absence of a systematic followup program.⁴⁸ By November of 1959, after almost a decade of workers' spare-time education, approximately 9 million workers had reportedly attained a middle school educational level and over 400,000 were at the college level.⁴⁹ While this represents only a quarter of the total number of workers,⁵⁰ it is, nevertheless, a significant advance over the negligible number of similarly educated workers in pre-Communist days.

By early 1958, illiteracy was said to be almost nonexistent among the young and middle-aged workers in the industrial cities of Harbin, Tsitsihar, Kirin, and in hundreds of Shanghai factories, and those

⁴⁷ Lu Ting-yi, "Oppose Right Deviation, Go All Out and Vigorously Develop the Cultural Revolution in Coordination With the Campaign To Increase Production and Practice Economy," in *The National Conference of Outstanding Groups and Workers in Socialist Construction* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1960), p. 105.

⁴⁸ "Over 13 Million Chinese Workers Enrolled at Spare-Time Schools," *NCNA*, Dec. 25, 1959, in *SCMP* No. 2167 (1960), p. 17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See "The Popular Movement for Spare-Time Education," *JMJP* editorial, Mar. 23, 1960, in *SCMP* No. 2228 (1960), p. 28.

employed in the telecommunications and postal services and in the chemical industry were almost all literate.⁵¹ By 1963, one-half of the workers in Tientsin were reported to have reached at least the junior middle school level of education.⁵²

This rising educational level is attributed by the Communists to the industrial spare-time school system. However, it is questionable whether industry's schools can be assigned anywhere near the total credit for the advance. Some Western demographers assert that a large proportion of migrants from rural areas to the cities during the 1950's were educated or partly educated peasants.⁵³ Many of these would be seeking the prestige and better pay accruing to those who join the modern industrial working class in Communist China. The labor pool for industry to draw from, therefore, also has a rising educational level. Personnel departments in some modern factories and mines have taken advantage of this opportunity to raise the plant's educational level rapidly by hiring only those applicants having at least a primary or junior middle school education.⁵⁴ Some prior schooling is now often required of new workers, and with the number of applicants greatly exceeding the positions available in most modern industries, this educational requirement certainly would have become an important criterion in the selection of new personnel. No data on the educational achievements of entrants into the industrial labor force are available, so an estimate of contributions from the conventional schools cannot be attempted. But whatever the apportionment of credit, the rising educational level of the workers is also certainly attributable in part to industry's spare-time schools, as well as to higher recruitment standards.

Such a conclusion is inescapable in view of the increasing number of persons affected by workers' education. The number of workers attending spare-time classes rose from 760,000 in 1950 to over 3

⁵¹ "Adult Education for Chinese Workers," *NONA*, Apr. 29, 1958, in *SCMP* No. 1765 (1958), p. 18.

⁵² "Workers' Education Develops in North China City," *NONA*, Apr. 25, 1963, in *SCMP* No. 2969 (1963), p. 3. In evaluating reports that students have reached the "middle school level," it should be kept in mind that this phrase does not mean that the students involved have completed middle school education; it means only that they are studying at one of the grades included at the middle school level. In addition, it cannot be taken as meaning that the student studying at the middle-school level in spare-time education is exposed to all of the subject matter covered in full-time schools at this level.

⁵³ In papers read at the Association for Asian Studies annual meeting in March 1963, Profs. Irene Taeuber and H. Yuan Tien both pointed out that migration from rural China to the cities is more likely to involve peasants having some education.

⁵⁴ See "The Popular Movement for Spare-Time Education," *loc. cit.*

million in 1954. By August 1960, as can be seen in the following table, 25 million workers were enrolled in factory classes:⁵⁵

Number of workers attending spare-time education classes:

1949	-----	276,432
1950	-----	764,199
1951	-----	2,026,381
1952	-----	2,344,272
1953	-----	2,587,987
1954	-----	3,050,000
1957	-----	10,000,000+
1959	-----	13,000,000+
1960 (February)	-----	19,000,000+
1960 (August)	-----	25,000,000

The increasingly vast numbers of workers attending classes over the years would indicate that, simply by sheer weight of participation, the industrial spare-time school system has been a dominant and crucial factor in raising the educational level of the workers. Of the more than 19 million workers attending spare-time schools in February 1960, over 4.6 million were in literacy classes, over 8.8 million were in elementary school classes, more than 5 million were studying at the middle school level, and some 160,000 workers were attending spare-time higher education classes.⁵⁶

Perhaps of greater immediate importance to Communist China's national development is the fact that spare-time education is used to replenish and expand the administrative and technical personnel of an enterprise, or to staff newly established subsidiary plants, by drawing on the enterprise's own workers. This is a crucial consideration, inasmuch as the conventional schools would have been unable to produce the numbers of trained cadres, technicians, and employees required to

⁵⁵ Figures for attendance at workers' spare-time schools are from: *Chinese Workers March Towards Socialism*, p. 67; Lai Jo-yu, "Unite the People, Work Hard, Be Thrifty and Build a New Socialist China," in *Eighth All-China Congress of the Trade Unions*, p. 25; "Over 13 Million Chinese Workers Enrolled . . ." *loc. cit.*, p. 16; Yang Hsiu-feng, "Actively Carry Out the Reform of the School System to Bring About Greater, Faster, Better and More Economical Results in the Development of Education," speech to Second Session of the Second National People's Congress, Apr. 8, 1960, in *CB* No. 623 (1960), p. 17; and "The Current Important Task of Spare-Time Education," *JMJP* editorial, Aug. 3, 1960, in *SCMP* No. 2318 (1960), p. 7. These figures are not necessarily comparable after 1954, inasmuch as "workers" and "workers and employees" are changing categories; the occupations included under these classifications are rarely explicitly defined and are sometimes used loosely in speeches or news items, and shifts in the gathering of statistics are not always known. The February 1960 figure includes those workers under 45 engaged in industrial production, capital construction, transportation, communications, finance, trade, mechanized state farms, forestry, water conservancy, and meteorological operations (see Yang's speech cited above). But none of the other figures are so precisely defined in terms of categories covered.

⁵⁶ Yang Hsiu-feng, *loc. cit.*

meet the demands of both a rapidly expanding industrialization and a burgeoning bureaucracy. Despite the substantial increase in the number of primary and middle school graduates and the prestige associated with industrial jobs, industry must still compete with the bureaucracies for educated personnel. Although the pace of industrialization has slackened considerably, it is quite probable that it will return again to a forced and relatively rapid rate—albeit not a Great Leap Forward rate—if the CCP leadership becomes satisfied that the agricultural crisis has passed. A continuously increasing supply of specialists from within the workers' ranks will once again be needed, because the graduates of the conventional schools in coming years, having spent fewer years in school and much of that time in nonacademic labor, will continue to be insufficient in number and inadequate in training for the purposes of rapid industrialization.

The degree of success of China's industry in meeting its requirements for larger numbers of technological and administrative personnel from within its own ranks cannot be measured or even estimated, as sufficient data are not available. However, examples drawn from press reports on factories which have had spare-time education programs for several years indicate that this method of self-expansion in the middle and upper manpower layers has been of vital importance to China's industrial development.

Ten years of spare-time education at Peking's #1 Lathe and Machinery Plant produced notable results. A deputy secretary and the propaganda director of the CCP committee, the chairman of the trade union, and a Young Communist League secretary were all workers on the line in 1952, as were 61 percent of the present cadres at the section level. The directors of all five research divisions were also formerly workers in the plant.⁵⁷ In the Ch'ang-ch'un Municipal Gas Co., one-half of the engineers and the cadres of the workshop-director level or above had been trained through spare-time education and promoted from the company's own workers. The Party committee of the plant considered this a major accomplishment of its educational program.⁵⁸

The Hsin-hsiang Electric Power Plant in Honan illustrates the proportion of technological personnel which a plant's educational program may supply. This plant has a total of 26 engineers and technicians; 18 of these came from the ranks of the plant's workers, via spare-time education in the plant. That is, the plant itself trained two-thirds of its technical personnel, with no cost to the state or added

⁵⁷ Ch'en'Ch'i, "Ten Years Persistent Effort at Workers' Spare-Time Education in Peking's No. 1 Lathe and Machinery Plant," *Hung-ch'ü* (Red Flag), No. 16, Aug. 16, 1960, in *Selections From China Mainland Magazines* (Hong Kong: American Consulate General), No. 229 (1960), p. 4.

⁵⁸ "Ch'ang-ch'un Gas Company Persevered in Spare-Time Education During the Past Twelve Years," *KJFP*, Mar. 17, 1963, in *JPRS* report No. 14133 (1963), p. 73.

strain on the already overburdened conventional school system. As a further illustration of the effectiveness of this plant's spare-time education program, 7 of the 18 trained by the plant were illiterates when the program was begun in 1951.⁵⁹

Such reports are common in the Chinese Communist press. The growth of this body of factory-trained leadership cadres is important not only for national industrialization but also for the CCP; the cadres are ex-workers and so may be said to have been steered by the Party in an ideal Communist mold. Their political consciousness and loyalty to the system and the Party would most likely be well above the average, and they add some visible evidence to the Communist contention that the industrial workers are the leading class in China. From 1957 until 1961, they might have been the most vivid examples of the plausibility of being both fully "Red and expert."

The modification of the Party's "Red and expert" concept since 1961 has been directed at workers' spare-time education as well as conventional schooling. The full-time student is no longer expected to acquire both highly specialized political knowledge and specialized scientific or technical operational knowledge. The emphasis in spare-time education has also changed, moving to an insistence on strengthening the teaching of basic knowledge. The basic scientific and technical courses need not be directly related to production, a stipulation which was a somewhat crippling emphasis in such education from 1956 through 1961. The leadership has finally conceded that if the student has not learned a body of fundamental knowledge, advanced and specialized technical education is frequently a waste of time. This attitude toward technical education began to be stressed in early 1962, when *Kung-jen jih-pao* editorialized: "Generally speaking, what the students of workers' spare-time schools most lack is basic theoretical knowledge."⁶⁰ One might suspect that with "politics in command," attempts to do too much too quickly and with too little pedagogical expertise caused an inevitable confusion in the priorities and sequence of the learning process in spare-time schools. If such confusion is corrected by devoting more efforts to the underlying theoretical courses, a good foundation would be laid for wider and more solid accomplishments in spare-time advanced and technical education in the future.

The CCP leadership has also recognized that technicians cannot be expected to be both fully "Red and expert."⁶¹ The general level of

⁵⁹ "Strengthening Leadership Is the Key . . ." *loc. cit.*, p. 118.

⁶⁰ "Expert Active Efforts . . . in Conducting Workers' Spare-Time Education . . ." *loc. cit.*, p. 17.

⁶¹ See, for example, Shih K'o-chien, "Fully Develop the Strength of Technical Personnel," *Hung-ch'ü*, Nov. 8-9, Apr. 25, 1962, in *JPRS* report No. 13903 (1962), pp. 124-130.

technical knowledge in China is too low to demand that technicians spend their time seeking to attain the highest level of political consciousness at the cost of advancing their technical expertise. If they support the Party and socialism and "adopt a revolutionary political attitude," they are sufficiently "Red."⁶² While technicians must continue to study politics, the CCP now concedes it "cannot impose the same requirements on the political studies of the technical personnel as on general political work."⁶³

The technicians are often part-time teachers in workers' education; with lessening political pressures, they may in the future have more time, better facilities, and a better teaching situation in which to strengthen workers' technical education. However, technicians are the pariahs of Communist China's industry. After a decade of propaganda frequently railing against the "remnant bourgeois thought" or middleclass tendencies of many such highly skilled workers, the technicians are distrusted by the Party-management group on political grounds and disliked by their coworkers on both economic and political grounds. The stifling of the technicians will have to cease and their relations with both cadres and workers will have to improve before spare-time technical education can become genuinely effective. The Communist leadership has made some efforts toward this end since 1961 by stressing that the opinions of technicians on technical questions should be taken into serious consideration by the cadres and not be automatically attacked or dismissed out of hand, simply because of the source. This, however, remains a far cry from the idea that expertise—and not politics—should be in command in technical matters or technical education.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

Prospects for the Future

The 1958 joint CCP Central Committee and State Council "Directive on Educational Work" stated: "There is a far-reaching future for spare-time schools."⁴⁴ While the directive, which promulgated the CCP decision to establish spare-time and part-work, part-study schools throughout the nation, refers to all spare-time educational systems, the statement is particularly relevant to the future of industry-centered education. It will take some time for the conventional school system to recover from the past excesses of combining study with labor and from the present confusion as schools prepare for the planned shift to a shortened primary-secondary cycle in accordance with the 1960 reforms.⁴⁵ During the interim, industrial spare-time schools will need to expand their current low levels of operation and exert continued efforts to train their own personnel.

As industrialization spreads further into the countryside, many of the new workers will be the partly educated products of the local spare-time or part-work, part-study schools. Bringing the educational levels of these new additions to China's leading class up to desired standards will be the major future task of industry's educational system. The number of middle school graduates qualified to enter institutions of higher learning or capable of specialized technical study should increase dramatically if the proposed 1960 reforms in the conventional school system are widely and successfully implemented. The great majority of these graduates will not be able to continue on into full-time higher education. But many among those who enter the industrial working force will be urged to continue their study through spare-time technical and university-level education in the factories. The industrial schools would thus function as an important path of advanced learning for increasing numbers of workers.

The industry-centered spare-time school system was the most experienced and best organized, and very likely the most efficient and best financed, spare-time educational system in China, until the ravages wrought upon it in 1961. Industry now appears to be beginning to

⁴⁴Joint CCP Central Committee and State Council "Directive on Educational Work, September 19, 1958," *JMJP*, Sept. 20, 1958, in *SCMP* No. 1883 (1958), p. 16.

⁴⁵See Robert D. Barendsen, "Planned Reforms in the Primary and Secondary School System in Communist China," *Information on Education Around the World* series, No. 45 (Washington: U.S. Office of Education, 1960).

recover from the chaos of that time and the industrial school system is also slowly returning to normal functioning, though at a much reduced pace compared to the heady days of the Great Leap Forward. For the purpose of national development, factory programs have constituted perhaps the most immediately useful of all school systems in China, being specifically directed toward meeting the needs of industrialization and technological advance. Workers' education has built some solid achievements over the years, though the successes have rarely been so impossibly brilliant as those envisaged in the plans and goals set forth by the Party, the ministries, or the trade unions. And until such time as conventional education in China reaches a level high enough and sufficiently extensive to supply industry with adequate numbers of well-educated personnel ready to step into an increasingly technological society—a time not in the immediate future—the need for this supplementary educational system in industry will remain.