

CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN NEW CHINA



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
REPORT ON CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK <i>By Kuo Mo-jō</i>	1
THE POLICY OF EDUCATIONAL CONSTRUCTION IN PRESENT-DAY CHINA <i>by Chien Chun-jui</i>	21
THE PRESS IN NEW CHINA <i>by Liu Tsun-chi</i>	37
THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S BROADCASTING SYSTEM <i>By Mei Tso</i>	49
PUBLICATION WORKS IN NEW CHINA <i>by Hu Yu-chih</i>	55
SCIENCE IN NEW CHINA <i>by Coching Chu</i>	63
THE CHINESE FILM INDUSTRY <i>by Tsai Chu-sheng</i>	73

REPORT ON CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK*

by

KUO MO-JO**

Mr. Chairman, members and comrades:

On behalf of the Committee of Cultural and Educational Affairs of the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government, I am going to make the following report on cultural and educational work.

My report deals with three problems: first, the general picture of the political study movement; second, the general picture of cultural and educational construction work; third, problems concerning the carrying out of cultural and educational policies.

I. THE POLITICAL STUDY MOVEMENT IN CHINA

I want first of all to say something about the current political study movement of the Chinese people.

* A report delivered at the 2nd Session of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, June 17, 1950. Figures quoted in this report were compiled in May, 1950, while those quoted in the special articles on China's press, broadcasting system and publication work were compiled in October, 1950.

** Chairman of the Committee of Cultural and Educational Affairs of the Government Administration Council.

A large-scale study movement was set going throughout the country after the Central People's Government was founded. It is a movement of the liberated people to educate and reform themselves by democratic methods of learning and it serves as the political foundation for our general cultural and educational work. The development and achievements of this movement are worthy of special note. Chairman Mao Tse-tung has said in *On People's Democratic Dictatorship*: "The People's State is for the defence of the people. Once they have the possibility of applying democratic methods on a nationwide and comprehensive scale to educate and reform themselves, they will get rid of the influences of domestic and foreign reactionaries. (These influences are still very strong at present and will remain for a long time to come; they cannot be eradicated quickly.) Thus the people can reform their bad habits and thoughts derived from the old society, so that they will not take the wrong road pointed out to them by the reactionaries; but will continue to advance and develop toward a Socialist and Communist society." This is the essence of this large-scale study movement.

The achievements of this movement may be summed up in general as follows:

1. By studying the three documents adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (*The Common Programme, The Organic Law of the Central People's Government and the Organic Law of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference—Editor*), especially the *Common Programme*, the fundamental differences between old and new China have become clear to the broad masses of the people. The whole of the Chinese people, especially the workers and peasants, have become more aware of the fact that they

are the masters of new China. Unity between the various nationalities is greatly strengthened. Self-criticism is practised by many old-style intellectuals and government personnel engage in self-criticism of their old erroneous ideas. The influence of the fallacious idea of a so-called "middle road" has, in the main, been eradicated.

2. The broad masses of the people have also gained a better understanding of the two great camps in the world: The camp of world peace and world democracy headed by the U.S.S.R., and the camp of imperialist aggression headed by the U.S.A. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the broad masses of the Chinese people, (after education regarding the struggles in the field of diplomacy by such means as exposure of the American *White Paper* and careful study of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance) have recognised the nature of U.S. imperialist aggression and U.S. plans for aggrandisement and have realised that the American imperialists and their lackeys are sworn enemies of the Chinese people and are deliberately attempting to provoke a new world war.

The great friendship of the Soviet Union for the Chinese people has emphatically refuted the brazen lies of the reactionaries both at home and abroad. Instead of cherishing the suspicions and misunderstandings about the Soviet Union that were disseminated over a long period by the Kuomintang (KMT) reactionaries and the imperialists, the broad masses of the people recognise that the U.S.S.R. is the closest friend of the Chinese people, that she is the mainstay of world peace and that the signing of the new Sino-Soviet Treaty not only benefits the two great nations, China and the U.S.S.R., but also strengthens the defence of world peace. There is no middle road between the world's two great camps. China must stand

on the side of the U.S.S.R. The fact that the strength of the camp of world peace and democracy has surpassed that of the camp of imperialist aggression has greatly strengthened the Chinese people's faith in winning victory in their fight against the imperialists. The movement in defence of world peace is now spreading all over the country, and more than 10,000,000* people have signed the Stockholm Appeal.

The concept that labour is the creator of civilisation has been decisively established among the broad masses of the working people and the intellectuals. Labour has become an honour, and labouring people are everywhere winning universal respect. Production emulation campaigns are being developed in many factories and mines side by side with the New Record Movement.

4. The idea of serving the people has become prevalent among intellectuals and government personnel. After political study, many intellectuals and young students have taken part in the work of revolution and construction. The great majority of them are very industrious and have displayed initiative in their work. As a result, achievements have been made.

The People's Democratic Dictatorship has been further consolidated by the ideological awakening of the broad masses of the people. The task of national construction has been pushed ahead and the forces to defend world peace have grown.

This is a great victory on the ideological front. It goes without saying that this ideological victory is an integral part of the revolution's over-all victory. It has

* By the time of the Second World Peace Congress, over 223,500,000 peace signatures had been collected in China.

been achieved thanks to the correct leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the Central People's Government and to the efforts of all those working in various fields.

This nation-wide study movement has been conducted mainly in the following ways:

(a) Political institutes and training classes have been established in various localities. According to incomplete statistics, total enrolment in these institutes and classes amounts to more than 470,000 students. With respect to social status, there are among them college and middle school students, working youths, workers, peasants, former employees and school teachers of the KMT regime, professional people, housewives, merchants, etc., with intellectuals and young students constituting the majority. So far as political affiliations are concerned, there are Communists, non-Party people, people from various democratic parties and former reactionaries.

(b) In general, teachers as well as students are organised for ideological study. After liberation, political classes in the history of social development, political economy, New Democracy, etc., have been opened in various universities and middle schools. Political studies have also been organised among teachers. As a result of the study movement, 20 per cent of our university and middle school students have joined the China New Democratic Youth League.

(c) Workers, peasants and urban citizens have been organised for education and study. Immediately after liberation, the political study movement was enthusiastically launched, first in the trade unions and in publicly-owned enterprises. After raising their political consciousness, the workers in general were eager for more cultural, technological and political knowledge. As a result, night

schools and spare-time schools for workers sprang up in various localities. According to incomplete figures, 500,000 workers are now studying in these schools.

An important form of education for the peasants is the winter study movement in the countryside. During last winter and this spring, over 10,000,000 peasants participated in winter study groups. As for the urban citizens, the spare-time schools are rendering them a great service. According to figures for December, 1949, there were 14,000 schools of this nature throughout the country with a total enrolment of 700,000 students.

To promote the study movement, government cultural and educational institutions have organised literary and artistic activities. These activities include writing newspaper articles and radio programmes, presenting scientific and cultural exhibitions and publishing large numbers of special books and journals. According to figures compiled by bookstores in North, East and Northeast China, 1,013,500 copies of books on revolutionary theory and government policies, including collections of documents, were printed and sold between January and March, 1950. The Central People's Broadcasting Station recently sponsored a programme entitled "Talks on Social Sciences", and within two months it had a basic audience of 206 organised groups scattered over 20 provinces. The play "The Song of the Red Flag" had a continuous run in Shanghai for many weeks, breaking all previous attendance records in China. All these examples serve to show the magnitude of the people's study movement.

Although tremendous achievements have been made in the self-education and ideological remoulding of the liberated people, the movement is still in its initial stages. We must strengthen the planning of our work so as to further develop the movement and consolidate the

achievements already made. Also it must be admitted that quite a few shortcomings still exist in our work. For example, we launched a general publicity campaign concerning the implementation of the *Common Programme*, our fundamental law, yet the work was rather vague and superficial and was not geared to actual needs. Such shortcomings must be overcome in our future work.

II. THE GENERAL PICTURE OF CULTURE AND EDUCATIONAL CONSTRUCTION WORK

Our legacy of culture and education from the old China was very meagre in quantity, and in content it largely failed to satisfy the demands of the people. Cultural and educational work, however successful in the old Liberated Areas, was small in volume. Basic facts and figures on education, public health, science, the arts and publications reveal the following:

EDUCATION: According to available figures, which are incomplete, China now has 227 colleges with 134,000 students; 3,690 middle schools with 1,090,000 students; 212,890 primary schools with 16,000,000 pupils. (These figures do not include political schools and political training classes).

Sixty-one per cent of China's colleges are government-supported and the rest are privately-run. A considerable proportion of middle and primary schools are also privately-run.

Where agrarian reform has been completed and economic reconstruction is going ahead, our educational work has already surpassed that of the old days in quantity and fundamental changes have taken place in the composition of the students. In the Northeast, the number

of schools at the end of 1949 were 60 per cent greater than the number before liberation. In the five provinces of North China, the increase was 50 per cent. In North-east and North China, the children of workers, farm labourers, poor and middle peasants and urban poor now form the majority of school children.

SCIENCE: The Academy of Sciences of China has now 14 research institutes, an astronomy station and an industrial research institute, all reorganised from former KMT research institutes. In addition, there are 93 natural science research institutions, 17 scientific institutes and 29 factories making scientific appliances in China.

THE ARTS: China now has three state-owned motion picture studios in Northeast China, Peking and Shanghai, which are capable of producing two-thirds of the country's films. There are four important privately-owned picture studios. Throughout China, there are 467 cinemas of which 206 are publicly-owned, 10 jointly-owned and 251 privately-owned. According to incomplete figures, in the 18 major cities below the Great Wall there are 151 theatres, while there are 82 theatres in the Northeast. There are also 400 dramatic groups, with 40,000 actors, musicians, singers, dancers and other members throughout the country, including those attached to the People's Liberation Army and those directed by municipal and higher governments.

PRESS: China now has 624 newspapers of which 165 are dailies. One hundred and twenty-two dailies are publicly-owned and 43 are privately-owned. There are also 216 army papers. According to incomplete figures compiled in May, 153 Chinese dailies had a total daily circulation of 2,600,000 copies. The Hsinhua News Agency has a network of seven branches and 43 sub-branches,

including three overseas sub-branches. There are 51 publicly-owned and 32 privately-owned broadcasting stations operating in China, of which 22 of the privately-owned are located in Shanghai.

PUBLICATIONS: The state-operated Hsinhua Bookstore now has 887 branches and 30 printing shops, which constitute about one-fourth of China's printing capacity. According to reports of the Publications Administration, there are 244 privately-owned publishing companies and six jointly-owned companies in 11 major cities throughout China. From January to March, 1950, the publishing companies in East, North and Northeast China published 878 new books, totalling 52 million copies, second editions included. Out of this total, the Hsinhua Bookstore alone published 40 million copies.

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Since its formation, the Committee of Cultural and Educational Affairs of the Government Administration Council in cooperation with all organs concerned, has conducted the above-mentioned people's political study movement. Furthermore, it has carried out the work of taking over and reorganising cultural and educational institutions and of restoring, reforming and developing these institutions, giving top priority to the more important ones. I shall report just on a few important points:

Promotion of Education for Workers and Peasants

Since the All-China Educational Workers' Conference of last December, short-term middle schools for workers and peasants have come into being. In the first half of 1950, thirteen such schools of an experimental nature were set up in Peking and in the various Greater Administra-

tive Areas. In addition to those established by the educational departments of the government, quite a number of such schools have been set up in the army and in public organisations. More will be opened during the latter part of this year.

In the meantime, many spare-time schools and technical classes have been set up for workers in industrial centres. In a recent directive, the Government Administration Council decided that Committees on Spare-time Education for Factory Workers and Employees be set up throughout the country with the aim of guiding spare-time education.

Education for the peasants takes the form mainly of winter study groups in which the peasants study during the slack winter months. Many of these groups have grown into schools or study classes which are now open all the year round. In the Northeast, as many as 26,006 winter study classes have grown into regular schools for the masses.

Reform of Higher Education

Some important tasks have been carried out in reforming higher education. The first of these was the establishment of the Chinese People's University. Its establishment was based on the experience of the Soviet Union plus the actual requirements in China. Its educational methods emphasise the integration of study with practice. Its purpose is to train cadres who have had considerable revolutionary experience, selected industrial workers and young intellectuals for work in national construction.

The second task was the training of teachers. In the first half of this year, the National Peking Teachers'

University was reformed in line with the new educational policy. Changes in the curricula and teaching methods have also been introduced in other higher educational institutions.

The third task was the convening of the National Higher Education Conference in June, 1950, which discussed the future policy and aims of higher education. The conference adopted several proposals, including decisions on reforming the curricula of institutes of higher learning, and also laid down provisional regulations governing institutes of higher learning. The conference pointed out that the teaching methods of higher educational institutes must emphasise the integration of theory with practice. It also pointed out that higher educational institutes must train senior staffs for construction work needed by the State and must begin to open its doors to young workers and peasants and to government cadres who come from worker or peasant backgrounds.

Development of the Cinema Industry

In 1950 the Ministry of Culture of the Central People's Government plans to make 26 feature films, 17 documentary films, 48 newsreels and one colour film, and to dub 40 Soviet films with Chinese sound tracks. A part of this plan has been fulfilled, while the greater part of the projected films are under preparation. In addition, in order to turn out more progressive films so as to be able to cut down the showing of inferior American and English films, the Ministry is giving aid to private film studios and has set up film studios jointly run by the state and private interest. Loans were made available to private film studios. During the first half of 1950, \$6,000,000,000 (people's currency) and \$220,000 (Hong-kong dollars) were loaned to private film studios.

As a result of the warm reception given to progressive films by the public, the number of American and English films screened in North China dropped from 63 films in the first eight months of last year to 12 in the latter four months. It has been one of the chief tasks of our cinema workers to turn out more progressive Chinese films, to dub more Soviet films with Chinese sound tracks and to raise the standard of Chinese films so that more progressive films will be shown throughout the country.

Another great task facing our cinema workers is to take our films to army units, factories and rural areas. We plan to increase our present 100 cinema projection units to 700. There will be an average of 20 mobile units in each province, apart from those catering to factories, army units and public institutions.

Reform of Old-style Arts

The reformation of old-style arts is being carried out in close cooperation with the old-style artistes. The number of such artistes throughout the country is considerable. In Peking and Tientsin alone, there are over 6,000 of these artistes, according to an incomplete estimate. Their importance cannot be overlooked. We are adopting a prudent policy in the reformation of old-style arts. We first examined and corrected some of the old dramas and songs, and then began to write new ones for the artistes. Under the joint guidance of the government departments and artistes concerned, work along this line has met with initial success. In the Northeast, Peking and Tientsin, hundreds of ballads, Peking operas and other forms of folk art have been re-written.

A research institute, a school and a theatre have been set up in Peking to reform Peking opera. In the first

half of this year, over 2,000 artistes in Peking enrolled in two training classes to reform themselves. They included many well-known artistes. Similar work is being done elsewhere. This reform movement has become popular with the old-style artistes and is beginning to bear fruit.

Improvement of the Press and the Strengthening of the Broadcasting Service

A national journalists conference was called by the Press Administration in April, 1950. The conference adopted "Decisions on the Improvement of Newspaper Work" in which it was pointed out that newspapers must establish close ties with the masses, develop criticism and self-criticism, and strengthen their economic coverage in coordination with the economic policy and construction of the State. These decisions soon influenced all newspapers. The *People's Daily* in Peking and other leading local papers are now playing an important role in guiding and criticising the work of the people and of government organs, and they have gained still greater prestige among their readers.

Newspapers are now run on a business basis. A division of labour between government and commercial newspapers has now been made. In many places, post offices now serve as distributors of newspapers. In this way, efficiency is increased and distributing costs reduced.

In the first half of 1950, an international broadcasting station and nine new broadcasting stations were set up and six more were taken over. Five others are being built. During the national journalists conference, it was decided to set up a nationwide radio-monitoring network. This decision is now being carried out.

Readjustment of State-owned and Private-owned Publishing Houses and the Establishment of a System of Distribution

The Publications Administration plans to call a national publishers' conference this autumn with a view to readjusting State-owned and privately-owned publishing houses, to discussing a reasonable division of labour and to overcoming the chaotic and disorganised situation in the publishing business. In order to achieve efficient distribution of books printed either by State-owned or privately-owned publishing houses, thus cutting down the costs of distribution and the price of books, the Publications Administration is preparing to reorganise the Hsin-hua Bookstore so that it will no longer print books but will become the sole distributor of all publications throughout the country. This plan will be put into effect this autumn.

Promotion of Exchange of Culture Among Fraternal Nationalities

To help promote an exchange of culture among all the nationalities in China, we have already instituted radio programmes in the Tibetan and Uighur languages and are planning to start broadcasts soon in Mongolian. Newspapers are being published in the Mongolian, Uighur, Kazakh and Korean languages. We have also set up the Sinkiang college in Tihua and a college for national minorities in Lanchow, Kansu Province, as well as other schools for national minorities. Field teams have been sent to Inner Mongolia and other places to make motion pictures about the life of national minorities. Two groups are being organised by the Committee of Cultural and Educational Affairs and the Commission of Nationalities