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The Educational Experiment of the Great Leap Forward, 1958–1959: Its Inherent Contradictions

JULIA KWONG

And shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales which may be devised by casual persons, and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they grow up? [PLATO, *The Republic*]

The educational system of China has undergone far-reaching changes in the last quarter century. Over this time period, Western scholars of Chinese education have continually reappraised their analyses of these reforms. In the 1960s Western scholars labeled the Great Leap Forward (GLF) a fanatical attempt to increase the educational capacity of the country and accused the Chinese government of failing to consider existing conditions and constraints. In the 1970s a number of social scientists began to agree with the Chinese government's reform efforts.¹ They interpreted the educational reforms of this period as part of the continuous struggle to establish a socialist order and as continuous with changes made in educational policies during the Cultural Revolution. Given the current renewed interest in the GLF, a review of changes made in this period should provide us with a better understanding of recent educational developments.

When the Communist party took political control of mainland China in 1949, only 20 percent of the population had completed some level of education; about 90 percent of the population was illiterate. Educational facilities were mostly located along the coast or in the major urban centers, and many rural regions simply had no educational facilities, a pattern which resulted in a great disparity in the distribution of educational opportunities.²

The government had the enormous task of expanding educational facilities and equalizing opportunities. In carrying out this task, they were faced with almost insurmountable difficulties: a lack of physical resources and competent teachers that was another legacy of centuries of foreign exploitation and civil war. To overcome this, the new communist government adopted the policy of providing both informal and formal

¹ Ruth Gamberg, *Red and Expert: Education in the People's Republic of China* (New York: Schocken, 1977); John Gurley, "The Symposium Paper: Discussion and Comments," *Modern China* 3, no. 4 (1977): 443–64.

² Leo Orleans, *Professional Manpower and Education in Communist China* (Washington, D.C.: National Science Foundation, 1960), pp. 5–7; *People's Daily*, January 18, 1958 in *Survey of China Mainland Press* (henceforth known as *SCMP*), no. 705, p. 21.

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facilities that were reminiscent of their own recent experiences in what is known as the Yen-an Period.³ The Chinese written characters were simplified; and newspaper reading groups, broadcasting groups, and evening classes were organized in which peasants and workers could gather together to teach and learn. Efforts were also made to provide improved formal education; for example, between 1949 and 1957 total enrollment in schools increased from about 25 to 65 million. Enrollment in primary schools increased nearly three times, in secondary schools five times, and in higher education four times.⁴

This does not mean that China solved her educational problems. Even if one accepts the above estimates, which are probably exaggerated, only 40 percent of the school-age population could have been in school. Reliable data on the social class backgrounds of students are not available; we do know that at the university level only 35 percent of the students came from the peasant or worker class. Education, especially at the higher levels, remained the prerogative of rich peasants and the bourgeoisie.⁵ In addition, the government retained the formal educational structures inherited from the previous regime—a 6-3-3 system, with 6 years of primary school, 3 years of junior high school, and 3 years of senior high school. Because of the lack of trained teachers, pre-1949 personnel were also retained. Although some changes were made in the curriculum, textbooks rewritten, and passages that blatantly opposed communism deleted, the program emphasis remained academic without the practical application that is so basic to socialist, or communist, educational theory.⁶ Little importance was accorded to manual labor, and rote learning and memorization continued to be the dominant modes of instruction. By and large, the pre-communist structure of the school system prevailed, which was a far cry from the ideals of the integration of theory and practice, or mental with manual labor, enunciated by Mao Tse-tung.

According to Mao, education was entrusted with the task of producing a generation of “red and expert” intellectuals committed to the welfare of the working class and who would identify with the proletariat, not a separate or elite intelligentsia.⁷ The first attribute of these working-class intellectuals, “redness,” referred to their communist

³ P. J. Seybolt, “The Yen-an Revolution in Mass Education,” *China Quarterly*, no. 48 (1971), pp. 641–70.

⁴ *Ten Great Years* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1960), p. 192.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 192. The estimate that only 40 percent of the school-age population is enrolled in school is based on the figure that about 189 million of the population was between 5 and 17 years old.

⁶ For details see Tseng Chiu-sam, *Society, Schools and Progress* (London: Pergamon, 1968); Orleans.

⁷ Mao Tse-tung, “Instructions on the Questions of Redness and Expertise,” in *Current Background*, no. 899, p. 28.

ideological position. They were to be authentic communists, ready to devote themselves to socialist reconstruction and to contribute wherever and whenever their presence was required. Expertise, on the other hand, referred to the knowledge and skills possessed by this new breed of intellectuals—abilities evaluated ultimately in relation to their contribution to the socialist economy. To perform this task effectively, the educational system had to be changed.

The inability of the government to effect radical structural change in the educational system, despite recognition of the need, reflected a concern with other pressing problems. After assuming power in 1949, the government saw its immediate and most pressing priorities in securing firm political control within China and legitimizing its position in the international context. Resuscitation of the shattered national economy and provision of basic needs for the vast population were intimately linked to these goals and were enormous tasks in their own right. In light of such exigencies and the inevitable diffusion of economic resources, it is understandable why the educational structure remained untouched. But, as I shall indicate, the roots of this inertia in educational reform were much deeper and are not fully explained by other priorities or distractions. The thesis to be examined maintains that the government encountered stubborn resistance to change when the opportunities were available to restructure the system.

Educational Policies of the GLF

The educational policies of the GLF in 1958 represented the first systematic attempt to reorganize China's formal educational system since the 1949 seizure of political power. Embodied in a joint directive on education issued by the Central Committee of the Communist party and the State Council and appearing in the *People's Daily* on September 19, 1958, the following statement announced a policy change:

One of the great historical tasks now confronting the whole party and people is to train tens of millions of red and expert intellectuals of the working class by giving correct leadership in educational work, but firmly adhering to the party line in educational development. . . . Education is one of the powerful tools for transforming the old and building up the society . . . to serve the socialist revolution, the building of socialism and the communist society which seeks to eliminate the remnants of all exploiting classes and systems of exploitation, the difference between mental and physical labor.*

The Communist party recognized that its immediate priorities were a closer alignment of education with party tenets, firm adherence to official

* *People's Daily*, September 19, 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1833, p. 12.

policy, wide dissemination of technical knowledge, and direct application of all aspects of education to economic development—in short, a total restructuring of the traditional model. “The first step in this direction was to expand educational facilities: This calls for the simultaneous promotion of schools run by the state and schools run by factories, mines, enterprises, and agricultural cooperatives; general education and vocational education; education for the adults and education for children, full-time schools and schools which divide their time equally between work and study or sparetime schools.”⁹ Such sweeping and strategic reforms obviously had to take account of limited economic and human resources; these constraints dictated the introduction of supplementary, as well as alternative, approaches to the formal educational system. This was to be accomplished through regular full-time and both part-time and work-study schools.

The full-time schools, which were state financed, were modeled after those established at the turn of the century. The major innovation consisted of the work-study schools (including the part-time schools), which were locally financed and operated, with students dividing their time between work and study. These part-time schools were usually attached to local industrial units, such as mines and factories, and their main purposes were to raise the cultural level of working adults and to provide technical training that would increase their contribution to production. The work-study schools were typically adjuncts of agricultural units and were geared to the needs of the younger generation.

The coupling of education with participation in labor represented a basic structural change within education in conformity with communist ideology. This policy had not been rejected before 1957, but labor education had simply not been emphasized previously. Aside from the usual study of political texts and classroom discussion, participation in productive work was listed as a formal course requirement in every type of school after 1957. The time spent in productive work was to vary annually from 1 to 5 months, and student activities ranged from tending vegetable gardens in school yards to working in neighborhood factories or communes. The central purpose of these activities was not purely economic (to supplement financing the schools) but also educational, allowing students to test the theoretical knowledge they had learned in the classroom. More important, such experience was to provide the younger generation with a chance to associate closely with the working class in order to overcome a traditional disdain for manual labor to express the highest ideals of communism.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Implementation of the Policies of the GLF

Policy directives concerning education emanating from the central Chinese government often appear vague by Western standards because they do not take the form of concrete orders specifying goals to be achieved, or specific steps to be taken. The formulas of such directives point, rather, to extremely general goals; details and concrete measures are left to the discretion of local authority. The allocation of local resources for school financing, the location and number of schools to be built, and recruitment of students, teachers, and administrators are examples of details delegated to local authority.

The educated elite, which included most government employees, was not very enthusiastic about the new policies of the GLF. Many government bureaucrats had been schooled in the traditional Chinese educational system or had been administrators of the overthrown regime whose policies were directly opposed to those of the new government.¹⁰ Consequently, members of this group generally had more traditional ideas about education and tended to look on the masses, especially the peasants and workers, as helpless and inferior because they worked with their hands. As direct heirs and beneficiaries of the mandarin tradition, such individuals looked down on manual labor with disdain and considered formal education their exclusive preserve. It is not hard to see why this group was uneasy about the educational policies of the GLF. Aside from these prejudices, they questioned whether the cultivation of communist ideology—that is, “redness”—would hinder the acquisition of expertise and thereby retard national development.

They also challenged the wisdom of involving the community in the establishment and running of schools. Their skepticism was expressed in many different forms. According to official sources:

Some comrades expressed the fear that the movement would be a mockery of school education. . . . Some comrades, commenting on the increase of hours of manual labor in agricultural middle schools, thought the increase was abnormal. With regard to the development of higher education, some comrades, hearing that peasants have set up their own universities in the countryside, would ridicule the idea, believing that a university without a staff of qualified professors and students who have graduated from senior middle schools cannot be called a university.¹¹

Whatever the source and form of opposition or concern, the educated elite carried out the central government's directives literally, if not

¹⁰ *New China News Agency* (henceforth known as *NCNA*), September 21, 1952, and *Chien-fang Jih Pao*, September 1952, in *SCMP*, no. 421, pp. 14–16. See also Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 246–47.

¹¹ *Kuangming Jih Pao*, July 11, 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1831, pp. 14. See also *Chiao Shih Pao*, July 1, 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1814, p. 9.

spiritedly, because of the firm political control of the Chinese Communist party.

One part of the GLF program for ideological education specified that greater attention be given to political education. Previously, courses offered in politics had been largely confined to the study of treatises by Mao and Lenin and to party documents. Now, teachers and students engaged in the active study and discussion of Marxist-Leninist political and ideological writings to develop the ability to analyze national and international situations from a dialectical materialist perspective. Fulfillment of these goals was thwarted, however, by the persistence of traditional modes of tuition and evaluation—for example, memorization or rote learning, which could not be substantially altered by decrees that often failed to take account of their radical implications. Teachers were accustomed to the formerly sanctioned teaching methods and retained authority in classrooms even though the aims of education had been changed. The communist leaders wanted nothing less than to alter and shape the consciousness of the population in accordance with their world views. But this aim was wittingly and unwittingly subverted by pedagogues whose thinking was captive to other ideals and practices. Thus, many students who were adept in memorizing political tracts were, in practice, unwilling to fulfill the communist ideals of serving the proletariat.¹²

In contrast, the government was more successful in programs designed to involve students in productive work. At the primary and secondary school levels, students cleaned their own dormitories and school premises and often kept their own vegetable plots. In the science universities, especially, there was a closer integration of theory with practice. Students generally worked part time in neighboring communes or factories on such projects as building dams, irrigation canals, and hydroelectric stations, or in iron and steel production, thereby putting their economic and scientific knowledge to practical use. There was also a more pragmatic orientation in the part-time and work-study schools where the curriculum included industrial techniques and agricultural science. About a third to a half of student time was devoted in these schools to the practice of techniques they had been taught.¹³

The main purpose of these innovations was to cultivate skills and expertise necessary for the development of a mature economy and to generate mass support for socialist ideals, but newspaper reports emphasized the economic contributions made by student participation.¹⁴

¹² *People's Daily*, June 17, 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1809, p. 8.

¹³ *NCNA*, December 19, 1957, in *SCMP*, no. 1683, p. 11.

¹⁴ *NCNA*, August 25, 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1947, p. 11.

Some cadre members were more concerned with the immediate economic gains that student participation in production might bring than with political socialization—another manifestation of the lack of understanding and commitment to official policies among educated cadres.

This lack of commitment is also evident in the way work-study schools were set up. We have numerous accounts of local communities contributing spare furniture, rooms, buildings, and other physical facilities to schools. In some localities, experienced farmers or workers taught farming and industrial techniques. However, reports about local communities becoming involved in school planning and administration or in the drafting of curricula are scarce.¹⁵ The communities were only urged to contribute material resources; effective decision-making power was wielded by bureaucratic cadres. The more subtle intention of involving a broad strata of the people in the provision of education remained an unrealized ideal.

Given the lack of a genuine commitment to communist ideals, school authorities focused their efforts on policies that gave immediate and tangible results. A strategy of external compliance succeeded in generating a climate of enthusiasm. For example, in 1958, over 9,000 agricultural middle schools were built in nine provinces, and 130 new universities were built in the northern provinces in April alone.¹⁶ Although such figures must be interpreted cautiously, even if more conservative estimates are made, enormous activity, if not genuine interest, is indicated. Inevitably, resources were strained in many areas, and books, equipment, support services, and competent teachers were in short supply.¹⁷ As a consequence, the intent to wed education to economic development and political consciousness was effectively undermined and often rendered impossible to implement.

Although the impression has been given that these shortcomings may be attributed primarily to the attitudes and actions of cadres, such a simplistic interpretation is not supported and fails to capture the complexity of the role of education in the GLF. The sources of failure lay within the initial mandates themselves because many of the regular academic schools interpreted their task as maintaining and raising traditional academic standards. This goal (which was quite valid in light of the ambiguous and vague guidelines) was at odds with the desire to obliterate the distinctions between theory and practice, and mental and manual labor. The possibility of defeating the spirit of Mao's thought by

¹⁵ NCNA, March 28, 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 1958, p. 19; NCNA, June 4, 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1788, p. 20; R. Barendsen, *The Agricultural Middle School* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, 1964), p. 18.

¹⁶ Hsueh hsi, August 1958, in *Extract from China Mainland Magazine* (henceforth known as *ECMM*), no. 146, p. 26.

¹⁷ *People's Daily*, March 10, 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 1985, p. 16.

adhering to literal procedures for accomplishing the desired goal is clearly shown in the following directive:

... among these types of schools, some [regular schools] are charged with the task of raising the educational level. These schools must have complete courses, and pay attention to raising the quality of their teaching and scientific research as well as their different branches of study. Without jeopardizing their present standard of achievement, these schools should exert themselves in helping build new schools. Any lowering of the standard of achievement in these schools, however, has a harmful effect on the cause of education as a whole.¹⁸

The traditional acceptance of the superiority of academic pursuits was, of course, strong in China. The special role assigned to the regular academic schools in the above directive enhanced further their status vis-à-vis the work-study schools. The effect, ultimately, was to encourage teachers in the work-study schools to strive for the same curricula and standards of achievement as those used in the regular schools, even though this meant sacrificing the intended practical orientation.¹⁹

According to communist ideology, the pursuit of academic excellence does not conflict with ideological or practical goals. In reality, however, this was not so in China during the late 1950s. Academic excellence was defined by the incumbents of the educational system as knowledge of the Chinese classics or the theoretical sciences, both of which had little direct relevance to the practical needs of the country. Crucial to the definition of excellence was the premise that mental work was superior to physical labor and that knowledge was both objective and apolitical. The encouragement of academic excellence, therefore, meant encouraging skills and values antithetical to the communist ideal and penalizing persons possessing the skills and attitudes valued by a communist, especially the ability to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical situation.

This is demonstrated clearly by the national examination system. In 1957 educational opportunities were still limited in China; for example, one out of every 150 primary school pupils had the chance to go on to a university,²⁰ and the criterion for selection was examination performance. This system was retained during the GLF. Students continued to be graded on their achievement in examinations, which effectively measured their ability to memorize materials and quote from recognized authorities. Those who excelled academically moved to the next higher educational level, while those with other political or professional qualities that were valued by the Communist party were more likely to spend their time in productive labor. Although these persons might become more

¹⁸ *People's Daily*, September 19, 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1833, p. 12.

¹⁹ *NCNA*, April 25, 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1947, p. 12

²⁰ Estimate based on *Ten Great Years* (n. 4 above), p. 192.

socially integrated with the proletariat, they were weeded out of the educational system by the examinations. The existing intransigent attitudes of educational administrators and teachers, who became all the more convinced of the intrinsic utility and prestige of academic and rote learning, was further reinforced. Such were the roots of inertia and resistance to change.

Conflicts between Educational Innovations and the Economic Sector

Given the important role assigned to the economy by the Chinese, we are obliged to consider how economic considerations impinged upon and affected educational policy and institutions. If the education system was tailored to meet the needs of the economy, we would expect the two systems to be supportive of each other. This did not occur, however. Many difficulties faced by the educational system were compounded further by economic imperatives that were at odds with the former.

Since 1949, the Chinese had systematically attempted to transform the basis of property ownership. Initially, the property of the wealthy landowners was distributed among peasants, giving each peasant an average of about 15 mou (about 2.3 acres) of arable land, and every two peasants shared a draft animal and plow. Foreign industries were confiscated without compensation, and those owned by Chinese nationals came under joint state and private jurisdiction with profit shared equally. By 1956, control and management of much of the land had been transferred from mutual aid teams to cooperatives, later to communes of up to 4,000 households. Most of the industries in China similarly became state enterprises, with the former owners drawing a fixed interest of 5 percent of their original investment.²¹

Despite these changes, some forms of private enterprise remained. Peasants could retain possession of their own tools and the lands around their houses if the total private acreage did not exceed 5 percent of collectively held land. Small handicraft industries were also permitted on a private basis within the home. These interstitial forms of private ownership sanctioned, to an extent, profit seeking and individualism, which were encouraged further by "free" markets that served as outlets for the sale of privately produced industrial and agricultural goods. Such markets, which provided continuing opportunities for speculation and the amassing of private wealth, obviously worked against narrowing of class differences.

²¹ For details, see Hsueh Mu-Chiao, *The Socialist Transformation of the National Economy in China* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1960); Audrey Donnithorne, *China's Economic System* (New York: Praeger, 1976); and Barry Richman, *Industrial Society in Communist China* (New York: Random House, 1970).

The division of labor also served to perpetuate class divisions. Those performing supervisory, coordinating, or technically sophisticated roles in industry and agriculture were more highly rewarded and respected than workers and peasants who were directly engaged in the production process. Managers and engineers were paid more than workers and cadres, and accountants were given more work points than ordinary peasants.²²

These economic realities were powerful forces against the implementation of the GLF's educational policies. Deference to and differential rewards for officials and experts were inimical to the survival of the work-study schools and reinforced the traditional prerogatives of intellectuals. The common people were deterred from active involvement in the establishment and running of these schools, thus reinforcing their beliefs that "outsiders should not lead insiders" and "those who work with their brains are superior to those who work with their hands." The bureaucratic cadres and educated elite continued to make decisions, take initiative, and provide leadership in the provision of education, leaving those who were less schooled with secondary roles.

These disparities also meant that those with higher education were better off economically than those with less education. Since access to higher education was limited and since passing the state examination was the only channel to higher studies, academic pursuit was attractive and participation in the production process unattractive. This worked against the Chinese attempt to inculcate communist ideals in the younger generation by further rendering the pursuit of political "redness" and professional or vocational "expertise" mutually exclusive and antagonistic.

The prestige of the regular academic schools was further enhanced and the work-study schools deprecated because those enrolled in the latter were generally unable to rise socially. This confirmed the perceptions of teachers concerning the superiority and utility of academic pursuits and led many teachers and administrators in work-study schools to conform to the academic standards of regular schools. Many of those whom the work-study schools were intended to serve refused to attend because the work-study schools were regarded as mobility "traps" which destined graduates to a life of toil in the fields or in a factory.²³

The final blow to the educational policies of the GLF was dealt by the economy. A primitive level of mechanization meant that production output and the resources available to educational development were limited. The establishment of large numbers of new schools and the

²² The work point system is a way of distributing remuneration in the rural areas. Work points are calculated according to type of work, ability, and skill.

²³ Barendsen, pp. 24–25.

numerous irrigation and industrial projects that were coincidentally initiated placed severe strains on local resources. In 1958, serious floods in the south and prolonged drought in the north brought the country to the brink of economic collapse. About 100 million acres, a third of the arable land, was suffering from either drought or flood.²⁴ By March 1959 there was a call to consolidate the work-study schools,²⁵ and many were closed or amalgamated with regular schools.

When economic conditions did not improve, even top members of the government became disgruntled and disillusioned. At the Lushan Conference held in July 1959, the policies of the GLF came under direct attack. Nevertheless, support remained relatively strong, critics were dismissed, and the policies of the GLF reaffirmed in principle.²⁶ At roughly the same time a state of emergency was declared,²⁷ and the whole population was enlisted to save the harvest, including workers and students who went to the countryside to help. The remaining agricultural work-study schools became convenient labor pools, and all forms of educational activity virtually ceased. The attempt to develop a parallel structure that would produce red and expert working-class intellectuals had to be abandoned.

These events paralleled a growing sense of dissatisfaction with lowered academic standards in the regular schools and were exacerbated by the preoccupation with production priorities. Externally, the Sino-Soviet split was widening, eventually culminating in the withdrawal of over 10,000 Soviet technical personnel in 1960. This sudden withdrawal added more chaos to the floundering economy and further convinced the leaders of the urgency of training their own experts.²⁸ As a response to these pressures, the central government became more concerned with the cultivation of "expertise".²⁹ Commitment to ideological education was not abandoned but subordinated to a renewed emphasis on raising academic standards. Consequently, the traditional structure of Chinese education remained relatively intact.

Conclusion

The innovations of the GLF I have discussed were not the result of "fanatical" attempts by the government to expand educational facilities in China. No doubt, such a facile interpretation is possible in light of the

²⁴ Anna L. Strong, *The Rise of the Chinese People's Communes and Six Years After* (Peking: New World Press, 1964), p. 120.

²⁵ *People's Daily*, March 10, 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 1958, p. 16.

²⁶ For details, see *The Case of P'eng Teh-huai* (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1968).

²⁷ *NCNA*, July 27, 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 2071, p. 9.

²⁸ For details, see Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962).

²⁹ *NCNA*, April 9, 1960, in *Current Background*, no. 623, p. 4.

ways in which these policies were enacted. In their attempts to obtain immediate results, administrative cadres zealously pursued the establishment of new schools, rather than taking a more cautious approach and considering the needs of each area and the available resources before embarking on projects that were either unwanted or economically impractical. Such a charge of fanaticism has also been based on the commitment to an educational model that seemed alien not only to the Chinese but also to the Western world of the 1950s and 1960s. This model entailed the assumption that students would benefit from direct involvement in the economic system (both academically and politically) and that everyone should participate in the running of schools.

The educational programs of the GLF represented the first organized attempt by the Chinese government to restructure and align the educational system with the national economy. The educational system was reformed in keeping with the needs of a socialist country moving toward communism and a generation of working-class intellectuals who would serve the needs of a socialist reconstruction of society. Besides disseminating an ideology supportive of a new socioeconomic order, the educational system was charged with the task of teaching specific skills pertinent to that stage of development. The new system was designed to minimize strains on the economy, but despite these intentions, educational and economic imperatives were not successfully synchronized and integrated.

Contradictions between the educational and economic spheres were especially marked during the GLF because China at this time was still making a transition from a feudal-capitalist to a socialist society. Pre-1949 economic patterns and values encouraged the pursuit of education for personal gain and fostered a strong respect for traditional intellectual pursuits, which contravened attempts to create an egalitarian educational system that would give equal weight to mental and manual labor. The economic disasters of late 1958 and 1959 merely settled the outcome by hastening the closure of the work-study schools and abandoning the policies of the GLF.

The educational policies of the GLF ultimately foundered because of patterned inertia within the educational system. The attitude of cadre members contravened the spirit of official policy, and their ambivalence influenced the way they blindly interpreted and executed directives from the center. These attitudes reinforced practices inherited from the pre-1949 period, for example, reliance on examinations, emphasis on memorization, the prestige accruing to academic achievement, and traditional respect for authority. Hence, the creation of a new educational system was blocked. The policymakers themselves unwittingly perpetuated conflicts within the educational system by assigning the special role of maintaining academic standards to the regular full-time

academic schools, leaving the part-time work-study schools behind in the scramble for status and resources.

An analysis of the history of the GLF shows that effective changes did not depend on the goodwill of educational policymakers alone but also on the way in which such policies were implemented. Other unforeseen obstacles that affected the proposed changes stemmed primarily from the scarcity of economic resources. In part, the lessons learned during the GLF led the government to attempt more basic reforms in education when the Cultural Revolution was proclaimed in the 1960s.³⁰ At that time, the state examination for university entrance was abolished and a system of community recommendation of candidates substituted. Bureaucratic control was subverted by the introduction of a supervisory committee of representatives consisting of educational administrators, students, and community members, and the exclusive pursuit of esoteric knowledge was disavowed by introducing "redness," or ideological purity, as the major criterion for university entrance. Instead of superimposing an overall plan for change from above, students were mobilized, the community was involved, and the resistance of administrators minimized.

³⁰ For details of the educational reforms since the Cultural Revolution, see Marianne Bastid, "Economic Necessity and Political Ideals in Educational Reform during the Cultural Revolution," *China Quarterly*, no. 42 (1970), pp. 16–45; Theodore Ch'en, *The Maoist Educational Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1974); P. J. Seybolt, *Revolutionary Education in China* (White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts & Sciences Press, 1973). For a good bibliographic source, see Stewart Fraser, ed., *Chinese Education and Society* (White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts & Sciences Press, 1973).