

## THE EFFECT OF THE REVOLUTION UPON THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF CHINA

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In describing China's early attempts to introduce modern education a certain writer compared her to "an infant sea-bather in the act of taking his first plunge, touching the water and then running away, wading out and then tearing back. He did not dare to succumb to the allurements of the fascinating element and though the sight of adult bathers frolicking and playing 'hide and seek' with waves shot an arrow of envy through him, he never undertook the attempt." This attitude, no matter how true it was at the beginning, was certainly not true at the dawn of the revolution. At that time China's attitude toward modern education was not the attitude of the timid sea-bather. She had taken her first plunge, also the second, and even the third, and had fully determined to make modern education accessible to her people at any cost. Evidences of this attitude were seen on every hand. It was seen in the earnestness with which the government carried out its educational policy and in the marvelous development of the modern educational system since its inception in 1905. It was seen in the rapid growth of popular interest toward education shown in the numerous gifts and benefactions given by the wealthy as well as the poor for the extension of educational privileges through the establishment of schools and colleges. It was seen in the presence of an increasingly large number of men and women who were willing to devote their time and talent to the advancement of modern education. These are but a few of the signs which clearly indicate that at the dawn of the revolution the attitude of China toward improving her educational system in modern lines was not at all equivocal and that modern edu-

cation had come to China to stay and to exercise its influence over the life of the nation as well as that of the people.

In order to appreciate fully the effect of the revolution upon the educational system of China, it is necessary to examine first the status of education at the dawn of the revolution. According to the third annual report of the ministry of education, published in 1911, there were in China during 1910, 52,650 schools of different types, including normal, vocational and technical schools, with a student body numbering 1,625,534, a teaching corps numbering 89,766, and a corps of administrative officers numbering 95,800. Aside from the schools there also existed during that year 69 boards of education, 722 local, provincial, and national educational associations, 1558 educational exhorting societies, and 3867 public lecture halls. The total income for educational purposes during that year was Taels 23,331,171, and the expenditure for the same year was Taels 24,444,309. The educational property possessed by the government was valued at Taels 70,367,882.

Some idea as to the quality of the work done in the schools of that period may be gained from many of the educational exhibits that were given in different parts of the country. At the Nanking Industrial Exhibition held in 1910, more than 34,000 pieces of articles, including apparatus, textbooks, charts, drawings, hand-writings, etc., all products of schools, were collected and exhibited, and the list of prizes awarded to the articles at the exhibition shows that no less than 966 prizes, which is about half of the total number of prizes given out, were awarded to articles in the educational exhibit. Much highly favorable comment was also received from educators of the west who visited the exhibit. A similar but smaller collection of educational articles was sent to the exhibition not long ago held in Italy, and there again many prizes were received owing to the high standard reached both in skill and in thought content.

The status of education before the revolution is perhaps best seen in the influence which modern education had exerted upon the intellectual or thought life of the people. It is the opinion of many who are in a position to judge that

the schools and colleges of China contributed a great share to the revolutionary movement. Education evidently had created in the life of the students, both young and old, an intense dissatisfaction with things as they were and an earnest desire to better the condition of their country both socially and politically. Indeed, it has been repeatedly declared by Sun Yat-sen and others prominent in the revolutionary cause, that education was the chief factor in the successful overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the republic.

The revolution naturally caused a temporary cessation of educational activity. Much or all of the funds intended for the maintenance of educational institutions had to be used for the support of the armies. In consequence, the activities of a large number of schools and colleges were either suspended or seriously crippled, especially those situated near the centers of disturbance such as Chentu, Hankow, Wuchang, Nanking, Canton, and Peking. During the days of storm and stress, many of the school buildings were used as soldiers' quarters, and in not a few cases the entire schools were destroyed, with their books and apparatus looted and scattered. A large number of students volunteered for service in the field, either by forming themselves into new regiments, or by joining the regular army. Some of them even became influential leaders of the revolution. An equally large number of students organized associations for securing contributions of money toward the war fund. It was reported that the students of one college in south China alone in one campaign collected more than \$40,000 toward the maintenance of the republican army. Still others volunteered to give lectures in public with a view to supply the people with the facts of the revolution and to instruct them in the principles of a republic, as well as the duties of their new citizenship. Thus during the short revolutionary period the cause of education received a hard blow from which it has not yet fully recovered.

As soon as the provisional government was established in Nanking, the matter of education received its serious attention. Tsai Yuan-pei, for five years a student in the

University of Leipsic, and a man recognized as one who had much ability and experience in educational affairs, was appointed as the first minister of education. While the Shanghai Peace Conference was still in session and the ultimate fate of the country was still weighing in the balance, the new minister of education issued a circular to the republican governors urging them the importance of the resumption of educational work. He outlined a set of temporary regulations for the guidance of the educators of the nation, the most important of which stipulate: (1) In the first grade of elementary education boys and girls are to be allowed to attend the same schools. (2) Classical studies are to be abrogated in elementary education. (3) Elementary handicraft departments shall have especial attention. This same Tsai Yuan-pei later became the minister of education on the first cabinet of Yuan Shih-kai after the latter was elected provisional president of the new republic; but as a consequence of the resignation of Premier Tang Shao-yi, he was soon obliged to resign from his office. The vacancy left by him was filled by Fan Yuan Lien, who was then serving as vice-minister of education. Fan is a native of Hunan and a returned student from Japan. He was known as a man who was most familiar with the work of the ministry of education, having served the ministry under the Manchu dynasty in the capacity of a secretary. He was therefore not ill prepared to perform the task which fell upon him, namely, to reorganize the educational system of the country.

One of the first tasks in the reconstruction of the educational system has been the reorganization of the central administrative organ, namely, the ministry of education in Peking. The ministry as now reconstructed differs from the one in existence before the revolution in that it is less complex and less highly centralized. The ministry has at its head the minister of education, who has general charge of all matters relating to education and to the general supervision of all the schools of the country, together with all public buildings under the immediate control of the ministry. The minister is assisted by many officers. Aside from those

officers that are common in all ministries, there are provided 16 inspectors and 10 experts in art and science (2 chief and 8 regular experts). The inspectors are appointed by the president of the republic at the nomination of the minister, and the experts are appointed by the minister himself. The work of the ministry is apportioned to one general council and three bureaus, instead of five bureaus as was the case before the revolution. The general council has special charge of all matters relating to schools under the direct control of the ministry, teachers in public schools, educational associations, investigations and compilations, school hygiene, repair and building of school library, school museum, and educational exhibits. The three bureaus are as follows: (1) general education: (2) technical or professional education; and (3) social education. The bureau of general education is in charge of all matters relating to normal school, middle school, primary school, kindergarten, and schools for all forms of defectives, including the deaf and the blind. It is also in charge of matters relating to children's attendance at school and the selection and certification of teachers. The bureau of technical or professional education has charge of all affairs relating to university and college, higher technical school, the sending of students abroad, the national observatory and the preparation of the governmental almanac, the society of doctors of philosophy, the association for the unification of the mother tongue, the association of examiners of medical doctors and pharmacists. In addition, this bureau has control of all matters relating to societies of arts and science and the conferring of degrees. The bureau of social education is in charge of all affairs relating to correction of public ceremonies, museums, libraries, zoological and botanical gardens, fine arts museums and exhibits, music, literature and the stage, the investigation and collection of relics, popular education and public lecture bureaus, public and circulating libraries, and last of all the compilation, the investigation, and the planning of popular education.

With the reorganization of the ministry there has taken place a change in the educational system itself. In the

course of a few months the ministry drew up one after another four different schemes. The final one which was submitted to the Central Educational Conference for discussion, provides the following: Primary elementary school, four years, ages 6-9; higher elementary school, three years, ages 10-12; middle school, four years, ages 14-16; college preparatory, three years, ages 17-19; and college proper, three or four years, according to the nature of the course, ages 20-22 or 23. It also provides two types of normal schools, the normal school with a course of four years, and one year of preparatory course, ages 13-17; and the higher normal having a course of three years and one year of preparatory course, ages 17-20. Two kinds of industrial schools are also specified, each having a course of three years, ages 10-12 and 13-15. Of the technical schools there are provided one preparatory course of one year, age 17, and the technical course proper lasting three or four years according to the nature of the course, ages 18-20 or 21. The scheme given received the endorsement of the Central Educational Association with the exception of the college preparatory course which the conference urged to have shortened from three years to one year. For one reason or another this recommendation of the conference was not accepted and the plan as given above has since been officially made the new educational scheme for the republic. It is to be noticed here that according to this new plan the length of time required to go through this entire educational system from primary school up through the university will be shortened to fifteen or sixteen years from that of twenty-three years which was the period required under the system existing before the revolution.

The next step of importance taken by the ministry was the promulgation of the aim of education, which shows a fundamental change from the one upheld for centuries by the old conception, which was to make royal subjects of those who go to school and to inculcate in them ideas of loyalty to the emperor, honor for Confucius, high estimation for the warlike, and respect for that which is practical. Education is now to be conceived as a means of cultivating virtuous

or moral character in the young. This moral training is to be supplemented by an industrial and military education and rounded out by an asthetic education. The chief emphasis is then placed on the cultivation of a moral or virtuous character (tao teh). Just what is meant by "tao teh" one is left to interpret for himself, but it is sufficiently clear that it refers to public morality or virtues, for the center of interest in providing such an education is said to be for the welfare of the state, so long that education does not impede the progress of the world and interfere with the development of the individual. In broader terms, "the general education aims at spreading modern knowledge to all young nationals in order that they may be qualified for citizenship. The higher education is directed toward cultivating the habit of regarding learning as sacred." This conception of education found its echo in the three personal messages of the minister issued to the educational administrative officers, teachers, and students of the country.

As a result of this change of spirit and aim of education, many interesting problems have arisen. All reference books and text books relating to the Manchu reign, containing sentiments and ideas which are in any way inconsistent with the spirit of republican form of government, have either to be discarded or modified. Enterprising publishers and text-book writers are not slow to recognize the fresh avenues of profit and are busy preparing new text-books of a new kind to meet the new demand. Already many of these so-called republican readers have been placed on the market and are enjoying a popularity unexcelled by any other text books. In Kuangtung and several other provinces even the use of the old governmental almanacs had been prohibited for the reason that they contain much material that is superstitious and is therefore not fitted for the citizens of the republic. This objection, together with the fact that the western calendar has been adopted in place of the old one, has necessitated the preparation and publication of a new kind of official almanac for use among the people.

Since the organization of the new ministry of education,

it has been making attempts to restore the status of education in China. Among other activities, it sent a deputy to Japan to study the method adopted there for recognizing the work of mission schools. During the summer of 1912 it arranged and conducted a series of lectures in the capital for the benefit of students and others who were inclined to study and had spare time at their disposal. It also ordered the provincial educational authorities to start half day summer schools for the same purpose. During the early part of the summer of the same year this ministry of education summoned a conference generally known as the Central Educational Conference to meet in Peking, July 10, to August 10. This conference was called for the purpose of obtaining the knowledge, experience, and result of deliberation of the educators of the country with a view to promote the cause of education, hasten its progress, and help the government to adopt a sound educational policy. In order to insure the highest efficiency and best result from the conference, every effort was made to secure fully qualified men, including graduates of normal schools in China or abroad, who have had at least three years of experience in teaching, and educators of national renown. The delegation of the conference was chosen according to the following manner: Two from each of the twenty-two provinces and also from Mongolia and Tibet; one representing Chinese residing abroad; fifteen from teachers and administrative officers of schools under the direct control of the ministry of education; ten from the ministries of interior, finance, agriculture, commerce, and industry, army and navy; and others specially invited by the ministry of education. The conference was conducted under the direction of the minister. Among the problems presented for discussion were the following: School government; division between central control and local control of schools; education of Mongolians, Turkestans, and Tibetans; the giving of special privileges to elementary school teachers and the certification of elementary school teachers; the worshipping of Confucius, the adoption of a national anthem, and the organization of higher school educational conference. In all, ninety-two problems were submitted to



the conference for solution, but during the nineteen regular meetings that were held, only twenty-three more important ones of these were satisfactorily settled and recommended to the ministry of education. Although the body of educators forming the delegation of the conference were invested with no legislative power, nevertheless, the suggestions and recommendations made to the ministry after careful deliberation exerted a strong influence over the educational policy of the country, as could easily be seen by comparing the resolutions of the conference with the measures of reorganizing the educational system put into force after the closing of the conference through the various educational ordinances made public.

Before passing from the Central Educational Conference, it is interesting to note a controversy which came before the conference for settlement. Early in the summer it was noised abroad that Mr. Chung Wing Kwong, commissioner of education in the Kwangtung province, was sending an official delegate to the Central Educational Conference charged with the task of urging the conference to endorse the idea that in the future the public schools of China should not permit the worshipping of Confucius on the ground that all religions should be excluded from the schools; for this is the trend of the leading republican nations, and more and more the governments of these enlightened countries are excluding religion from the sphere of national education and priests from interfering therein. The suggestion, which is but a sign of the new movement toward general reform, that the government authorities have been pushing forward with great rapidity, proved to be too radical not only to the conservative Chinese, but also to some of the more cautious of the progressives. Immediately protests were raised from all directions. Many sent appeals to Chung Wing Kwong pointing out the mistake which, in their opinion, he was making in advocating not to permit Confucius to be worshipped by the students. These protests, however, were but the opening shots in the warfare. In Canton, the matter was brought before a large gathering of the members of the assembly, who apparently were united in their wish

that such a course should be resisted. At this meeting it was agreed that as Confucianism is not a religion, therefore it is wrong to class Confucius with the founders of religion, and that it is an insult to class Confucianism with these religions, for Confucius had nothing to do with inducing men to worship the gods. His influence was all on the side of virtue and knowledge; therefore his influence should be extolled and the sphere of his influence enlarged. In spite of these protests, the matter was duly brought before the Central Educational Conference, and, contrary to the expectation of many, the conference strongly endorsed the suggestion made by the commissioner of education in Canton, and recommended that the clause providing for the worship of Confucius in public schools be omitted from the new school law. That this recommendation has been accepted is shown by the fact that in the educational ordinance regarding rites and ceremonies used in school, a very significant injunction occurs, namely, that in the observance of anniversaries of any kind, no worshipping and religious ceremony of any kind are to be used.

The educational activity of the ministry of education has been, to a great extent, curtailed or handicapped by the financial stress of the central government. According to the budget prepared for the new republic, an annual sum of Taels 12,801,468 was provided for the ordinary expenditure in educational affairs. In addition, a sum of Taels 3,348,061 was specified to cover the necessary provisional expenditure. Considering the gigantic task that is before the ministry, the allowance made for education is by no means liberal, and even the fund thus specified has been thus far slow in coming during the present period of readjustment. For this reason the ministry of education has been somewhat slow in carrying out what it proposes to do. Meanwhile it has been devising means not only to eliminate as much waste as possible, either by abolishing institutions that have outlived their usefulness or by combining forces, but also to exercise the strictest economy in the administration of educational funds. Thus the Hanlin Academy in Peking, once the center of literary activity and the chief

seat of the educational system of China, has been recently abolished. No students from the Tsing-hua College were sent abroad during the past year. The ministry, however, is doing its best, so far as its financial condition would allow, to restore the institutions which come under its direct control. The Peking University has been reopened. This is also true with the Tsing-hua College in Peking, and competitive examinations were held last summer with a view to selecting a number of students to be trained before sending them to America to study. The central government has also been able to send abroad twenty-five of the revolutionary leaders to receive a western education; fourteen of these have come to America.

In the provinces the financial stress is less stringent than the central government, and efforts for the extension of educational privileges and facilities have been pushing forward with considerable rapidity. Provincial as well as local educational associations are showing great activity. During the month of August 1912, examinations were held in Tsinanfu, Shantung province, for students who are desirous of being sent to the United States for college education. The Kwangtung province, in spite of its financial stress, managed to send during the past summer 100 students abroad, 20 to America, 10 to Europe, and 70 to Japan. The Kiangsi provincial government has recently sent 60 students abroad for advanced study. Of this number, 16 were sent to America, 1 to England, 1 to Germany, 2 to France, 2 to Belgium, and the rest to Japan. Early in the year of 1912, the Commercial Press in Shanghai undertook to supply a Chinese educational exhibit for the Teachers' College of Columbia University. An announcement of the fact was made by the said press, and within the course of two or three months, some six hundred schools responded and over seven thousand articles were sent in. Before the exhibit was sent from Shanghai, an opportunity was given to the public to visit it, and in the course of three days over ten thousand people availed themselves of the opportunity, showing something of the enthusiasm of the people toward things educational. These and other facts which might be

mentioned, indicate clearly that the provincial authorities, as well as the people, fully realize the importance of education in the national life of the new republic and are exerting every effort to develop the system of education both extensively and intensively.

At present the government and the people show a strong tendency to emphasize primary education. Some adjustments and combinations are being planned in higher education, and the money thus saved will be devoted to the establishment of more primary schools of both grades in order to hasten universal education, which is the goal of the new educational policy and is a problem which has loomed large in the minds of the Chinese statesmen and educators since the establishment of the republic. The charge has often been made to the effect that in introducing modern educational institutions, China made the mistake of starting at the top and building downwards, and in her anxiety for universities, high schools, and middle schools, she overlooked the importance of the primary schools. Assuming this charge to have been true, the mistake is now being remedied and primary education is now receiving the attention which it deserves.

One more important tendency remains to be noted. The statesmen and educators of China, realizing that manifold difficulties are still standing in the way to make education accessible to all, and that the stability of the republic is largely dependent upon the intelligence of its citizens, are now emphasizing the importance of popularizing education through means other than the school, such as newspapers, art galleries, theatres, public gardens, museums, libraries, zoölogical and botanical gardens, public lectures, and moving pictures. It is their belief that these quasi-educational institutions will be able to exert a strong influence of educational value to the uneducated men and women as well as those children who are unable to go to school, and that through these institutions a mighty social revolution could be effected. Already movements to put these ideas into practice have been reported. Early in the spring of last year, the formation of the Social Reform Association

was announced. Among the organizers of that association are such distinguished men as Premier Tang; minister of navy, Liu; minister of education, Tsai; minister of agriculture and forestry, Sung; and others equally prominent in the political and educational life of the new republic. In an article announcing the formation of the said association, some thirty-six different social problems were given as reforms which, in the opinion of the association, should be vigorously advanced. In Kwangtung and several other provinces, the provincial educational authorities have appointed through competitive examination, a number of lecturers to give popular lectures on topics such as self-government, education, hygiene, and philanthropy. Attention has already been called to the fact that the present ministry of education has a bureau, known as the bureau of social education, the duty of which is to advance the whole movement, namely, to popularize education through quasi-educational institutions.

This treatment of the educational situation created by the revolution is necessarily incomplete. Perhaps enough has been said to indicate the fact that the work of reconstruction in education, as in other phases of China's national life, has already well begun and begun with a great determination to win. The problem of supplying educational facilities to China's millions is so gigantic in its scope and so complicated in its character, that it calls for not only the highest professional skill, but a great deal of enthusiasm, patriotism, and altruism for its successful solution. The system existing today, being still in its infancy, is naturally full of imperfections and has plenty of room for improvement, especially when it is compared with the systems of other enlightened nations, most of which have taken centuries of adjustment and toil before reaching their present stage of excellence, and even they still have some room for improvement. New China, however, is confident that given sufficient time she will be able to work out her own salvation in spite of the fact that the problem is fraught with difficulties. For the present she needs time to regain her breath from the shock which she experienced in the transition from monarchy

into republic. She needs time to consider what are the best elements in western education which could be utilized to her best interests, and what are the best elements in her own system which have proved best for China through the centuries of her history and which should be preserved with all vigor and tenacity. In short, she needs time to readjust herself to the new conditions which now surround her. Meanwhile, young China believes that help and coöperation from the educators of the West are not only highly desirable but in a way indispensable to a speedy success. For this reason she favors and welcomes every effort put forth by all well-wishers of China toward the solution of the problem and the attainment of the high ideal which she has set before her. From the teachers and educators of the West China expects to find sympathy and encouragement which come with the consciousness of a common purpose, and to gain, in no small measure, the inspiration of their highest ideals.