

1949

## Meetings

**Dates of Meeting:**

23-12-1949 – 31-12-1949

**Type of Meeting:**

National Educational Work Conference

**Place of Meeting:**

Beijing

**Attendance:**

Ma Xulun, Qian Junrui

**Major Agenda Items:****Speeches/Reports:**

**Ma Xulun** began by warning delegates to resist the temptation simply to 'decree' the abolition of illiteracy in China. Raising the people's impoverished educational level, Ma told delegates, was an enormous and complicated undertaking that defied quick solutions. It could only be accomplished by 'gradually eliminating' illiteracy over an extended period.

The brave and diligent workers and peasants of China created Chinese history and civilisation, but they were deprived of the rights of enjoying culture and education in the old China. Such phenomena began to change fundamentally in a nation-wide scope after the founding of the People's Republic of China. The victory of the great peoples revolution makes the workers gain political status as the country's foundation and they start to enjoy the political rights of formal education at different levels. To raise the cultural and political levels of the workers and peasants is an indispensable condition in development and consolidation of this people's democratic dictatorship. Meanwhile, our nation's current central task is to restore and develop rapidly the productive construction which mainly relies on the two big troops of workers and peasants on the production front. If our education can't help to raise the ideological consciousness, cultural and technological levels of the two big troops, there will not appear the new working attitudes and creative spirits needed for the productive construction. Our productive construction will be harmed and our education will be divorced from reality. Therefore, to carry out correctly the worker/peasant education is a grave political task for the people of the whole nation especially for educators.

**Qian Junrui** pointed out the seven challenges facing the reform and development of education in PRC, namely: (1) building a new democratic system of education by absorbing the useful experiences of the old society and borrowing from the Soviet Union experience; (2) establishing the People's Universities to cultivate professionals and fast middle schools to cultivate intellectuals; (3) conducting literacy movements across whole country; (4) improving the quality of education in the old liberated areas; (5) uniting and reforming the thinking of intellectuals in the old liberated areas; (6) reforming the old educational system gradually and accumulating experiences; (7) preserving and restructuring private schools administrated by Chinese governments

**Other Decisions and/or Actions:**

adopted the optimistic position, that illiteracy could be eliminated among 70% of peasants within only 7 years (3-5 years for cadres) A decision to launch a literacy movement was adopted by the conference and ratified by the State Council immediately afterwards, in order to develop worker-peasant education and train educated workers and peasants.

The main task of governments should be to look after the following five aspects: (1) establishing a democratic educational system by using the educational experience of the former liberated area and the Soviet Union; (2) creating the People's University and the Harbing Industrial University and a number of Fast Schools for workers and peasants; (3) carrying out Massive Literacy Movements; (4) enhancing the quality of educational in the old liberated area; (5) continuing the operation of educational institutions in new liberated area; (6) reconstructing the old educational system; (7) maintaining status quo, strengthening leadership and reconstructing gradually for the development of private schools.

**Remarks:**