

1950

## Meetings

**Date of meeting:**

20-09-1950 – 29-09-1950

**Type of Meeting:**

1st National Conference on Worker-Peasant Education

**Place of Meeting:**

Beijing

**Attendance:**

heads of education departments of the central government, the major administrative regions, provinces, and municipalities, and trade union and cultural and educational departments at all levels; heads of various industrial management departments (heavy industry, light industry, fuel industry, textile industry, etc.); managers of public and private factories; heads of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, the All-China Women's Federation, the Ministry of Labor; representatives of various ministries, commissions, and agencies of the Central People's Government; principals of workers' and peasants' accelerated middle schools; model teachers and role models in workers' and peasants' spare-time schools; specially invited scholars, totaling 345 people. Eighty-nine people attended the conference as observers, and together with those attending as observers, the total number of attendees was over 470.

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

**Ma Xulun:** 20 September 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 civilization, 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 people's 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. New China had inherited a corps of peasant cadres with impeccable revolutionary credentials - but with no education.

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.

During this conference, Vice Chairman Zhu, Vice Chairman Li, Vice Premiers Dong, Guo, and Huang of the GAC, and Vice Chairman Li of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions all made reports to the conference. Leaders from the Ministry of Heavy Industry and other relevant departments and various mass organizations also spoke at the conference.

**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 GAC immediately afterwards, in order to develop worker-peasant education and train educated workers and peasants

**Remarks:**

The First National Workers' and Peasants' Education Conference was jointly convened by the Ministry of Education of the Central People's Government and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. After several months of research, study, and preparation, the conference began on September 18th. A two-day preparatory meeting was held to hear reports on work and experiences from representatives from various regions.