

Gasp of History: Communication University of China and Broadcasting Studies in the Cultural Revolution

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Abstract. Based on the history of Communication University of China and the history of the Department of Journalism, the paper quotes the reminiscences of the worker-peasant-soldier students to try to present the history of Communication University of China in 1966-1976 and the worker-peasant-soldier students majoring in Broadcasting (1974/1975/1976) with line drawing style.

Keywords: Communication University of China, Broadcasting, the Worker-Peasant-Soldier Students

Suspension and Rerunning of Communication University of China

On 2 April 1959, China's Ministry of Education agreed to establish Communication University of China (abbreviate to CUC) on the basis of the original Beijing Broadcasting Academy, and pointed out in the approval, "The maximum size of the institute is no more than 1,600, and 400 students are enrolled each year. Four-year academic for undergraduate degree and two-year for college degree." (CUC Anniversary Office, 1994: 4) Five months later, CUC welcomed the first batch of new students, recruiting 573 students of three departments (Journalism, Radio and Foreign Languages). In 1966, the political winds shifted suddenly, and the news which the national college entrance examination could not be held as scheduled in July was announced on 13 June. CUC, which had been running for only six years, stopped enrolling students, just the same as other institutes across the nation. By 1969, CUC had existed in name only since the last batch of students graduated. After that, CUC had been ordered to suspend, and almost all of the staffs (except those who stayed in Beijing) were sent to Zhanghuang (Wangdu County, Hebei Province) and the "May Seventh Cadre School" of China Central Broadcasting Bureau (Huaiyang County, Henan Province) to work. On 12 May 1971, the leadership of China Central Broadcasting Bureau submitted a report on the request for the suspension of CUC to the Central Committee of CPC. Two months later, the National Education Conference decided to implement the trial of CUC suspension. At this point, CUC closed officially.

On 27 May 1970, Peking University and Tsinghua University submitted *the Specific Opinions of Peking University and Tsinghua University Admissions (Pilot)(revised draft)*. A month later, the Central Committee of CPC approved the admission request and stated below: The eligibles contain the workers, the poor and lower-middle peasants, PLA soldiers or young cadres with good political thoughts and physical health, more than three years of practical experience, around 20 years old, and obtain the degree equivalent to junior high school or above, and implementing the enrollment policy of "Voluntary registration, Mass recommendation, Leadership approval, and Institute review" (National Institute of Education Sciences, 1984: 433), and requiring the undergraduates should take the task of "Going to university, Managing university, Transforming university with Mao Zedong Thought". The undergraduates during the period of the Cultural Revolution are called "the worker-peasant-soldier students". There were about 940,000 worker-peasant-soldier students across the nation during the period from this group entered into Peking University on 1 September 1970 to all this group members graduated.

In 1972, Zhou Enlai's "Educational Rectification" in the field of higher education began in the name of "Rectification Movement of Criticizing Li Biao" after "9.13 Incident". Although the educational rectification, which attempting to correct the various of extreme activities of the "Educational Revolution" in the previous stage, only lasted for a few months, it promoted the gradual restoration of normal teaching order essentially in various colleges and universities, and CUC is one of them. In November 1972, the staffs who had been sent to the "May Seventh Cadre School" of China Central Broadcasting Bureau (Huaiyang County, Henan Province) returned back to Beijing under orders. On 21 December 1972, the China Central Broadcasting Bureau officially submitted *the Request for Report on the Rerunning of Communication University of China* to the State Council, and established a preparatory leading group for the rerunning of school. Zuo Ying, former CPC Party chief and vice president in CUC (before the "Cultural Revolution"), who had been sent to Huaiyang County to accept "labour reform" before and just regained the freedom for tow months (Zhao Yuming et al., 2005: 341), was ordered to be the leader of group. In March of the following year, the Science and Education Organization of the State Council issued a document: Consent to the restoration of CUC, directly led by the China Central Broadcasting Bureau, meanwhile, the party's work and political work are still under the leadership of the Beijing Municipal Committee, and the infrastructure investment and funding are arranged by the competent authority. The curtain of rerunning was raised.

If the history which from the Technical Training Course of Central Broadcasting Bureau to the Beijing Broadcasting Academy to Communication University of China is compared to "the first pioneering work", then the rerunning of CUC

is undoubtedly the “the second pioneering work”, which is even tougher. There were three major problems in front of Zuo Ying and others: Building, Equipment, Staff. The west campus, where the Department of Journalism and the Department of Radio was previously located, was almost occupied by the technical department and administrative department of the Central Broadcasting Bureau, and the east campus (CUC is located today), where the Department of Foreign Languages was located almost became the workshop of the Shuangqiao Factory. “Library books, teaching materials, and the equipments, also lost and scattered, together with the tables and chairs were taken away by the surrounding production team. As the former large and small canteens were occupied by the factory, they could only use the original woodworking room for cooking, queuing and eating were very crowded. Situation got worse when the weather was hot. The library was also occupied, and of course it couldn't be used. If the amount of people increased, there wasn't a place to assemble them, needless to say owning classrooms.” (CUC Anniversary editorial committee, 2004: 50) Facing such situation, the members of the preparatory leading group had to lead the returning teachers to “renovate campus, build walls, dig trenches, and do physical jobs” on the one hand, and on the other hand, reported to the Central Broadcasting Bureau. According to Zhao Yuming, a professor at CUC (former vice president of CUC), Zuo Ying wrote a letter to the higher authorities in November 1973, “requesting to strengthen the leadership of CUC” and changed the “request” to “urge” in final draft. Its emergency also sees one spot accordingly. Compared with the shortage of materials, how to solve the problem of reuniting people and forming a teaching team seems to be more difficult. Sudden and perplexing changes of political climate is shaking people's hearts. Some people were reluctant to return after being transferred to other working place, some people stayed in the the “May Seventh Cadre School” directly, or some people hesitated when they had seen the desolation of the campus. According to Zhao Yuming's recollection, Zuo Ying went to his living place to visit him and other former teachers, and tried to persuade them to return to CUC. Zhao Yuming decided to grant the request eventually because of “Zuo Ying's sincere attitude” though he had been assigned to the News Department of China National Radio (abbreviate to CNR) (Zhao Yuming et al., 2005: 299). Except working hard to do the ideological work of teachers, implementing policies is a more important task. During the revolution, although it was impossible to fundamentally “order out of chaos”, many policy implementing jobs had begun. For example, after being discussed, a group of so-called “staff with historical problems” were still arranged in certain jobs and even in leadership positions. It is not an easy thing that implementing the policy under the principle of “seeking truth from facts” in that political environment. It also underlying three things below: unloads the burden of thought, mobilizes work enthusiasm, and influences other teachers to return. After these efforts, the teaching staff of CUC had gradually stabilized, mainly composed of the former teachers of CUC (came back from the “May Seventh Cadre School” for instance), the researchers from other universities and the professionals from media system. Yuan Hua, the deputy director of the News Department of CNR, Qi Yue, the director of announcing of CNR, and Lu Qian, the deputy head of the Newsgroup of CNR, entered the journalism department of CUC to engage in journalism and broadcasting teaching during this period[1-3].

The worker-peasant-soldier students majoring in Broadcasting

Under the efforts of the preparatory leading group and returning teachers, CUC had met the requirements of re-enrolling students. In September 1973, CUC proposed to the Central Broadcasting Bureau that it would enroll 170 students in total from nine majors, including the broadcasting in 1974, meanwhile the duration of study was two years for the broadcasting major and three years for other majors (extra time is not accounted). On 28 February of the following year, the Central Broadcasting Bureau proposed to the Science and Education Organization of the State Council that the broadcasting major should be enrolled separately in advance. On 21 November 1974, the rerunning CUC welcomed the first batch of 159 worker-peasant-soldier students, including 27 students majoring in Broadcasting(1974). Since then, CUC had recruited and trained a total of 94 worker-peasant-soldier students, including 38 in 1975 and 29 in 1976.

In order to truly “select the outstanding members from the workers, peasants, soldiers and the educated youths (down to the countryside movement)” (Li Jiangyuan, 2006: 323), the reform of the admissions system had become an important part of the entire “Educational Revolution”, especially After the “blank examination paper event” in 1973, the significance of the admission system reform was raised to a new height, “which kind of students were enrolled and raised by universities reflected the political direction of education directly.” (Li Jiangyuan, 2006: 324). The worker-peasant-soldier students majoring in Broadcasting are no exception. Take the group enrolled in 1976 as an example. Before entering the school, they were workers below: Qiu Zhijun (Factory 960, State Commission of Science and Technology for National Defense Industry), Guan Lei (the Second General Machinery Factory of Beijing Machinery Bureau), and Jin Zhongjian(Vehicle Maintenance Shop of the Eighth Filiale of Ministry of Communications), etc. Qin Lubin (military reconnaissance of Yanqi County, Xinjiang Province), Chen Xiaoyu (The General Logistics Department of PLA) were soldiers, etc. And they were educated youths before entering school: Jing Yidan (Qinghe Forest Farms of Xiaoxinganling), Han Ju (Hongguang Pasture of Tekesi County, Xinjiang Province), Wang Fusheng (Wujia Commune, Shuangcheng County, Heilongjiang Province), etc. The enrollment requirements of broadcasting major has its own characteristics, therefore the level of spoken mandarine, the beautiful voice and nice appearance are still the requirements of recommendation and selection even in the revolution period. “As the major with artistic characteristics, the broadcasting major has its own interview, which needs to test your level of spoken mandarine or voice at least, that is an examination of the basic abilities when you facing microphone.” (Jing Yidan et al., 2017: 92) According to the

recollection of the worker-peasant-soldier students majoring in Broadcasting (enrolled in 1976), the interview duration was June-November 1976, and organized by CUC or local media and education organizations entrusted by CUC[4-6]. The content of the interview was mainly based on announcing critical news and poetry, which had distinctive times characteristics, such as *the Central Committee of CPC headed by Chairman Hua Guofeng pulled the "Gang of Four" down* and *the Glory of the Red Sun Illuminates the Candlestick*. A thousand things wait rerunning CUC to be done. The teaching order had not fully recovered yet, thus it is impossible to establish a complete teaching system. The content of the courses "had a lot of content in keeping with the political trend", and the basic courses "set philosophy, classical literature, writing, formal logic, etc.", and in major courses aspect, "*Chinese Broadcasting Announcing* had not published yet, so there was so-called "no theory" to some degree, and when it comes to teaching methods, "there were lots of lecture but a few seminar, meanwhile, lack of professional teaching materials." (Jing Yidan et al., 2017: 138-139).

In addition, teaching content with a strong "Educational Revolution" color still exists, even continued after the revolution. In order to train qualified editors, journalists and announcers who could meet the requirements of the times, journalism department of CUC made teaching plans for every major, which under the principle "Open door schooling", for instance "Learn from Workers, Learn from Peasants, Learn from Soldiers". As for broadcasting major, the teaching plan require them "go down to the county and undertake the broadcasting tasks for local media organizations." (Journalism Department of CUC, 1994:10) The book written by the worker-peasant-soldier students majoring in Broadcasting (enrolled in 1974) was the findings of "Open door schooling". This theoretical book, written by students and guided by Professors Qi Yue and Zhang Song, is characterized by the "Cultural Revolution" though, it has "a relatively complete system framework and scientific theoretical point of view" (Zheng Wei, 2013: 137-138). According to the recollection of the worker-peasant-soldier students majoring in Broadcasting (enrolled in 1976), although the movement was over, the "Learn from Workers, Learn from Peasants, Learn from Soldiers" still occupied a lot of their learning time, such as went to the troops of Xingtai, Heibei Province to "learn from soldiers", went to Heishan Village of Changping, Beijing to "learn from peasants", and worked for Chairman Mao Memorial Hall, etc. It is undeniable that the "Educational Revolution" reflects the simple concept of educational equality and the pragmatism trend of the authorities. Starting from its subjective will, the purpose of "Open door schooling" is to change the former closed state of colleges and universities, to bridge the school with the society, to combine education with labor production, and to undertake the task of transforming the society. The ultimate goal is to cover the following gaps: the physical labour and mental labour, the urban and rural, the workers and peasants. However, students are tumbling in the political wave and the learning time has been occupied, "making Chinese education deviate from the development track of modern education. This is an indisputable fact." (Li Jiangyuan, 2006: 33)

Epilogue

The year 1976 is an extraordinary year. From the beginning of the year, in just eight months, three outstanding leaders of CPC passed away. On 6 October, the "Gang of Four" was arrested, the revolution that lasted for ten years ended, and the various fields of society started the movement of unveiling and criticizing the "Gang of Four". On 24 October, all staffs and students of CUC participated in the conference of celebrating smashing the "Gang of Four". On 30 November, CUC held the meeting for unveiling and criticizing the "Gang of Four". Due to the frequent political events in that year, the enrollment duration of the worker-peasant-soldier students majoring in Broadcasting (enrolled in 1976) was from the fall of 1976 to the beginning of 1977. The spring of 1977 had already arrived, the land of China was full of vitality. Although the haze of political struggle had not completely dissipated, the worker-peasant-soldier students at that time had no longer pretended their desire of absorbing knowledge, and "Filling the sacks with knowledge" became the mainstream at that time. However, they would not realize that they would be the "last-generation" worker-peasant-soldier students[7-9].

In December 1977, under the strong support of Deng Xiaoping, the national college entrance examination was held again. About 5.7 million candidates from all over the country attended, and a total of 270,000 people were admitted (including 62,000 in the first quarter of 1978), and the acceptance rate is 4.7%.

On 10 March 1978, the first batch of freshmen entered CUC since the national college entrance examination recovered, with a total of 103. In this year, the last batch of the worker-peasant-soldier students, including 29 students majoring in broadcasting graduated from school and went to work. "The worker-peasant-soldier students" withdrawn from the historical arena officially. In February 1980, the degree system of China was formally established, the then Minister of Education Jiang Nanxiang defined the qualifications of the worker-peasant-soldier students as "college degree". In 1993, the Personnel Department of State Education Commission issued a document, pointed that the degree of the worker-peasant-soldier students was defined officially as "Normal university degree", or "Dapu" for short (Liu Hui, 2010: 52).

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