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DEVIATIONS AMONG NEW DEMOCRACY YOUTH IN CHINA

Central Youth Committee
27 July 1950

In recent months many students have awakened to the possibility and actual existence of incorrect ideology, impure motives, and unsafe methods in New Democracy Youth work. For this reason, reform movements arose, but these, in turn, were defective and showed excesses. Impetuousness is among the main ideological faults. The writer emphasizes that to expect young middle-class students to show complete "devotion to the cause" is an utter delusion.

Recently in newly liberated areas many deviations have appeared in student work, which, if allowed to continue, will result in unfortunate effects. The more prevalent and serious of these problems are reported below:

1. Before and after the "4 May" [anniversary], several schools in Sian had school-wide movements concerned with "Scrutiny of Thinking," "Three Critiques," and "Summation of Learning," in order to solve many questions still extant in student thinking. The scope of these movements was very wide. For instance, in the "Scrutiny of Thinking" in the Sian Normal, such topics were embraced as: (a) Attitude in Learning; (b) Habits of Life; (c) Service; (d) Thinking; (e) Relation to Party; (f) Motives for Entering the Youth Group. Topic (a), "Thinking," embraced such matters as pride, megalomania, individual hero complex, incoherence, excessive super-class viewpoint, hedonism, freedom complex, superiority complex on the part of intellectuals, disdain for labor, contempt for laborers, contempt for the masses, leniency. Under topic (e), "Relation to Party," the question was even asked, "Do you wish to draw near or enter the Communist Party and the Youth Group?"

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During the movement, it is said that the students of Middle School No 3 were very eager in suggesting questions. Most of them had 50 or more questions, but these were mostly simple questions requiring simple answers, such as "Why did you not join a 'yangko' group?" "Why do you seek higher learning"," "Why in making talks do you quote from the classics and other works?" and even "Why do you make talks before Youth Group members but do not enter the organization?"

In the Sian Normal, two members of the class of 1950A took the responsibility heavily and considered suicide; but their designs became known and tragedy was averted. In Middle School No 3 the students were very much concerned about their thinking; one student said, "I'd rather they would kill me than put me up in the hall for criticism." One girl, fearing criticism, withdrew from school; her father came to the school and asked, "What's all this about the three critiques? It's made my daughter ill over criticism." In the "Summation of Learning" movement two so-called "model students" were criticized; one of them was 15, the other only 14. Gleefully their sex relations were made the subject of questioning.

What were the fruits of the movement? Nothing! In some classes, learning is more lackadaisical than before.

The above practices are plainly enough all wrong. The local committee has not been able to correct them. Now there has been an inquiry and this spirit of self-criticism is necessary. It is hoped that other Youth Group committees will as a result be able to avoid such errors.

2. In Wu-chou in Kwangsi, in answer to the appeal to learn the New Democracy, a city-wide movement has been started for exposing old ways of thinking, and there have been many assemblies for exposing thoughts and for confession. The motive for the movement has been to remove obstacles and institute aids for extending the study of the New Democracy, since only thus can there be any hope of quick and favorable progress to this end. The movement began on 15 May with an appeal by the City Normal under the sponsorship of the Student Federation, and by the 19th had become city-wide.

Wu-chou Ch'ing-nien Pao (Wu-chou Youth) No 6, gave statistics on students' thoughts about study. Of 314 students in seven city middle schools and one nurses' training center, with the exception of one nurse who trained half for self and half for service, all others were motivated by livelihood, diploma, marriage, being a hero, and such objectives. We claim that such methods of discovering motives in seeking an education are essentially in error. To demand that young middle-school students (mostly from medium social strata) be wholly imbued with a high degree of the service-to-the-people viewpoint, is unrealistic fantasy. As a matter of fact, their motives for entering school need not be exposed. We know them in general already.

Our already determined objective in New Democracy education is to raise the students' awareness so that they can all serve profitably in the building of the new China. Whatever their motives for entering school, no matter whether their thoughts are exposed or not, our objective in teaching and promoting New Democracy education among all the students will not and ought not to be changed in any respect. So we claim that all this exposure of students' thinking is superfluous, with no real meaning. On the contrary, it may create a fear of studying the New Democracy and lead to lying and similar doings.

3. The party work committee in Hunan, in aiming to co-ordinate the rural social reform movement and to meet the reactions caused among young intellectuals because of their having been the subjects of "rural social reform," first started the work of "education against feudal thinking" among students in Changsha, and extended the Changsha experience over the province. We claim that such

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work is basically proper. However, as to the work method, we wish to make this comment: "In co-ordinating rural social reform, the work of thought education among intellectuals should be by discussion and research in conjunction with instruction in theory and concrete facts. The aim is to educate the majority. When the majority have progressed, the backward minority will be isolated and forced slowly to move forward."

If you say "when necessary" the struggle method may be employed, the standards for this "when necessary" will not be uniform, and will easily lead to involving the whole complex of village struggles, so that the people will not dare disclose erroneous thoughts. It will also lead to some persons using fair speech outwardly, but secretly opposing the People's government, the Communist Party, and the Youth Group. Therefore, in carrying on thought education, the use of struggle methods easily leads to faults -- for instance, dealing with secret agents should be left to the government -- and should not be adopted.

The above-named problems have one common fault, that of impatience. Reform of students' thinking and revamping of schools are not solved by one movement or one struggle. Therefore, the aim of steady progress should be adopted.

At the Third Congress Mao Tse-tung gave this directive: "In an orderly, cautious manner, maintain reform of existing schools and education and existing social culture. In this problem, delay for those unwilling to alter thinking will not do; neither will impetuosity and the wish to use coarse violence serve in reforming thoughts." We should appreciate the spirit of this directive and act accordingly.

This article is made up from reports from all sides, and may lack continuity, but the deviations revealed are worthy of notice. It is hoped that workers everywhere will be helped, and overcome similar problems. It is also hoped that the thinking of cadres will be strengthened and their policies and active work improved.

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