

RED FLAG AFFIRMS VERDICT ON REVISIONIST LINE

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[Text of RED FLAG No 2 article by a mass criticism group of Liaoning University: "No Attempt To Reverse the Verdict on the Revisionist Line in Education Is Permitted"]

[Text] The appraisal of education in the 17 years prior to the Great Cultural Revolution was originally a clear-cut issue. Commenting on the situation in education before the Great Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao pointed out in his 7 May directive: "The period of schooling should be shortened, education should be revolutionized, and the domination of our schools and colleges by bourgeois intellectuals should no longer be tolerated." This has clearly shown us: Education at that time was bourgeois, not proletarian. Schools and colleges had not become tools of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie exercised dictatorship over the proletariat in education.

Given the reality, Chairman Mao made a correct appraisal of outmoded education prior to the Great Cultural Revolution and spoke what was in the masses' minds, winning the warm support of the proletariat and working people. However, the bourgeoisie and their agents continuously tried to negate this correct appraisal. Over the past decade, repeated struggles over this issue were waged between the proletariat and bourgeoisie and between the Marxist and revisionist lines. Early last autumn, some people in the education field again began to argue this issue. They concocted all kinds of absurd arguments, trying to prove that a fundamental revolution in education is absolutely unnecessary and that the ignition of the raging fire of the Great Cultural Revolution from this issue is needless. But facts are indisputable; their schemes are useless.

The correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything. Those who concocted the absurd arguments in education frenziedly clamored that "the idea of firmly opposing the 17-year-old education line was erroneous." If so, what line were they promoting for the domination of education during those 17 years?

In the early days after the founding of the nation, education was taken over from the Kuomintang reactionaries. It was both semicolonial and semifeudal. Although new principals were appointed and secretaries of school CCP committees assigned, teachers and the teaching system, curricula and methods and other aspects remained the same. This remnant of the old superstructure impeded the development of the socialist economic base. Soon after the founding of the nation, Chairman Mao pointed out: "On the basis of our experience in developing education in the former liberated areas, we must gradually and prudently carry out our work of transforming the old schools and education system as well as the old social and cultural system." However, Liu Shao-chi and his gang who usurped power in education were opposed to Chairman Mao's instructions, clamoring that "the basics will remain unchanged." They did not permit any changes in the Kuomintang clique's education system. They blindly followed Soviet practices in education, adding revisionist education to bourgeois and feudal education.

In 1957, Chairman Mao refuted the fallacies peddled by Liu Shao-chi and his gang, on the basis of the laws of classes, class contradictions and class struggle, and in accordance with the requirements for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat. He pointed out: "Our education policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically, and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture."

In 1958, Chairman Mao again pointed out: "Education must serve proletarian politics and be combined with productive labor." In line with Chairman Mao's instructions, teachers and students furthered the education revolution under the impetus of the Great Leap Forward. However, no sooner had the revolution begun than Liu Shao-chi and his gang poured a bucket of cold water over it and stamped it out, branding it a mess and a mishmash. Later, they vengefully counterattacked and further strengthened bourgeois domination of education. They tried to establish a system by peddling revisionist fallacies such as "teaching should be done by professors," "intellectual education first," "put academic work in command of everything" and "study in order to become officials." They attempted to legalize and systematize the expansion of bourgeois rights and the training of intellectual aristocrats. From 1962 to the beginning of the Great Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao again issued a series of instructions on the revolution in education, vigorously criticizing the revisionist line peddled by Liu Shao-chi.

Chairman Mao was indignant at the old education system which was detrimental to the training of able persons and young people. He strongly disapproved of this system and demanded its complete change. Liu Shao-chi and his gang refused to implement Chairman Mao's instructions and tried to maintain bourgeois domination of the schools by promoting the so-called "two education systems." Looking at the struggle between the two lines on the education front over the past 17 years, we have realized: Although we cannot say there were no changes in schools during that period, there were no basic changes. A revisionist line dominated the schools. Thus, the schools of that period were places where the bourgeoisie exercised dictatorship over the proletariat and the working people in the field of culture, and places where bourgeois intellectuals poisoned the young people with the bourgeois academic system, thinking and point of view. If we are not struggle firmly against this reactionary line, does it mean that we are to follow it?

Obviously, if we follow this line the working people will not only fail to achieve their own cultural emancipation but also lose their position as masters of their own fate in the fields of politics and economics. This is the real aim of those who frantically oppose our firm struggle against the revisionist education line.

"Outstanding achievements were also scored in education prior to the Great Cultural Revolution." This remark, made by those who concocted the absurd arguments, is aimed at praising the 17-year-old revisionist line in education. What are those "outstanding achievements"? They believe "the students trained in old schools and colleges are of high quality. The students now trained by schools and colleges are not as politically and academically good as those of the past." The quality of education has a great deal to do with one's class and the line one follows. Different classes have different standards. The aim of the revisionist education line is to train and cultivate intellectual aristocrats, while that of the proletarian education line is to train and cultivate workers with both socialist consciousness and culture. The old schools and colleges dominated by the revisionist line can never meet the high standards set by the proletariat.

Let us discuss this first in regard to politics. Those who promote the revisionist education line openly peddle the reactionary concept of Confucianism that "he who excels in learning can be an official." They try to instill the concepts of bourgeois rights into the minds of the students.

In fact, the students have been stamped with brands such as "study in order to become officials" and "seek fame and become experts" as soon as school doors are open. Poisoned by these fallacies, some students of the old Liaoning University pledged to become famous even if it required exhausting efforts. At the same time, they just tried to get by politically. However, those who try to stay in the middle are not always able to do so. Those who try just to get by often fail to get by. Some people often vacillate or even become reactionary when they encounter a severe storm. How can such students compare in political quality with worker-peasant-soldier students with socialist consciousness? They are certainly no match for the latter!

This is also true in the academics field. In the past, a number of bourgeois scholars were academic pillars. Failing to integrate theory with practice, they could only make use of the shopworn book knowledge which they picked up in old schools to fill the minds of the young people.

After studying for more than 10 years behind closed doors, first attending elementary and middle schools and then universities, philosophy students do not know how to analyze contradictions; literature students do not know how to create literary workers; and history students know only the outline of "the historical records" and the genealogies of emperors, kings, generals and ministers, but they do not know how to apply historical materialism in summarizing historical experiences. Contrary to the evaluation of those who peddled the absurd arguments, it is no exaggeration to say that, as far as the Marxist-Leninist ideological level of these students and their ability to analyze and solve practical problems are concerned, many of them are below the level of their fraternal brothers of today. Of course, there has been a change in the class composition of the university student body over the past 17 years. The number of children of workers and peasants has increased, especially since 1958. However, studying in this kind of school is no different from what Lenin said: Receiving an education under these circumstances was like subjecting oneself to the enslavement of the bourgeoisie. Although the workers and peasants joined their efforts to set up the schools, their children, after attending these schools, ideologically turn their back on them. We have had enough of these great achievements of revisionist education. These great achievements are singularly the most painful historic lessons for the proletariat and the laboring people. Those who spread the absurd arguments have once again, with great relish, brought up achievement and high quality. Is it not crystal clear in which direction they are trying to advance our education?

Of course, the majority, the overwhelming majority of those students who graduated in the first 17 years after liberation have integrated with the workers, peasants and soldiers, and some have made contributions through inventions and innovations. However, this is absolutely not to the merit of the old schools. These graduated students have made progress and played a definite role in their various jobs because, after graduating from their schools, they have constantly taken part in the social struggle and received reeducation from the workers, peasants and soldiers under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. After graduating from the old universities, many do not know how to use a shoulder pole to carry loads, nor do they know how to use their hands. That is why they have no common language with the workers and peasants. They have to learn from the beginning after joining the three great revolutionary movements. The proletariat has to spend a long time and make great efforts to help them transform their world outlook, ideology and sentiments in order to make them integrate with the workers and peasants and serve them.

These facts show that one cannot say there were also great achievements in education before the Great Cultural Revolution. On the contrary, the facts can only prove that the revisionist line in education has obstructed the healthy growth of the young people, adversely affected the building of a huge contingent of proletarian intellectuals, and seriously damaged the socialist revolution and socialist construction.

Now, look at the socialist universities which follow Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line. Nurtured by Mao Tsetung Thought, the worker-peasant-soldier university students are growing sturdily. Those who came from the workers and peasants do not forget the workers and peasants. Immediately after graduation, they will integrate with workers and peasants and assume a greater role in class struggle and in the struggle for production and scientific experiment. This is in sharp contrast to students from old universities.

Of the students in the 12th group of graduates from Liaoning University, 12 have returned to the countryside to take up farming. They have become leaders in narrowing the three differences and in restricting bourgeois rights. They have established a new communist style. These 12 graduates have the ability to build socialism and deepen criticism of capitalism in the three great revolutionary movements in the rural areas. They have won the acclaim of the poor and lower-middle peasants.

The profound changes that have taken place in schools since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution have fully proven that only by turning schools into instruments of the dictatorship of the proletariat can successors to the cause of proletarian revolution be trained and raised.

"The line taken in the past may be wrong, but that does not necessarily mean that all methods used in the past were wrong." This is one of the best known of the absurd arguments. On the surface, it seems they have admitted their line was wrong. But this is not the true picture. Marxism has always maintained that methods and line cannot be totally divorced. Education methods are always determined by an education line which they serve. Those in the education circles who concocted the absurd arguments allege that the supraclass method of education, which was divorced from a certain class and line, never did exist. Prior to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, all methods employed in admitting and placing new students, and from teaching to examination, were dominated by and designed to serve the revisionist education line at that time. In regard to admitting new students in to universities, graduates of senior middle schools were the ones who were directly selected or rejected on the basis of their marks. The revisionist education line thus excluded vast numbers of sons and daughters of workers and peasants from universities. Were they not using precisely this method?

The old teaching methods were based on the theory of apriorism which separated education from class struggle and the struggle for production and from the workers and peasants. They boxed the students in classrooms with books and preached scholasticism. The teaching methods stressed comprehensive cramming which kept the students in perpetual state of mental tension. The whole teaching process was lifeless and regressed to formalism. All vital and healthy things were stifled. Students were led by the nose by lifeless teachers and by foreign teachers; all independent thinking and creativity was thus curtailed. These teaching methods handed down by Confucius some 2,000 years ago were inherited by the bourgeoisie for training and raising lamb-like tools to exclusively serve the needs of the revisionist line.

Now let us look at the examination system of the past. The same method used to harass enemies was employed to surprise the students by including strange and most unexpected questions in the tests. Endless tests were given. The examination hall was comparable to an execution ground. The examiners were like judges. The fate of a student's promotion, repeating the same classes or graduation was solely decided by a test paper. Consequently, students perspired in a desperate effort to meet the five-point passing grade. Sons and daughters of workers and peasants who failed to meet the standards were not admitted.

Regarding job placement, the students had nothing to do with workers, peasants and soldiers as soon as they graduated from universities. In fact, they took the road of study in order to become officials, and to keep themselves away from workers, peasants and soldiers. These various methods are identical with the revisionist line which defends and widens the three differences.

To carry out the proletarian revolution in education, it is imperative to put a harsh end to the domination of the revisionist education line. In this regard, the various revisionist education methods of the past must be drastically changed. Chairman Mao pointed out: "Reforming the old education system and the old teaching principles and methods is an extremely important task of the current Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." Running counter to Chairman Mao's instruction, those who concocted the absurd arguments are attempting to gradually employ the old methods. Doesn't this amount to reviving the revisionist education line dominant for the past 17 years?

The vast numbers of revolutionary teachers and students as well as the workers and peasants who experienced untold suffering under the old education system over the past 17 years expressed inveterate hatred for it. By closely linking themselves with the struggle between the two classes and lines, they have since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution launched revolutionary mass criticism of the revisionist education line.

Marx once said: "It is the proletariat that wants to discover a new world by criticizing the old one." The profound changes on the education front by which "past scenes are transformed" have taken place in the course of criticizing the old education system of the past 17 years. Those who concocted the absurd arguments are the defenders of the old world. They are making efforts to revive the past in order to revile the present. They want to reverse previous verdicts on the education front of the past 17 years. In short, they want to negate the revolution in education as a whole, thereby negating the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution begun in education. They attempt to hold back the revolutionary current of the proletariat and the laboring people to build a new socialist world.

Chairman Mao pointed out: "Although some people bear the title of 'communist,' they show little or no interest in current socialist undertakings. Instead of supporting the enthusiastic masses, they poured cold water on them. We should sharply tell these people: You must correct your mistakes and quickly return to the correct line." The mass debate on the revolution in education is a very good thing. Education by the exploiting classes lingered for several thousand years. Ensnared by the old traditional ideas and forces of habit like a cocoon, some people still cannot think through the matter of negating the old education system of the past 17 years, and look contemptuously upon such a new thing as the revolution in education.

This force of habit, however, cannot be overcome by administrative orders. The mass debate has dealt a powerful counterblow to the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts and concurrently enabled the masses to receive a profound education in the struggle between the two classes and lines.

Those who cannot think the matter through or look contemptuously upon new things should make further efforts to distinguish between right and wrong regarding the question of line and should break with traditional ideas and forces of habit as soon as possible. It goes without saying that the struggle is a protracted one. However, no matter how tortuous the struggle may be, we are confident that as long as we act according to Chairman Mao's instructions and follow the correct Marxist-Leninist line, a brand-new proletarian system of education will be established and gradually consolidated in the course of the struggle.

PEKING HISTORY DEPARTMENT PROMOTES REVOLUTION

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[Text] Peking, February 11, 1976 (HSINHUA)--Great changes have been taking place in the History Department of Peking University during the current debate on the revolution in education. The teachers and students have reviewed the tremendous achievements of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the educational revolution and, proceeding from the standpoint of class struggle and using a class analysis, they have severely criticized revisionism. They have compared the present class nature of education, the ways of promoting education and the teaching material with those of the past.

Before the Cultural Revolution, the bourgeoisie exercised dictatorship over the proletariat in the university and the History Department was dominated by bourgeois intellectuals. Applicants of worker and peasant origin were refused entrance on grounds of "admitting students with good marks" only while those of the landlord and capitalist classes were enrolled. Today, reversing this reversal of class line, the university is led by the working class and is enrolling students from among experienced workers, peasants and soldiers. The worker-peasant-soldier students have joined teachers and cadres in mapping out plans for the revolution in education and revising the teaching material and methods. They have become a new political force in the educational revolution.

In the past, students of the History Department, most of whom had not been tempered in class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment, were susceptible to feudal, capitalist and revisionist ideologies. Having been lured to climb to the "top of the pagoda" as intellectual aristocrats, they were increasingly affected by the bourgeois world outlook with its ideas of fame and wealth, and they grew weak because of overwork after several years' study. On graduation they wanted only to stay in the big cities, work in research institutes to build up their own careers, and lead lives of luxury untroubled by concern for the needs of the state and the interests of the people. The present worker-peasant-soldier students have practical experience and a higher political consciousness. They try hard to become both socialist-minded and professionally competent and to develop themselves morally, intellectually and physically. They do not forget their worker and peasant backgrounds and are striving to rid themselves of all old traditional ideas.