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***QIUSHI [SEEKING TRUTH]***

No 8, 16 October 1988

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## **An Investigation Into the Party Building Work in Liaoning**

*OW2011014888 Beijing QIUSHI [SEEKING TRUTH]  
in Chinese No 8, 16 Oct 88 pp 2-6*

["Party Life" column by Song Ping]

[Text] From 6 to 16 July, several comrades and I went to Shenyang, Dalian, Jinzhou, and Yingkou in Liaoning to acquaint ourselves with the party building there. We were briefed by the responsible comrades of provincial and city party committees, held 14 discussion meetings, and visited some rural enterprises. Our general impression is that in last several years the whole province of Liaoning has attached importance to party building and paid great attention to work in this regard. Particularly in rural areas, party rectification has brought about new progress in building party organizations and membership.

### **I. Party Building Is an Important Item on the Daily Agenda of Party Committees**

1. A system of discussing party building work regularly has been established.

The Dalian City party committee and its subordinate county (city) and district party committees conduct monographic research on party building work every six months. The Jinzhou City party committee holds quarterly meetings to discuss party affairs. The meeting, attended by responsible comrades of all departments under the city party committee, conducts monographic research on party affairs and solves practical problems in party building. The Jinzhou City party committee also requires village party branches to brief township [xiang 6763] and town [zhen 6966] party committees quarterly on party affairs, township and town party committees to brief county (city) and district party committees semi-annually, and county (city) and district party committees to brief the city party committee annually. When we were there, the sixth Liaoning provincial party committee had just finished its sixth plenary (enlarged) session. One of the important items on its agenda was to discuss "several opinions on strengthening party building" in preparation for convening a provincial conference on party building work.

2. Party building is handled at all levels, with the higher level supervising the lower level.

According to the comrades of the Xingcheng City party committee, they conducted an investigation prior to the party rectification and found that many party organizations were concentrating their energies on economic work to the neglect of party building. Someone said critically that some leading cadres "would rather create a 10,000 yuan income household than a party branch." The Organization Department under the city party committee had become a cadre department because it was mainly dealing with the cadre work and paying very little

attention to building party organizations and membership. In other words, its "two wheels" were not turning simultaneously. Since the party rectification, the city party committee has established a trilevel responsibility system for party building work, and all levels have been supervising the work of the next level. Members of the city party committee have divided among themselves the work of supervising primary party committees, members of the primary party committees have divided among themselves the work of supervising party branches, and members of party branches have divided among themselves the work of supervising party cells. With the level-by-level supervision, the party building work has been carried out to the letter. The Xingcheng City party committee has restored the organizer system and set up five organizers in the Organization Department to handle the party building work fulltime. Party committees in various localities in Liaoning Province regard party building as job performance for leading cadres under evaluation.

3. Leadership of rural party branches has been readjusted and strengthened.

According to the secretary of the Jinxian County party committee, before the party rectification, leading members of many rural party branches were old, had a poor educational background, and lacked the ability to organize and lead the masses in developing commodity production. More than one-half of the 472 party branch secretaries in the county were over 50 years of age. In last few years, the county party committee has regarded the readjustment of party branch leadership as a key to strengthening the building of rural primary party organizations. At present, more than 80 percent of the party branch secretaries in the county are under 45 and have an educational level of junior middle school or higher. The average age of members of rural party branches in Yingkou City is 42. Since party rectification, the Sunjiawan Party Branch in Taihe District of Jinzhou City has had a young and well-educated secretary who has knowledge of the commodity economy. The people in Sunjiawan Village are developing a collective economy under his leadership. In last 3 years, the total industrial and agricultural output value of the village has risen to 30 million yuan from 4 million yuan. The young secretary has been rated as an outstanding enterpriser in the province.

4. A system allowing for a designated Party Activities Day was established.

Each of the 12 counties (cities and districts) under the jurisdiction of Jinzhou City has designated a particular day each month as Party Activities Day [PAD], during which all party members are expected to take part in the activities of the party organization to which they belong. As a rule, party members who are in other places on business must return to their home place for the PAD activities. Members who are unable to do so must obtain permission in advance. The masses metaphorically said:

"A kite can fly anywhere in the sky, but it cannot break itself from the cord." Leading cadres with party membership serving in the county party committee, government, CPPCC Committee, or Discipline Inspection Commission are required to report to their respective grass-roots party organizations, take part in PAD activities in the capacity of ordinary party members, try to understand the actual situation of the grass-roots party organization and party members, and help improve the PAD activities. The PAD has developed into a system, and this system has been observed basically by all. At a party activities center in Xinzhan Village, we found a PAD record book which clearly records all past PAD activities, the number of participants, highlights of the speeches made by party members, and the names of party members taking leave.

5. Party schools have been established in towns and townships as bastions for educating party members.

Party schools have been generally established in towns and townships throughout Liaoning. Yingkou City has 113 grass-roots party schools, with each of its 61 towns and townships possessing a party school. The city has more than 900 full-time and part-time teachers. In addition, it has recruited 4,134 leading cadres at different levels and advanced personnel from all walks of life with more theoretical and policy knowledge to serve on a spare-time lecture team. Party schools in 31 towns and townships in Jinxian County have resolved the question of school buildings, faculty, teaching materials, and budget. The budget comes from retained profits of rural enterprises, and members of the faculty largely come from retired veteran comrades and leading members of the party committees. A total of 796 classes with more than 80,000 party members, cadres, and activists have graduated from the county's town and township party schools, resulting in the improvement of the standards of party members.

Where conditions permit, party committees in the province have tried to use modern audio-visual equipment in education. Audio-visual equipment has been installed in each of the 18 towns and townships in Yingkou City, forming a network of audio-visual education at the township, village, and work group levels. As a result, 93 percent of the county's party members are able to receive party education.

6. Instruments of propaganda have been fully used to commend advanced party organizations and outstanding party members.

The Liaoning provincial party committee considers this a top priority in party building. GONG CHAN DANG YUAN [COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERS], a periodical published by the provincial party committee, has been reorganized into five related publications to publicize party building. The five publications are GONG CHAN DANG YUAN, GONG CHAN DANG YUAN

(Internal Edition), DANG JIAN WEN HUI [COLLECTION OF PARTY BUILDING ARTICLES], GAIGE ZHI SHENG [THE VOICE OF REFORM], and KAN-SHOU DANGXIAO [A CORRESPONDENCE PARTY SCHOOL]. The total volume of publication of these five periodicals tops the rest of the country. In recent years, through "GONG CHAN DANG YUAN" the provincial party committee has commended 100 outstanding leading cadres, 100 outstanding party members, 100 outstanding party branch secretaries, and 100 outstanding reform-minded entrepreneurs. The provincial party committee specially commended 38 outstanding female party members on the occasion of this year's Women's Day. The publicity of these advanced models has had a positive impact on the masses. It has aroused the revolutionary vigor of party members, enhanced their sense of glory, and increased the prestige of the party among the masses. Commendation activities were widely held in all parts of Liaoning during this year's party anniversary. For example, Dalian City commended 100 outstanding secretaries of grass-roots party organizations, Anshan City commended 100 party members who performed outstanding services, and the Organization and Propaganda Departments and the Discipline Inspection Commission of the provincial party committee issued a joint circular on the selection of 100 outstanding party affairs personnel province-wide for commendation.

## II. Primary Organizations of the Party in the Rural Areas Should Organize and Lead the Peasants To Strive for Common Prosperity

At present, there are generally three different situations with regard to the efforts of the primary organizations of the party in Liaoning's rural areas to lead the peasants to become rich.

The first situation is that the township party committees and village party branches are actively organizing and leading the peasants to develop a collective economy and take the road of common prosperity. We visited Houshi Village in Jinzhou District of Dalian City. There are over 900 households in this village with more than 3,000 people. Before the 3d Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, the village's per capita income was only a little more than 150 yuan. In the past few years, they have given full scope to the local advantages under the leadership of the party branch. They have established five companies specializing in agriculture, fishing and breeding aquatic products, construction, transportation, and the food trade. Aside from two households that are engaged in private transportation business, all the rest of the village's able-bodied persons are working in the village enterprises. Last year, the village garnered a total output value of 23 million yuan. It paid more than 1.7 million yuan in taxes and profits to the state, built up collective accumulations by 2.6 million yuan, and achieved a per capita income of 1,800 yuan. Every household has access to tap water and liquefied gas. There are continuous services available for the villagers from the time they are born to the time they die. As they

say: "Good preparations have been made to welcome the newborn, raise the child, help the young, educate the adult, provide for the old, take care of the disabled, and arrange for the dead." In the past five to six years, no disciplinary actions have been taken against any party member. The whole village has had no crime, no gambling, no births above the target, and no funerals held. The party branch is increasingly becoming a rallying center with its prestige growing day after day.

In Xinzhan Village in Jinxian County, the local natural conditions are not as good as those in Houshi Village. However, its party branch has actively carried out party activities with the village's special characteristics in mind in an effort to explore avenues to prosperity. They are doing just as well. The secretary of the village party branch has taken the lead in developing a courtyard economy. He started by growing grapes in the areas around his house first, and then popularized the practice on the basis of his personal experience. The village provides grape seedlings to the villagers and lays down the rule that no payment will be required from those who have success with the seedlings. Those who do not will be required to pay for the seedlings. We saw that every household in the village has grape trellises in its courtyard. Through this alone, the village expects to earn an income of 1,000 yuan per household after three years. In addition, they are also vigorously developing a vegetable garden economy and village industry, which brought an average of 750 yuan income per capita for the village in 1987, a figure more than four times that in 1982. The village party branch has encouraged seven veteran party members to establish an Association for Social Ethics Education. The association has three major tasks: The first is to mediate disputes in civil cases; the second is to provide help to the backward youths; and the third is to urge the villagers to change the traditional habits and customs in holding weddings and funerals. Now when a person dies in the village, no religious rites are held, no one dons any mourning apparel, and no ritual is held to call home the spirit of the dead. Instead, wreaths are displayed, black silk bands are worn, and mourning music is played to pay last respects to the remains of the dead, for whom cremation is adopted. The party branch has also launched a drive to build "four kinds of households on each street." There are eight streets in this village. Each of the streets has four households respectively designated as the center for party members' activities, the center for women's activities, the center for scientific and technological activities, and the center for cultural activities. They have composed village songs and are conducting education among youths about the need to "love and build up the hometown and make it prosperous." A fine social practice has taken shape in the village. We called on one veteran party member there. At the age of 81, he was the village's first village head after the founding of New China and is serving now as the president of the Village Association for Social Ethics Education. He told us: "I am old, but although I can no longer perform any other task for the party, I can still serve it by offering the people my persuasion. If I find a

mother-in-law is not getting along well with her daughter-in-law or someone else is in dispute with another villager, I step forward to help them straighten things out. By doing so, I help keep the village cadres from being preoccupied, so that they can have more time to perform their duties well." In the past few years, he has helped mediate more than 30 disputes in various civil cases among the villagers, from whom he has won popular respect.

Some contradictions between cadres and people once long perplexed rural cadres, but the development of a collectively-owned economy and increase in income have alleviated these contradictions. The Jixiang Village party branch in Taihe District of Jinzhou City last year allocated some 200,000 yuan from the profits of village-run enterprises to pay agricultural taxes and agricultural water and electricity bills for the peasants. The building of collective welfare facilities, the care of families enjoying the five guarantees [childless and infirm old persons who are guaranteed food, clothing, medical care, housing, and burial expenses], the families of soldiers and revolutionary martyrs, and the wage subsidies for village cadres and teachers of collectively-run schools have also been funded with the profits of village-run enterprises instead of being shared by villagers. This practice has eased the villagers' burdens, brought their relations with the cadres closer, and promoted the development of agricultural production. We also visited the well-managed enterprises at Yingshou Village in Yuhong District of Shenyang City. Agriculture, animal husbandry, and fishery are separately managed by specialized teams. All villagers' families have an annual income exceeding 10,000 yuan each, and 90 percent of the villagers have moved into collectively-built apartments there. The peasants greatly appreciate the village party branch that led them in becoming well-off. Not long ago, the district party committee tried to transfer the village party branch secretary, Xu Zhengben, to work as a deputy township head, but the villagers surrounded his car and asked him to stay. The district party committee respected the villagers' opinion and let Xu stay on at the village post.

The second situation is that in the course of implementing the party's policy of helping the people become well-off, the primary party organizations in some localities have not played their organizing and leading role as they should. Some cadres with party membership try only to make themselves rich and fail to help the people become well-off. In these localities, some people have become well-off by engaging in individual or private economy, but the collectively-owned economy is quite fragile. In some cases, the collectively-owned economy has basically collapsed, and the party organizations there lack the ability to rally the people. According to an investigation report that we read, the peasants in a town became well-off quickly by running large-scale country fairs. Of the 8,100 peasant families in the town, 30 percent keep more than 10,000 yuan cash each. In five of its villages, 25 percent of the families are 100,000 yuan families. However, the building of party organizations

there has not been stepped up accordingly with the development of the commodity economy. In one of the villages, there has not been a soul in recent years who wants to join the party. In order to fulfill the membership recruitment quota (failure to fulfill the quota will cost each member of the party branch committee 10 yuan from his year-end bonus), the members of the party branch committee tried their best to recruit qualified people, but in vain. All the CYL organizations in the town have disintegrated. Since 1985, 6 town office cadres and 10 teachers have resigned from posts and shifted to business operations.

There is a township where private economy has developed, but the collectively-owned economy is very poor, farmland water conservancy facilities have long been in disrepair, and it has even been difficult to pay the cadres' wages. In September last year, the township authorities decided to collect 25 yuan rent for each mu of land contracted out to the peasants. The rent income totals some 500,000 yuan annually and the practice will remain unchanged for 10 years. With the rent income, the township has been able to pay the teachers of collectively-run schools and the village cadres. The wages of a village cadre range from 2,600 yuan to 2,800 yuan. The township authorities have also set a 5,000-yuan fine for each additional child born in excess of the one child limit per family. People call such children "children of negotiated prices." However, some well-off households engaged in specialized businesses do not mind the fine at all. In 1985, the township listed four children as above-quota children in its report to the county authorities and was criticized by the latter. In fact, the figure was false because there were 104 children born in excess of the one child limit. The standards of social conduct in the township are very bad. The children of some private enterprise owners there generally fail to study well in school. Many private enterprise owners have concubines. Gambling is very popular in the township.

The third situation is that the party organizations have not found the way to lead the masses to become well-off. For many years, the village has been the same. The masses say that cadres there just "ask for more money, more grain, and fewer babies (planned parenthood)." The relations between cadres and the masses there are extremely tense. One party member has refused to pay party dues. The party branch secretary has more than once asked him to pay. Once, taking out 10 yuan, he said: "That is all for you. Don't you ask me to pay dues for 10 years!" A village cadre asked a villager doing specialized jobs to pay his share for public village funds. He opened his cash box, took out a stack of bank notes and threw it on the bed, saying: "I have lots of money, but I just don't want to give it to you." A comrade of the Yingkou City CPC Committee said that in one township, the branch party secretaries in 8 of the 15 villages have resigned.

In the course of conducting investigations, we have gained a great deal of enlightenment on the issue as to how the rural party organizations lead the masses in becoming well-off.

First, in the course of developing the commodity economy in the countryside, should the party organizations actively lead the masses to become well-off, or should they leave the masses alone and let them become well-off by themselves? The results are not the same. In places where party organizations are strong and party members play their vanguard and exemplary role well, the economy is well developed, the party has a much stronger cohesive force, and the general mood of society and the people's spiritual outlook there are much better. In places where primary party organizations are weak in leadership and fail to play their role well, the masses are usually poor. Even if some of them become well-off, feudalism, capitalism, and other decadent trends begin to crop up again, while the party's prestige and influence begin to wane. We should firmly consolidate the party organizations in these localities and help them play their role well and ensure that the party's policy to help the people become well-off is implemented correctly and in an all-round manner. In the course of developing the commodity economy, the responsibilities of the primary party organizations in the countryside are even heavier than ever before. The main task of the rural primary party organizations is to organize and lead the masses in developing agricultural production, promoting the commodity economy, and following the path of fostering common prosperity. We must actively develop the collective economy, while supporting and helping develop rural individual economy in line with the party's policies. We should develop the collective economy in light of actual conditions and the characteristics of various businesses and on a voluntary basis. Under no circumstances should we force the masses. In short, party organizations must adopt different ways to organize and lead peasants to realize common prosperity.

Second, in playing their vanguard and exemplary role, party members in the countryside must keep in mind their task of helping the masses realize common prosperity. Liaoning Province has done a good job in this connection. It has accumulated good experience in setting up teams to organize both the party and the masses to seek common prosperity in Liaoning's countryside. This kind of team was first started in 1986 by the general party branch of the Fuyou Village of the Shibajiazhi Township in Changtu County. With party members as the core and professionals who are experts in money-making, activists with no party affiliation and CYL members as its backbone cadres, the team was first formed by some peasants on a voluntary basis. It is a team loosely organized on a mutually beneficial basis. Members of the team join efforts in working out a plan to become well-off; support each other with funds and materials; exchange their experiences in developing production technology; and help each other in tackling ideological issues and in improving living standards in an effort to achieve the goal of realizing common prosperity. The practice of setting up "teams to organize both the party and the masses to seek common prosperity" is another step forward compared with the system of "maintaining close touch with party members" set up in

the past. If such teams become popular, they may become a new form of cooperative economy. In less than a year after Changtu County popularized the experience of the Fuyou Village, more than 9,400 teams to organize both the party and the masses to seek common prosperity were set up in the county with the participation of over 12,000 party members. These party members accounted for 75 percent of the peasants with party affiliation. More than half of the peasant households participated in the aforementioned teams. After the founding of the Wang Zhendong team in Bacha Village in Shibajiazi Township, it reclaimed 52 mu of paddy rice field on an abandoned river bank. Last year, it reaped more than 54,000 jin of paddy rice, and helped each member of the team increase his income by 1,300 yuan on average. The teams organizing both the party and the masses to seek common prosperity in this township have developed diversified projects to help people become well-off by growing mushrooms, plaiting straws for making hats and baskets, and storing grapes during the winter season. In the first year alone, they developed some 900 such projects. Many of them yielded good economic results. The practice of setting up teams to organize both the party and the masses to seek common prosperity is an effective form of displaying the vanguard and exemplary role of the rural party members during the new period. It is worthy of further popularization.

Third, we should give positive guidance to some rural people who have become well-off in order to help them regulate their consumption and accumulation. We should gradually develop a mechanism to oversee the expenditure in all sectors of the collective economy and the wages and incomes of cadres who are party members. In one village, we met a young couple with a child in kindergarten. They built a two-story house with a total floor space of more than 200 square meters. Some peasants had double carpets and even two television sets in each house. In places where the per capita income has reached 2,000 yuan, we should give positive guidance to peasants to help them control their spending. After the individuals have reached a certain level of consumption, we should stress the need to increase collective accumulation and investment for production; otherwise, we will be unable to maintain sustained and stable development of our rural economy. At the same time, we should also impose the necessary limits on the ratio between the income of the cadres who are party members and that of the individuals and the masses. In some localities, plans for the distribution of collective income and cadres' income are made public after being collectively determined by the party branch after a democratic debate at the meeting of the villagers' representatives. This is a fairly good practice. We should further improve the system in this regard.

### **III. Handling Disqualified Party Members Should Become One of Our Regular Tasks**

Between last winter and this spring, the Jinzhou City CPC Committee in Liaoning carried out various activities to evaluate party members on the basis of the

principles laid down by the 13th National Party Congress on handling disqualified party members. It called such activities a movement of "grading party members." Except for the old, weak, sick, and disabled, more than 68,000 rural party members in the city participated in the movement, accounting for 87 percent of the total number of rural party members. The results of the movement showed that 2.2 percent of those graded were disqualified or basically disqualified. As a result, six party members were expelled from the party, and 30 party members were given a warning or a serious warning or were placed on probation within the party. Forty-three party members were persuaded to withdraw from the party. Another 62 party members had their names struck from the party rolls. The membership of five probationary party members was annulled, while the probationary period of one probationary party member was extended. Ninety-nine party members were instructed to correct their misdeeds within a time limit. Nine party members were pending investigation.

The principal measures taken by the Jinzhou City CPC Committee were: 1) Organize party members to study the documents of the 13th National CPC Congress and the party Constitution; further clarify the criteria of a Communist Party member; and get all party members ideologically mobilized. 2) Help party members conduct self-examination. 3) Convene party group or branch meetings for the evaluation of party members. 4) Evaluate all party members by soliciting views from people inside and outside the party. 5) Handle disqualified party members in accordance with the provisions of various policies concerned and the various different conditions.

As seen from the situation in Jinzhou City, to annually evaluate party members is an effective practice in handling disqualified party members. First of all, it will be better to determine which party members are not qualified by conducting democratic evaluations within the party and soliciting the views of the masses instead of relying on the decisions made by a few persons. In addition, the results of the evaluation will be more accurate, because they are obtained by following strict procedures in evaluating the party members. Thus, the party members themselves will readily accept the results of the evaluation. Second, the general evaluation of party members is usually carried out in close connection with the year-end appraisal. Handling disqualified party members should not be done in isolation. During the general evaluation, not only are disqualified party members handled, but advanced party members are also commended. The practice of handling disqualified party members is closely linked with the activities of "commending the advanced." This practice will be good education for the broad masses of party members and should be carried out regularly and on a long-term basis.

### Streamline Administration and Restructure Government Organs

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[Article by He Guanghui 6320 0342 6540]

[Text] In line with the overall requirements of political restructuring set by the 13th CPC Congress, structural reform of our country's government organs has entered the phase of implementation since the first session of the Seventh NPC. Twelve ministries and commissions under the State Council have been abolished, and nine have been set up; the number of organs directly under the State Council has dropped from 22 to 19; and the number of State Council non-permanent organs has been reduced from 77 to 44. Although the number of organs abolished is insignificant, staff size has been reduced by one-fifth. After months of intense work, all the newly established ministries and commissions have now entered the phase of normal operations. The departments that have been retained are now busy with the work of the "three fixes"; that is, fixing functions, organization, and size. All in all, structural reform of the central government organs has proceeded smoothly.

As compared with the several major structural reforms that have been carried out since the Republic's founding, the current government structural reform, which is being carried out under the general background of China's economic structural transition from a product economy to a commodity economy, has several distinguishing features:

—Structural reform of organs is integrated with structural reforms in other areas. Most of the assorted malpractices in the structure and operations of our government organs have their roots in the old system of highly centralized management in various areas including economics, politics, and cultural and social affairs. Structural reforms in the past failed to address this fundamental problem and were confined to "streamlining administration and reducing staff." Consequently, the size of both organs and staff swelled again soon afterwards. An organ is the organizational embodiment of the administrative system. Experiments in selected areas over the past few years have shown that only by integrating structural reform of government organs with structural reforms in other areas, especially with the economic and political structural reforms, will we be able to break through old patterns. The current structural reform of organs is being carried out under the bigger environment in which the organizational patterns of the entire society and economy are undergoing qualitative changes and the operational mechanisms are experiencing a major transformation. In the overall plan for structural reform, especially the restructuring of departments in charge of economic administration, we have given special consideration to the requirements of the

new economic mechanism "the state regulates the market, and the market guides the enterprises." If administrative structural reform is well adapted to and coordinated with the other structural reforms, we will probably be able to avoid repeating the old practice of "streamlining, swelling, restreamlining, and reswelling" and at the same time promote the other structural reforms.

—Changes in government functions are the focus of structural reform. To suit the needs of the new economic and political structural reforms, the party will, in accordance with the principle of separating party from government, greatly reduce its involvement in specific administrative affairs in the future, and the relative independence of government in administrative matters will be enhanced step-by-step. While ensuring victory, the government should markedly expand the scope of centralized administration of social and public affairs. However, the government should delegate, step-by-step, the powers it used to extend to enterprises and institutions and give self-management authority to mass organizations. Under the principle of separating enterprises from government administration, government functions in macro-management will be enhanced constantly and its role in direct intervention in micro-economic operation and management will be reduced step-by-step. These changes in government functions will be the most important content of structural reform which will permeate the entire procedure of reform. In formulating plans, we will break down the functions of these departments, focusing on departments in charge of economic administration, and analyze their posts. On this basis, the tasks and responsibilities of each government department will be clearly defined; division of work, either lateral or vertical, among government organs will be clearly laid down; and the structure of government organs will be rationalized. In light of the malpractices such as inefficient government functions, overlapping government organs, confusion over responsibilities, structural imbalance, low efficiency, and serious bureaucratism, we will promote what is beneficial and abolish what is harmful.

—Structural reform is linked with the work of changing the mentality of the vast numbers of cadres. Our cadres are fairly familiar with the way of doing things in a product-oriented economic structure, but from now on, economic and legal means will mainly be used in economic management. This constitutes a very big change that requires a corresponding change in our mentality. As long as we make painstaking efforts to unite the thinking and awareness of our cadres according to the relevant decisions of the party Central Committee and the State Council, the overwhelming majority of our comrades will be able to quickly adapt themselves to the changes in government structure and in economic mechanisms—as well as social changes—and voluntarily plunge themselves into reform.

—Structural reform is aimed at a systematic change in the government organizational structure, with attention paid to the integrated nature of the established organs.



Restructuring government organs is a complex system engineering project with multitudinous changes. Restructuring must be based on overall planning and implemented with supporting measures. It requires consideration of long-range goals as well as the extent of changes in the existing economic structure and the ability of government organs to function. It requires attention to static as well as dynamic changes. In the current structural reform, the function, structure, and size of all newly established organs must be clearly defined. In addition, the function, structure, and size must also be defined for existing organs which are to be expanded and for other organs which are temporarily retained because the timing and conditions for their restructuring are not yet right. In other words, all government organs should enter the phase of restructuring to some degree. There are no exceptions. To make the structure of government organs more scientific and comprehensive, it is necessary to establish and perfect the government policy-making process and to establish a system of information feedback, supervision, and inspection in order to improve the overall functioning of government administration and management. It is necessary to readjust the existing policy enforcement agencies of the government in the following ways: 1. appropriately strengthen government agencies that exercise overall functions—particularly planning, finance, banking, taxation, labor, supervision, auditing, and industry and commerce administration departments—by changing their functions and forms of administration, establishing and perfecting their systems of organization, and improving the standards of their personnel and work efficiency in order to strengthen the mechanism for the government to exercise macroeconomic control and regulation; 2. reduce administrative agencies in charge of specialized trades and industries and such offices within a government agency which exercise overall functions and lessen their administrative functions based on particular products in order to change direct government control of enterprises to indirect control and to change the state of affairs in which enterprises are managed by a government agency to one where enterprises are managed by the industry itself so as to promote the establishment of new mechanisms for economic operations.

—Structural reform is coordinated with the structural readjustment of our cadre contingent. Although reducing personnel and cutting down the size of government agencies are part of the task in the current structural reform, “cutting the fat” is nothing more than a superficial target. What is more important is that through structural reform we will readjust the distribution and mix of our cadres and improve their standards so that we will have a contingent of high-standard cadres who are better suited to the needs of modernization rationally distributed in our government agencies. Whether or not the results of our government structural reform will make themselves felt depends, to a certain extent, on the development of such a contingent of cadres. In structural reform, personnel will be reassigned, according to plans, to government agencies to be established or to be

expanded and also to various economic and social organizations. In addition, structural readjustment of cadres will be carried out in conjunction with their training, which is a necessary “intellectual investment,” so that they will receive new knowledge, acquire new professional skills, and be better equipped to deal with changes in their work and their reassignment. In this way, we will be able to minimize the “shock,” thereby ensuring smooth progress of the entire structural reform.

—Structural reform is supported by the institution of a civil service system. From the outset, structural reform has called for the establishment of a civil service system of the state so that structural reform is supported by the reform of the government’s personnel system. This was the intention behind establishing the Ministry of Personnel. In order to establish a new order of government operation, attention has also been paid to institutionalizing and codifying into law the size of various government organizations.

The general plan for administrative restructuring has clearly pointed out that the long-range objective of structural reform is to establish a flexible, efficient, functionally complete, structurally rational, and operationally coordinated administrative system with distinctive Chinese characteristics. Judged from our actual situation, this objective cannot possibly be achieved by streamlining administrative organs on one or two occasions within a short time; we must proceed step-by-step along with the development of economic and administrative reforms. This being the case, structural reform at the present stage—including the organization of new government organs—is a preliminary one which is transitional and still has certain traces of “old functions.” Thus, during the course of reform, we must always examine our work and explore new ways and methods. These are the characteristics of structural reform during the various transitional stages when the old system is being replaced by the new. Proceeding from reality, the current structural reform has quite successfully handled the timing and linkage of various long-range objectives of structural reform at all stages; made the best use of opportunities and conditions for reform; and pushed reform forward positively and reliably, thus maintaining stability and continuity of economic and social development as well as government administrative work.

While China has taken the first step toward restructuring its government organs, the tasks ahead are still very formidable. To achieve the long-range objectives of structural reform during the course of establishing a new order of socialist commodity economy, our reform should proceed in the following areas:

First, departmental management should be replaced by management of all trades.

One important aspect in the restructuring of government organs is to rationalize the relationship between the government on the one hand and the various enterprises

and institutions on the other. On the basis of changing their functions, all specialized departments should gradually shift the focus of their work to managing their respective trades. This means carrying out indirect management of enterprises owned by the state, various collectives, and other owners, and using economic and legal measures to guide their production and operation so that they will really become independent producers making their own decisions and being responsible for their own profits or losses.

Replacing departmental management with management of all trades calls for doing away with the "departmental" mentality that is deeply rooted in people's minds and encouraging complete openness and services for all trades. To restructure the irrational production and organizational structure and create the indispensable conditions for management of all trades, we should earnestly separate enterprises from government administration so that they can really operate openly, be responsible for their profits or losses, pay taxes according to regulations, and operate according to contracts; they should also be able to establish lateral ties with other enterprises and form enterprise groups with them. We should attach great importance to providing economic coordination and properly handle the relationship among various trades as well as among various enterprises belonging to the same trade so that trade management will be in line with the state's macroscopic economic policies.

Meanwhile, we must improve the organization of trade associations, which should be nongovernmental, social, economic organizations playing the role of linking the government and the enterprises. The main purpose of trade associations is to serve enterprises by promptly reflecting their wishes and requests to the government, guiding them to implement state policies and laws, and, at the request of the government, performing certain administrative responsibilities. After the government's specialized departments have been streamlined and have had their functions changed, they can turn over to the trade associations a large portion of services which are not the responsibility of government.

Second, an effective supervisory system should be established and perfected.

In the past, supervisory work of our government was rather insufficient. At the very beginning of the current structural reform, it was proposed that efforts be stepped up to improve the supervisory system. The present situation is that among the administrative and economic supervisory organs in our government departments, some are newly established units and others are undergoing a change in functions. Moreover, many problems exist among the supervisory organs, such as confusion over duties and responsibilities, overlapping functions, lack of perfected systems, and disorderliness in internal management. A well-coordinated, orderly, and highly efficient integrated system covering administrative,

legal, technological, and social supervision has yet to be established. In particular, ineffective economic supervision has become a striking problem. With the development of the commodity economy, more and more enterprises and institutions are entering the market to do business, making it an urgent task to strengthen economic supervision. For this reason, strengthening the economic supervisory system must be the focal work in the next step of structural reform.

A prerequisite for exercising supervisory power is to have a law to follow. We should create, through legislation, the conditions for strengthening economic supervisory work. Here, the most important task is to perfect the principal laws and regulations that are the basis for economic supervisory organs in exercising their supervisory powers. According to industrial and commercial administrative departments, there are now more than 140 laws and regulations being used as a basis for industrial and commercial administration in our country, but because there are no laws or regulations on market management, they often find many difficulties that must be dealt with in their work. Similar problems also exist in other supervisory organs. The establishment of rules for the market, the adjustment of relations among various sectors, and the exercise of powers of various departments all depend on legislative work.

Through structural reform, we should explore how to establish an effective leading system in supervisory departments. In recent years, another major reason for the ineffective work of supervisory departments has been that they have met with too much interference in doing their work. Out of financial consideration, some localities have often taken a lenient attitude toward violations of laws and discipline by local enterprises but have arbitrarily punished enterprises located in other places and have even used market blockade to deal with them. Normal economic order has thus been seriously affected. To correct this state of affairs, it is necessary in the next step of structural reform to energetically study the leading system at all levels of government supervisory departments with a view to gradually setting up an effective system of supervision.

Third, we should speed up the institutionalization of government organs and the establishment of a legal system for their work so as to ensure a highly efficient and corruption-free government.

The current reform has, as an initial step, put the work of restructuring our government organs on the track of institutionalizing them and forming a legal system for them. If we want to radically solve the problems of our government organs such as dilatory workstyle, buck-passing, and serious bureaucracy, and to eliminate embezzlement, bribery, abuse of power, dereliction of duty, and other corrupt phenomena, it is not enough to merely rely on the initiative of personnel of these organs. We must deepen the reform and quicken the pace of institutionalizing our government organs and forming a

legal system for them so as to use the legal system as a tool to eradicate all corrupt phenomena and unhealthy practices. At the same time, we should further develop democracy and hold consultations and dialogues so that supervision may be carried out on an open basis. These are major measures indispensable to the establishment of a new order of the socialist commodity economy. They are major issues concerning the success or failure of our program of socialist modernization.

To speed up the institutionalization of our government organs, particularly the economic administrative departments of our government, two systems should in the main be established and perfected. One is the market management system. In this regard, it is necessary to clearly define the market management organization; the scope, methods, and measures of management; the duties, responsibilities, and powers of the market management organization; and the demands on market management personnel. All regulations governing market management should be made public. The other system to be established and perfected is the administrative system with regard to enterprise. It is necessary to clearly define the scope of government administration with regard to state-owned enterprises, the responsibilities involved, and the ways such administration is carried out. At the same time, the government's administrative departments in charge of various trades should make public their administrative functions and responsibilities as well as their work procedures so that enterprises may have something to follow when dealing with the relevant government departments.

As to those noneconomic departments that assume political, national defense, foreign affairs, and social work functions, the emphasis of organizational reform should be laid on improving their own administration and implementing scientific management in order to raise their quality, capacity, performance, and, in particular, their work efficiency.

In promoting legal institutions of government organizations, stress should be laid on establishing administrative laws and regulations and a system of budget control. The "three fixes" plans for various departments—including their functions, organization, job classification, operational procedures, and working rules—should all be prescribed by administrative laws and regulations (such as organizational laws or regulations for various departments). It is necessary to establish a new system to control administrative budgets, strictly control administrative expenditures, and avoid repeating the old practice of reswelling after streamlining. Following the promulgation and implementation of the "Enterprise Law," the enactment of relatively sound administrative laws and regulations must be done as quickly as possible in our country so that government organizations at various levels can all perform their tasks in accordance with the laws and regulations.

Fourth, it is necessary to actively promote the implementation of a national public service system.

The implementation of a national public service system is an important task of our country's reform of the political structure and also an important part of the reform of government organs. After the fixing of functions and formation of various government organs, we must raise work efficiency and quality of various government organs and reasonably assign personnel with relatively high quality to appropriate posts. The "Regulations Governing Public Servants" are important legislation which clearly stipulate the selection, evaluation, promotion, reward, punishment, appointment, dismissal, wages, and other benefits of government personnel. Therefore, the implementation of a public service system is to deepen the reform of government organs. Currently, we have only taken the first step in promoting the reform of government organs; restructuring of various functional departments is under way; and the work of analyzing and classifying various jobs has not yet started. Accordingly, the public service system should be gradually promoted from a number of selected places to larger areas in combination with the restructuring of government organs. In a number of units selected with the approval of the State Council, we can try to implement the public service system following the restructuring of government organs, including the fixing of roles and functions of various organs, readjusting personnel, and fixing the form and size of various government bodies. On the one hand, we should control the appointment of new personnel. On the other hand, we should control the "ladder" of promotions. We should select, evaluate, and promote cadres according to the new criteria. In the meantime, we should train the existing personnel in a planned way to enable them to acquire qualifications for being public servants. Our goal is to streamline and improve the quality of government functionaries.

Fifth, following the restructuring of various organs of the State Council, various localities are actively studying plans and implementing procedures to restructure government organs in line with local economic development and progress of reform. The 16 selected medium-sized cities which have tried the restructuring of government organs are summing up their experiences in this respect. In accordance with the requirements set by the Seventh NPC, the reform of local governments at various levels will be started next year. In order to ensure the smooth implementation of the reform work, party and government departments in various localities should start to investigate, study, and draft plans for implementing the work. Trial implementation of structural reform may be started at some places where conditions are ripe. Whatever plans the various localities might adopt, all places should understand the following guiding principles: adhere to the principle of separating party and government and separating government functions from those of enterprises; adhere to the principle of unifying and

streamlining government organs and ensuring that government workers will do their work more efficiently; and adhere to the principle of proceeding from reality and refraining from duplicating work done by lower and higher units. Based on these principles, we should straighten up the relationship between lower and higher units and change their administrative functions. We should have a clear reason for setting up or eliminating government organs and truly achieve the goal of having streamlined government organs with greater efficiency. The government organs at the grassroots level should pay particular attention to achieving this goal. This will not only raise work efficiency but will also reduce the financial burden on the people and the state. Government organs at higher levels should support the reform of their lower-level units. With the exception of a few supervisory and administrative departments which require vertical leadership and a counterpart relationship, departments of the central authorities must not require various provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions to set up government organs which are all similar to those of the central authorities. Likewise, departments of various provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions must not require various counties to set up government organs which are all similar to themselves. All units must not reduce or stop the appropriation of funds and the supply of materials to lower level units because the latter are not similar organs; neither should they use other methods to block such appropriation and supply. Following the reform of the economic structure, especially the deepening of structural reform of various enterprises, the structural reform of economic management departments in various localities will be carried out ahead of other departments. Great changes will take place in various specialized departments and administrative companies at various levels. Local governments at various levels should also carry out reform of their administrative organs, administrative functions, and administrative methods to comply with these changes, including the elimination of some specialized organs, reducing administrative levels, and strengthening the role of macro-control and economic supervision of economic administrative departments which administer economic affairs in an indirect manner.

Currently, our country has entered a period of all-out reform. The reform of the political structure will be stepped up in closer coordination with the reform of the economic structure. At a time when the reform of the economic structure has entered a critical period—namely, a period in which price and wage reform is being carried out with great difficulties—the reform of the political structure will not be stopped. On the contrary, the reform of the political structure will be stepped up. In particular, the restructuring of government organs, which ensures changes in the system and organization of economic structural reform, will be intensified in line with the deepening of the reform of economic and political structures. We are convinced that under the leadership of the party Central Committee and the State Council and with the concerted efforts of the entire

party, governments at various levels, and all cadres of our country, we can certainly establish highly efficient and honest government organs with Chinese characteristics to meet the requirements of our country's new economic system and political structure.

### Tentative Views on Controlling Institutional Purchases

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[Article by Fu Guangming of the Hubei Provincial Finance Department]

[Text] The so-called institutional purchase refers to a monetary payment made by an office, institution, or enterprise using public funds to purchase nonproductive goods for collective consumption. In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in China's commodity prices. This has been caused by an expansion of social consumption funds, in addition to the deep-rooted cause of inability to control the scale of capital construction. Failure to control institutional consumption in the consumption funds has also, to a certain extent, led to price rises and huge financial deficits and created difficulty for the reform.

#### I. The Situation in Institutional Purchases Over Recent Years

First, institutional purchases have increased at an abnormal rate, exceeding the normal growth rate of institutional consumption. Institutional purchases have increased at a rate faster than that of national income and financial revenues. Institutional purchases across the country amounted to 13.5 billion yuan in 1977 and reached 25.6 billion yuan in 1983, an increase of 12.1 billion yuan over six years with an annual growth rate of 21.5 percent, exceeding the growth rate of national income and financial revenues during the corresponding period. In 1987, institutional purchases totalled 55.3 billion yuan, topping the previous year by 20.2 percent. The following chart reflects the situation in Hubei Province:

Year	People's Income (Percentage Increase Over the Previous Year)	Financial Revenues	Institutional Purchases
1983	8.9	11.0	16.8
1984	23.0	4.2	20.69
1985	22.2	19.3	23.9
1986	8.4	7.1	12.7
1987	12.0	13.5	16.22.

In social consumption funds, institutional purchases have grown at a rate faster than consumption by individual residents. There are two elements in social consumption funds, that is, consumption by individual residents and consumption by institutions. During the

seven years between 1981 and 1987, the index of institutional purchases was higher than that of purchases made by individual residents over five years, except for 1981 and 1985. This shows that institutional consumption has exceeded individual consumption in the newly increased social consumption funds.

Second, institutional purchases are for all kinds of purposes and are luxurious in nature. Funds were spent on eating, clothing, articles for use, fuel, travel, and so forth. The luxury is manifested in the following facts: 1. There has been a drastic increase in durable consumer goods. According to statistics, there were only 15,000 high-class new sedans in China in 1981, but the figure rose to 195,000 for the two years of 1985 and 1986. Ten billion yuan was spent for the new sedans, which consumed two billion yuan in fuel. In Hubei Province, the number of new sedans has increased by about 3,000 annually since 1984. Besides, motorcycles, sofas, large musical instruments, and color television sets have also increased by big margins. 2. There has been a pervasive tendency to give dinners and gifts, and gift exchanges have become more and more costly. 3. High quality labor protection gear, which used to be domestically made low quality consumer goods, has been imported from abroad to make life more convenient. 4. There has been an excessive issuance of bonuses in cash or in kind. Such bonuses used to be under 10 yuan, but they have sometimes exceeded 100 yuan or even 1,000 yuan.

## II. The Harm from the Increase in Institutional Consumption

First, the increase of institutional consumption aggravates the contradiction between overall supply and demand and causes prices to rise. Our country's present commodity production is characterized by production shortages, an unbalanced commodity mix, and excessive demand. The increase in institutional consumption, as Comrade Li Peng has pointed out, "causes prices to rise and creates shortages." Institutional consumption actually competes with citizens for limited commodities, and this is especially true today when the market is in rather short supply. Control over the prices of certain small manufactured goods and agricultural and sideline products was lifted, particularly through price reform. Different pricing systems, such as pricing according to the quality of a product and using floating or negotiated prices, are in force. The price of retail commodities in the market relies more and more heavily on market supply and demand. Institutions have strong financial resources and a variety of means and connections at their disposal. Individual purchasers are unable to compete with them in terms of the quantities, grades, and price of purchases. In addition, institutions are often the primary customers of imported commodities, agricultural and sideline products, and other popular commodities in short supply. The increase in institutional purchases inevitably aggravates the shortages of popular commodities, causing price increases. This is a primary cause of the excessively fast price rises of our country's

commodities in recent years. Hubei Province's overall commodity prices rose 7.6 percent in 1987. This also has something to do with institutional consumption.

Second, it increases the size of expenditures, resulting in the rapid growth of administrative outlays and increases in financial deficits. Administrative outlays in our country's expenditures have increased rapidly in recent years and its proportion has become increasingly large. Take Hubei Province as an example. The province's administrative outlays in the sixth 5-year plan accounts for 15.58 percent of overall expenditures, an increase of 8.01 percent over the fifth 5-year plan. Equipment purchases rose at an annual rate of 23.1 percent from 1981 to 1985. Small car fuel and maintenance expenses have risen at an annual rate of 22.6 percent since 1982. In some poor counties and cities, the number of small cars more than tripled between 1983 and 1986, with small car purchase and maintenance expenses accounting for one third of their administrative outlays.

Third, it harms our efforts to improve party style and promotes extravagant and wasteful practices. Comrade Zhao Ziyang pointed out: The economy must be prosperous, but party and government organs must be honest. In the past few years, cars used by leaders of a number of localities and units have become higher and higher in class; office buildings, reception halls, guesthouses, and sanatoriums have become more and more luxurious; and office equipment and stationery have become more and more tasteful. In addition, the practice of using the opportunity of meetings and business trips for sightseeing and extravagant eating and drinking has become increasingly serious. Our party and state do not allow the existence of these phenomena and workstyle. It would be strange if there would be no public indignation when ordinary citizens are asked to avoid "unearned consumption," while our party members and cadres themselves waste precious foreign exchange to import large numbers of luxurious cars through a variety of tricks!

## III. Causes for the Increase in Institutional Consumption

The first cause is that there has been no fundamental changes in the system of consumer goods supply to institutions and in the practice of "everyone eating from the same big pot." In the case of administrative organs, institutional consumption is still treated as a normal expenditure. Despite repeated efforts to reduce administrative outlays in recent years, administrative organs are still able to purchase consumer goods through different channels and by a variety of means. In the case of enterprises, most consumption is covered under production cost or treated as personnel benefits under all sorts of names. Some are deducted from revenues.

The second cause is that powerful and influential cadres are involved in institutional consumption. This is the reason why it is difficult to control institutional consumption. In the case of a few organs and units, the

purchasing of cars, building of houses, improving office conditions, and increasing personnel benefits are on the top priority list of responsible persons when they assume office.

The third cause is that administrative measures are the primary means used to control institutional consumption. Our past financial system was characterized by highly centralized control of revenue and expenditure. As a result, besides the budget, enterprises and institutions had very few other sources from which to obtain funds. Under such circumstances, it was easy to control institutional consumption by administrative measures, such as requiring purchasing documents and special invoices, designating supply points, and controlling buyers and sellers. With the increase of the financial power of enterprises and institutions in recent years, nonbudgetary funds have greatly increased. As a result, it becomes difficult to control institutional consumption through the continuous use of administrative measures. In addition, for a time, while exercising control over money-spending units, we delegated the financial power over institutional consumption to the institution making the consumption. This has contributed to a loss of control.

The fourth cause is the failure to strictly enforce rules and regulations and the existence of too many loopholes.

1. The phenomena of violating regulations governing specially controlled commodities are extremely serious. In 1987, the Hubei provincial office in charge of controlled commodities approved the purchase of only 2,267 small cars, or 2,389 less than the previous year, which represents a drop of 51.31 percent. The amount of other specially controlled commodities approved by the office also dropped 19.4 percent. However, statistics compiled by the concerned departments show that the number of small cars in the province actually increased by 4,700 in 1987, and 57.9 percent of them were purchased without the approval of the provincial office. 2. Deceptive means were used to avoid detection. Specially controlled commodities were purchased in the name of purchasing non-controlled commodities. For example, some units would write a check with a note saying that the check was used to purchase hardware, when it was actually used to purchase a carpet. Others would pretend to purchase instruments and meters when they were actually purchasing cameras and video tape recorders. 3. Funds earmarked for other purposes were used for the purchase of specially controlled commodities. An investigation of 26 provincial units shows that 5.5 million yuan was diverted from various special funds, operational funds, and nonbudgetary funds to purchase specially controlled commodities. This figure accounts for 71.4 percent of the total amount of purchases.

#### IV. Measures Used To Control Institutional Purchases

Since the beginning of this year, governments at different levels have adopted measures to reduce institutional consumption. However, there has been no notable result. An inspection of 10 provincial units shows that outlays

in the first five months of this year have risen 18.6 percent compared to the same period last year. This tells us that administrative measures alone are not enough to get results. The author believes that we should establish a control and regulatory mechanism that incorporates mainly economic measures supplemented with administrative and legal measures.

1. Start collecting a regulatory tax on institutional purchases. Different tax rates should be established for different commodities under special control. For example, small and large cars should use progressive tax rates so that the higher the price, the higher the tax rate. Color television sets, washing machines, and refrigerators may be taxed at a rate of 10 percent, while other specially controlled commodities may be taxed at 5 percent. Purchases made in violation of regulations and discipline should be taxed at twice the original rate. The collected regulatory tax revenues should be shared by the central and local authorities, with the local authorities taking the lion's share. The local authorities should use the tax revenues as special funds to develop production and improve the people's livelihood.

2. Strengthen control of institutional consumption by restructuring state budgetary outlays. The restructuring of state budgetary outlays has a certain effect on the control of institutional purchases. For example, reducing a department's administrative outlays in the budget will help limit its institutional purchases. A policy of retrenchment should be adopted for administrative outlays. With the exception of payroll and operating expenses, all other expenses, including repair and maintenance and purchases, should not increase over the next several years.

3. Establish a self-control mechanism by using the method known as "two controls and one set-up." In the case of controlling the consumption quota, the focus would be on the total amount of consumption. Quotas for specially controlled commodities and quotas for commodities not specially controlled would be controlled separately. An overall evaluation of the control of both these categories would be conducted. In addition, an auxiliary account should be set up to make all units link the control quota with their budget. The purpose of this would be to establish a self-control mechanism. For example, an administrative unit would link its quota with its budgetary outlays, while an enterprise would link its quota with the business management funds and workshop operation funds incorporated in its revenue and expenditure plan. A purchase plan can be implemented only after it is approved by higher organs.

4. Institute socialized management step by step. Take small cars, for example. We should establish a specialized service company that manages all small cars currently owned by institutions, which in turn can use the car for a fee.

5. Establish an office in charge of controlled commodities. Car approval, management and auditing agencies, and other agencies exercising control over cars can be combined to improve work efficiency and stop loopholes.

6. Establish a system of general inspection on the purchase of specially controlled commodities. Governments at different levels should take the lead to organize concerned departments to carry out the general inspection. Inspection shall be targeted at both the supplying and the purchasing units. In addition, it should also be targeted at control units, such as banking, communications, tax, commercial, and auditing departments. Violations of regulations and discipline uncovered during the inspection should be dealt with. Actions to be taken would include criticism in circulars, fines, and confiscation of the purchased commodities.

#### **Why Is It Necessary for Banks To Guarantee the Value of Deposits?**

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[Article by Yu Naidong]

[Text] During an executive meeting, the State Council decided that the People's Bank should offer a new service that guarantees the value of money deposited, in order to stabilize the market and the supply of money and to protect the people's interests. After consultation, the People's Bank and other specialized banks drew up concrete rules governing value-guaranteed deposits. The rules were put into effect beginning 10 September this year.

This service concerns the vital interests of both urban and rural depositors. At present, the people are quite sensitive to price reform, and artificial price hikes and rush-buying of commodities have occurred frequently because of the failure of some localities, departments, and units to adjust the prices of commodities in accordance with the state's unified plan. Under these circumstances, it is very important to decide on guaranteeing the value of bank deposits.

The interest rate is the price of money and is closely related to the price of commodities. In a country with a market economy, the interest rate fluctuates with the price of commodities, and its reaction is also conspicuous. A rise in the interest rate can serve to tighten money supply and credit. In the buying market, tightening loans can stop the increase of prices and lower the rate of inflation.

In China, interest rates have been readjusted many times. Special policies have been adopted to encourage urban and rural people to deposit their money in banks. That's why the rate of savings deposits has been raised many times. In 1978, the annual interest rate for current deposits in both urban and rural areas was 2.16 percent.

The interest rate for fixed yearly deposits and small deposits for lump withdrawal was 3.24 percent per year, and there were two kinds of interest rates. Moreover, interest-free deposits were greatly encouraged during the "Great Cultural Revolution." In order to wipe out the effects of the "leftist" line on bank interest rates, the People's Bank, with the State Council's approval, began to raise the interest rate for savings deposits on 1 April 1979, raising the yearly interest rate for one-year deposits from 3.24 to 3.96. Moreover, the People's Bank also added interest rates for half-year, three-year, and five-year deposits. Later, it successively raised the interest rate of savings deposits five times. By the end of 1987, the yearly interest rate for half-year deposits had reached 6.12 percent; for one-year deposits, 7.2 percent; for three-year deposits, 8.28 percent; for five-year deposits, 9.36 percent; and for eight-year deposits, 10.44 percent, averaging 8.04 percent for fixed deposits. As the retail price index of commodities rose by an average of only 7.3 percent before 1987, money deposited in the banks would not incur a loss. The enthusiasm of the masses to deposit their money in the banks during 1978 and 1987 was very high. During that period, both urban and rural savings deposits increased by 286.27 billion yuan, about 13.6 times the amount of deposits increase over the past 30 years.

The rise of commodity prices has been aggravated since the beginning of this year. According to an announcement by the State Statistical Bureau, the retail price index of commodities rose 12.6 percent during the first half of this year. In order to deepen the reform and stabilize the economy and the money market, the People's Bank, with the State Council's approval, decided to substantially raise interest rates for bank deposits and loans beginning 1 September of this year. The adjustment of interest rates was considered too small in comparison with the current increase in the price of commodities, and therefore it failed to achieve the aim of increasing bank deposits. On the contrary, savings deposits in the banks continued to dwindle. This is because the masses would invariably look to the price of commodities as a guide to whether to deposit their money or spend it. When the interest rate was low, they knew that their money would incur a loss if deposited in the bank because of the increase in commodity prices. In order to assure the people and stabilize bank deposits, the State Council instructed the People's Bank to guarantee the value of long-term urban and rural deposits for years or longer. To guarantee the value of deposits means that the interest rate of long-term savings deposits is linked to the degree of increase in commodity prices. The interest rate will rise if prices rise. Thus depositors will not have to suffer losses resulting from price increases.

At present, the masses are very interested in knowing what kind of price index is to be used in order to guarantee the value of bank deposits. The price index of commodities currently used to guarantee the value of savings deposits is the general price index, which the



State Statistical Bureau has selected after careful calculations and which can objectively reflect the change in consumer prices in both urban and rural areas. The general price index is known in full as the "general price index of retail commodities and services." It sums up the price indexes of foodstuffs, clothing, daily necessities, books, newspapers, magazines, medicines, medical articles, building materials, fuels, means of agricultural production, and services of various kinds. Such a price index is scientific, rational, and trustworthy. Although the subsidiary interest rate for value-guaranteed deposits floats with the commodity prices, it will cease to float when the price index dips below the bank-fixed interest rate for three-year deposits. In such an event, the bank will pay the depositors according to the interest rates for three-year, five-year, and eight-year deposits.

At a time when the price of commodities has risen considerably, the measures taken by the state to guarantee the value of savings deposits have been warmly welcomed by the masses. The governments at various levels are now trying their best to stabilize market prices. Once the prices of commodities have been stabilized, value-guaranteed deposits will be meaningless.

### My Humble Opinion on Historical Study

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[Article by Li Kan 2621 0170 of Zhonghua Bookstore]

[Text] Great changes have taken place in our reform over the past decade. Changes have taken place not only in our social life but also in historical science, which is an important field of social science. Because of the special characteristics of historical science, the development and changes of this science and its influence on social life are not as direct and obvious as those of economics, political and legal sciences, or literature and art. However, being a reflection of an aspect of the social and ideological trends of our times and a necessary channel for people to understand society and the national situation, it is closely bound up with the realities of social life. Reality is an outcome of historical development, and everyone is living at the intersecting point of history and reality. Therefore, if the pioneers and builders of the new period can gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between reality and history, better unify their sense of reality and sense of history, and have the current situation, history, and theory linked with one another more closely when studying and pondering questions, they will surely be able to create history more soberly, more cleverly, and more conscientiously.

Questions such as what changes have taken place in historical science over the past decade, what progress have we made in this field, and what are the problems facing it are all big subjects for study and it is difficult to explain all of them in a few words. In this article, I can only offer some humble opinions on these questions according to my personal experiences.

### Improvement of Academic Environment Brings About Prosperity in Historical Science

If we want to sum up the situation of historical study in only a few words, I think we may do it as follows: The situation is unprecedentedly prosperous, but the historical science circle is not satisfied with it; great achievements have been made in historical study, but people are not content with them; and people's academic thinking is very active, but the researchers are not content with it. Thus, a situation has appeared in the historical science circle which is characterized by the coexistence of both the sense of prosperity and "the sense of crisis" and by both the sense of mission and "the sense of disappointment." At present, the historical science circle is exploring, developing, and advancing amid the contradictions between prosperity and discontentment and between inspiration and perplexity. Discontentment and perplexity have both emerged from prosperity and advance. Perhaps it is also an inevitable phenomenon in the period of reform and opening up.

Like all other sciences, the prosperity of historical science needs a good political and academic environment. A political situation of stability and unity is the soil for academic prosperity, and the ideological line of "emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts" is just like the sunlight and rain for the growth of this prosperity. Since the 3d Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, owing to the effort of setting to right things which have been thrown into disorder, historical study has been extricated from the trammels of "leftist" dogmatism. Historical researchers have discarded the practices of willfully manipulating history and making history a tool to "coordinate" various political movements and carry out all kinds of "mass criticisms." They have overcome, to a great extent, the defect of oversimplifying and formulating history, which arose due to certain misunderstandings of historical materialism. The past "authoritative" judgments and "unified opinions" on academic questions have been substituted by the independent reflection and free discussion of historians. Apparently, there have been no "earthshaking storms" in historical study over the past decade. But this does not mean that there have been no breakthroughs in this field, nor does it mean that historical study is a pond of stagnant water. Since the "great cultural revolution" ended, the historians have been making retrospections after recalling their past painful experiences. They are making explorations calmly and in a down-to-earth manner. If we pay attention to the writings and trends of the historical circle over the past decade, we can easily discover that there are different opinions on almost all major historical subjects, such as the theories and methods of historical study, the study of ancient history and modern and contemporary history and the study of both foreign and Chinese histories, the macroscopic study and microscopic study, and the demonstration of historical facts and assessments of historical figures. There have been some new ideas and free discussions on a series of



questions, such as the motive force of historical development, the creator of history, the division of China's social and historical formation according to five modes of production, the question of the basic clue of modern Chinese history caused by different appraisals on the Westernization Movement, the time for the formation of China's semi-colonial and semi-feudal position and its social attribute in modern history, the reassessment of China's traditional culture and the Confucian school, and the relationship between Chinese and western cultures. Moreover, objective studies and realistic explorations have also been started on many other historical subjects, which were regarded as "forbidden areas" in the past, such as the history of the Republic of China, certain important figures and historical facts of the CPC in its early period, the history of relationship between the CPC and the KMT, and the history of the "great cultural revolution." A gratifying phenomenon is that during the discussions and controversies, there were no more administrative interferences as in the past, nor the fierce "criticisms" and the practice of having "conclusions" drawn by certain people. A free and harmonized atmosphere of carrying out academic study and discussion on an equal basis is taking shape.

Judging from the general situation, in the disputes among various academic viewpoints in the historical science circle and the course of renewing people's understanding of history, the scientific principles and methods of historical materialism have not been discarded or negated. Moreover, the absolute, oversimplified, and one-sided way of understanding historical materialism has been overcome, and historical materialism is regarded as a developing science rather than as a rigid dogma or formula. Thus, historical science has been filled with new vigor and vitality. The founders of historical materialism correctly pointed out: The history of all previous societies, or of societies in which there are class antagonisms, is a history of class struggle. But this does not mean that all the historical phenomena existing in past human societies can be explained by means of class struggle. A fashionable viewpoint in the past, which was regarded as a universal truth for a long time, was: It is necessary to use the viewpoint of class struggle and the method of class analysis to study and analyze all things. Of course, all things refers to everything in the world without any exception. As a matter of fact, if the specific historical conditions and specific historical spheres are not taken into consideration, class struggle is by no means an all-powerful magic weapon to explain everything—there has never been such a magic weapon in the world. Naturally, there cannot be any supernatural being who "has a keen insight into all matters." In the past, due to the trammels of the "leftist" dogmatism, not only was historical study oversimplified and formulized, but also many historical subjects, which should be studied, were excluded from the range of study. For example, the influences of geographical environment and other natural conditions on human society and history were originally obvious historical facts. In China, due to the differences in geographical conditions, there are great

differences between various areas, such as the coastal areas and the interiors, the hinterland and border areas, in their socioeconomic and cultural life. However, since the so-called "theory of geographical environment" was criticized, the study in this field was suspended. It seems that apart from class relations and class struggle, there are no other relations and other struggles in human society and history. As a result, both the field of historical research and the vision of historical researchers were becoming narrower and narrower and both the content and forms of historical science were becoming more and more rigid and dull. The greatest change and most gratifying progress in historical science over the past decade is that the dogmatic trend of talking about historical materialism in abstract terms and in isolation, to the neglect of concrete historical conditions and complicated historical facts, has been replaced by the scientific spirit of seeking truth from facts, and the universal pattern under which a certain school was overweening and arrogant has been replaced by the contention among various viewpoints and the application of various methods. With the publication of many historical works, the exploration in many new spheres, and the growth of numerous young historians, China's historical circle is full of vigor and promise.

#### **Gradual Shifting of the Stress of Historical Research in Order To Suit the Call of Our Times**

Undoubtedly, the science of history has its own scientific nature and independent character. Being a kind of social ideology, it is restricted by the times and the specific social and historical conditions. The historical science of a certain period directly or indirectly reflects the features and pulse of that specific time. In different historical periods, there are different stresses and methods of historical research. In the period when the "leftist" idea of "taking class struggle as the key link" was the guiding ideology, political movements formed the main content of social life. At that time, the main subject and stress of historical research was class struggle and all kinds of "criticisms" to "coordinate" this struggle and political movements. It then developed from criticizing bourgeois academic viewpoints to the tragic stage of "appraising the Legalists and criticizing the Confucian school." The higher the "criticisms" were upgraded, the further historical science went from the truth and the greater the damages to the prestige of this science. If we say that the "historical science of criticism" and "historical science characterized by innuendoes" were special outcomes under abnormal conditions, then most historical subjects earnestly studied by many serious and honest historical science workers at that time, except for some textual research and demonstration on certain historical facts, were also restricted to the land system, peasant wars, the seeds of capitalism, and the revolutionary struggles against imperialism and feudalism, which were reflecting class relations and class struggles in history. Of course, it is necessary to study these important historical subjects. However, by making repeated comments and expositions on the same subjects, the same contents, and

almost the same forms of expression, it is difficult to bring forth new ideas and develop historical science. The past situation had a great deal to do with the political environment and historical conditions at that time. For a rather long period after the founding of the state, the focus of the party's work was not really shifted onto the track of economic construction. The erroneous idea of "taking class struggle as the key link" had brought about endless political movements. Under such circumstances, historical science could not but be restricted by the political environment and historical conditions at that time.

After the 3d plenary session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, a line and policy of "one center, two basic points" was established. Reform, opening up, and building socialism with distinctive Chinese characteristics became the main subjects of social life in the new historical period. Accompanying the profound changes in practical social life and with the deepening of reforms, many new problems have emerged one after another, many of which are related to history. Thus, changes have also taken place in the train of thought and the focus of the historians. The historical science circle has restudied many questions, such as why China's feudal society was unable to develop in a very long period of time, what roles China's traditional culture has played and what influence it has on modernization, why China's commodity economy has been developing slowly, how to look at the relationship between Chinese and western culture, and why China's science and technology have lagged behind, as well as the questions concerning the population, town and country, and social groups and ways of life of the past. In this way, the focus of historical study has been shifted. Generally speaking, the main expression of this change is that the past unitary and vertical study has been changed to a multiple and horizontal study and the past practice of imbuing people with the class viewpoint and the "philosophy of struggle" has been changed to a practice of studying society and finding out about the real national situation. The starting point of historical study is no longer political needs and principles but historical facts and real life. The phenomenon of "having the final conclusion drawn" before "demonstrating and proving" no longer exists. It is replaced by an atmosphere of common exploration and each airing his own view. The shifting of the focus of historical study is not only reflected by the study of many historical subjects in the new period, but also reflected by the decision on the main subjects for social science research, including historical research, in the seventh 5-Year Plan period. There are 45 main subjects for historical study during the seventh 5-Year Plan period, including 12 subjects on world history and 33 on the Chinese history. The subjects on Chinese history include four subjects on the ancient economic and social life history, eight on the ancient and modern cultural history, three on modern rural socioeconomic history, and four on modern urban history. Most of the rest are about the history of border regions and the history of Sino-foreign relations. Almost all the "major" and "popular" subjects

of the past are not included. Perhaps this is also an expression of reform and opening up in the sphere of historical science.

The relationship between history and reality is a hot topic for discussion lately. On this question, there are all kinds of comprehensions and understanding. I think we may gain certain enlightenment from comparing the changes in historical science over the past decade with the situation of historical study before the "great cultural revolution" and from studying the objective fact of the shifting of the focus of historical study. Historians may have different understandings and opinions on the relationship between history and reality. On the other hand, on certain special subjects and basic subjects, it is not necessary for us to realize the relationship between history and reality, and we cannot even see any direct relationship between them. However, judging from the overall situation of historical science and the trend of historical study, they cannot be separated from the specific conditions and demands of the times. We may say that historical science always bears the characteristics of the specific times.

#### **Blaze New Trails and Advance Amid Conflicts and Challenges**

The development and prosperity of historical science over the past decade is obvious to all. However, things are still not as good as people expected. Battered by the waves of reform and the commodity economy, historical science is also faced with new problems and new challenges in the period when both the new and old structures coexist and the old is being replaced by the new. The main expressions are: First, although great progress has been made in historical science, for the near future it is still impossible to achieve more important breakthroughs and bring forth new ideas either in theory, method, or the form of expression. There will be more "restudies" and "rediscussions" than new breakthroughs and new ideas. Theoretical and intellectual development and the broadening of vision and deepening of understanding will still be unable to meet the needs of reality. Second, the academic value and social functions of historical science will still not be widely recognized and understood by society, and the theory holding "it is useless to study history" and the phenomenon of "treating historical science coldly" will continue to exist. Third, university students and postgraduate students who have graduated from the historical department will continue to have difficulty in finding jobs, and the problem of the students being unable to apply what they have studied will become more serious, which will engender a sense of "crisis of historical science."

How do we look at such problems and challenges, and how do we overcome and change this depressive situation of historical science? In my opinion, we can try to solve these problems in the following way. The historical science workers must make continuous efforts to increase their research level and professional ability so

that they can make greater achievements for the people and society. At the same time, they must firmly believe that historical science is by no means something dispensable or useless. If a country, a nation, forgets its own history, it will surely have a lamentable fate, and the consequence is unimaginable. People have inherited the legacy left over by history under specific conditions. They have thus inherited rich cultural treasures as well as heavy historical burdens. However, what they can do is to blaze new trails under the existing historical conditions. They cannot neglect or surpass these historical conditions if they want to subsist. Therefore, if they do not understand history, they will find it difficult to gain a profound understanding of the present and foresee the future. It is true that historical science cannot directly create material wealth, but it can create and accumulate spiritual wealth. Generally speaking, it cannot be directly changed into productive forces, but it can help increase the quality of man, the most important and most active factor of the productive forces. Historical science workers must strengthen their sense of social responsibility and sense of historical mission and arouse their enthusiasm in participating in practical life. They are required to pay greater attention to the important questions raised by practical life and try to make realistic and objective explanations on them by organically linking reality with history. For example, the theory of the initial stage of socialism is an important theory based on our socialist practice over the past more than 30 years. It also has a historical basis. To further perfect, enrich, and develop this theory is not only a task for the theoretical circle and other relevant circles, but also a task for the historical science circle. For another example, in order to make the deepening of reform conform to the objective reality and in order to make scientific policy decisions, we have to make investigations of our national situation, provincial situation, and municipal situation. These investigations should also include necessary historical investigations and demonstrations. In this field, historical science is also very useful. Of course, the leading department and policy-making department must attach importance to the opinions and achievements of historical science workers and must actively create conditions to support their activities. This is also indispensable. But the effort of historical science workers is the most important. On this question, it is also necessary to proceed from reality. We must not demand that historical science play undue roles and make unrealistic comparisons between it and other sciences to see which is "higher" and which is "lower." We must not feel puzzled due to certain external influences. In reality, or looking forward to the future, those who study history do not necessarily engage in historical research or teaching and "get a job suited to their profession." This is because historical science is different from other sciences and technologies. In a certain sense, having historical knowledge will also be an advantage for them to engage in other undertakings, such as political affairs and commercial businesses.

The development of historical science theory and methods needs our exploration, practice, and great efforts. In this respect, it is impossible or almost impossible that a "miraculous leap" will suddenly emerge. Hunting for novelty does not mean bringing forth new ideas; transplanting does not mean taking root; and deliberately mystifying things does not mean a profound theory. Historical science can have great vitality only when it truthfully and scientifically explains history. When its explanation is realistic, profound, and easy to understand, it will provide people with wisdom and enlightenment and will be turned into material forces.

The challenge of objective realities will make historical science workers more courageous in blazing new trails and will promote the development of historical science. It will also spur them on to gain a better understanding of society and to train themselves in social practice. To all those who know history well and are determined to devote themselves to the cause of socialist modernization, their activities should not be restricted in the field of history.

**Social Democracy Should Include the 'Minority Principle'—Research on Two Principles of Socialist Democracy**

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[Article by Qin Xiaoying 4440 2556 7751 of the Central Propaganda Department]

[Text] Establishing a socialist democratic government is an important part of the reform of the political structure now progressing in our country and is important in establishing a socialist spiritual civilization. Strengthening the theoretical discussions in this connection and seeking a workable road, suited to the national conditions of our country, toward establishing a socialist democratic government is of extreme importance and has realistic significance. Discussions in this article on the meaning of the two principles of socialist democracy are meant to play the role of attracting more expert opinions thereon.

Historical speaking, the term democracy is of Latin origin. It was first seen in the writings of the historian xi-luo-duo-de [1585 5012 1122 1795]. From the origin of the word, democracy (demokratos) is the outgrowth of the two words populace (demos) and power (kratos). In his book *Political Science*, Aristotle pointed out: "Political affairs are judged by the wishes of the great majority of people and the wishes of the great majority of people constitute righteousness.... Hence in a democratic government, the poor people being in the majority, they determine everything and thus poor people's power is relatively higher than that of rich people." The capitalist theorist Rousseau developed a set of classical democratic ideas in which he believed that democracy in politics implied a system of government based on the principle of majority rule and that the majority being the people,

the people's voice would be God's voice. However, be it under the Athenian democratic system of the ancient Greek era or under the democratic system of the capitalist class, in reality it was and is the democracy of the minority class, despite the fact that both have made certain historical progress.

According to Marxist viewpoints, socialist democracy has two meanings. On the part of the state structure, democracy and despotism are linked together. And within the people democracy is practised but vis-a-vis the opposing classes despotism is practised. On the part of the political structure, democracy and centralization are linked together and the system of democratic centralization is practiced within the people. In our realization of socialist democracy, we have both criticized and succeeded former people's theories and converted into reality the ideas and form, conceived by people's progressive thinkers, of the democratic rights of the majority of the people. Only because the political power is held by the people can we carry out the system of democratic centralization and put in force the most important principle of socialist democracy, that is, the minority following the majority. Here, we shall temporarily call this the majority principle of democracy.

Today, along with our carrying out the above-mentioned most important democratic principle which can be truly carried out only in a socialist society, we have frequently lacked the consciousness of another equally important principle which should also be sufficiently manifested in our socialist society. This principle is that under precondition of ensuring the majority of the people exercising their rights, the minority be given the right of expressing, retaining, and firmly insisting on their own viewpoints and ideas. We shall temporarily call this the minority principle of democracy, that is, the principle of respect for the minority. This is also an inseparable part of socialist democracy.

As for this meaning of democracy, that is, the minority principle, it was first mentioned by the si-duo-ya [2448 122 0068] group. John Locke made the clearest and most concrete explanation of it. When explaining their viewpoint Locke and his colleagues emphatically pointed out: Democracy implies that in politics all citizens are free and equal. This is a basic constituent part of the natural law. Subsequently, certain politicians of the capitalist class (such as Dai-zhai [2071 1396]) advocated a fair combination of the implementation of the majority's wishes with the protection of the individual's rights. Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence of the United States, expressed the opinion that the right of the minority to express their views should to a certain degree constitute the essence of democracy. Tracing back history, if we take the majority principle as a classical principle which is suited to mankind on the strength of collectivism engaged in production and living, then this minority principle may be looked at as a principle which, following the initiative movement of the capitalist class,

coexists with socialized production and large-scale commodity (including labor force) exchange. Its existence and recognition by progressive thinkers have more of the color of modern world's history.

Proletariat theorists and practical workers who have all along respected mankind's superior material results and spiritual wealth have also paid a lot of attention to this democratic principle and expressed important comments thereon. Rousseau Luxemburg once wrote: "If liberty is given only to supporters of the government and if liberty is given to only the members of a party (regardless of the large number of members), this is not liberty...all the educational, beneficial and purified functions of political liberty are related to this essence, and if 'liberty' is a special right, it is of no use." Lenin, in his treatise "On the Russian Revolution," when touching on this problem, wrote: "All the experiences in the struggles subsequent to the representatives' congress have forced us to consider the legal status of the minority group (regardless of what kind of minority group) in our Party. We deeply feel that these experiences have taught us that we must in our Party constitution ensure the rights of the minority groups so that the ceaseless and unstoppable sources of discontent, anger and struggles may be led from the vast flow of vulgar quarrels and disputes to the still unaccustomed channel of regulated and proper struggles prosecuted according to one's own faith and belief."<sup>1</sup> But in our country over 30 years after the establishment of the republic, although class struggles still exist to a certain extent, the exploiting class as a class by itself has been eliminated, and basic changes have taken place in the political and economic situation inside the country. Particularly after the 3d Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, a high-tide in the large-scale establishment of socialism has made its appearance. Under such a new situation, there are even more objective demands and subjective possibilities for paying attention to realizing the second principle of democracy.

In my opinion, simultaneous with enforcing the "majority principle," it is necessary to permit the minority to express, retain, and firmly insist on their own viewpoints on both the affirmative and negative sides: First, it helps in making decision-making both scientific and democratic and it enables us in the enterprise of socialist reform to promptly discover problems, solve them, further perfect and improve the various suppositions of the reform, and further develop the good trend of the whole country from top to bottom being of one heart and soul in undertaking the four modernizations; second, it helps us to promptly grasp social ideas and news and to more powerfully pursue our stand against and criticism of erroneous thought waves.

Marx once said: The development of history has frequently gone against the wishes and hopes of people. This reminds us to note that certain things which are correct and conform with objective laws can at their

initial stage demonstrate to people their own full progressive significance. The socialist four modernizations are currently imposing on people of our whole country and leadership at various levels a large number of important and difficult assignments and tasks. To fulfill these tasks we cannot at once or smoothly make the correct decisions. Among the comrades both inside and outside our party, even though their targets are completely the same, necessarily there are differences in their choice of methods and in their lines of thought. Due to the differences in the materials in their hands, in their cultural level, in their social environment and in their individual experiences, unavoidably people have differences in their opinions on certain problems. And the differences may be extremely large ones. Under general conditions, the views of the majority of people are comparatively correct, but definitely we cannot stop right here and believe that truth has ended here. We cannot simply take decisions made by the majority of people as equivalent to military commands in time of battle, and even far less should act like people in the past who frequently regarded as "historical conclusions" possessing "deep historical significance" certain things which could produce only short-term effects, and so on. True, certain decisions or programs may, before their formulation, have gone through thorough discussions on their pros and cons, but these discussions were merely suppositions. In the midst of muddled and complex reality, what actual effects they can produce in enforcement can be revealed only in their implementation on an even larger scale. Only then can certain imperfections and missing points be discovered and recognized. Of a fool's thousand thoughts there may be a meritorious one and of the thousand thoughts of a wise person, there must be a wrong one. In the history of China and abroad, the condition of "truth frequently being in the hands of the minority" has not been seldom seen: That the views and observations of the majority were in the wrong while the views of the minority were closer to being correct; and that the viewpoints held by the minority might tomorrow become the viewpoints of the majority. Life has pushed forward the process of man's acquisition of knowledge and among the minority and the majority such dialectical and dramatic changes have frequently occurred. Unfortunately due to the lack of legal protection of the "minority principle in democracy" to provide these objectively existing changes with a kind of laxity and even possibility, the occurrence of these types of dramatic and normal changes not only has not given people a sense of pleasure after the discovery of truth but also has brought along a certain taste of tragedy. In China the most familiar instances are Ma Yin-chu's "population theory" and Pang Dehuai's "memorandum" opposing the Great Leap Forward. In the international communist movement, the most outstanding example was that related to Lenin's new economic policy. This policy, after the death of its originator Lenin, went through many trials and tribulations and caused several persons to sacrifice their lives. "Though buried and useless, the spirit still rose daily to the sky," and the above-mentioned spiritual wealth eventually had

its day, though after having gone through many turns and twists and paid a price that was enormous and overly heavy. Indeed why can we not smoothly make self readjustment in the course of recognizing the truth and why should we come to realization and understanding only after having suffered defeat in actual practices? One of the causes for this was that in political life we were still unable to make a flexible and correct use of the "minority" principle in democracy.

On the other hand, actively considering and striving hard to realize the principle of respecting the minority group is an advantageous way, under the new historical conditions, to promptly catch hold of the pulse of social ideas, obtain correct news and information, realize effective social control, and open up scientific and healthy ideological discussion; and at the same time is an effective road to enhance the level of Marxist theoretical criticism, construct a new type of Marxist ideological contingent, and overcome doctrinairism.

Since our country's enforcing the opening to the outside world, the phenomenon of a certain portion of people blindly worshipping the west has definitely appeared. Comrades holding this type of idea, though able to firmly oppose and refute the "leftist" side of doctrinairism, have still not made clear the difference between the "leftist" set of ideas and system of theories of doctrinairism and true and healthy Marxism. Undoubtedly to maintain silence against the ideas of this type of comrade is not right. However, merely employing a simple type of administrative handling and criticism of the ordinary type definitely cannot yield any concrete results. This is because, seen from the theory of knowledge, the fatal disease of this form is that an analysis has not been made on the appearance of the above-mentioned thought wave as sort of complex historical phenomenon. It should be noted that the appearance of this viewpoint of blindly worshipping the West is due to many factors. First, comrades holding this viewpoint, though discontented with the present state of the political and economic conditions inside the country, are still unable to locate a workable road and as for overcoming bureaucraticism and various instances which are not up to people's wishes, they were at first anxious for success and subsequently became pessimistic and lost hope. Second, after the war, western countries definitely made immense progress in science, technology and the level of scientific and technical artcraft. Comparing our country with them, a vast disparity exists in the majority of fields. This has given people a deep impression and certain comrades have come to look at this disparity between the scientific level of our country and that of the advanced countries as having been caused by the difference in the political systems, while for our part we are unable to deny that in this connection falling behind has been caused subjectively and even by errors in certain concrete systems. Third, our own contents are antiquated and repetitious propaganda and tasteless political education have objectively caused the loss of certain segments of the populace. Fourth, powerful western propaganda media, taking the lead of satisfying people's quest

for knowledge, livelihood needs, and the "hunger for news and information," have politically striven hard to aid the growth of these sentiments.

Precisely because these new conditions and new phenomena have appeared in a new situation, we must solve them by means of smoothing out methods which correspond to the special features of the matters themselves. One of the methods is that of carrying out the second principle of democracy. Pure and simple administrative intervention will either take double the work to reap half the results or fail altogether, or obtain the opposite results. Just as Marx once said: "The supervisory system has not eliminated struggles. It has made struggles become one-sided and changed struggles in the open to struggles in secret and converted the struggle in principles to struggle between principle without force and force without principle." He believed that true supervision emerging from the essence itself of publication freedom is criticism. It is a sort of judgment generated by publication freedom itself.<sup>2</sup> Although Marx's words were directed at Germany's conditions of the time, we can find if we carefully scrutinize them that this teacher of the proletariat revolution was employing an attitude of dialectic materialism conforming with the law of development of man's thinking about threatening problems of this kind. His basic idea was: Let the ideas, even though erroneous, be publicized first, and follow up with carrying out correct social criticism. Only by so doing would it be possible to overcome the psychology of antipathy of the rank-and-file masses, and obtain good results. Otherwise, as Marx said, "in dying for one's cause it is impossible not to have divine light or disciples," "all secrets have an attractive power," and any publication that has been banned, "be it good or poor, becomes an unconventional production." What we have said about enforcing the "minority principle" of democracy can serve the purpose of effectively solving this type of irregular social attitude mentioned by Marx.

Speaking from another angle, implementation of this principle will force us to truly form a vast Marxist theoretical commentary cadre because in order to obtain the objective of educating the masses by means of reasonable and truly just commentaries, it will not work if there is not a cadre of a rather high theoretical level. This first of all will demand that we cast off doctrinairism which has for a long time kept us in bondage, and encourage comrades in the theoretical circles and social scientific circles to boldly probe into and answer the realistic current problems of China, the world, and communist internationale. Naturally, this should include summation of experiences and lessons. Under the social conditions of doctrinairism and the universal similarity in public opinion, with the passing of time many of our theoretical workers have lost the capability of studying new problems and creating new thoughts. Sarcastically speaking, they have become "idea-planted people," accustomed only to taking orders from above. Contrarily, politicians of the capitalist class abroad have had several decades to study our dark side. In their

propaganda, instead of making use of our self-criticism, we would rather say that they have utilized our silence and our weak points of not being willing to analyze our defects and errors and always desiring to avoid making mistakes. What we did not dare say on a correct stand, our opponents would state on an opposite stand. It can thus be seen that to refuse to answer or study the most urgent current topics not only cannot promptly and correctly explain things to the masses but also is equivalent to giving up the battlefield without a fight. Naturally this is a foolish act.

Marxism is a science. Hence, it should not be like those un-scientific theories and doctrines which, though after the passing of many centuries, still maintain the same stance as that at the time of their creation. Marxism must be developed. Over the past hundred years and more, the wave-after-wave of great struggles of the world's proletariat class and the "passing through thick and thin to achieve accomplishment" on the part of members of the Communist Party of China have provided valuable experiences and lessons to prepare the ground for the actual practices and theories in this development. Only when Marxism is bold enough to face and answer realistic problems can it maintain its vitality. Not doing so will only cause the development of errors or lead the masses to the spiritual attitude of being passive to politics and unconcerned with theories. This will basically damage the prestige of Marxism.

A little over half a century ago, Lenin, the originator of the socialist enterprises, already made the forecast: "Without enforcing full democracy, socialism cannot succeed."<sup>3</sup> Now thousands upon thousands of socialist builders, through their own painful experiences, have come to understand the meaning of this forecast. People understand that in order to create productive forces that are much higher than those of capitalism, we must simultaneously create a democratic system much superior to that under capitalism. This is where the vitality of socialism lies and wherein socialism's hopes lie.

#### Footnotes

1. *Complete Works of Lenin* vol 7 pp 444-445
2. *Complete Works of Marx and Engels* vol 1 p 68
3. *Complete Works of Lenin* vol 22 p 138

#### Reforms and Ethics in the Initial Stage of Socialism

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[Article by Zhuang Zhou 5445 5297 of the People's University of China]

[Text] I. How to Treat Change in Ethics in the Course of Reform

Regarding the changes in ethics that have occurred in the course of reform, people have expressed different views and this has become a hot topic for discussion among theoretical circles in recent years. One view holds that reform has brought along a new ethical countenance, indicating progress in history; the disruptive and bad phenomena in the social atmosphere have no relationship with reform and are caused by factors outside it such as the influence of the remnants of feudalism, the rotten ideas and stature of the west; and so forth. Holders of this view undoubtedly wish to remove any of the peoples' apprehensions about reform and rebuff attacks against it. Another view holds that the current changes in ethics are rooted in the human relationships of the commodity economy according to which, if efficiency is to be considered, then it behooves the introduction of the principles of commodity economy; being subjected to commercialized relations cannot be avoided, regardless of whether this is ethically right or not. At times we cannot concurrently adhere to efficiency and ethics. We must weigh the advantages and disadvantages and choose one or the other. Holders of this viewpoint admit the existence of the phenomenon of regression in ethics and conclude that this is related to reform, and they explain all this as a historical inevitability which cannot be shifted by man's wishes.

In my opinion, both of these views are incomplete. As I see it, reform must continue and the accompanying changes will be extremely complex. Making a careful analysis, we can see that of the fresh and new phenomena or those that people cannot accept because of the question of feelings, some which represent future progress will naturally be met with resistance or even boycott from traditional customs and psychology; while certain others, which definitely indicate a regression in ethics, will with good reason cause anger and discontent. At the moment, people have discovered many causes explaining the regression in ethics. These causes do actually exist. But, why have certain phenomena suddenly appeared in quantity only since the opening up of reform and become universal social problems? And why is it that at precisely this time the functional mechanisms of certain causes have become exceptionally active? In my opinion, only by taking the economic structure since reform as one of the principal causes and revealing the innate relationship between the changes in the economic pattern and changes in ethics can we obtain a relatively rational explanation of this problem.

First, the linking of economic benefits with individual interests is a recognition that the demands of individual interests are one of the motive forces behind the laborer's work and that furthermore, this motive force mechanism is employed to arouse people's enthusiasm. This on the one hand strengthens the autonomous wishes of the worker and on the other can lead certain people to incline toward the separation of individual interests and

social interests; take the seeking of individual interests as the only motive force in labor; make all sorts of calculations, even seek profit-making only; damage public but fatten private purses and damage other people but benefit one's own self.

Second, vigorously developing a commodity economy displays the role of the law of value in arranging or allocating man's interest relations. The law of value stimulates the producers' competitive wishes and their progressive spirit. Respecting knowledge and giving important attention to the value of labor are advantageous to displaying to the maximum the laborer's creative power and talent. This is because, if each unit and each person wishes to make the individual value of their own products lower than the average social value in order to procure the maximum benefits, utmost efforts must be made to improve production technique, operation, and management, thus lowering the cost of production and raising the productive rate of labor. But stressing the law of value at the same time also clearly manifests man-to-man interest relations. In particular, people under a commodity economy are exceptionally concerned with the representative of economic interests, namely money. Money can give people a false impression and make them forget what is concealed behind it, that is, man-to-labor relations and other social relations, and make people see only monetary relations. The phenomena existing in today's society of "everything for money's sake," use of illegal measures to procure excessive profits, and so on, are manifestations of seeing the visible thing but not the invisible people behind it. True, interest relations are by no means low-class or vulgar things. To talk about interests in places where they should be talked about helps to develop productive forces. In certain places, monetary relations replace all other human relations and money becomes the axle and object which life mills around and the only norm for the estimation of man and things. As a result, various kinds of evil phenomena, which pay no regard to ethics, appear. This we should think deeply about.

The above analysis shows that the results drawn out by reform itself are contradictory (we shall skip here the added role played by historical conditions and social environmental conditions). This is not at all astonishing. In history, similar instances were already found in the revolutionary stage of capitalism. Progress in science and technology and social reforms and changes in the political and cultural sectors will inevitably bring along changes in ethics, and they also have an effect on both the principal and subordinate sides. The formation of a new ethical spirit is at the same time accompanied by a decline in social behavior on certain sides and by the regression and falling off of ethics. Since the 17th century this set of contradictions has, from beginning to end, embarrassed and puzzled generation after generation of sages and thinkers in Europe and America. What we have seen is only its special manifested form in the initial stage of socialism. Progress in history always manifests such a contradictory state not exactly to people's liking. We must dialectically look at and handle it.



## II. How To Treat the Ethical Realities in the Initial Stage of Socialism

Facing ethical changes since reform, some people have lamented the falling off of manners and morals. Yet, if we turned back to the days before reform, we would not find a good social atmosphere and, on the contrary, we might even fall anew into the double tragedy of material shortages, low and poor efficiency, foolishness in spirit, and corruption in social behavior, and if we should go further back to the 1950's, we might even meet with illusions of the utopian type. Some people believe that in the initial stage of socialism these phenomena are unavoidable, that people can only accept them, and that the tasks of ethics should be confined to a description of these moral phenomena but should not make any attempt to rectify people's morals and manners. Are these viewpoints and attitude harmonious with the objective laws of mankind's social development? The answer is "no."

Comparing the laws of human society with the laws of nature, there is a principal distinctive feature, which is that they are objective laws with the participation of man's subjective activities. In what form social laws play a role in human society—direct or indirect, persuading or hindering, large or small scale of the role, and so forth, are all related to man's participation. This explains that the relationship between objective laws and ourselves is one of non-mechanical determinism and non-fatalism. Man has the background and freedom to choose his destiny and the possibility to change it.

Selection is the special feature and capability possessed by man. Life itself frequently falls into deep contradictions and conflicts which force man to find a way to get rid of these contradictions. Briefly speaking, the process of selection is first to make use of imagination to create an ideological state which is precisely opposite to the dilemma to be gotten rid of and which can surpass the contradictions. Second, people always focus on those objective laws related to the realization of their ideal objectives. Man's knowledge of objective laws is not through passive reflection of an opportune or general nature. The scope of his knowledge of objective laws is marked by the goals in concrete practice. Following this, action should be taken on the basis of knowledge of the laws obtained through the guidance of these goals, to revise or rebuild every aspect of the social pattern including the economic structure, laws, culture, and education, and correspondingly fix anew the standard of conduct, thus changing man's own self to readjust the structure of social relations.

From this we can see that society's natural historical process infiltrates into man's principal conduct, or it may be said man's principal conduct becomes a constituent part of society's natural historical process, and that the two cannot be separated. In reality, man's activities in actual practice themselves possess the special character of these two aspects. If this reasoning is not followed,

then it will not be possible to find any bridgework for the transition from judgment by knowledge and judgment by reason to judgment by value and it cannot be imagined that man's activities in actual practice are devoid of judgment by value. Hence, those people are incorrect who hold that all the phenomena in the initial stage of socialism are inevitable and beyond man's power and that immoral acts should be allowed to freely develop. The functions of morals is that the principal body should set up for itself an "ought to," that is, fix a value standard and laws for conduct. As a matter of fact, naturalism itself which opposes "should be" and advocates "actuality" is a sort of "ought to." It contains the tendency to secretly support certain acts as beyond the reproach of morals.

There are two phases to the contradictory relationship between material and spiritual civilization in the initial stage of socialism. First, the building of spiritual civilization depends on the construction of material civilization. It is difficult to imagine that a society which has just solved the problem of dressing warmly and eating to the full can make each and every one of its constituent members obtain a perfect education, possess a highly developed civilized quality, and have full spiritual enjoyment as well as the all-round development of the individual's character. Second, the degree of spiritual civilization should rise at the same pace as the growth of material prosperity and avoid the abnormal situation of lacking the principle of justice, a low level of morality, and social instability. To fit in with this contradictory relationship, in the initial stage of socialism, the prefixed objectives should be: On the basis of vigorously developing the productive forces, a balanced development of material and spiritual civilization should be maintained, that is, the pattern of coordinated development of society as a whole. This has the objective of, on the one hand, striving to rectify our past efforts of blindly endeavoring to overcome the poverty of socialism characteristic of this stage, and on the other hand, to prevent the evils of opposing class and spiritual let-down in the original stage of the accumulation of capitalism and in the present capitalist society.

Morality is an important measure in realizing social ideas. Regarding in the initial stage of socialism what morality "ought" to include, we cannot help considering that it must be in line with the ideal targets of the stage. This touches on the problem of "permissibility" which is now being much discussed. In my opinion, "permissibility" not only should be duly regarded but also "ought" to be an important principle generalizing morality. "Permissibility" has been frequently and erroneously interpreted as acceptability by the majority of people and, as a result, some people have attacked "permissibility" as vulgarly lowering the standard of morals to suit the morality level of ordinary people and thus making it lose its purity and loftiness. In reality, "permissibility" carries a far deeper meaning than this way of looking at it on the surface. It demands of us to regulate morality in the same direction as the economic and political reform. If



an excessive demand is made which is separated from the economic development level and from beneficial needs, then enforcing this sort of morality lacks material, psychological, and popular basis. These types of morals will then be devoid of permissibility and can only denote the subjective wishes of the utopian type. Morality which cannot be put into actual practice ipso facto loses its moral effect. Viewed from another angle, only when the regulations of morality are in line with economic and political demands can society use economic, political and legal tactics to assist the realization of morality. Realization of morals cannot merely depend on educational processing. Innate efforts of the individual and the obligatory force of external society are also necessary conditions. In the realm of ethics, the refining method of morality is to start from the socialist public ownership system and the group interests of the proletariat class, to introduce the format of morality. However, from our renewed understanding of socialism at the initial stage it reveals to us that the ownership system is not equivalent to whole interest relations. Under the conditions of the separation of the ownership right and management power, there exist complex interest contradictions. Hence, the refining method of morality which emerges from the public ownership system and its pre-determined ideals is obviously not sufficient. The principle of "permissibility" provides for us a new method: It reveals to us that we should not only start from this social principal body of the public ownership system but also, based on more detailed and complex interest relations embodied in this principal body, point out to people the rules guiding the acts of correctly handling these relationships.

Naturally, "permissibility" is not the only principle for the generalization of morality. What it manifests is the aspect of morality being in line with economics, politics, and culture. The necessity of restrictions and guidance of a higher caliber than are actually needed denote the aspect of the independent character of morality. Permissibility does not conflict with the restrictive character or the character of guidance. When man handles actual relations, morality teaches him where to exert the necessary self control and how to rationally enter into reciprocal restrictions with other persons. It makes man attain the spiritual plane and cultural intension of being a human being. Precisely because of this, morality is taken by people to be the mark of a civilized person.

Restrictive character, guiding character, plus the character of permissibility, make people's actual character no longer become purely and simply natural and animal character, while man's spiritual character will not evolve into an empty and fallacious character of sacredness. I believe that this generalization principle of morality is scientific and rational.

### III. Ethics That Should Be Advocated in the Initial Stage of Socialism

This article does not wish to propose a perfect system of moral standards but only wishes to cite examples of how

to use the above-mentioned principle generalizing the ethics that should be found in the initial stage of socialism.

First, with reference to labor of an autonomous character. In the initial stage of socialism, labor is still in the nature of making a living, and a portion of the motive force of labor is still relative to seeking individual interests. Disparities in the division of work in professions, disparities in the manual and mental power of the individual workers and the large or small quantity of labor expended are all converted, through the form of distribution according to work, into disparities in the interests of individuals. The workers understand that only through their own efforts and labor can they satisfy their own material and spiritual needs, and that the larger the labor contribution the larger the individual interests attained. This kind of labor is labor possessing an autonomous quality.

Under the conditions of the public ownership system occupying the leading position, the state must, by means of such economic tactics as taxation, restrict the over-large differences in the individual's labor income; ensure a general equilibrium in social development; enlarge public facilities, and so forth. Hence, labor of an autonomous character includes not only the seeking of individual interests but also of public interest. Frequently, the latter is unlike the former which receives the worker's constant and deep concern. This shows economic reform a rather difficult lesson: It should not only cause the workers to be concerned with their individual interests but also make them concerned with the close liaison of individual interest and public interest, and gradually raise people's consciousness of public interest. A person possessing the attitude of doing labor of an autonomous character should, and must, take laboring for public interests as being within his own sphere of work.

Individual interests are not necessarily the individual's economic interests, but also include social needs and spiritual and cultural needs. Following the rise in the level of material living, the proportion occupied by demands outside of material interests is becoming increasingly larger. At times people engage in public welfare enterprises not purely for the sake of economic benefits; there may be other causes, such as realizing social rights and benefits, social feelings and affection, satisfying the desire for social honor, satisfying the individual's interest and likes, showing off the individual's special talents, and so forth. Realization of these categories of a person's value can be manifested only in social enterprises. In comparison with the combination of purely economic interests, this combination of private and public interests is much more extensive and deep-going.

In short, labor of the autonomous character implies that the laborer consciously makes an organic combination of individual with public interest; forms a powerful motive

force; and using the maximum potentialities, actively engage in social labor. This should be a new content to be added to the ethical standards in the initial stage of socialism.

Second, regarding collectivism. Actual practices have shown that only a development speed of the productive forces built on a foundation of an economic benign cycle is true and real speed, and that the key to ensuring an economic benign cycle lies in correctly handling the tri-party interest relations of the state, the collective, and the individual. The interests of the three parties are basically unanimous but are relatively independent and frequently come into conflict with each other. On the one hand, if individual interests should by themselves blindly expand, then it would cause economic imbalance and social instability. Hence, subservience of the individual to the collective and subservience of the individual and the collective to the state should be the ethics stressed in our country. On the other hand, enterprise vitality and individual enthusiasm are the prerequisites to expanding social accumulation and the establishment of public welfare enterprises. Among the three sides, an increase in the interests of any one side will help in increasing the interests of the two other sides while damage to the interests of any one side will impede the whole society's economic operations and in the end adversely affect the interests of the other two sides. Hence, the state should concurrently consider the individual's and the collective interests. Between the three, distribution of income should maintain an appropriate ratio.

Understanding of the law of economic operations changes our understanding of "whole interests." The definition of socialist whole interests should include the three constituent parts of the state's, collective, and individual interests, and the coordinated unification of the three. None of the three sides can be excluded, nor can we one-sidedly take any side to impersonate the whole interests of entire society. The state's representing the entire interests and long-term interests of the working people is not equivalent to representing the whole interests of society. What these two concepts denote are two actual scopes which are outwardly extended but not fully reunited. The state's interests are included in the whole interests and if we say that the two are equivalent to each other, then we are edging out the place of the individual and that of collective interests. This is inconsistent with the objective economic laws. In my opinion, the saying that the "state representing the whole interests" was one of the erroneous theoretical sources of the "leftist"-inclined economic policy when formerly pushing the fallacious "whole interests." Moreover, it prepared the ground for the big cheaters who borrowed the name of the state to convert public interests into their own. In view of this new interpretation of "whole interests," the formation of the ethical standard should break through merely regulating the partial limits and individual acts and be extended to formulating the limits

of the acts of the three parties, namely, the state, the collective, and the individual, so that the three will not encroach on one another but will join in mutual combination and mutual service.

Third, in respect to democratic ideas and understanding. In the initial stage of socialism, morals of the individual still have an aspect which is extremely important but which has long been neglected: that is, the individual should be clear about his own proper interests and various rights including economic, democratic, and legal rights, and know how to exercise these interests and rights. When his legal rights are being down trodden, he should be bold enough to stand up and defend them. Our country has a long history of being ruled by feudalistic despotism. In the minds of the people the customs of blindly worshipping and obeying power and prestige still more or less remain, and this includes concepts of an emperor's power and of subordination to those holding high official positions. Breaking with the feudalistic and traditional ethical concepts is a special and difficult task in the initial stage of socialism in our country. Only in strengthening the people's democratic ideas, independent character, and concept of legal rights can we clearly mark the basic difference between socialist ethics and feudal ethics. Socialist consciousness is not straightforward blind obedience and sacrifice but is the ability to clearly distinguish what constitutes rational and proper individual rights and what constitutes real public interest. We should be bold enough to firmly insist on the individual's proper rights and privileges when occasions demand, but when occasions demand that sacrifices must be made, then we should do so without any hesitation.

I believe that the several points above should be strongly emphasized. I sincerely desire to discuss with other comrades whether or not these viewpoints and the viewpoints throughout the whole article are correct, in the hope that building of ethics in the initial stage of socialism can be strengthened and perfected.

#### On 'River Elegy'

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[Article by Tian Benxiang 3944 2609 4161 of the China Arts Research Institute]

[Text]

#### I

After the screening of the television serial *River Elegy* [He Shang 3109 2999], a stir effect was induced which was completely unexpected by the authors, the broadcasting units, or comrades connected with the screening.

It was not like a New Year's evening show and likewise not like an exciting television serial. Stir effects by such programs are expected. However, one would not have

expected it of the television series *River Elegy* with its heavy and strenuous philosophical content, its certainly not light and even tragic tone, that continuous, eloquent narration which filled the screen, together with those highly condensed pictorial images which did not allow one's eyes to rest, and which came at one like a heavy downpour. Despite all this, this six-part serial unexpectedly drew millions of viewers in front of their screens. As we watched and listened, we could not suppress the urge to cheer. Then as we watched further, we involuntarily plunged into deep thought. There were great sighs of sorrow for the backwardness of Eastern rural culture and continuing deep concern about the fate of the nation. However, its calls were not of self-abasement and not of sorrow. Rather, it had a reflective consciousness of painstaking searching, a will of self-strengthening so as to be able to rise and stand among the family of nations, and a firmness of will for the great cause of reform, which is so full of difficulties and obstacles. It can be said that no previous television serial has given viewers such a deep-going and severe ideological shock and presented so many serious questions for thought as has *River Elegy*. The response of the intelligentsia has been even more intense. This is because the questions which *River Elegy* discusses are those questions, theories and arguments which they have racked their brains about and spent a great amount of time exploring. They are the questions they have been writing articles about and those which they have debated at conferences and in daily discussions. These questions touch on many fields, including philosophy, economics, politics, culture, and history. Now that these questions have been concentrated, put into images on the screen, and broadcast through this powerful medium, it has inevitably both given these people a feeling of contentment and at the same time shocked them with a bone-shaking resonance. Likewise, China's newspapers and periodicals have never reported with such favor on a television serial as they have on *River Elegy*, and they have published commentaries, provided running reports, printed appraisals and organized discussions. I believe that all of these aspects form a television cultural phenomenon which attracts great attention. Perhaps this can be called the "*River Elegy* phenomenon."

Regardless of whether or not people support it, the *River Elegy* phenomenon does exist. Faced with this objectively existing television cultural phenomenon, the task of theoretists is to examine and ponder this in a sober and thorough-going way! How did the *River Elegy* phenomenon come about? Is it a coincidental occurrence or an inevitable result? What is the significance of the *River Elegy* phenomenon? That is to say, what significance does it have for China's television culture which is now at the developing stage? What new experiences does it provide to television circles and what questions can thus be deeply explained? This article cannot carry out an overall examination and assessment of all these questions and thus it is intended only to put forward a few impressionistic ideas on a few topics.

The appearance of *River Elegy* was not coincidental and the emergence of the *River Elegy* phenomenon was not coincidental. The wisdom and sorrows of the times and the intuitive knowledge and conscience of the times are all reflected through various fields and various people. Leaving aside the remote past, the ideological and cultural history of the last hundred years centralizes the perplexity, the thought, the wisdom, and the suffering of several generations. It can be said that there is nothing more capable of inducing the pain of and deep thought by the whole nation than the fact that the people's republic, which had stood like a giant in the East, had to go through the calamitous period of the 10 years of the "Cultural Revolution" which shook people's souls. Also, in the great present-day tide of reform, which is determining the fate of the country, the layer upon layer of obstacles and deep-rooted obstructions also force people to ponder the origins of this hotbed of roadblocks to reform and to explore the prospects for and fate of China's reforms. All of this is not only condensed into the historical resolutions and historic documents since the 3d Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, but also reflected in an unprecedentedly vigorous way in the works of the intelligentsia and more widely in the topics of conversation of people in their daily lives. Together, these form an unprecedented high tide of reflection by the whole nation on the fate of the nation. Thus, I feel that the *River Elegy* phenomenon is a television projection of this tide of reflection by the whole nation. If these aspects did not exist *River Elegy* could not have emerged and there would thus be no *River Elegy* phenomenon.

Engels said: "Modern materialism sees history as the process of development of mankind and its task is to discover the patterns of movement of this process."<sup>1</sup> When a nation, on such a scope and scale, starts urgently pondering its place in "the patterns of movement of this process," it is a sign of the invigoration and development of that nation. The achievement of *River Elegy* lies in that it has reflected on the screen this tide of reflection by a nation and the achievements which have been realized. Even though it has shortcomings of one sort or another, it has made path-breaking contributions which cannot be obscured.

## II

In our country, the production of television series has seen a glorious period in the 1980's. Just as Chinese television entered a take-off stage, beginning with *Silk Road*, there was one series after another which received nation-wide acclaim: *Talks on the Changjiang*, *Talks on the Grand Canal*, *Song of Life*, *Let History Tell the Future*, and so on came to prominence one after the other. These were the result of unstinting efforts. Without the accumulated experiences provided by these series, *River Elegy* would not have seen the light of day. The advance in each program required the base laid by those which had gone before. At the same time, each was a breakthrough and a new path as compared with those

which had gone before. The history of this fine cycle of dynamic movement and renewed creation in television is worthy of serious examination and summing up.

The path-breaking value of *River Elegy* lies in the fact that it breaks through the conclusion that "television culture is only a type of mass culture" and makes innovative experiments. In "expressing complex ideas" in a television film, it has achieved quite successful exploration. It has shown that television culture is able to create its own elite cultural products. The significance of this is wide-reaching.

Over the last few years, in research into television culture, I have been constantly pondering a question: Western media studies experts and sociologists have always considered television culture to be a type of mass culture. Their idea seems to be that as television can satisfy the cultural consumption needs of the masses on only a shallow and popular cultural level, one can make television programs only at that level. Also, there are some scholars who feel that it is extremely difficult for television programs to express complex ideas. Toeffler, when talking about his thoughts and feelings while participating in the making of "The Third Wave" television film, had this to say: "For a large number of authors, television is not an easy thing to deal with or a very natural communication medium." He also said: "Using a serious television technique, which does not pander to the masses, to present complex ideas, while on the visual level leaving people with a deep impression—this truly is a difficult thing to achieve."<sup>2</sup> Even this futurist, so rich in imagination, considered it difficult to have television programs express complex ideas. Is it then strange that these difficulties have proved hard to overcome? After the screening of *Talks on the Grand Canal* and *Let History Tell the Future*, I seemed to see a possibility and a hope. I then wrote an article elaborating on these ideas. And now *River Elegy* has achieved pleasing progress. It has raised television film to a quite high philosophical and cultural level, to what can be called an elite cultural level. This has resulted in it beginning to move from a descriptive narrative form to a realm in which complex ideas are expressed. This step which it has taken may indeed bring with it a qualitative change, and it can be seen as a step with significance for the future.

It does not seem appropriate to use the existing categories of television film when judging *River Elegy*. It is not a scenic film and not a documentary. Rather, it is a new category of television. The author Su Xiaokang [5685 2556 1660] has said that it is a television political commentary. "We intended to try a television political commentary which grasped the Huang He from a cultural and philosophical consciousness." However, I feel that this is insufficiently precise. I prefer to see it as an exploratory television film. As we permit exploratory literature, exploratory film, and exploratory drama, we should allow exploratory television. That is to say, it has an experimental nature. As it is experimental, we should

allow it to succeed or allow it to fail. If we are to give this category a name, we feel it should be called an academic culture film or an ideological culture film for television. Although *River Elegy* has a political commentary hue, if we call it a political commentary film for television, we will be overlooking the special nature and creativity it manifests.

Why do we say that it is an academic culture film? This is because, as far as its overall nature is concerned, it is academic. Although it is not a theoretical work, it has its theoretical model, academic opinions, and rational speculative characteristics. The views expressed on Eastern agricultural culture, on the so-called "Asiatic mode of production," on the "super-stable structure" of Chinese feudal society, on Confucian culture, on dragon culture, on the historical role of the Great Wall, and so on, can all be said to be authoritative. However, these ideas, as the authors note, are not their own. They have been taken from Chinese and Western scholars and especially from the research achievements of the discussion and reflection during the "culture fad" of the 1980's. Of course they are academic viewpoints in which the authors are interested and with which they identify. The basic contents of *River Elegy* are structured around these academic opinions.

The fields upon which it touches are quite wide-ranging and include political culture, economic culture, natural culture, the history of human civilization, comparative Chinese and foreign cultural history, and so on. Thus, the debate and discussion which has occurred between different academic viewpoints is also extremely natural. The views on traditional culture can, according to Mr Tang Yijie [3282 0001 0094], be summed up into five schools: the anti-traditional school, the May Fourth Movement school, the early enlightenment school, the modern Confucian school, and the return-to-the-classics school. However, *River Elegy* cannot completely encompass the views of these five schools. While it adopts the view of one school, there remain at least the other four schools to discuss the matter with it. As these are academic ideas, of course they can be discussed. Mankind's knowledge and culture develops through discussion and debate, criticism and evolution. Thus, I believe that, regardless of whether one adopts a critical or accepting attitude regarding its academic viewpoints, it is quite natural to consider *River Elegy* to be an academic culture film. If the appearance of *River Elegy* has played a promotional role in encouraging academic discussion, this is a good thing. The basic aim of *River Elegy* lies in arousing a consciousness of pondering. It does not want people to take its theoretical model and academic opinions as "the ultimate truth" or accept them as a "conclusion." In the past, we got used to seeing the communication media as authoritative representatives of public opinion, which had to communicate definite ideas. However, the ability of communication media to give expression to communication democracy is also necessary if they are to manifest communication authority. I believe that the appearance of academic

culture films has meant that the medium of television has found a mode which stimulates viewers to think and which engages in ideological and cultural interflow at a deep level. This mode is going to be extremely significant. The historical and practical significance of *River Elegy* lies in that it has guided the thought of the academic and cultural circles to the masses. The value and significance of this cultural enlightenment will leave their mark on the history of Chinese culture.

*River Elegy* is but one type of television film, and does not run the whole gamut. The other types of film are still needed. Only thus can television films be richer and more diverse.

### III

In the appraisal of *River Elegy*, I have tended not to focus on whether or not I endorse the various specific academic views, and rather have centered my attention on the poetic, fervent, and critically rational spirit which it expresses.

The critical rationality of *River Elegy* is quite rigorous and serious. It is as if the great pain which the authors' penetrating insight brings is interrogating the Huang He, interrogating history, interrogating the nation, interrogating the souls of the people, and even more interrogating themselves. The film engages in serious national self-criticism. Some of the words it uses are extremely severe, even to a degree where people find them hard to accept. I believe that national self-criticism of this sort is not easy and requires preconditions. Many years ago, I wrote an article on Lu Xun's stories. I said: "The novel *The True Story of Ah Q* can be said to be a great work, unprecedented in having national self-confidence engaging in national self-criticism. When Lu Xun, burning with anger, criticizes Ah Q-ism and criticizes the ignorance, backwardness and apathy of the peasants, we can see behind this humiliating image an unbending and great national spirit. Without a great national self-confidence, it would be difficult to have such great self-criticism."<sup>3</sup> I do not want to compare the authors of *River Elegy* with Lu Xun, but behind the critical rationality of *River Elegy* there is a great sense of mission and sense of crisis in terms of the fate of the Chinese nation, as well as the fate of and prospects for the reforms. This is quite difficult to find and is thus to be valued.

People all know that over the last few years an undercurrent has appeared in the literary and arts fields and in the academic and cultural fields. This undercurrent is an attitude of indifference to politics, an attitude which is divorced from reality, which evades reality, and which includes such things as "amusement" scholarship and "amusement" literature. This is a cynical attitude. Further, some of our television programs have been tainted by the mold of commercialization, toadying and bowing to low-level tastes and evading important practical questions. When *River Elegy*, with its great sense of mission, cut straight to reality, it showed the zealous fine qualities

mentioned previously and this is the real reason *River Elegy* has won the common acclaim of the viewers. Some people believe that *River Elegy* only "safely flogs the ancestors." This criticism is clearly insufficiently objective or fair. Criticism is not "flogging" and even less is it ruthless destruction. The spirit of critical rationality lies in the negating or the questioning of every "ultimate truth" or "absolute truth" and putting forward new propositions and new opinions, so as to at least induce new thought and new appraisals of things. This in itself means advancement and the discovering of truth and stimulates a spirit of building and renewal. The combination of a poet's passion and a philosopher's rational criticism and the linking of images and ideas are what have produced the power of *River Elegy* to shake the soul.

*River Elegy* has moved away from "lecturing from a pedestal" and away from the propaganda style of stiff inculcation, and rather has pushed the television screen to the level of philosophical culture. With a rational power to inspire and power to persuade, it awakens the reflective consciousness and reform consciousness of the entire nation. Seen in the context of the development of world cultures, the stimulation of a pressing sense of crisis among an entire nation basically inspires a spirit of arousal in that nation and raises the cultural quality of the masses. I believe that this program will result in China's television communication art leaping to a new higher stage. That the central television station could broadcast a television program such as this is indicative of far-sightedness. It can be said that this manifests a movement towards maturity in terms of the station having some control over television culture.

### IV

*River Elegy* broke through the conclusion that the television culture is mass culture and has begun to push television film to the elite cultural level. In this, its significance is far-reaching.

The various problems which have occurred in the development of Western television have increasingly perplexed some of the Western media scholars and sociologists and increasingly caused uneasiness among Western viewers. How we are to get our country's television to draw in these lessons, prevent television becoming an alienating force, and avoid suffering the same troubles, and instead get television to move along a road of development of socialist television culture with Chinese characteristics, is indeed a matter which requires deep discussion. After watching *River Elegy*, Mr Chen Guying [7115 7849 2019] emotionally said: "I went from Taiwan to the United States and then came to the mainland and have watched over 40 years of television. A work such as this which reflects major questions such as social problems and the fate of the nation is not to be seen in the United States. The situation in Taiwan over the last few years has also been very tragic, but I did not see such a film there. The level of academic and

cultural education in the United States, Taiwan, and western society is very high, but their television takes people's minds down to a very low level, resulting in their intellect and thought becoming mediocre." These words of his afford much food for thought. I believe that the appearance of *River Elegy* brings us hope that television will produce its own elite cultural products. A major aspect in guarding against television's travelling the road of mediocrity and vulgarity is the proper handling of the relationship between mass culture and elite culture.

The structure of television culture should be in accord with the structure of social culture. In the structure of social culture, it is possible to have mass culture levels aimed at the broad masses of society, levels which have the general intellectuals and members of the masses with a reasonable educational level as their targets, as well as an elite level. The structure of television culture should also correspond with these levels. Only by having a multi-level corresponding structure like this will we have a rational television culture structure which has complex internal mechanisms and is rich in vigor for growth. The problem now is that people either do not have a sufficient understanding or have underestimated the importance of television having its own elite culture. If both mass culture and elite culture existed side by side in television culture, they could restrain and supplement each other. Without the nourishment and guidance of elite culture, mass culture may increasingly tend towards vulgarity. Likewise, without the supporting base of mass culture, elite culture might become a completely high-brow thing. Arranging the position and role of proper elite culture in television culture will be of benefit to the overall development orientation of television culture. This will satisfy the needs of a specific audience in society and also satisfy the daily increasing cultural needs of the masses. Looking at the significance of the screening of *River Elegy* in terms of this question, it is clear that it has special value. Thus, it is said that it is not that there are too many television programs like *River Elegy*, but rather that there are too few. The elite cultural level of television culture which was gradually formed with the appearance of *River Elegy* is a television culture landscape which is truly moving.

## V

Television film is a comprehensive art and television is one form which is an epitome of social culture. This characteristic determines that it must be tightly linked horizontally with various circles and, through horizontal osmosis, richly develop itself. Development impetus will thus be drawn in, the cultural quality of television will be raised and the cultural function of television will be brought into play. The experiences of *Talking About the Grand Canal* and *Let History Tell the Future* prove these points. *River Elegy* goes a step further and shows cooperation and linkage on a deeper level. A young television writer-director full of vigor closely cooperated with an outstanding reportage writer and a young scholar, and

also sought wide-ranging cooperation from philosophers, historians, mythologists, and economists. In this way, it was ensured that the contents of *River Elegy* had a wide and deep-going academic base, as well as the speculative focal points of the time. This is integration at a deep level, as well as cooperation based on a common sense of mission and responsibility and common goals.

However, I also want to make a call to the intelligentsia to adopt a new consciousness of television culture, to adopt a creative consciousness, whereby they excel in using the television communication medium to spread ideas. For quite a long time, the intelligentsia has been used to spreading ideas through the medium of print. Theories have been spread in books and people's ideas have had to be converted into lead type. This was the way the literati worked in the past. But today, the age of the medium of television has arrived. However, due to historical factors and objective conditions, our writers, philosophers, politicians, economists, and so on are not skilled in using this powerful medium and even hold a dismissive attitude towards it. Looking lightly on the medium of television is a backward view. The experiences of *River Elegy* prove that as soon as the ideas of scholars are changed into images on the screen, they can produce an unexpected effect over a wider range, an effect which cannot be surpassed by the print medium. Of course, I am not saying that the television medium can replace the print medium. The latter is irreplaceable. However, if scholars and writers are able to be aware of television culture and are skilled in utilizing the medium, would this not be a more modern avenue for spreading ideas?

## VI

The writing of *River Elegy* is outstanding and the directing is likewise outstanding. The director was the planner and organizer of *River Elegy*. If, on the ideological cultural level, there had been a lack of resonance between the director and the writer, then outstanding cooperation would have been difficult to achieve. If there had been a lack of creativity in television culture concepts, this artistic exploration in "expressing complex ideas" would have been difficult to carry out. If there were insufficient knowledge and insufficient preparation in terms of comprehensive television arts, it would have been difficult to realize overall artistic demands in the areas of photography and images, cutting and editing, music, art design, and commentary. It was only with a very high level of overall artistic coordination that *River Elegy* was able to produce an artistic power which shook people's hearts. Thus, *River Elegy* is not only a product of the director and writer, but also of the sincere cooperation of the whole body of workers and personnel involved.

The work sequence of *River Elegy* was special in that first the commentary was written and then the pictorial images were added. *Let History Tell the Future* was also done in this way. As far as the director is concerned, this put him in a quite passive position, especially because of

the time limits and the fact that photographic images from the earlier period are quite limited. It was possible only to arrange pictures from "Huang He" and its image materials. This situation of passivity provided difficulties, but also gave the director an opportunity to seek active creation from passivity and provided the possibility of an artistic experiment. In this respect, it can be said to have been a breakthrough.

In a good television film, the commentary and the images should be organically combined. Having a commentary divorced from the images or images divorced from the commentary can weaken the ideological and artistic power of a television film. The difficulty of the image artistry in *River Elegy* lay in determining how to ensure that the images matched up with the commentary which is tinted with speculation. The achievements in this area provide some valuable experiences for reference.

In the handling of the pictorial image materials, it can be said that a rich variety of materials were obtained through great efforts. This guaranteed that there would be pictorial materials which could match the commentary. Actually, the materials it used far surpass those of "Huang He." It is not just a re-creation of "Huang He." The fact that this aspect of the production, which must not be underestimated, was successful, is tied to the fact that the director understood the value of the image materials. Further, a wide cultural vision ensured that the value and meaning of the pictorial materials was recognized. That is to say, there was vision in the selection of materials. Some of the materials which appear in *River Elegy* cause people to wonder how they were photographed, and such materials are used in quite a clever way. For example, the much-praised images at the beginning of the film, whereby people are seen worshipping on bended knees in all directions, are linked together in a way which produces something of deep meaning. This demonstrates the point being made.

One of the characteristics of the structure of the images in *River Elegy* is that there is an attempt to harmonize the images with the entirety of the theme, tone, and mood of *River Elegy*, rather than just to have them partially synchronized. In accordance with the imposing tone of reflection in the commentary, the structure of the images is built on major contrasts. In an overall way, it shows the backwardness of mainland culture and the vitality of ocean culture, the precipitation of the historical culture of the Huang He, along with the psychological predicament of real-life culture. Also, in every segment, it engages in comparisons—conflicting, opposing, alternating, and contrasting comparisons. Thereby is formed the artistic shock of integrated commentary and pictures.

I believe that a more successful aspect is that, in order to seek harmony with the rational commentary, a "hazy expression" mode is adopted on the pictorial level. That is, pictures which are generally corresponding, but not

precisely so, are used to express abstract ideas. Sometimes they are symbolic and at other times they are metaphorical. Such pictures are more conducive to stimulating connected thoughts, and also more appropriate to the expression of abstract ideas, than are precisely corresponding pictures. The method of counterpointing or alternating commentary and image is frequently used in this film. For example, pictures with which people are very familiar, such as the moving scene when the Chinese women's volleyball team defeated the United States' team, the heroes swirling about in the Huang He, the ancient Great Wall, the dancing dragon.... when contrasted with the commentary, form a strong artistic effect. The strange effect achieved is something which the commentary alone could not achieve.

Color is ideology and color is mood. *River Elegy* has put effort into the area of color. The yellow which was revered by the ancestors is seen in the yellow water and the yellow earth, forming a yellow tone which is coordinated with the heavy tragic tone of the film itself. This is seen particularly in the part entitled "Sorrows." Also, the blue in the final part "Sky Blue" forms a contrast with the yellow. This contrast of tones and moods gives color to the reflective theme of *River Elegy* and this color is a powerful way to provide artistic form. Non-specific color can also be said to be a type of "hazy expression."

The rhythmic speed of the images is also a way of giving material expression to ideas. This is the melody of the ideas, the melody of the mood. Seeking a correlation between the rhythmic speed of the images and the contents of the commentary is more abstract, but it is an appropriate method for *River Elegy*. When this is coordinated with the music elements and the speech elements, it truly brings into play the poetry and the rationality of the commentary.

I certainly do not consider the pictorial image artistry of *River Elegy* to be perfect and there are clearly many places where pictures are used to fill in for commentary. However, it has achieved a breakthrough in terms of how it has turned the logical and rational language of the commentary into pictorial language. Directors and specialists should sum up the experiences and lessons to be gained in this respect. In my view, television still has much potential in terms of using pictorial language to "express complex ideas." This demands further exploration.

#### Footnotes

1. *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*
2. "Forecasting and Premises"
3. *A Comparative Study of 'Call to Arms', 'Wandering,' and the May Fourth Novels*—Articles of the Academic Conference To Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Lu Xun's Birth



### My Views on *River Elegy* and the Discussion It Has Evoked

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in Chinese No 8, 16 Oct 88 pp 34-39

[Article by Qi Fang 2058 2455 of the Central Committee Propaganda Department]

[Text] In recent times, among the literary and arts circles, there has been quite some debate on the issue of "the stir effect." The intense reaction elicited by the screening of the television program *River Elegy* [He Shang 3109 2999] seems to have been a response to this debate. The "stir" caused by *River Elegy* has been sufficient to show that literature and art in a situation of reform, opening up, and intense change in social life certainly does not lack the subject matter, topics, and relevant social environment and attitudes to elicit a "stir effect." It is precisely because *River Elegy* touches on the major, acute, and sensitive questions which are of wide concern in the society during a period of reform and opening up that it has elicited intense response and even quite intense debate.

However, strictly speaking, whether we speak about the program *River Elegy* itself and the propositions it has put forward and discussed, or the ideological waves these have induced, both extend far beyond the scope of literature and art. As a television program, *River Elegy* was originally not considered a literary and art work. Also, the so-called "Elegy Culture" and the "*River Elegy* Phenomenon" are not purely "literary and art phenomena."

On this point, the writers of *River Elegy* are fairly clear. They have repeatedly pointed out that this television program engages in "overall reflection" on China's history and culture. They say of this program that it was "conceived as a television political commentary which attempts to understand the Huang He from a cultural and philosophical consciousness." In this program "the television film places those elements which formerly were the most important, the pictorial images, the music, the language, and so on in a secondary position, and places the ideological elements in the prime position."

In fact, the authors of *River Elegy* not only use the television screen as an effective means by which to express their own cultural, philosophical, historical, social, and political viewpoints, but use this modern, powerful communication medium to transmit their "cultural and philosophical consciousness" to the largest possible audience. They are only using the television screen as a theoretical and ideological "forum" and the television film itself becomes a "political article" or "speech" assisted by pictorial images.

In this sense, we have reason for an attitude of admiration in respect of *River Elegy*. In the past, regardless of whether we speak about China or the world abroad, there have not been very many television programs which

have no aim to act as diversions or entertainment, but which intend, through television screens, to have direct dialogue with the viewers on cultural and philosophical questions. Shifting thoughts and discussion about major theoretical questions onto the television screen and thereby bringing them to hundreds of thousands of households is undoubtedly a significant development and exploration. It has broken through the clear limits of the past when the discussion of such questions was carried out only within a quite small range, and has given the discussion of these questions a somewhat mass nature. The bringing of lively pictorial images into the discussion has meant that these very abstract, serious, and even quite dry theoretical topics have had the assistance of audio-visual images. This has heightened the interest and the appeal for people to connect things in their minds and think deeply. This has both made it easier to understand and also stimulated people's interest and sympathies. This sort of "article" has without doubt some aspects far superior to written "articles" and spoken "speeches." *River Elegy* with its quite "abstruse" theoretical hue has been able to achieve an "effect" of moving so many viewers, pulling at their hearts and producing much discussion. This would clearly be difficult to achieve through other communications media.

However, it must also be recognized that the communication medium of television clearly has major limitations when discussing theoretical questions as complex as these which involve thousands of years of historical civilization. It can even be said that the television screen is really not the ideal place for fully discussing major theoretical questions which are complex, deep, and strictly logical. It cannot completely replace theoretical works in book form. The limited space and time of television, and the fleeting pictures, often result in very complex theoretical questions being handled in a way which excessively simplifies them.

The desire to attract viewers and the efforts to show people that a program is not dry often result in the sacrificing of the scientific nature, precision, and accuracy of theoretical thought and evidence. Many people who saw *River Elegy* had the following feeling: On first viewing, its rapid-fire commentary and its swiftly changing leaping images often meant that it was difficult to take everything in. It was not easy to ponder or think about what had been said, let alone carry out an independent assessment. One was just left to passively receive what was presented. It was only when people watched this program for the second time, and could read over a written version of the commentary, that they had the initiative in their own hands. It was then that the weaknesses and holes in the arguments and the knowledge became increasingly obvious. Of course, this cannot be ascribed simply to the communication medium. It is just that the limitations of this medium resulted in these weaknesses and holes becoming more prominent.

What gives food for thought is that the discussion of this television program which far exceeded the scope of literature and art has up till now been mainly restricted



to the relatively narrow scope of the literature and art circles. The articles discussing *River Elogy* have mainly been published in specialized literature and art periodicals such as WENYI BAO, WENHUI DIANYING SHI-BAO, ZHONGGUO WENHUA BAO and ZHONGGUO DIANSHI BAO or in the literature and art pages of RENMIN RIBAO, GUANGMING RIBAO, and ZHONGGUO QINGNIAN BAO. The writers of these articles have been mainly (but not entirely) people from the literature and art circles and the writers of *River Elogy*. However, the sectors which are more closely related with the questions put forward by *River Elogy*, such as the areas of historical and cultural studies, and in particular those specialists who have engaged in real, systematic research in and observation of Chinese and Western culture, seem not to have responded too enthusiastically to *River Elogy*. Their appraisal of it has not been very high and they have adopted quite a cautious attitude in respect of the viewpoints which have been discussed. Their opinions have not been fully reflected in the press.

It is because of this that it seems that there is no reason to make an overly high or satisfied assessment or appraisal of the ideological results achieved by *River Elogy* and the discussion which has surrounded it. Strictly speaking, the "reflection" engaged in by *River Elogy* is mostly on the level of feelings and impressions. It acutely touches on several questions, but certainly does not go deeply into them. There is no lack of examples of insight, but these cannot be considered profound. On the reasoning level, it is even harder to speak about it being rigorous or scientific. The discussion surrounding this issue has as yet failed to produce an article of substance. Saying things like "*River Elogy* not only proves that an elite cultural group with an independent academic consciousness has already been formed, but reveals the results of independent thought on the fate of the nation" or even saying "The thought in *River Elogy* comes from the ideological circles of the entire nation and it gives expression to the concern about the fate of the nation felt by the entire cultural elite," and that it is the beginning of "the second enlightenment" following the May Fourth movement, and so on, is really over-stating things and exaggerating.

In China's modern history and contemporary society, which people have the conditions to qualify them as "the cultural elite" or to become members of the "elite cultural group"? Can it be that, before the appearance of *River Elogy*, "an elite cultural group with an independent academic consciousness" had not yet been "formed" in China? Can the questions put forward and the answers provided by *River Elogy* represent the "entire cultural elite" of China? Of course, this article does not intend to discuss here who constitute the "cultural elite" of China or who can represent the "entire cultural elite." What we are concerned with here is how *River Elogy* carried out its "overall reflection" on culture and what answers it provided in respect of China's historical culture, the relationship between Chinese and foreign culture and the reasons for cultural backwardness.

One fact is clear, the phenomenon of China's intellectuals engaging in "overall reflection" on China's culture, and seeking reasons for the backwardness of modern culture and avenues for escaping this predicament, is not something which began today. This has been going on and following a winding road for a full one hundred and fifty years. Comrade Mao Zedong described this process in a quite vivid way:

"From the time of the defeat in the Opium War in 1840, progressive Chinese people underwent untold hardships in order to seek truth from Western countries." "At that time, Chinese people who were seeking progress would read any book as long as it contained the new truth from the West. A large number of students were sent off to study in Japan, England, America, France, and Germany and this reached an alarming proportion. Within the country, the examination system was abolished and schools where the West was assiduously studied sprung up everywhere. When young, I myself studied these things."

This was one of the true "high tides" on the road of seeking the invigoration of Chinese culture through the West. It could also be said to have been an "overall reflection" on the culture. In the long, drawn-out process of history, there are low tides, drops in temperatures and breaks. However, in this "reflection" and the discussion which has surrounded it, there has never been a break. The book *Collected Articles on the East-West Cultural Question Debate Around the Time of the May Fourth Movement* published in 1985 by ZHONGGUO SHEHUI CHUBANSHE reflects in a quite centralized way the degree of vigor and excitement in the discussion of the cultural question at that time. It can be said that the majority and the most important questions which *River Elogy* touches on had, to varying degrees, already been put forward at that time. None of the people who participated in the debate, people such as Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, and Qu Qiubai on one side or Hu Shi, Liang Qichao, and Liang Shuming on the other could be considered ignorant or without abilities, could they? They were major intellectuals who had a good grasp of Chinese culture, had long studied Western culture, and were knowledgeable in both. They form a clear contrast with many people in intellectual circles today who are lacking in both theoretical and intellectual preparation.

The book *Taiwan Over Thirty Years*, which has just been published, also provides us with the following information: In Taiwan in the 1960's there occurred a "major debate on Chinese and Western culture" which was very heated and intense. This was considered to be "an attempt by Taiwan's intellectuals to find an avenue for Taiwan's social development and cultural orientation, faced with the contradictions which had occurred in the political, economic, ideological, and cultural areas since the 1950's." This discussion even escalated into legal proceedings, and this testifies to the intensity of the debate. On one side of the debate was Li Ao who strongly

advocated "complete Westernization" and "cutting the umbilical cord of tradition with one stroke." In his view, "apart from going all out in studying from the foreign devils, nothing else is real." The other side in the debate was Hu Qiuyuan, a senior member of Taiwan's academic circles, who is now visiting the mainland. What is worth noting is that even though it was in Taiwan, in this debate about Chinese and Western culture, the so-called "complete Westernization" view was not widely accepted in the academic and literary and art circles. The modern school literature and art movement which arose in the 1960's in Taiwan advocating "complete Westernization" was by the 1970's proclaiming a "turning of the tide" and some of the "chief commanders" "turned on those they had previously supported" and become leaders strongly opposed to the "complete Westernization" of literature and art. These people were referred to as "returning prodigal sons." In the 1980's, there have appeared in Taiwan complaints about the negative effects of excessive copying of the Western models. An article in TAIWAN XINSHENG BAO at the end of last year cried out in alarm: Taiwan's spiritual civilization is "collapsing." "Taiwan is rapidly moving towards an unknown future." "The material level of Taiwan's people and their spiritual level are moving in opposite directions." "We have lost our 'roots' and have become floating weeds, getting pushed here and there and ignorantly following the currents and tides. We do not have our own direction." The author also directly put the questions of whether Taiwan "truly has a culture" and "what course Taiwan culture should follow." In engaging in "overall reflection" should not thought be given to such situations?

Of course, advanced Chinese people, and especially advanced Chinese intellectuals, are not satisfied with the endless "theorizing on paper" and they have put efforts into providing answers to China's historical fate through revolutionary practice and trying to basically resolve China's problems. The Communist Party of China which formulated and put efforts into realizing the program of democratic revolution, including overthrowing the "three great mountains," and which led the vast masses of people in founding the PRC, made a historical choice which was, in a certain sense, the result of "overall reflection on the culture" and engaged in practice which was aimed at the revival of the culture of the Chinese nation. Comrade Mao Zedong once said: "The great, victorious war of liberation of the Chinese people and great revolution of the people has revived and is reviving the great culture of the Chinese people." Of the outstanding representatives of the intellectuals who appeared in this great revolution, including Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, Chen Yi, Deng Xiaoping and so on, how could any be considered to not qualify as the outstanding elite of Chinese national culture? Also it should be said that everything which the members of the CPC contributed in order to end rule by the landlord class, overturn imperialism and establish the PRC was intended as an attack, negation, and surpassing of the negative factors in traditional culture, which were

obstructing and fettering the progress of our social history. The major changes thus brought, including political, economic, cultural and ideological changes, were thereby achieved for the first time in China's history. Yanan, which is situated on the banks of the "Huang He," on the yellow loess plain, became a major source of effective "historical reflection" and was a starting point in attaining victory throughout the whole nation. "On the banks of the Huang He, gathered a group of outstanding sons of the Chinese nation." <sup>1</sup> At that time, there were indeed gathered at that place a generation of Chinese "cultural elite" truly worthy of the name.

I must regretfully point out that *River Elegy*, as an "overall reflection on culture," has not placed even elementary stress on the "overall reflection on culture" which has been carried out by our country's ideological circles over the last one and a half centuries, on the ideological achievements realized, or the very rich experiences and lessons drawn. Further, the great revolution of the people, which was led by the CPC, did not even enter the field of vision of the authors of *River Elegy*. In *River Elegy* there is not even one word about the Yanan Rectification Campaign which was "The Second Ideological Liberation Movement." In their view, it is as if we are still today standing on the starting line of one and a half centuries ago, and they act as if no important events or changes have taken place. Seeing *River Elegy* as an indicator of the formation of a Chinese cultural elite group and as a "breakthrough" in overall reflection on the culture is a model expression of biased understanding.

The conclusions of *River Elegy* of course cannot really represent the results of the overall reflection on Chinese culture by the Chinese national elite over the last one and a half centuries. The debate which it has elicited among academic circles and the fact that most experts hold different or at least cautious, reserved opinions about it, illustrate this point. For example, the writing off and denial of "the culture of the dragon" and of the Great Wall and the Huang He have been strongly opposed by the U.S. Overseas Chinese physicist Yang Zhenning. He said that taking these three "symbols" of the Chinese nation and "criticizing them as being devoid of any merit, is something I cannot accept." He also held that "the Chinese cultural tradition is one of the oldest cultural traditions of the world. It is the only tradition in the world which has lasted from ancient times until now in the one place. The Chinese cultural tradition is envied by Western people." He does not agree with the adoption of an attitude of overall negation and instead advocates the adoption of the principle of "discussion" of "the many complex factors." Yang Zhenning is not only a descendant of the Yellow Emperor, but can also be considered a member of the world's cultural elite! Is not the fact that this member of the cultural elite, who grew up in a Western cultural tradition, does not agree with the attitude in *River Elegy* of overall negation of Chinese culture, worthy of attention?

Before this, in a series of speeches, Professor Zhao Haosheng, another person of Chinese descent who has lived in an Western environment for an equally long period of time, also strongly expressed opposition to any attitude which affirmed everything in Chinese traditional culture or negated everything in Chinese traditional culture. The common aspect of their views was that they did not believe that we should adopt an absolutely negative attitude towards "Huang He Culture," or adopt an absolutely affirmative attitude in respect of the so-called "blue culture." Hundreds of thousands of Chinese descendants abroad see the dragon, the Great Wall, and Huang He as symbols of the Chinese nation, and see these as their "roots." The experience of a long period living in Western culture has not weakened and rather has strengthened their attachment to these "roots." How can this be explained? Can this be said to be a "closed consciousness?" If, without any distinction, we completely negate these things, what will be left of our love of country and patriotism?

If, without distinction and without analysis, we negate, scoff at, or even make fun of, as "conservative" and "benighted" "traditional viewpoints," people's deep attachment to our nation's territory, which has been fostered for a long time, their warm love of the long history of their nation, their respect for the outstanding and heroic people in history, and even their own sense of pride in being a Chinese person, it will result in many people being unable to bear the feelings it induces. Is this a praiseworthy action?

Through over a century and a half of "reflection" and especially after experiencing the lessons of many defeats and setbacks, China's progressive intellectuals have increasingly come to recognize that in looking at questions of cultural tradition, the uncritical guarding of tradition and closing oneself off as well as the undifferentiated copying of foreign things are both one-sided attitudes and are thus not feasible. In fact, either affirming all or negating all, and seeing "that which is bad as absolutely bad and all bad, and that which is good as absolutely good and all good" is not an achievement of the Chinese "cultural elite." Quite the contrary, it has been a negative factor in the "overall reflection on culture" over the last one and a half centuries. Comrade Mao Zedong said that this method is "on the one hand a reaction to the positive factors of the May Fourth Movement and on the other hand is an inheritance, continuation, or development of the negative factors of the May Fourth Movement." This ideological method of either affirming all or negating all became the ideological base for the Leftist opportunism in the modern revolutionary history of China, and resulted in very major losses for the Chinese revolution. The peak of the development of this absolutism and extremism was the "Cultural Revolution." On the one hand this adopted a completely closed attitude of rejection of Western culture and on the other hand adopted an attitude of absolute and thorough negation of China's traditional culture. The so-called "sweeping away the four olds,"

"overthrowing feudalism, capitalism and revisionism," "criticizing Confucius," and "sweeping everything away" were the extreme development of this nihilist attitude of negating everything. History has proved that using one extreme to overcome another extreme not only cannot truly overcome the negative aspects of traditional culture, but actually provides the soil for the growth and expansion of these negative factors. In getting rid of the negative influences of the "cultural revolution" we of course cannot go to the extreme of copying foreign culture, that is, engaging in "overall Westernization," and completely negate our own cultural traditions. Rather, we need to base ourselves on our cultural traditions, overcome our negative elements, and draw in those aspects of foreign culture which are of benefit to us. Our nation has been backward for so long and we should seek the reasons for this within its history. The strength for our nation's revival is mainly contained within this culture. A supercilious nation which is full of its own self-importance has no great prospects. In the same way, a nation which has a low opinion of itself, has a sense of inferiority and despises its own history likewise has no hope. We have never heard of any nation in the world which has relied on self-belittlement in order to achieve development. If a nation with 5,000 years of history is left with only negative and disheartening things, what is it to rely on to invigorate itself?

The authors of *River Elegy* say that this program "provides a new world view to Chinese people whose field of vision has, till now, been fettered by a backward material and cultural life." What, then, is this "new world view?" It is said that Chinese people have always believed that "from a small clue, one can see the overall picture." However, the new vision and approach the writers provide for examining Chinese culture is one in which "from the overall picture, one can understand the details." "From a small clue, one can see the overall picture" is actually nothing more than a vivid way of expressing "movement from the specific to the general," while "from the overall picture one can understand the details," is but a term for expressing the idea of moving from the general to the specific. Whether we speak of the former or the latter, it seems neither can be considered an invention, much less a "new world view." Should our world view set these two in opposition or use the latter to completely replace the former? If one does not study the "specific," from where will we find the "general," and how from this "general" will we know the "specific?" Is it possible, like the authors of *River Elegy* say, to "sit in front of a globe or a three-dimensional map, roam in the mind and discuss things widely" and thereby discover and develop a "new world view?"

What in fact is worthy of attention is that the authors of *River Elegy* actually lack a consistent "world view." When the authors hold that the ultimate reason for the backwardness of China lies in that it is a yellow culture, what they are embracing is in fact a "geographic environmental determinism" viewpoint. The Chinese people did not originate between two great oceans and did not

emerge on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. This determines that they had a closed culture. However, why is it that Africa, which is likewise situated between two great oceans, and some African and Asian countries which are situated on the Mediterranean coast (such as Egypt, Libya and Tunisia), long remained in a culturally backward situation? Likewise, why was it that the Tang Court, which ruled on the banks of the Huang He, had a golden age with such an open culture and such cultural interflow? On the one hand the authors use geographical environment to explain the basic reasons for China's backwardness, and on the other hand stress that in 65 A.D. an emperor had a dream about Sakyamuni and that "this led to the meeting of the peoples on the two sides of the Himalayas, of two major ancient cultures, resulting in eight centuries of cultural fusion. If geographical conditions determine China's cultural decline, and we still try to save it, are we not just wasting our efforts? If we can use Western ideas and Western civilization to replace our own innate culture, is that not declaring the ineffectiveness of geographic environmental determinism? Calling Chinese culture "yellow culture" and basically negating it, and calling Western culture "blue culture" and fully affirming it, is not really a "new world view." Rather, it is an idea which is rigidly copied from Western scholars. This "Eurocentric" viewpoint has, in Western society and in the countries of the third world, been criticized by an increasing number of people and is considered in modern history to be an "outdated world view." In fact, many ideological schools in the West have already dissected the chronic ills of Western culture, and breaking free from "the crisis of culture" has become the topic of their research. For China, which is now developing in the direction of modernization, should not the study of how to avoid duplicating the negative aspects of Western culture be the function of "opening to the outside world"?

I have no doubts that the authors of *River Elegy* felt a real sense of mission and sense of historic responsibility when they engaged in their creative activity. New history, new contradictions and new situations caused them, when again putting forward the major questions in China's cultural development, to feel a new pressing significance. However, we must also point out that the authors are clearly lacking in terms of their preparations on the theoretical and knowledge levels, and also in terms of their abilities to master complicated and complex questions. This is not only a problem of the authors of *River Elegy* but a problem which widely exists among the academic and literary and art circles in modern China. On the one hand, the phenomena of life are more complex and more difficult to master than in any period in history and on the other hand, our efforts in our theoretical and knowledge preparations and in mastering complex theoretical topics are clearly insufficient. This inevitably means that in observing and analyzing life, there will be more difficulties than we know how to cope with. In respect of this situation, we often lack self-knowledge, and instead have a feeling of self-satisfaction. This problem needs to be thought much about. As

for the *River Elegy* phenomenon, could we not perhaps examine and think about things from a greater number of angles?

#### Footnote

1. "School Song of the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Military and Political College"

#### Developing Thought and Being Brave in Creation—On Reading *History of the Ideology of Science*

HK0112045788 Beijing QIUSHI [SEEKING TRUTH] in Chinese No 8, 16 Oct 88 pp 40-41

[Article by Cai Kenan 5591 0344 7181 of the JIANGSU SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PRESS]

[Text] In today's world, tens of thousands of scientific and technological creations that cause people to gasp with surprise have made their appearance. However, virtually all of these appear in front of people in a completely finished form. However, how do scientists engage in creative thought? What conditions are necessary for creative thought? What processes need to be gone through for such thought? For many people, these questions are not easily answered. The book *History of the Ideology of Science* which was published not long ago by JIANGSU SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PRESS, provides some answers to such questions.

Some people have said that the outstanding scientists have left two "legacies." One is their scientific theories and the other is their scientific method. However, people often overlook our inheritance of the second-mentioned legacy from those who have gone before. Despite this, this legacy is actually more valuable as, through using it, people can realize a greater number of achievements that are even more outstanding.

"The life of science is exploration. The history of the ideology of science involves further exploration of the initial exploration. It is rediscovery of the initial discovery. It is a type of self-understanding by science itself."<sup>1</sup> What *History of the Ideology of Science* wants to do, through research into the emergence and process of development of thought in science both in China and abroad and in ancient and modern times, is to show that creation requires being brave enough to think differently and think independently; requires brave imagination, fantasy and conjecture; and that one be good at analysis and summing up, and strong in intuition. Without creative thought, there will be no development in science. People's understanding of the phenomenon of combustion is a vivid example of this. The earliest theoretical explanation of combustion was the phlogiston theory, which was systematized by the German imperial physician Stahl. This theory held that the phlogiston are the original elements which constitute fire. These original elements fill Heaven and earth, and

the essence of combustion is the destruction of phlogiston. The theory proposed a process whereby combustible materials, on going through combustion, would lose their phlogiston and leave a residue of ash. Although this was not a correct theory and very quickly met with all sorts of theoretical difficulties, for the following almost 100 years, the phlogiston theory remained free and unimpeded. Scheele, a Swedish chemist, also did some experiments on the combustion process. These resulted in the contradictions of the phlogiston theory, which he had already sensed, "bumping into the nose of truth." However, as he had blind faith in the phlogiston theory, which held authority at that time, he dared not hold too firmly to the results of his own research. Following him, the English chemist Priestley, even though he had discovered and produced oxygen, still firmly believed in the phlogiston theory. This led to later people saying: "Priestley was the father of modern science, but he never recognized his own daughter." After Scheele and Priestley, the French scientist Lavoisier repeated their experiments. Lavoisier firmly believed in the reliability of scientific experimentation. Through strict and logical experiments and inferential judgments, he finally scientifically arrived at the correct conclusion and established the theory of oxidization. This brought with it a great revolution in chemistry, a revolution which people refer to as one of "the two great revolutions of 18th-century France," and brilliant scientific achievements were thereby realized.

It is not difficult to see whether it is the right course in scientific creation to trust in science or to respect authority, to think independently, or to follow blindly. Lavoisier's experiments to produce oxygen were inspired by the academic reports of Scheele and Priestley. However, it was only he who put forward the scientific theory. This is because he firmly believed in science and thought independently. Thus, it can be said that seeking truth is a precondition for creative thought.

Creative thought based on seeking truth has as its characteristics of being brave in challenging existing theoretical systems and being brave in doing the unconventional. Heisenberg summed this up as: "Nearly every advance in the natural sciences has come through the discarding of some question or concept. Nearly every new understanding requires the sacrificing of questions previously put forward and concepts previously formed."<sup>2</sup> Thus, people should not be fettered by the concepts and theories which are popular at present and, in regard to authority, blind faith should never be used to replace respect. The reason academic authority and its theories are held in esteem is that they have made an outstanding contribution to the development of society and mankind. However all thought achievements, regardless of how fine they appear at the time, will, following the development and deepening of mankind's understanding, be found to have imperfections and incomplete aspects. Newtonian physics was considered by physicists to be a perfect system without deficiencies and people thus felt that the only task left to physics was

to fill in the details and bring a bit more precision to the final figures after the decimal points. However, the development of physics has shown that Newtonian physics provides only the laws of motion at low speeds for macro-objects. It is unable to describe the movement of high-speed micro-objects. The theories of relativity and quantum mechanics have filled in some of the deficiencies of Newtonian mechanics. It can be seen that the thought achievements of mankind are continually developing, being revised, being supplemented and being perfected. From their original fields they are continually being deepened and broadened to new fields. Such development is never-ending.

The popular science writer Gao Shiqi [7559 1102 0366] has written: "We need to tell the broad masses of young people about the principles and methods of scientific thought. This is because if we purely inculcate them with knowledge and technology without giving them a correct thought methodology which will allow them to sum up and sort out ideas and which will provide guidance, we will not be able to produce the skilled people needed by the four modernizations and we will only produce a generation of people with closed minds who lack the ability to adapt to circumstances and who lack creativity."<sup>3</sup> In fact, in our propaganda and education work we have clearly overlooked the guidance and development of people's thought and creativity and have often advocated "the teacher is always right," or even "one sentence by the leader is more authoritative than ten thousand by other people" and "every sentence by the leader is truth." We have not allowed people to doubt the correctness of their predecessors or of authority. With such ideological guidance, how can we expect people to be bravely creative and dare to explore? People who come later have no option but to continue within the same conventions which bound those who went before them.

History provides a clear mirror for people.

The thousands of years of historical development of the ideology of science form a long river. It is not easy to sum this up and appraise it in a single book. Also, it is not easy for the experts who engage in specific theoretical research to use popular language to simply explain very difficult theories from ancient times and the present, from China and abroad, in the areas of astronomy, geography, philosophy, biology, and so on. However, on both accounts, the author of this book has made a successful attempt. The book *History of the Ideology of Science* traces the development of science from a summary of ancient scientific theories prior to 800 B.C., to an analysis of scientific ideas of the 20th century. It provides a continuous commentary and notes both outline and detail. It reflects the continuity in the development and changes of scientific thought, but does not get stuck in a mechanical recording of historical events. In its expression it is sometimes highly condensed and sometimes quite detailed. The writing is excellent and the text flows easily. It intends to reveal the social and

historical backgrounds in which scientific theories emerged, analyzes why the scientists were able to make such discoveries and seeks to provide people with enlightenment on the ideological level. Thus, while the author does not make a big hue and cry in stressing the importance of thought, and does not write large amounts telling people how they should think, from the author's exploration of the thought of scientists and his discussion on their successes and failures, we are still awakened to these matters.

Lin Dehong [2651 1795 1347], the author of the book *History of the Ideology of Science*, is the head and professor of the Philosophy Department at Nanjing University. He believes that "As long as a person is of normal intelligence, he has creative potential of some type and can become an innovator."<sup>4</sup> This is the inspiration of the author as well as the main aim of *History of the Ideology of Science*.

"The past history of science is an epic story and will long be worthy of our attention and reference. The future of science is even more enticing and will long encourage us to progress." If we all cease to blindly follow authority, if we are all able to stimulate our minds to think independently, if we are able to use the experience of our predecessors in creation to study and explore, if.... This is my intention in recommending *History of the Ideology of Science* to everyone. I believe that this book will achieve quite good results in stimulating potential.

#### Footnotes

1. Foreword to *History of the Ideology of Science*
2. Heisenberg, *Changes in the Tight Base of the Natural Sciences in Recent Years* SHANGHAI YIWEN CHUBANSHE 1978 p 20
3. From the foreword to *The Study of Thought*, Jiangsu Science and Technology Press, 1988
4. Taken from the foreword to *The Self-Development of Creativity*, Jiangsu People's Press, 1987

#### Monthly Digests

HK2511093288 Beijing QIUSHI [SEEKING TRUTH]  
in Chinese No 8, 16 Oct 88 pp 41-43

[Excerpted by Bo Rong 2672 2827 from HEILONGJIANG RIBAO 13 Sep 88]

[Text] Economics: On the Demands of the New Order of the Socialist Commodity Economy (excerpted by Bo Rong [2672 2827] from HEILONGJIANG RIBAO 13 September 1988)

According to Liu Guoguang, there are eight demands of the new order of the socialist commodity economy.

First, the government-run economy should be people-managed. State-run economy refers to the economy in which the functions of the government are not separated from those of the enterprise or that which is directed by administrative order from above and is supported by administrative power. To change the government-run economy to people-managed economy does not mean that the latter becomes privately-run economy. It can be privately-owned economy or publicly-owned economy. In the future it will more likely be a mixed economy. The adoption of the share system is an example. It does not happen due to an administrative order from above. Rather, it is directed by changes in the market demand. It does not rely on administrative support to exist. Rather, it relies on its own results to exist and develop.

Second, let monopolized business compete. The government-run economy monopolizes with administrative power. The people-run economy develops with the market economy; it can lead to market monopoly. Therefore, an 'anti-monopoly act' should be formulated in time to safeguard fair competition.

Third, the seller's market should become the buyer's market. The seller's market is a market where demand exceeds supply. The seller is the authority, whereas the consumer has no say. Such a market and economy do not agree with the nature of socialism. We must gradually change the seller's market into the buyer's market. Only by doing so will there be competition. Subsequently our business management and service will improve.

Fourth, production factors should become commodities. In the past we did not count production factors as commodities. From now on they should count as commodities and enter the market. They should be traded and allowed to flow or combine with other things freely according to the principle of commodity exchange. Only in so doing can our resources be disposed and combined effectively and raise the utilization rate of all our resources. Therefore, we must eliminate all obstacles to commodity circulation, especially blockades and the barriers between higher and lower levels and between different departments or regions, so as to form a uniform national market system.

Fifth, exchange activities should be in the form of currency and bills. In order to create an environment of fair competition and safeguard the state from revenue and taxation losses, it is essential for exchange activities to be in the form of currency and bills.

Sixth, personal incomes should be known. Unknown incomes will cause unfair distribution and cover up some illegal behavior and encourage corruption to extend.

Seventh, the incomes and property of officials should be publicized. We should set up a system of property declaration. The scope of declaration can be decided after studying the subject.

Eighth, the multi-track system and dual-track system should be changed into the single-track system. Currently the paramount problem in the transformation of the mechanism lies in that of the dual-track system. At present much of the confusion in the commodity economy is related to the contradictions and conflict of the dual system. Unless this problem is resolved, we cannot even begin to talk about establishing a new order of the socialist commodity economy.

**Political Theory: Explanation of "Democracy Is a Correctional Mechanism" (excerpted by Huai Peng [2037 7720] from LILUN XINXI BAO No 168)**

In his response to the article entitled "Is Democracy Only Correctional?—A Discussion with Yan Jiaqi" in LILUN XINXI BAO No 165, Yan Jiaqi stressed again the following. The prerequisite of democracy is the recognition that human nature is imperfect, people can make wrong decisions, but that they can freely express their opinions, wishes and emotions, and can revise their decision with pre-set procedures.

To the state, the question of democracy or not goes back to the question of the relationship between the state power and the people. If the people can freely express their opinions and will and the majority opinion can decide by means of the constitution, legal procedures, and other pre-set procedures how state power is formed, who is to control it, and the changeover of state leaders according to pre-set procedures, then this country has established democratic politics. A "correctional mechanism based on pre-set procedures" refers to a system that allows the amendment of the constitution by means of pre-set procedures, parliamentary elections or elections of other systems of representatives at fixed intervals, duration of term of service of the government and the maximum number of terms state leaders are allowed to serve, vote of non-confidence, recall, impeachment, and so on. In the implementation of democracy, on the one hand decisions should be based on the majority opinion, on the other hand the minority should be protected. When people find out from practice that a decision made by the majority is wrong, the minority can then become the majority. In this sense democracy can be seen as a 'correctional mechanism.'

**Philosophy: Promote a Modern Concept of Equality that Corresponds to the Commodity Economy (excerpted by Jian Yi [1696 0001] from SHANGHAI SHEHUI KEXUE No 8, 1988)**

According to Li Junru, the concept of equality in the minds of the Chinese today refers to evenness or near evenness of distribution of income and benefits for all, the equal status of all people with no one as the boss of another, and employment, welfare, and labor insurance for all. In fact these are all egalitarian ideas on equality. They are a product of the backward natural economy. Marx's discussion of socialist equality can roughly be divided into three stages. The first is the stage of criticism during which Marx criticized the bourgeois view of

equality. The second is the stage of theory creation during which Marx pointed out that the modern concept of equality emerged on the practical basis of the commodity economy, that under the capitalist system of private ownership, it had lost its rightful value, and that the concept of equality in the future society cannot be the equality between all classes, but rather equality after the elimination of classes and class differences. The third was the stage of actual movements during which Marx formulated the theory of stage of development of the future society and raised the idea of making use of the bourgeois rights (equal rights) during the first stage of the communist society. According to the Marxist view, during the initial stage of socialism, we should first oppose the concept of hierarchy and privilege (which is also a request of bourgeois rights) and then oppose the empty concept of equality which links to small-scale production. The concept of equality for the initial stage of socialism has a twofold meaning. First, a modern three-in-one concept of equality, i.e., equality of opportunity, equality of rights, and equality of rights and responsibilities, must be established in the entire society. Second, among advanced elements of the working class a concept of equality should be further established which aims at eliminating and correctly coordinating class differences. The elimination should be the basis and prerequisite of the coordination.

**Culture and Education: Discussion on the Questions of Subjectivism and Realism in Literature (excerpted by Che Yishi 6508 0122 1193 from WENHUIBAO, 12 July, 9 August, 23 August, and 20 September, 1988)**

In the article entitled "Questions of Realism and Reflectionism," Wang Ruoshui criticizes objective reflectionism. He states that "the formulation of reflectionism can be studied, but I think that to use 'subjectivism' to replace it may not be appropriate, for it can easily lead to another extreme. Perhaps practice-ism is a better formulation." He also believes that realism should put what is true in the first place. The kind of realism we worked on in the past was actually fake realism. We sacrificed the truth for political needs.

In his article entitled "I also Discuss Subjectivism and Reflectionism in Literature," Yang Chunshi voices his ideas. He thinks that while Wang Ruoshui "criticizes traditional concepts of philosophy, he has not freed himself from the boundaries of the system of traditional philosophy" and that since Wang's article affirms both material subjectivism and practical subjectivism, it is dualism. Yang points out in his article from the perspective of existential subjectivism that existence (i.e., activities of existence) is the creation of the meaning of the integration of both subject and object. He also maintains that "the original face of reality" cannot possibly exist since reality always implies the reality related to a certain subject and is already explained by the subject. The reality portrayed by any writer is already marked by a subject and is 'a second nature' that reflects the writer's aesthetics. To resume literature's militant function of



criticizing the reality depends solely upon the recovery of the subject. In the past fake realism flourished under the banner of 'reflecting the reality' because the writer had been deprived of his subjective consciousness and literary subjectivism.

In the article "Realistic Subjectivism and Literary Subjectivism" Li Yadong raises questions about Yang's article. To him Wang's view is not dualistic. "People who practice" does not only refer to those who build upon a material basis; practice is itself an extension, strengthening, and enrichment of it. "Practice" means nature conducts activities through human beings. To Li the shortcomings of literary creation since the last few decades do not lie in mechanical reflectionism, but in the long tradition of didacticism and mystification that appears in a modern form. Li also criticizes Yang's view that "human nature can be adequately manifested only in aesthetics (including art)." To Li human liberation must be rooted in the soil of reality, otherwise psychological experience which substitutes reality means losing the self rather than gaining the subject.

**On the Competition Among Institutes of Higher Learning (excerpted by Liu Ren [2692 0086] from ZHONGGUO GAODENG JIAOYU No 9, 1988**

According to Liu Yifan, the key of the reform of institutes of higher learning lies in strengthening their ability to take the initiative to adjust to economic and social development, and to introduce the competitive mechanism is one of the important aspects for it. To institutes of higher learning, the word 'competition' which is introduced or borrowed from economics has a different meaning.

The competition within institutes of higher learning is in the final analysis competition in educational quality, academic standards, and effectiveness of the administrative mechanism or lack of it. In effect it is competition of intelligence and labor.

There is a great difference between the competition among institutions of higher learning and that among enterprises. In terms of concrete goals, one tries to produce as many qualified people and as much achievement as possible. Apart from technological results, nothing is for sale. The other tries to produce as many good products as possible; most of them are commodities for the market. In terms of assessment criteria, one focuses on the quality of the specialized personnel trained and the level of achievements of scientific research, the other on whether the labor consumed by commodities (including materialized labor) exceeds the amount of labor essential for society or not. In terms of styles and methods, one aims at selecting the best students, raising the caliber of the faculty, acquiring the necessary educational facilities, and improving the administrative system in order to raise the educational and academic quality. The other tries to raise the labor productivity, save labor time, lower the labor consumption of per unit

product, and produce good and cheap commodities. In the process of assessment, in one a decision can be made about the quality of the institute only after practice in all realms of society and repeated examination for a long period of time. In the other it takes a short time for the fittest to survive after comparison and examination by consumers in the entire market system. In sum, institutes of higher learning are engaged mainly in spiritual production and follow the educational law of training personnel and the scientific law of developing academic work; whereas enterprises are mainly involved in material production and follow the basic socialist economic law and the value law of commodity production.

**Discussing National Self-Confidence Beginning with 'Attainment of Wealth and Rank by Unfair Means'**

HK2511084288 Beijing QIUSHI [SEEKING TRUTH] in Chinese No 8, 16 Oct 88 p 44

[Article by Gao Yang 7559 2254, written on 15 September, 1988—"Discussing National Self-Confidence Beginning with 'Attainment of Wealth and Rank by Unfair Means'"]

[Text] "Attainment of wealth and rank by unfair means is as worthless to me as the floating clouds" is a moral maxim of Confucius. Recently it has been always on my mind. No matter how I try to get it off my mind, it is still there. Today a new confrontation between Chinese and western cultures has emerged and the assessment of Confucian thinking has become a popular topic of discussion. Is Confucianism really so deeply rooted in my subconsciousness? I have thought about this question carefully, but the answer seems to be negative.

The Republic of China had already set up modern schools when I began to go to school. In primary school I studied Chinese, arithmetic, moral education, history, geography, and agriculture. However, our school principal had been educated the traditional way. He still taught us "The Analects of Confucius" and "Mencius" and made us recite them. So even today I still remember some of the sayings by Confucius and Mencius. When I went to secondary school and university, I was influenced by the new culture movement during the May Fourth Movement and the anti-feudal stand "down with Confucianism." Our professors taught us new and old disciplines in the humanities, such as western economics, politics, and law. I was exposed to Marxism and subsequently took the arduous road of the revolution. In recent years my work has demanded that I read academic works that represent new western thinking. I have not had much time for classical Chinese books, although I do read some classical poems in my pastime. So why did I suddenly remember the words of our distant ancestor?

Our national construction has entered a historical period. Our economy is fast growing, people's material life has generally improved, the process of political



democratization is accelerating, and people's spiritual life is more active than ever before. However, corrupt practices in the party and deterioration of the social atmosphere that accompany the above delightful changes worry those that are concerned for the fate of the nation. For me, on top of this worry, I am also worried about the loss of national self-confidence in some people.

When China was on the verge of falling apart, Lu Xin said in his article "Have the Chinese Lost Their Self-Confidence?" that "since ancient times there have been in China people who tried their best to do their work, those who tried to attain their goal regardless of their own limitations, those who pleaded for the people, and those who sacrificed their lives for legal justice....Although what they did served as 'legitimate history' for the family trees of emperors, generals, and prime ministers, their glory could not be dimmed. These people were China's backbone." For more than a century since the Opium War, there have been numerous internal and external adversities in China. However, with its "backbone" China has been able to be reborn from its ancient past and now stands upright in the eastern part of the world. The times when "China's backbone" was devastated, caught, and killed, and then disappeared in the dark" have passed. The pillars of the people, comprised of true communists who "are not tempted by name and money," patriots, and outstanding elements of the masses with a modern consciousness, were finally able to grasp the fate of China. To them it is not too difficult to overcome the barriers to the current reform and save the ways of society which have been perverted. They have faith and do not deceive themselves. Regardless of the difficulties and failures ahead, New China will be able to inherit and develop the Chinese spirit of tolerating and absorbing foreign cultures and develop a new one as it did before. It will be shining to the world with bright cultural rays. It is valuable for people to be concerned with the nation when we think of the past and the present and look at the world. However, it is wrong to lose our national self-confidence.

Kind-hearted friends will find my words untimely. They worry that some may laugh at these words and say they are didacticism Chinese style; others attack them as hackneyed speech of the teacher. I do not agree with them. Confucius looked down upon the "attainment of wealth and rank by unfair means." He aimed at attaining his 'way' and 'saving all the drowned' with it. Even if his view is outdated, his spirit of saving the world must still deserve our support. Those with knowledge of western humanities and are reasonable must know that lessons by the Greek sages, Christian maxims, and bourgeois human rights of the Age of Reason all emphasize the establishment of a moral scope for society, i.e., they all attach importance to what China calls 'the differentiation between justice and benefits.' They differ only in what they call for, which varies with the times. Essays are written in response to the times. I quote concrete Chinese moral maxims instead of Western ones to criticize

current problems. Why should I be attacked? Those who label others as teachers making hackneyed speeches are a handful of superficial youth. They devote their energy to "panning" and enjoying life, and do not have time for the "boring sermon." So they will not be the readers of my short essay. In order to avoid misinterpretation from the meddlesome ones, I stress here that like money, the effect of education varies according to the type of people. It is not all-powerful. The state wishes to use education to produce hundred of thousands of young people with ideal, moral virtue, culture, and discipline. However, each person has his own goals and it is impossible to force him to change. For those whose sole aim in life is to make money or whose sole concern is to benefit themselves and never to consider the state, it is their right to do so. "The road is ahead of us and we can each go our own direction." It would be all right if only these people are truly law-abiding and behave "subjectively for their own benefits and objectively for the benefits of others!"

#### What I Saw and Heard in Seoul

HK2511085688 Beijing QIUSHI [SEEKING TRUTH]  
in Chinese No 8, 16 Oct 88 pp 45-46

[Article by Xiao Qian 5618 0051, written in Hong Kong on 6 September, 1988]

[Text] If a river runs through a city, the scenery of that city cannot be poor. Seoul is like that. I stayed at a hotel on the middle of the hill. In the early morning I had a ham and egg breakfast in the restaurant which provided a view of the river. The Han River looked like a half spread piece of creamy-colored silk. It made a turn and then flowed toward the northeast. Every now and then a motorboat ran fast up stream. South of the bridge was the site of the Olympiad. The dark grey arena was waiting for the competition that was to come in three weeks. Olympic flags with five rings on them were hoisted on rows of buildings in the Olympic Village.

The whole city was absorbed in a happy mood welcoming the 24th Olympiad. In this clean and orderly city, all buildings and wire poles were decorated with signs that congratulated the 24th Olympiad being held in Seoul. Colored balloons were flying everywhere. On the grass surrounding the Olympic Village were works of sculpture from different nations. Of them a three-meter high thumb that was pointing up impressed me the most.

However, I felt a hidden worry behind this joy. Although there seemed to be an unstated agreement among the government, the political parties, and leaders of the student movement to reach a 'truce,' the conflict was still there and a sense of crisis could not be removed.

I had never experienced such meticulous protection. When we got off the plane, among the passengers in the arrival hall were soldiers in yellowish green uniforms patrolling back and forth. Some of them were holding submachine guns, others were armed with guns at the

waist. I came to participate in the meeting of the International Pen Society. Before entering the meeting hall I had to go through an electronic security check like the one at the airport. Then a polite lady moved a checking apparatus up and down and in front of and behind me. At first there were people in army uniforms and with guns patrolling in the hallway of the hotel. Later they put a table next to the elevator and there were always three armed personnel on duty there.

Of the four young tigers of Asia, this was the third I had visited. Like the other three tigers, the economy of South Korea took off in the 1960s and 1970s. Sadly for me, that was when the Three Red Banners were flying on mainland China and when China closed its doors for class struggle. What struck me the most was that the South Koreans loved to use South Korean goods. I did not see advertisements for Hitachi or Sony on the busy streets. Even foreign cars were rare. We searched hard for nine days and found only one foreign car. The elevators and bathroom facilities were all made in South Korea. I pondered what I saw. Many years ago didn't the Chinese advocate using Chinese products and boycotting foreign ones? Yet, today our people generally feel that the more foreign goods they acquire, the prouder of it they are. On Wangfujin Street in Beijing, advertisements for Japanese products are everywhere.

On the subject of domestic products two points occur to me. (1) If domestic products are not of good quality, it does not work just to promote them with patriotism. During the nine days of my stay in South Korea, we had tried Daewoo, Hyundai, and Kia cars. We even drove at high speeds in the countryside. There was not any problem at all. South Korean-made bathroom facilities were as good as those produced in the West. The elevators were steady and swift and were not any worse than those in the West. (2) South Korean government ministers set a good example by using domestic cars. It is not enough just to advocate. Leaders have to prove their words with action.

I felt that from food and drink and living styles to culture, the South Koreans value what had been transferred to them from China, a land of etiquette, but which China itself had lost. The first is politeness. Whether in the airport, the hotel, or on the street, people were always polite. Edgar Snow's friend Mr Xuan Xiong [3763 7160] took us to a typical South Korean meal at a simple and graceful restaurant called "Gentlemen's Restaurant." The waiters were attentive and efficient, the service was perfect. In Fenen [1144 1869] Temple in Seoul, we saw the four Buddha's warrior attendants, the main temple hall, and the horizontal board inscribed with Chinese characters. It was like being in the Lingyin Temple in China. The pilgrims smiled at us. I looked at the library catalog of the Central Research Institute for Spiritual Culture, what was marked as "classical text" were all Chinese texts. When the director of Tanguo [2905 0948] University, Mr Kong Delong [1313 1795 7893], saw us, the first thing he mentioned was that he was the 77th

generation of descendants of Confucius and that he wished very much to visit the native place of Confucius in Qufu, Shandong Province, to pay homage to his ancestor. A reporter of TONG-A ILBO told us that his ancestors had migrated from China to South Korea in the Tang dynasty. Another told us that his ancestor came from Linqu, Shandong Province and that he came to Korea during the Ming dynasty and had taken part in the resistance against the Manchus.

At the 52nd conference of the International Pen Society I made a presentation on the reform and opening up of the Chinese literary field. According to conference regulations, presentations must be made in Korean, English, or French. I presented in English. There was simultaneous interpretation in both Korean and French. Newspapers in Seoul reported about us (and Soviet Union writers) every day. However, the coverage was grossly inaccurate. For example, it said that Ke Ling had followed Chairman Mao in the Long March, that Feng Mu is an important staff of Zhao Ziyang, and that I had been jailed twice.

South Korea and Shandong peninsula are separated only by water. Now trade between the two places is quite active. The South Koreans mentioned to us many times that South Korea hoped to establish friendship with China, not primarily for trade, but rather to ease the tension between North and South Korea through China and then to realize some form of unification.

What surprised me a great deal was that South Korean sinologists were familiar with the "Speech at the Yanan Symposium on Art and Literature." It was said that the literary circle there formed groups according to one's attitude toward the "Speech." The mainstream group supports it and others are opposed to it.

This time Taiwan sent 18 delegates. Their leader Yao Peng (Peng Ge) and other delegates such as Wang Lan were very warm and friendly to us. KYUNG-HYANG ILBO organized a dialogue between Taiwan's Madam Lin Hai-yin and me. It was chaired by sinologist Xu Shixu [6079 0013 2485] who started by saying that he hoped we could talk in the spirit of reconciliation. I said that we did not have to reconcile, for we had never quarreled with each other. We talked in order to communicate. Lin said that we did not have to communicate either, for we understood each other. Then she never stopped praising mainland works of literature such as *Hibiscus Town* and *Tobacco Bottle* and I praised the ways Eileen Zhang and Bai Xianyong used the language and techniques of the classical Chinese novel in their works. When the chairman asked us about our views on the separation of North and South Korea, we both said that it was an issue between North and South Korea, but that we believed that the Koreas will one day be unified, just as the Chinas on both sides of the strait would not be separated forever.

What we talked about most was Beijing. Lin was born in Taiwan and was brought to Beijing as a young child. She lived in the east end and then south end of the city. She asked many detail questions about Beijing. I said that seeing for oneself is a hundred times better than hearing from others and encouraged her to come back and see for herself. She said that she liked Teresa Teng's songs and asked why Teresa Teng's songs and Qiong Yao's fiction are so popular in China. I said, "Taiwanese songs and fiction are popular on the mainland primarily because they came from Taiwan, just as you cherished your memories of the mainland in 'Memories of Old Beijing'."

The Taiwan delegates left one day before we did. In the hall I said goodbye to them and said "We welcome your visit to Beijing." They replied, "Your wish to visit Taiwan will come true sooner or later."

**Cards in the Hands of 'Official Racketeers'**  
*HK2511100088 Beijing QIUSHI [SEEKING TRUTH]  
in Chinese No 8, 16 Oct 88 pp 46-47*

[Article by Ye Yanbin 5509 1693 3453: "Cards in the Hands of 'Official Racketeers'"]

[Text] There is an eye-catching coverage in the newspaper on the trial of the son-in-law of Brezhnev who has been accused of corruption and accepting bribes... The newspaper reports again about the Philippine court's handling of the case of former President Marcos' corruption in state finance....

The ordinary people do not seem to have noticed the above news as it is all about "official racketeers" in foreign countries, especially because they are ones that have fallen from power. It is the domestic "racketeers" that are a hot topic among the ordinary people. Those who live on wages, in particular, have seen so much that makes them angry about that they do not have time to talk about Brezhnev's son-in-law and the fallen president. What do they talk about? Those who ride motor bikes on the street are "racketeers" and those who frequent dance halls and coffee houses are also "racketeers." New bills worth 100 yuan seem to have been issued for "racketeers" holding money boxes.... If this is all, people can tolerate it, for besides those riding motor bikes, there are those driving Toyota Crowns; besides those buying expensive liquor and cigarettes, there are those who eat and drink without having to pay; and besides those visiting coffee houses and dance halls, there are those who travel abroad with the expenses paid by the government... What provokes the people is that the "racketeers" have amassed wealth, whereas prices have soared and what little money the ordinary people have has decreased in value.

In actual fact it is unfair to put the responsibility of disrupting the market on all "racketeers" without differentiating between them. We should be dialectical about them. One category of "racketeers" collects information

with their brains and sells and transports goods with physical labor. They pay the cost of sweat and brain work for the income from the sale of goods at increased prices. Another category of "racketeers" are called "official racketeers." There are many kinds of them. Some are both officials and managers, some are formally officials but actually managing directors, others are business men and women who have fathers as officials... Such "official racketeers" do not have to do physical work. They rely on notes from officials, face, and "doors," and they get bills.

Recently market prices in China seem to have gotten malaria and bad fevers which have been caused by another type of blood-sucking mosquito—"official racketeers!" According to China News Agency in Guangzhou dated 14 August, "Of the cases revealed by the Guangdong price management department, 90 percent of those who jacked up prices were government merchants." This is just one example. "Official racketeers" are so rampant that it no longer works to cover up their corruption by saying that we should "distinguish between nine fingers and the remaining one." In the difficulties our nation has encountered in the reform, the "official racketeers" remind me of the monsters the monk Xuanzhuang encountered on his way to search for Buddhist sutras. The ordinary people are frank and outspoken, they say the "official racketeers" are making a fortune out of a national calamity!"

The brand "member of the communist party" on these people has not changed; their uniform of "public servant" has not changed either. The ordinary people say it is just their thinking, behavior, and goal of "serving the people" which have changed.

In our old system a system of power and benefits had been formed which considers first of all "the interest of the officials." People in the state service are placed in a hierarchy, such as the levels of ministry, bureau, department, and section... Not only do they possess corresponding power, they also have corresponding "work requirements" and remuneration. Apart from these legal benefits, some officials take advantage of their power to grab illegal economic benefits. This is the "use of official power for selfish ends" and "corruption" that we have been trying to curb for many years. With the deepening of the reform, we have been trying to separate the party from the government, the functions of the government from those of the enterprise, and administrative power from managerial power. Those who use their official post to obtain profits for their own ends realize that the above separations are more fearful than the "movements" they are accustomed to. Therefore they lose no time in taking advantage of the transition between the old and new systems. They truly feel that if they miss the opportunity while they still have power, it will be too late. To transform power into currency is the card in the hands of the "official racketeers!"

If our old system breeds and covers up the corruption of some officials, the emergence of "official racketeers" is the ulcer that has grown out of this sick system.

Unless the official racketeers are eliminated, there will not be any peace in China!

What does that mean? First, "official racketeers" jack up prices and in so doing disrupt circulation and production and threaten social stability. The ordinary people suffer direct economic losses. This has intensified the difficulty of the reform. Second, the currency "official racketeers" have obtained with illegal means have made a handful of people "government merchant-millionaires." In the commodity economy they stand for a strong social force due to their economic strength. They form a challenge to social equality and cast a shadow on the order of the socialist commodity economy which we hope will appear. They cost us worries.

Yes, the ordinary people have read about the court trial of Brezhnev's son-in-law and know that Marcos has only himself to blame for his exile in the U.S., but they are more concerned for the future and fate of the reform in our country! The reader must have noticed that what is sold on the official racketeers' stall on the ground are the party spirit of the members of the communist party and the conscience of society's public servants. If such a trade is not abolished, what will depreciate is not only the renminbi in the hands of the ordinary people, but also their confidence in and support for the ruling party and government!

**Understanding: The Thirst of Human Souls—  
Watching the Modern Drama *Sirius***  
HK2511091688 Beijing QIUSHI [SEEKING TRUTH]  
in Chinese No 8, 16 Oct 88 pp 47-48

[Article by Li Jian 2621 1696: "Understanding: The Thirst of Human Souls—Watching the Modern Drama *Sirius*]

[Text] The drama *Sirius* performed by the China Youth Art Theater has aroused the attention of the audience with its innovative and profound conception.

On the surface *Sirius* is about love. The main line of the story is the dispute between an outgoing and pretty girl, Bai Fan, and her stubborn and suspicious fiancé, Han Bing, about their love. In his efforts to exchange the place he lives in for another one and the anxiety thus caused, Han Bing has a strong but unfounded sense of insecurity toward his surrounding environment. He constantly suspects that someone is plotting against him and trying to shatter his future happiness. Therefore when Bai Fan receives a telephone call from a mysterious young man who keeps talking about *Sirius*, he is convinced that this hooligan is trying to seduce his fiancée. The dramatic conflict of the play starts from here. Then a plumber comes, and then Bai Fan looks back in search of a love affair of the past. Amidst these are telephone

calls from the mysterious young man, which are full of understanding and spiritual communication. All these intensify Han Bing's suspicion and jealousy. Finally the lovers who were to marry soon end up separated. In actual fact this drama has to a certain extent transcended concrete questions like love and living and touched another important issue—human beings' difficulty in understanding each other and their persistent pursuit of understanding.

It should be easier for people in a love relationship to communicate with and understand each other. *Sirius* reveals through this typical relationship how absurd, pitiable, and tragic human stubbornness, suspicion, and jealousy are. The choice of this kind of male-female relationship manifests the playwright's unique artistic conception: if even those in love cannot understand each other, then it must be even more common for people at large to lack communication with each other. In this way the play makes the audience ponder deep and far and feel that many things merit our contemplation.

*Sirius* gives one a sense of absurdity, which comes mainly from the mysterious young man who makes the telephone calls and his reveries about *Sirius*. To understand their meaning we must first understand the author's conception about the relationships of the characters. In the play the heroine is involved in three relationships. The first is a realistic relationship, meaning that between Bai Fan and her fiancé. This realistic relationship of love has not brought Bai Fan to the harmonious state of mutual understanding and communication. On the contrary, she is being jealous for an inadequate reason. The performance of this relationship is on the brightly lit stage. The second is a relationship of memory, meaning Bai Fan's memories of her former lover. Here memory is a tender-hearted sieve. What is left behind is all good. What the audience sees on the dim backstage seems to be the genuine love between Bai Fan and a young man with a beard. Actually it is only an unforgettable memory of a love affair that has gone. The separation of the lovers (due to Bai Fan's suspicion and jealousy) negates the genuine love in this relationship of memory. The third relationship is that between Bai Fan and the mysterious young man who telephones her and his *Sirius*. This is an illusory and somewhat absurd relationship, but both parties can communicate with each other. The relationship means that for human beings to come out of a lack of mutual understanding, they must expand their environments and view. "The further you look, the closer you will be related to the world." Such a quasi-absurd relationship has a profound meaning.

Although *Sirius* has some elements of absurdity, it is delightful that its creator has his own thoughts and pursuits. The play neither copies the techniques of western absurd drama nor blindly follows western existentialism. There is no sense of loss, illusion, or desperation in *Sirius*. The existence of people and the human world is all concrete and meaningful. Its meaning lies in

people's realization and understanding of the state they are in and that they are still searching for ways to change this state. In this sense *Sirius* provides a lot of food for thought.

In the production of dramatic art, the creation of the play is only one aspect of creation. Even a good play has to go through careful stage recreation before becoming complete dramatic art. The charm of the stage creation of *Sirius* lies in the stage art creator's profound understanding and accurate grasp of the playwright's message and the psychology of the characters and their relationship. Therefore accurate stage image is used to illustrate them. There is a satisfactory meeting point for the pursuit on stage and that of the playwright. The performance does not ignore the play nor simply go after so-called pursuit of technique. Two points deserve mention here. First, both the director and the actors and actress grasp the characters of the play, but instead of emphasizing their uniqueness, they manifest the profound quality of the characters with sincere and simple performance. Of course, the performance is not flawless. For instance, some details are overly performed and

gives one a feeling of stereotyping the characters. However, on the whole the performance is quite good. The temporal and spatial treatment of the performance, in particular, conveys vividly and profoundly the play's careful portrayal of the psychology of the characters and their relationships. Second, the performance adequately conveys the artistic charm of the small theater. The actors and actress and the audience become one in time and space resulting in the audience's conscious or unconscious participation. Performance in the small theater shortens the distance between performers and audience. It shatters the temporal and spatial performance in the large theater in which the audience seems to be watching a mirror. The performers often come out from the audience or simply perform among the audience (such as the mysterious young man who telephones). Naturally the performers and the audience are in a state of common psychological experience. This is a unique artistic charm. Of course, small theater performance is still an experimental field in dramatic art. Experiment itself implies that it is imperfect and necessary to search for progress. However, the process of experiment shows that small theater performance is showing more and more of its unique charm. The search by *Sirius* in this aspect deserves much attention.

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