

Yao Wenyuan

Letter to Mao Zedong

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Chairman:

This time I returned to Shanghai for the National Day festival and stayed there for 12 days. During the period, I made some investigations. I convened several investigation meetings and took a look at the basic echelon, including the Diesel Plant where armed struggle had been most fierce. Once I got in touch with the masses, I learned a lot of new and lively things. I deeply felt that the important instructions Chairman Mao has recently put forward all reflect the inner demands of the broad masses of revolutionary people and touched on the most important and critical problems of the current revolutionary movement, and therefore, they possess boundless power. Take the training class for example. Cadres need it; so do the leaders of rebels. The No. 8 Dye Plant, which produces activated dye, has opened eight study classes since the establishment of the revolutionary committee in July. Each class lasting from one week to ten days studies the "three constantly read articles" and other works by the Chairman. Participants include regiment leaders of the rebel groups as well as those cadres who have committed mistakes. The class concentrates on solving two problems: 1. How to use the Chairman's thought as a guideline for ideological and political work; 2. How to deal with the masses correctly, unite the masses, and not to be divorced from the masses. After new cadres have held power, the main complaint by the workers is that they have seldom mingled with the masses. To study in this manner is very effective. Short-term study classes of this kind may be conducted by plants and other organizations. When they hear the Chairman's latest instructions, they immediately feel that they are the reflection of their innermost feelings.

Several problems are covered by my investigation: 1. The problem of the National Party Congress and that of the Party; 2. The problem of having better troops and simpler administration; 3. The problem of mass criticism and repudiation; 4. The problem of great alliance. Now I shall report the first two problems to you, hoping to receive instructions from you.

1. THE PROBLEM OF THE NINTH PARTY CONGRESS

At four symposia (with the revolutionary committee, Red Guards, rebel Party members at factories and schools, and P.L.A. comrades), on the basis of Chairman Mao's instructions, I solicited opinions from the audience. I had expected that the participants would be surprised, but it was not so, since discussions had already taken place among the rebels. Apparently, the masses had been thinking about this matter.

When should it be convened? The overwhelming majority believed that it should be held as early as possible. Most of them said it should be held in the first half of next year and should not be later than the fall of that year.

How should the delegates be produced? Should they be selected from bottom to top, level by level? A few comrades thought it should be done in this way; however, most of them did not express definite opinions. They said: "In the past candidates were actually decided by the superior. After one year of the Cultural Revolution, the political failures of many people, whether good or bad, have been seen even more clearly, more clearly than at any previous times, therefore, delegates may be selected through consultations with concerned quarters and then approved by Party congresses of cities, districts, or neighborhoods." "It may be begun at the central level with the opening of the National Party Congress. When there is a program, it will be more advantageous for the Party congresses at each level to meet." "Chairman Mao has said that the form should not be restricted, but the content should be stressed; the name does not matter much, but essence is important." There were even some comrades who suggested: "The National People's Congress should be convened in the same way; it should be held at the same time with the Ninth Party Congress in order to solve the problem of Liu Shao-ch'i."

Red Guards said: "A greater number of representatives from workers and Red Guards should be allowed to be present at the Congress." "It is better to absorb some workers and Red Guards into the Party."

Shall Wang Ming be selected? Shall Liu [Shao-ch'i], Teng [Hsiao-p'ing], and Tao [Chu] be selected? Shall Peng [Chen], Lo [Jui-ch'ing], Lu [Ting-i], and Yang [Shang-kun] be selected? The consensus of opinion was that they should not be selected. "Wang Ming has become a citizen of the Soviet Union. Can we select a Russian agent?" "All renegades should not be selected, which is a big principle." "Liu Shao-ch'i is a renegade and he should be further criticized and liquidated." There were some who said: "Chairman Mao may decide to keep a few teachers of negative

example, if so, we should listen to Chairman Mao. But, we hope there will not be too many, and they should first be thoroughly criticized." People generally know more about Liu than Teng.

How about the leadership organ of the Party? Many comrades were of the opinion that it might take the form of the revolutionary committee. There is the Party nucleus in the revolutionary committee which is authorized to perform the functions of the municipal council. The good point about this is unified leadership which facilitates association with the masses and the thorough implementation of Chairman Mao's proletarian line. There was another opinion which was that when formal power organs are established in the future, the division of power between the municipal council and the municipal people's council will still be necessary, otherwise, it would be difficult to hold a people's congress, because, if a person is busy with government affairs, he will inevitably neglect Party affairs.

Many comrades believed that in places where revolutionaries had already been established, the Party should have a leadership nucleus, and outstanding leaders of the rebel groups could be absorbed into the Party and allowed to frequently participate in the nucleus meeting of the Party. This nucleus meeting, just as has been pointed out by Chairman Mao, should not be formed subjectively or self-proclaimed; they should be naturally formed and developed in the course of struggle. Reorganization of the Party should not start from the basic level, but from the leadership organ. The districts, counties, and bureaus and units equivalent to bureaus in Shanghai had established 35 bodies of three-way alliance by October 5 with a total of 856 committee members of which 457 were Party members, representing 53 percent. A group of comparatively good Party members have already been elected to the leadership bodies by the revolutionary masses. Some outstanding revolutionaries have practically played the role of Party members. I believe this opinion is fairly reasonable and may be used as a reference. I do not know whether this is correct or not.

Before the "January Revolution," few Party members joined rebels, generally from two to five percent. After January of this year, more Party members successively joined the rebels, the percentage varying from 40 to 80. The practical experience of class struggle has told us that our proletarian revolutionary party — the vanguard of the proletariat—must be formed on the foundation of revolutionary workers, revolutionary peasantry, revolutionary fighters, revolutionary intellectuals, and revolutionary cadres, and only in this way can we lead several tens of thousands of masses to carry the proletarian revolution through to the end. "The call for restoring the Party organization is not a good slogan; it will be easily distorted as meaning a return to the old situation." It should be called reorganization and transformation. The revisionist stuff of Liu Shao-ch'i needs continued vigorous criticism. These points warrant special attention: First, the question of the nature of the Party and its mission. Second, the question of the line of Party building. ("Those who have made a good performance in production and are obedient may be allowed to join the Party.") Third, the question of relationship with the masses. (This is a fundamental problem. Some party members manifested deep hatred when talking about how they had become

"docile tools" for revisionism under the pernicious influence of Liu Shao-ch'i's black "Self-Cultivation" and how they had been deceived by the Liu-Teng line during the early period of the Cultural Revolution and thus took steps to suppress the masses.) Fourth, the question of democratic centralism and consolidating proletarian dictatorship. All this requires using the Mao Tse-tung thought to thoroughly criticize and repudiate Liu Shao-ch'i's revisionist viewpoints. Is this conclusion correct or not?

A unanimous earnest wish is that Volume V of the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung can be published before the opening of the Ninth Party Congress to provide historical material on the struggle between the two lines within the Party. Many Party members (particularly rebel groups of workers) have hoped to gain a greater understanding of the Party history, to learn the origin and development of the struggle between Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line and the bourgeois counterrevolutionary line, and to know the historical background of certain personages. In the past, they could read the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party," but now the document is no longer useful.

2. THE PROBLEM OF HAVING BETTER TROOPS AND SIMPLER ADMINISTRATION

This is an urgent problem.

Over the past several months, staff members of the Municipal Revolutionary Committee have increased considerably. At present, there are 20 departments with 3,229 employees. There are 763 workers in the General Office alone, which does not include those of revolutionary mass organizations who have left their production posts. Anyway, this organization is too big. The bigger the structure, the greater the chances for bad elements of all types to penetrate and for leading cadres to be divorced from the masses. Once hit by the sugar-coated bullets of the bourgeoisie, they [leading cadres] will develop the mountain-stronghold mentality. The increase of personnel in some departments was due to the development of mountain-stronghold mentality. After consulting with Comrade Chun-chiao, we decided that at least half or two-thirds or even more of the personnel should be slashed. The ideological work in this respect is very difficult and important. We have already transmitted to leading cadres the Chairman's instructions concerning having better troops and simpler administration.

The problems concerning the relationship between cadres and the masses, having better troops and simpler administration, and ideological and political work, and training classes as well as continuation of mass criticism must be given attention by special editorials of the People's Daily and Red Flag. And the Chairman's important instructions shall be quoted in these editorials. Is this consideration correct or not?

Since January of this year, most of the rebel leaders have gradually become mature in the course of struggle and have learned how to hold and wield power for the proletariat. The

situation is excellent and is becoming better and better. In cities and districts and at the basic level, we saw a large number of good cadres with high spirits who dared to make revolution and to shoulder the burden. But, there were also a small number of comrades who began to enjoy feasts, applause, flattery, and driving in sedans. Hit by the sugar-coated bullets of the bourgeoisie one by one, they began to be divorced from the masses and no longer desired to go deep among the masses and be their pupils. A Red Guard organization of middle school students wrote to us, criticizing some leaders for "seeking fame, fortune, limelight, and physical enjoyment." They voiced the hope that "a warning will be signaled in order to effect revolutionization." This reminded me of the brief episode of "three anti's" in 1949. In addition to study classes, Comrade Chun-chiao is prepared to hold a few small-sized meetings for educational purposes and for face-to-face talks.

I am afraid that too much of your precious time may be taken away. Therefore my letter stops here.

The report on the other two problems will be made later. Enclosed for your reference is a copy of the minutes of the symposium of Party members.

With a revolutionary salute of the proletariat.

Yao Wen-yuan

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