

How To Deal with the Idea of "Politically Passable,  
Professionally Proficient and Living Well"

- Forum on Question of Being Red and Expert -

I

(Peking Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Pao, December 24, 1964)

Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Pao Editor's Note:

The problem reflected in the letter of Comrade Ch'in Jung-hsiu (秦荣秀) of Peking Iron and Steel College is very important. An explicit discussion of this problem will be of great significance to the revolutionization of young intellectuals.

In conjunction with studying and implementing the spirit of the 9th National Congress of the Young Communist League, young intellectuals in many places are presently developing an enthusiastic discussion on the problem of being red and expert. This discussion fires the ardor of the broad masses of the young intellectuals to advance on the road of being both red and expert.

Some youths have, nevertheless, voiced their understanding and view in a different way. The more popular one is the so-called idea of "politically passable, professionally proficient and living well." It is found not only among a portion of university professors and students but also among young scientists and technicians, young literary and art workers and other young intellectuals. Therefore, this newspaper accepts Comrade Ch'in Jung-hsiu's recommendation, and begins to launch today a forum on "how to deal with the so-called idea of 'politically passable, professionally proficient and living well.'"

The topics for discussion are:

(1) Under the socialist conditions of our country today, should the revolutionary youth set a strict political demand for themselves? Should they strengthen ideological remolding and realize proletarian revolutionization? If they are satisfied by merely refraining from taking the anti-Party and anti-socialist stand, can they be "politically passable" in the stormy class struggle?

(2) Under the socialist conditions of our country today, what is the relationship between politics and professional work? What does our technical and professional knowledge serve? If we do not remold ourselves ideologically and set a strict demand for ourselves politically, can our technical and professional knowledge be really sound enough for the cause of revolution and construction?

(3) Under the socialist conditions of our country today, what should be the aim of life for a revolutionary youth? Should he serve the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people or just pursue a good life for the individual?

(4) What is the ideological essence of "politically passable, professionally proficient and living well?" How does it endanger the revolutionization of the young intellectuals? Why must young intellectuals advance along the road of being both red and expert?

We hope that the young intellectuals on various fronts will use Mao Tse-tung's thought as their weapon and enthusiastically participate in this discussion in the spirit of submitting to facts and reasons. Each contributor should grasp one or two problems and concretely analyze and describe the actual situation of his department, unit, or himself. We also welcome readers to raise other red and expert problems for discussion.

Letter from Comrade Ch'in Jung-hsiu

Comrade Editor:

Some teachers and students of our school recently held a discussion on how to understand and handle the relation between revolution and construction, and the relation between politics and professional work. This is an important problem bearing on how intellectuals should be oriented and which road they should follow. In this discussion, the understanding of certain teachers and students could be generalized by the popular idea of "politically passable, professionally proficient and living well." In place of being both red and expert, they considered this philosophy to be the most practical and effective avenue for intellectuals.

The reasons are:

(1) The present era is different from the past. In the past, there was the war and the revolution, and it was necessary to set rigid political requirements. Although we are still required to carry out the revolution now, yet the principal work is to carry out construction. The exploiting class has been overthrown. Although there are still some remnants, they can do no great harm. With the times changed, the tasks are changed too.

Our current main task is to make a success of socialist construction. The principal task for us technical and professional men in particular is to carry out construction and not revolution. Hence, there is no need to make the political requirements too strict, and it will do if we are passable politically. What is called "passable" means that we must support the Party and socialism, or it can be said that we must not take the anti-Party and anti-socialist stand.

(2) Politics is empty, but professional work is solid. Redness is abstract, but expertness is concrete. Only professional work can make contributions to socialist construction and directly and truly serve socialism. There must be something concrete to demonstrate whether we are red or not. To us professional men, expertness is a demonstration of redness. We are principally concerned with professional work and serving the people with our professional work. We must be professionally proficient and make a success of professional work before we can make a success of the revolution. Professional work and the revolution cannot be separated.

As a matter of fact, it is difficult to require professional works to be good both politically and professionally. This is difficult to put into practice. Redness and expertness are opposites in most cases and are seldom unified. It is only possible to be either more expert and less red, or less expert and more red. Therefore, the weight of political work and professional work should vary with persons. There must be division of labor, and the two, though following different paths, lead to the same destination. As far as a scientific, technical or professional youth is concerned, the principal problem of revolutionization at present is to be professionally proficient.

(3) When you are professionally proficient and make contributions, it goes without saying that the state and the people will take account of you and pay you well. This is only reasonable. Today we still adopt the system of "distribution according to work." Is it not just because they are professionally sound that some experts and specialists are held in high esteem, stand high in society, and lead a good life? It is therefore said that as long as one is professionally proficient, the question of "leading a good life"--to which the intellectuals aspire--is also solved.

How should these problems be dealt with? Is the idea of "politically passable, professionally proficient and living well" the path which the intellectuals should follow? Under the situation that there are still class and class struggle in society, is it practical to replace the avenue of being both red and expert with this philosophy? What danger is there, if any, in following this path? I believe clarification of this problem is of significance. I suggest therefore that it should be discussed in the newspapers so that it may be correctly understood.

Ch'in Jung-hsiu

Pressure Processing Department,  
Peking Iron and Steel College.

II

(Peking Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Pao, December 26, 1964)

Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Pao Editor's Note:

We are publishing four more articles today which give two different views on the red and expert problem. Which opinion can stand up firmly? We hope that you young intellectuals on various fronts enthusiastically air your opinions in accordance with your own real situation and comprehension. Let us repeat the topics for discussion that were published last time for your reference:

(1) Under the socialist conditions of our country today, should revolutionary youth set a strict demand for themselves politically? Should they strengthen ideological remodeling and realize proletarian revolutionization? If they are satisfied by merely refraining from taking the anti-Party and anti-socialist stand, can they be "politically passable" in the stormy class struggle?

(2) Under the socialist conditions of our country today, what is the relationship between politics and professional work? What does our technical and professional knowledge serve? If we do not remodel ourselves ideologically and set a strict demand for ourselves politically, can our technical and professional knowledge be really sound enough for the cause of revolution and construction?

(3) Under the socialist conditions of our country today, what should be the aim of life for a revolutionary youth? Should he serve the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people or just pursue a good life for the individual?

(4) What is the ideological essence of "politically passable, professionally sound and living well?" How does it endanger the revolutionization of the young intellectuals? Why must young intellectuals advance along the road of being both red and expert?

\*

It Is Not All Right for One to Be Politically "Passable"

by

Tai Chih-fen (戴志芬)

a young technician of the Designing Institute for Non-Ferrous Metallurgy, Ministry of Metallurgical Industry

I am a young designing worker. In the past few years, I always considered that my principal contradiction was that my professional knowledge was not sound. As for politics, I thought it would do so long as I did not commit any mistake. During the past few years, since I really had made no big mistake of a political nature, I could be described as passable in this connection. From the recent forum on revolutionization of designing work however, I realize that if a technical man does not thoroughly remodel his thought, the bourgeois ideology in his head will devise all ways and means to show itself in his work and will bring great loss to the country.

The designs that I worked on in the past were characterized with the pursuit of lavishness and the pursuit of the so-called high standards of socialist enterprises. For example, when I designed lighting equipment for the barber shop of a factory I copied the lighting equipment of a high-class barber shop in Shanghai. The main entrance was decorated with two wall lamps in the shape of barber poles which rotated automatically, and the interior was lit throughout with pineapple-shaped wall lamps which looked very gorgeous. But they were completely divorced from the needs and the living standard of the broad laboring people. Again for example, when I designed power wiring for a factory, I advanced various reasons to increase many unnecessary installations, and as a result, the area of civil engineering work was increased by one third and state investment totaling more than ¥100 thousand was wasted.

I did not feel there was anything wrong at the time. On the contrary, I was quite proud of myself. Why was I not distressed over the waste of so much money of the state? This had much to do with my stand and ideological sentiments. I was born to a family of the exploiting class in Shanghai. Since childhood, I had led the life of a "young lord." The extravagant living of the bourgeoisie in Shanghai prior to liberation left a profound impression with me. After my participation in work, the Party education made me realize that I must serve socialism. However, I had not remolded my thought in real earnest and I was in pursuit of a peaceful and comfortable bourgeois life. Ideologically I had not drawn a line of demarcation from bourgeois Epicureanism. Hence, I replaced Party policies with the bourgeois viewpoint of enjoyment in my work and held that living as the bourgeoisie did in the past constituted the happy life of socialism.

When I designed these things, although I argued superficially that I aimed at serving the workers and making them comfortable, I was actually rendering a service to "myself." Bourgeois individualism always influenced me in my work. As I now recall, when I accepted a task in the past, I thought not in terms of how to implement Party's policies in the designs but considered whether the job was a big or a small one. If it was a small job of no significance, I dealt with it perfunctorily. If it was a big job, I would set my mind at making a success of it, thus creating an "exemplary masterpiece" for the electrical industry and erecting a "monument" for myself. When I designed power wiring for example, I felt that since both the technological installations and civil engineering construction were grand and magnificent, if the electrical installations were of too low a level, they would not seem to match. Hence, they must be a little bigger, a little prettier and a little more perfect before they were presentable and could catch the eye. However, "a little deviation" in my political ideology led me far astray and caused the loss of one hundred thousand Yuan to the state.

I only thought that I would be politically passable if I did not commit any big mistake but I did not consider the heavy loss brought to the state by my not having thoroughly remolded my thought. Therefore, when I said "I am politically passable" in the past, I only meant that things were alright as far as I was concerned, but I did not consider whether such was also alright for the state and to the people.

Comrade Liu Shao-ch'i said: "Our intellectuals must understand that they can not be divorced from politics. Once divorced from revolutionary politics; they could easily head for reactionary politics. Without a correct political stand, they could drift to the reactionary political stand. Even though they might have mastered some knowledge and skills, such people could not truthfully and reliably serve the cause of socialism or whole-heartedly serve the workers and the peasants." Comrade Liu is correct in this respect. My personal experience proves that, if intellectuals like me do not thoroughly remold their bourgeois stand and ideological sentiments, they can neither be truthful nor reliable.

\*

Not "Politically Passable" in the True Sense

by

Chi Pei-t'ing (吉佩定)

Student, Foreign Languages Department,  
Peking Normal University

There are few people today who advocate that they would only follow the road of being only expert but not red. However, this does not mean that the idea of being only expert but not red has passed away. On the contrary, it is still looking for a market among us. "Being politically passable, professionally sound and living well" is precisely a camouflaged version of this idea.

I had this idea too when I first entered the university and I used it to guide my study, life and work. I read as many books as I could, and learned "in the hard way basic skills in my specialized field." I paid little or no attention to political studies and ideological remodeling. I considered that so long as I did not take the anti-Party and not anti-socialist stand, I would be "alright politically" and problems would not arise. But, what were the facts? When discussing a rural problem on one occasion, I mistook the advocacy for following the capitalist road as the correct view because of my lack of class viewpoint and unclear understanding. After things were analyzed by other schoolmates, I discovered that my eyes had been deceived by bourgeois ideology and were not sharp enough. As I had always considered myself to be "politically passable," I never realized that I could not "pass through" the major question of the struggle between the two roads. At times, I set "strict demands" for myself to "stand firmly in politics." But I did not know how to adhere to this stand.

For example, when I saw other people pursuing the bourgeois way of life by emphasizing good food and clothing, I could not tell whether it was right or wrong. On the contrary, I thought that this was reasonable. As university students, we must have the "style" of university students. In this manner, I began to waver. Without realizing it, I began to pay attention to good food and clothing, and abandoned the good style of leading a plain and hard life. This showed that the idea of "politically passable, professionally sound and living well" had opened the door to bourgeois ideology and stood in the way of making myself "politically sound."

The Party wants us to become successors to the revolution and take up the heavy burden of realizing communism in China and throughout the world. This burden cannot be borne by those people who have the idea of "politically passable, professionally sound and living well." The aim of this philosophy is to enable the individual "to lead a good life." They would finally sink one day into the quagmire of intoxication over material enjoyment and cannot extricate themselves. This is very dangerous. We must thoroughly criticize and abandon this philosophy which is a big barrier in our revolutionization.

\*

Mere Satisfaction in Not Taking the Anti-Party and Anti-Socialist  
Stand in the Subjective Would Not Lead to Sincerely Serving  
Socialism in the Objective

by

Wang Hsi-p'eng (王锡朋)

Institute of Geophysics and Meteorology, Academia Sinica

Some people say that under the conditions of the socialist system in our country a person always want to serve socialism in the objective as long as he does not take the anti-Party and anti-socialist stand in the subjective. They try to use this reasoning to defend the so-called idea of "politically passable." In fact, the problem is not as simple as this.

We know that in our class society today the class stand directly determines whether scientific and technical knowledge serves the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. If you do not sincerely remold your thought and subjective world, your stand will not be firm and how will you be able to more properly and outstandingly serve socialism objectively? Will not what you call "professionally sound" end in profiting the bourgeoisie? Such examples are not hard to find in our life. For example, there are people who do not have a correct political direction and who do not possess the philosophy of serving the people whole-heartedly. They use their specialized knowledge as capital for advancement in society and as the stepping stone to personal fame and profit. What they call "sound" does not stem from a consideration for the interests of the country but from a personal pursuit of fame and profit. They are thinking on how to use as little time to turn out as much work for as high a remuneration as possible.

Some people are also divorced from reality and the laboring people in their scientific and technical research. They are satisfied with and intoxicated by their own book knowledge because in their eyes only book knowledge is "sound." They show no interest in technical work assigned them and are unwilling to cooperate and exchange technical knowledge with other people.

Let us ask: Since this so-called "soundness" runs counter to socialist construction, what else can it be if it is not in the service of the bourgeoisie?

It can be seen from the above that the relationship between politics and profession, as far as a scientific and technical workers in the socialist society is concerned, is basically a question of class stand--an important question of whether one is primarily a "scientist" disinterested in politics or primarily a revolutionary. It is the question of whether the road of the bourgeois intellectuals or the road of continued and self-conscious ideological revolution of the proletariat intellectuals is followed. Otherwise, what he calls professionalism "sound" and "serving socialist construction in the objective" is but individualism in a beautiful mantle for deceiving people.

\*

### When One Cannot Be Both Red and Expert

by

T'ien Ho-shui (田和永)  
Student, Peking Steel and Iron College

I feel that the demand for and emphasis on being red and expert should vary with time. We know that the purpose and aim of revolutionaries varies with different periods of time and that the demand on revolutionaries also changes. For example, during the period of democratic revolution, the chief task of revolutionaries was to fight a war and go into battles with live ammunition. At that time, even the best knowledge in mathematics, physics and chemistry had to be abandoned. At that time, many revolutionary intellectuals with specialized knowledge put down their books and became professional revolutionaries.

Now with our country ushered into a period of all-round socialist construction, the state is in need of large numbers of engineers, specialists and research personnel. Under these conditions, we must implement necessary division of labor. For persons handling social sciences and persons specialized in political work the demand for "redness" must be high. For persons handling natural sciences the demand for expertness must be high, and the demand for redness may be somewhat lower.

I do not say that persons handling natural sciences may entirely forsake redness. I only hold that the degree of being red should vary. A social scientist or philosophy researcher can no longer serve socialism once his world outlook is idealistic. On the other hand, some bourgeois technical experts whose world outlook has not been remolded can still serve socialism under the proletarian leadership. Have not the old experts and the old artists whose stand and world outlook has been thoroughly reformed made contributions to socialism just the same today? Had they spent too much time on study of Marxism-Leninism, their expertness surely would have suffered.

According to what I know, none of the great natural scientists in history was well versed in Marxism-Leninism. It is my opinion, therefore, that different persons should be dealt with according to their conditions.

Man's time is limited and his energy is also limited. A metallurgical engineer could never be expected to know history and biology as well. By the same token, it is practically impossible to expect persons engaging in scientific and engineering work to be both red and expert--to have a good knowledge of Marxism-Leninism as well as specialized knowledge. If the demand for redness is set too high, one's knowledge in his specialized field would definitely be affected. In this manner, it would be disadvantageous to socialist construction.

The above is my opinion on the problem of being red and expert. I welcome criticism and correction from everyone on any inappropriate points that I may have made.

\*

\*

\*

III

(Peking Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Pao, January 7, 1965)

What Has Been Discussed Recently?

by  
Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Pao Editor

Three issues of this column have been devoted to discussions on the question of "red and expert." This editorial department has received a large number of contributions from the broad masses of the young readers of various trades and professions in enthusiastic participation in the discussions.

As shown in the articles received, the question on which readers hope to clarify first is: Is it correct to think that one is required to be proficient professionally but merely passable politically? Most of the contributions received hold that one should be proficient both politically and professionally. A few of them hold that as far as those who are presently engaged in technical work or plan to take up such work in the future are concerned, it will do if they are politically passable. They hold the following views:

(1) Brought up under the red flag, the youths of today have all embarked on the socialist boat and have positively taken to the socialist path. As they devote themselves to technology, those engaged in technical work are, by the very nature of their work, serving the people. Provided they adhere to the line of opposing neither the Party nor socialism, and provided that they can curb their individualism at the critical moment, they will be able to hold their ground politically.

(2) A division of labor is always necessary in a society. Some are exclusively engaged in political work and some are exclusively devoted to technology. Since those devoted to technology are concerned mainly with technical problems, it is, therefore, not necessary for them to maintain such a high degree of political consciousness.

Whether or not these views are correct is worthy of further discussion.

Under the circumstances that an ever greater penetration is made into the socialist revolution, is there any question of what path should our youths follow? Is it possible for a person to carry out resolutely the revolution without thoroughly remolding his thought and setting strict demands for himself? What is the essence of the thinking to seek merely to become passable politically?

In the socialist society in which classes and class struggle still exist, can one stand firmly so long as he is not opposed to the Party and socialism? Is it possible for those devoted to technology to mind only technical problems and to ignore the class struggle?

What, after all, is the purpose of promoting technology? Without a correct standpoint, viewpoint, and method to guide technical work, can it be used to serve the majority of the people?

It is hoped that more people will continue to state their views and discuss their experiences pertaining to the above-mentioned questions, in association with their actual work and thoughts. For thorough reasoning, it is best that each article should discuss only one question, including viewpoint, facts and analysis. Discussions should be factual and specific, and facts referred to must be exact and correct.

As the articles received are many, those articles which are not published will not be returned. Please retain your own copy.