

VETERAN AND NEW CADRES SHOULD UNITE

November 8, 1949

We should make an overall adjustment in the allocation of our human and material resources. It's not right for the authorities of every greater administrative region¹¹ to launch large-scale projects on their own, as they are planning to do. We have to be realistic: with a limited amount of money and machinery, we must begin our undertakings where conditions are favourable, where we have a good foundation to build on. It is very important for us to launch projects in the order of their importance and urgency; otherwise we shall lose sight of the overall situation. You comrades must have learned that from your study tour. On the other hand, it would be wrong for us to consider only the most important and urgent projects to the neglect of others. As for the allocation of machines, before distributing them the Central Financial and Economic Commission⁷ and the Ministry of Heavy Industry should send people to investigate the situation in the various localities.²⁸ There has to be a large-scale adjustment in the allocation of personnel too. Technical cadres in the south should be transferred to the north, because northeast China is suffering from a serious shortage of such people.

Comrades who have been transferred from east China to northeast China feel that there are problems in the way cadres are used there. And comrades who have been transferred in the other direction make the same complaint about their new region. The crux of the matter is the relations between veteran and new cadres. The "new" cadres are afraid the "old" cadres don't trust them, and the "old" cadres, for their part, are afraid the newcomers may not be very reliable.

According to materialist dialectics, nothing exists without a cause. It might be a good idea for us to review the history of our relations with people

Part of a speech made in Beijing at a meeting to welcome returning members of a study group that had been sent to northeast China. At the time, Comrade Chen Yun was Vice-Premier of the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government and concurrently Chairman of the Central Financial and Economic Commission.

who have technical skills. The years immediately following the liberation of Harbin constituted the first stage of those relations.²⁹ At that time many of the technical personnel, under the influence of orthodox ideas, still harboured illusions about the Kuomintang and were full of anxiety. We had constant problems then with railways and coal mines, but we could rely only on the help of workers. The second stage began when Siping was liberated and our military position in the Northeast was consolidated.³⁰ This, coupled with our correct policy towards them, made the technical personnel abandon their wait-and-see attitude and become willing to work with us. In the third stage the liberation of Shenyang put the minds of the people in northeast China at ease.²⁴ We regarded the technical personnel who came with us from northern Manchuria to take over Shenyang as veteran cadres.³¹ That is how our relations with them developed in the Northeast.

After our capture of Tianjin and the peaceful liberation of Beiping [Beijing], there was no doubt that we would seize political power throughout the country.³² In the factories, except for a small number of people from the revolutionary base areas who were brought in to assume leading positions, there was no change in the composition of the technical staff. This was in keeping with the rapid expansion of the liberated areas. During this period many of the technical people in the south came north for discussions with us, so after the PLA crossed the Yangtze, it was those people who were entrusted with much of the take-over work in the south. In production units, not only were technical personnel at the lower levels left in place, but some of them were recruited to fill the higher positions. All this shows that people's political awareness was related to the progress of the struggle for liberation.

So it is clear that in recent years the technical personnel have been drawing ever closer to us as the cause of liberation has advanced. This is how history has been developing, and we should not consider a question apart from its historical context. Veteran comrades should not judge east China by the standards of northeast China of a few years back, and comrades from east China should not cling to old attitudes about the Northeast.

Veteran comrades should trust the technical personnel who used to work in the Kuomintang-controlled areas, and they should change their attitude if they haven't already done so. Now that circumstances have changed, we should change our approach. We should recognize that the overwhelming majority of the technical personnel are ready to serve the people and remould their ideology, and that many of them may become Communists. We should utilize their abilities instead of closing the door on them. Of course, there are diehards among them, but these are only a handful.

Technical personnel who worked under the Kuomintang regime have their weaknesses. We can advance their ideological remoulding if we help them recognize those weaknesses.

First, the great majority of the technical personnel received a British or American bourgeois education and had no contact with the Communist Party. Some of them blindly worship the capitalist countries and entertain illusions about them. We should make it clear to them that although British and American technology is advanced, it is controlled by a minority who are hostile to us and will never help us. Now we have only the Soviet Union to turn to for help.

Second, many technical personnel profess to be aloof from politics: they think that politics is just empty talk and that only technology can serve society. We should help them realize that serving society is not an abstract question. In old China under Kuomintang rule, technology served the capitalists in their quest for profits, as it does in capitalist countries today. Only in countries like our People's Republic can technology serve the overwhelming majority of people. Naturally, if they are truly to serve the people, technical personnel must undergo a process of ideological remoulding. Under capitalism, in order to earn a living, most of them have to sell their labour power to the capitalists and subject themselves to capitalist control and exploitation; thus, their intellectual development is seriously hampered. As I see it, the greatest happiness one can have is to join the revolution and work for the people. Only when the revolutionary cause is assured of a promising future can a person make full use of his abilities.

Third, many technical personnel tend to look down on workers. That's not good. The founding of New China has wrought a change in the relations between people. In the old society the capitalists exploited and oppressed the workers and played the technicians against the workers, even though the technicians were exploited too. Things are different now; relations between the workers and technicians are no longer antagonistic but harmonious. The two should unite to promote production. Production cannot proceed without workers, and it requires technicians as well.

We should be failing in our duty to our comrades doing technical work if we didn't point out to them the three weaknesses that I have described. There's nothing unusual about having a touch of individualism. Quite a few Party members do too. The point is that even though it is a painful process, in the long revolutionary struggle our comrades must and can overcome individualism.

In short, the distinction between veteran and new cadres is only relative. A cadre may be new today, but he will be a veteran tomorrow. We hope that

cadres will clear up any misunderstandings with each other, learn more about one another and co-operate closely so as to make greater contributions to economic development in New China. Veteran comrades should trust the new ones and allow them a free hand in their work, while helping them to overcome their weaknesses. For their part, new comrades should respect the veterans and help them to acquire both general knowledge and technical skills. Only when both sides have come to understand this will they gradually achieve unity in their thinking and be able to work together more successfully.