

1950

Speeches/Documents

Title: Decision concerning Launching Criticism and Self-Criticism in Newspapers

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Description:

(1) Drawing the popular masses to openly criticize flaws and mistakes in our works in newspapers and periodicals, and educating Party members, and especially Party Cadres to conduct self-criticism concerning these flaws and mistakes in newspapers and periodicals, has become even more important and important at present. Because at present, the war on the mainland has come to an end, our Party is now leading the regime of the entire country, flaws and mistakes in our work can easily harm the interest of the broad people, and because of the position of regime leaders, and the rise of the prestige of the leaders, arrogant emotions easily come about, refusing criticism and suppressing criticism within and without the Party. Because of the emergence of these new situations, if we cannot openly and timely launch criticism and self-criticism in the entire Party and the broad people concerning the flaws and mistakes of our Party's People's Government and all economic organs and mass organizations, we will be poisoned by grave bureaucratism, and cannot complete the task of establishing the New China. Because of these reasons, the Central Committee has hereby decided: to launch criticism and self-criticism concerning all flaws and mistakes in our work in all open sites, within the popular masses, and especially in newspapers and periodicals.

(2) In order to openly and correctly launch criticism and self-criticism in newspapers and periodicals, we shall conduct education in the two aspects of inside the Party and among the people. First, it is necessary to educate Party members and especially cadres to understand: conducting criticism and self-criticism in newspapers and periodicals, is a necessary method to consolidate the integration of the Party with the People's Government, guarantee the democratization of the Party and the country, and accelerate social progress. Causing the popular masses to be able to freely express their criticisms and suggestions concerning the Party and the People's Government in newspapers and periodicals, even if these criticisms and suggestions are not completely mature or completely correct, they can also not be attacked or ridiculed because of this, and this is a critical step in raising the popular masses' consciousness and vigour, and drawing the popular masses to eagerly participate in the undertaking of national construction. Because of this all Party levels' leading organs and cadres must adopt an attitude of enthusiastically welcoming and firmly protecting criticism reflecting the opinions of the masses, and oppose a bureaucratist attitude of brushing the criticisms from the masses aside, limiting expression and attacking, retaliating against or ridiculing those expressing criticisms. This is the main aspect at present. Second, it is necessary to educate the editing personnel, journalists, reporters of newspapers and periodicals and the popular masses to differentiate correct criticism and destructive criticism. The criticism that we advocate, is criticism of the popular masses (and first and foremost workers and peasants) with stimulating and consolidating the undertaking of national construction as objectives, that is principled, constructive, and well-disposed, and it is not that sort of destructive criticism in order to oppose the people's democratic system and the common programme, in order to destroy discipline and leadership, in order to attack confidence and enthusiasm in the advance of the popular masses, creating disheartened emotions and scattering splittist attitudes, and especially the talk of counterrevolutionaries to destroy the people's democratic dictatorship should and must be rejected.

(3) In order to guarantee that criticism and self-criticism in newspapers and periodicals is able to be conducted smoothly and efficiently, the Central Committee has stipulated the following rules, and hopes that all levels' Party Committees and Party newspaper workers realistically implement them:

A, All criticism published in newspapers and periodicals falls under the independent responsibility of the journalists and editors of the newspaper or periodical. In the past, a rule that was implemented in many locations was that contributions criticizing organizations and personnel of the Party and

Government were submitted to the criticized organization and individual for consultation, and was only published after obtaining their agreement. This sort of rule, under the conditions that it was inconvenient to investigate during the war period, has avoided many criticism that did not completely conform to reality and that were inconsiderate, but continuing to adopt this sort of rule under the present conditions nevertheless does more harm than good, and is incorrect. From now on, newspaper and periodical personnel may still, and even should solicit opinion of the corresponding department in cases where they cannot decide truths and falsehoods by themselves, but as long as newspapers and periodicals affirm that this sort of criticism is basically correct, even if the agreement of the subject of criticism has not been sought or has not been obtained, they shall be responsible for publication.

B, Concerning contributions from worker and peasant reporters, the above rule applies in the same way. The work of worker and peasant reporters, apart from being led by newspapers, shall be assisted by the Party organization of the production work unit to which they belong. The situation of worker and peasant reporters' activities shall be classified as an investigative newspaper work and the work of the Party in all production work units. No person may abuse their power to suppress the criticism of worker and peasant reporters in newspapers and periodicals, or retaliate against them.

C, Concerning positive criticism in letters from readers, all newspapers and periodicals can determine whether they are true, and shall publish them. Letter writers shall notify their real name and address to the publisher, but the publisher must keep them secret according to the requirements of the letter writers.

D, After criticisms are published in newspapers or periodicals, if their are completely verified, the subjects of criticism shall immediately state their acceptance in the same newspaper or periodical and openly correct the consequences of their mistakes. If a part is inaccurate, the subject of criticism shall immediately make a correction that seeks truth from facts in the same newspaper or periodical, and accept the correct part of the criticism. If the subject of criticism refuses to express his attitude, or attacks the critic, they shall be punished by the Party discipline inspection committee. The part of the above facts that violates law on administrative discipline, shall be punished by the State supervision organ and the judiciary organ.

(4) It is stipulated that Lenin's "On the Nature of our Newspapers", Stalin's "On Self-Criticism" and "Opposing the Vulgarization of the Slogan of Self-Criticism", comrade Mao Zedong's "On Self-Criticism" and the "CPSU 8th Party Congress Resolution Concerning Party and Soviet Newspapers" are to be study materials for all levels' Party committees, Party newspapers and Party periodicals in discussing and implementing this Decision.

(5) This decision concerns the newspapers and periodicals led by the Party, but when newspapers and periodicals outside of the Party adopt a similar correct attitude to criticize Party organizations and personnel in a similar spirit, the Party shall also provide the required cooperation and support according to the same rules.

Remark

Its chief concern was the danger of arrogance among leaders and the growing habit of suppressing public criticism of the regime. This, the resolution stated, would harm the people because errors would not be corrected. The danger was bureaucratism and the only way to root it out was public self- and mutual criticism. Thus, education was needed. Party members must learn to accept criticism because it is good for the Party, and journalists and editors must learn to distinguish 'good' criticism, which aided the Party's goals, from the 'bad', which questioned Party dominance. These ideals were backed up by stiff organizational rules: the Party Centre decreed that no longer could Party leaders vet criticisms before their publication and in the event that such leaders sought reprisals against their critics, they were to be handed over to the Party's Discipline Inspection Committee. Furthermore, administrative authority for selecting, investigating, and publishing 'criticisms from the masses' was now vested in the editorial boards of Party periodicals. They needed no other approval before publication. Finally, objects of criticism were ordered to reply to criticisms, acknowledging their faults and defending themselves only in the case of factual errors in the original criticism. Editorial boards, for their part, were assigned a long list of 'study materials' on the role of journalism from Lenin, Stalin, and Mao.

Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China: Deng Tuo and the Intelligentsia. Contributors: Timothy Cheek - author. Publisher: Clarendon Press. Place of Publication: Oxford. Publication Year: 1997. Page Number: 135/6.

"Instructions on Carrying Out the Consolidation Campaign with the Entire Party and All Forces."