

1954

Speeches/Documents

Title: Letter concerning the study of the dream of the red chamber

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Date: October 16,
1954

Source: SWM volume V

Description:. Letter to the comrades of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and other comrades concerned

Enclosed are two articles refuting Yu Ping-po. Please read them. It is the first time in over thirty years that a serious attack has been levelled against the erroneous views of the so-called authorities on The Dream of the Red Chamber. The authors are two Youth League members. At first they wrote to the Literary Gazette to ask whether it was all right to criticize Yu Ping-po, but they were ignored. In the circumstances, they were obliged to write to their teacher at Shantung University, their alma mater, and they received support. Their article refuting "An Essay on The Dream of the Red Chamber" was published in the university journal Literature, History and Philosophy. Then the matter came up again in Peking. It was suggested that the People Daily reprint the article in order to start a debate and carry on the criticism. This, too, came to naught because certain persons objected for a variety of reasons (the main ones being that it was "an article written by nobodies" and that "the Party paper is not a platform for free debate"). In the end a compromise was reached and the article was allowed to be reprinted in the Literary Gazette. Later, the "Literary Legacy" page of the Kuangming Daily carried another article by the two young men refuting Yu Ping-po's book, Studies on "The Dream of the Red Chamber". It seems that a struggle may now be able to get under way against the Hu Shih school of bourgeois idealism in the field of classical literature, which has poisoned the minds of the young for more than thirty years. The whole thing has been set going by two "nobodies", while the "bigwigs" have ignored and obstructed it as is their wont; they go in for a united front with bourgeois writers on the question of idealism and become willing captives of the bourgeoisie. The case is almost the same as with the films Inside Story of the Ching Court [1] and The Life of We Hsun when they were shown. Inside Story of the Ching Court, which has been described by certain people as a film of patriotism but is in fact one of national betrayal, has never been criticized since it was shown all over the country. The Life of Wu Hsun has been criticized, but up to now no lessons have been drawn; what is more, such strange things have happened as tolerating Yu Ping-po's idealism while suppressing the lively critical essays by the "nobodies". This deserves our attention.

Towards such bourgeois intellectuals as Yu Ping-po, our attitude should naturally be one of uniting with them, but we should criticize their erroneous ideas which poison the minds of the young, and we certainly should not surrender to them.

NOTES

1. Inside Story of the Ching Court was a reactionary film which vilified the patriotic Yi Ho Tuan Movement of 1900 and preached capitulation to imperialism. This film of national betrayal was extolled by Liu Shao-chi as one of "patriotism".