

# How to Look at Intellectuals Correctly

by KUNG CHUN and CHAO HUI

From the Workers' and P.L.A. Men's Mao Tse-tung's Thought Propaganda Team  
Stationed at the Peking Polytechnic College

**T**HE first problem our propaganda team came up against upon entering the college was how to look at intellectuals. Seeing the many unhealthy things among the intellectuals, some comrades lumped them together as being all the same. Therefore, there was a big question mark in these comrades' minds as to whether the intellectuals could really be remoulded or not.

This way of looking at intellectuals as "all the same" is wrong.

In his extremely important work *Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work* [March 12, 1957], Chairman Mao made a penetrating analysis of the intellectuals in our country, pointing out that they are in three different states — left, intermediate and right: **Those who take the firm stand of the proletariat — "they are a minority"; "the number of intellectuals who are hostile to our state is very small"; "the majority have the desire to study Marxism and have already learned a little, but they are not yet familiar with it. Some of them still have doubts, their stand is not yet firm and they vacillate in moments of stress. This section of intellectuals, constituting the majority of the five million, is still in an intermediate state."**

Chairman Mao's brilliant thesis has been fully proved by the political showing of the intellectuals in the great proletarian cultural revolution, and by the actual situation of the intellectuals with whom we have come into contact in our work. The left wing of the intellectuals stand comparatively firmly on Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line. The right wing, including a handful of renegades, enemy agents, and diehard capitalist roaders, are hostile to the great proletarian cultural revolution and resist and sabotage it. Among the intermediate section of the intellectuals there is the aspect of wanting to make revolution, as well as the aspect of vacillation. Because of long periods of bourgeois education and poisoning by the counter-revolutionary revisionist educational line of the renegade, traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi, their

world outlook is fundamentally bourgeois. Both the left and right wings are in the minority. Our work among the intellectuals today is mainly to help the overwhelming majority, who are in an intermediate state, to be re-educated by the workers, peasants and soldiers and to change their bourgeois world outlook. Therefore, we must adopt a policy of uniting with this overwhelming majority and educating and remoulding them.

Chairman Mao recently taught us: **"The majority or the vast majority of the students trained in the old schools and colleges can integrate themselves with the workers, peasants and soldiers, and some have made inventions or innovations; they must, however, be re-educated by the workers, peasants and soldiers under the guidance of the correct line, and thoroughly change their old ideology. Such intellectuals will be welcomed by the workers, peasants and soldiers."** This great teaching of Chairman Mao's has pointed out a clear orientation for our work of re-educating the intellectuals. The "majority" and the "vast majority" Chairman Mao referred to are those intellectuals whom he analysed as being in an intermediate state in his *Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work*. Towards these people, we must firmly believe that they want to make progress, want to remould themselves and can be remoulded. There is no cause for lack of confidence in the fact that intellectuals can accept re-education. One important political task for our propaganda team in entering the college is to use the great thought of Mao Tse-tung to re-educate the intellectuals. We must work hard to shoulder this heavy task, and not fall short of our great leader Chairman Mao's expectations.

There are three different attitudes towards the work of re-educating the intellectuals. One is to be impatient for quick success. The second is to sit and wait passively. The third is to proceed from the present condition of the intellectuals and actively re-educate them so as to help them gradually achieve ideological revolutionization.

The attitude of impatience will not do. Comrades who have this attitude want to remould the intellectuals overnight. This is an unrealistic way of thinking. We must be active in re-educating intellectuals, but being active does not mean being impatient. The change in the intellectuals' world outlook is a revolution. They must undergo a long and even painful process of tempering. The obstinacy of bourgeois ideas determines that giving re-education will be an arduous job. We **"must not attempt to change people's ideology, which has been shaped over decades of life, by giving a few lectures or by holding a few meetings."** The qualitative change of things comes after a number of partial qualitative changes resulting from the accumulation of quantitative changes. To ignore quantitative changes, to neglect long-term, patient and painstaking work among the intellectuals will inevitably result in raising unrealistically high demands and in doing things in an oversimplified and stiff way which produces results contrary to what one desires.

The sit and wait attitude is wrong. Comrades with this attitude have actually relinquished their responsibility to actively promote the remoulding of the intellectuals. The practice of struggles in the great proletarian cultural revolution has clearly proved that the intellectuals cannot bring about their ideological remoulding by relying solely on their own efforts. Internal causes are decisive in the ideological change of intellectuals, but external causes are also indispensable. **". . . External causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and . . . external causes become operative through internal causes."** This condition is that **"they must . . . be re-educated by the workers, peasants and soldiers under the guidance of the correct line."** How well we do our work of re-education determines the speed and effectiveness of the intellectuals' ideological remoulding. We must consciously realize that the working class has the historical responsibility of transforming the old world, and must never take the passive sit and wait attitude towards the re-education of the intellectuals.

Only the third attitude, that of actively promoting the ideological remoulding of the intellectuals, is correct. Most of our comrades have adopted this attitude. This means that, with respect to the whole, we firmly believe that the vast majority of the intellectuals can be remoulded and that Mao Tse-tung's thought can remould them. But in concrete work, we must proceed from the actual situation, take practical steps and use effective methods to do painstaking ideological-political work, and actively promote the ideological revolutionization of the intellectuals. We must organize them to creatively study and apply Chairman Mao's works, guide them to actively throw themselves into class struggle, encourage them to fight self and repudiate

revisionism conscientiously and remould their bourgeois world outlook. Towards those who make comparatively fast progress, we must, in the spirit of uninterrupted revolution, help them continue their advance along the revolutionary road pointed out by Chairman Mao. Towards those who make rather slow progress, we **"should not slight or despise them, but should befriend them, unite with them, convince them and encourage them to go forward."** We must do our work among different people according to their different characteristics. Towards the bourgeois reactionary academic authorities, too, we must carry out the proletarian policy of **"giving a way out."** After full criticism and repudiation, they should be given a way out. Although we have been doing all this for not too long a time, preliminary results are already evident. The intellectuals have already taken a gratifying step forward on the road of receiving re-education and integrating with the workers, peasants and soldiers. The unhealthy atmosphere among the intellectuals of the Peking Polytechnic College has changed markedly. The students say: **"With the arrival of the propaganda team, people's thinking has changed and so has the college, which has taken on a new look."**

Re-education of the intellectuals is fraught with contradictions and struggles between the two world outlooks. In this process, there is bound to be reversals. When we meet with such reversals, we must not lose heart or waver, but must persist in the work of re-education. We must allow for reversals. Reversals are not necessarily a bad thing. **"In given conditions, a bad thing can lead to good results. . ."** Old ideology will be conquered and new ideology developed in the course of repeated struggles. So long as we do ideological-political work well, each reversal will be followed by a step forward. On the question of conquering the influence of bourgeois factionalism alone, we have seen reversals by some students four or five times since our propaganda team entered the college. There also were a number of reversals in some classes. But after this process, these students finally realized the harm of bourgeois factionalism, and raised their political consciousness. The revolutionary great alliance in these classes also gradually became consolidated. Facts have proved that when guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, so long as we take an active attitude and overcome impatience and passivity and make unremitting efforts, we can certainly do the work of re-educating the intellectuals well. As for the very few among them whose thinking is ossified and who cling to a reactionary stand and remain obdurate, that does not matter very much. They merely serve as teachers by negative example for the proletariat.

*(Originally published in "Hongqi,"  
No. 2, 1969. Slightly abridged.)*

*Peking Review, No. 8*