

June 5, 1959

**The Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal
Committee Foreign Affairs Small Group Report
Concerning the Situation With Respect to Foreign
Trainees and Ideas for Future Improvements**

Citation:

"The Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Committee Foreign Affairs Small Group Report Concerning the Situation With Respect to Foreign Trainees and Ideas for Future Improvements", June 5, 1959, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Shanghai Municipal Archives, B134-6-276, pp. 3-10. Obtained by Liang Zhi and translated by Neil Silver. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/115927>

Summary:

Report of the Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Committee Foreign Affairs concerning the situation with respect to foreign trainees and ideas for future improvements.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Report of the Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Committee Foreign Affairs

Forwarded Organizations: Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Committee, State Council Foreign Affairs Office

Copied Organizations: Foreign Trade Ministry, Shanghai Municipal Foreign Trade Bureau, Light Industrial Bureau, Chemistry Industry Bureau, Textile Industry Bureau

Main Content: Concerning the Situation With Respect to Foreign Trainees and Ideas for Future Improvements

After the Shanghai Municipal Foreign Affairs Office was established, the principle of "unified leadership, divided management responsibility" in foreign affairs work was fixed, assigning the division of responsibility for management of all municipal foreign trainee work to the Foreign Trade Bureau. We then were able to carry out, along with the Foreign Trade Bureau, in succession, investigations of the situation of foreign trainees in all Shanghai units. In September last year, Comrade Qi Weili convened all factories under the Industrial Bureaus and directly affiliated factories, discussing existing problems in the management of foreign trainees, and also proposing ideas for future strengthening of leadership over this kind of work; in October, we went [down] to some training units to understand the situation; in November and the first part of December, the Light Industrial Bureau, Textile Management Bureau, and the Chemical Industry Bureau separately convened in succession five reporting conferences. Now, after participating in these meetings and directly going to some training units, we will systematize and report below the situation as we understand it:

In the whole municipality there are now 934 foreign trainees, among which are 491 Vietnamese trainees, 384 [North] Korean trainees, and 59 Mongolian trainees, dispersed among 60 factories of the three systems of the Light Industrial Bureau, the Chemical Industry Bureau and the Textile Management Bureau as well as among the Commodities Inspection Bureau, Customs, research institutes, the Maritime Products Companies, and the Shipyards. For the most part, all bureaus, all factories and other units pay enough attention to the training of foreign trainees. The Light Industrial Bureau and the Chemical Industry Bureau have established foreign aid offices, and the Textile Management Bureau has a special person fulfilling this responsibility. Most factories have set up a small working group led by a party member factory director to lead this work, with the personnel and security section responsible for specific work. In the workshops, generally, the head of the workshop is in charge, and an outstanding skilled worker is selected to be responsible for specific training work. Owing to the attention paid by factory leadership, and also the positive efforts made by the trainees themselves, the overwhelming majority of trainees complete their training plan on time or ahead of time. At the same time, owing to years of party education, the internationalist thinking of the mass of staff and workers has generally been raised, and, before trainees have come to the factories, most factories have launched an ideological mobilization [campaigns] aimed at the same workers; therefore, our country's staff and workers and trainees of all countries generally get along quite well. Some veteran workers not only engage in selfless help toward them in technical [work], but they also bring [the trainees] fully into their lives, using after-hours time to study language together and introduce each other to the situation in their respective countries. On days off, they invite the trainees to their own homes as guests, or go out together sight-seeing, making the trainees feel that the comradely Chinese workers are like family. They even call our veteran workers "papa," and call China their "second homeland." Most factories are relatively good in taking care of the life [needs] of the trainees, do everything they can within standards to arrange so that trainees are more satisfied, and, whenever [trainees] make reasonable requests, also do all they can to satisfy them. In order to show consideration for the special fondness of Mongolian trainees to eat meat, several woolen knitting factories have even set up small individual dining rooms for them.

Besides this, a small number of factories have already started to pay attention to political-ideological work aimed at trainees, for instance, some units have the comrade responsible for organization appear in person in the manner of a report to or a dialogue with [the trainees] to introduce some important policies and measures of our country's party, the situation [with respect] to the Great Leap Forward in the whole country, in this municipality or in the unit itself, etc.; and use rest days to arrange for them to visit people's communes and various Leap Forward exhibitions, etc., with a good response on the part of the trainees.

The situation above is the basic aspect [with respect to] foreign trainee work. However, in the work there are still many defects and problems that await urgent improvement, among which are some problems of a still very serious nature.

1. Great country chauvinism and capitalist nationalism thoughts and actions still appear in individual places. Recently we received a letter from the leader of the Vietnamese soap [trainee study] group in the Shanghai Soap Factory and the Yongxing Soap Manufacturing Factory to the Municipal People's Committee, the Light Industrial Bureau and other units. Besides extending thanks for our assistance to them, the letter offers some opinions with respect to great country chauvinist and capitalist narrow nationalist thought and actions by staff and workers in the factory in interactions with them as well as the insufficient attention paid by factory leaders to training foreign trainees and some other issues. The letter says: "There is a group of Chinese comrades who call us Annamese and ask us why we don't blacken our teeth; some Young Pioneers treat our flag as if it were the American imperialist flag; some people in the Yongxing Factory suspect that we are buying more than the factory-allotted number of steamed buns; some in the Shanghai Soap Factory don't allow us to buy somewhat better food.... Although these phenomena are trifling, they make some comrades (that is, Vietnamese trainees) quite unhappy, with some even planning to express their own grievances in dramatic form...." In addition, they also put forward an opinion regarding the leadership of the soap company and the two factories, holding that the soap company and the factories do not pay enough attention to training work with respect to the trainees. We believe that the situation reflected in this letter is very serious. Also, for example, relations between Mongolian language interpreter Sang Bu (a person from our country's Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region) at the Number Two National Woolen Factory and trainees is very poor; sometimes in the middle of work he goes off on his own authority, leaving a very bad impression on the trainees. When a Mongolian Trade Ministry delegation came to Shanghai to meet with the Mongolian trainees in Shanghai, the trainees asked Sang Bu and two other interpreters to participate, but they unexpectedly refused. Now the trainees have asked that Sang Bu be transferred at once (the Textile Management Bureau has already reported, asking the Textile Industry Ministry to handle this issue).

Since some worker comrades, taking pride in the achievements of our country's Great Leap Forward, and lacking understanding of the situation in other people's countries, unintentionally display an air of arrogance and self-satisfaction in their contacts with foreign trainees, thereby frequently wounding the other side's self-respect. For instance, a worker in the Central Rubber Factory, while smelting steel, asked a Vietnamese trainee: "Our China this year produced 10,700,000 tons of steel, how many did your Vietnam [produce]?" Put in an awkward position, the Vietnamese trainee was only able to reply: "At present, none. But we are now building a steel plant." A Mongolian trainee at the Number Two National Woolen Factory expressed his opinion to the factory party committee that China distributed too little news about the situation in Mongolia, such that somebody asked him whether or not they use wash basins when they wash their face. [Female] [North] Korean trainees at the Zheng Changhe Soft Drink Factory, seeing that Chinese comrades did not pay attention when they discuss the situation with respect to the [North] Korean Great Leap Forward said: "You are forever talking about the Chinese Great Leap Forward, but you don't want to listen when we talk about the [North] Korean Great Leap Forward."

Besides this, since leading cadres in some individual factories handle problems in a simple fashion, and are not careful enough when launching criticism, this leads to the development of some estrangement and misunderstanding on the part of trainees. For example, when leading cadres at the Yongxing Soap Factory noticed during the upsurge in the Leap Forward [Movement] that Vietnamese comrades still came to and left work according to schedule, unlike Chinese worker comrades who put in overtime and extra work, they then criticized [the Vietnamese] as lacking in enthusiasm, something that the Vietnamese comrades felt they could not tolerate. [Leading cadres] also criticized them for insufficient attention to combatting the four pests [rats, bedbugs, flies and mosquitos] in their dormitories, and for being combative and resentful, while, on the other hand, complaining within the factory, saying that the rooms allotted to them were too small and there was no way to keep them clean. They were thus estranged within the factory. [Vietnamese trainees] complained about training work, believing that Chinese comrades were conservative, that Chinese comrades helped Chinese apprentices (apprentices from Guiyang) a lot, but [only] helped them a little. (According to the response from the factory side, veteran skilled workers actually paid greater attention to foreign trainees than to Chinese apprentices.)

2. The political-ideological education of trainees has still not attracted enough attention. Many comrades believe that political-ideological work aimed at the trainees is their own internal thing, and should be the responsibility of their embassies in China, and that we can stand aside; some comrades believe that if you are not careful in discussing politics with foreigners this can lead to errors and create international repercussions, and are therefore conservative and overcautious, not daring to discuss politics very much with trainees; and some comrades stress that they are busy with work, and can't find time to "discuss principles." Owing to these blockages in thought, this kind work basically winds up in a passive state, and even when trainees in some units repeatedly ask for us to make a report to them, [these units] still plead they are too busy and end up doing nothing.

3. All factories have generally attached comparatively great importance to the work of training trainees, but since the Great Leap Forward in production, some factories have been relatively relaxed, training plans have been thrown into confusion, and some veteran skilled workers have feared that after they put machinery in the hands of trainees this will influence the completion of their own production responsibility, such that they do not want to give trainees more actual operational opportunities. Trainees feel strongly about this saying: "You have had a Great Leap Forward in production, but there has been no Great Leap Forward in our training." In addition, there have repeatedly been industrial accidents among trainees, and relatively serious [ones], such as cutting off fingers and breaking wrists, making it impossible for trainees to go forward. The occurrence of these accidents is due principally to [the fact that] there has not been insufficient safety education aimed at the trainees and that responsible personnel are frozen in their thoughts. For instance, in some factories where trainees are still not capable of operating independently, they allow [trainees] to operate on their own, without paying greater attention [to them], leading to industrial accidents. Some veteran skilled workers in charge of training themselves engage in production without following operational regulations; when trainees copy them, it results in accidents.

4. In food and lodging, basic life support for trainees is generally good, but not enough is done with respect to their spare time lives, very few cultural and leisure activities are put on, and many trainees express the feeling that their lives are fairly boring. Especially recently under the situation of relatively scarce provision of commodities, in some areas we have taken the initiative to show appropriate consideration, but [still] have not done enough. For instance, since some trainees have not been able to buy soap, they have bought [bars of] facial soap to wash [their] clothes, and some individual units have been very restrictive when trainees have asked for some more cloth ration coupons, giving rise to misunderstandings on the part of trainees. There are still individual [factories] where food and lodging have not

been well arranged, leading to dissatisfaction among trainees.

5. The leadership question. Although the majority of factories have a special person responsible for this type of work, it is not put on the work plan of party organizations, party organizations rarely examine this type of work, and even neglect to ask about it, and, in individual factories, they don't even have a responsible person, and there is no presentable training plans. The basic reason that has led to the defects and errors outlined above has been the lack of sufficient leadership attention.

Although all industrial bureaus have responsible persons [in charge of trainee work], there is insufficient examination by bureau leadership. Since the Foreign Affairs Office has been set up, it has not handled this type of work in a timely manner.

With the development of national [infrastructure] reconstruction in all the fraternal countries, especially in today's [North] Korea, Vietnam and other countries, there is a Great Leap Forward situation; in the future more trainees of course will be sent to our country; and the requests of trainees already sent to our country will be greater; we must [therefore] conscientiously carry out training work. This is not only to [provide] the most practical help to fraternal countries, but it is also an internationalist responsibility that we must undertake. Therefore, this kind of work must only be done correctly, and cannot be done poorly. Based on the spirit of long-standing guidance from the center and from the Municipal Committee on foreign trainee work, we offer the following ideas for reform aimed at currently existing defects and problems in trainee work.

1. All factories and enterprises with the responsibility for training foreign trainees, in addition to appointing principal leadership cadres to conscientiously take this work in hand, must also put this type of work on their party organization work plan, discuss it regularly (once every quarter) and regularly examine it. The trade union and Youth League also must take the initiative to help party and administration [units] do this work well. All concerned industrial bureaus must strengthen their leadership, and must conscientiously take this type of work in hand in all its aspects; and, in addition to increasing their oversight of the implementation of the training plan, they must also increase oversight of the related implementation of external policy, and organize the exchange of experience, and regularly (one a month) report the work situation to the Foreign Affairs Office (simultaneously reporting to the Foreign Trade Bureau). The Foreign Affairs Office and the Foreign Trade Bureau will take the responsibility for collating [information on] the situation with respect to trainee work throughout the whole municipality, and will strengthen guidance to all units implementing external policy and conducting political-ideological work.

2. All concerned factory enterprises must continue to implement the spread and deepening of internationalist education among the whole body of their workers, and severely criticize the incorrect thought of great country chauvinism and capitalist nationalism. They must make the whole body of their workers understand that: the common enterprise of communism requires cooperation, mutual help and assistance among socialist countries; that one of the important forms of cooperation among the countries of the socialist camp is to help train the trainees of fraternal countries; and that we must regard this work as our own glorious duty and personal enterprise. We must simultaneously emphasize the principle of mutual assistance and mutual study among fraternal countries, that the victory of our revolution and the implementation of socialist construction and assistance to fraternal countries are inseparable, and that the valiant struggles of the heroic [North] Korean and Vietnamese peoples are of enormous assistance in strengthening of our country's defense and the peaceful implementation of [our country's] peaceful construction. Our assistance to fraternal countries is [carried out] precisely with the aim of [fostering] the thorough victory of our country's socialist enterprise. We must also recognize that all fraternal countries have abundant experience with struggle and construction; that we must modestly study from all fraternal countries; and that we must guard against the appearance of

arrogance and conceit in the face of our country's Great Leap Forward, and disdain for incorrect ideas in other fraternal countries. Regarding the possible existence of some overly high demands and incorrect ideas among trainees, we must depend completely on the spirit of unity, friendship and sincere help, and have appropriate personnel carry out explanations and education toward them.

Besides this, we must severely deal with actions that obstruct unity in an important way, and simultaneously raise our guard against sabotage in this area by counter-revolutionary elements.

3. Political-ideological education aimed at trainees has to be strengthened. We must understand that this is a responsibility we cannot shirk, and moreover this is also an urgent request of numerous trainees. Responsible persons in all factory party organizations must regularly and in a planned way explain some of our country's major directions and policies (for instance, the people's communes, the direction of industrial construction, education policies, etc.), and questions with respect to the Taiwan struggle and the international situation; and lay out the situation with the Great Leap Forward in the municipality and in their unit, etc. We can invite them to attend all of our staff and workers' general political reporting meetings, and use to the maximum days off to organize some significant sightseeing activities for them. Regarding ideological education for [North] Korean trainees, we must pay heed to the special point that most of them are young, and can use relatively lively methods such as relating stories of struggle, introducing real people and events, and relating personal stories.

In view of the situation, it would be worthwhile for the Foreign Affairs Office and the Foreign Trade Bureau to organize some municipal-wide reporting meetings.

4. We must firmly implement the training plan for at the trainees, guarantee the on-time or ahead-of-time completion [of the plan], and never allow our own Great Leap Forward in production to influence the training of trainees. Since their own countries are undergoing their own Great Leap Forward, [North] Korean and Vietnamese trainees all demand of us a Great Leap Forward in our training of them, and the [North] Korean embassy in China is also formally engaged in a thought mobilization [campaign]. We should pay attention to these kinds of warm [feelings] and requests, and pledge to help them complete the training plan quickly and well. But in the face of a hasty, overzealous mood among trainees, we must carry out patient explanation and education, pointing out that we should speed up the pace [only] under the condition of guaranteeing quality. If the training plan is completed ahead of time, you should use the time remaining to help them study some other production techniques, but should trainees ask to return early to their home country, we should solicit the opinion of their embassy through concerned departments at the center.

5. Questions related to the [daily] life of trainees must be appropriately handled, and we must take the initiative to care for their clothing, food, lodging and transportation, but we have to accept as a limit the standards set by the center and concerned departments, and should not be excessively accommodating. As long as conditions allow, we must do what is appropriate in response to reasonable requests raised by trainees. But when their demands are excessive or conditions do not allow it, we must patiently explain the reason to them, and, to prevent misunderstandings, must not adopt an attitude of refusing to acknowledge and ignoring them,. We should appropriately arrange the after-hours life of the trainees, and besides using days off to organize significant sightseeing, we can invite them to engage in after-hours cultural, entertainment and athletic activities together with our staff and workers. On our national day and their country's national days, a responsible comrade in the unit can take charge and invite them to hold small scale dinner parties and also hold small scale get-togethers along with our staff and workers. Veteran skilled workers who usually have a lot of contact with them can invite them to visit their families and

organize some activities to build friendship.

Besides the problems stated above, the political-ideological education of interpreters (Chinese nationals) must be strengthened so that they come to appreciate the important significance of doing good interpretation work; at present, there is unease about their work among interpreters, and there is still the serious phenomenon of politics not being in a leading position; we must help them correct this. In addition, instances of romantic liaisons have already occurred between foreign trainees and our staff and workers; we must educate our staff and workers that to guarantee smooth progress in training on the part of trainees, they should not engage in romantic liaisons with them, and furthermore that [North] Korea and Vietnam both stipulate that trainees are not permitted to engage in romantic liaisons during their training periods.

If you agree with the ideas above, we recommend you transmit this to concerned units to conscientiously put them into effect.

Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Committee Foreign Affairs Working Group

December 30, 1958