Enrollment Suspension Crisis of National Labor University

Li Tao¹

Correspondence: Li Tao, Faculty of Education, Southwest University, No2 Tiansheng Road, Chongqing, China. Tel: 86-136-3831-7583. E-mail: Lit1983@163.com

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Abstract

In 1930 the Ministry of Education ordered National Labor University to stop recruiting students, which led to a series of incidents. There were complex reasons behind the Ministry of Education's action, which involved with groups beyond education and produced profound influences. The National Labor University Enrollment event was more than an education problem, and it also reflected the penetration of state power into the university, the internal clique conflictions in education field and parties, and the university's loss of independence.

Keywords: National Labor University, enrollment suspension, clique confliction

National Labor University (1927-1932) was the first national university established by Nanjing Kuomintang government after its foundation, and should have made a difference in the favor of Kuomintang government. At its early age, this university was strongly supported by four founding fathers (Wu Zhihui, Li Shizeng, Cai Yuanpei and Zhang Jingjiang), and directly funded by the central government, and thus strong in teacher strength. However, as the enrollment suspension happened, it underwent personnel changes, loss of fund, teachers and students, and eventually collapsed in 1932. The National Labor University Enrollment event was more than an education problem, and it also reflected the penetration of state power into the university, the internal clique conflictions in education field and parties, and the university's loss of independence.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Nation and Political Parties Had Penetrated into Education, and It Became Imperative to Reorganize the University

In 1927, the northern expedition made success, and Nanjing national government was established, and gradually stabilized its regime after many confused fighting between the warlords. Changes happened about the "laissez-faire" policy made by northern warlord's government in the field of education. In 1929 on the third national congress, Kuomintang formulated "the Three People's Education" principle, and the policy of earnestly conduction Party-oriented Education. The then deputy director of the Ministry of Education Ma Xulun said," The former China education policies were almost laissez-faire.....as a consequence of laissez-faire, there were bad influences on six aspects, namely school qualities, school runners, teacher resources, teaching materials, enrollments and entering to a higher education. These six bad aspects led to four worse consequences, which could be disasters on three factors, namely individual, society and the whole nation. Given the failures of the past, we should make efforts to correct, change the laissez-faire, into rigorist." (Ma, 2010) The laissez-faire policy had produced many problems such as excessive open of private universities, decadent academic atmosphere, no education funds, cumbersome departments, disorderly curriculum, level low enrollment of students, as well as imbalance between liberal arts and science department, thus created conditions for the penetration of state power into education, and provided the premise to reorganize the university and improve the education quality. In addition, after his betrayal of the revolution, Chiang Kai-shek launched a party purge to prevent communism and other parties that might hindered its ruling party position from entering into university. He often gave blows to liberals and communists of the university in the name of reorganization. Independence of thoughts and academic freedom were at stake.

1.2 Clique Conflictions within Education System

Chinese intellectuals have always formed groups or cliques based on geopolitical reasons or learning reasons. Among many cliques within the education system, the powerful and influential ones are respectively the Anglo-American faction led by Cai yuanpei, and the French-Japanese faction headed by Li Shizeng. During the

¹ Faculty of Education, Southwest University, Chongqing, China

reign of northern warlord's government, struggle between the two parties became increasingly fiercer due to their battles in Peking University and Women's Normal University, and by the unreasonable removal of President Guo Bingwen of Southeast University from his office. After Nanjing Kuomintang Government was established, the center of their battle transferred from Beijing to Nanjing. In the end, the power of Education Ministry in Beijing was taken over by the French-Japanese faction, and that power of Nanjing fell in hands of Jiang Menglin, a capable man of the Anglo-American faction. Yi Peiji was detested by the Anglo-American faction for his despicable means against them, and at the same time looked down upon by the French-Japanese faction for his climb on relations. Consequently, the National Labor University with Yi Peiji as the president was put in danger. In order to raise more funds, Yi Peiji even made unauthorized use of money from Agriculture and Mining Ministry without the consent of the Treasury Department, which caused offence to Song Ziwen. Therefore, Yi Peiji was at risk whether in education circle or in political circle.

1.3 Unemployment and Dropout of Small and Medium-sized Stratum of Intellectuals, and the Rampancy of Anarchism

After the imperial civil service examination system was abolished, new education system, on one hand, had lost both the social cohesiveness and integration mechanism contained in Confucianism of the system, and the stress relief function of the system participation in politics; on the other hand, new schools had far surpassed private schools in mass production of intellectuals. New education system fit in with the large needs of various talents driven by the modern industrialization and market economy. After the new school replaced the old imperial examination system, there were great expansion in the number of Chinese intellectuals, but due to the slow process of modernization, social demand for all kinds of talents did not expanded accordingly. In addition, the tradition was that a good scholar would make an official. Therefore, politics was still the target for most intellectuals, and thus there was larger participation pressure at that time than the imperial period. (Wang, 2009) On the one hand, most of these small and medium-sized intellectual stratum neither went to a higher education out of economic reasons or incompetence, nor they were willing to return to the countryside; on the other hand, the unemployed were everywhere as industrialization could not provide enough corresponding occupations. Those people hesitated in the city's streets, exhausted, despair and helpless, hence took part in the student movement or the political competition. Tuition fee was generally expensive to attend a private school, and it was low in a national university but the academic level of small and medium-sized intellectuals was low, too. Therefore, the newly built National Labor University became their first choice, where accommodation fee was exempted, and the guiding principle of "Labor" happened to fit their taste, therefore, students of National Labor University mainly come from small and medium-sized stratum. The students of National Labor University were mainly small and medium-sized intellectuals, they had unique psychology and ideology, advocated freedom, cherished the hard-won learning opportunities, and actively participated in politics. "General Young people are strong in will but weak in power, they are sighed for and worried about the next semester's tuition, therefore, a number of out-of-school youth were forced to go the wrong way with their talent buried and right direction abandoned. What a pity!" "School is a restricted place for the poor. The giant school door seems to be staring at the heavy and awful tiger-headed tablet. The moment our poor kids see them, we could not help but feel helpless." (Zhi, 1930) And the objective of the National Labor University of was intimately involved with work-story doctrine and anarchism. Teachers in this university also made a great whoop and a holler about anarchism theories of Prudhoe, Bikinis, and Kropotkin. This kind of environment tended to become a hotbed of communism, naturally the national government would not tolerate it of national university against the country.

1.4 The Right of Enrollment Became Independent

The spirit of independence and freedom of universities in west countries had been inherited by modern Chinese universities, and got incisively and vividly expressed in the period of Northern Warlords government. At that period, universities were not subject to political power, political parties, organizations and individuals, and had independent administration of its education policy, curriculum, teaching and scientific research. Like a hundred flowers in bloom, universities were flourishing in this period, and even some famous university such as Peking University, Southeast University and Jiaotong University, formed their own characteristics and advantages. Meanwhile, on the occasion of the "hot university period", private universities had sprung up, and even some "close business", "diploma mill" could be seen everywhere. This situation was looked down upon by delegation of International Education Group, who held a view that a serious problem was universities had diversified admissions without a unified standard, and proposed to the Ministry of Education that unified college entrance examination should be organized in the principle of a few basic subjects, to improve the academic level of universities. Enrollment played an important role as entrance to universities, which had independent enrollment right before to make decisions on the number and way of enrollment, examination and set of admission criteria.

Peking University, Tsinghua University, Jiaotong University had strict admission criteria, but some school had relatively loose admission criteria. In 1923 when the Ministry of Education was reviewing the freshman entrance examination papers of above junior colleges, it found that "while most of the students had passed the exams, a lot among them still need improvement for some were no better than the first grade students of middle school in Math or English", and that "there were students with a same name from different schools, students with different handwritings for their first exam papers and reexamination papers or for their national Chinese papers or history and geography papers, and even more students with same answers for their English and Math papers", and "it was rare to see excellent papers but common to see wrongly written of characters". (National library archives literature periodicals, 2004)

2. Case: Fights Caused by the Enrollment Suspension

In 1930, the Ministry of Education started a nationwide reorganization of universities, in accordance with that "starting from improvement of quality, instead of increasing the enrollment number, the existing schools should first begin to enrich the content, improve the degree, so as to improve the universities", (Anonymous, 1931) and because of this the National Labor University began to face a crisis of enrollment suspension.

In May of 1930, Chiang Kai-shek summoned senior personnel from the Ministry of Education, and ordered Jiang Menglin to send officials to investigate why the National Labor University made no achievement for years. On May 6th and 7th, the Ministry of Education appointed Xie Shuying and Zhong Lingxiu who were section chiefs, Chen Dezheng, director of Shanghai Municipal Education Bureau, and engineering experts to carry out a inspection. Later, an investigation report was submitted to the Executive Yuan, which read that "not only the university did not meet the standards of politics, factories, managements and teaching tools, but also its university did not have relations with labor. The university had enrolled students who did not participate in labor, and the factory had employed workers who were not students. It seemed poles apart without real effects but caused disputes. If no measure was taken to change the situation, the government would not achieve the goal of cultivating labor talents." (Anonymous, 1930a) The total number of the students was 408. Their examination papers of each subject through years were reviewed and found poor grades even with big differences." (Anonymous, 1930b) Probably, it was because the big difference between students when they first entered the university. There were students who attended university directly after graduation from junior middle school. The students' thoughts were complex as shown in their examination papers. "Immediately the Ministry of Education issued an instruction saying that, "the ministry has made plans for the university and decided an enrollment suspension for 1990s at all levels, and an announcement of enrollment ad cancellation will be published on newspapers." (Anonymous, 1930a) The real reasons why Chiang Kai-shek kept a watchful eye on National Labor University remained unknown, maybe to strengthen its thought control, or to improve the education level, or to purge the party. On this matter Jiang Menglin also acted actively firstly to enhance university education, secondly to give blow to Yi Peiji of the French-Japanese faction, and lastly to win the trust of Chiang Kai-shek. However, the National Labor University was not the only one that had problems regarding management, teaching, facilities and students mentioned in the investigation report, and the emphasis of no relation between "Labor" and "University" was deadly untrue. Since its foundation, the National Labor University was under attack. Labor seemed to have nothing to do with the university, but something with communism and liberalism. If enrollment suspension was a disaster for the university, deny of its "Labor" was equal to shake its foundation.

When the suspension news came, the university did not passively accept it but made an announcement, saying, "The National Labor University was the only national top university of labor education, and has made great achievements in the past three years since its foundation. Another news was that this university a plan has been made a three-year plan to improve its education, organized a labor education implementation committee, and a construction committee in order to realize the plan. "(Anonymous, 1930c) "The university argued that problems arise due to the establishment of the academy of social sciences inconsistent with the Law of University, and it has made a lot contributions during the past three years, and has no need to carry out a reorganization, and according to the three-year plan the university would continue to enroll students in future. On June 10th, the National Labor University continued to claim that "the National Labor University in Shanghai has been authorized to recruit students, and will not stop the recruitment because of the uncertain suspension news"(Anonymous, 1930d) and a meeting on administrative affairs of the university was held on that day. "The instruction on enrollment suspension by the Ministry of Education refers to the college admissions. According to the relevant law, our university has full right to make our own decisions to continue the resolutions. As to the newspaper report about document submitted to the Executive Yuan by the Education department, who considered all facts untrue and bad for colleges, we will send professor representative's including ZhangYousan, Huang Shupei, Gong Xianming, Xia Kangnong and Zheng Ruogu to Nanjing to give facts to Guomingtang

government and the Executive Yuan." (Anonymous, 1930e) On the one hand, the National Labor University hoped to win support from the publicity and the education circle; on the other hand, it insisted that the university had discretion, denied the intervention of Ministry of Education, and sent representatives to Nanjing for petition to circumvent the ministry of education, hoped to get understanding of the executive Yuan. On June 10, the seventh KMT headquarter in Shanghai declared that the move to suspend enrollment of National Labor University was closely connected with the International Development of China and the peasant and worker policy made by prime minister Sun Yat-sen. Therefore, a special telegram was sent to the Central Committee of the Party to give strict order to the education department to continue labor education and to withdraw the enrollment suspension order. The telegram said," The foundation purpose of the National Labor University is to carry out the International Development of China and the peasant and worker policy made by Prime Minister Sun Yat-sen to develop laborer education and experimental education, so the National Labor University is the supreme authority of the national labor education. In order to train actual construction talents, our party established the university and run it for more than two years. Even though it was small in scale and simple in facilities, but there were thousands of students in each department, and now was striving to enhance the courses and buildings. But the investigators did not note this point, and hence took them as evidence against the university, even ordered it to stop recruit students all of a sudden, ending its education life. This was really bad luck for the future of China's labor education. It has little to do with enrollment even if it is necessary for the university to make reorganization. Unexpectedly, the education department stop it from recruiting students today only by four words-carry out separate reorganization, put an end to the life of labor education. For this, we can not help but heaving a deep sigh. (Anonymous, 1930a) The National Labor University with Yi Peiji as the principal was powerful to instigate local party departments against the central policies with firm statement, and took teachings of the deceased Sun Yat-sen as the ultimate shield, showing the determination to fight with the ministry of education.

National Labor University did not accept the instruction from the ministry of education, but used both hard and soft tactics instead. On this, the ministry of education did not resigned to playing second fiddle for what the ministry of education did, but waged a tit-for-tat struggle. On June 11, Zhou Gan, secretary of the ministry of education said, "Now the university is actually breaking the law to continue the enrollment arbitrarily regardless of the order from higher authority. Now the department has issued an announcement that the university should not enroll new students at will before the reorganization, and Peiping University, Wuhan University, Zhongshan University and others should not enroll students on behalf of the university, and Shanghai education bureau should prohibit newspapers publishing admission ads for it. "(Anonymous, 1930a) The Ministry of Education had issued notice in succession many times saying that "our ministry has instructed National Labor University to suspend recruitment, and issued this notice especially for wide knowledge." (Anonymous, 1930f) It was rare to see that the ministry of education repeatedly released announcements for smooth implementation of orders, which showed the firm determination of the ministry to reorganize the National Labor University and its extreme dissatisfaction with the conduct of the National Labor University for disobeying the central management. In the struggle about enrollment, two sides even lost self-respect as scholars. People of the time suspected the enrollment suspension was for retaliation. On 10th of this month, minister Jiang Menglin talked about reorganization issue of National Labor University, pointed that, "the enrollment suspension does not mean to close the university, but to reorganize and improve the university's organizations and original students at the university to ensure the realization of training labor talents for the country, and it is really a matter of a organization instead of personal issue." (Anonymous, 1930g) Jiang Menglin attempted to remove suspicion of taking revenge on Yi Peiji of the French-Japanese faction by a response of rectifying the university to train labor talents, leaving the real purpose unknown. In his memoirs, Jiang Menglin wrote, "I was aggressive when I was young; after decisions were made, I would carry them out to the end without any compromises; I thought I was making every efforts but others thought I was taking my own course." (Jiang, 2012)

The National Labor University played a more hardball against the tough attitude of the Ministry of Education. On June 11, faculty representatives of the university including ZhangYousan, Huang Shupei, Gong Xianming, Xia Kangnong and Zheng Ruogu came to Nanjing to present a petition, and put forward four points, "1) as the highest education administrative authority, the Ministry of Education holds supervision responsibility for national schools at all levels. According to the special nature of National Labor University, the Education department should provide it with guidance wholeheartedly, to set up solid foundation for labor education in our country. But according to representatives, the education department has always lacked reformation instructions. It seems careless in the before and rash at present to stop enrollment when the university is in a time to recruit students and grasping chance to develop. 2) At first, the undergraduate education of this university has two colleges of workers and peasants, adds academy of social sciences after approval of the Ministry of Education.

Then because of the organization law of university was promulgated, problems arise about the name of academy of social sciences. The president of the university has repeatedly consulted with minister concerning the name change in order to meet with the law, but has not received permission. It is simple like this. But now instruction comes to stop recruit students, which is nothing else than lack of sincerity. 3) on sixth and seventh last month, a group of people who know little of labor education was sent by the Ministry of Education to the university for an two half-day investigation, the actual inspection only of a few hours. Then they returned Nanjing and reported to the Ministry of Education. Without careful review of the details and valuable materials, the ministry submitted the record to the executive vuan. According to the contemptuous language in the report, the university was far from meeting goals of developing national labor education. The real purpose of inspectors remained unknown. 4) The university was established in May of the year by Mr. Sun Jiemin, Mr. Chu Minyi, and Mr. Li Shizeng who was sent by the central government to make preparations for the establishment, with the purpose of trying a labor education and developing laborer education. At the same time, they made some key points: "practice to gain knowledge", "pay equal attention to learn both theory and technique', ' carry out production work'," "promote labor spirit", "keep a habit of work', 'research labor issues, as well as to popularize laborer culture". These points have been carried out for three years, and have been quite effective, but facts are distorted suddenly representatives feel sorry for this. (Anonymous, 1930h) The National Labor University held that it was the Ministry of Education to be blame, who did not take full responsibility of offering guidance and supervision, and added later that even if the establishment of academy of social sciences might violate the organization law of university, it had got the approval from the Ministry of Education, hence only an excuse of reorganizing the university. But inspection personnel did not seem to care about the National Labor University itself, their real purpose is to combat it and eliminate anarchism, so as to retaliate against Yi Peiji of the French-Japanese faction, and attack Jiang Menglin of the Anglo-American faction. Finally conflicts upgraded. The university took KMT founding fathers like Cai Yuanpei and Li Shizeng as backstage support and shelter, holding that it was against the fouding fathers and against the later prime Minister's teachings to fight against the university, on June 12, the university held a faculty meeting and made a unanimous decision: 1) to release announcement and struggle against recruitment suspension made by the Ministry of Education; 2) to continue enrollment; 3) to look for help through telegrams to the preparatory committee of the university, including Mr. Cai yuanpei, Mr. Li Shizeng, Mr. Zhang Jingjiang, Mr. Chu Minyi, and Mr. Yan Shenyu; 4)to send telegrams to representatives who went to Nanjing to take positive measures; 5) issued three-day newspapers to publish administrative affairs of the university and promote labor education; 6) to organize a committee to implement the above resolutions in each case, and on behalf of all the staff to cope with temporary matters. As to the university, everything goes as usual. (Anonymous, 1930a) The university firmly resisted the reorganization order from the Education ministry, and claimed their inviolability of admission right. On the one hand, the university asked KMT founding fathers and representatives who went to Nanjing to save the dangerous situation, on the other hand it also made perorations for the predicted situation and established a committee to deal with the worst conditions, preparing for a long battle. The founding fathers of KMT as members of the committee did have tremendous influence in education circle, and it was wise to ask them to exert pressure on the Ministry of Education. Sun Yat-sen's ideas and thoughts are like an imperial edict for education of Three Principles of the People, and it was helpful to gain the upper hand to take prime minister's teachings as the basic principle.

With the approach of the enrollment days, the National Labor University made the final efforts. On June 29, the university sent another five faculty representatives including Li Lianggong to Nanjing for petition, inviting officials for review and giving order to the Ministry of Education to cancel enrollment suspension, so as to keep the university status. At the same time, students of the university joined the battle with a statement saying. " to resolutely stand for the Three People's Principles of labor education; to be committed to the claims of the school authority; to publish the development of the university; to continue to recruit students; to ask for just assistance from all walks of life." (Anonymous, 1930i) At that time, the faculty and students stood in the same trench. Small and medium-sized intellectuals from this university also highly enthusiastic to defend their university because of their uniqueness of ideology.

The Ministry of Education had been silent ever since. The Ministry of Education had Chiang Kai-shek as background, and naturally ignores the university's actions. As an academic manager, Jiang Menglin hoped to restructure the university in order to improve education and regain the management right lost for a long time. As for Chiang Kai-shek, there may be a variety of reasons to restructure the university, such as to prevent the penetration of the communist party and other opposition parties, to strengthen ideological control, to strengthen national control of education, as well as to improve the level of education. Throughout the conflict, the National Labor University was the weak side. In the face of tough attitude of the Ministry of Education, its faculty and students run around for help, but could do nothing but to accept it silently in the end. Since then, Chiang

Kai-shek wanted to extend his forces into education circle dominated by Cai Yuanpei and Li Shizeng. On the third session of the third central executive committee meeting of KMT, Restrictions on Concurrent Post was passed, leaving many closest aides of Cai and Li were forced to resign, and Yi Peiji dismissed from his office. Yi Peiji's dismissal both reached the purpose of changing Jiang Menglin and gave a strike on the forces of the French- Japanese faction in educational circle. But Jiang Menglin could not help himself and was resented by Wu Zhihui, head of the French- Japanese faction, for his reformation of National Central University and the National Labor University. Jiang Menglin recalled, "He asked me what crimes the two universities had committed, and asked me to defend them for justice. In Mr. Wu's view, as a minister, I should pay more attention to state affairs rather than university stuff. " (Jiang, 2012) These words showed that the French- Japanese faction thought Jiang Menglin's real purpose was out of personal revenge with no intention to restructure the university, and that the upper leaders of the French- Japanese faction paid efforts to protect Yi Peiji but could do nothing. Jiang Menglin offended the French- Japanese faction and was removed from his position. Chiang Kai-shek concurrently held the position of minister of education to prevent the Anglo-American faction from long time control of education. As the influence of Cai Yuanpei and Li Shizeng in education became weaker, Chen Guofu who had peered education circle for a long time as CC faction of Chiang Kai-shek clique, immediately proposed to reorganize the university in liberal arts and experimental department, to gain public consensus, Chen Lifu to power from the ministry of education, after its cronies Ann tied to the positions of teaching department and the universities. Later, Chen Lifu controlled the Ministry of Education, and arranged his trusted follower to the key positions of the education departments and the universities. Chiang Kai-shek achieved the purpose of killing two birds with one stone in excuse of reforming the Central University and the National Labor University.

3. Conclusion

For the enrollment crisis of National Labor University, it might be a small event in education circle, but had complicated motivation, and involved wide range and produced strong influence.

3.1 Motivation of the Enrollment Suspension Crisis

After Nanjing Guomingtang government gradually consolidated its political power, Chiang Kai-shek tried to infiltrate its influence into education. Previously, the education department was dominated by KMT founding members like Cai Yuanpei and Li Shizeng. Although they all were KMT members, they were dominantly led by liberalism. Cai yuanpei's claim of college system was to get rid of the government intervention on education, which was in disagreement with Chiang Kai-shek. Rectifying the university education was only part of Chiang's motivation, and its deep reason was probably to give a blow to the Anglo-American faction and the French-Japanese faction, and to take advantage of the time to place his own clique in order to control the university thought and strengthen national control of university. This was proved by the failure of the college system and the fall of ministry of education into hands of CC faction. As an capable person of the Anglo-American faction, Jiang Menglin hoped to gain recognition from Chiang Kai-shek through university reformation, at the same time, gave a strike on the French-Japanese forces, in order to improve the university education.

3.2 Involvement of the Enrollment Suspension Crisis

The Ministry of Education and the faculty of National Labor University were direct deifiers of this crisis. As an independent and free group, the university naturally did not want to be at a disadvantage, while the Ministry of Education on behalf of the nation gradually broke the situation of university autonomy in the period of Northern Warlords government. As small and medium-sized intellectuals students from National Labor university were mentally enthusiastic, but limited in capacity. The university headmaster Yi Peiji narrowly survived between the Anglo-American faction and the French-Japanese faction, and was resented by both sides; in politics, he offended Chiang's clique including Song and Chen; therefore, he was bound to be purged by the excuse of enrollment suspension. Shanghai 7th party division even got involved in the dispute, but they could not defeat the central government. In addition, the National Labor University took KMT founding fathers and the teachings of late prime minister as shield. But at the moment, there were disputes between Cai Yuanpei and Li Shizeng, and increasingly contradictions between the Anglo-American faction and the French-Japanese faction, thus teachings of late prime minister only counted on the preach. With strong support from Chiang Kai-shek, the Ministry of Education naturally disregard the struggle of Natinal Labor University.

3.3 Influence of the Enrollment Crisis

The National Labor University accepted the enrollment suspension and the order of reorganization in silence. Yi Peiji, headmaster of the university was removed from his office, but Jiang Menglin did not retreat completely. Since then the National Labor University stayed totally in silence and closed down until 1932. The Ministry of

Education was dominated by CC faction. There were increasingly deeper conflicts between the Anglo-American faction led by Cai Yuanpei and the French-Japanese faction headed by Li Shizeng, and forces of the two sides in the education gradually became weak. The ministry of education achieved national control of university, of which right of autonomy was gradually deprived. Thought control and party-oriented education were truely realized. It was not a special case that National Labor University faced enrollment suspension crisis, similar events at early time of Nanjing KMT government occurred often, such as disturbance caused by the change of president of Southeast University and Beiping Normal University Recruitment Suspension Disturbance, among all of which were mingled with complicated struggles among factions and political parties, and with student movements. These events just kept step with Nanjing KMT government to strengthen the control of education, improve the quality of education, and implement party-oriented education.

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