

High-school students are raising the level of their protests against the administration of President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) over its decision to force through ideologically driven changes to the history curriculum guidelines. The protesters did not even stop at breaking into the Ministry of Education and occupying Minister of Education Wu Se-hwa's (吳思華) office, which led to their arrest and the ministry filing charges against them, as the foolhardy Ma regime is turning back the clock to an earlier era when education was directed by the party-state.

Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) presidential candidate Hung Hsiu-chu (洪秀柱) says that academics Ma has paid to change the curriculum guidelines "have made far too few changes" and even accused the protesters of "revolting," saying: "You cannot start a revolution over everything."

She showed her true colors as a former director of student affairs who is not afraid of using the rattan cane; she and Ma really are birds of a feather.

The group that has truly started a revolution is the Ma regime. It wants to overturn a regular education system that searches for truth and fact, preferring a return to an ideologically dominated brand of education aimed at brainwashing students to align the nation with China. Students, who have no channels through which to complain are resorting to protest because they want what is their legitimate right: An education that provides insight.

The generation that was on the receiving end of one-sided education provided by the party-state after the end of World War II could not or did not know how to fight back. The only historical knowledge that many of those people received was what they read in textbooks. They were not familiar with Taiwanese history, and the only thing they knew was the Chinese history that the KMT told them to memorize. This obscurantist education was aimed at maintaining power in the hands of the KMT by rooting out any seeds of Taiwanese awareness by way of deceit and duplicity.

The history curriculum was the result of a general agreement among academics reached after a long period of discussion. It placed an emphasis on balance, not deviating from fact, and on letting students who grew up in Taiwan learn about the nation and the experiences of those who came before. The Ma regime, on the other hand, has used academics from other disciplines, but not the field of history, to force through changes to the curriculum, and that is

‘Hatchet’ men stoke education revolution

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truly overturning things.

When Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je (柯文哲) called Wu a “hatchet man” for his role in the goings-on, he did not misspeak: It is precisely because Wu is a mere hatchet man with an obstinate personality that he is not being replaced.

The truth is that Wu is Ma’s hatchet man, and Ma is China’s hatchet man. Officials from China’s Taiwan Affairs Office were recently quoted as saying that they were worried about the tendency among young Taiwanese students to seek national identification, adding they were “extremely disappointed” that Ma still had not implemented adjustments to the history curriculum guidelines.

China is displeased with Ma’s ineptness, and as a lowly little hatchet man, he will of course do as he is told; even if brute force is required. Even Hung — the “Little Red Pepper” — has complained, saying that the changes to curriculum guidelines are not far-reaching enough.

The younger generation must not be fooled by this unconscionable hatchet man, while the generation who suffered brainwashing under the former KMT’s state-directed education system are worthy of our respect.

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