

THE STATEMENT ON THE RESIGNATION
OF THE 8TH COMMITTEE OF THE ENGLISH SOCIETY
OF NANYANG UNIVERSITY

Since the revised 'Regulations for student bodies' for re-organizing the English Society are not acceptable, we, the 8th Committee of the English Society cannot but seriously tender our resignation. Our resignation will be effected on June 4, 1965. We will relinquish all posts and offices we previously held in the Society. Whether the English Society is to be dissolved or to be re-organized will not rest upon our responsibility.

THE ENGLISH SOCIETY AND ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT

The English Society was inaugurated in 1957 under the auspices of the famous scholar Dr. Lim Wo-chiang and other professors, with the aim to promote the studies of English among the students so as to foster research into the thoughts and culture of the English speaking world.

During the past eight years, encouraged by the University authorities, guided by its advisers and receiving popular support from its members, the English Society has conducted evening classes in English, debates, public lectures, phonetic classes, academic exhibitions. The English Society had also successfully staged two plays in English and won applause from the staff, fellow-students and the public. Its publication -- SULOH NANTAH, which is rich with essays on literature, history, politics, education as well as short stories, poems, prose, translations and literary criticisms, was highly esteemed by local and foreign academic circles. All these but indicate that the English Society has exerted much influence in the academic pursuits among our fellow-students. Therefore, its existence is of vital importance. The English Society should continuously deserve every help and regard from the University authorities.

THE GRAVE INFLUENCE FELT FROM THE IMPOSITION
OF THE REVISED 'REGULATIONS FOR STUDENT BODIES'

"The Department of Supervision for Student Activities" was set up following the re-organization of Nanyang University. In the beginning of this year, the Department announced the revised 'Regulations for Student Bodies' and informed these student bodies to amend their constitutions and to re-organize in accordance with the Regulations before May 31, 1965. As the Regulations were compiled without consultation with the advisers of the student bodies, there are many items which are irrational and impractical that would have a grave effect on the very existence and development of the student bodies. In mid-April, 13 student bodies (Chinese Language and Literature Society, History and Geography Society, Education Society, Political Science Society, Social Science Society, Mathematical Society, Society of Biology, Society of Chemistry, Physical Society, Nanyang University Chorus, Dramatic Society, Science Publication and English Society) submitted a memorandum to the authorities concerned expressing our views regarding the revised Regulations. However, much to our regret the authorities concerned rejected our requests in total without giving full consideration.

In conjuncture with this, we wish to reiterate our views as follows:

(1) The English Society has always been a popular society among the students. Its memberships are not restricted only to the students of the Modern Languages and Literature Department, but are open to all students of the University, disregarding what faculties and departments they belonged to. All members enjoy equal right to elect and to be elected, and take part in all its activities. However, the revised Regulations states that: "All academic organisations are to be named after the faculties and departments

to which they belonged. Promoters of a particular organisation are restricted to students of the faculties or departments in which they belonged. Students other than the aforesaid should not be invited to become members". This regulation strictly curtails not only the scope of activities of the English Society, but, it further deprives the students of their right to take part in student activities. Such measures are unprecedented in democratic country.

(2) Paragraph 14 of the revised Regulations states: "There should be at least one adviser present in every meeting or gathering held by the organisation" and in Paragraph 16 states: "All publications of the organisation should obtain permission from the advisers in advance". These two items impertinently prescribe the responsibility to the advisers. In fact, owing to the time devoted to teaching, the advisers are unable to attend all meetings and gatherings of the student organizations by troubling themselves with all these minute matters. Hence, these measures will directly impede the student organizations to function properly. According to the Ordinance of the Registration of Societies, it is the publisher who is answerable to the legal responsibilities of the publication, therefore it is unnecessary to obtain permission from the advisers since they are not answerable to any legal consequence.

(3) The Regulations also states: "Apart from being a member of the Students' Union, a student may only take part in a restricted number of student bodies, his participation shall be decided by the 'Department for supervision of Students' Activities' according to his academic merits." However, we are of the opinion that academic merits should not be taken as the basic criterion to restrict the student in taking part in student activities. For, it is beyond doubt that, every undergraduate is mature and is able to think independently. He knows well what he should do and what he should not, so as to develop his interest and exercise his talents.

(4) Another paragraph in the revised Regulations states: "First year students are not allowed to hold posts in the student organizations." This rule deprives first year students of their right to participate in the activities of the organizations. The role of the university students is not only restricted to the learning of knowledge from book, but it is also vital for them to put forth their learning into practice and cultivate their initiative-ness. We have no reason to negate their working ability and prohibit them to hold offices in the organizations. On the contrary, we should encourage and welcome them to take up their posts and help to drive forward the activities of the organizations. This will help them to gain practical experiences.

OUR FINAL DECISION

The authorities concerned not only rejected the memorandum of the 13 student bodies, but also turned down the petition of our representatives, and insisted our society must be re-organized in accordance with the revised Regulations, or otherwise to cease functioning. Under such circumstances, there are two alternatives in front of us: To refuse re-organization and cease to function, or to accept re-organization subjected to the decision of the General Meeting. But the Department for Supervision of Students' Activities ordered the present Committee to amend the existing constitution and obtain approval from the Authorities before we can apply for venue to hold the General Meeting. However, the General Meeting is conditioned to the fact that all members who are not students in the Department of Modern Languages and Literature are not allowed to attend the Meeting. They should be automatically relinquished from their memberships. At present, these members constitute more than half of the members within our Society. Before any formal re-organization is made, the Committee have no power to relinquish their memberships and refuse them to attend the meeting to discuss on the matter of re-organization. This is totally unreasonable and is in contrary to the constitution of the Society. We cannot accept this!

In order not to violate the aims and objectives of the Eng-

lish Society and not to act against the interest of the advisers and members who have but faith in us, we cannot but choose to resign.

OUR EARNEST APPEAL

We earnestly appeal to the University Authorities to reconsider our views and withdraw those irrational and impractical items in the revised Regulations in the light of democracy and academic freedom, and to help and guide sincerely the student bodies in their development, so as to exert their greatest influences in the general appeal to raise the academic standard of the students.

We sincerely request our members to watch this matter which concerns greatly the future of the English Society. We are convinced that the staff of the University, fellow-students as well as students in fraternal universities, student organizations and the public will give us full support in safeguarding the right of student and academic freedom!

The 8th Committee of the English Society of Nanyang University

June 3, 1965.