

125. REVOLUTIONARY STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS HAVE A GREAT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM

Providence, August 20, 1972, (NAMN)--The following is the full text of the report delivered by the spokesman of RI Student Movement at the COMBAT CULTURAL FASCISM forum held on June 10, 1972, as reprinted in "Rhode Island Student", Vol. III, No. 8.

Comrades and Friends,

This "Combat Cultural Fascism" forum, attended by progressive students and intellectuals is a very significant event in the history of the revolutionary work in Rhode Island. From an overall viewpoint it shows the cooperation of many people in planning and laying the groundwork for this forum to intensify the struggle against fascism in the sphere of culture and ideology. From the standpoint of building revolutionary organization, it reflects a growing sense of discipline based on the desire to serve the people and, in the spirit of the Internationalists and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a desire to come under the supervision of the masses and to be open and forthright in developing ideological struggle and the raising of political consciousness among them.

The development of Rhode Island Student Movement has been a long struggle. In the earliest stages of our development, the struggle against "bourgeois hang-ups" appeared in many forms. The most prominent form being anarchism. There were certain people who wanted a "tea-group" instead of a revolutionary student movement, and others from a so-called "left" position who took up the practice of almost hitting people over the head if they didn't fit up to their metaphysical standards of what a revolutionary was. Both of these positions were rooted in opposition to our most basic need of strengthening the organization through building close ties with the people. Those who opposed this task--to strengthen the organization in order to arouse the masses--began to do two things. They would throw up their arms and blame the masses for their own mistakes, or they would carry out an adventurist style of work, i.e. jumping ahead of the present

level of organization. The result of both of these practices was isolation from the people. The struggle against both tendencies, particularly the rightist "tea-group" tendency, culminated in a split in RISM in April of 1971 during which a handful of backward elements, attacking the correct line of building a serious, disciplined organization through revolutionary practice and opposing all forms of anarchism, walked out calling RISM "bureaucratic". These people have not been heard from since.

After the split, serious summing up of the history of our movement began. Public meetings were held to pursue this question. A great deal of discussion and struggle followed about the lessons to be learned from our past successes and failures, and about the tasks at hand.

We saw the main task at hand to have two aspects. We saw the necessity to start from scratch and, under the slogan "divide the forces to arouse the masses," to develop basic discussion groups on the general question of American culture. The experience gained through practice during this time was instrumental in the development of the study and discussion groups which are here today.

The second aspect of our main task was to develop a workable program. We needed to develop a general program based upon the experience of revolutionary students throughout the country in the American Student Movement under the leadership of the American Communist Workers Movement (Marxist-Leninist), and on our own experience. After working throughout the summer of



1971 on this program, it was published in August. This program stressed two major points. The student movement must be anti-imperialist. This is the main trend in the world today. Student organizations that do not grasp this will be of no consequence in the mass movement. The second point is that the anti-fascist struggle of the American working class is our own struggle. The American people have nothing without revolution, and there can be no revolution without a revolutionary political party. The building of such a party, and preparation of public opinion for it, must be our task also.

In January of 1972, the CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT CULTURAL FASCISM was announced. This campaign made concrete the general tasks of the program which were:

--to wage class struggle in the classroom against all anti-scientific anti-working class ideas as well as fascist classroom restrictions. We saw the necessity for representing the proletarian revolutionary line in the schools and universities.

--to support mass democratic, anti-fascist organizations and develop fraternal relations with them, and to develop basic mass democratic study and discussion groups in order to further strengthen our ties among the masses.

--to hold mass-democratic meetings on political topics in order to popularize and develop our struggle against fascism.

--to distribute works of great communists and support and distribute organs of propaganda of the American Communist Workers Movement (Marxist-Leninist) and other fraternal revolutionary organizations, and,

--to produce and distribute Rhode Island Student to sum up developments within and report on the growing struggle against fascism in the university and across the country as a whole, in order to raise the level of this struggle.

At this time we began a protracted campaign, the first of its kind in R.I. This was the CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT CULTURAL FASCISM. The purpose of this campaign has been to strengthen the unity of all progressive people in Rhode Island and across the country as a whole, in order to raise the level of this struggle from one of understanding fascism to ACTIVELY UNITING WITH OTHERS IN ORDER TO ORGANIZE OUR OPPOSITION TO FASCISM.

The development of this campaign, and particularly the planning of this forum today, shows that a significant attack against anarchism has been made. This struggle that has been with us since the earliest days of our organization still continues. We are now planning the further development of our Political Program based on the wealth of experience gained this year in building organization at many levels. With CONSTANT SUMMING UP OF EXPERIENCE and DEEPENING TIES AMONG THE PEOPLE we will certainly live up to the task of participating in building a true revolutionary party of the American working class, a revolutionary party which will arouse the masses and lead us in the struggle against American fascism.

Fascist culture is not a mystery or the product of some ill-defined "human nature".

It is the culture offered to us and perpetuated by all the decaying institutions in this country which have no ties to anyone but United States Imperialism--the "mass" media, the churches, educational institutions, etc. Our country is now controlled by US monopoly capitalism. The "freedom of the individual" as promoted in our culture is nothing other than the freedom of the individual to serve this end. Any freedoms taken beyond that point are suppressed by those who depend on US imperialism for their existence. When one accepts and supports the status quo one cannot promote ideas which help to clarify issues, generalize experience and bring about real and long-lasting social change. This cannot be done because these ideas will help us to overthrow fascism, the parasitic rule of US monopoly capitalism.

Fascist culture attempts to prevent us from doing three things. It attempts to prevent us from seeing our own position and the nature of our enemy clearly in the context of history and social progress, it attempts to prevent us from taking any action based on a thoroughgoing analysis of American class society, and creates cultural roadblocks to unity under the slogan of "bourgeois individualism" --an individualism based on egocentrism.

The soul of fascist culture is the obscuring and denying of the role of the masses in history. The American working class is rising, and is very willing and capable of seizing state power from the small handful of US monopoly capitalists and their agents. Revolution is an historical inevitability and the only solution to our problems.

We students and intellectuals can not sit and dream up a genuine people's culture in the midst of modern American fascism. We can prepare the groundwork for a truly democratic America and a genuine people's culture only by destroying the decaying culture and ideology of the exploiting classes which have ruled us. This will help prepare material conditions for the final overthrow of fascism in all spheres of American society.

This forum to COMBAT CULTURAL FASCISM could by no means be the final word on cultural fascism. Combatting cultural fascism means taking up the world outlook of the international proletariat as our own--the outlook of just struggle, principled unity on the basis of solving concrete problems, and revolution. We must change ourselves. The struggle against fascism goes on within us and without us. It is particularly intense among students and intellectuals where the old worn out carrot of a bourgeois career is still held out to us. To COMBAT CULTURAL FASCISM is to break through the bindings of a culture which can offer us nothing but consumption and decay, self-service and, in the long run, acceptance and submission to fascism.

The fact that we have come here together signifies the beginning of a real attack on fascist culture. We are not sitting alone somewhere contemplating the cosmos. There is no "individual salvation". In the face of organized fascist oppression --OUR MAIN WEAPON IS UNITY.

Today we are uniting on the basis of exposing and repudiating fascist culture. This is a tremendous basis of unity. Fascist culture would have us asking "what can you do for me?" or, "how can I be amused a little longer?" We have no use for questions like this. We want to ORGANIZE TO CHANGE THE WORLD, not to discuss it endlessly or dissect it. Revolutionary students and intellectuals have a great role to play in the American people's struggle against fascism. The American Communist Workers Movement (Marxist-Leninist) has called upon us to take up the struggle in the cultural and ideological sphere. This is our own struggle. Friends and supporters of the Rhode Island Student Movement from all over Rhode Island have come together in the course of a common struggle to sum up experience, clarify lines, and learn from each other's experience in exposing and repudiating fascist culture and in building mass-democratic, anti-fascist organization-- the complete anti-thesis of what fascism offers us.

This forum is being held at a great time in history. The economy of US imperialism is approaching total breakdown due to the development of its internal contradictions. Competition between the US and advanced capitalist countries is growing more and more intense. Anti-imperialist revolution is developing and winning ever-increasing victories in the face of imperialist oppression and exploitation.

The American people are seeing the true nature of their oppressors as the US government falls more and more heavily on the force of arms to maintain its tottering rule. Greater oppression will only hasten the development of the revolutionary political consciousness among our people. The American Communist Workers Movement (Marxist-Leninist) has taken up the task of building a revolutionary party based upon Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought in order to lead the American people in their struggle against fascism and for socialism. Chairman Mao teaches that "A single spark can start a prairie fire". Our prairie fire will be the mass-democratic, anti-fascist revolution of the American working class and people. The spark that we are creating is the spark of mass democracy. With deep ties among the people and the weapon of mass democracy, our oppressors will only become more isolated and frantic until the American people rise up and sweep them away in a revolutionary storm.

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