Rectify Our Style of Work!

Combat Spontaneity

This is the third article on the Rectification Campaign recently launched by LPR (M-L). We present here excerpts from a Central Committee on the need to Rectify Our Style of Work. We have copies of the previous articles available for those of you who have not followed the entire series.

In combating subjectivism in our way of thinking we cannot belittle the importance of also combating the manifestations of that subjectivism in our style of work. Contrary to opportunists and windbags of all hues, who see their style of work as something separate and apart from their political and ideological line, we see style of work closely connected with the line. For us then, it is not a question of attributing our faults to "poor style of work" disconnected from the line, but to see the dialectical relation that exists between the way of thinking and the way of doing. How the line is affected by the tactic and in turn how our style of work affects our way of thinking.

We have unity in that the principal evils in our style of work are spontaneity, amateurishness, and sectarianism. There is a need then to develop consistent and systematic struggle against them. Without an all out war against our evils of spontaneity, amateurishness, and sectarianism from our ranks we will not be able to carry out the great tasks ahead.

OUR SPONTANEITY

The fact that there is spontaneity and there is spontaneity makes it very important that we talk about it in the specifics of our organization’s life. In the main, the spontaneity in our style of work manifests itself in the lack of long-term and consistent planning that conversely brings us to a situation of continuous improvisation, tainting of the spontaneous mass movement, and the utilization of “tactics-as-a-process”.

ABSENCE OF SCIENTIFIC PLANNING

For a revolutionary organization to be able to put its line into practice, to win people over to it, to provide continuous leadership to the spontaneous mass movement, in short, to move ahead with all the revolutionary work, it is extremely important that the organization plan its work far ahead. In doing whatever has to be done today, we have to plan not only for tomorrow and the day after, but for months and years to come. Obviously this is not meant to be understood in a literal way—what we are going to be doing in February, 1982—but in a dialectical way. That is, we are doing this today because in this way we are going to realize our aims, move the work in such and such a direction in order to create the specific conditions necessary for the realization of those aims.

Planning in this way allows us to develop a conscious plan that views every aspect of revolutionary work, not as isolated events or tactics, but as a comprehensive whole that turns our strategic and tactical line for the period ahead. It goes without saying that in order for any plan to be conscious, it has to be developed in the light of scientific analysis of the concrete conditions (recall time, place, and conditions), and we have to correctly integrate theory and practice, correctly apply the mass line, and practice criticism and self-criticism all along. The timely jump-up of work utilizing the methods described above will allow us to determine strengths and weaknesses, the general direction in which the work is moving, what tactical changes have to be made in the plan in order to be able to accomplish its purposes, etc.

It is a sad reality, but reality is a stubborn fact that has to be accepted as it is, if we are going to be able to transform it, that our planning has been mainly characterized by its being subjective, narrow (a tendency to piecemeal just dealing with issues in isolation one from the others), and greatly divorced from the concrete reality of both the working class and the revolutionary movement on the one hand, and our own organization on the other. Such is what has happened when we have made attempts to map out a plan, because it is a fact that in many occasions we have engaged in particular activities without ever even planning a plan for them. Thus, on many occasions we are engaged in practice for which no clear political objectives have been agreed upon, in which no clear political direction has been established, no analysis of forces has been made, and so on. This is sheer hewing to spontaneity, which is one of the bases for incorrect lines.

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CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

From the beginning, LPR (ML) saw the Bakke case as not merely reduced to an issue for students, but one affecting oppressed nationalities in general and women as well. We said:

"Its effects are not limited merely by the Harvard School of Engineering of the University of California at Davis. It establishes the legal precedent for the elimination of all minority groups throughout the country, not just in education, but also in labor contracts and in housing. The Bakke case constitutes the stepping stone for fascism and works against the hard-won gains of oppressed nationalities in the U.S."

"The Bakke Decision seriously threatens the gains that had been won as a result of the mass struggles, especially those for working women, such as the quota establishing that a certain minimum of women has to be hired by companies such as AT & T, N.Y. Telephone, General Electric, etc. This is especially hard on women workers who need to keep their jobs for the survival of their families in these times of serious economic hardships."

At the same time there are certain so-called affirmative action programs that we do not support such as those calling for more oppressed nationalities to be hired as cops. We think that to support the "right" of oppressed minorities to hire oppressors is to see democracy in the abstract, not from a class viewpoint. Also, hire only the Capitalist State in Repressive measures.

2. In the immediate period ahead we must pay special attention to affirmative action in the field of employment rights, as typified by the need to defend against the "Weber" attack in steel.

In carrying out our work in defense of affirmative action programs, the focus of our efforts must be in the working class. The bulk of our work should be aimed at the shops and workplaces. The discrimination against oppressed nationalities in the workplace divides the working class, as well as the phoney charges of "reversal of discrimination" used by the forces who oppose affirmative action. Therefore, we have also said:

"Affirmative action programs benefit not only oppressed nationalities but the whole of the working class. It is in the interest of all workers to support the struggle to end national oppression and racial discrimination as it is precisely one of the tools of the bourgeoisie to continue to oppress workers by keeping us divided and fighting each other over jobs, raises, and opportunities. By keeping the oppressed nationalities (and women, Ed.) much below the level of the rest of the working class, the bourgeoisie uses the minorities to keep down the level of the rest of the workers and to divide and weaken the working class."

(see RESISTANCE vol.8, no.9)

Thus it would be incorrect to limit our work to the colleges, as ABDC has done, to the point that when summer comes along affirmative action struggle seems to go underground because there are no students around to carry it out.

3. "All national and local forces must be organized into a single, broad based, democratic coalition."

We agree that this is the best way to build a strong and effective anti-Bakke movement. Our experience in the ABDC with the GAM, and the BOGATM leading it, is that they had no intentions of building a single movement on a democratic basis. Due to the sectarianism, they were unable to draw the masses into the ABDC. A movement that had seen thousands of followers in demonstrations and other actions, was down to less than a hundred in its last highly publicized rally in New York City.

But affirmative action programs must continue to be defended. And it is only through mass struggle that this can be done! In fact, the masses have continued to defend affirmative action and, scattered throughout the country small groups or coalitions have sprung up and have continued to struggle where the NCOBD and the ABDC left off. It is our task now to organize all these forces into a single powerful movement.

Decisions were being made exclusively by them, without the participation of the masses and other communists and advanced forces there. They would allow no political struggles to go on at the meetings, always claiming that "this has been decided already", and certainly no opposition which would be immediately labeled as sectarian, obstructionist, etc.

This is consistent with what happened with the WC(ML) in other ABDC chapters in the country. The ATM-IWK leadership of ABDC squashed the struggle raised by these comrades around the focus of the work and the need for a national plan. Rather than discussing the WC proposal, the ABDC leadership preferred to expel them from ABDC. This was done through a unilateral decision of the IWK-ATM leadership without any participation or discussion of the general membership. By taking the differences between communist organizations into the WC, the IWK-ATM leadership are carrying out an incorrect, sectarian, non-mass style of work that can only help to destroy, not build, this mass democratic movement.

The anti-Bakke movement can not be built in this way. The masses must be given ample participation both in making and carrying out decisions, and the broadest possible sectors must be incorporated into a single program for struggle around affirmative action.

The framework for betrayal cooked up in Camp David between Egypt and Israel with the intent of U.S. imperialism has led to a proposal for a peace treaty between the two countries. This proposal will establish diplomatic ties at the ambassadorial level between Israel and Egypt. It is a major victory for the Israeli settlement state of Israel and U.S. imperialism.

In asking the Israeli parliament for approval of the proposal, Prime Minister Begin said: "Without Egypt, it will be impossible for Syria, Jordan, or other Arab states to launch a war against us." Begin is obviously describing the conditions for Israel that were created by Egypt's treacherous behavior towards the Arab people.

Having the guarantee that the major and most powerful Arab state will remain neutral — maybe even assist them — in any conflict with other Arab states, it's definite- ly something for the fascist-zionists to be happy about. Furthermore, its recognition from the U.S. to the IWK-ATM leadership are: carrying out an incorrect, sectarian, non-mass style of work that can only help to destroy, not build, this mass democratic movement.

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4. "We must rely on the direct action of the masses."

The fact that the NCOBD and the ABDC have scaled down their activities since the Bakke Decision was upheld by the Supreme Court active- ly proves one thing: that both were relying on the courts. Now that the channel of the courts has been exhausted it seems like there's not much else left for them to do.

The struggle for affirmative action is in fact linked to the struggle for the democratic rights of women and oppressed nationalities. It is our task to link them up and thus raise the consciousness of the masses in the course of the struggle, as well as point to the final solution to national and women's oppression — socialism. It is by con-cretely showing the masses that we are the defenders of their rights that we can expect to win them over to the cause of socialism.

The step taken by the comrades of the WC(ML) in putting forward a national program is very positive one. Besides being an attempt to provide leadership to the anti-Bakke struggle it helps in the tasks of unity of Marxist-Leninists and winning the advanced, crucial in our party building efforts.

We urge all comrades to study the proposal and in the spirit of Marxist-Leninists we put forward our views on it.

SUPPORT THE DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS OF OPPRESSED NATIONALITIES AND WOMEN!

Without the PLO
There cannot be peace

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