



AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, THE WOMAN QUESTION AND THE RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN

AS OUR RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN moves forward, the attention has to shift to the concrete manifestations of the incorrectness in our way of thinking and style of work. One of the areas in which we are summing up work, identifying strengths and shortcomings, and putting forward methods of rectification is in our mass work in general, and in the work among women and around the woman question in particular.

As pointed out in the previous articles, our revolutionary activity is very narrow and our links with the masses very weak. We have also identified bowing to spontaneity as well as amateurishness in attempting to bite off more than we can possibly chew as other problems that are to be overcome.



Our work in the women's movement suffers from the same weakness. Although we have dealt in a consistent way with this question, and real progress has been made in some areas (a more scientific understanding of the question, making it a component part of all our revolutionary work, overcoming to a great extent manifestations of male chauvinism and women's passivity in our ranks, combating male chauvinism, bourgeois feminism and other forms of opportunism on the woman question are some of these areas) the fact of the matter is that we are still disconnected from the women's movement and its struggles.

This is a very serious weakness that has to be overcome not only in order to be able to exercise revolutionary influence in the women's movement, but also to be able to move forward the central tasks of party building. We cannot forget that to Lenin's words, "no revolution can be victorious without the full participation of women" we have to add that "no genuine communist party can be built in this country without the full participation of women." And that is also true for every single task facing the revolutionary movement in the United States or in any other place in the world.

We understand, correctly, that the real emancipation of women cannot happen within the boundaries of capitalism. That

socialism is the only solution ahead for the oppression of women. We also understand, correctly again, that in order to move forward the struggle for the real solution, socialism, we are to struggle for the immediate demands of working and oppressed women. It is a fact that the struggle for the immediate demands in so much as it is carried out in a revolutionary way paves the way towards the struggle for proletarian revolution. The problem we face then, lies not in the theoretical understanding of the problem, not even in the understanding of what is to be done about it, but in the actual day to day practical implementation of the line upheld.

As a matter of fact, we have many years of participation in the struggle for the

emancipation of women. But our work has lacked continuity, focus and direction. We have jumped from one issue to the other, failed to accumulate forces, to win over to communism the advanced women we have met in those struggles, to provide a conscious direction and communist influence in those struggles. Despite our good intentions and hard work, too little has been accomplished in those attempts to develop ties with the masses of women in the course of those struggles.

In the actual work we have committed right and 'left' errors. It has been extremely difficult for our cadres and contacts to establish a correct relationship between the struggle for the immediate aims of the movement and for its final aim. In our experience the failure has been that of not putting enough emphasis on the struggle for immediate aims. In struggling for democratic rights, for day care centers, for welfare rights, and education, for abortion rights and against sterilization, for equal pay and access to all job classifications at the plant, etc., our failure has been that of not providing correct leadership on how to go about fighting for those things.

We have been good at exposing all forms of opportunism, at showing theoretically the links between the particular struggle and the general struggle for socialism. But when the time comes to put out proposals

as to how to get people to the meetings, what kinds of actions should be taken, what forces should be mobilized and relied upon, and all the practical problems that face every mass struggle, we have not exercised good leadership. It has frequently been the case that after we successfully expose some opportunists for relying on the bourgeois courts or politicians, we have been asked by the same people whom we have just finished convincing about what to do now, and we have been for all intents and purposes mute.

We believe that our overemphasizing the final aim (socialism) and the belittlement of the struggle for the immediate demands of the women's movement represents a 'left' deviation in our line on this question. The rectification process is to start from the acceptance of that reality. (We want to state clearly here that we are talking specifically of the relation between the struggle for the immediate demands and the struggle for socialism. We still firmly uphold that right opportunism, revisionism, is the main danger facing the U.S. Communist movement and the women's movement as well.)

It is precisely in the context of this rectification campaign that we decided to take up the work in defense and for the expansion of affirmative action programs as one of our organizations' priorities. Affirmative Action is a concrete, positive way of combatting the particular oppression of women and oppressed nationalities in the U.S.

The struggle for affirmative action is a struggle to build the multinational unity of our class, the unity of our class with its allies, and the unity between men and women. In this sense it will most certainly help us to broaden the scope of our revolutionary work. Affirmative action work is being taken up not just in one community or another, not just in New York or Chicago, but in all parts of the United States. And it is not just in the schools, and not just in the workplaces, but in all schools and workplaces affirmative action is becoming more and more a burning issue for the masses.

All over the U.S., committees, coalitions, work groups, individuals are uniting to take up the work of fighting to implement affirmative action in their area or to prevent that program already established to be taken away from them, or to struggle to expand an already existing program. Our work in affirmative action will thus provide an excellent field to link ourselves with all the masses of people struggling like us. And not only will it help us in developing ties with the masses, a requisite for moving forward in our revolutionary work, but also, to establish ties with those other revolutionary organizations and individuals with whom, because of the narrowness of our work, we have not been able to link ourselves with in the past. The success of this goal will mean a great step forward in the process of uniting Marxist Leninists and the great task of building a truly revolutionary new communist party in this country.

Last, but not least, the struggle for affirmative action will allow us to work in a most concrete way, and not just in words, against women's and national oppression. Cases such as that of Weber, Bakke, etc., provide the opportunity to raise such issues among the working class and educate the broad masses on these questions, and at the same time fight against such oppression and build the multinational unity.

For all these basic reasons, we will be participating to the fullest of our capacity in this struggle for affirmative action, and we urge all comrades and friends around the country to form local committees and coalitions, to link up with each other in this work. Let's build a powerful, broad based democratic movement in support of affirmative action. Let's show the bourgeoisie the immense revolutionary potential of the masses in this country. Let's show them what the masses are capable of if they are correctly organized and led, and if they decide to struggle and take their lives and their destiny into their own hands.