

BE LENIENT WITH VICTIMS OF FACTIONALISM

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[WEN HUI PAO editorial: "Be Strict With Those Close to Us; Be Lenient to Those Who Are Not"]

[Text] Some comrades who were once victims of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois factionalism have begun to realize its danger. They pledge to break with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois factionalism. However, how could they free themselves from the shackle of factionalism? There is no way to wipe out factionalism completely but to act on Chairman Mao's latest instructions.

"The two factions should talk less about other's shortcomings and faults and let each other talk about its own. They should make more self-criticism and seek common ground on major questions while reserving differences on minor ones."

Why should they talk with the other's faults? Generally speaking, people imbued with factionalism are unwilling to listen to opinions and criticism of others. It seems to them that the earth would not turn if they accepted opinions and criticism. Therefore the two factions have always racked their brains to label the other old-hand conservatives and to describe the shortcoming of the other with endless words like the flow of a river. As a result, factionalism can never be wiped out thoroughly. Only by constantly undergoing self-criticism and seeking common ground on major questions while reserving differences on minor ones can the two factions gradually bridge their differences and wipe out factionalism.

To achieve this goal it is necessary to adhere to the principle of "being strict with those who are close to us and being lenient to those who are not." Being strict with those close to us and comrades in our own organizations should put strict demands on themselves in the light of Mao Tse-tung's thought. As soon as shortcomings are discovered they should undergo criticism and education seriously without hesitation, without connivance, and without covering them up. Those closer to us should persistently adhere to this principle: by so doing the corrupted style of work would not be able to rise again.

Being lenient to those not close to us means that, with regard to the comrades relatively distant from us and the revolutionary masses of other organizations, it is wrong to constantly talk about their faults or to elevate minor issues to the level of principle. It is proper to let the other talk about its own shortcomings so that a common ground can be reached on major questions while reserving differences on minor ones.

We must be good at uniting comrades with different opinions to fight against our common enemy. This has nothing to do with "magnanimousness," but is a correct way to handle contradictions within the revolutionary ranks. However, those who are seriously imbued with factionalism always act the opposite. To them it means to be lenient to those close to them and strict with those not close to them. They always cover up or whitewash their own faults; as a result, they have not only harmed the comrades but also protected the bad elements.

Moreover, as for the shortcomings of the other side, they magnify a small issue and elevate it to the level of principle; they even gloat over the shortcomings of the other side without lending a helping hand. In fact, they themselves do not realize that they are falling deeper into a dangerous abyss. Their practice has completely mixed up the contradictions of two types and departed from the general orientation of struggle, thereby benefiting only the enemy.

Defending factional struggle, some comrades said: "What we are engaged in is not factional struggle but one between two lines. There should be no compromise in this struggle." Is there a struggle between two lines? Yes, there is. It is necessary to struggle against China's Khrushchev and a handful of capitalist-roaders in the party and to thoroughly criticize the revisionist line. There is absolutely no compromise in this struggle. If we aim the spearhead of struggle at our own comrades and cover up factional struggle with the so-called struggle between two lines saying it is simply a contradiction between revolutionaries and conservatives, which in fact is an out-and-out factional struggle, then in the long run we will surely be used by the class enemy and the general orientation of struggle will be diverted. As a result, we will commit serious mistakes. Are there any examples in the past?

To achieve alliance it is imperative to struggle. Yes, we must struggle. But against whom? We must struggle against the handful of capitalist-roaders in the party to achieve the revolutionary great alliance. Furthermore, to forge the revolutionary great alliance we must also struggle against the bad elements who have sneaked into the revolutionary ranks and used factionalism to create splits among us. To bring about the revolutionary great alliance we must struggle against factionalism in our own organizations.

If we aim the spearhead of struggle at our own comrades, the more fierce the struggle, the more serious the split will be, and it will be impossible to forge the revolutionary great alliance. Implementation of the principle of "being strict with those close to us and lenient to those not close to us" within the revolutionary ranks reflects the proletarian party spirit. By adhering to this principle we will be able to proceed from the point of placing party interests above everything else and achieve complete unity within the party. As for the bad elements who mixed up the class front by using factionalism, this is not a question of being strict or lenient. Every revolutionary organization must drag out this handful of bad elements and unite to combat self-interest and repudiate revisionism and to chop off their sinister hands.

Since we have already realized the reactionary nature of factionalism and found the correct way to wipe out factionalism, so long as we act on Chairman Mao's latest instructions we will certainly be able to overthrow bourgeois and petty-bourgeois factionalism and achieve unity to win victory in the great proletarian cultural revolution.