ANAKBAYAN AT UCLA'S STATEMENT ON THE ORGANIZATION'S LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND LIBERALISMS IN ADDRESSING AN SV/SH INCIDENT

CW: misogyny / homophobia / transphobia / abuse

A formal criticism and self-criticism (CSC)[1] session was held on October 5, 2020 between two of our members about their past relationship, which was facilitated by two other members. On that day, the following resolutions were made: exit of a kasama from the organization, disclose the acts of the current chairperson to the general membership and public, and hold an open space for an educational discussion on unpacking toxic masculinity.

On the afternoon of Thursday, January 7, the former member of our chapter publicly raised rightful criticisms against our chairperson and our organization. The criticisms included the now former chairperson's acts of emotional abuse, sexual coercion, and homophobia, as well as the unfulfilled unities of transparency, accountability, and the educational discussion. On the same evening, our general membership raised the posts and called for the organization to address the situation. We therefore held an open space for our members, which has since been recognized as a general assembly (GA). During that time, we discussed and united on passing the two following resolutions: ***the timely fulfillment of the resolutions from the October CSC, and for our chairperson to step down.***

Anakbayan at UCLA takes responsibility for the failure to fulfill these unities in a timely manner. We sincerely self-criticize and apologize to the victim, our members, solidarity allies, and the rest of the community for the harm caused by our lack of transparency, misprioritization, and failure to hold our now former chairperson accountable. We recognize the liberalisms[2] ingrained in our work and practices after further investigation of the lapses of our organization. From October 2020 until now, we were operating against the principle of recognizing that the youth is a force in the movement.[3] We operated by focusing on fulfilling our tactical plan and mobilizing to different events, but did not attend to the contradictions that needed to be addressed, which unintentionally created an unsafe space that prevented several youth from taking part in the movement. We have failed to hold ourselves accountable, and we acknowledge the pain that our liberalisms have caused.

We admit that our liberalisms are inexcusable manifestations of the bourgeois, imperialist, and feudal culture pervading our daily lives. Moreover, we recognize that we cannot eliminate misogyny, toxic masculinity, and sexism while imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism underlie the patriarchal culture in the Philippines, which serves to divide the masses. To eliminate these conditions, we must overturn the current political and economic system. ***We aim to practice a more scientific, mass oriented, and pro-people culture***, which requires adjustments in the day-to-day operations and priorities of the organization. We will continue our practices of agitating, organizing, and mobilizing to deepen our relations with the masses even further and to always put the masses first.

We also apologize for addressing the public only now. This past week, we took time to address our membership, immediate community, solidarity allies, and alliances to give them the space and opportunity to provide additional criticisms and ask questions they may have. Furthermore, we have been reaching out to advisors and other organizations for guidance as per the constitution[4], particularly about how we should address the situation at the local level, changes in our leadership structure, and the educational discussion.

Moving forward to implement resolutions and unities, both immediate and further in the future, we are planning to:

1. ***Host an educational discussion (ED) and open space to hold conversations on unpacking toxic masculinity, to be led by non-binary Filipinx Womxn***
    a. This discussion will be open to the public and serve as a space where folks can further address other manifestations of toxic masculinity in the organization, if any.
    b. This ED is but a starting point of our attempts to truly eradicate the culture of toxic masculinity in our space and practices.
2. ***Review current organizational structure***
    a. We recognize that, initially, our leadership failed to correctly combat the dominance of cis male voices in this space, failed to correctly make space for trans/LGBT members, and failed to fight these liberalisms. Thus, we plan to:
        i. Open up executive committee meetings to the general members,
        ii. Create opportunities for collaboration in our work and in our space,
        iii. Strengthen the educational committee to continually study liberalisms,
        iv. Genuinely uphold the principles of collective leadership.

3. ***Implement a system of accountability and transparency***
    a. Initial ideas include holding intentional open spaces, hosting *talambuhay* (life story) sessions, and working on a buddy system.
    b. As a general body, we strive to foster a culture where everyone feels empowered and heard in the space, comfortable to raise matters to leadership, as well as honest about their concrete capacities and boundaries in sharing their abilities, time, and life to the movement.
    c. We would also like to be more transparent about our work, history, victories, challenges, and the overall existence of the chapter, especially when orienting new members.
4. ***Write specific bylaws***
    a. We will work to sharpen our constitution by incorporating bylaws that are based on our particular conditions. We will enumerate protocols to better address and hopefully prevent similar situations in the future, as well as guide our day-to-day operations in general.

Beyond these, we would like to offer the following resources, especially for those who are affected in any way:

- Sexual Harassment Prevention / Title IX Office - Confidential Resources[5] https://www.sexualharassment.ucla.edu/resources/confidential-resources
- UCLA LGBTQ Campus Resource Center - Services and Resources | https://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/Services-and-Resources | @uclalgbtq on IG
- UCLA Campus Assault Resources & Education (CARE) - Local and State Resources | https://careprogram.ucla.edu/get-help/resources#879051274 | @uclacareprogram on IG
- Los Angeles LGBT Center | https://lalgbtcenter.org/health-services | @lalgbtcenter on IG
- Trans Defense Fund LA Resource List | https://transdefensefundla.org/pages/resources | @transdefensefundla on IG

Lastly, we want to recognize that this is the time to collectively heal, process, and struggle out what this all means for Anakbayan at UCLA moving forward. We sincerely thank you all for your patience, understanding, and willingness to struggle during this time, especially those who have opened space for us and expressed support and best wishes in the process of healing and transformation. **If you have any questions, clarifications, and/or criticisms for us, please contact us via anakbayanucla@gmail.com or @anakbayanucla on IG.**

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[1]Criticism Self-Criticism - Excerpt from ARAK (Araling Aktibista, Activist Studies)

“In the course of the struggle, it is natural that we sometimes commit mistakes or fall into wrong tendencies. These are commonly caused by our lack of experience of the product of wrong ideas and bad habits carried over into the movement. But we are always ready to overcome these mistakes because we are committed to the highest interests of the people.

As revolutionaries, we are always ready to criticize our own mistakes and weaknesses, and we welcome criticisms from others, because we desire only what is good for the people. If the criticisms are valid, we will not deny them or hesitate to correct them because it is not our personal interest but the interest of the people that are at stake. We are not afraid of criticism because truth is on our side, and the masses are on our side.

Criticism and self-criticism is a powerful weapon for correcting our mistakes and overcoming our weaknesses. It is essential for ensuring unity within our ranks, maintaining a healthy and democratic style in our organizations, and increasing our fighting capacity. Through criticism and self-criticism, we learn from our past mistakes and are able to avoid them in the future.
We should undertake criticism and self-criticism on a regular basis. In this way, we are able to constantly examine our actions, improve our work, and strengthen our unity and maintain our close ties to the masses.”

Generally, CSCs offer open space for individuals to enumerate their tasks, conditions, and/or contradictions. They are able to self-criticize, i.e. assess how and why they were or were not able to execute tasks, what conditions lead to certain situations, and/or how contradictions arise and affect them. Afterwards, there is a collective discussion with those they work closely with, in order to objectively assess the individual’s conditions, contributions, and practices. Along with affirmations, support, and accountability, the collective offers constructive criticisms and next steps to improve the individual’s—and consequently, the collective’s—work and practices moving forward.

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[2]Liberalisms - Excerpts from "On Basic Revolutionary Attitude" from ARAK

“Liberalism is the rejection or avoidance of active ideological struggle. It rejects and avoids the clarification of what are correct revolutionary ideas, policies, and actions, and which ones are incorrect and non-revolutionary... We must combat liberalism

because it is incorrect and it destroys the principled unity of the revolutionary ranks. Instead it upholds unprincipled peace, the existence and propagation of incorrect and non-revolutionary ideas, policies and actions…

Liberalism manifests through the following thinking and habits:

i. Letting wrong things slide, refraining from principled argument because the comrade is a close friend, or touching on the matter lightly instead of going into it thoroughly, so as to keep on good terms…

ix. Working half-heartedly without a definite plan or direction; to work perfunctorily and muddle along…

To thoroughly combat liberalism, selfishness must be rejected and [we must instead] uphold the interest of the revolution or the majority of exploited and oppressed masses. We must stand for revolutionary principles and actively fight against all wrong ideas, actions and tendencies. Every revolutionary must cultivate and uphold the spirit of selflessness."

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[3]Article II: Statement of Principle (Section 3):

Anakbayan recognizes the historical role of the youth as a powerful force that advocates and advances social change against a rotten and old social system. The majority of the youth comes from the laboring class (uring anakpawis) who are the most determined in winning National Democracy towards Socialism.

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[4]Anakbayan USA National Chapter Bylaws (amended on 2019)

Anakbayan USA constitution and by-laws state the following:

a. Due process should be promoted and upheld. A thorough investigation and documentation of facts should be a part of any process involving disciplinary action.
b. All matters which are strictly local should be handled on the local level, unless intervention is requested to the NEC.

These acts include but are not limited to discriminatory behavior, harassment, victimization, and abuse:

- Harassment is unwelcome behavior that demeans, threatens, intimidates, or offends another, resulting in a hostile environment. Harassing behavior may include, but is not limited to, derogatory comments and lewd propositions, impeding or blocking movement, unwanted physical contact, following the

person, or communicating with them through electronic devices in a way that is alarming or may cause annoyance.
- Assault is an attempt with force or violence to do bodily harm to another, whether from ill will or extreme carelessness; for example, by striking at or holding up the fist at a person in a threatening manner, or with other circumstances that evidence an intention of actual violence against the person.
- Discrimination, harassment, abuse, and assault based on, but not limited to, the following identities will not be tolerated: age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity/nationality, religion, disability, medical history, incarceration history, etc.

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[5]Title IX

- Title IX is a federal law that prohibits gender discrimination in any federally funded education program or activity.
- "*No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*"

  — 20 U.S. Code § 1681

Title IX in the UC System

- The University of California ("University") is committed to maintaining a community dedicated to the advancement, application and transmission of knowledge and creative endeavors through academic excellence, where all people who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation.
- Sexual violence, sexual harassment, retaliation, and other behavior prohibited by this Policy interfere with those goals. The University will respond promptly and effectively to reports of such conduct. This includes action to stop, prevent, correct, and when necessary, discipline, behavior that violates this Policy.
- This Policy addresses the University's responsibilities and procedures related to sexual violence, sexual harassment, retaliation, and other prohibited behavior as those terms are defined in this Policy (together, "Prohibited Conduct") in order to ensure an equitable and inclusive education and employment environment. The Policy defines Prohibited Conduct and explains the administrative procedures the University uses to resolve reports of Prohibited Conduct.