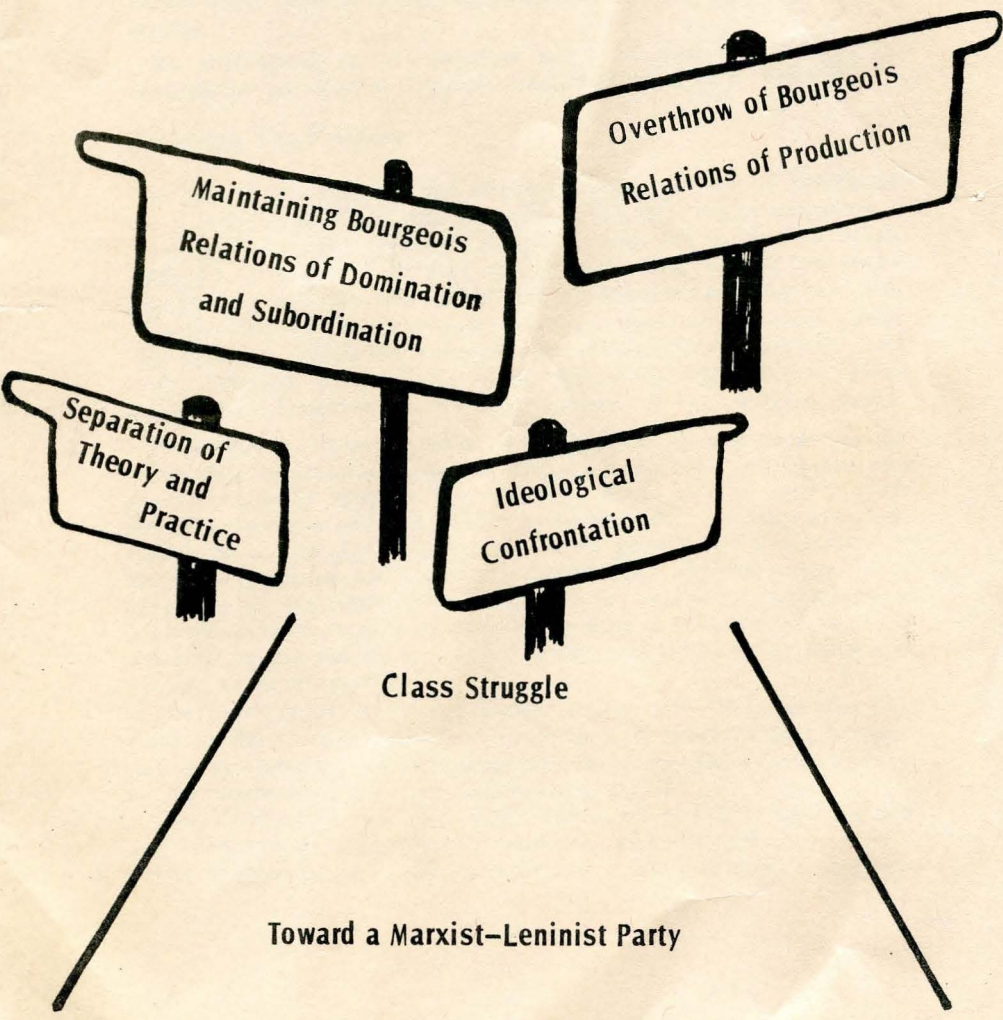


Response to Red Dawn



RESPONSE TO THE ARTICLE:

CRITIQUE OF OL'S OPPORTUNISM

In this paper Red Dawn correctly points out the necessity of making an ideological break with revisionism by bringing the science of Marxism-Leninism to the working class. It condemns the incorrect practices of OL and other opportunist groups as holding back the development of the class. The consolidation of these forces RD clearly sees as a victory for the bourgeoisie. Red Dawn pinpoints two key problems with opportunism: its belittling of theory and its tailing the mass movement. However the fundamental source of opportunism, which is rooted in the class relations of society, and is basically ideological in character is not referred to. This problem in the analysis of Red Dawn holds back their conceptualization and struggle with opportunism.

We will speak to this problem using the four step method as developed in Mao's Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing.

Observing The Problem:

We see in our practice and observe in the practice of Red Dawn as developed in RD I, that throughout the left, organizations are dominated by opportunistic elements who are using the class struggle to further their own self interest. By tailing the class and putting out only what sells these groups are holding back the development of the class and securing a position of social power by which to concretely maintain the relations of domination and subordination in the midst of revolutionary organization. They represent obstacles to the development of the working class.

In the Twin Cities we have seen opportunism expressed as the difference between saying and doing. Many left individuals and groups verbally support the working class, but in reality their practice reveals concern only for themselves: gaining recruits, publicity or position. Internally these groups are a mockery of Marxism-Leninism as bourgeois competition thrives--those most prepared by their dominant position in the relations of production take over leadership, those who come from a subordinate position wind up on the bottom again--doing the shit work, being used and getting no development.

The practice of RD in the Worker's Congress (WC), as put forward in RD I, speaks to the destruction of revolutionary organization by those intent on maximizing their bourgeois self interest at the expense of the exploited and oppressed.

The "Critique" contains many examples of OL's opportunism and connects this opportunist character with the influence of the petite bourgeois and labor aristocracy. This influence undeni-

ably exists but to indicate this as the primary basis for opportunism is not scientific. Dialectical and historical materialism teaches us that external are conditions of change and internal are the basis of change. If we are to pinpoint the ideological essence of opportunism we must look to the internal basis in revolutionary organization.

Posing The Problem:

Groups and organizations talk about using Marxism-Leninism to guide their practice but in fact ignore the concrete application of these tools as they come into conflict with their self interest.

Analyzing The Problem:

Red Dawn denies their own experience in Worker's Congress where they summarized the predominance of bourgeois world outlooks as leading to the destruction of this organization. In the Critique they offer a superficial explanation for the predominance of opportunism without looking at the ideological essence which would lead them to view opportunism as an aspect of their own practice as well.

Solving The Problem:

Red Dawn needs to make a further analysis of opportunism based on summarization of their own practice in the revolutionary movement.

Specifically they need to address the questions: What is the internal basis of opportunism? In other words how does opportunist practice lead to the maximization of bourgeois self interest? How is this presently being manifested in Red Dawn?

RESPONSE TO THE ARTICLE: THE ADVANCED WORKERS AND PARTY BUILDING

The article begins by posing two fundamental questions: "How do we fulfill these two essential tasks of building the vanguard party and mobilizing the masses? What is the correct relation between these two tasks?" It proceeds to expose OL's opportunism--a not very difficult task since all that is required is reiteration of OL's failure to develop the leadership of the working class and evasion and deception of confronting that failure. The article correctly asserts that the defeat of opportunism is inseparable from the development of the leadership of the working class.

But the article glosses over more fundamental questions than it raises. Furthermore, it portrays the opportunism of OL and the universality of opportunism in our movement simply as the betrayal of principles rather than opportunism being materially based in capitalist ideology. This is idealism, not dialectical and historical materialism. As a result, the authors fail to take the struggle against opportunism to a higher level. We are left with the injunction to develop an Iskra style newspaper and to uphold revolutionary principles, which the authors note have been betrayed over and over again in our movement. Giving only this direction to our struggle can lead only to inevitable repetition of betrayals and opportunism that signalled the decline of BWC, PRRWO, etc.

Based on our revolutionary practice, we will speak briefly to the questions the article poses and to the particularity of the contradiction we see in Red Dawn itself.

Observing The Problem:

The history of our movement reveals in fact many examples of organizations founded on the basis of Marxist-Leninist political principles. At a point in their development they have inevitably come to a crossroads where their practice was exposed as falling short of their principles. At that point, the question "who's class interests are you committed to serving" is posed in a very concrete way. At that point, as a law of development of Marxist-Leninist organizations, they split. Some opportunistically abandon any attempt to move class struggle forward through developing the leadership of the working class and instead maintain organization to serve their own self interests. Others become demoralized and decay in their revolutionary commitment. Some have correctly summed up their experience using the tools of dialectical and historical materialism to move forward.

Based on the particular historical development of Red Dawn's practice, as recounted in both issues of RD, it is clear that this ideological crossroads is approaching. Elsewhere in RD II, you expose the fact that your contacts with advanced workers have been neglected and undeveloped, that you have neglected the study of philosophy and political economy and are questioning your methods in regard to how you study based on your earlier position on the international situation, and that the organizational process of publishing even an irregular journal has been met with numerous delays. Yet in this article--which speaks to the question of how advanced workers are to be developed as cadre and proposes the establishment of a weekly Iskra style newspaper --no analysis is offered of this contradiction, no lessons drawn from this concrete practice, and no concrete methods of correction put forward.

In short, there is an apparent theoretical contradiction between, on the one hand, your theory* and principles and, on the other hand your practice.

Posing the Problem:

How have opportunists come to predominate? Why have so many organizations founded on correct revolutionary principles failed to give ideological direction to the training and development of working class leadership? These are the fundamental questions which Red Dawn does not speak to clearly and materially and from RD's own experience.

Clearly the answer cannot be ignorance of revolutionary principles, as the authors note, the leadership of organizations like OL consciously abandons, evades and covers up their betrayal of those principles. Their opportunism is exposed in the contradiction between their theory and their practice, their words and deeds. Nor can the cause be attributed to misleadership. Such an analysis does not account for the universality of the contradiction and begs the question: 'the source of opportunism is opportunists.' Nor can the incorrect assessment of revolutionary strategy and tactics be the fundamental cause since opportunists so clearly waffle back and forth in their strategy and tactics according to their own interests. The separation of theory from practice, the withholding of revolutionary theory from advanced workers--which the theory of spontaneity is simply a bourgeois rationalization for--is a most serious consequence of opportunism and retards the struggle against it. But it does not explain why opportunists fear to train the working class in the science of Marxism or why any workers fall for such rationalization in contradiction to their own material experience.

Analysis:

We distinguish opportunists fundamentally by their social practice, not by whatever rap they happen to run as justification for that practice. Further, we remember, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."

We clearly distinguish theory from ideology. Theory is "the experience of the working class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect." Ideology is the mental institution--conscious materialism--that houses the basic economic law of production, within capitalist society the law of surplus value of commodity production. The root of opportunism is ideological, not theoretical.

The particularity of the contradiction of opportunism within our movement resides in the universality of contradiction of capitalist

development, in the law of surplus value which Marx described as the fundamental law of motion of capitalist society. Upon this economic law of motion is established the ideological relation of domination and subordination, within this ideological relation is the capitalistic practice of economic exploitation and social oppression. Within capitalist society, everyone without exception is born under the domination of this law of motion.

Opportunism in essence speaks to the maintenance and re-creation of bourgeois relations of production within an avowedly revolutionary organization. It is in this way that the struggle against opportunism, against the domination of the law of value, and the development of working class leadership are linked. For how can the leadership of the working class—ideologically conditioned to maintain bourgeois relations of domination and subordination—be developed without conscious ideological class struggle *within* revolutionary organization? How can the particularities of the bourgeois world outlook internalized by the working class be replaced by the science of Marxism-Leninism except in the condition of ideological confrontation with the concrete effects of particular social practice?

It is because the authors of Red Dawn's article remain based in the world outlook of idealism that they do not and cannot provide particular, concrete direction to take the struggle to a higher level, and instead remain upholding revolutionary principles abstractly as if they were moral injunctions. Constantly "re-tracing our steps" and refusal to develop forms of organization to take the struggle to a higher level, reflects the practice of those who would *maintain* the left movements as a marketplace of ideas rather than *transforming* the left movement into an arena of class struggle, and developing advanced workers in the science of Marxism-Leninism.

Methods of Solution:

We base the development of revolutionary leadership and organization firmly on the cycle of knowledge of negation of bourgeois ideology: ideological confrontation. It is only by studying carefully the particularity of the contradiction at each stage of its development that we can develop practice which speaks to the negation of bourgeois relations of domination and subordination and exploitation and social oppression. In contrast to this, it is the usual practice of idealists to disregard their own experience and value highly the policies and directives of others. For Red Dawn to move forward rather than backward, an assessment must be made of the principal contradiction internal to Red Dawn in both aspects, and forms of organization developed to transform that contradiction.

RESPONSE TO: 'SPLIT IN THE RED DAWN'

Observing The Problem:

In examining your article on the 'Split in the Red Dawn' in the context of previous articles and summaries of your work, there are several repeated and interconnected phenomena which come to light.

1) You reveal a theoretical awareness of the universality of class contradiction within communist organizations and individuals, based primarily on much valuable experience in struggles in previous organizations, yet there is no indication that you utilized this understanding in the conscious application of strategy and tactics to the developing class struggle within the Red Dawn Committee--as a basis to move the organization forward.

--This passive approach is reflected in your statement that 'when the New York District left the Workers' Congress and established the Red Dawn Committee, we knew that class struggle would continue within our organization, even though we could not know exactly what form the lines of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would take.

2) You raise correct criticism of the apparently dogmatic, autonomous and dishonest practice of the splitters--as you did previously of the central leadership of the Workers' Congress--but again failed to take decisive action to confront these tendencies until the contradiction had become antagonistic and already caused many negative effects in terms of organizational work.

3) You took a consistent class stand against opportunism in the WC but then adopted a one-sided approach to practice in the Red Dawn Committee--i.e., focusing almost exclusively on theoretical work connected to your magazine--in disconnection from other work and at the expense of developing advanced workers.

--Again you spent much time on the importance of accountability from above and criticism from below in your analysis of the split in the WC, but have failed to implement this in practice.

4) You have consistently expressed the need to put communist theoretical work on a scientific basis as the foundation for effective propaganda--i.e., in your criticism of the literature of various communist organizations involved in the struggle at Gouveneur Hospital--but in the Red Dawn Committee have neglected the study of philosophy and political economy necessary to do that.

5) You have allowed the perpetuation of organizational looseness, unsystematicness and decentralization in the Red Dawn Committee--which you were so frequently the victims of in the WC

--not learning the lessons regarding what this practice reflects ideologically and its effects.

6) Finally, in order to rectify your errors you indicate that you must "reorganize to continue to further develop our work,...step up our theoretical work, particularly around questions that will lead to a party program," and integrate the latter with practical work, "in particular the winning of the advanced." Once again, these are all steps that you have put out previously but shown little movement on.

Posing The Problem:

An overview of these aspects reveals a consistent contradiction between saying and doing in your practice in general, and failure to learn from the lessons of the BWC and WC periods in particular. In short, you continue to make the same mistakes.

An aspect of this contradiction is, on the one hand, taking a self-critical approach in the exposure and analysis of mistakes, and on the other, not confronting their ideological basis in your own practice. In fact you still point to organizational primitiveness as being the principal problem, an analysis which flies directly in the face of what you've summarized regarding others' practice. One result of this continued motion is that you were for the most part caught off guard by the deceitful maneuvers of the splitters--in spite of their similarity to what you previously encountered in relation to the central leadership of the Workers' Congress.

Analyzing The Problem:

In using the tools of dialectical and historical materialism to analyze this recurring motion in your practice, it is evident that it dominantly reflects the world outlook of idealism. This takes the concrete form of 1) not confronting and taking systematic, material steps on the contradictions you've been faced with, and 2) taking a subordinate role in the internal relations of the organizations you've been associated with. As you yourselves have summarized in your analysis of previous internal struggles, the opportunists have *always* won out in the end--using whatever maneuvers and control mechanisms necessary to maintain their domination.

There is an internal, material basis for the practice of both sides of the contradiction in the internal relations of communist organizations. Yet, what you have analyzed in the practice of the various opportunists you have dealt with--i.e. what it reflects in terms of their position in the bourgeois relations of production--you have failed to analyze in your own. This is the primary obstacle to the resolution of the contradiction between saying and doing in your practice.

Concretely what this means is looking at what in fact is your self-interest in not confronting problems and perpetuating your subordinate role in the communist movement. It is a basic economic law of capitalist society that everyone without exception behaves in fashions to guarantee self-interest. It is particularly important to look at this in terms of the particularity of contradiction in your practice. For example, what is your self-interest in giving almost all your time and attention to theoretical work vs. practical work? Why have you remained a small closed group vs. taking steps to develop your contacts? All your actions must in fact be scrutinized ideologically if you are going to move beyond the current limits of your practice.

Solving The Problem:

Based on our own experience in the process of ideological struggle and development, we recommend that you seriously take up and apply the theoretical tools of dialectical and historical materialism in general, and the concept of contradiction in particular, to an analysis of the internal basis of your motion and mistakes. The primary aspects of this process are: 1) utilization of the 4-step method of solving problems, as developed by Mao; 2) clearly distinguishing idealistic and metaphysical thinking from dialectical materialist thinking; 3) application to your practice of the law of value, which Marx described as the fundamental law of motion of capitalist society--it is within this law that is established the ideological relation of domination and subordination; 4) most importantly, you need to take decisive action in the implementation of steps based on your analysis--this can only take place, however, in the organizational condition of ideological struggle and confrontation.

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