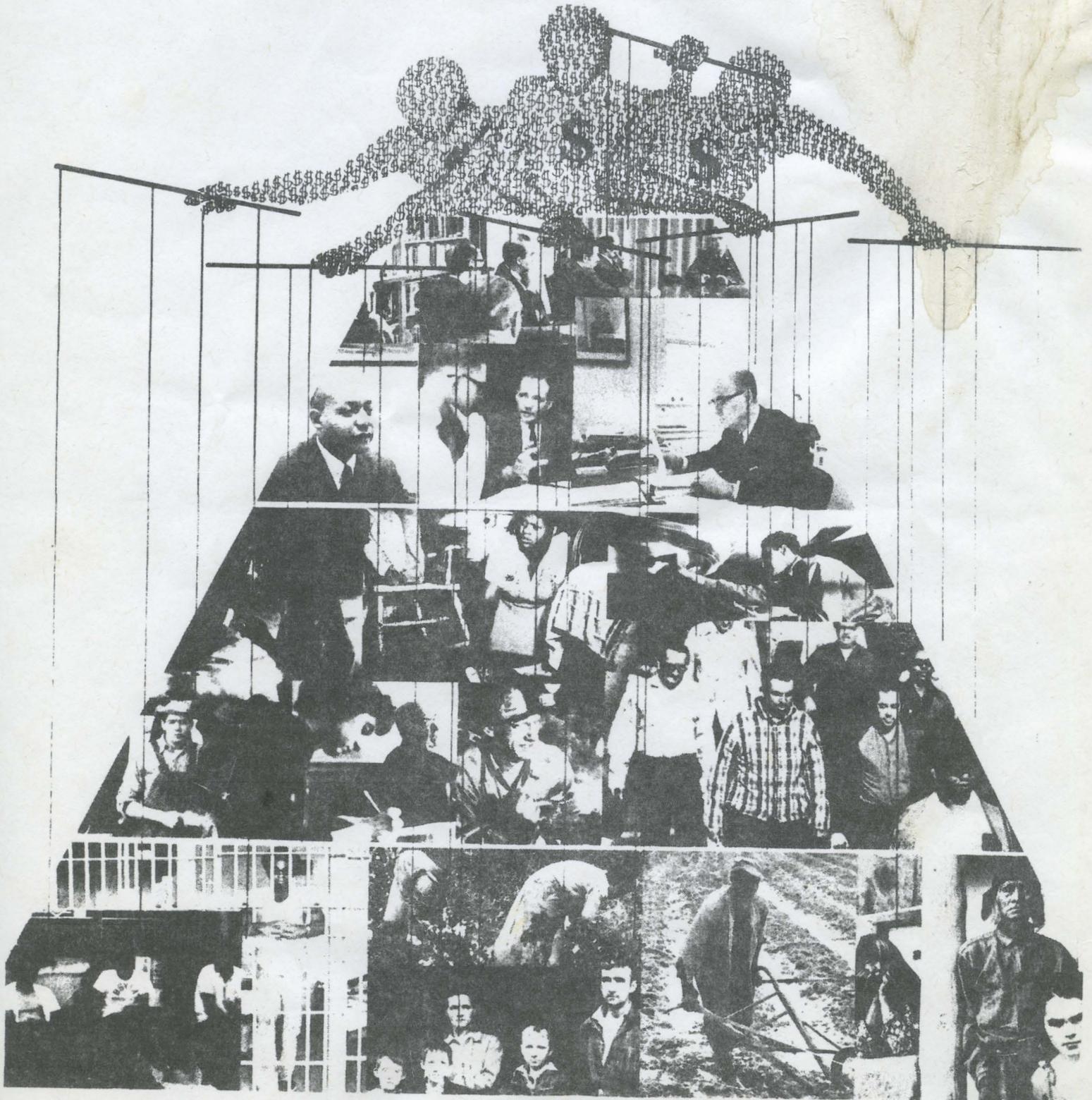


this is the first paper that sparked
most of the discussion & criticism. The beanery
is a food co-op in Minneapolis.

2/75

WHO IS THE BEANERY FOR?



Myoshi

THE BEANERY POLICY

The Beanery policy is divided into three parts - the introduction, the history and internal reorganization.

INTRODUCTION

In the past two months, you, the customer, have witnessed a few radical changes; for instance, removing the sign from the window and anchoring it to the wall above, painting the walls, rearranging in order to make shopping easier. Most important, we are doing our best given our financial limitations to keep the store well stocked. The atmosphere of a private club is disappearing and working class people are beginning to feel welcome.

We are proud to announce that the Beanery is finding itself less in the red than in the past, however, we are far from being out of the quicksand of financial ruin. With your continued cooperation, we, the Beanery workers, hope to provide you with more goods and services and make shopping less of a hassle.

HISTORY

We want to take time out to run down a very brief history of the co-op because it is imperative for you, the customer, to know some of the reasons behind our policy and why we are asking you for your support.

The co-op stores emerged from the latter days of the anti-war movement and the beginning of the anti-imperialist movement. What is the difference? The anti-war movement was at its heart a peace movement which saw the war as threatening people's lives which otherwise were quite secure, peaceful and happy. The essence of the anti-imperialist movement is that it is the struggle of oppressed people under the heavy weight of a privileged people of which the struggle against the Vietnam war was part and parcel. Most of the original organizers of the co-op stores didn't and couldn't make the qualitative leap from the antiwar movement to the anti-imperialist movement. Why? Because in order for their movement to build legitimacy, it had to be built on the firm political conviction, grounded in working class struggle, that monopoly capitalism must be overthrown and destroyed. However, the original founders of the co-op stores were grounded in the colleges and universities.

There are other reasons why the anti-imperialist movement didn't develop here in the Twin Cities and other predominately white areas across the country. Let's take a closer look.

The anti-war and anti-imperialist movement were inseparable from the assertiveness of self-determination of the black liberation struggle in the early days of 1966. In those days SNCC (the organization of young black people that spearheaded the black liberation movement in the south) had already linked the 3rd world liberation struggles to the black liberation struggle. Therefore, it was SNCC that spearheaded the anti-imperialist movement which linked blacks' social oppression and economic exploitation with the 3rd world peoples' and encouraged young blacks to resist the imperialist war in Vietnam.

A year and a half later, the white movement picked up on the anti-war sentiment of the blacks but didn't keep it in its proper context of anti-imperialism. In 1968, the white anti-war movement was in full swing; unlike the black anti-war movement, whites had set up draft counseling centers on a large scale across the country and had elicited enormous financial and material support from religious and charitable organizations. There were many support groups in Canada that provided an escape route to many thousands of white resisters.

To understand the impact that the white anti-war movement had on the anti-imperialist movement, we must raise the question: what was the greatest failure of the white antiwar movement? It did not build any class solidarity - but fostered and reinforced through its programs either legal evasion, which led to the bourgeois (upper class) tendency of escapism, or to moralistic confrontation on an individualistic basis. In order to figure out the cause for the misdirection, we only have to look at the leadership of the anti-war organizations - bourgeois in nature.

The original organizers of the co-op who came out of the anti-Vietnam war movement knew that it was next to impossible to rally and organize white workers into an anti-imperialist movement because: one, they were college graduates, college students, and college drop outs which composed the hippie cult. Although most of the hippies came from lower middle class, their leadership came from the middle and upper classes, and two, the white working class was a big recipient of the benefits of imperialism and was not to the point where conditions would have led them to question the basic principles and economic laws of capitalism.

These were the two factors that prevented the development of an anti-imperialist movement here in the Twin Cities. Having recognized this fact, the middle class leadership of the hippie movement proceeded to organize alternative structures foremost for themselves - the co-op stores because they were unable to rally the working class.

It is a historical fact that anti-imperialism was the motivating factor behind the creation of the co-op stores. This historical fact is still evident in

the co-op system policy; for instance, there is a ban on all goods and items which come from countries that don't respect the human rights of their workers and also companies and unions that don't acknowledge the legitimate demands of 3rd world workers, for instance, the lettuce and grape boycott, Farah strikes, etc.

Having established the fact that the co-op stores have a political context - anti-imperialism - we must raise the question, does the co-op stores' politics respond to its political context? The answer is NO!! In order to understand why, we must look at class ideology. From the inception of the co-op stores, they took on the class character of their leadership which was and is upper class snobbishness, elitism, and upper class domination of the lower class. For instance, the capital that was used to set up the stores came from the middle and upper classes. Capital is translated into background experiences in business, financial connections, and personal resources for money such as bank accounts, stocks, etc. As you can see, the one who holds the money bag is the one who calls the shots. In order for the bourgeois and petty bourgeois (middle class) leadership to maintain their class ideology and control over the co-op system, they instituted a deceitful line - community control. What community? In reality, the community they speak of is the community which they have alienated, a community which is not composed of their class, and a community which they have utter class contempt for - this community is the working class.

How do they control the co-op? By looking at the co-op stores one will not see a formal structure, maybe not even an informal structure, it may even appear to be structureless. If this is the case, how can we charge the bourgeois elements with controlling the co-op stores? There are many forms of control. But the most effective control that the bourgeois leadership has exercised is establishing its class ideology as supreme: approaches to solving problems (illusionary community meetings), establishing its priorities (do your own thing and eat organically), in short its world outlook. Hence we must view its control as an attempt to prevent working class control from replacing theirs.

We, the Beanery workers, have made an all out effort to destroy upper class attitudes on food by organizing the Beanery Food Committee which will study materials that relate to all phases of the food industry, including farming, to ascertain, for one thing, once and for all, if there is any such thing as organically grown food in modern times. And if so, who is it available for - for those with lots of money in their pockets, etc., or is it available for everyone?

Because of the high inflation rate, recession and the gathering depression, we are optimistic that the hard core working class will continue to bring us their mandate - away with class snobbishness, cultism, food purists and on with stocking the type of food which is nutritional and cheap.

INTERNAL REORGANIZATION

The weakness of the present volunteer program plays a central role in the failure of the Beanery to serve a meaningful purpose - providing cheap good food to busy people. Let's examine these weaknesses point by point. They all find their basis in the illusionary and deceitful community control line springing from bourgeois ideology.

People come in to run the store without training and moreover often as strangers off the streets. This means that:

- often the volunteers know very little about the store themselves and therefore cannot be very helpful to customers.

- many customers weigh items improperly and there is no way of checking this given the present system.

- customers eat food without paying for it (peanuts, cookies, apples, etc.)

- cash walks out with the volunteers (just recently we lost \$200 in this way).

- food is taken without being paid for.

- An accurate account of the money coming in or going out cannot be kept.

- standard procedures for doing things, reducing loss of time and money cannot be set up.

The volunteer program also led to uneven distribution of responsibility.

Invariably, in the past, if the store was to function at all the weight fell entirely on one person's shoulders. This meant a lack of efficiency in many different areas - stocking, maintenance, bookkeeping, etc. It also means that people are unable to maintain their energy. Basically, the energy giving impulse in the first place is an ideal non-money relationship type store. As the reality and the ideal come more and more into conflict, the treadmill-like aspect of the reality caught in confusion, directionlessness and isolation leads to complete exhaustion and hopelessness. Among other things, this results in recurring crises of management, keeping the store barely above operating level.

In view of the failure of the present system, a new policy is being instituted. The first step in initiating this new policy will be to set up a workshop to train people in the operation of the Beanery. This will enable us to get acquainted with the people we will be working with. It will also enable us to train people as to Beanery policies and procedures. Also, we will be able to work out a more clear understanding for one's motivation for volunteering.

This workshop will be held for workers every two weeks and will deal with whatever is necessary to properly train and orient volunteer workers.

The new policy also means that the structure of the store will go through a

radical change. The major thrust of the new structure is to put into practice the understanding that its your store. This means completely wiping out any traces of old attitudes of snobbery and cultism. This means organizing the work so that it can be done efficiently and in response to people's needs.

The following are four work crews and an idea of how they will function.

STOCKING AND PRICING CREW

- a. Stock store before opening and before peak business hours.
- b. Be at store to put away deliveries, stock, and check prices.
- c. Cutting and pricing cheese, fish, etc.

CUSTOMER SERVICE CREW

- a. Help customers weigh items.
- b. Explain procedures, etc. to customers.
- c. Light stocking.

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE CREW

- a. Keeping the store clean.
- b. Maintaining the store (building new shelves, etc.)
- c. taking care of bags and jars (cleaned, stored properly and neatly)
- d. Making whatever pickups are necessary.

CAHIER CREW

- a. Running the cash register.
- b. Help co-ordinate work crews.
- c. Fill in for other crews when their presence is not necessary.

Being on the cashier crew would demand the most time and would also be the least flexible. For each crew standard procedures for operating would be set up so that things can be accomplished with a minimum loss of time and energy. These standard procedures would be posted so that people will have a guide to refer to.

We are going to pay people a very minimal salary. While the spirit of self sacrifice is something we want to encourage, people, especially these days, do need material sustenance. Therefore workers will receive 75¢ an hour in Beanery food stocks.

In order to continue improving the store, we are going to initiate a policy of Beanery food stocks. As mentioned above, this will be a method of funding workers. Also the stocks will be available to customers who can in this way help finance the store's continued improvements. These stocks will be in the form of food coupons of varying denominations redeemable in periods ranging from two weeks to three months.

Another very important aspect to the success of our program will be our ability to arrange some kind of facilities so that people who are tied down by responsibilities to their children will be able to have them taken care of. Your initiative and ideas are important here.

To implement this policy will require a transitional period of three or four days so that workers can be properly trained and whatever else is necessary can be accomplished.

Needless to say, this policy cannot succeed without wide and enthusiastic support. Its success will be a step forward for all working people in the neighborhood.