

THE MANIFESTO OF THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST OPPORTUNISM

A speech delivered by Jerry Path at Walker Church, Dec. 3, 1975

Most of us have brought to this meeting political differences which stem from differences in approach to revolutionary strategy and tactics.

There will always be differences among us. This fact is based on the universality of contradiction, which is a basic law of dialectical materialism. Mao Tse-Tung states this law as follows: "The universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a two-fold meaning. One is that contradiction exists in the process of development of all things, and the other is that in the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end."

We are here together tonight because, between the opposing forces in a contradiction there is both unity and struggle. In other words, there are not only differences between us but also a common unity. As Mao goes on to say, "The interdependence of the contradictory aspects present in all things and the struggle between these aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward. There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist."

Although there will always be political contradictions among us, we must always be clear on the political character of those contradictions. In conjunction, we must always keep a close eye on what is the principal contradiction at each moment between us and who is our principal enemy. We must never be confused on the latter.

The political character of the principal contradiction between us is one of an ideological character. The principal contradiction between us is between the desire to put revolutionary theory into practice and actually and actively putting revolutionary theory into practice. In short, the contradiction between saying and doing.

Let us now examine the ideological character of the contradiction between saying and doing. In analyzing any political organization, the first step is to define the class content of the organization and the next step is to determine what class or class sector is the organization basing its political orientation on.

These two factors are the keys to the life and vitality of a revolutionary organization. If a revolutionary organization has a majority of its members who are not dialectical materialists and who are not fighting for the dictatorship of the proletariat, obviously it has a majority of the wrong class elements dominating the class content of the organization. Moreover it is a fact that has been proven over and over again in practice, that whenever the wrong class elements dominate a revolutionary organization, the revolutionary "life" of the organization slowly dies.

The internal class content of an organization is automatically connected to its class base. Disregard of this law of dialectical materialism has resulted in the organizational death of many petty bourgeois revolutionary organizations. The dialectical materialist explanation of the cause of organizational death is based on the contradiction between saying and doing. For a petty bourgeois revolutionary organization to preach Marxism and Leninism without active efforts to transform its dominant class content of petty bourgeois to the proletariat, in essence, cuts the organization off from the source of revolutionary vitality---the working class. Whenever the revolutionary vitality is cut off, it is always a matter of time before the organization dies because of deficiency of working class participation.

The point to be made is this, whenever a revolutionary organization says more than it does, the key place to look is at its class content.

The differences in class content and class outlook also say a lot about how a person or an organization responds to events such as have been taking place in the movement in the Twin Cities recently.

To set the stage for this discussion, here is a quote from yesterday's paper: the Associated Press reports that during president Ford's visit to the People's Republic of China, "the Americans...were confused...by (the Chinese) declaration that 'there is great disorder under heaven and the situation is excellent.'" *(Teng Hsiao Peng's revisionist worship of spontaneity)*

The point is that the Americans and the Chinese were looking at it from different class perspectives.

In the Twin Cities, we have been going through a year of great revolutionary upheaval inside the movement. People ask, why does there need to be all this struggle among us? Why do we need to be fighting each other?

There is great disorder---and the situation is excellent.

(Teng's worship of spontaneity.)

The movement here is going through a historical turn, a qualitative leap from one stage of development to a higher stage of development, and this kind of turning point is never accomplished without intense struggle. That is a law of development.

Those who are upset and confused by this struggle, who seek to prevent it, stifle it and hold it back, (do not see the new growing up inside the old.) They are looking at it from the wrong class perspective. They do not see that out of this struggle, once the obstacles to the growth of the new are removed, we will arrive at a new and much stronger unity on a much higher level of development as a revolutionary movement.

so true ---

The new revolutionary force is like the chick inside the egg that has to crack the shell of the old obstacles before it can continue its development. We are now trying to crack the shell, or, in human terms, we are in the delivery room of the revolutionary movement in the Twin Cities.

What is this new force we are trying to give birth to? What is necessary to take the revolutionary movement forward?

There are three key elements in a revolutionary movement, and they are, ideological thrust, organizational form, and programmatic content. To understand the difference between the old and the new, we must examine both the old and the new in the light of these three key elements.

1. Ideological thrust. Many political activists confuse theory and ideology, but they are not the same. The difference between theory and ideology is another way of stating the contradiction between saying and doing.

Theory is a scientific description of how the world moves. Anybody can read and spout Marxist theory, and to a certain extent you can learn theory from books.

Ideology, on the other hand, can not be learned from books. Ideology is your basic cutlook on the world and that comes from your experience, which is basically determined by your class position in the social system. Revolutionary ideology is formed by the experience of oppression and exploitation and struggle of the working class.

Theory and ideology, or in other words theory and practice, must be united to make a revolutionary organization. A revolutionary outlook without a revolutionary theory leads to blind and ineffective action. Marxist theory without concrete practice in revolutionary struggle leads to reactionary dogmatism.

All organizations in the Twin Cities movement have been going through intense ideological struggles in the last few years, especially in the last year. This ideological struggle is over class allegiance---what class will the organization be based on. These struggles have particularly focused on the class outlook of the leadership. In all organizations, the working class outlook is winning out... but there is still disunity in the movement. The working class forces in all organizations have not yet consolidated themselves, and organizational practice still lags behind theoretical statements. In other words, still more saying than doing.

That brings us to element number 2: Organizational form. Because of the history of most of the political organizations in the Twin Cities left movement, coming out of the college-based anti-war movement, these organizations were established on a petty bourgeois class basis. What does this mean in practice? The petty bourgeoisie is a dying class, being squeezed out in the struggle between the monopoly capitalists and the working class. This dying class position leads to attitudes of seeking individual solutions and vacillation between the seemingly all-powerful ruling class and the rising force of the working class. In organizations, it leads to trying to perpetuate a dreamy world of the past, when things were nicer for the petty bourgeoisie.

So we get organizational forms that are like social clubs, saturated with individualism, careerism, and bourgeois habits of egotistical competition that breed opportunists like flies.

like C.L.

Political action based on subjective individualism leads straight to opportunism, and opportunism is a common disease in petty bourgeois organizations. Opportunistic leadership is now the principal obstacle to organizational unity of the revolutionary movement in the Twin Cities. We can see this time and time again.

right!

We all say we are for the working class, so why are we still disunited? Partly this is the contradiction between saying and doing, but that could be resolved by less saying and more doing. Mostly right now it is because organizations have been developed to build up the careers of opportunistic leaders, who pimp off the movement and think they own the organization. This is why they hold back both unity and development---they use their organization as capital for personal advancement and they resist having their property merged into a larger unity.

org.
"self
cultivation"

Let's contrast this form of organization, based on petty bourgeois social ties and supporting opportunistic leadership, with organizational forms based on revolutionary principles and day to day practice in the working class struggle. This is the new that is now breaking out of the old.

no, we don't.

Here we have organizational discipline as opposed to individualism, careerism and opportunism. We have organizational forms designed to protect the work from the inevitable repression of the state, instead of being designed to promote stars and big shots. We have democratic centralism based on the authority of the working class, not subjective individualism based on the desires of idle schemers, or ultra-democracy based on liberals who want a social club that can't do anything. We have scientific criticism and self-criticism to combat bourgeois tendencies, jealousy and back-biting.

We have flexible, Leninist-style organization that can take any form that is needed to meet the changing demands of the struggle, not rigid beauraucratic structures that are designed only to perpetuate their own limitations.

We have organizations based on revolutionary principles, not on the good wishes of outstanding individuals---built on ideological unity, not social unity of groups of friends.

The contrast between the old and the new in organizational character is the contrast between the class content and base of the organization, between working class and petty bourgeois class traits.

The CO has attempted to build its organization on these revolutionary principles, and constantly develop working class leadership while weeding out petty bourgeois and bourgeois tendencies. We would be the first to admit that we have made many mistakes, and there have been opportunists within our organization as within all organizations. But because of the form and character of organization which we have practiced, it was easiest for the CO to take the lead in weeding out the opportunists within our own ranks. Our organization did not depend on any one person or small clique, and we have constantly developed new leadership to replace those who fell by the wayside.

This brings us to the question of motivation, what do we want this new kind of organization for? We in the movement have many differences, but we have an over-riding unity in our common opposition to monopoly capitalism. We believe that we are all after the kind of organizational forms that will enable us to unite the great majority of the working people into a coordinated movement to strike the death blow to monopoly capitalism. So keeping that common goal in mind, we believe we can have differences and still find the forms to work together.

Let's get this straight, we are not asking everybody to join the CO. The CO is a limited form of organization that has come out of a particular struggle, in the Twin Cities food coops. Similar struggles have been going on in the women's movement, the black liberation movement and the native american movement, to name just a few. The outcome of these and other struggles will be a real revolutionary movement in the Twin Cities. The CO is not this revolutionary movement, but it is the outcome of one of the struggles that will be necessary to bring this movement to life.

In the interests of uniting all that can be united to take this movement forward, the CO tonight wishes to make a material gesture of unity to all other organizations in the Twin Cities revolutionary movement. We do not think it is likely that full-fledged organizational unity can be achieved in one easy step. We think it is more likely that there will be lots of little steps, filled with difficulties, leading to a qualitative leap. We think the easiest step to take first will be in the area of the third element in a revolutionary movement, programs.

Programs are the vehicles that carry the ideology of the organization to the masses. One of the key programs in the development of the CO has been the Working Woman and Man Bookstore in south Minneapolis. It is highly necessary to counter the effects of bourgeois ideology by vigorously putting forward revolutionary ideology in the form of literature, art and discussions, as well as many other forms. It is also necessary to develop the theoretical understanding

of working class cadre in the science of Marxism. Right now we are fortunate enough to be able to get our hands on revolutionary literature---some day soon this will be repressed. A bookstore is a key program in the development of a revolutionary movement. In that light, to establish a material basis for re-unifying the revolutionary movement in the Twin Cities, we are going to transform the Working Woman and Man Bookstore from a CO program to a movement bookstore, with all other organizations in the Twin Cities revolutionary movement invited to participate.

never carried out in practice;
sabotaged ...

cont. between SAYING & DOING again