

What is theory?

- The analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one another
- A belief, policy or procedure proposed or followed as the basis of action
- A scientifically acceptable body of principles offered to explain phenomena

What is the theoretical foundation?

The science of dialectical and historical materialism which by explaining the physical universe and its laws of development and motion (as a spiral, not a circle of development), illustrates the development of human society from the beginning primitive to the current Capitalism. Then explains the next step in human development.

Why do we need theory?

- Revolutionary organizations, leadership, cadre can only go so far without the clarity and direction of correct theory
- When you have that clarity, theoretical basis and understanding, it is easier to understand, commit, and perform revolutionary actions
- Armchair revolutionaries do not make changes in society. Theory without practice does not test theory, deepen theoretical understanding, advance the struggle for human development

How was theory introduced to the CO?

- First, a foundation of theory upon which to organize people
 - The initial cornerstone was Dialectical and Historical Materialism
 - Introduction to M/L analysis of Capitalism and class struggle
 - Control, Conflict and Change by James Forman
 - 20 Enemies by James Forman
 - Three Tactics by James Forman
 - Political Lesson One: Get Acquainted by James Forman
 - The importance of leadership and organization
 - Democratic centralism
 - Criticism-self-criticism

How was theory used in the CO?

- Then, an almost continual study and attempting to tie theory with practice
 - Political Economy by Leontiv
 - The Theory of Knowledge by Maurice Cornforth
 - On Practice by Mao Tse-Tung
 - On Contradiction by Mao Tse-Tung
 - M: Capital
 - L:
 - The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State by Frederick Engels
 - The development of the ITP

Personal experience with the study of theory and the putting theory into practice

Theory was at times very difficult to learn, at other times it was like a drink of cold water on a hot day, putting phenomena into structure and perspective. After study and analysis, the solution, the steps were much clearer. Because of clarity, came resolve. Because of resolve, it was often easier to carry out difficult tasks. I often thought “The problem with my practice isn’t theoretical, it’s ideological.” And this was true for many people.

Being raised under capitalism, I needed revolutionary theory to understand my experiences, the economic system, injustices, human relationships, my own practice. Without theory, I reacted emotionally to injustices, but didn’t have a basis to struggle.

Learn from other's struggles: the Making of Black Revolutionaries by James Forman

- P. 412
SNCC at certain stage of development of having potential to become mass revolutionary organization, but no clear theoretical basis
- P. 413
“...the need for internal, political education was great...” “...need for criticism-self-criticism...”
- P. 414
SNCC had acquired power with potential, but its internal contradictions caused it to fall. The Black Panther party rose but it also had a lack of theory and organization (no criticism-self-criticism).
- P. 429
Practice but not theory. “...little time to analyze, share experiences, do long-range planning...needed a constant process of education...”
- P. 447
”People must learn from their own experience, although study can quicken the pace.”
- P. 475 Chapter 58 – Rock Bottom
P. 478: The Introduction to Forman’s paper “Rock Bottom”
P. 480: The need to wage ideological struggle / With the correct theory and study, Forman was moving SNCC from anti-white to anti-imperialist (a ML class analysis)
P. 484: Forman took the time to read Lenin. Realization that blacks had been “**denied the opportunity to learn from those that preceded us**”

The study of the analysis of SNCC (SNCC development, problems, methods of correction and solutions) related to the development of the CO

- Organizational and individual development through revolutionary practice.
- Organizational contradiction: A centralized organizational structure under proletarian leadership and the unwavering maintenance of organizational discipline is the greatest revolutionary weapon of the masses.
- Theoretical contradiction: Constant summarization of our total experience and the study of revolutionary theory are essential elements in the process of discovering laws of revolution in the US.

Study of the internal struggle within SNCC:

SNCC		
Problem	Method of Correction	Theory
PB elements idealistically misguiding the political strategy on the basis of <u>moralistic purism</u> (i.e., non-violence as an end in itself).	SNCC's <u>social practice</u> in militant struggle exposed the fallacy of moral purism and the ineffectiveness of non-violence as anything other than a conditional <u>tactic</u> .	This was theory divorced from practice.
Lack of administration	Establish and maintain administrative structure and fund-raising apparatus.	Organizational
PB domination of the organization. PB characteristics: elitism, resistance to organizational structure and leadership. Working class members' liberalism and failure to exert leadership.	Organizational leadership summarizing and asserting itself to train, plan and give direction. In particular, provide direction to the working class elements, enabling them to seize democracy.	Organizational
PB romanticism, individualism and lack of discipline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political education • Exertion of proletarian leadership • Requiring adherence to organizational discipline • Criticism/self-criticism • Appropriate use of censure • Where problem not corrected, expulsion 	
Reactionary nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political education • Study of revolutionary theory (particularly the national question and the class question) 	

Theory

SNCC		
Problem	Method of Correction	Theory
Laziness, rhetoric instead of development of programs	Assertion of working class leadership and raising principled struggle to maintain organizational discipline	
Individualism and the cult of personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criticism/self-criticism • Imposition of organizational sanctions • Expulsion if problems not corrected 	
Looseness undermining organizational security	<p>Organize in such a manner that police infiltration is minimized and eliminated.</p> <p>Take a long-range view of history – test people in practical day-to-day work, check on their background, viewpoints, statements and actions.</p> <p>Maintain secrecy in certain organization matters.</p> <p>Use caution using the phone.</p>	
Maintaining political fundraising sources and maintaining political principles.	Shift funding sources to economic programs (coops), political demands for reparation (Black Manifesto), and organizational dues	

Theory

Internal struggle within the coops

Development of the CO within the context of revolutionary movements

Development of the CO carried out by leadership developed through other revolutionary struggle

There is no substitution for revolutionary social practice. Social practice is the true test of ideas. social practice must be guided by correct revolutionary theory.

CO		
Problem	Method of Correction	Theory
PB <u>moralism</u> and <u>utopianism</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two years of M/L study and summarizing experience before forming the CO • Social practice in the struggle to transform the ideological thrust of the coops 	
Need for economic base to sustain the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalization of economic programs • Political education • Ideological struggle • Applying knowledge of the laws of economics and Dialectical Materialism to sustain these programs and maintain their working class character 	
PB egotism and individualism leading to in-fighting, which would inevitably result in organizational disintegration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership formulated and began the implementation of the ideological assessment process (the ITP) • Leadership organized the two-line struggle • Results of the assessment process exposed PB elements in the organization • Leadership directed the culminating mass expulsion which marked the victory of <u>proletarian democracy</u> in the organization 	
Bourgeois ideology within the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ongoing ITP • Criticism/self-criticism • Summarization of practice • Ideological struggle and political criticism resulting in concrete Methods of Correction (steps) 	

Theory

CO		
Problem	Method of Correction	Theory
Bourgeois feminism	Political education and practice in the process of political criticism and discussion in the local women's union	
Organizational security	<p>From the onset of the origin of the organization, leadership established disciplined security practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New members were screened thoroughly and systematically. • Open and closed forms of organization • Internal organizational security (based on the principle of the need to know) • Political education on the traits of agents and informers • The ITP became a high level method of ensuring organizational insulation from police infiltration 	
Consensus decision making based on individualism	Development of an M/L organization	
Lack of knowing how to build an organization	<p>Leadership providing methods to build an M/L O:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-level study groups based on people's understanding and commitment • Systematic assessment of people • Assignments as a means to both develop people and to test them in practice 	<p>Organization – S</p> <p>Ideological struggle based on contradiction – Mao</p> <p>Look at people's social practice not what they say – Mao</p>
Lack of economic work/practice	Concept of class struggle which is grounded in economic work	On Practice
Lack of programs rooted in mass forms of struggle	Development of concrete programs to maintain links with the masses	
Carelessness with assets	Controlling assets	
<p>Relationships of domination/subordination in the coop structure</p> <p>Class contempt of some of the PB leadership in the coops towards working class people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of who the coop serves • Direct struggle to break social relations 	