



TWENTY
ENEMIES

by JAMES FORMAN

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20 ENEMY FORCES WITHIN A REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION THAT MUST BE COMBATTED

By James Forman

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INTRODUCTION

Individuals who belong to revolutionary organizations that are seeking and working toward the seizure of state power must not only study the theory and practices of other revolutionaries, but must carefully study our own experiences and draw conclusions from those experiences that will help others. This paper is based on long experiences in the revolutionary struggle inside the United States, collective discussions, wide reading of revolutionary experiences of others, intimate knowledge of many organizations in the United States and intense personal experiences in the past and currently as we struggle with many sisters and brothers and as they struggle with us.

People are urged to discuss and expand upon the contents of this paper. It must always be stressed that not written or spoken word is the definitive statement upon any subject, but only a guide for action, learning, discussion and further exploration. All of us must strive to contribute to revolutionary theory by summing up our experiences and drawing lessons for the future. A revolutionary learns a great deal from his mistakes.

To wage the ideological struggle does not only mean to try to convince those outside of revolutionary organizations, but the internal struggle in organizations and within people is a never ending process. Revolutionaries must constantly be on guard for tendencies inside a revolutionary organization that will lead to its destruction and a retarding of the revolutionary process. Constant vigilance must be exercised and corrosive tendencies fought vigorously at the time they begin to spring up. Otherwise they will grow like deadly cancerous tissues and infect the vitality of healthy revolutionary organizations. Every revolutionary pamphlet, article, essay, memorandum or book is written to serve a need and this paper is written to consolidate the thoughts of many people who have had negative experiences with the tendencies listed as enemy forces within a revolutionary organization.

These tendencies are manifested in many of us and in some sisters and brothers, they exist to a greater degree than in others. Many organizations have failed to raise to a discussion level many of the points contained in this essay and as a consequence, revolutionary struggle is not proceeding at the pace it should or could if internal struggle was waged around the implications of the twenty enemy forces within a revolutionary organization that must be combatted.

Back-biting, underhand tactics, gossip, rumors, incorrect statements and laziness are just some of the destructive tendencies that plague some organizations that seek to call themselves revolutionaries. Struggle could be and must be waged within individuals who manifest these tendencies and others, but the tendencies themselves must be exposed and all effort must be made to correct them. Without the struggle to eliminate the causes, then other sisters and brothers will be infected with the same deadly poison and we will find ourselves constantly fighting the enemy within rather than United States racism, capitalism and imperialism. For it is impossible to fight the external enemy when one is constantly engaged in internal strife and internal strife is rampant in many organizations that call themselves revolutionary.

The revolutionary struggle in the United States, however, is mounting each day and many people are learning revolutionary theory and trying to struggle with themselves and their comrades because we live in crucial times, a time when we must try to recruit more and more people into the difficult struggle against United States imperialism with all its racist forms and institutions. We must resist the destruction of our offensive work by the twenty enemy forces with a revolutionary organization.

1. THE LACK OF PRACTICE AND DAY TO DAY WORK

What we do and how we behave is usually called social practice. And social practice is the primary basis for learning and testing all our ideas. Much has been written on the subject, but Mao Tse Tung's essay, "On Practice," stands as a classic work in talking about the role and importance of concrete work and social practice. It is not

my intention to restate the material contained in this essay, but the reading of that article is absolutely essential and should accompany the reading of this paper. Moreover, all revolutionaries should constantly reread “On Practice” for there are many insights contained within it and the more we struggle each day the more profound becomes the implication of actual work as the basis for learning and the testing of ideas. People who want to change the oppressive conditions under which we live and who strive to be revolutionary but are not willing to actively engage the repressive forces of the state in struggle on a day to day basis are not very serious about the thoughts in their mind. Many people have ideas about how society should be like and what must be done to change the institution and to work for a revolution. But this is not enough.

Often these ideas do not conform to reality and if they do conform to reality there is only one way to test them: Try to put them to work and see if they succeed. Testing our ideas in concrete work is the only way we will ever know if they are correct. Moreover, we will never change the world if we are not prepared to work very hard each day to implement our ideas. There is an old saying that you shall know them by their deeds. This simply means that the words we utter are not sufficient. What we do is important and primary.

Quite often people look for blueprints for revolution. They say there must be a blueprint for the new society. This is absurd. There cannot be a blueprint for the new society. We can have general ideas and stated objectives that describe how we would like to see the affairs of the world conducted. But if we fail to do any work to change the world, then all the “blueprints” in the world will not make any difference. If the four students who sat at the counter in Greensboro, North Carolina in February 1960 had waited for a blueprint of the perfect society, then much of the political consciousness which we see in the United States might not exist, for the actions of those four students sparked a wave of southern student protests that has led to many developments in this country. Action was fundamental to the oppressed students throughout the South and they helped to infuse many people with a commitment to change. Their work, their day to day struggle, their social practice was paramount.

For some of us the revolutionary movement in the United States is a young one and we have made several mistakes on all fronts. But if we had not been willing to act, to engage the control forces of the state in concrete struggle, then we would not have the legacy of experiences by which we could judge correct forms of struggle. There are many dogmatic armchair revolutionaries who parade around in the name of Marxist-Leninist thought who fail to understand the creative role in the revolutionary struggle by those who do not consider themselves Marxists. Reading and studying all the classics of Marxism will not, by itself, help the revolutionary struggle. One must act. Action is primary. Social practice is fundamental and from our work we will learn more and more theory.

Personally, I know that we cannot make a revolution in the United States without the aid of all revolutionary thought that has been tested in practice by groups and countries that have made and are seeking to make revolution. It is not an accident that the science of Marxist-Leninist thought has guided those who seek to make a socialist revolution. All of us in the United States must study this science in order to learn to apply it to our concrete realities. But the fundamental thing that you learn from studying Marxism is that social practice is primary and from this arises all knowledge. The science and art of making a revolution arose from the historical actions of people and has been tested in many countries.

Revolutionary theory is important, but it is misleading and false to assume that all revolutionary theory comes wrapped neatly in a sterile package of old ideas. People who are engaged in acts against the state are guided by some form of ideas; as they work against the state or any of the control mechanisms they develop more theory based on their concrete work. It is also misleading to assume that people who have worked in the revolutionary struggle in the United States have not produced a body of material that can be called revolutionary theory. Their concrete work and their understanding of ideas of other revolutionaries have helped them to extend the volume of revolutionary theory.

We do ourselves and the revolutionary struggle a great disservice if we do not begin to realize that our concrete work in the United States must be described in writing for the benefit of all the world, especially ourselves. We must constantly sum up our work, our revolutionary effort and our social practices so that we might learn what is correct and positive and what must be further developed. At the same time we must discard that which is irrelevant and negative. To assume that the Bolsheviks, the Chinese, the Vietnamese, the Cubans, the Algerians and other revolutionaries have not made mistakes from which they profited is not to understand that there are no blueprints for revolutions. The concrete work that we do in the final analysis is the basis for truth.

Within the United States we must realize that we are struggling to make a revolution in the most advanced technological society ever known in the history of the world, a society where the dogmatic assertions of an exclusive class struggle must be rooted in the realities of racial and national oppression. Thus our work in this country, our social practices, will lead to a body of knowledge that will enrich revolutionary theory, but this will not occur automatically. We must struggle each day against the state and its control mechanisms and constantly summarize our experiences so that we will have theories to guide our future work.

Many people with extensive social practice, people who have had long experience in organizing, sometimes do not feel they have the ability to write down those experiences, but in the United States tape recorders are readily available and all activists and revolutionaries who can talk should record their experiences on tape and transcribe them. The sensitive revolutionary organizer is aware that some people have acquired writing skills while others have not. These are accidents of history, but every revolutionary organizer must always struggle to get his fellow workers to summarize their experiences through the use of a tape recorder or through the written word. (Those with writing skills must teach others those skills.) Some people with writing skills simply do not take the time to reflect and to realize that the experiences we gain in the revolutionary struggle are important and a basis for future actions.

Social practice, what we do and how we behave, is the basis for truth and the development of knowledge. The more we root ourselves in the struggles against the state and strive to enlarge our ranks – the greater our knowledge of revolutionary action becomes. As we work each day against the ruling class, we build upon revolutionary theory and we should study our own experiences and those of other revolutionaries so that we can have more effective social practice. If we fail to work each day and to organize for the revolutionary struggle, we are helping the United States imperialist powers to maintain their oppressive administration and control over the people and ourselves.

2. LOSS OF MORALE

The greatest strength that a revolutionary has is morale. The higher the morale, the more efficient the revolutionary work. In other words, a defeated person mentally is a defeated person in reality. One of the reasons that the United States will not win in Vietnam is because the morale of United States soldiers is at a low ebb. Imagine an army where forty to fifty percent of the soldiers are using dope of one kind or another and many of them are heroin addicts. No amount of administrative rules will booster the morale of the soldiers fighting Vietnam because the United States is fighting an unjust war and there is no basis for morale among its troops.

Revolutionary organizers must fight to maintain their morale. Many people who start out with enthusiasm tend to drop by the wayside because they have lost their morale and have become frustrated. One of the key reasons for the loss of morale is failure to understand the long range nature of the revolutionary struggle. Revolutions do not come in instant packages or short commercials. Revolutions are a long term view of struggle. Inside the United States this long range viewpoint is essential for the odds against the revolutionary forces are immense.

In addition to taking the long range viewpoint, it is necessary to realize that perfection does not come in people. We are all human and we have our positive and negative factors. Those who look for

perfection in humans are going to become demoralized, frustrated and unable to function, not realizing that perfection does not exist within themselves. We should strive to develop our strengths and minimize our weaknesses. This requires considerable effort, but morale will increase as we accentuate the positives and struggle to eliminate the negatives.

Loss of morale will result from constant infighting. Many of the quarrels inside organizations are a result of uneven political development and sometimes a failure on the part of leadership to recognize that its primary function is to train, to plan and to give direction. And this means that people with long experiences in the revolutionary struggle should strive to find the time and must be involved in the political education of incoming and advanced cadres.

The reason for this lies in the tremendous amount of experience that older members of an organization have acquired. Their social practice, their accumulated day to day work – usually gives them insights into struggles against the state, insights in how to deal with internal conflicts, insights into the mobilization of people and insights into the application of revolutionary theory.

Leadership has the responsibility to share its experiences with new members of an organization. If it does not do this, the results will be disastrous sooner or later, for the new member will not have a method by which he can participate in the experiences of the older members of the organization, leading to an uneven political development.

Those in leadership positions must realize that the morale of people is very important to the revolutionary struggle and the actions of leadership reflect on the morale of the people. Organizations and people who are selected for leadership positions must always strive to maintain their revolutionary principles and not betray the confidence of their members and people in general.

Some people in the revolutionary struggle lose their morale because they do not have a method of changing the stagnation that is often

apparent in some organizations. This is a result of an authoritarian structure. Leadership must constantly avoid authoritarian structures and actions and strive for an interaction between the base and the top not only in theory but in practice. Failure to hear and to act on the correct ideas that spring from the base will lead to a loss of morale and a retarding of the revolutionary struggle.

Sometimes people lose their morale because they believe in the cult of the personality and are often betrayed by the great “leader.” It is very dangerous and idealistic to place faith in the great “leader” rather than principles and collective organization. Too many people have had their hopes raised by the “leader” only to have them dumped when the leader goes astray. The fault is not only in the so-called leader, but in the failure of people to realize that a people’s movement must be guided by the people and not by the great “leader.”

Women lose their morale through the actions of male chauvinists who fail to realize there is a special oppression of women in the society and often in revolutionary organizations as well as the home. Some brothers have dismissed the complaints of sisters as women’s lib. “We’re all exploited. No such thing. I don’t exploit you, bitch. What do you mean? I’ll knock the shit out of you, if you keep pushing that crap!” Stated long range goals, a firm political education program that studies the revolutionary experiences of all people and concrete work each day – these are the three best prescriptions for combating loss of morale and sustaining the morale of the revolutionary organizer and members of revolutionary organizations.

3. LAZINESS

Much of the rationalizing of the failure to do day to day work comes from plain laziness and a failure to understand the urgency of the work that must be done. Perhaps there is a psychological basis for laziness and this subject needs to be further explored, but many people have acquired lazy habits from street life, as children, students and community organizers and still wish to be known as

revolutionaries. Revolutionary organizations must eliminate the lazy person from its ranks, for the effects are corrosive and tend to demoralize those who are disciplined and who work very hard.

4. FAILURE TO STUDY REVOLUTIONARY THEORY AND THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHER REVOLUTIONARIES

A serious person committed to revolution in the United States cannot ever take the attitude that we do not have something to learn from all revolutionaries. We must build upon all revolutionary thinkers and test our ideas in practice.

It is important to read and to study biographies and works about revolutionary thinkers. This type of reading gives insight into some of the background material and references that are often cited in the writings of revolutionaries. Books about the political, economic and social developments within revolutionary countries are important. Some books that are supposed to be critical of revolutionaries and revolutionary countries are often useful if one reads critically. Naturally there is no substitute for reading primary sources, but it must always be stressed that one cannot read primary sources one time and expect to gain all the wisdom contained in these works. Revolutionary works as well, as all other important works, must be read and re-read and we will gain more knowledge as we read again.

All those seeking to engage in revolutionary struggle should make a priority of acquiring revolutionary books. We can still buy books in the United States – some books. But it is not unreasonable to assume that there will come a day when revolutionary books will be banned from bookstores. We should resist this possible intention, but we should prepare for it by acquiring all the books possible on political and military struggles anywhere in the world. All inputs of information on revolutionary struggle will increase our understanding and commitment.

Where possible, we should strive to keep articles and stories that appear in revolutionary newspapers and magazines since many fresh ideas first appear in these forms. In order to keep abreast of current

events we must read establishment newspapers and magazines and sometimes this gives us information on the intentions of the United States government. Political education means that the revolutionary must keep abreast of the changing circumstances in the world. Without knowledge of what is occurring in the world the revolutionary organizer and revolutionary leadership will not be able to shift direction when that is required.

In some organizations, revolutionary theory is not systematically discussed and people flounder and stumble upon revolutionary concepts the best way they can, often distorting the ideas of revolutionary thinkers.

And some people who parade as revolutionaries have done the black struggle serious harm by attacks on Marxism as a white ideology written for white people. One leading personality used to preach that Marx was a honky and had nothing to say to black people. All these statements and many more have had their negative effects. Rapidly, people are repudiating this poison and beginning to understand that there are scientific truths in the works of Marx and Lenin, Mao Tse Tung, Kwame Nkrumah, Fanon and many other revolutionary thinkers.

People who attack Marxism as a white ideology are not serious about revolution. Many of the sciences that we study each day in some form were developed by the accumulated wisdom of people including white people. We utilize scientific discoveries regardless of the race of the person who is credited for the discovery. Those who attack Marxism as a white ideology simply do not understand and refuse to recognize the scientific truth contained in the discoveries of Marx about the functioning of societies and how revolutions are made.

Political growth will not come simply through social practice, although this is primary and must never be minimized. However, revolutionary study must accompany practice. Political growth is essential and political growth will come through reading and intensive study of the revolutionary experiences we acquire and

those of others. Coupled with concrete works against the repressive forces of the state, we are armed for the intense struggle that we must wage.

5. FAILURE TO ENGAGE IN CRITICISM AND SELF-CRITICISM

To fully understand the implications of criticism and self-criticism, we should strive to master dialectical materialism, a world outlook that holds that all events are rooted in material substances that can be verified by observation and must be understood in their historical development, their interconnections, their changes, their development from one stage to another and interdependence upon all other forms of matter. In his essay, "On Contradiction," Mao Tse Tung sets forth a detailed analysis of dialectics that must be studied. Again, it is not my intention to summarize Mao's thought. Rather, I refer to this essay and the need to understand dialectical materialism so that the scientific basis of criticism and self-criticism is clearly understood.

There is nothing perfect in the world and nothing is fixed. All things change and are constantly changing. One of the ways that revolutionaries have of improving upon their ideas and experiences is to subject those ideas and experiences to the criticism of others. Collective discussions about plans, methods of work, ideas and policy decisions will produce greater results than unilateral actions. And the more people who bring their wisdom to bear on a subject the greater the reflection of the reality. Criticism improves the quality of the work that we are seeking to do in the name of revolution.

Once we have taken actions and implemented plans it is absolutely necessary to constantly evaluate those actions and plans and to bring to bear collective discussions and criticism. What were the positives; what were the negatives; where was strength exhibited and where was weakness displayed? We study our strengths in order to maximize them and our weaknesses in order to eliminate them and thus grow stronger.

Sometimes we fail to recognize that criticism and self-criticism must stem above all from a desire for unity. Some people do not have the strength to criticize or often criticism is all negative without pointing out the good points. No action is all negative. Somewhere there are some positive points in the actions we have performed. And it is the duty of the brother and sister who is striving for unity to not only criticize but to take into account the historical development of an organization, a person, or an action performed by the group.

Self-criticism is sometimes the hardest task for many of us. We often can see incorrect actions in others but fail to assess our responsibility for those actions, and sometimes people think they are above criticism leading to an authoritarian style of work. Within a group we must ask people to give criticism of themselves so that they develop the habit of self-criticism and we must always examine ourselves for mistakes. Many times people point the finger at the political unit or members within the unit without realizing that all the member of a political unit or group share equal responsibility for actions.

The objective of criticism and self-criticism is to bring about greater purpose of will. Transformation of old habits and ways of thinking and methods of carrying out work will not come about without criticism and self-criticism. Without such transformation we often retard the revolutionary struggle.

Leadership, especially, must set the style and tone of criticism and self-criticism. It must constantly evaluate its actions and infuse this spirit in others. Where leadership is authoritarian, certainly the spirit of criticism and self-criticism will not prevail and just as certain the organization that does not engage in this practice is marked for doom and a reactionary role in the revolutionary struggle.

Some people erect many ego barriers and defense mechanisms that prevent criticism and self-criticism. Then too some people engage in criticism at a very low level, without offering alternatives or suggestions for improvement.

Criticism and self-criticism that strives to consolidate a unity of will and to transform incorrect habits and ways of actions is the most valuable weapon that a revolutionary organization possesses and it must be cultivated as a tender young rose among a field of weeds. The strength that we will all derive from criticism and self-criticism is beyond measure and absolutely necessary for the rough days ahead and the fulfillment of any revolutionary objectives.

6. LIBERALISM

In his essay, “Combat Liberalism,” Mao Tse Tung has clearly defined many forms that liberalism takes and the destructive nature of this tendency. We have placed this entire short essay as an appendix and the study and constant discussion of its contents is mandatory to fully understand this paper. In my personal experiences and observing and interacting with many others I have found the contents of the essay illuminating. Many people after reading it have had a scientific basis for criticism and self-criticism. Inside the United States with its stress on compromises, individualism and low level political discussions — many of us are affected by liberalism. In essence liberalism is the refusal to engage in principled ideological struggle inside and outside of a revolutionary organization and if we are truly revolutionary we will struggle to eliminate all forms of liberalism from our social practice.

7. FAILURE TO EXERT LEADERSHIP

As we have stated, the primary function of leadership is to train, to plan and to give direction. In order to do this leadership must be thoroughly acquainted with all phases of the struggle — political, military, cultural and economic. Leadership must read widely and study developing trends in the world and within the territory in which it fights. Under no circumstances can anyone in a leadership position reflect a lazy, know-all attitude. Leadership requires hard work, a willingness to sacrifice time and energy and to work each day to help implement revolutionary objectives. Above all leadership must strive to thoroughly master the science and art of making a revolution.

Many conflicts in organizations are really conflicts in the leadership and the failure of leadership to understand that its function is to give direction and to plan. Leadership shows its courage and wisdom in the plans that are formulated and its willingness to train people to implement those plans. Quite often people confuse leadership with the giving of orders or the unilateral execution of some “daring act.” But this is hardly the case and reflects an authoritarian spirit and adventurism.

Some people in leadership positions fail to plan either through incompetence, laziness, a loss of morale or a confusion of roles. Sometimes the last point arises when people in leadership positions do not take the necessary time to plan, to investigate the facts, to study concrete situations, to read revolutionary material, to summarize experiences, to heed the demands of the base, much less people outside its organization. Helter-skelter-random activity, failure to pursue agreed objectives, constant shifting of activities, failure to train and to educate new member and to recruit, liberalism, inadequate planning of long and short range goals, disregard for the importance of meeting, constant infighting — all these are forms of failure to exert leadership. And these tendencies have a disastrous effect upon the base and cause a loss of morale and disintegration of revolutionary work

Leadership which strives to be authoritarian, demanding blind loyalty and the rigidity of the green berets is a leadership that is not only faulty but the type of leadership that will find itself without a base, with more former members outside the organization than within.

Eliminating from positions of power those who fail to exert leadership is not an easy task and in an authoritarian organization such efforts often lead to brutality and terror against those who dare to criticize in the interest of revolutionary work. Hence it is absolutely essential that sincere people evaluate very carefully those they select to install in leadership positions. And in organizations they seek to join they must pay close attention to the leadership structure and how it is composed, by what methods of work does it

carry out its functions, its movement history, class attitudes, relations with fellow workers and treatment of women.

Careful selection of leadership and controls to insure that the leadership is responsible to the base are the two most important considerations for a sincere, dedicated revolutionary who does not want to work alone, for that is futile in the long run.

People in leadership positions cannot be liberal with each other and must constantly assess whether they are performing a correct role. The members and cadres of a revolutionary organization have an indisputable right to demand that all those in leadership positions perform in the interest of the organization and the revolutionary struggle. Moreover, they have the indisputable right to replace anyone in leadership position who betrays the rules and regulations of the revolutionary organization and retards the revolutionary struggle. But power is not something that people give up easily and usually they do not without a fight.

8. LACK OF INITIATIVE AND IMAGINATION

The initiative is an advantage in warfare and in concrete revolutionary struggle and organizing. Guided by objectives, rules and regulations, the revolutionary organizer must always strive to initiate forms of work that will help the revolution. To sit and wait for orders, specific details of every assignment and never to use our creative imagination is to retard the revolutionary struggle. No books will ever give all the details for action in every specific situation. Marxist-Leninist thought is not a dogma but a guide to action. Intense creative powers must be applied to the revolutionary struggle wherever we fight. Wide reading of the revolutionary experiences of others, the acquisition of skills, study and a determination to engage in constant practice will all lead to an increased capacity to assume the initiative and creatively use our imagination.

9. INDIVIDUALISM AND LACK OF DISCIPLINE

Discipline implies self-control, a willingness to submit to the rules and regulations of an organization and a willingness to follow the authority that must be exercised in a revolutionary organization. Based on an understanding of the objectives of the revolutionary organization and a need to work consistently in an orderly fashion — using initiative and imagination — organizational and self-discipline can be acquired.

People often disregard discipline because they have not given up the traits of individualism, which is rampant in a capitalistic society. Arriving late for meetings, failure to execute details, performing work in a sloppy manner are all signs of the lack of discipline. Naturally, disregard for the rules and regulations of an organizations stands at the apex individualism and a lack of discipline. These tendencies must be weeded out immediately for they have a deadly effect upon the morale of people who are disciplined.

Discipline can be increased by the acquisition of address books, appointment calendars, diary pads, three by five cards for addresses that can be filed without retyping and a refusal to take on more work than one can handle. Extreme security must be taken with addresses.

A unity of will and purpose can never be achieved without conscious efforts of all members of a revolutionary organization to strive to achieve the maximum discipline. When we give our word that we are going to do something, this carries a burden of responsibility and trust and all efforts should be made to keep our promises. Often quarrels and disagreements have arisen in organizations because people have failed to keep their word and promises. Revolutionary work has been retarded because this or that comrade has said that he would take such and such responsibility and failed to deliver at the proper moment.

As the armed struggle in the United States escalates, the importance of discipline will increase. It is not easy to acquire conscious discipline. Even many who are forced to discipline themselves on jobs for fear of loss of pay and dismissal refuse to consciously discipline themselves in a revolutionary organization. (Good work

habits should always be kept and not discarded.) Actually, a lack of discipline is a disregard for the feelings of others and an egotistic assumption that your actions are more important than the group's or some other brother's and sister's.

When we enter groups and organizations we have automatically pledged to give up something of ourselves for a greater unity and we must expect that greater unity to exercise some control over our actions. We no longer can think of just ourselves but of the group, the political unit, the revolutionary organization and the revolutionary movement. Constant political education and group study are the two best methods for instilling discipline in all members, because discipline must be conscious. An intense love for the revolutionary struggle, which will come through constant political education and day to day work, stimulates a greater desire for conscious discipline in revolutionary work.

Thus, to build discipline and eliminate individualism we must stress constant political education, criticism and self-criticism, the appropriate use of censure. Ultimately, revolutionaries must purge from their ranks those who consistently violate organizational discipline.

10. ELITISM

Many people and organizations take an elitist attitude when they think their small numbers are the cream of the crop. Students in particular are full of elitist concepts due to their educational and class experiences but there are many other people who judge themselves as vanguard forces, regardless of the size of their ranks and some of their social practices, revealing elitist tendencies.

Elitism tends to make people very sectarian and instills a dislike for mass work and love of people. Those who do not understand the laws of history and the role that millions of people will play in revolutionary activity will fall prey to elitism, isolate themselves and become ineffective.

11. LACK OF INTERNAL DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITARIAN ACTIONS

No person or revolutionary organization will grow successfully if internal democracy is not practiced. The form of internal democracy will vary according to the nature of the work that an organization is trying to carry out, but collective discussions must exist regardless of the size of the collective.

Some brothers and sisters are confused about internal democracy thinking that all members of an organization must be present before any decisions can be reached. This is ultra-democracy and can never be achieved in practice.

In some organizations calling themselves revolutionary people are constantly purged because they failed to obey the whims of some authoritarian person in charge. Strong political units that are not afraid of authoritarian actions and actively combat them must be built to ensure that the revolutionary process is accelerated.

There is a distinction that must be made between individual authoritarian actions and the collective authority of a group. Nor should it be assumed that once a group has invested power in some person that he should not exercise his authority, but power should not be invested in anyone who is not willing to promote collective discussion and internal democracy.

12. EGOTISM

We are not using the term egotism in the sense that people should not be aware of themselves. In psychological terms we all have egos. Rather we are accentuating a tendency that expresses itself in conceit and the dwelling upon one's self and one's interests. Many people in political movements have used organizations to build themselves rather than the organization. They have willfully disregarded the interests of the brothers and sisters who worked with them and concerned themselves only with their own interest and social mobility within the ranks of progressive and revolutionary

forces. They have lied, cheated, plotted, disregarded organizational rules, plundered resources and abused the trust and confidence that people have placed in them.

Egotism is rampant in the United States and is a reflection of the drive for profit and social mobility, characteristics of a capitalistic society. Egotism flourishes in organizations that do not have stated rules and objectives and a membership base that is afraid to challenge the actions of the egotist.

Egotism is manifested in many different forms:

- (a) The egotist usually refuses to do detail work, thinking that he or she is above the day to day, tedious work that is necessary to build a revolutionary organization.
- (b) The egotist is unwilling to struggle with other members of the organization, assuming they are ignorant or stupid or not at the proper level of development.
- (c) The egotist tends to be elitist in outlook, believing in the privileged few.
- (d) The egotist, therefore, actually has a disregard for the masses, although rhetoric is often couched in terms of the people.
- (e) The egotist seeks his own personal advantage in most situations.
- (f) The egotist is very authoritarian.
- (g) The egotist is usually chauvinistic. We have known some popular egotistic revolutionary heroes who consistently beat women and/or kicked them out of bed after intercourse. (There are many subtle forms of chauvinism but these examples are real.)
- (h) The egotistic person hoards information. When there is a travel assignment in the name of the organization, the egotistic person is concerned with his or her own advantage and not that of the organization that the person represents.

Egotism must be fought all the time, for it appears in various forms in all of us. Absolute vigilance about the rules and regulations of an organization is essential and no person must be permitted to violate them without censure and ultimate expulsion, if necessary. It follows

that without rules and regulations, as we have stated, the egotist will have a field day.

Constant political education and intense criticism are vital. Often the egotist will agree with a criticism but violate the spirit of the session immediately after it's over.

Many of us have seen important political units and organizations crippled by the egotistic actions and words of many people. The class basis of egotism must be thoroughly examined, but where egotism flourishes it can readily be determined that it is an authoritarian organization whose members are weak politically and do not understand the role of criticism and self-criticism.

13. JEALOUSY

Webster's unabridged dictionary defines jealousy as suspicion, and apprehension of rivalry. Seldom is jealousy discussed within the ranks of revolutionaries because it is usually assumed that this emotion does not exist, but this is hardly the case. People and organizations have often indicated jealousy of each other, masking this tendency under some form of revolutionary jargon or back-biting tactics. Some people fail to do what they are supposed to do on the theory that they do not know what others are doing and therefore they cannot function. At base in some of these arguments is jealousy and a low level of organizational development and political experience.

Jealousy will lead to inaction and a greedy, selfish tendency, trying to herd up everything for one's organization and refusing to realize that in a revolutionary struggle we must share experiences and resources in order to make the ranks of revolutionaries stronger and stronger.

14. SECTARIAN ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS

Sects are usually small, exclusive and narrow minded. Within the ranks of revolutionaries there are many people and organizations

that take a narrow view of the revolutionary process, insisting that some dogma they inherited twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty years ago is the only correct approach to revolution.

Within the United States there are many small organizations that absolutely refuse to join the ranks of a larger unity not because they disagree in principle but because they will have to relinquish some of the prestige and glory of their little sectarian corner of the revolution. Often it is best to let sectarian groups wallow in their egotistic myths, for in a larger unity they bring these attitudes, often demoralizing fresh and new forces that are serious about revolutionary action.

15. ISOLATION

In my paper, Three Tactics [Transcriber's note: this paper is now out of print], we have dealt with the problem of isolation at great length. In essence, sectarian attitudes, jealousy, elitism, refusal to do mass work and incorrect political training, all lead to isolation and retarding of the revolutionary struggle.

16. ADVENTURISM AND ROMANTICISM

Usually when people speak of adventurism in the United States they are putting down military forms of struggle, and this is not the point I am trying to make. However, not to realize that revolution in the United States is the work of millions of people and not a small group of military specialists is to take an adventurist and romantic attitude toward revolution, usually caused by extreme frustration and a failure to study dialectical and historical materialism, the method and science of how revolutions are made.

17. MALE CHAUVANISM

See Three Tactics.

18. REACTIONARY NATIONALISM

See Three Tactics.

19. POLICE INFILTRATION

The greatest danger facing revolutionaries in the United States is not police infiltration, but a refusal to organize in such a manner that police infiltration will be minimized and eliminated. People are often brought into revolutionary organizations without a thorough check on their backgrounds. Often all they have to do is to present themselves and they are automatically made a part of the working force and inner circles. This is a fault of the organization and not a credit to the police infiltrator.

The revolutionary movement in the United States has not reached the point where police infiltrators are killed after they publicly reveal their role in helping to destroy an organization or frame one of its members on trumped up murder charges or a conspiracy, but this day is fast approaching.

The best safeguard against police infiltrators is to take the long range view of history and test people in practical, day to day work, checking on their background, points of view, statements and actions. Secrecy in certain organizational matters is another protection from police informers.

One cannot be too careful, but at the same time mass political work must be stepped up, for it is impossible to make the total population police informers. In fact police informers and frame-ups are a deliberate part of psychological warfare waged upon an oppressed people. The more the government can make the people feel there are informers everywhere, the more resistant to organizational work they will become.

Concurrent with police infiltrators is police surveillance. The simple device of not using the telephone very much will help eliminate some forms of police surveillance.

20. LACK OF ADMINISTRATION

Within the ranks of some revolutionaries there is a dislike for administration, for it usually involves office work, typing, filing, writing reports, et cetera. Sometimes people have not been trained in administration and therefore erect defense mechanisms against this type of work on the basis of what they are doing in the field is more important. Often administration is relegated to sisters from a conscious and unconscious male chauvinist position that women should do the office work while the brave male is out making the revolution.

Actually, administration is one of the most important tasks of revolutionary work and cannot be considered something that is not significant. Control and discipline are impossible without an administrative apparatus. Initiative and imagination becomes spontaneous and lessons learned from revolutionary work are lost. An administrative network helps to codify and to spread the political lessons learned from actual work to other members of the revolutionary organization and to the revolutionary movement in general.

Big business and the United States government have the peoples money to operate administrative networks. They have plundered our labor and stolen our riches and take that money to further control us with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency. But there are many thousands of other administrative networks that the oppressors use to control the exploited population. Vast sums of money are spent on the latest research and computer management that will further the interest of the imperialists while some of us in the revolutionary struggle do not have adequate typewriters, mimeograph machines, much less printing operations or the use of the latest communication devices.

But administration is something that we must all discuss and raise to a new level of awareness, for without efficient administration we will retard the revolutionary struggle. Every revolutionary must spend time learning how to type so that we can do our work more

efficiently. That is the last tool of administration in this highly technological society.

Many of our brothers and sisters have performed services for the giant corporations and are still committed to revolution. In these functions they have learned new skills in programming and management that the ranks of revolutionaries could desperately use. We must stretch out, politically educate many people with technological skills and bring them into the ranks of the revolution. We fail to do this at our own peril and we will continue to administrate with horse and buggy while the imperialists use the latest in computer management.

Under no circumstances will our administrative network ever equal those of the imperialists, but we could make more efforts at simple letter writing and report writing and share these with our brothers and sisters. Many meetings take a long time because the organizer wants to share all of his experiences with the group. He or she has been working in isolation and when the political unit meets there is an urgency to talk about work that has been done, usually highlighting many details rather than the essence. Written reports save much time and they can be shared with others.

Some will argue that the intelligence network of the United States makes it a security risk to write reports. This is extreme paranoia and a failure to realize there are some things you write down and some details are omitted, but the revolutionary movement will not grow if people do not share their experiences through the written word. This fear of the government cannot stop the population once it is armed with ideas and a determination to make a revolution. Writing experiences and using those experiences to teach others is an important tool in the revolutionary struggle.

Stress must be placed on discussion of written material, for we usually do not grasp all the essence of a written report or document with a quick reading. We must strive to internalize the lessons of revolutionary experiences and that comes through discussion, criticism and self-criticism.

Administration must be stressed, for all of us are in the process of learning how to make a revolution in the most technological society in the world and the wisdom that we are acquiring must be passed on to future generations. Among many colonized people the oral tradition is very strong, but when passed on orally many insights are lost from generation to generation.

Some revolutionary organizations do not have a historical file and many leaflets and newspapers that are published are lost, no copies can be found, the files are in disarray. This is a lack of administration and a criminal waste of energy. Every revolutionary organization, political unit or cell must assign someone as the keeper of records. Systematic filing of leaflets, bulletins, reports and minutes should be done by someone who is security cautious and all the members of a political unit should struggle to keep their own individual files. Material passed out at a meeting must be kept in a safe place, for we never know when it might be useful. It is again criminal for a people to lose their records and not to have copies in more than one safe place.

Perhaps the first step in overcoming the lack of administration is to recognize that no organization will ever grow to its potential if it does not have an administrative network and that administration is not shit work, but a vital part of the revolutionary struggle. Every member of a political unit or revolutionary organization must be concerned with the administrative network that belongs to the organization.

One aspect of administration that is often ignored at great damage is that of fund raising and resource gathering. In the final analysis the base of an organization must be totally responsible for supplying the necessary funds to carry out revolutionary work. If we fail to organize fundraising at the base, we are not involving people to the extent where they feel politically responsible for the growth of the revolutionary organization.

Taxation of the community and the membership must become the standard by which we ultimately raise money for revolutionary work

and this will be easier if we are truly serving the people. In this respect we should thoroughly understand that a financial contribution to a revolutionary organization is a political act, an act that must be multiplied. If our programs and objectives are clear and revolutionary and if our social practice is worthy of the people's respect -- we will not have much difficulty in finding financial support.

Every revolutionary must have food, clothing and shelter. Some can get jobs in this country and some cannot. Welfare is often ignored out of stupidity. Where possible we should utilize the small amount of money that is provided by the welfare system. It will at least provide us with food and some shelter.

Only until we realize that the fund raising machinery of a revolutionary organization is perhaps one of the most vital parts of administration will we begin to gather some of the resources we need to survive and to help make the revolution.

We have stressed the role and importance of administration in the general sense, giving only a few details of how it might be improved, but additional ideas will come when every revolutionary seeks to find those persons who might help in administration -- research, fund raising, communications, printing and publishing, and organizing. For the good organizers is a good administrator. And we cannot establish an efficient administration without organizing.

Inside the United States many of us are in the process of summing up the experiences of the sixties and preparing for the long years ahead, especially the decade of the seventies. We have acquired much experience in the last ten years and there have been many profound changes in the consciousness of the people. The changes that have taken place in the minds of many people cannot be underestimated. We will become very frustrated if we fail to realize the tremendous difference in the political consciousness of people today and the consciousness that existed in the beginning of the sixties. That change did not come about just through discussions, but rather concrete struggle against the oppressive forces of the state.

Many people in the future will ignore the history of the sixties, to their own peril. One lesson that stands clear to many of us is the absolute necessity to wage the ideological struggle and to stress the importance of revolutionary theory. The police infiltration and surveillance, the many forms of co-optation, the difficulty in maintaining revolutionary commitment, the betrayal of many of our friends and former associates, the observation that many people who were once revolutionary long years ago are today retired and enjoying a good living -- all these phenomena are best combatted by waging the ideological struggle and striving each day to engage in concrete work, fighting at all times to keep our moral and revolutionary commitment.

COMBAT LIBERALISM

by Mao Tse-Tung

We stand for active ideological struggle because it is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Party and the revolutionary organizations in the interest of our fight. Every Communist and revolutionary should take up this weapon.

But liberalism rejects ideological struggle and stands for unprincipled peace, thus giving rise to a decadent, Philistine attitude and bringing about political degeneration in certain units and individuals in the Party and the revolutionary organizations.

Liberalism manifests itself in various ways.

To let things slide for the sake of peace and friendship when a person has clearly gone wrong, and refrain from principled argument because he is an old acquaintance, a fellow townsman, a schoolmate, a close friend, a loved one, an old colleague or old subordinate. Or to touch on the matter lightly instead of going into it thoroughly, so as to keep on good terms. The result is that both the organization and the individual are harmed. This is one type of liberalism.

To indulge in irresponsible criticism in private instead of actively putting forward one's suggestions to the organization. To say nothing to people to their faces but to gossip behind their backs, or to say nothing at a meeting but to gossip afterwards. To show no regard at all for the principles of collective life but to follow one's own inclination. This is a second type.

To let things drift if they do not affect one personally; to say as little as possible while knowing perfectly well what is wrong, to be worldly wise and play safe and seek only to avoid blame. This is a third type.

Not to obey orders but to give pride of place to one's own opinions. To demand special consideration from the organization but to reject its discipline. This is a fourth type.

To indulge in personal attacks, pick quarrels, vent personal spite or seek revenge instead of entering into an argument and struggling against incorrect views for the sake of unity or progress or getting the work done properly. This is a fifth type.

To hear incorrect views without rebutting them and even to hear counter-revolutionary remarks without reporting them, but instead to take them calmly as if nothing had happened. This is a sixth type.

To be among the masses and fail to conduct propaganda and agitation or speak at meetings or conduct investigations and inquiries among them, and instead to be indifferent to them and show no concern for their well-being, forgetting that one is a Communist and behaving as if one were an ordinary non-Communist. This is a seventh type.

To see someone harming the interests of the masses and yet not feel indignant, or dissuade or stop him or reason with him, but to allow him to continue. This is an eighth type.

To work half-heartedly without a definite plan or direction; to work perfunctorily and muddle along--"So long as one remains a monk, one goes on tolling the bell." This is a ninth type.

To regard oneself as having rendered great service to the revolution, to pride oneself on being a veteran, to disdain minor assignments while being quite unequal to major tasks, to be slipshod in work and slack in study. This is a tenth type.

To be aware of one's own mistakes and yet make no attempt to correct them, taking a liberal attitude towards oneself. This is an eleventh type.

We could name more. But these eleven are the principal types.

They are all manifestations of liberalism.

Liberalism is extremely harmful in a revolutionary collective. It is a corrosive which eats away unity, undermines cohesion, causes apathy and creates dissension. It robs the revolutionary ranks of compact organization and strict discipline, prevents policies from being carried through and alienates the Party organizations from the masses which the Party leads. It is an extremely bad tendency.

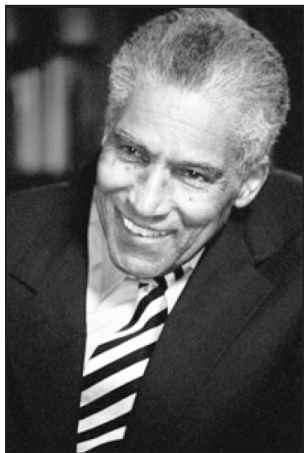
Liberalism stems from petty-bourgeois selfishness, it places personal interests first and the interests of the revolution second, and this gives rise to ideological, political and organizational liberalism.

People who are liberals look upon the principles of Marxism as abstract dogma. They approve of Marxism, but are not prepared to practice it or to practice it in full; they are not prepared to replace their liberalism by Marxism. These people have their Marxism, but they have their liberalism as well—they talk Marxism but practice liberalism; they apply Marxism to others but liberalism to themselves. They keep both kinds of goods in stock and find a use for each. This is how the minds of certain people work.

Liberalism is a manifestation of opportunism and conflicts fundamentally with Marxism. It is negative and objectively has the effect of helping the enemy; that is why the enemy welcomes its preservation in our midst. Such being its nature, there should be no place for it in the ranks of the revolution.

We must use Marxism, which is positive in spirit, to overcome liberalism, which is negative. A Communist should have largeness of mind and he should be staunch and active, looking upon the interests of the revolution as his very life and subordinating his personal interests to those of the revolution; always and everywhere he should adhere to principle and wage a tireless struggle against all incorrect ideas and actions, so as to consolidate the collective life of the Party and strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses; he should be more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any private person, and more concerned about others than about himself. Only thus can he be considered a Communist.

All loyal, honest, active and upright Communists must unite to oppose the liberal tendencies shown by certain people among us, and set them on the right path. This is one of the tasks on our ideological front.



BIOGRAPHY OF JAMES FORMAN (October 4, 1928 - January 10, 2005)

Nearly a decade older than most civil rights activists involved in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), James Forman gained the respect of SNCC's staff through his militancy and organizational prowess. At times, his more confrontational, revolutionary style clashed with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s nonviolent, faith-based approach to civil rights activism.

During the late 1950s, Forman gradually became involved in the expanding Southern civil rights movement. In 1958 he covered the Little Rock school desegregation crisis for the *Chicago Defender*. In late 1960, Forman went to Fayette County, Tennessee, to assist sharecroppers who had been evicted for registering to vote. That summer, he was jailed with other freedom riders protesting segregated facilities in Monroe, North Carolina. After his sentence was suspended, Forman agreed to become executive secretary of SNCC.

Following the defeat of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964, Forman and other SNCC workers went to Guinea at the invitation of that nation's government. After his return, Forman became increasingly outspoken in his criticisms of the federal government and cautious liberalism. Within SNCC, he encouraged staff to become more aware of Marxism and Black Nationalism. He was, however, critical of the black separatist faction within SNCC who expelled whites from the organization. Forman joined with other black militants, including the Black Panther Party (BPP), in calling for greater alliances between black and white radicals. Though still working for SNCC, in early 1968 Forman became the BPP's minister of foreign affairs and sought to build ties between African Americans and revolutionaries in the Third World.

A prolific writer, Forman authored many books on the civil rights movement and black revolutionary theory, including *Sammy Younge, Jr.: The First Black College Student to Die in the Black Liberation Movement* (1968), and his autobiography, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (1972).



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