

57-12
 due per
 discussion

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNICATION

1. FREIRE: Revolutionary leadership cannot denounce reality without knowing reality.

In other words, Revolutionary Communication must criticize, denounce, attack the existing reality;

BUT IT MUST ALSO make clear what is happening, why things are as they are; where THINGS are going; how things are changing, which are the main contradictions in each situation.

the theoretical analysis must be correct the fact must be accurate

2. FREIRE: Revolutionary leadership cannot proclaim a new reality, without having a draft project which, although it emerges in the denunciation, become a viable project only in praxis. *new practice*

In other words, Revolutionary communication must proclaim a new reality. It cannot just say what is wrong without saying what should be, what must replace what is

BUT IT MUST ALSO AT THE SAME TIME

- a. project concrete actions that people can take now as part of the movement to the new reality. E.g. begin discussing and taking action with one's family, neighbors, block clubs, church groups, classmates in re the Crime Statement and "hot goods."

or vote against millage.

- b. ~~begin to~~ do things that show what we think. The organization must begin to devise ways and means to do things that are illustrative and demonstrative of the collectivity, the dedication, the unity that we believe is necessary to solve our problems. NB: These actions must not be so complex that they require huge preparations and get us bogged down in internal administration. Nor so complex that they demand tremendous trust and long-range commitment on the part of people whom we invite to participate with us. Whatever we are doing must be visible, transparent. As we are doing these things, we should put out leaflets explaining why we are doing them.

3. FREIRE: Revolutionary leadership cannot know reality without relying on the people as well as on objective facts for the source of its knowledge.

In other words, Revolutionary leadership cannot depend on what the masses say is real because at this point the masses are not dealing with reality. They are mostly just reacting. So we must not expect them to have all the answers and then become demoralized because they seem so confused.

AT THE SAME TIME we must be on guard against and reject any tendencies to ELITISM OR ARROGANCE, e.g. implying that the answers are all in books or in our heads, while the masses know nothing, learn nothing from their experiences, or that we are the teachers while the masses are only students.

TO MAKE SURE THAT WE ARE RELYING ON THE PEOPLE AS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE,...

ALL REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD BE CHECKED:

1. for subject matter. Is the subject one with which people are concerned?
2. for tone. Is there any hint of arrogance or elitism in the tone?
3. Are we asking people to think, to ask questions of themselves and of their friends, relatives and of us? Or are we just hurling slogans, answers, ultimata at them? *or directives*
4. for praxis. Are we asking people to do something concrete?

4. FREIRE: Revolutionary leadership cannot announce and proclaim by itself.

IN OTHER WORDS, revolutionaries must engage in genuine dialogue and interaction with the masses.

Genuine dialogue must be continuing. A specific area or group of people should be selected - to whom we go back again and again so that they can judge us. We cannot just hop about from one area to another.

Genuine dialogue requires listening to what people say, paying as much attention (and perhaps more) to their negative and critical responses than even to their positive ones. We must be on guard against hearing or reporting only those responses which confirm what we already think.

FREIRE: Revolutionary Leadership cannot make new myths out of the denunciation & annunciation

IN OTHER WORDS, we must denounce white society, white nationalist history, capitalism, and announce Black Pride, Black Power, a new society. BUT AT THE SAME TIME We must be on guard against making new myths out of Black Pride, Black Power or the New Society, pretending that everything "Black is Beautiful" without seeing the internal contradictions in blackness; or creating the illusion that Black Power can be achieved easily, through rhetoric and symbols; or giving the impression that the new society is a "Promised Land" rather than a world in which struggle will have to continue.

Myths are more dangerous to oppressed people than they are to anyone else. Because oppressed people are more likely to grasp at myths in order to evade the harsh realities of their lives and the struggles they have to engage in, in order really to change their lives.

6. FREIRE: Revolutionary Leadership cannot renounce communion with the people.

In other words, the revolutionary cadre organization is not the same as the masses and must not act as if it is the same thing as the masses. BUT AT THE SAME TIME revolutionary communication must always express our conviction that we are from the masses, are part of the masses, and that our fundamental interests and goals cannot be separated from those of the masses; that we are anxious to learn from the masses and eager to work with them. Communication is not revolutionary if it is based on the belief that we have all the answers, while the masses are just ignorant or foolish.

Detroit, April 30, 1972