

## REVOLUTION IN OUR LIFETIME

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There are three elements required to make successful revolution: 1. objective material (environmental and social (human) conditions, 2. a cadre, or party, of committed, conscious and capable (both willing and able) people, and 3. The support and participation of the mass element.

Revolution is the radical and willful reordering of society by an organized self-interested social order internal to that society.

Objective conditions, both environmental and social, are a necessary prerequisite of revolution. However, the existence of fertile ground, is not, in and of itself, sufficient to make revolution or to guarantee the success of a revolution.

Objective conditions are those conditions which exist independent of individual observation or reflection. Objective conditions exist and operate regardless of whether we recognize their existence or even acknowledge their effects. This is important to remember because often, unconsciously, we dismiss that which we don't know or understand, and acknowledge or accept mainly those phenomena we individually perceive.

For example, there is the error of judging the whole by the part. This error takes many forms and most commonly evidences itself by those who make judgements based solely on their own experience without investigation outside of the self.

Additionally, we must remember that objective does not mean abstract. Above all, objective conditions are concrete, they exist in a given time frame, a given geographical and geopolitical context. While this seems obvious in stating it here, to often, the obvious is overlooked in our day to day practice.

Because "thinking is one of the strong points of human endeavor, we sometimes divorce it from both practice and context. The famous metaphysical statement "Cogito, ergo sum – I think, therefore I am" is a prime example of taking thinking out of context.

There is a sharp and important distinction between mere experience (or sensory perception) and reflection (or analysis). Presence does not guarantee perception, nor does perception guarantee analysis or understanding.

Because we, as Afrikan-Americans, have experienced racism does not mean that we understand racism. Being a victim in no way guarantees that we understand the crime or the perpetrator of the crime. Only through investigation, hypothesis, practice can we objectively “know” a phenomenon.

Similarly, how will we know when the conditions are ripe for revolution? We will know by experience based on theory. We will know through analysis of conditions, formulation of revolutionary theory and the testing of that theory in practice.

In making our evaluations of objective conditions we must not be mechanical as if we were simply fitting wood blocks together. It is critical to remember that although matter is primary, consciousness is critical. Environmentally, the conditions could be ripe for revolution, but if the social factors are not present than overall the conditions are not ripe. “A single spark can light a prairie fire” only if the grass is dry (i.e. in a flammable state.).

Clearly, we are in a period of great upheaval and social dislocation and disorder. Such periods, when the status quo shakes and loses its iron grip, are fertile periods of revolutionary change.

In order to make revolution in our lifetime a necessary first step is an assessment of our immediate and the worldwide material and social conditions.

A cadre, or party, is the second necessity in order to actualize revolution. The cadre represents an element who are committed to the fight to bring about revolution, conscious of their role as revolutionaries, and capable of carrying through from “plan to planet”.

Developing the commitment necessary to wage revolutionary struggle is not easy and it is particularly difficult during periods when mass activity is at a low ebb. The chief characteristic of a revolutionary is commitment: a willingness to go against the tide; to do what is right, what is necessary regardless of what others are doing or not doing.

Developing such commitment calls for a refuting of the socialization process we experienced as children and young adults. To commit one's self to the struggle for revolution is to de facto establish a priority of activity. However, commitment alone is not enough.

We need to conscious, i.e. self-aware and self-controlled. This means we must be clear on our own self identity and develop the discipline necessary to advance that which we define to be our own issues, interests and ideals. Consciousness, in the case of the cadre, also requires political development.

What does it mean to be political, to put politics in the lead? Firstly, being political means to be guided by correct theory, i.e. theory which has been tested and found true. Secondly, to be political means that we, 1. study self, environment and others, 2. develop analysis and plans out of our study, 3. puts into practice what one believes to be true, and 4. based on past study and practice, takes their own political development to a higher phase of work/study. Finally, to be political means to put our politics in the lead through critical and self-critical analysis, practice and evaluation.

But both commitment and consciousness will come to naught if we are not capable of performing the tasks that lie before us. We must be willing to engage in protracted struggle and we must be able to do so. The will to fight is developed and reinforced by the environment and social associations we make, the success or failures we have, and by the degree of understanding we have of the tasks we must do and the steps necessary to do them.

Without a doubt, our conception of ourselves, our people, our history, our conditions is all important to developing our capability to withstand the corrosive attacks that we must face on a day to day basis, and is important also in confronting and overcoming our own weaknesses, which as comrade Cabral has pointed out, is often our hardest battle.

In order to make revolution in our lifetime we will have to mold ourselves into a committed, conscious and capable cadre of change agents who are ready to reconstruct ourselves, our people and this world.

Finally, mass support and participation, is both the reason for our efforts and the legitimizer of our actions. We exist to improve the lives of our people and our people's support and participation is the ultimate yardstick by which we measure success. Until we have incorporated into our plans the needs and aspirations of the masses of our people, until we have inter woven our programs and practices into the daily lives of our people, until we have consolidated our people into a unified body then we have not done what it takes to make revolution.

The masses of our people, the working class Afrikan-American, are the most important aspect of our struggle. We must never forget nor frown upon them.

While it is not a question of a numbers game, or of a popularity contest based on who can get the most vote, it is critical that our people support and participate in our collective struggle for national liberation.

While we do not romanticize our people and believe that everything they do is correct at the same time we know and understand that until the masses of our people participate in revolutionary practice there will be no revolution. Our job is to lead the revolutionary struggle forward. Our job is to develop the theory and perfect the practice of revolutionary struggle, to take this theory and practice to the masses of our people (having synthesized it initially from the needs and aspiration of our people). Our job is raise ourselves and our people.

There can be revolution in our lifetime if we dedicate ourselves to creating the conditions, developing ourselves as a cadre of revolutionaries, and winning the support and participation of the masses of our people in the struggle to make revolution.

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