

ANNOUNCING THE BIRTH OF THE COOP ORGANIZATION

A class struggle has been brewing in the coops ever since the first year of North Country Coop, when the middle class leadership of the hippie movement won near-total control. People with working class experience and others who were serious about desiring social change began to feel isolated from the masses---and that their work was being exploited to perpetuate a set of bourgeois-escapist attitudes.

This struggle has been building up behind the scenes for the last 2 years. Now it has taken a qualitative leap and burst out into open confrontation.

The Beanery paper was only the first shot in this ideological struggle, and the Beanery only the first coop to go thru a transformation. At a mass debate of the Beanery paper, the desires for transformation in the coops that had been building up all over the system came out in the open for the first time---along with some of the opposition.

The Beanery is no longer the center of attention. The Beanery paper has served its purpose of putting the coop struggle in a class perspective. Now people are moving beyond that, to deal with other coops and the whole coop system.

The slogan, CRITICISM DISCUSSION AND TRANSFORMATION, which came out of that mass debate, has since been taken up at Mill City, the Bakery, the Warehouse, Selby, the Scoop, and other points in the coops.

People who had been waging lonely struggles against class cliquishness, snobbishness, isolationism and escapism now have comrades. Their struggles are now being unified into a common front. This is the Coop Organization.

As the struggle intensifies, an opposition line is hardening: moving more and more towards the position of the coops being the private property either of individuals or a small class clique that is out to serve only its own self-interest.

So a new slogan has been raised:

STOP PRIVATE OWNERSHIP
AND CONTROL OF COOPS--
by individuals
by class cliques

This struggle against private ownership of the coops by a class clique is the basis of the Coop Organization. We do not intend to stop there but to move the Coops into the arena of the whole working class struggle against the private ownership of the means of production. We must see the struggle in the coops as a small reflection of the struggle in the world:

a) In the capitalist world, the relations of production based on private ownership and domination and exploitation of one class by another strangle the development of the working class. The capitalist system gives us depressions and wars, starvation in the midst of food surpluses, unemployment, inflation and repression. (See the Coop Food Committee reader for more details.)

b) In the coops, there have been clear desires for a different kind of relations of production, socialist relations of mutual cooperation between workers. But this development has again been stifled by a small clique which has contempt for the working class, which sees the coops as their property, a device to allow them the privilege of escaping from the working class struggle.

The coops have represented a desire for a different social system, but to bring a different system into being cannot be done by a few people setting up a "better life" for themselves.

The coops must advance to the higher level of a socialist workers organization or they will continue to retreat into private property.

The Coop Organization is only one step in advancing the coops to a higher level of struggle. We ask all coop workers and customers who are serious about making social change to join us.

There will be meetings to introduce new members to the organization Tuesday night at the Waite Center, 2529 13th Ave. S. at 6:30 PM, Thursday night at the Sunrise Book Coop, 516 Selby Ave. in St Paul at 7:30PM, and Saturday afternoon at Walker Church 3104 16th Ave. S. at 2:30 PM.

Call 827-5055 between 9AM and 1PM and from 4PM and 8PM for more information, ask for the Coop Organization.

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