

Trying to separate political failures and personal frustrations of non-performance has become difficult but in the last few days I am seeing my way clear out of the morass and into what some of the problems are and the means for overcoming those problems. First a word or two on the general political picture as I see it and as it effects both MPA and society,

At this point it would be ludicrous to see MPA as a radical political organization. Its basis is both radical and political but this is very different from saying the group is a revolutionary one. What the group is essentially and lumpen group, a group of people who have had much more than their share of capitalist oppression and exploitation--the group is composed of refugees or, more properly, victims of capitalism.

The general level of consciousness around MPA is extremely low. It is higher in most people's heads than it would be if there were no group at all but after two years that's still not saying much. Where does the blame lie? Is it our (political peoples') fault? Here I get into an individual flash but then I realize--something I have lost sight of over the past few years which says something about the way in which I have been living, listening to self-flagellation trips over psychic aches and pains and becoming the worst product of psychoanalysis--the necessity of collective political action wherever that collective might be. That collective is not MPA per se. That collective is a few members within MPA who have some grasp of political analysis and group strategies for raising the level of consciousness both in the group, in ourselves, and in society. This group has never formed and people have known better than not to form it. In this I include myself.

So the political tasks have been neglected except for sporadic attempts here and there. I know as a political action research coordinator I cannot do it by myself. Political work means group solidarity of some sort. Even the lonely saboteur or trade union organizer knows he/she has a group of some sort behind him/her. Lately I've been trying to find or create that group. There are obvious people within MPA that should be working in this as well, who haven't been, and instead have left it more or less up to hited hand to do it. There are obvious people in the city, groups which are very close to ours (I almost say me, at this point since in talking to them its been my ideas that have been responded to--I can't say I speak for MPA except on the broadest level) which I have been meeting with to coordinate common activities. In this case I can only urge certain people on after they've agreed what to do with us.

What I'm trying to get to is there is a political vaccuum at this point, a soul-killing vaccuumm which has led to fragmentation of the left and truncation within groups which have led those groups to become insular and self-concerned. This is a common--maybe even the prevailing mood around MPA. And except for occassional exhortations fro contrary movement not much has been done about it. Again, I'll share the blame but I'll only share it, I won't take it.

I'll complain some more before I get into any proposals for how we get out of this mess.

REsearch. Research for what? TO become our own experts on mental health in B.C. Or to advance an intelligent vibrant, radical and devastating critique of present social prattices by state and professional. Obviously its the latter. But you'd never know it from ^{the} amount of education and self-education that has been going on around the place.

Gut-feelings ultimately make me sick--no pun intended. True we begin often from those feelings but when and how do we translate existential despair into a political critique and action. This again takes a certain amount of solidarity. At the moment there are perhaps three people in the organization that could begin to put these things together. Two of them are working more or less together. Not enough I'm afraid. Where's the day to day political backing we need from conscious elements within the organization. Even politics night which was to be shared amongst four people has fallen back onto the shoulders of one, one who is running ~~out~~ out of ideas for more events. OK-enough griping. It's obvious what I'm saying. If there's to be political activity then there has to be a collective attitude towards it. There has to be leadership from those who are conscious--at least in part-- of what has to be done. This is a formula older than Lenin but the general drift of radicalism as I've been seeing it recently is away from considerations like these.

Some proposals.

Research-needs concrete goals and discussion about what's come up so we know how to use it and for what. If there's to be a research committee then let's have a research committee and if we have to free up people's time to work in that committee let's do it. Let's decide what to do with projects that have been sitting around for so long and let's educate ourselves politically.

Publications-I got shit on awhile back for neglecting research to work on a newsletter. The point is I've been instrumental in getting about 3 of the damn things out since I've started to work for MPA. I didn't do it for my health--mental or otherwise. We have to have a forum for ideas to get out and I think we have to create that forum in part.

The Grape is of extremely limited use. Three hundred of the converted might see those articles of which there've been quite a few. The Nutshell is important for internal communications but it has to be larger and it has to come out on time. Jeff's project with the trade union newspapers is a good one and should be encouraged. We can write for them if they accept. That way we reach the working class which is the most oppressed by "mental health". We also need pamphlet publication and distribution for longer important pieces and a journal to reach frustrated middle-class psych. students and others. This is important but I need help. The anti-textbook should not be abandoned. Through we can perform a valuable service and educate ourselves as I think we are still basically ignorant of many of the issues and philosophies psychology embodies.

Library- mea culpa, mea culpa even tho the committee did break down. I could have got it started again. Needs new energy to collect info and books which a research group should read together. study sessions could incorporate anyone whose seriously interested and can contribute. All the fucking statistics have to be collected again. SOmething I've been slipshod about as my arrogant and undisciplined young mind seems to keep refusing to locked into tasks like that. I'll try harder.

WE ALL GOTTA TRY HARDER!

There are other obvious ideas we can pursue but for me these are the main ones.