

SUMMARY OF THE DECEMBER 1978 SC MEETING

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1) Communications

a) Potomac Socialist Organization

The PSO recommended that PUL be invited to send representatives to the conferences on Point 18 as speakers and participants. They also recommended that no distinctions be made between observers and delegates in the discussions.

The SC disagrees on both counts. The SC's perspective is that the conferences are intended to resolve an internal contradiction within the OC. The PSO's recommendations, effectively, ask us to step back from the consolidation that has been achieved and act as if the OC had never adopted Principle 18. At the conferences, we will discuss whether we should take a step back. The PSO asks us to step back first and then discuss it.

Delegates should have priority in the discussion and the internal nature of the conferences should be maintained. The minority has said that PUL can present their ideas better than they can themselves and should therefore be allowed full participation. Allowing delegates to defer to an observer should, as far as the discussions go, allow this to take place. If one of the minority delegates wishes to defer to a PUL observer, they are quite free to do so. It would not, however, be consistent with the internal character of the conferences for an observer to present the major address for the OC's minority.

The SC sees nothing mechanical or unusual in this procedure. On the one hand it addresses the minority's desire to have their ideas presented by PUL. On the other, it upholds the right of the OC to hold a conference to resolve its internal contradictions.

It should also be pointed out that the status of PUL observers will not be different than the status of any other observers. And this kind of observer status has worked out well at other conferences.

b) Milwaukee Socialist Union and Milwaukee Alliance

The SC has received several letters from these organizations. In part they concern OC matters and in part they concern conflicts between the organizations. There is a letter to both of these organizations from the SC in the appendix which addresses one of the issues raised. *

* we decided that it would be inappropriate to include this letter at this time without checking it out with MSU and MA because the letter responds to some things that MA and MSU wrote just to the SC.

The MA asked that their request that PUL participate in the Point 18 conferences be reconsidered. This was addressed above with respect to the PSO.

c) Bay Area Coordinating Body

The BACB commended the SC on its work. They also stated that they think the OC should make a self-criticism regarding the process of adopting Principle 18 prior to having sufficient discussion. The SC disagrees that a self-criticism is in order. A letter from the SC to the BACB explaining its views on this matter is included as an appendix.

d) For The People

FTP wrote a long and detailed criticism of the method of presentation and the style of writing of the Founding Statement of the OCIC. They did agree, however, with its contents. Their criticisms centered in two areas.

The first was the level of knowledge of the party-building movement which the document assumed. No general survey of the history of the development of the tendency was given. They thought that this made the document much less useful for outreach work than it might have been.

The second was of more narrow style questions--such as choice of words, complicated constructions, etc. They thought that this made the document much less useful than it might have been for (among others) people who have had limited higher education.

The letter concluded with an offer of FTP's services to the SC in writing, editing, etc. FTP thinks they have much to contribute in this area through their long experience with developing a mass newspaper and the conscious attention they have paid to these questions.

The SC agrees with both criticisms. It also responds very positively to FTP's offer of their services. FTP is to be commended for their positive and constructive attitude toward developing the OC.

2) Membership

a) WSOC

Two former WSOC members informed the SC that WSOC has dissolved. The SC is asking FTP to work with several former WSOC members -- helping them in a number of ways, but especially in building an OC presence in NYC. Two former WSOC members asked to be individual OC members, which was acceptable to the SC.

b) Danville Collective

The SC received a letter informing the OC that the Danville Collective had decided to leave the OC and join NAM! DMLO will meet with them.

c) Tuscon Marxist-Leninist Collective

After the SC clarified to the TMLC that Principle 10 of the OC's principles of unity is not a statement of a "fusion line" on party building and that the party-building perspective of the TMLC is in no way excluded from the OC, the TMLC reaffirmed their desire to be part of the OC.

d) New applicants

1. A small group in Denver has applied and been admitted to the OC.
2. An individual from Oregon has applied and been admitted to the OC.

3. An investigation of a group in the Midwest which has applied is being undertaken by the SC.

4. The Movement for an Independent and Socialist Canada (commonly called the Saskatchewan Waffle organization) has requested that they be allowed to participate in OC activities. The SC thinks that there will be mutual gain for the party-building process in both Canada and the US if this request is granted. The SC admitted them to non-voting, but dues-paying, membership in the OC.

3) Secretary's report

Many requests for information about the OC were received in response to the publication of the founding statement. Most came from individuals but some from collectives. A form letter is being developed to systematize investigation. A short history of the OC is also being developed.

The investigation is proceeding slowly since many organizations have not yet responded to the first questionnaire. The process of summing up will begin soon. The questionnaire should be returned as soon as possible.

In the past, OC members have not been kept sufficiently well-informed by the SC about when they could expect certain materials from the SC--the 18 Point Study for example. The SC is self-critical of this and will make improvements. In particular, when the SC knows that certain material will be late, or activities delayed, it will make this known promptly and systematically.

4) Organizational relations

El Comite has agreed that a systematic SC-El Comite liason to discuss and evaluate the development of the OC in a systematic and ongoing way would be a positive step. They will also participate in the survey of the communist movement and in the Principle 18 conferences as observers.

El Comite also stated that they have no criticisms of the OC process as it has developed thus far and regard it positively. They do not see evidence of the emergence of the overly centralist approach which had concerned them and view the avenues of participation which the OC has left open positively. They are in the process of developing a statement on the OC.

5) Local centers

A discussion of the progress in the development of local centers is summed up in the progress report enclosed in the appendix. Additionally, a report written by LA comrades on a discussion with a representative of the SC is also enclosed since it contains a general perspective of the SC on local centers. Note that, in the latter report, the SC has taken the position that LC's should have independent representation at conferences, etc. The SC thinks that this is important in helping to break down a federationist approach to OC activities. The specific forms for this remain to be worked out.

The SC also addressed a problem arising out of the development of an LC in Detroit and differences between the DSC and DMLO. It was reported that DSC comrades think that their views on how local centers should develop are being misrepresented to the SC by DMLO. The SC recommends that if this is the case, DSC comrades should write up a formal letter to the SC, outlining their disagreements. The SC will respond formally, either in writing or with a visit by the chair.

In general, the SC thinks that it is important that comrades communicate their views to the SC in writing so that problems of this nature can be avoided. This applies to the full range of concerns that comrades wish to raise with the SC.

6) Southern conference report

The forces in the South are weak, disorganized, and out of contact. The SC's original plan of proceeding directly to a Southern conference had to be replaced by the step of holding a smaller meeting which discussed the state of the party-building movement, the objectives of the OC, national versus local emphasis, and practical plans. The group decided on the following tasks:

- a) developing the tendency's and the OC's presence in the South;
- b) demonstrating, in practice, the difference between the "lefts" practice and the tendency's practice;
- c) helping local forces to consolidate themselves; and
- d) developing systematic contacts throughout the South in order to build for a larger conference.

The Louisville Workers' Collective has taken on the responsibility of coordinating the Southern work. A packet of materials from the OC and from leading OC organizations will be prepared. This, along with personal visits, will be used to build for the conference. After the conference, an OC tour is planned in the region.

7) National minority conference report

The conference planning committee is fully formed, representing both OC forces and forces outside of the OC, and has met twice. Preliminary work has generated a great deal of enthusiasm about the prospects of the proposed conference. It will be held in the beginning of May.

The revised agenda for the conference is:

- a) Why the task of party building at this period.
- b) The special tasks of oppressed nationality Marxist-Leninists.
- c) Sexism: Its role among oppressed nationality Marxist-Leninists.
- d) Our future tasks.

Small subcommittees of the planning committee have been formed to prepare each of these items.

8) 18 point study

The SC is self-critical that the 18 point study curriculum has been so long delayed. The perspective of the SC has been that the study curriculum would go through a process of improvement and refinement as it was used on a broad scale and further input was received. The SC erred in starting this process of improvement even before the curriculum was even distributed. This resulted in the delay. It should have been distributed nationally when it was ready and SC faced up to any criticisms.

9) Point 18 conferences

- a) The exchange of papers has been completed and they are now being produced for distribution. The conferences will be held in the end of March and the beginning of April.
- b) The conferences will be one day meetings with the topic: Should Principle 18 be a line of demarcation for building an anti-"left" trend?

The format will be:

- two one hour presentations with fifteen minute rebuttals (10AM-1PM)
- small group discussions (2PM-4PM)
- plenary discussion (4PM-5PM)
- resolutions (5-5:30PM)

The SC will introduce the resolution: Principle 18 is a necessary line of demarcation for building an anti-"left" trend.

- c) Delegates: Dues paying members. From organizations, one delegate for each five members or part thereof. Delegations should be representative of the organizations they come from in terms of line, level of development, etc. Delegates should not be sent with binding instructions. This is crucial if we are to avoid a federationist approach to our activities.
- d) Observors: Because conditions differ, this will be left up to the regional planning groups which will organize each regional conference.

10) Publications

- X a) The exchange on Principle 18 will be printed and offered for public sale as the first OCB (Organizing Committee Bulletin). It will also be sold to to OC members. You should order the number of copies that you want from the SC Secretary as soon as possible.
- X b) The SC approved a draft response to the Guardian's statement on the OC. After some reworking, it will appear, along with the Guardian's statement, in OCB#2. A much shorter version is being prepared for the Guardian's "Radical Forum."

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