

SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE SC-OCIC

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In addition, enclosed you will find:

- 1) A public statement on the formation of the OCIC.
- 2) An SC statement on the struggle against racism. (The SC's evaluation of the struggle that developed at the February national meeting.)
- 3) An SC statement on the request that PUL participate in the conferences on Principle 18 as a line of demarcation with "left" opportunism.
- 4) A statement from the Guardian explaining why they are not participating in the OC. (This was received after the SC meeting so that the discussion of the Guardian in this summary does not reflect this statement or the Guardian's decision.)

Summary of the proceedings:

1) Communications

a) Milwaukee Alliance

1. A split has occurred in the Milwaukee Alliance. Many comrades have received papers discussing the split from both the MA and the Milwaukee Socialist Union, the new group which has formed. The MA specifically asked the SC whether the way the split developed is the SC's perspective on how the tendency should develop.

It is clear that there are significant political differences. But the SC cannot take a position on either whether the split was justified or on whether the way the struggle developed was correct. In order to take a position that has a valid claim to non-subjectivity, a thorough investigation of the situation would be necessary and the SC simply does not have the resources to do this.

2. The MA also requested that PUL participate in the conferences on Principle 18 as a line of demarcation with "left" opportunism. This is considered in the section of this summary on the conferences.

3. The MA also asked if it would be possible for them to participate in these conferences in regions other than their own. This is also considered in that section.

b) Buffalo Workers' Movement

1. The BWM is concerned that too much of the energy of the OC is being put into the resolution of the contradiction over Principle 18. They think it should be a line of demarcation and that too much discussion of this point will detract from the key task of winning the advanced. They suggest that the special conferences on this point should be incorporated into the conferences on the other 18 points. This is taken up in the section on the conferences.

2. They are also concerned that the SC is neglecting the criterion for membership in the OC which was adopted at the February meeting. This is discussed in the section on OC membership.

Related to this, they objected to what, apparently, they interpreted as the SC's decision to change "practical experience" to "practical ability" in the secondary criteria for SC nominations (see page 2, 3.a.3 of the summary of the first SC meeting).

But the SC was not making a judgement on what the correct criteria should be in making this change. "Practical ability," in the sense indicated in the summary, was decided upon by the Nominations Committee at the February meeting. The SC was merely correcting the minutes of the February meeting to accurately reflect the decisions which were made at that meeting.

c) Potomac Socialist Organization

1. The PSO raised questions about the OC voting procedures. They feel that it is not correct to give equal voting weight to organizations of qualitatively different sizes and even to individuals. The SC is considering the problem and will take it up formally at a future meeting. Delegated voting will be used at the conferences on Principle 18.

2. They also raised questions about the participation of individuals in the OC. This is taken up in the section on OC membership.

2) Organizational relations

No statement has been received as of yet from either the Guardian or El Comite on their participation in the OC.

El Comite has, of course, presented a clear position in opposition to the proposal which was adopted to guide the development of the OC and voted against adoption of that proposal at the February meeting. The SC will continue to involve El Comite as much as possible in the process of the development of the OC.

The situation with the Guardian is different. As far as can be determined at this point, the Guardian's perspective falls well within the principles of unity of the OC and is consistent with the proposal which has been adopted to guide the development of the OC. Furthermore, their representative voted in favor of both the principles of unity and the proposal. The SC hopes that the differences which the Guardian has with some of the organizations in the OC over party-building line will not obscure the broad unity which the Guardian shares with the OC and will see that the best place to develop the ideological struggle over party-building line is within the process which the OC is developing. And, therefore, that the Guardian will join with the OC in a common effort towards the centralization of the ideological struggle in the emerging anti-"left" tendency. In the SC's opinion, the task of party building in general, and of developing a united struggle against ultra-leftism

in particular, will only be impeded if the ideological struggle over party-building line does not take place in the most favorable context.

- 3) Conferences on Principle 18 as a line of demarcation with "left" opportunism
 - a) A conference steering committee composed of one SC member and representatives from OC organizations in the region will be formed in each region to organize and direct each regional conference. These conference steering committees will, within the guidelines set by the SC, make the decisions on who attends the conferences, settle any credentials questions, and take charge of the actual conduct of the conferences. The SC representatives responsible for the various regions are Seattle Workers' Group (West, in San Francisco), DMLO (Midwest, in Chicago or Detroit), and BOC (East, hopefully in Washington D.C.).
 - b) The response to the BPO should reflect the position of the SC. The BOC will prepare a draft for the SC's consideration.
 - c) PUL's participation in the conferences

In response to the request of the MA, the SC decided that the participation of PUL would inevitably shift the focus of the conferences away from the question of Principle 18 as a line of demarcation with "left" opportunism to the question of the correctness of Principle 18 itself. It would therefore alter the intended nature of the conferences. The intention is not to reopen the question of the correctness of the content of Principle 18 but to move to discuss the implications of disagreement with the principle for the struggle against ultra-leftism. The correctness of Principle 18 is not an open question for the OC to the extent that organizations which have a consolidated opposition to the principle are required to state such and withdraw from the OC.

The SC decided, therefore, that PUL should not participate in the conferences. PUL will, however, be permitted to send observers (specified later in this summary).

A more detailed response to the MA is enclosed with this summary.

- d) Representation at the conferences

Organizations, collectives, and study groups who are part of the OC will be invited to send delegations of one person for each five members or part thereof. (This means that groups of 5 or fewer would send one delegate; groups of 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 would send 2 delegates; groups of 11, 12, 13, 14, or 15 would send 3 delegates; etc.) Individual OC members will also be invited.

Voting will be on a delegated basis. Although votes at the conferences will not be binding and delegations will imperfectly reflect their organizations, the SC thinks that careful voting is necessary so that the process, insofar as possible, reflects the actual concrete conditions of the OC. Organizations should not bind their delegations to vote as a bloc so that the delegates can be responsive to the debate.

Individual members of the OC will receive one vote. This should not present a problem of overrepresentation since there are only a few individual members in the entire OC.

- e) Observers

Observers will be permitted on a limited basis. The central focus of the conferences is not on outreach or on external ideological struggle but on resolving our internal differences. Observers will be permitted to speak only when a delegate recognized by the chair permits an observer to represent them.

In response to the request from the MA, the SC decided that OC groups will be permitted to send observers to conferences in other regions. The SC does not, however, advocate this since it could place a burden on the conference organizers. The number of such observers should be restricted to one unless there is some pressing need to send more than one.

f) BWM's suggestion that the conferences should be combined with the 18 point study

The SC decided that it would be incorrect for three reasons:

1. The focus in the 18 point study will be on proletarian internationalism and the content of Principle 18. The intended focus at the conferences will be Principle 18 as a line of demarcation with "left" internationalism.
2. Without further consolidation of the OC around Principle 18 and the overall thrust of the OC, the consolidation of the OC around the other principles in the study would be weakened.
3. The SC is specifically mandated by the proposal adopted in February to organize a discussion of the importance of Principle 18 as a basis of unity.

g) Timetable

The BPO has informed the SC that they will not be able to have their paper done until the end of October. They were first requested to do the paper at the end of May. The SC has asked them if it would be possible to complete the paper by the end of September so the process can proceed. The SC will allot itself 4 to 6 weeks to finish its response after the receipt of the BPO paper. Alloting time for distribution and discussion, it now appears that the conferences will take place at the end of January and the beginning of February. Tentatively: January 27 for the East Coast, February 3 for the Mid-West, and February 10 for the West.

4) OC membership

Partially in response to the BWM and the PSO, the SC discussed the possibility that an overly open OC membership policy might lead to problems of "dilettantism."

The February meeting decided that:

The following will be the approach used by the SC in proposing criteria for membership: "Organizations or individuals must demonstrate in their practice their commitment to Marxism-Leninism."

Each new group or individual will be collectively discussed by the SC in this light and their commitment in practice to Marxism-Leninism will be considered. The SC will strive to avoid liberalism and, in addition to careful evaluation of prospective OC members, the struggle against manifestations of dilettantism will be carried out within the OC as well. Additionally, and most crucially, it will be the developing activity of the OC itself which will draw lines of demarcation with dilettantism. The SC does not think it is a problem at this time.

In the special case of individuals who wish to join the OC, the SC will investigate each candidate and make sure that there is a good reason for the particular person to participate as an individual.

5) New OC members

- a) the Louisville Workers Group has officially joined
- b) a (unnamed) group of Marxist-Leninist professionals in Baltimore
- c) a newly formed (and still unnamed) group in Los Angeles
- d) an individual in central New Jersey

6) Curriculum for the 18 point study

A draft curriculum for the 18 point study has been developed, specifying a general outline of the goals in study of each point and suitable reasons. It will be fleshed out in the future by making further selections (some of the readings at this point are overly extensive); selecting particular passages, chapters, etc. for special emphasis; and preparing study questions which will focus the study and link it to the concrete conditions we face.

In spite of its preliminary character, the SC feels that, after a few further modifications, that it will be useful to get it out to the entire OC since many organizations need direction in their study. It will be mailed out soon. The curriculum will go through a continual process of improvement through criticism so that all comrades should feel free to communicate their criticisms and suggestions to the SC.

The SC urges all groups to participate in the study of the 18 points. The form of course will depend upon the particular situations of the various groups. Some groups will want to, and be able to, undertake organization-wide study. Others, for whom this is either impossible or undesirable, should consider forming a smaller group which represents a cross section of the organization to undertake the study.

7) Public statement on the formation of the OCIC

A copy is enclosed. The Guardian will be asked to print it. The Organizer has agreed to print it in a special centerfold.

8) The struggle against racism

a) Report on the national minority conference preparations

The planning committee which will organize the conference is being formed. The committee will solicit names of individuals to be considered for participation in the conference, do investigation to determine who should attend the conference, and work out the agenda. The fully constituted planning committee will have to work out the final plans but some tentative plans have been made:

1. special stress will be put on unity with points 11 and 12 with the intention of excluding confirmed narrow nationalists;
2. the unity required for participation would be broad enough so that comrades who do not think of themselves as consolidated Marxist-Leninists could be included;
3. the projected agenda would include:
 - the history of the New Communist Movement and the development of the OC
 - the special role of the Black liberation struggle, the primacy of the struggle against racism, and the special role of national minority communists and workers
 - the contradictions among national minorities along sex lines
 - the role of organization
 - practical work, Southern Africa work in particular
4. at this point, a series of more than one conference is contemplated;
5. the planning committee will circulate a letter to the OC sometime in October

OC organizations who know individuals who they think might be able to play a role in the conference should communicate to the SC (to be forwarded to the conference planning committee) the names of the individuals along with a brief description of what they are doing and their level of development. Indicate whether, in your estimation, you regard the individual as a key person in such an undertaking.

b) The struggle at the February meeting

The SC has drawn up a statement on the struggle at the February meeting. It is enclosed with this summary.

c) How the question will be pursued in the OC

The SC has begun to formulate a plan for developing the OC's consciousness of the nature and importance of the struggle against racism. A formal proposal is being prepared for the next SC meeting. Some general points were discussed:

1. What is needed most is thorough consolidation around the centrality of the struggle against racism. Special attention to this point will be given in the 18 point study and further discussion in the OC will be organized following the completion of the curriculum. In the opinion of the SC, the weakness of many comrades consolidation around the centrality of the struggle against racism is rooted in a moral, rather than a materialist, approach to the question. Special efforts will be made to combat this error.
2. The SC anticipates that there will be some resistance within the OC to recognizing the centrality of the struggle against racism, as compared with the struggle against sexism.
3. It will be important for organizations with experience in building multi-nationality to sum-up this experience for the benefit of other OC organizations. This should include a discussion of the different forms which racism takes.
4. The SC has a special responsibility in taking leadership in the development of a thoroughgoing anti-racist perspective.

9) Local OC centers

The SC is developing a more systematic orientation towards the development of local OC centers. An outline of the SC's perspective on the constitution and activities of local centers will be mailed out.

Ongoing evaluation and re-evaluation of the progress of local centers will be a permanent item on the SC's agenda.

A special effort will be made to involve Guardian Clubs and their members in the formation and development of local centers since, although it appears that the Guardian may stay outside of the OC, the Guardian has political unity with the OC.

El Comite, of course, does have principled differences with the perspective of the OC so that their participation in local centers may be more limited. Every effort will, however, be made to engage El Comite in the development of local centers and to develop friendly relations and liason with them.

10) Plan for an ideological center

A draft outline of a plan to develop an ideological center has been formulated. Further elaboration will be taken up at the next SC meeting.

11) Southern conference

A preliminary call for the formation of a committee to organize the conference has been sent out for discussion with leading contacts in the region. If OC groups around the country have contacts in the South who they think should be involved in the conference, they should communicate (immediately) the necessary information to the SC.

12) Security

There was a discussion of improving security practice on several fronts. Whenever organizations have face-to-face contact with SC members, they should take the opportunity to raise the security questions which concern them.

13) Next national OC meeting

In the opinion of the SC, it does not make sense to have another national meeting until after the conferences on Principle 18 unless some special need arises in the interim. The SC is prepared, of course, to reconsider this if there are sufficient responses to the contrary.