

Mini-Conference on Party Building September 18, 1976

Attending: L.R., P.R., J.J., B.R., S.H.

Groups Attending: DNLO, SUB, PWOC, EL COMITE, GUARDIAN, WASH. D.C.

All came to conference with agreement on following:

- 1.) Need for M-L party
- 2.) Party does not presently exist
- 3.) Party Building is primary task

Conference dealt with analysis of objective conditions of:

- a. working class movement
- b. M-L movement
- c. Tasks for M-L's around party building
- d. *progressive forces*

Each group first gave presentations on working class movement, combining international and national analysis. The following are the highlights of the presentations:

El Comite

1. U.S. imperialism is fundamental enemy of world's peoples and imperialism is on the way out.
2. U.S. ruling class has recently been weakened by defeats in Indochina and Angola
3. National scene is aggravated by what's happening on international scene where...
4. World wide markets are shrinking--there is increasing exploitation
5. Past few decades have been marked by super-profits and peacefulness for the bourgeoisie. With...
6. Many concessions to workers...
7. Discontent within rank and file
8. Oppressed nationalities are rebelling against U.S. imperialism
9. One of the major weaknesses of this time is that there is no M-L group in leadership position

Guardian

1. We must operate from the assumption that it is possible to change the objective conditions of the classes.
2. That objective conditions should not be merely registered or viewed as static or as separate from the working class
3. Role of revolutionaries is to act upon the objective conditions
4. There is a deepening crisis of imperialism
5. Vietnam, Watergate and recent recession are indications of severe economic and political crisis
6. Options of the ruling class are becoming more limited and the options of reform are narrowing
7. The ruling class has created the illusion that there is more viability left in the system than there really is-- "they have diverted revolution through the judicious use of reform"
8. The main blow should be directed at U.S. imperialism
9. There is an intensification of superpower contention
10. Revolution among third world peoples is thrust of the times
11. U.S. is marked by much discontent and disenchantment
12. Racism has intensified during the crisis
13. No single political ^{tendency} dominates the broad progressive movement and leadership is necessary among the progressive forces. Party-building forces must define more precisely what we are; a critique of revisionism and opportunism is a must

SUB

1. There has been a revival of activity in the last several years--as evidenced by:
 - a. Activity within trade union rank and file--awareness of class collaborationists
 - b. Broad based economic struggles
 - c. Third world struggles--national liberation struggles are at a high level of class consciousness
 - d. anti-war movement
 - e. Communist movement arose from anti-war and national liberation struggles
2. Among progressive forces there has been a lack of ideology, lack of multi-national unity and fragmentation of the Left forces
3. The principle contradiction is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; specifically the dialectic of the integration and separation of the Communist movement and the worker's movement

PWOC

1. Felt that Guardian incorrectly characterized this epoch as only the decline of imperialism
2. They recognize the decline of imperialism but also see the transition to socialism taking place. Emphasized that while imperialism is declining, something else is coming into existence.
3. Not only is imperialism on the decline but as of 1972 or 1973 there began an acceleration of decline
4. The motion of objective conditions is intensifying more rapidly
5. There is a narrowing of options
6. We must defeat the imperialists move toward war
7. Fascism is an immediate question and we must oppose this movement
8. Revisionism is the main danger of the working class movement
9. There is a vacuum of leadership with an emergence of groups like KKK, Nazi Party, etc.
10. We need to work to unite the working class and oppressed nationalities

Secondly, the groups dealt with the tasks of M-L's:

El Comite

1. Formation of cadre is important--people who are steeled in the class struggle
2. Deepening the roots in the working class
3. Strengthening of ideological movement
4. Strengthening of revolutionary ties
 - a. analysis of national question
 - b. analysis of U.S. foreign policy, military aid
 - c. national and international situation
 - d. international solidarity

Guardian

1. immediate task is to build a revolutionary party of the proletariat
2. Party-building starts when you form a party
3. Level of organizations cannot remain primitive/local because localism puts off party building process

4. Guardian puts out 7 basic concepts of unity for party-building forces:
 - a. agreement on nature of U.S. monopoly capitalism
 - b. re-emphasize role of working class as leading class of revolution
 - c. re-affirm Lenin's emphasis on the State
 1. primacy of political struggle as opposed to economic struggle
 2. dictatorship of the proletariat
 - d. develop revolutionary strategy that says mass armed struggle is necessary--include legal and illegal
 - e. re-affirm concept of united front
 1. working class needs allies
 2. whites need to take up the demands of minorities
 3. unite working class with oppressed nationalities
 - f. re-affirm proletarian nationalism
 1. critique of revisionism
 - g. emphasize vanguard party
 1. democratic centralism
 2. importance of theory

SUB

1. Basic task is to deal with separation of worker's movement from Communist movement
2. Proletarianize existing Communist movement
 - a. deepening roots in working class, gain experience
3. Develop cadre from the working class
4. Raise political consciousness of the mass movement
5. Develop Communist leadership
6. Create worker's communism

They saw two stages to the development of a Party:

1. Party-building stage
 - local, pre-party formations dominate
2. Formation of Party

PWOC

1. Party-building is one stage in a long process
2. We must look to establishing socialism
3. Merging of theory with working class and oppressed nationalities
4. Construction of Party marks first stage
5. Party assumes a degree of fusion between communism and workers
6. Concrete application of M-L principles to today is necessary
7. Positions are necessary on:
 - a. U.S. imperialism -fascism
 - b. class analysis of U.S.
 - c. correct strategy for revolution
 - d. analysis on international question, Soviet Union
 - e. Afro-American, Puerto Rican and Chicano question
 - f. Trade union question
 - g. Woman question

They saw two stages to the Party building process:

1. winning over to Communism of vanguard-advanced workers
2. struggle with the masses

DMLO Position At The Conference On Party Building - September 16, 1976

The DMLO members, who attended the meeting, felt the major area of political disagreement was between the position of the Guardian and the FWOJ tendency (supported by SUD and the Washington group). The Guardian position sees the process of party building as the immediate task. This view feels confident that political unity can be forged in the non-dogmatic left around seven basic principles (see the outline of the conference). This view assumes the "party building process," starts when the party is actually formed. The position sees the immediate formation of a party as one concrete way in fighting the dangers of localism (single local collective lacking a national focus) and "workism" (a view which says only from the plants will a party emerge).

The FWOJ position assumes that party building is a longer process. That first, the central task is the "fusion" of the "worker's movement" (trade union, community struggles) and oppressed struggles with communist theory. This they call the development of "worker's communism." The FWOJ approach urges a national conference and the development of a national center to struggle against the ~~dogmatic~~ dogmatic trend. The FWOJ approach would concentrate first on the development of greater working class cadre, and then focus upon the actual development of a party.

The position of El Comité was somewhat different than both groups. This position stressed fundamentally the development of cadre building as the immediate task, and the needs of this cadre to sink roots among the working class. It is interesting to note that some of the El Comité comrades did not see major differences between the approach of the Guardian and FWOJ.

The DMLO members believed the FWOJ approach more closely represented the development of our own thinking than that of the Guardian. The FWOJ position emphasized that dogmatism came from the lack of contact with workers and the failure to concretely struggle around issues affecting workers. Their argument that at present it is difficult to separate the true M-L group, unless greater or working class cadre is developed seemed to have greater merit than the belief that it would be easy to develop unity of the current anti-dogmatic trend. From our perspective, it would appear that the unity the Guardian speaks of is a paper unity based more on abstract points not upon practical experience and cadre development.

We feel that the Guardian's position tends to mis-represent the reality of the American situation on the left. The political differences can only more fully emerge when differences are tested through practice. On the other hand, we must guard against the oversimplistic view that in order to bring about a party all we must do is bring socialism to the workers. We were impressed with the El Comité's emphasis that the first task was the development of a cadre which implied both a continual struggle for a correct theoretical view and the movement away from localism and other forms of primitive work.