

PWOC PLENARY CHARTS FUTURE

focuses on six areas of work

On November 23, the PWOC held its semi-annual plenary, an all-group conference to sum up our work over the past period and set tasks for the coming one.

The all-day meeting heard and approved a general report from the Executive Committee dealing with the full range of our current situation and tasks, a propaganda report summing up gains and identifying areas for improvement in that area and passed two resolutions, one further concretizing the PWOC's approach to party-building and the other creating a Women's Liberation Commission to strengthen all aspects of the PWOC work in this critical struggle.

The reports and resolutions had been the subject of internal discussion within the organization over the past two months and drew on input from all the units of the PWOC. The unanimous endorsement of the reports and resolutions indicated a high level of political unity in the organization.

NATIONAL WORK

The EC general report to the membership was the major item on the agenda. The report examined the international and domestic aspects of the crisis of imperialism and situated the tasks of the Communist movement and the PWOC in that framework.

Six areas of work came in for particular focus. First of all, the report noted the growth of an independent Marxist-Leninist trend nationally in opposition to both revisionism and dogmatism. The PWOC has begun to place greater emphasis on reaching out to forces that compose this trend in order to make our own contribution to further defining and strengthening its Marxist-Leninist character.

In the past period we have met with many groups and individuals and gained a wider circulation for our materials. In the coming period we must increase this work and begin to give it a more coherent organized form. (see party building resolution for a full discussion).

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM

The second area of focus was the struggle against racism. Gains in trade union work were cited. In election struggles in several unions concrete demands against discrimination were advanced and made central issues in the election agitation.

However, serious weaknesses still remain in our trade union work in this critical area. In contrast with the more advanced election work other cadre had fallen into tailism and side-stepped the question of racism.

In the first case, our work had served to build a firmer foundation for multinational unity in the rank and file movement by drawing Black workers into the struggle and educating the white workers in the spirit of class solidarity.

Where the struggle against racism was weak division in the form of a low level of Black-white unity remained the central problem. The report noted that

while our cadre had in general become more conscious and consistent fighters against racism, much room for improvement remained.

Our ideological understanding remains uneven and our practice must become more aggressive.

UNEMPLOYMENT WORK

The development of work among the unemployed was a third focus of the report. The central importance of this work in this period of economic crisis was underlined.

The attempt to build a mass organization of the unemployed over the last period has met with real success. Several months of consistent agitation have advanced the work to the point where a core of unemployed workers has developed and where the stage is now set for a campaign of mass action around jobs.

The importance of follow-up work with contacts made through leafletting, the need to broaden the composition of the leadership and the need to step up the struggle against both sexism and racism were all identified as problem areas needing attention in next period.

The report confirmed our commitment to the unemployment work and our intention to insure that it received all the organizational resources necessary to forge ahead.

BUILD MOVEMENT FOR DESEGREGATION

Another priority area of work for the PWOC in the coming period is the effort to build a mass movement for desegregation and quality education in anticipation of eventual court ordered busing plan here in Philadelphia.

We are committed, in conjunction with other forces, to building a broad coalition with a working class approach to the question of busing, which essentially means that we must fight for desegregation while simultaneously opposing further deterioration of the city's school system and demanding real improvements in the education of all working class children.

The EC reported that generally the PWOC has provided positive leadership in the beginning efforts to build such a coalition.

INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION

Another area of review and further development was the struggle for Independent Political Action. In the last period we advanced the slogan of independent political action in relation to the mayoralty elections primarily through our treatment of the elections in the Organizer.

We also had a series of internal educationals to consolidate our understanding of this concept within the organization. We now must expand our agitation bringing the slogan into the rank and file movements and the various coalitions in which we are active.

We must also seek to develop relations with those forces in the city which are moving in the direction of independent political action. At this point in time, our main work is propagandistic rather than organizational.

We must popularize the slogan of independent political action and win broader forces to a commitment to move in this direction before viable independent formations can actually be formed. The report noted that the growing trend of disillusionment with the two capitalist parties both locally and nationally provides a fertile field for this agitation.

STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPORTUNISM

Finally, the report focused on the struggle against opportunism and called for an intensified struggle on the ideological front against both revisionism and dogmatism. In the struggle for the party here in the US we have to sharpen our critique of revisionism.

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RESOLUTION ON Party Building

The road to the vanguard party is anything but straight and level. It is a steep and winding path, climbing rocky inclines and traveling along narrow ledges where the mere loss of footing can result in a plunge to death waiting on the rocks below. Heavy rain and thick fog have obscured the path in some places. In others, rockslides have placed huge boulders in the way.

Like so many climbers, the Marxist-Leninist movement is struggling up the path. Its progress though slow has been steady. And while some forces have taken the wrong path and others have fallen behind, the column continues its relentless advance.

Both the numbers and the dedication of the party building movement continue to grow. The movement has deepened its ties to the working class from which it gains nourishment; there are larger numbers of activists in the trade unions than ever before and their influence is growing. The movement has also strengthened its grasp on the science of revolutionary struggle; it has sharpened its critique of revisionism and continues to accumulate ammunition for the struggle against dogmatism. Further it has developed its multinational character both in terms of its work in the mass struggles and its own organization.

It is true that there have been setbacks -- setbacks which are serious and must not be underestimated. There has been a definite consolidation of dogmatism in two of the leading national organizations. The RU has consolidated its bankrupt, racist ultra-left line; they now call themselves the Revolutionary Communist Party. They maintain that the new revolutionary party has been founded. And it appears that they have been able to hoodwink some honest revolutionaries into placing a vanguard label on rearguard practice.

The OL, never wanting to be left far behind RU, has also declared itself solidly behind dogmatism. While OL has always had strong dogmatist tendencies, there were countervailing pressures which for a time seemed to be making some headway. In the last year, however, dogmatism and its cohort, ultra-leftism, have gained the upper hand. This is demonstrated by OL's recent rejection of *any* 'unity of action' with the revisionists and, in addition, by their June Congress which altered their party building line. In June, party building became a "question of immediacy" and now they are calling for the "actual organizational work of party construction" to begin. It seems that we are to suffer two dogmatist 'vanguard parties.'

Beyond the RU-OL masquerade lie some even better examples of what our movement should *not* be. Organizations like Worker's Viewpoint and Marxist Leninist Organizing Committee, while they have stumbled upon some correct criticisms, have chosen to compound RU and OL's political errors. Rejecting dogmatism in favor of ultra-dogmatism, they advocate sounding a retreat from the working class movement, a retreat from the stormy seas of class struggle to the cushioned rooms of intellectualist study and debate.

It would be equally wrong, however, to overestimate these setbacks. While real enough, this dogmatist trend does not include the majority of those taking the road to the new party; its main strength comes from petty bourgeois elements -- those who are most susceptible to dogmatist opportunism. There are many schooled Marxist-Leninists who have not fallen prey to its wiles and it has been unable to make significant inroads into the bulk of the advanced workers who every day become more open to communism.

Opposed to these dogmatist forces are a growing number of activists who are searching for a different kind of movement. They seek a movement which bases itself primarily on the historical experience of the working class here in the US rather than in China or elsewhere. They seek a movement formed and shaped in the crucible of a real live class struggle, not in the dull grey reflection of that struggle in revolutionary literature. They seek a movement which expresses its internationalism through national forms of struggle, a movement led by real Marxist-Leninists, not by dogmatic, unschooled Bible-thumpers.