

UNITY CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

August, 1975

RESOLUTIONS ON PARTY BUILDING

1. The central task of all communists is winning the vanguard to communism, that is building a genuine multinational communist party and thereby taking the first step in fusing communism with the workers' movement. We hold that the development and victory of the revolution depend on the existence of a revolutionary party built according to the revolutionary theory and revolutionary style of Marxism-Leninism.

We further hold that the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) has become a revisionist and bourgeois reformist party. Since the betrayal of the CPUSA the principal task of the proletariat has been to build a revolutionary party of a new type which reclaims the revolutionary heritage of the U.S. working class and its vanguard.

We must subordinate all our work to uniting the foremost representatives of the proletariat ideologically on the science of Marxism-Leninism and, transforming ideological unity into the material unity of organization, weld the main core of the proletariat into a genuine communist party of the Bolshevik type. Only a bolshevized core can assume Marxist-Leninist leadership of the practical actions of the masses and it is therefore only by forging this core that we lay the reliable foundation for expanding our political activity.

2. Winning the vanguard of the proletariat to communism means winning the foremost representatives of the proletariat to the consciousness of the struggle of the entire multinational working class as a single working class engaged in a struggle directed, not against individual employers or groups of employers, but against the entire capitalist class and the government that supports it. It means welding the best elements of the working class into a bolshevik core, mobilizing the experience, revolutionary spirit, and selfless devotion of those who show their readiness and ability to win the confidence of the masses, who accept communism consciously and who devote themselves entirely to the education and organization of the proletariat.

3. We hold that accomplishing this task requires a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism, revisionism, chauvinism, narrow nationalism and all manifestations of bourgeois ideology which arise spontaneously under capitalism and which are imposed on the working class. It is opportunism in all its forms which keeps the advanced of the proletariat from communism and which is the primary obstacle to welding the core. The chief form of our activity must therefore be propaganda in order to win the vanguard to communism.

4. The primary defects in our work which prevent us from winning a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and from carrying out the tasks of party building are (1) ideologically, a failure to recognize the mobilizing, organizing and transforming role of Marxist-Leninist theory, (2) politically, tailism and the restricted scope of activity that comes from bowing to the spontaneity of the workers' or mass movements, (3) organizationally, amateurishness, fragmentation,

the local circle spirit, and liberalism, (4) on matters of leadership, bowing to the sentiments of the average or backwards elements and failing to identify the advanced or to strengthen its leadership role in everything and rely on the advanced to win over the broad masses of workers and oppressed people.

The fundamental principles which we take to guide our work in correcting and overcoming these errors are the following:

- 1) We insist on the leading role of the ISKRA principle,
- 2) We insist on disciplined organizational consolidation based on democratic centralism and taking factory nuclei as the primary unit or organization.*

RESOLUTIONS ON THE ISKRA PRINCIPLE**

5. We insist on the leading role of the ISKRA principle in all our work. The basic principles that Lenin's ISKRA organization stood for are the foundation of a vanguard party. The four basic tenets of the ISKRA principle are the following:

- i) to unite on the science of Marxism-Leninism and put proletarian ideological and political line in command of everything we do;
- ii) to work out and implement an independent communist policy on all our tasks;
- iii) to consolidate ideological unity in the material unity of communist organization, strengthening the centralized leadership of the vanguard in everything;
- iv) to provide communist leadership on every task by uniting with the advanced and relying on the advanced to win over the intermediate and the backward.

We hold these tenets should guide every Marxist-Leninist organization and individual in the U.S. If we unfold our theoretical and practical work on the basis of the ISKRA principle we will develop, through common struggle, the essential ideological and political foundation we need to unite. *Backwards.*

6. A CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ISKRA TYPE. The primary practical means to implement the ISKRA principle at this time is a central organ of the ISKRA type -- a collective propagandist, a collective agitator, and a collective organizer directed primarily to the advanced and taking up every tactical, political and theoretical problem of international communism.*** Propaganda that is consistent in principle and nationwide in scope requires a frequently-published national newspaper devoted to topical political exposures. By unfolding work around such a newspaper we will learn to be always prepared, theoretically and practically, to support every protest and outbreak of resistance of the proletariat and oppressed masses.

* See our note on the resolutions on factory nuclei.

** The "Iskra" principle is a set of general Marxist-Leninist principles. Calling them the "Iskra" principle, and including the discussions of the newspaper under the same heading, served to confuse these general principles with our particular tactical plan for party building, based on an Iskra-type newspaper. It reflected a dogmatism which belittles theory by assuming all theoretical work has already been done.

*** After our experience with the WC-ML and The Communist we have come to the conclusion that there is today no single organization capable of developing an Iskra-type paper. We believe that a theoretical magazine can lay the groundwork for such a paper.

6.1 Comprehensive political exposures are the chief means to train the masses and ourselves in political consciousness and revolutionary activity. They are the means to learn to apply a communist point of view to all aspects of life and to the activity of all classes.

6.2 We emphasize the importance of developing specialists in propaganda and newspaper work who are capable of using the science of Marxism-Leninism to systematically appraise what is going on around us. The ability to make an independent revolutionary estimate of everything that affects the class struggle of the proletariat does not arise spontaneously but must be consciously learned and fought for.

6.3 PLAN FOR AN ISKRA-TYPE NEWSPAPER. We call on all Marxist-Leninists to unite to build a single common ISKRA-type newspaper for the Leninist trend. Our movement today remains scattered and disunited, restricted by the local circle spirit. It suffers above all from a lack of centralized ideological and practical leadership, that is consistent in principle and national in scope. As a result, revisionist and petty-bourgeois distortions of Marxism-Leninism remain dominant. It is the duty of all Marxist-Leninists to unite against such distortions and draw firm lines of demarcation between the Leninist trend and the Economist trend. We must develop common propaganda and stretch a common political line that speaks for the Leninist trend. No one organization or circle by its own efforts can achieve such a task. Only by a united effort, by pooling the resources and centralizing the leadership of our trend, can we establish the hegemony of orthodox Leninism and defeat Economism. An ISKRA-type newspaper is an essential weapon in this fight, a means to unify, centralize, and consolidate the Leninist trend. By uniting in the common practical activity to build a single organ, we can gather together the now-scattered forces, establishing common propaganda and a broad network of collaborators and correspondents. By uniting to stretch a single common line, the ideological unity of the Leninist trend can be forged, and in a step-by-step way, this unity can be transformed into the organizational unity necessary to unite Marxist-Leninists into one common organization-- a genuine communist party.

6.4 The Workers Congress (Marxist-Leninist) resolves to base ~~THE~~ COMMUNIST on the model of ISKRA. To this end we open our columns to all honest Marxist-Leninists and will exert our best efforts to develop a newspaper that every comrade can use as his own. We shall conduct THE COMMUNIST in the spirit of orthodox Marxism-Leninism, and while we intend to discuss questions from our own definite point of view, we open our columns to polemics among comrades. In the same way, while we rely on the cadres of the WC (M-L) as the core to distribute and use THE COMMUNIST in a disciplined way, unfolding their common activity around it, we put THE COMMUNIST at the disposal of all comrades, class-conscious workers, study circles, organization etc. We will do our part to make THE COMMUNIST a means to unite the best forces of the Leninist trend, and build it as a mighty instrument in the struggle for a single common organ which speaks for all U.S. Marxist-Leninists.

We call on all Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers to join with us in building THE COMMUNIST. We call for reports and correspondence on factory and political exposures, trade union struggles, the fight against national oppression and for democratic rights, etc., and especially encourage workers to write us. Broad distribution of THE COMMUNIST, reports on its use and criticisms of its content are all valuable means by which comrades can contribute. We ask that comrades serve as collaborators and join in the tasks to develop a broad network which enables THE COMMUNIST to respond to the struggle and needs of the proletariat and oppressed people. Our ability to improve our common work and formulate common policy that is national in scope depends on the closest collaboration of all Marxist-Leninists. Only in so far as we succeed in uniting Marxist-Leninists and class-conscious workers from throughout the nation can we establish THE COMMUNIST as an

organ which speaks for the Leninist trend. We call on each of you to take up THE COMMUNIST as an instrument of unity in the struggle to build a common ISKRA-type newspaper.

7. CADRES TRAINING. We emphasize the practical importance of cadres training at this time. It is impossible to implement the ISKRA principle or to weld the bolshevik core without the utmost attention to arming cadres at every level with the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism, enabling them to find their way in any political situation. In our daily activity we must become good at learning and overcome the U.S. tendency to empiricism, pragmatism and disregard of theory. Socialism is a science and must be studied like a science. We master the science of Marxism-Leninism in order to guide our practical revolutionary work and base cadres training on the principle that the sole purpose of mastering Marxist theory is to apply it. We must guard against the dogmatist error of divorcing study from concrete practice or of making theoretical training an end in itself.

We must learn to use all forms of ideological and political education -- training schools, touring propagandists, independent study, etc. It is essential to develop a national cadres training school and to promote common programs of political education through the Central Organ.*

8. DRAFT PROGRAM. We stress the practical importance of a Draft Party Program as an essential aspect of the ISKRA plan. A draft party program which briefly and scientifically formulates the aims and objects of the struggle of the working class is an indispensable tool for uniting all Marxist-Leninists in the struggle to build a vanguard party.

9. ORGANIZATION. It will be impossible to undertake any of these practical tasks to implement the ISKRA principle without a professional style of work. Organization is key** Only improved organization will make it possible to extend and deepen the content of our propaganda and agitation. To this end we will step up our efforts to develop the disciplined unity of the entire organization under its centralized leadership. This means decentralization with regard to keeping the center informed since without information, centralization is impossible. Without the maximum decentralization in regard to responsibility to the center we will be unable to achieve the greatest possible centralization of the ideological and political leadership of our revolutionary work.

RESOLUTIONS ON FACTORY NUCLEI

10. We hold that the basic unit of a communist organization is the nucleus or cell in the place of employment (factory, workshop, mine, office, store, farm, etc.) which unites all members of the organization in a given enterprise, and we will

* A cadre training school requires a high level of organization so that work will not be disrupted by sending comrades to the school. It requires good leadership that can provide a worthwhile program for students. It requires the resolution of certain security problems so that police surveillance of the school will not immediately expose all our best cadre. It is not immediately feasible.

** We will not use this slogan, because it can be misconstrued to suggest that organization is the key link, and that we want organizational unity without ideological and political unity. This confusion was evident both among opponents and members of the WC. On the other hand, we must reiterate that in order to strengthen the ideological and political unity of scattered forces, we need organization. We need organization to centralize the exchange and distribution of theoretical work and practical experience on a nationwide basis.

build our organization on that basis.* We must make every factory our fortress.

10.1 We base ourselves on the industrial proletariat in the large factories and mills as the decisive sector of the revolutionary proletariat in regards to numbers and concentration, breadth of outlook and influence, and strategic position and fighting capacity to overthrow monopoly capitalism. At the present time our whole task must be to go lower and deeper among the working masses and to consolidate our position in the working class.**

10.2 Factory nuclei are the essential means to achieve the closest contact with the working masses in the factories, to ensure our active participation in the everyday struggles of the class and to secure the leadership of these struggles, to connect the immediate economic struggles of the proletariat to its long-term revolutionary interests, and to develop the mass political struggles of working and oppressed peoples in a revolutionary way. The cell is the primary organizational link between a communist organization and the working class, and the mechanism to join communism with the workers' movement.

10.3 Factory nuclei are small, conspiratorial units of approximately 3 to 7 members working in the same plant. Nuclei must take up all general problems of the organization, participate in working out policy, carry out the decisions of the organization, and apply its line and policies in all its work. It is the organizational tool to implement the ISKRA principle, to forge the unity of all Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers, to turn organizational plans and policies into a material force in the working class, and to win the vanguard to communism. In struggling to make nuclei the primary unit of organizational life, we must strive to develop nuclei in every department, groups of departmental nuclei, and a plant-wide nucleus, capable of giving centralized guidance. We must learn to establish a division of labor which enables the nuclei to accomplish all their basic tasks. Nuclei must be skilled in conspiratorial work and trained in conditions of illegality, but security must never cut the nuclei away from the masses of factory workers.

10.4 The main tasks of factory nuclei must be to form strong and close connections with workers in the factory. All workers must realize that the nuclei exist and react immediately to every event in the factory and country. Every manifestation of discontent, every grievance, every occasion for factory and political exposure must be utilized in order for the nuclei to gain leadership of the defense of the daily interests of the working class. To provide this leadership, the establishment of plant-wide nuclei and the widest variety of factory organizations is essential. Directing the work of fractions in the trade unions and other mass organizations is particularly important for establishment of close connections with the working masses. In striving to create such nuclei, cadres must utilize THE COMMUNIST, distributing it, forming study groups, gathering worker correspondents and collaborators around it. In addition, shop papers, leaflets, pamphlets, etc. should be used. As a basic

* Factory nuclei are our goal. Until we have won the advanced workers, however, we will not just declare a group of our cadre to be a nucleus. We will organize Marxist-Leninist workers' circles on an industrial basis as a step toward factory nuclei. These will include both advanced and intermediate workers and revolutionary petty-bourgeois intellectuals. It should be clear that these resolutions present a discussion of factory nuclei without saying how to build these nuclei. This question was never correctly resolved in the WC. It should also be clear that nuclei are appropriate for party work, bringing the party to the plant and to the masses. This is not our task just now.

** This formulation was the seed of the later "To the Masses" line of the WC. While generally correct, it cannot be our "whole task" now.

unit it is essential for nuclei to lead members and non-members in studying Marxism-Leninism and criticizing opportunism, petty-bourgeois liberalism and revisionism. Cadre should seize every opportunity to expose reformist and revisionist agents of monopoly capital, and their efforts to betray the class interest of the proletariat and spread opportunist ideas of class harmony and class collaboration.

10.5 Factory nuclei must apply communist methods of leadership and be good at uniting with the advanced and relying on them to win over the broad masses of workers. Members of the nuclei must first of all acquaint themselves with their fellow workers -- they must learn to know who is advanced and revolutionary, who is an honest proletarian, who is opportunist or has a philistine disinterest in politics, and who is an agent or fascist reactionary. On that basis they must develop their daily work and wage an uncompromising struggle against opportunism.

10.6 We must strive to recruit primarily through the factory nuclei. If we recruit through the persistent day-to-day work of the nuclei, the best and most progressive elements of the working class will be won over, those with a clear understanding of the everyday work of communists and of its connection with our revolutionary tasks, those the most capable of carrying out communist policy and mobilizing the masses in struggle. To insure the proletarian character of our leadership we must concentrate on training and bring forward leaders through Factory Nuclei.

10.7 Factory nuclei are essential to bolshevizing a communist organization. In the Bolshevik Party, work was centered in the factory cells and rested on their responsibility and initiative under the Party's centralized leadership. Social Democratic traditions of basing the party on electoral or neighborhoods were never fully repudiated in the Communist Parties of Western Europe and North America and the principal defect of their structure was the failure to build permanent organizational connections in the factories. These social-democratic traditions are perpetuated by the petty-bourgeois democratic trends in our movement today which has emphasized organizing broad coalitions and economist forms of workers' organizations rather than undertaking the more difficult job of establishing nuclei in the large factories and mills as the basis for unfolding our political and organizational work.

The test of our seriousness in taking on the task of winning the advanced to communism and building a vanguard party of the Bolshevik type will be measured by our ability to break with this stubbornly rooted opportunist tradition and by our ability to make factory nuclei the primary unit of our organization. We hold with the Fourth Congress of the Comintern that "no Communist Party can be regarded as a serious and solidly organized mass party if it does not possess strong Communist nuclei in the factories, workshops, mines, railways, etc."

RESOLUTIONS ON DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

11. Organizational consolidation depends on strict, class-conscious adherence to democratic centralism. Centralism expresses the unity of aim, the unity of will, and the unity of action of the proletariat. Democratic organizational life is essential to the full expression of revolutionary vigor, initiative, and responsibility of every cadre. We hold that centralism makes possible the highest level of participation in struggle and is a prerequisite to the full flowering of democracy in organizational life. We hold that proletarian democracy is the prerequisite for the firmest and most disciplined centralism, for it is only conscious discipline that can be iron discipline. At all levels we must strive for unity in thinking, policy, plan, command and action as the indispensable precondition for victory. The development and extension of organizational democracy is fundamentally for the purpose of achieving still better centralization. It is essential to establish a

political situation in which there are both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness.

Leading bodies at all levels shall be selected through elections and cooptation on the basis of democratic consultation. Every member must actively participate in the daily work of the organization. Every leading body and organizational unit must report regularly on its activity and give an account of its work.

Every member of the organization must observe the rules of unified discipline:

- 1) the individual is subordinate to the organization;
- 2) the minority is subordinate to the majority;
- 3) the lower level is subordinate to the higher level;
- 4) the entire membership is subordinate to the Central Committee.*

Whoever violates these articles of discipline disrupts organizational unity.

At this time we place particular emphasis on the practical importance of improved centralization to overcome organizational fragmentation, the local circle spirit, amateurishness and the disease of liberalism. We insist on a resolute break with menshevik and petty-bourgeois democratic tendencies on matters of organization. Centralism is an indispensable tool to create the conditions for genuine proletarian democracy in our organizational life and to develop the specialized skills of cadres throughout the organization in a planned, professional and comprehensive way.

* We want to refer the reader to our article on democratic centralism to see how the opportunist leadership violated these principles. It should also be noted that this passage, taken verbatim from the 1973 Constitution of the Communist Party of China, did not also include some statement on the authority of the organizational conference. The constitution of the Chinese party says, "The highest leading body of the Party is the National Party Congress and, when it is not session, the Central Committee elected by it." By omitting such a statement from its resolutions, the Workers' Congress left the door open to the leadership to reverse the line of the Unity Conference.

In this pre-party period, in which we have no program that we have all agreed upon, we should be bound by discipline on programmatic points which we have agreed on. Questions of the ideological and political basis of the party should be decided by discussion and debate, not by commandism.