

Feb. 27, 1979

Dear Comrades:

This letter is in response to your announcement of a multilateral conference on party building. Our first reaction on receiving the announcement was that we felt it would be a great step forward but after collectively reading and evaluating the proposal we have found several very serious drawbacks.

1) "The purpose of the MULC is to provide an organized framework so that ideological struggle can take place in a systematic way on how to advance party building, and based on principled unity, an agreed on party building plan (or plans) would be put into practice." We believe that the proposed conference would be successful if it only set forth a path towards party building, a method of carrying out the ideological struggle that is to lay the backbone of a new communist party in the US. The line put forward in this sentence from the 2nd page of your announcement as well as other sections in essence are putting forward the line of organization as the key link. This was stated earlier and more clearly in your response to MLC's June letter when you said; "In building the party we have several tasks; building the center (the key link)...". We differ with this type of priority. Our view of the tasks in front of us in terms of party building are first to begin to draw lines of demarcation clearly so we can see who are in a trend. With this begun and proceeding we can begin to see who the leaders are in drawing these lines of demarcation and in the struggle to delineate a trend. Demarcation put it clearly when they replied to MLC; "This is what we need today- ideological struggle leading to ideological unity so that we can then unite." (p.5) The need to establish a center and to establish a newspaper or other method of carrying out propaganda and struggle ideologically follow closely the process of drawing lines of demarcation and establishing a Marxist-Leninist trend. The MULC while devoting a great deal of time to ideological questions has lined up so great a number of questions with so little time for prior exchange of views between the various groups to in effect negate the ideological aims it is trying to achieve. In effect we see the real aim of the MULC is an attempt (and a very premature one) at building a new communist organization.

2) Purpose of the MULC as you see it is to provide "an organized framework so that ideological struggle can take place in a systematic way on how to advance party building..." We see a much better framework being a M-L journal not a weekend conference where matters will only be touched upon and little can be resolved.

3) You allow and even seem to encourage more than one party-building plan to come out at the MULC. We believe that on every question there is one correct M-L line and that must be struggled for for the winning of that line and its implementation in practice in what moves us forward to proletarian revolution not the acceptance of 2,3 many lines.

Comrades, we are keeping our response to your proposal very short as we did not have the time to develop it and meet the March 3 deadline. From the above we think you can see our views of the MULC and the views we have of what road to take in regards to party building. We would like to see a meeting of the various collectives you have invited to the MULC and with the criteria for attendance you have made. However

touching earth. Just about every one of the topics of the agenda is susceptible to that kind of problem. We do not believe that those subjects should not be discussed, but we do believe that for a meaningful struggle, those subjects must be discussed in the context of the real world and our analysis of that world.

We therefore propose that the agenda be substantially amended. We do not have a final or complete proposal at this time, but we would suggest the following. We start from the analysis of concrete conditions, so we would suggest that there be a plenary to discuss the objective situation in the world today: what are the relative strengths and weaknesses of the superpowers, what are the relative strengths and weaknesses of the other imperialists both in relation to one another and in relation to the superpowers, where is revolution on the rise, what is the treat of war, what are the principle contradictions in the world, how is the crisis of imperialism evidenced?

We would suggest a second plenary on the objective situation in the United States: what forces are in motion, what is our analysis of classes, what is the state of the national movements, what is the situation for women, what are th forces of reaction up to?

We would suggest a third plenary on the state of the movement: recent history of the movement, what lines are represented by forces not involved in the MULC, strengths and weaknesses of the movement, etc.

After those discussions are completed and some unity is reached, it is appropriate to turn to the question of how do we move forward, what is our party building plan? In the struggle around this last topic we would discuss such questions as party building as the central task, key link, theory and programme, fusion, what it is and how to develop it, uniting M-Ls, etc.

There is one glaring omission from the agenda. Nowhere is it suggested that we should struggle over the question of what is a party and how does it function, what is the internal life of the party? We feel that the trend in the movement is to overplay the aspect of centralism and squash democracy in the party. As we said, two line struggle is the lifeblood of the party, democracy must flourish. We do not believe that there should be factions within the party. Nor do we believe that once a decision is made in the party that cadre are free to carry it out according to their whims or beliefs. That would be a major breakdown of discipline and cripple the party. However, none of that means that struggle should not be wide open and for all cadre to participate in fully and without fear of reprisal. These are questions which must be taken up by any forces attempting to build a communist party, questions which must be discussed at the MULC.

We hope that comrades in organizations invited to attend the MULC give our suggestions and questions careful attention. We look forward to all responses. And we hope to see you over Memorial Day weekend.

Comradely greetings,

Revolutionary Workers Collective (RWC)

WICHITA COMMUNIST CELL

BOX 493

Wichita Kansas, 67201

from MARXIST-LENINIST COLLECTIVE

Comrades,

We received the proposal for a multilateral conference, and will take it up for more detailed analysis and scrutiny in the immediate future.

At this time we can only give an initial and brief response.

We unite, in general, with your proposal. A multilateral conference of the groups named in your proposal is due. As far as we can say now, we plan to attend and participate in the MULC, because it is basically in accordance with our line, in particular with the suggestion that we put forward in our November letter. Obviously, you've filled in a lot of details that makes your plan more viable and gives us a much better basis from which to struggle.

Our internal rectification campaign has taken an enormous amount of time and work over the past month-6weeks. We don't want to have our rectification campaign encompass all our time and energy, to the exclusion of taking up other tasks, such as criticizing and commenting on your plan in more detail. But the fact is that we are quite busy, thus we will necessarily have to delay a fuller response to your proposal.

We will address the following points of your proposal:

- (1) purpose of the MULC
- (2) principles of unity
- (3) other groups and individuals involved
- (4) Focus of Struggle for the MULC

We will also try to address questions like time, place, security arrangements, etc., although we feel they are secondary questions and should not take up a whole lot of time and effort right now.

While our basic orientation is to participate in the MULC, we feel it is imperative that we have basic, principled unity with the proposal. As we analyze the proposal more deeply, we will register any differences that we have with or problems that we see in it. Then, based on the struggle over any possible contradictions and whether any differences are of principle or tactics, we will determine finally whether to participate. We don't want to sound negative, or make it seem like we don't plan to or want to participate. Rather, we want to lay out very generally what we feel is the correct basis for our participation in a MULC.

We feel that your initiative in this matter is quite positive and hope that all details can be worked out, and unity reached on your proposal.

A note on the Denver forum: we plan to send you our minutes from the forum itself, plus an assessment of it quite soon. We are waiting until we finish holding a series of meetings that we've set up with contacts and friendly organizations to discuss the forum and the speeches. We want to include the results of these meetings in our minutes and assessment.

In the struggle

MLC

A

SUM-UP OF LATE RESPONSES TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A MULTILATERAL CONFERENCE (MULC) ON PARTY BUILDING WITH WCC'S SUGGESTIONS TO MOVE THE MULC FORWARD--March 19, 1979

Demarcation and Red Dawn responded late. Red Dawn was late because they received the Announcement late (3/2) and initially sent their response to the wrong box. Demarcation was late because they wrote a polemic against the Conference as proposed by WCC and put forward a counterproposal with the U.S. Leninist Core (and apparently because they waited to see what the replies were going to be first). We have already criticized them for being late and this criticism still stands. Much of what was in their counterproposal regarding the Conference had already been relayed to us by phone 2-3 weeks ago. The lateness, to us, shows disregard for moving forward the Conference, plus waiting for the responses from other groups before putting theirs forward (see Demarcation and the "Core"'s quote on PC's reply, p. 15) is an opportunist way of not being open and of maneuvering for positions.

We will sum-up the responses with any additional changes we think should be made to the Conference. Since the responses are so different, we will do this by groups this time. Then we want to put forward an overall sum-up of how we think things are going and what we encourage groups to do.

Red Dawn

The spirit of Red Dawn's reply is good and shows a desire to struggle for M-L unity with the groups invited to the Conference. They criticize our "party building plan" line as most other groups do and we have already been self-critical and tried to clarify this in our initial answer. We hope our "Initial Sum-Up" of responses clears this up.

Red Dawn has a point on the content-agenda of the Conference. "We suggest that you wait until the documents start coming in and the principle (sp) areas of unity and difference emerge before setting an agenda. Then representatives of the main viewpoints could be selected to initiate discussion before opening debate to all, instead of insisting that every group say their piece first." This may be a good idea if there is that much similarity between certain groups' views and there are main viewpoints coming out. At this point in time we can't say that is the case (except KCRWC and WCC have similar views and we are going to try to make our document and presentation joint). We suggest that as preparation for the Conference develops, groups circulate their suggestions for the method of the Conference and whether this way of going about it would be good.

Red Dawn's comments on seeing the PLA as the leading party are similar to that brought up by other groups and we have already responded to this. We don't think that we can be very particular in our POU's on just what leadership the PLA has taken because again, there are varied differences and unities with the PLA. The point Red Dawn makes about the danger of drawing lines of demarcation on the basis of parties or personalities without spelling out the political and ideological lines they represent, is a very good point. This is why we have not been concerned about being the "first" to trash Mao Tse-tung (its the fashionable thing nowadays don't you know) but to seriously examine, and as deeply as possible, the criticism the PLA is putting forward around Mao and the "old" CPC (before the revisionist take-over in 1976) in order to improve our work. In other words (and don't try to tear the above sentence out of context Demarcation) what is important are the lines and practice of Mao and the PLA, what has been M-L and non-M-L about them, what can we learn from the errors, what errors are we making and how do we change them.

We want to reply to Red Dawn's comments on including "there is no genuine party or center" in a POU. Comrades, we include this because we see it as a line of demarcation between genuine and sham. If we included economism or small-circle spirit and sectarianism as a line of demarcation (in practice) we would not have a conference. But making economist errors, having small-circle spirit, sectarian deviations is not a line of demarcation at this time as long as groups do not consolidate this. We feel that all of us invited to the Conference have had, and have, varying degrees of economism, sectarianism, small-circle spirit, not to forget tendencies in some of "theory only," "struggle only,"

all of which are very incorrect tendencies, but none of us invited to the Conference have gone so far as to declare these defects the party or the center (Demarcation suggests that they and the "Core" are the embryo of the center). This is what we demarcate. Comrades, no M-L party and no M-L center exists in the United States and any group which has the gall to call themselves such are some of the worst opportunists. Therefore, this is putting the POU's quite on the basis of ideological, political, and organizational line--we reject the line that the movement has produced an M-L party or M-L center. Also, this line encompasses so many ideological, political, and organizational lines (e.g. that programmatic questions have been settled, an M-L trend has emerged, the M-L character of the party developed and united on, etc.) which not all the groups invited have complete unity on, and this prevents us from making these particular lines points of unity. But this is the aspect of developing the unity of these POU's. We feel it is good that groups unite that no M-L party or M-L center exists, but we need to develop more unity around why. Also, this part of the POU does not reflect small-circle spirit. We do not say there is no M-L party or M-L center because we don't want one, we say it because one doesn't exist. To stand objective reality on its head as Demarcation does is idealism, and their attempt to discredit us with this is sophistry.

Red Dawn's point on the third POU, that practice is the decisive criterion for the truth of ideological and political line, is very correct. We are learning this more each day in our work. We already say that the unity is around line and practice, meaning groups would see another groups' line in practice before real unity comes about, but we would add that after criticism and self-criticism, the transformation takes place in practice. The POU (#3) would read: Contradictions among comrades are to be resolved through ideological and political struggle, Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism and transformation in practice, in order to unite on a principled basis around line and practice, and achieve higher communist organizational forms of unity.

On Red Dawn's comments on Demarcation: we will respond briefly to this in dealing with Demarcation's counterproposal.

Demarcation - The U.S. Leninist Core

Demarcation and the "Core" hold that our Announcement is trash, "bankrupt," conveniently remain silent on most of the responses to the Announcement they received and studied while writing their reply, and put forward a counterproposal. Rather than wading through the mounds of "merciless blows," we will try to analyze the essence of the r-r-r-revolutionary stand they have taken. The particular merciless blows will have to wait for future response as we will explain more later.

The essence of Demarcation and the "Core"'s holier-than-thou, super-Bolshevik line on the Conference is that they don't want a conference with most of the groups invited (it's not worth it) and they don't want groups to get together to have the Conference. They try to mask these motives through "criticism" and the counterproposal put forward. But it can be seen that they could not have had in mind meeting with the other groups when their whole document treats other groups in an uncomradely way, says that some groups are not worth meeting with (PC especially), demands the "Core" be at the Conference, and puts forward a counterproposal that we don't think most groups will unite with. There is much which points to Demarcation not wanting the Conference to take place. First, they try to discredit what is happening--the proposal is backward, the Conference is unprincipled, if they and the "Core" don't come and the Conference goes as groups are planning, it will be a right opportunist conference, and as far as the preparation for the Conference goes "extreme anarchy has reigned in the decision-making process." According to them "the chaos around this conference shouldn't have been allowed to have gotten as far as it already has." Aside from some amateurishness and some lack of leadership on our part, the preparation for the Conference is organized and things are going smoothly, groups have a desire to get together and develop unities and sharpen disunities, and it looks like a constructive conference on party building will occur which will help move party building forward. In the middle of this

positive motion (which has already been seen by Demarcation) comes Demarcation and the "Core" with their line of "anarchy," "chaos." Since this is not reality, why would they paint reality so? Why would they try to insert real anarchy by waiting to read other groups replies before responding, responding late, doing whatever they want to do, responding when they care to respond?

Before this counterproposal arrived, the liquidationist maneuvers on Demarcation's part were beginning to appear to us. Back in September, 1978, Demarcation indicated interest in a MULC. When we got around to try to organize this in January, we sent Demarcation an initial proposal* for them to criticize, improve and support. We never received anything written that criticized and improved our initial proposal nor our Announcement until we got the counterproposal. We did talk to Demarcation on the phone several times concerning the Conference. The first time Demarcation called, they had just received quite a lot of material from us, including the initial proposal, but they were more concerned about the forum in Denver and whether they should come or not. We had to bring up the conference and other things we felt were also important in the materials we had sent. At the time, Demarcation held they had general unity with the proposal, and made no major criticisms or improvements. Then, the more we moved on the Conference: the fact that it became the subject of a brief meeting at Denver and that certain unities did come out of the meeting, the fact that we got an Announcement out (and it was correctly an Announcement since proposals had already been discussed between several groups including Demarcation who fussed the most about an Announcement--the groups who did not discuss the proposals did not complain about an Announcement but went on to criticize it and improve it); the more Demarcation became negative. They began phoning us and engaging in long (and we mean long--1-2 hours) conversations about what great work they were doing (their journal, their "study" of Mao, etc.). We had two or three conversations about the Announcement after it came out, in which they had criticism and the beginnings of their counterproposal were appearing. The last two phone conversations we had contained discussions around the "Core" coming, where we put forward our views and Demarcation would not listen to them. Finally, they made a proposal which would have objectively kept us from getting work done around the Conference. This was their proposal that there be a forum with them and the "Core" on party building in our area. They proposed this on February 25 and wanted the forum to occur in a couple of weeks. Demarcation knows that WCC is small and that we could not possibly prepare for a forum and continue to prepare for and organize the MULC and do all our other work within such a short period of time. In fact, they should have known very well that if we had gone for their forum it would have messed us up to the point where we would have been very late in replying to the responses (two weeks from Feb. 25 is March 12--just when we had to reply to the responses coming in--how could our small group have successfully organized a forum, continued ongoing theoretical and practical work, and responded to the responses to the Announcement at the very same time?). We declined the forum partially for this reason. The major reason we declined was because of the "Core," and another reason was that Demarcation had never responded to our line on party building in "Let's Move..." our criticism of their line on party building in Red Dawn #1, and additional letters around party building. We could see that Demarcation did not have ^{mind} in principled struggle over party building when they suggested the forum. Our point in running through this history of struggle with Demarcation around the Conference, is that Demarcation has been in on the Conference and has been close to developments from the very beginning, and has basically not helped develop or promote it, and has objectively thrown up obstacles to its development.

The counterproposal itself is an attempt to get "chaos" and "anarchy" going around the Conference. It is inflammatory and is designed to get groups attention off the Conference and on to the various criticisms it throws on groups. Groups are being goaded into jumping into the fracas in an unorganized way. In this way, groups would have a hard time preparing for the Conference, the organization around the Conference would break down and it might get postponed.

*This initial proposal sent to Demarcation was in essence the same thing presented at the Denver Forum. The proposal was not designed for any set discussion at Denver but was planned to give groups to study and hopefully discuss. At a meeting on party building in Denver, the proposals were discussed. We are attaching the initial proposal and Some Comrades' "Notes..." since they are being the subject of discussion and some distortion.

This is why we did not try to answer all the criticisms and accusations Demarcation-"Core" raise up and set straight all the distortions at this time. We think there is plenty of time, and will be room in our paper for the Conference, to deal with this petty bourgeois infantilism. Other groups too, will see through this goading and will approach struggle with Demarcation in an organized way. We suggest that groups see struggle over the lines Demarcation put forward as mainly through their papers for the Conference and at the Conference, and only secondarily through their response to this round of discussion, keeping in mind deadlines so as not to get behind. We feel that the criticisms and accusations of various groups, the party building lines brought out, should be mainly discussed in the papers for the Conference and at the Conference; and questions concerning the Conference should be the main subject of groups' response at this time.

In addition to seeing through Demarcation's sham proposal, we disunite with the main things they propose. We have already written how the purpose of the Conference is not to draw lines of demarcation on party building. Drawing lines of demarcation (in a constructive, M-L way) means the lines have been struggled out in an organized, open and full way and an M-L line has come forward. The lines and questions at the Conference have not been aired fully, sharpened and struggled over. That is part of the purpose of the Conference! The other part of the purpose is to identify and develop the general M-L line on party building and begin to unite forces around it. New lines of demarcation on party building are developing, but they will not be drawn at the Conference. To whatever extent the general M-L line and unity develops at the Conference, there will be much more struggle before the line is deepened and others won to it, and before it can be declared a line of demarcation between genuine and sham. However often Demarcation and the "Core" trot out Lenin's quote on drawing lines of demarcation, it will not help them grasp the essence of this quote, which is: in order to unite (into a party) we must draw firm lines of demarcation. Uniting on a principled basis is the goal, aim, not drawing lines of demarcation. Why then, would Demarcation make the aim of the conference "to draw lines of demarcation"?

Demarcation holds that struggle over Mao Tse-tung Thought is the most important thing in party building and should be the most important thing at the Conference. Our reply is: and what after Mao Tse-tung Thought? What if imperialist war breaks out? Is the most important thing deciding questions on imperialist war? And what if there would be a revisionist take-over in the PLA--would this be the most important thing to deal with? What if after that our bourgeois "democracy" turns fascist--would the main thing be debates on the nature of fascism? What if all these things happened about the same time in the near future? If deciding these things were the main thing when we don't have a party, how will building and actually forming the party and putting it firmly on its feet (Stalin) ever take place? Wouldn't it be better to have a party which can decide lines on burning questions a thousand times better than we can now? When do we form the party in all this? Demarcation answers simply, "After all the lines of demarcation have been drawn." We wish the situation in the U.S. wasn't so serious that we could laugh at this infantile ridiculousness. Go on Demarcation--try to draw all the lines of demarcation and we will give you the Duhring award for finding the end of infinity, for there will always be questions, always struggle and always lines of demarcation to be drawn. While Demarcation and the "Core" are trying to draw lines of demarcation on all the burning questions, the M-L party will be built, on a solid Marxist-Leninist foundation, with certain important lines of demarcation drawn and others still needing to be drawn, and still others just appearing and yet to be drawn. Some of Mao Tse-tung's teachings are certainly some of the lines of demarcation (not the only) for the formation of the party and we are sure the M-L line on these questions will come to the fore and be united around. But meanwhile, some groups realize that the party can't be built solely in the struggle over Mao Tse-tung Thought and are seeking the correct overall way to build the party. We have already shown that discussion of Mao's line and practice on the party and the experience of the CPC, and the PLA would be a part of the Focus of Struggle at the Conference, and that other questions could be discussed in the bilateral meetings and be part of Documentation of Existing views.

Demarcation and the "Core" do not agree that documentation of views should be existing ones and not the subject of further study and development. We say this only so groups do not think that they need to perfect their view on all these subjects, which is not possible

in the given time frame. If Demarcation and the "Core" can explain to us how we can develop our views in an M-L way on all the subjects listed under Documentation of Existing Views, we will give them another award. Documentating ones existing views means putting down what you are currently thinking: if a group is already working to improve their line on a certain question this only serves to help get this line out to the other groups; if a group is not working on improving a line or doesn't have a line on a particular question, they are not forced to do a non-M-L investigation and "come up" with something in time for the Conference. How does this "stifle debate"? M-L debate, that is? It is true that it will limit the amount of hot air at the Conference.

Demarcation and the "Core" do not "care about personal biographies," and do not want to go into groups' histories at the Conference. This reflects an opportunist desire to gloss over past mistakes, and especially that of the "Core", and a metaphysical outlook that the "key question of groups' present views" is not interconnected with groups' past views. We think that the majority of groups see the need to discuss their past, bring up errors and deviations and that this will be an integral part of the Conference.

MLOC or any other group not invited to the Conference (COUSML for example) can be discussed at the Conference as they tie in to lines put forward, but we don't see having a separate session on MLOC, etc. In the Announcement, MLOC was to have been part of the Main Danger discussion, but since we have suggested that this not be a separate topic, but incorporated into the line discussion, we see the same thing happening to discussion of MLOC.

The changes in the POU's are designed to let an unprincipled group into the conference (the "Core") (see our "Initial Sum-Up"), and to change a correct line on the relationship between theory and practice to an incorrect line--Demarcation, the "Core" and Some Comrades line and practice (see our "Initial Sum-Up"). This does not mean that other groups coming completely follow the relationship between theory and practice that we put forward, but we must still fight for the correct line on it and struggle to convince other groups when their practice doesn't correspond to their line. As far as all the row about eliminating right opportunism as the main danger from the POU's, we explained why this was done in our first Announcement if Demarcation and the "Core" want to argue that point further.

We see nothing wrong with who we invited and the procedure to include other groups as has been updated, and see no need to make changes here. We have voiced our views on the "Core" and await other groups' views. Demarcation's opportunism around this area is astounding. To top off their trying to sneak the "Core" in with their changed POU's, after we suggested in the Announcement that they contact the Sunrise Collective, they told us the Sunrise Collective was "messed up" and there was no reason to include them in the conference. Now Demarcation chastizes us for not having Sunrise Collective on the original list! We ask Red Dawn to sound out the Sunrise Collective since Demarcation can't seem to make up their minds about them.

On the preparation for the Conference, Demarcation wants it to just be in "regular literature." This minimizes the importance of clearly putting views out on questions all the groups will decide on as important. We are not interested in Demarcation's journal as much as how they think that journal contributes to party building, in fact how they think their overall work contributes to party building and winning the broad masses. We doubt that they would stop to explain this to us in their journal since they have so far not done so, nor have they responded to "Let's Move" and letters we wrote them on party building in their journal.

Much criticism on the agenda has already been answered. One important thing we want to say is that viewing a discussion of illegal work, especially regarding the character of the party and how to build the party, as not important at this time shows two things: one, a social-democratic tendency; and two, a disdain for the abilities and genuine tendencies of groups at the Conference. Apparently illegal work is a question for the "Core" (Demarcation and the "Core") only--a line which is non-M-L and will be brought out in some reprints we will be distributing shortly.

As far as Time and Place are concerned, we don't have any further changes from what we said in our "Initial Sum-Up". We think a three day conference is needed to provide adequate time, and continue to push for Memorial Day weekend, if at all possible; and we encourage comrades on the West Coast to host the Conference if they are able to. As far as an "unlimited number" attending, we don't see how this is practical for financial considerations alone, nor desirable from the point of view of security. We think realistically the number per group could go up to 4-5.

The section on decision making prior to the Conference has already been dealt with in "Initial Sum-Up". It's too bad Demarcation can't remember how we urged them to help us organize this Conference way back in January, and it's too bad Demarcation is now upset that something they never thought would get off the ground did, and they don't have more control over it. But sorry, it looks like WCC exerted some leadership with no help from Demarcation, groups are helping us with our errors, and the Conference is getting settled and is on its way. Plus, it is incorrect to hold that decisions require consensus. What ultra-democracy from a group which formally rails against it! We know from long experience that things do not move forward if the majority submits to the minority which is what consensus turns out to be. Majority decision is the only way to move the Conference forward. Anything else will bog us down in endless debates.

There is one distortion around the Conference that we want to briefly criticize. Anyone seriously studying the whole line of WCC on the Conference and the responses by groups, could not come to the conclusion that polemics will be restricted at the Conference. The essence of the Conference is polemical; and the only reason why we initially wrote that in the group's presentation, polemics be restricted, was because of time on presentations and so the Chair organizing the future struggle would not get bogged down with: this group has this to say about this group and this group, but that group thinks that about these two other groups and so-on. After groups presented their party building line, there was to be struggle over the particular aspects of this--could we somehow say this isn't polemical? Since this initial method was laid out, we have changed the content and so the method has changed. We proposed that groups present whatever they think will best put forward their position, be it a repeat of their paper, clarification, and/or criticism of other groups. Then unities and disunities would be brought out to be deepened and struggled over. Not polemical, huh? Taking this one sentence about restricting polemics out of context is just sheer sophistry and the whole argument built up around it easily destroyed.

It can be seen that we basically disunite with Demarcation and the "Core"'s counterproposal and consider it a sham and derailing proposal which does not have intentions of getting groups together at a Conference and developing principled unity between groups. Our invitation still stands for Demarcation to come to the Conference with the purpose and content as decided by the majority of the groups, but the "Core" is not invited as far as WCC and KCRWC go, and other groups will put their views forward on the "Core" also. If Demarcation wants to childishly "get their way," we cannot stop them, and if they and the "Core" want to have their own conference we cannot stop them, but we can condemn another conference as ultra-left and sectarian, and Demarcation's association with the "Core" as unprincipled from an M-L standpoint.

We want to caution groups against reacting to Demarcation and the "Core"'s mainly incorrect and nonconstructive counterproposal in a completely negative way, in other words, not gleening out any truth which exists in their criticism of us and the Conference. At some other time (in our paper for the Conference likely) we will try to draw out some criticisms which we feel have aspects of truth in them, and other groups should do the same. The problem is that Demarcation and the "Core" distorted so much, are incorrect about so much, and criticized groups in such an uncomradely way, that it is hard to see the bits of truth that are there. This is a good example why the ultra-left lines and incorrect methods of struggle don't help move groups forward.

We hold that Demarcation and the "Core" are ultra-left for several reasons. First, practical work in the working class is negated. Contrary to the experience of the Bolshevik party and the Third International, communists do not need to be in the factories, according to them. Demarcation has told us in phone conversations that they "do not know what to do with MLC's sum-ups of practical work"--meaning they see no value in it, and no need to struggle with MLC over their practice in the working class movement. Then, the old "only's" of PRRWO apparently have never died and are being rejuvenated for struggle over in the communist movement again. "We are only for a conference that aims at open polemics to draw clear lines of demarcation on all the buring questions in front of all communists and class conscious workers." This all, all, only has been, and is, a purism, a negation of processes, stages, steps, which is akin to trotskyism. A real dogmatism is emerging also: check out the fact that there is no need to develop M-L theory, we just import What is to be done? and One Step Forward... and we have all the theory we need to build the party. If this was the case, why did Lenin write these two pamphlets which develop Marxist theory and apply it to conditions in Russia? Lenin should be criticized if we follow their dogmatic logic. We study Lenin in order to develop our general understanding and draw out principles, but we must apply this to the particularities of our conditions. We study the experience of other parties to understand the correctness and incorrectness of that experieince to apply it to what we are trying to do. Finally, Demarcation and the "Core" have a better motto than the one they supposedly deplore ("the movement is everything, the aim is nothing"). Their motto is "Drawing lines of demarcation is everything, unity is nothing." This actually is "the movement is everything, the aim is nothing" from an ultra-left, all struggle no unity point of view.

We have seen a lot of what the Red Dawn Committee says in Red Dawn #2 "Split in the Red Dawn" about Demarcation (Red Dawn asks groups to look at this article in their reply to the Announcement). Red Dawn says Demarcation holds a theory of stages--theory first and then win advanced workers, theory in a vacuum, that only they, the theoretical genuises, can do theoretical work. Their disdain for democratic centralism is also evident in their petty bourgeois disregard for deadlines, their ultra-democratic proposal for consensus in decision-making. And we experienced liberalism and opportunism in their relationship with us and around the Conference.

If groups recall, we not too long ago said that we were ideologically and politically close to Demarcation (response to PC's proposal for coordinated replies to CPP/MLOC, 1/21/79). How this could have been the case when we now have so many differences and Demarcation clearly has an ultra-left line and practice, has to be examined. Several things must be looked at --did we not look at Demarcation close enough, and what kind of error would this be? Did Demarcation put forward appearances which were deceiving? Or did Demarcation change? Right now we think we did not look close enough at Demarcation, and Demarcation's appearance was deceiving. There were minor things about Demarcation all along that bothered us that we just put off, but should have taken into account more. But as far as major lines being put forward, there is a major difference between the lines in the short letters and the struggle around the joint response in '78 on the one hand, and the phone conversations and no correspondence after the joint response on the other. Did Demarcation try the tactic of opportunist compromise with us such as Red Dawn brings out? Did they write things similar to our views to get us close to them? Or were they not this ultra-left and bowed to the influence of the "Core"--much of the counterproposal is like reading the "Bolshevik". We think these things need to be summed up, and on our part, we need to especially sum-up errors we made in our relationship with and struggle with Demarcation. One thing we have learned so far is that we should be more cautious in thinking and stating we are "close" to some circle or circles, we should do more investigation and have more practice with them.

This ultra-leftism of Demarcation and the "Core" and the reemergence of the "Core" are detriments to the movement. Ultra-leftism cannot successfully fight the right, it in fact, may push those with right tendencies even more to the right. Dealing with the ultra-lefts takes attention off the right deviations and makes those with right tendencies defensive and may have a tendency to consolidate their position. The ultra-leftism of Demarcation and the "Core" is destructive and should be combatted and replused as well as the right deviations in the movement. It is our view that, generally speaking, right opportunism is the main danger, however, this does not mean the fight against "left" opportunism is abandoned. In the case of the struggle for the MLC, at this moment, we need to concentrate on replusing ultra-leftism.

We will be reprinting a Comintern document which has helped us gain more clarity on the struggle against centrism (which Demarcation talks a lot about and accuses us of) and how to analyze persons and parties dialectically, and urge groups to look over the sample copy we will be sending out in a few days and order more to study. This document defines the centrists, shows how to struggle against those with centrist tendencies and the consolidated centrists, and groups can apply this to the errors that are being made in the movement. This document is also very helpful in getting an understanding of how to analyze the PLA's criticism-negation of Mao and how to analyze Mao and the CPC.

How the Conference is going and what we encourage groups to do

So far, the general purpose and content of the Conference is still being settled. Red Dawn's late reply was similar to other groups and poses no problem to groups' response to our suggested changes in the purpose and content. Demarcation and the "Core"'s late reply may require that groups take a few extra days to answer, but should not throw things off too much (i.e. change the remaining schedule) if we don't bow to their anarchy. We urge groups to circulate their responses not later than 3/27, instead of 3/24 as indicated in the Initial Sum-Up.

After we get the replies, if there is some general unity, we will reprint the new unity in these areas--hopefully we will have unity on the purpose, content, POU's, and preparation. In some areas (such as method) we will sum-up the discussion so far, but continue to leave it open for improvement. Our immediate goal is that groups are real clear on the purpose, content, POU's and preparation so that they can prepare well for the MJLC.

If things go as above, after the above sum-up of the Conference, we will work on developing areas not completely decided on--groups should circulate suggestions on method of the Conference, agenda, logistics, additions to Documentation of Existing Views, suggestions to help us organize things better, etc., and we will continue to sum-up groups' views and draw out the general unity.

Before we know it, it will be time to circulate our views on party building, so we encourage groups to continue in the positive motion, to be timely in replies and continue the constructive criticism and suggestions, as we prepare our documents for circulation.

We greatly look forward to the Conference and continue to urge groups to make it something which really helps move party building forward.

With Communist Greetings,

Wichita Communist Cell

Notes on a Conference of Marxist-Leninists

(The following notes outline a rough, initial proposal for a conference. We understand the W.C.C. intends to put forward a detailed proposal in the near future. These notes are not meant as a substitute but as a contribution to that proposal.)

There is now somewhat better communication than previously among a number of small groups and independents nationwide who oppose the "theory of three worlds" and look to the Party of Labor of Albania as the leading communist party in the world. The recent joint statement signed by some of the groups has played an important role in improving that communication. While there have been some bi-lateral meetings and regional joint work, a broad exchange of views on the vital questions facing us has been lacking, so that groups do not really know what they have in common and on what they differ.

At this time, when there is still no leading center and all these groups seem to have rejected the latest attempt, by MLOC, to proclaim such a center, the most pressing task is to define the tendency (or tendencies) that may be coming into existence. In our view, the most suitable means of accomplishing this would be a conference of the groups at which the basic views of each organization on the most vital questions would be put forward and discussed.

A conference (say, for two days on a weekend) would allow for a much more comprehensive and rounded exchange of views than could correspondence or bi-lateral meetings. As it is, written proposals have been the main vehicle for moving things forward, and on that basis things have been very slow in getting moving. A conference, based on oral or written presentations by representatives of the groups, could be a good step forward toward overcoming the isolation and confusion that exists and moving toward a common party-building plan at a more rapid pace.

There will no doubt be differences over how the conference should be organized, and these should be struggled out prior to the conference. We will outline our views below.

Purpose: To find out what the basic views of each group are, in order to see if there is one tendency or more among the groups. To begin to move toward a joint party-building plan.

Method: Presentation by each group of its line on a specified set of major topics; questions on the presentation. Discussion after all the presentations are completed.

Criteria for participation: The anti-revisionist movement has been continually narrowing since it began, as various false parties have been declared and "wings" and "trends" formed. The points of unity for participation in the conference should, in our opinion, reflect that fact, to the extent possible at this time. That is, we should strive for the highest level of unity that the groups have, not the lowest or broadest. Some of the points of unity will require further definition at the conference and on one there are sharp differences on how to carry it out (point 1). We think that most, and perhaps all of the groups, would say they have unity on these points:

1. Party-building is the central task.
2. No leading center yet exists. (That is, not MLOC, which is now the "CPUSA-ML"; not RCP or COUSM-L, the "trend," PLP, any of the pro-"theory of three world"ers, etc.)
3. In this period, theoretical work is primary.
4. We oppose all forms of revisionism and trotskyism, specifically:
5. We oppose Soviet social-imperialism.
6. We oppose the "theory of three worlds" and Chinese revisionism.
(By way of exception, possible inclusion of groups or individuals that may now only lean toward opposition to the T3W and Chinese revisionism.)
7. The PLA is the leading Marxist-Leninist party at this time.

Given these criteria, we think the following groups may want to participate and should be invited:

C.C.C., Demarcation, KCRWC (Is KCPR now part of KCRWC?), MLC, PC, RWC, WCC, WROC. (Possibly: Japan Town Collective)

As for individuals who are not part of a collective, like us, participation should be invited if there is agreement with the points of unity as outlined above and if it is felt the individual or individuals can make a useful presentation on one or more subjects or contribute significantly to the discussion.

Location and date: In the Midwest, either Wichita, Kansas City, or Chicago. As soon as preparations can be made, about 1 1/2 half to 2 months.

Major topics for discussion:

After a brief history of each group, we suggest three major topics based on the third, first, and seventh points of unity (which theoretical work is primary, how to carry out the central task of party-building, and the PLA as the leading M-L party).

We think groups should state their position on the topic and give the basis for that position; that is, whether their own analysis, that of the PLA, or some other source. (Reading lists would also be useful.) If the group has no position on a question, it should note that in its presentation and move on to the next point.

I Brief history of each group.

We suggest no more than 5-8 minutes for this.

II Which theoretical work is primary?

A. "party-building theory"?

B. lines on major international and U.S. questions, like PLA's criticisms of CPC under Mao and implications for the party we are trying to build; the nature of the Black liberation struggle; strategy for revolution, etc.?

C. What theoretical work needs to be done toward a party program? What was wrong with MLOC's program?

D. What is the line of the group on these issues:

1. The current crisis of U.S. (and world) imperialism and the immediate and long-term economic and political prospects. Since the movement is very weak in political economy, references in this area would be especially useful.

2. Analysis of classes and strategy for revolution in the U.S.
 - a. For example, does the proletariat include only industrial workers, industrial plus service and clerical workers, or all who work for wages? How large is the petty-bourgeoisie, what strata are there, and what will their stand be toward socialist revolution?
 - b. In the strategy for revolution, what is the strategic (long-term) alliance? Proletariat plus oppressed nations? Proletariat plus sections of petty-bourgeoisie? Is the "united front against imperialism" the strategy for revolution, as RCP and CP/ML have held? Who do we direct the main blow at? the labor aristocracy, the revisionists and trots, the Democratic Party?
 - c. What effect would moves toward more open fascism have on our strategy and tactics? What are the lessons of the 1930s and 40s on this?

3. Nature of the struggles of Blacks, Chicanos, and Native Americans. Is there a Black, Chicano, or Indian nation with the right to self-determination?

4. Approach to the trade unions and the spontaneous workers movement.

In what sectors should our efforts be focussed: industrial or both industrial and clerical-service? In trade unions or unorganized areas? In what industries? What sections of the country?

What are the characteristics of a factory nucleus in our conditions and how should it be built?

What should be the goals of our work in trade unions at this time? If our focus is "winning the advanced," who are they? (Lenin's "advanced worker"?)

5. Nature of oppression of women under monopoly capital.

Has a solid theoretical foundation for understanding this oppression been laid? Should the focus of our work in this period be in the industrial sector only? the clerical-service sector? with oppressed nationality women?

6. Work in the military and secret work.

What should our work consist of in these areas in this period?

III Party-building as the central task.

- A. What is the way to move toward a party at this time? What is the correct plan? What is the "key link" and how does it relate to the plan? View of a theoretical journal, of building the center, of a network? What is "party-building theory"?

- B. What was wrong with MLOC's plan: the form, the content, or both?

- C. What is the correct view of fusion? What is the relationship between "Marxist-Leninists unite!" and "Win the advanced to communism!" and what is their content?

IV The PLA as the leading Marxist-Leninist party.

A. On what basis do we say that the PLA is the leading party?

B. Evaluation of PLA's criticisms of CPC under Mao, and implications for the kind of party we want to build: place of two-line struggle, Mao's leadership and theories "revisionist"?

C. Criticisms of PLA. Inconsistency by PLA and Hoxha in attitude toward Mao and CPC? View by PLA on dissolution of Comintern in 1943 and the need for an international center for the communist movement. "Equality of parties." Evaluation of Stalin by PLA. Hardial Bains visits Albania, the PLA hails the CPC(M-L)'s Montreal rally.

January 31, 1979

Comrades in the Bay Area
(B.R. Johnson)

WCC's

Basic Proposal to Organize a Multilateral Meeting on Party Building

In our joint response to MLC and in "Let's Move" we talk about a multi-lateral meeting (MLM). We see a MLM as an important forum for struggle. At this time, the objectives of a MLM would be to further clarify and unite, as many circles as possible, around the advanced party building line, particularly how to concretely move forward the key link. This unity would then be implemented in practice. In order for a MLM to be successful, many circles would have to be convinced that a MLM, face-to-face struggle, is an important way to further clarify the different party building lines and practice and strive for principled unity. Further, party building proposals would need to be circulated at least a month in advance to allow the attending circles to discuss the various proposals properly. The International Situation, because it is vitally interconnected with party building, should be discussed during the MLM. A MLM, depending on the number of participating circles, would probably last 3-4 days.

We think that some principles of unity (POU's) are needed for circles to attend. The POU's should be able to exclude consolidated revisionists and opportunists, but not too high that we end up talking to ourselves. There is another reason for POU's. An individual circle may hold that another conclusion is not shared by many other circles because they have not studied the line struggle carefully, the line struggle is underdeveloped, they are still struggling with that circle, etc. Then too, POU's would help combat small-circle spirit and sectarianism in relations between circles. POU's establish a common denominator. Their aim, for the proposed MLM, is to get the circles with the advanced line and the middle forces to attend, but on such a basis as to facilitate unity around the M-L line. Here is our initial list of POU's:

1. All forms of revisionism and opportunism are irreconcilably hostile to the class interests of the ^{international} proletariat and must be combatted and defeated. The main international revisionist trends are: Soviet revisionism (and capitalism has been restored in the Soviet Union which is social-imperialist); Chinese revisionism (and the "theory of the three worlds" is counter-revolutionary); Yugoslav revisionism; Social-Democracy; Trotskyism.
2. There is no genuine M-L party of the U.S. proletariat, or genuine M-L center in the U.S. Communist Movement, and party building is the central task of all U.S. M-L's and advanced workers. Right opportunism and revisionism is the main danger in the U.S. Working-Class Movement (W-C M) and U.S. Communist Movement (CM); "left" opportunism must also be fought. Theoretical work is principal in this period where we lack a lot of M-L theory to guide practice, and practice work must be carried out simultaneously. Theory is needed to guide practice, and practice in turn serves to further develop theory. It is especially important to grasp the key link in the party building chain, in theory and in practice.
3. Contradictions among comrades are to be resolved through ideological and political struggle, Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism and transformation, in order to unite on a principled basis around line and practice and achieve higher communist organizational forms of unity.

(over)

The first POU is designed primarily to exclude revisionists of the Soviet and Chinese type, and Trotskyites as well. The second POU relates directly to party building. The point on theory was made because we felt the struggle at the MLM should be how to actually make theory principal. Many circles agree with this in words. The importance of the key link in general was made so the MLM would be able to focus on uniting around the correct key link and how to carry it out. The third POU relates mainly to the attitude and practice comrades should have around principled struggle, and the need for higher M-L forms of organization. We are open to improvements in the POU's.

As far as announcement of the MLM on party building, we think that a wide array of circles should receive this, even circles such as the Proletarian Unity League and the League for Proletarian Revolution (of course, with their present stand they should not agree to the initial POU's above). But LPR, for example, might change their stand (this is a slim chance) with all the blatant examples of Chinese revisionism which appear in the bourgeois press daily. By announcing a multilateral meeting with definite principles of unity, we tell everyone we want to come together to struggle for unity, but not on just any old basis. On the other hand, the POU's should not be so high that only a couple of circles could agree with them before the MLM.

We need to make additional arrangements to insure the success of such a MLM. For example, the WCC can take charge of the announcement, correspondence and arranging a meeting location (we think a mid-Western site would be best). The following is a rough timetable for a MLM:

1. By *February 10*, an announcement would be sent out to various circles.
2. By *March 3*, circles who agree with the POU's and want to attend should indicate this to WCC.
3. By April 11, party building lines would be circulated among the groups that are to attend
4. By *June 1*, circulate response to groups' party building lines
5. MLM - June 15-17 (or 18) 3 to 4 days

Suggestions for an agenda would be solicited and a proposed agenda circulated in advance. We would like to receive your criticisms of our proposal for a MLM. In addition, we would like to be able to tell other comrades in our announcement that you will attend. We hope that you comrades get behind a MLM and help make it a success.

We sent the above ideas, almost word-for-word, to Demarcation ^{and KCRWC.} We think that if our collectives state they will attend the MLM, this will be helpful in convincing other comrades that they should also attend.

NOTE from WCC (3/17/79): the above was written essentially as it stands in late December, 1978, sent in a letter to Demarcation dated January 16, 1979, forwarded to KCRWC in the latter part of January, 1979, and distributed in Denver, February 2, 1979