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 * NEXT GENERAL MEETING - JULY 9, 1978 *
 * 7:00 P.M. - SHARP!! *
 * PEOPLE'S CULTURAL CENTER - 721 VALENCIA - SAN FRANCISCO *
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This newsletter contains the new Coordinating Committee (CC) proposal for reorganization. This proposal comes out of two months of increasingly sharper debate as to the needs of the Organization, carried on in both the CC and the General Meeting of June 4, as well as in those study groups that are still meeting. In order to give a coherent historical background of this debate, and in answer to a criticism of the CC that it did not provide the membership with a clear enough picture of the political thinking behind the first proposal that was made, we are including all the various proposals we considered on the way, summaries of our discussions at meetings, a summary of the last general meeting, a self criticism by the committee, and some general thoughts on the importance of evaluation, leadership, and disciplined decision making. We hope that, armed with this material, members of our process will turn out for the next general meeting prepared to carry out fruitful debate on the new proposal.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE PROPOSAL

To address political and organizational questions: All along it has been recognized that a big task within this process is to arrive at a workable level of political unity. Recently there have been criticisms that, without having addressed ourselves to this problem more immediately and directly, we are tending to get caught up in seemingly organizational differences that in fact reflect differences in political views. There has been some feeling that whereas the study groups have been useful, they have not contributed directly toward establishing a level of unity, that there is considerable divergence between the purposes of the study groups and the immediate needs of the process as a whole. Therefore, the CC is proposing the following reorganization plan:

1. Study groups be asked to conduct a formal summing up of their experience, including answering questions such as the following:
 - a. Were the goals set up for your study group met?
 - b. Were these goals realistic? What would have been better goals?
 - c. What were the major strengths and weaknesses of the study group?
 - d. What on the study group's curriculum was learned that would be valuable for sharing with the larger group?
 - e. What major ideas (points of unity, organizational structure, practical work, etc.) came out in your study group as to what is necessary for the larger group to meet its goals?
2. Study groups to prepare written summary of above along with summary of curriculum and bibliography, study questions, etc. Serious attention to be paid to evaluation of the process as well as content. These written summaries to be circulated among the other study groups for reading and discussion.
3. Study groups that have ceased meeting to be urged to reconvene for this purpose.
4. CC will take these written summaries into consideration when formulating any future proposals on the course of the organization.
5. That in order to carry out discussion on a systematic basis toward establishing a sufficient level of political unity, a session be held where everyone who considers themselves part of the process be encouraged to join a small discussion group. The principal purpose of these groups will be to carry out discussion on the key questions around which some level of unity needs to be established. A secondary, for now, purpose of the groups would be the discussion of the mass work that people are involved in. For that reason, it is proposed that groups be established around areas of mass work, whether trade union or community or around other areas of struggle. New small groups are to be commenced as soon as possible (even if study group sum-ups are still continuing). Possible mass work divisions for small group organization—those involved in caucus trade union work, others in trade union work, those at unorganized workplaces, school work, health work, women's movement, gay movement, cultural work, anti-racist work, anti-imperialist work, and a fundamentals or initial political orientation group. That additional small groups be allowed to form around: study of a given topic and/or research and writing and/or practical work and/or common interests. Those members of newly formed small groups are urged strongly to take part in the common study of the group as a whole.

6. The "Outline for the Party Building Phase of Discussion" was adopted as a provisional document to provide a basis for discussion in the small groups of what questions should be adopted by the group for group study. Final decision of what topic(s) to adopt will be made at a general meeting after the small groups have had discussion and submitted their amendments, revisions, alternative proposals, etc., to the CC.
7. It is proposed that General Meetings be continued on a monthly basis and the discussion in the small groups be integrated with the discussions at these meetings. General meetings will have the advantage of keeping in touch with discussions throughout the whole group, whereas the small groups will offer the opportunity for more individual input. It is further stipulated that the schedule make it possible for members to engage in other study groups, mass practice or whatever without undue hardship.

OUTLINE FOR PARTY BUILDING PHASE OF DISCUSSIONS

- I. Objective factors in the present historical conjuncture: Everyone says that U.S. imperialism is in crises—what does that mean? Does it mean that a socialist revolution is just around the corner?
 - A. How do the objective factors determine the fact that the level of class consciousness is at such a low ebb, if it is true that U.S. imperialism is in crisis?
 - B. Discussions of these questions could produce alternative viewpoints. Some of the outlooks might be expressed in these terms:
 1. Since the level of struggle is so low, we should study theory, or concentrate our efforts on uniting with other revolutionaries, or perhaps do nothing right now.
 2. Since the level of struggle is already so high, or at least increasing at a rapid rate, a single spark could ignite the revolutionary movement. All that is needed is some sensible communists to go to the masses, because the mass movement is ready and waiting for these forces to make it bloom.
- II. Objective factors:
 - A. What are our main tasks as communists in the present period? Obviously what we agree upon in Part I will help us determine how to approach this part.
 1. Some people say we should "unite with the advanced", while others say we should build the mass movements instead. What is the correct relationship between these two tasks?
 2. What does "fusion" mean? How does "fusion" relate to our other tasks? Is it a strategy or is it a goal?
 3. How do we relate our work in the different struggles for reforms to our long-range revolutionary goals? What does a communist do that a good trade unionist does not do (propaganda, program, recruitment, study circles...???)?
 4. What is the correct relationship of communists to united fronts, mass organizations, and reformist leaders?
 5. What short-term and long-term gains can we expect to make? Can we make these gains given our present theoretical weaknesses? Or do we need more theoretical understanding in order to be effective?
- III. What is the present situation within the communist movement?
 - A. What are the major trends on the left?
 - B. What roles do the revisionists, the dogmatists, and the Trotskyists play in the movement?
 - C. If our goal is to build a revolutionary vanguard communist party, what can we learn from the strengths and weaknesses of the new communist movement?
- IV. What kind of communist organization do we need? In the Bay Area? On the regional and national levels?
 - A. For a local organization what level of unity should we have? What do we need to agree on immediately and which questions can we defer? For what reasons?
 - B. By level of unity do we mean how many questions we agree on, or how deeply we analyze the questions we agree on?
 - C. Should a communist organization practice democratic centralism? On a local level? On a national level? Is this a question that we will only be able to resolve in the indefinite future, or can we plan to move toward such practice now? Are there different forms of democratic centralism?
 - D. How would a communist organization guide our mass work? Do we need a communist organization in order to accomplish the tasks which are mentioned in Part II?
 - E. How can we best contribute to building communist unity on the regional and/or national levels? How would this work relate to our efforts to develop a local organization that would enable us to carry out our tasks successfully.
 - F. What does it mean when we say that "party building is the central task"? Is it true? How does this task relate to other communist tasks?

This phase of political discussion and analysis could be pursued for several months (6-8). The purpose of these discussions would be to further consolidate our political unity. However, the CC recognizes that exhaustive analysis of the questions above is not possible in such a brief period of time. Nevertheless, the CC believes some preliminary discussions of these questions, which we would all pursue together in a systematic way, would help us advance our collective understanding of the present needs we have to meet in order to build a genuine and powerful revolutionary movement in the United States.

When we have successfully completed this phase of our discussions, we should have the basic political unity necessary to identify the main questions on which we will need a more in-depth analysis in order to establish a higher level of unity. This can lead to the formation of a local organization.

WHY SHOULD WE STUDY PARTY BUILDING? (Notes from an imaginary meeting where everyone says what they mean.)

PRESENTATION: The working class is getting its ass kicked. Although its spontaneous resistance is increasing, it needs a party of its own to give leadership, organization, and class consciousness to these struggles. Right now, there is no party that can do this. The Marxist-Leninist movement is divided, weak, and caught up in dogmatist errors. It doesn't have a base in the working class, and doesn't have a correct approach to get one. We need to find out what a correct approach it, and what's wrong with the others that have been tried.

What are some of the disagreements that people have about this situation? (If there weren't any disagreements, there wouldn't be any point in studying it.) Some people say that we need a fully formed party before we can do much. Some people say we should do mass work now and worry about a party later. Some people say that we need better theory before we can do anything else. There is a lot of debate in the "Trend" about how to understand the different elements of party building: theory, fusion with the working class, unity among MLs. How are these elements related to each other? Is one of them the most important?

Another reason for discussing party building is that there seems to be disagreement about these questions in our group. There's no point in assuming we agree if we don't. If anyone thinks that building the mass movement, or retiring to study, or immersing oneself in the working class as an individual, is the primary task of this period, then we should argue about those positions. If no one thinks those things, and no one has said they do, then we should be talking about party building. (If any Marxist-Leninist doesn't believe that party building is the overall strategic task of the period that we are in, it is their obligation to tell us what the alternative is.)

Whether we form an organization, and what type of organization we form (loose association of collectives, democratic centralist, or somewhere in between) depends upon how we answer these questions. Also, an overall assessment of what kind of a period we're in and what our strategic task is forms the groundwork for answering any other questions we decide we need unity on.

Q. Isn't this plan making theory too important in the new discussion groups?

A. Don't get the wrong idea; we think practice is really important. Most people in this process are involved in mass struggles and we don't think that this should stop. Furthermore, if we can start discussing practice in these small groups, that will be more than we've done up until now. But how can we accomplish anything significant in these mass struggles unless we can reach some agreement on long-range as well as short-range goals? How can we tell what we're doing right? By how many cents we get in our contract? By how many people come to a rally? By how angry we make the ruling class? This isn't good enough, and I, for one, am burned out from doing mass work without knowing how to consolidate gains or build towards an ultimate revolutionary goal.

Q. Wouldn't it be better to build more unity through common work first? If we find we disagree now, won't the group just fall apart?

A. Relying on activities that might build our morale places too much emphasis on the role of "group spirit" rather than on fundamental political unity. This relies on subjective "good vibes" which won't even help that much if we still have political disagreements under the surface. It could only lead to an unstable organization. Most of us have quite a bit of practical work under our belts (even some together since this group has been functioning—Bakke Coalition, Miners' support work). Ask any of the people who were involved if that built more unity! If we can't even sum up our work so far, why go out and get more? If people start out without political unity, common work can build more disunity, plus antagonism. This has been the result in some cases in this group. Building an organization which takes up not just one, but many different struggles as they come up needs even more unity.

Q. If we disagree on some of these questions, does it destroy the basis for us working together?

A. No. If we still share basic assumptions, hopefully minority positions would continue to be discussed and

evaluated. However, it makes sense that if some people disagree on most things they wouldn't want to continue working together. This wouldn't be a disaster. It's better to find out if we agree on minimal levels of unity so we don't waste time fooling ourselves and each other.

- Q. Hasn't the question of party-building been handled with such abstract formulas that we're bound to repeat dogmatist errors?
- A. We are going to try to start from reality and not base any analysis on book-bound formulas or Tsarist Russia or subjective wishes. Undoubtedly dogmatist errors will be made in all of the discussion groups by people approaching the questions the wrong way. The only thing we can do is to struggle to overcome these errors as they come up. Shying away from political discussion is no solution.
- Q. Why should we think that these new groups should be any better than the old Party-Building or Trade-Union study groups?
- A. People joined the old study groups with different goals and expectations. The bottom line was to get to know other people in the process. These new groups are not just to discuss abstractly, but to struggle out our differences and answer some of these questions, with answers we want to stick by and try out. Trying to reach political agreement was never the goal of the old study groups. These discussion groups will be a transition form: intended to isolate the questions which we need answered to have points of unity, and to start talking about practice so that we can have a basis to begin giving guidance to it and summing it up in these groups.

There's no guarantee that these groups will be better; they'll only be better if people bring political commitment to them—if they're willing to disagree, argue out these disagreements in a principled way, and accept the possibility that they might be wrong, and be willing to come to a resolution of the questions.

SUMMARY OF JUNE 4 GENERAL MEETING

The main purpose of the general meeting on June 4 was to discuss and vote on the reorganization proposal developed by the Coordinating Committee. A paper outlining in more detail implementation and topics from the Party Building Phase of Discussions from the CC was presented in writing to the general membership for the first time at the beginning of the June 4 meeting.

The discussion of the proposal was preceded by announcements, a report on proposed meetings with the Coordinating Body of the East Bay and the Bay Area Guardian Club, and a lengthy discussion of the Forum II and follow-up workshops. The body voted to accept the Forum Committee's criticism/self-criticism (part of the paper summarizing the workshops), including the point that the focus of the forum discussion on party building would have been sharper if there had been two separate forums, since there were disparate presentations at the Forum.

The discussion of the CC proposal did not begin until about 8:30 p.m. After a brief introductory statement by the CC, the discussion began around the question of the "balance between theory and practice". Most participants expressed frustration and lack of clarity on this abstract question. When the body then attempted to discuss the substance of the outline on "party building broadly defined", most of the meeting time had been exhausted. After much difficult discussion and disagreement, the body decided that neither the proposal nor its political basis had been clearly explained by the CC. The CC was directed to prepare a more fully elaborated proposal for the next general meeting, including an evaluation of the June 4 meeting, so that a full political discussion and decision on the proposal would be possible.

In criticism/self criticism: The CC was criticized by members for failing to exercise decisive leadership in the meeting and for failing to present the proposal to the members with enough lead time to allow for careful thought and preparation for the discussion. There were also criticisms that many members exhibited disrespect for each other by taking an individualistic and long-winded approach to the discussion and by failing or refusing to stick to the topic at hand.

SUMMARY OF THE JUNE 11 GENERAL MEETING

The meeting began with a discussion of the June 4 general meeting. The reports entitled "Criticism/Self-Criticism by the Coordinating Committee" and "Methods of Decision Making in our Organization" were developed from the points made in that discussion. The original reorganization proposal, alternate proposals and related topics were discussed. Among these topics were the need for serious sum-ups by the study groups and the content of the proposed discussion groups' work and study. The CC Decided to continue the discussion of the proposal on June 18 and assigned tasks to members to prepare for that meeting.

CRITICISM/SELF-CRITICISM BY THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CC) REGARDING THE GENERAL MEETING OF JUNE 4, 1978, AND THE PROCESS AROUND THE REORGANIZATION PROPOSAL

The general meeting of June 4 did not accomplish its purposes of discussing and adopting the CC's reorganizational proposal. Instead, it left those present with feelings of uncertainty and frustration about the direction of the organization and the process in which we are involved. Although the meeting suffered from serious technical shortcomings from the standpoint of chairing and presentation, these are symptoms of more serious problems. The difficult meeting was the result of a series of errors made by the CC and joined in by the general membership. Primary responsibility, however, must be assumed by the CC. The following will attempt to identify those errors.

The reorganization proposal was developed in response to a mandate from a general meeting to develop a structure for discussion that would facilitate establishing unity as a ML organization. This was in response to the expressed desire of the membership to discuss political questions at general meetings, rather than to continue to discuss organizational questions at general meetings.

The CC did present the next general meeting with a proposal to restructure the organization to take up the questions of "party-building, broadly defined". The CC intended that the general meeting's discussion of the proposal would center on why it is important to take up party-building questions at this time. The discussion consisted mainly of questions and answers of clarification concerning the proposal. The CC was requested to supply more details.

In the interim between the meetings of April 23 and June 4, the organization held Forum II on party-building and the follow-up workshops; and the CC met three times, including a special meeting June 3 to prepare for the general meeting the following day.

WHY WAS THE MEETING SO POOR

The CC never supplied itself or the membership with a unified and comprehensive description of the proposal prior to the meeting. The special meeting of June 3 was an attempt to plug some of the holes in the proposal, but it was too little—too late.

The role of the CC in the general meeting should have been to lead the discussion and clarify the various aspects of the proposal. Instead, the membership was given an abbreviated summary of the June 3 meeting, and was left to stare at an outline on the blackboard, the relevance of which was uncertain.

The chair failed to exercise decisive leadership in directing the meeting, and the result was an altered agenda and disorganized discussion. Along with the failure of the chair to lead, other CC members failed to assist in directing the discussion, and the membership at large was highly individualistic and exhibited a propensity for contributing irrelevant remarks at inappropriate times.

These and related problems have been discussed by the CC and attempts are being made to use the lessons learned concretely to improve practice. Additional comments and reactions are welcome.

SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF JUNE 19 COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING

This is only a brief summary of the minutes of a long and useful meeting. Anyone interested in seeing a very good, but lengthy, report on the discussion should consult the original minutes by asking any CC member.

The main item was the preparation of a reorganization proposal to be presented at the next general meeting. Some old business items were on the agenda, but were deferred to the next CC meeting (name, liaison with other groups).

Before the main item was taken up, there were a series of reports as assigned at the last CC meeting. First, it was reported that all study groups plan to do a written evaluation of their work and one is completed now, a Trade Union section. Second, a report by Robin and Scott was presented criticising the CC's role at the last general meeting. It was adopted, with the deletion of the final section on the broader significance of these errors. See report as adopted in this newsletter. Third, Joe and Fernando presented their report, "Evaluation, Decision Making and Leadership" which was also adopted. See it also in this newsletter.

On reorganization, a number of proposals were on the floor. One was the original proposal (see April newsletter) plus the new implementation ("Outline for Party Building Phase of Discussion", by Steve Ha., Hillary, and Pat) that appears in this newsletter. Two was "One Step Backward, Two Steps Forward", by Fernando and Robin. Three was "Ten Point Proposal", by Ira and Henry. Four was "Whither the Process", by Reg. See all these in this newsletter. Also, in the course of discussion, a number of oral proposals, mostly compromise in

nature, on particular points or sections, were presented.

All proposals were formally presented and a general discussion followed. The result of that discussion was the proposal that is printed at the beginning of this newsletter as the recommendation of the CC to the general body for adoption.

This summary will not attempt to list point by point the discussion of some three hours length, but the technique adopted by the CC was to draw into the original proposal those sections of other proposals that could be used and there was extensive, and very political, debate on nearly all sections of the proposals. As one can see by comparing the final document to its many predecessors, a number of points were incorporated, as well as the proposed plan of study, subject to discussion by the small groups. The discussion was generally characterized by sharp debate, but also by an ultimate willingness to compromise.

At the end, details for the newsletter were worked out and the next CC meeting was set for July 5, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., at 4031 25th Street, in S.F. The next general meeting was set for July 9 at 7:00 p.m. (see notice on Page 1).

EVALUATION, DECISION MAKING, LEADERSHIP

Evaluation is a crucial part of decision making. Making the proper decision is often a function of how well the practical consequences of previous actions are understood. An ongoing system of evaluation is the only way to learn from experience, and learning from experience is the best way to learn.

All major actions should be analyzed and summarized afterwards, especially if there is disagreement as to success or failure. Even when there is agreement as to failure, evaluation is necessary until there is common understanding of the reasons for failure.

Our major actions, for instance have been: 1. Forums; 2. Establishment of, and carrying to conclusion, nine months of study group format. All major changes in policy or organizational format should be the result of evaluation and analysis of past practice and the present situation.

DECISION MAKING

Throughout our study groups, general meetings, and CC meetings, one consistent difficulty has been our lack of a clear and useful view on how decisions shall be made. The problem, as perceived by several of our members (including CC members) is our group's reluctance to make any decisions on any contested points until there has been long, often rambling discussion, directed towards a total consensus of all who happen to be in the room at the time. This has sometimes resulted in: 1. poor decisions based on superficial compromise; 2. important decisions not being made at all; 3. unclarity about what decision has been made; and 4. an occasional inability to implement even the most routine decision in a disciplined manner.

It seems to us that much of this problem is rooted in a fear of controversy, which leads to a sort of "Quaker consensus" form of operating, as if the strong expression of opposing views must necessarily lead to strife and disunity.

In contrast, even the rudimentary form of democratic centralism appropriate to a group such as ours, demands the strong and forthright expression of all views on a subject, and then a majority decision made and followed.

We recognize the fear many people have of the term "democratic centralism". Because of years of abuse by sectarian groups who used the concept to stifle debate, this fear is understandable. Its root lies in the "top down" conception of what the term means. There is also a "bottom up" aspect of democratic centralism. It is a tool which cannot be abandoned by revolutionaries. It is based solidly on the experience of 200 years of proletarian struggle. In its simplest form, it says that, after full and free discussion, if an act is decided on by majority vote, all members of the organization (factory shop, union, revolutionary party) are bound to carry out that action. Naturally, experience has taught that you don't immediately go out on strike if 10 out of 21 in your shop are against it without further struggle. We are not speaking of bourgeois formal democracy. But given a reasonable majority of opinion, appropriate to the action, the majority is followed. Advantages are:

1. In full and free discussion differences can be brought out, not buried in the interests of false unity. Buried differences tend to spring up later, at critical times, like poisonous weeds.
2. When two proposed courses of action are voted upon, and one followed, the other becomes a tool for future

- evaluation, that is, "That worked, plan B would have been a disaster", or "Plan B would have been better", or, "That didn't work, but neither would plan B have worked; we were analyzing the problem incorrectly."
3. Within the CC such a method of proceeding means that majority and minority opinions may be taken before the entire membership for discussion, where these differences may be voted upon and learned by the entire group.

At present, almost any trade union meeting shows more evidence of an understanding of the principles of democratic centralism that do our meetings.

Consensus is fine if it is a true consensus. Example: Two proposals brought up and the important points of each incorporated into a compromise that adherents of both sides are comfortable with.

Properly followed, the rudiments of democratic centralism spelled out above may speed up our entire process. We must develop the ability to recognize the point where all the significant points of view have already been expressed, and proceed from that point to decision making in a disciplined and comradely manner.

LEADERSHIP

Although our CC has a largely coordinating, rather than leadership, function, it must be clearly recognized that at each stage of development of our group it can and must take on more political leadership responsibility.

Therefore, at each stage we must take greater care in electing people who take responsibility seriously, who are capable of growth in their leadership roles (we should recognize that none of us is as yet a tested leader in class struggle) and who are as representative as possible of the full range of divergent political views within the group. This last is extremely important if our political understanding is to grow through struggle and not stagnate through easy agreement.

A danger to be looked out for in the early stages of a group such as ours is the tendency of "leadership" to do most of the work of the organization. Leadership role should be to propose discussions and actions, to coordinate same, to propose salient political points for discussion. Most importantly, to organize the membership to take increasing responsibility for the organization, to encourage initiative, to seek to develop in others organizational and leadership skills.

We feel it is incumbent upon all communists to accept leadership, to constantly test leadership, to hold it accountable, to develop leadership, to develop themselves as potential leaders so as to have a basis for judgment of leadership, as well as to prepare to truly step into the vanguard of class struggle. Leadership is a skill which may be learned, not a genetic attribute.

—Joe & Fernando

ONE STEP BACKWARD, TWO STEPS FORWARD

Our last general meeting made evident, at least to us, that the objective condition of our group is that there is no significant degree of unity on how to proceed. Despite the lack of overt opposition to the CC's proposal, few people seemed ready to implement a plan that would so radically change the focus and structure of the group without engaging in a great deal of further discussion. We feel that a major reason for this was that the proposal was generated by a small group which made no systematic attempt to investigate and incorporate the ideas and needs current among the general membership.

Implicit in the CC proposal is the assumption that what we have done so far is of no value. Even if this were true, valuable lessons may still be learned from our experience. We have summed up the experiences of four other organizations in our first forum. Do we not owe ourselves the same respect? If we want to move ahead as Marxist-Leninists, we need to employ one of the great contributions of Marx and Engels: scientific socialism. Utilizing the methods of scientific socialism means setting goals, carrying out practice, and evaluating that practice to learn the lessons of its success and failures. The practice of this group for the past nine months has been study groups. We originally set out goals for the study group period, and it would be a disastrous precedent to abandon Marxist methodology at this point by not carrying through the original plan and evaluating our past practice.

Since the basic, day-to-day work of this group has been within the study groups, if clear ideas of how to proceed are to come forth, the study groups should take a leading role in producing them. To ignore the results of nine months of study when attempting to answer questions as complex as those that need to be answered is to proceed in an idealistic manner.

FROM THE STUDY GROUPS, TO THE STUDY GROUPS

Therefore we propose, to the CC and the general body, the following:

1. The CC proposal be tabled.
2. Study groups be asked to conduct a formal summing up of their experience, including answering questions such as the following:
 - a. Were the goals set up for your study group met?
 - b. Were these goals realistic? What would have been better goals?
 - c. What were the major strengths and weaknesses of the study group?
 - d. What on the study group's curriculum was learned that would be valuable for sharing with the larger group?
 - e. What major ideas (points of unity, organizational structure, practical work, etc.) came out in your study group as to what is necessary for the larger group to meet its goals?
3. Study groups to prepare written summary of above along with summary of curriculum and bibliography, study questions, etc. Serious attention to be paid to evaluation of process as well as content. These written summaries to be circulated among the other study groups for reading and discussion.
4. Study groups that have ceased meeting to be urged to reconvene for this purpose. Additional groups for people involved in the "process" but not in study groups to be formed as needed.
5. After sufficient time for thoughtful evaluation, that we implement our original plan to have a conference of the study groups and interested participants. This conference to share summaries of the experiences of the study groups and to entertain in written motions on the basic points of "how to proceed" from the study groups, CC, and interested individuals. These motions to be submitted previous to the Conference.
6. CC to be charged with drawing out the salient differences and similarities in order to focus discussions of these motions.
7. Conference to express through straw votes group opinions on major points to be addressed in any proposal on "how to proceed", in order to promote a truer and more objective picture of where the group wants to go.
8. CC to put together these expressions into a proposal, or majority and minority proposals, after the conference.
9. These proposals to go back to the study groups for reading and discussion.
10. Grand general meeting to be held to decide and implement future organization and political structure of the group.

We recognize that this is a long and painstaking process. We also recognize that all will not want to be involved in every part of it. The objective reality of summer and many people being out of town must also be acknowledged. However, by using the already existing study group structure, we will certainly involve more than the 35 people at our last general meeting. Once we have arrived at the point where we have a structure and a clear task, we anticipate that many now tangential members will seek fuller involvement.

In Struggle and Solidarity,
Robin & Fernando

TEN POINT PROPOSAL

1. That each study group sum up their experience so far, including any positive or negative lessons. That any papers, bibliographies or curriculums that came out of the groups be written up and reproduced.
2. That the key areas of theoretical and/or practical work in the coming period be: a) the trade union movement, b) the schools, c) culture, d) anti-racist work and/or African Liberation support. That collectives be set up, or continued, to carry out this work.
3. That a fundamentals study group be formed.
4. That a discussion journal be published, to be financed by sales and ear-marked contributions. That a committee be appointed by the CC to edit and produce such a journal.

5. That the CC appoint a committee to work with regional and national ML contacts and organize joint activities with them.
6. That additional collectives be allowed to form around: study of a given topic and/or research and writing and/or practical work and/or common interests.
7. That points of unity be adopted among the following choices: the 2, the 6, the 17, the 18, or other. That this can be done by majority vote at a general meeting, after discussion of said points has taken place in all the collectives.
8. That a creative name be adopted in some way.
9. That every other month, some question be discussed by all the collectives. That on the following month, the same question be discussed at a general meeting. Possible topics: the family, the "trend, taxes, the three worlds theory, Eurocommunism, stalin. That these discussion be structured with readings, questions and/or ten minute presentations.
10. That when appropriate, official positions be adopted by majority vote at the general meetings, after discussion in all the collectives.

—Irva & Henry

WITHER THE PROCESS?

[These suggestions were preceded by an extensive analysis which is available on request.]

Without theory, we cannot possibly be successful in practice, without organization we cannot possibly divide our theoretical work up in a productive way, without practice our theory will remain sterile and lifeless—separate from and useless to the masses, and so on.

It is with this in mind that I make the following suggestions.

- That two sets of study groups be set up, one focusing primarily on theoretical work, the other on practical work, and that active participation in one or the other or both be a minimum criteria for membership in our group. (Perhaps the presently existing study groups, if they are still bearing fruit, could maintain some sort of independent or peripheral existence, but I am suggesting here that they should not be allowed to remain in the center of our activity.)
- That a group of politically advanced and responsible people be elected at a General Meeting to chart out a course for our theoretical work and that a special General Meeting be convened to discuss their proposal.
- That the practice "study groups" be based on commonality of interest to the extent possible, and that a special committee be elected at a General Meeting to set this up, with final approval reserved, as before, for the group as a whole.
- That the group as a whole get involved in one specific mass struggle, for example, the Jarvis-Gann Fight Back, and that at least interim leadership for this campaign be elected at a General Meeting—possibly with recommendations from the Coordinating Committee.
- Finally, that we dump the baggage, stop our interminable wrangling over small details, adopt a bold, fresh approach, and pursue our work in an honest, principled, and disciplined Marxist-Leninist manner.

—Reg

ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT JARVIS-GANN WORK COMMITTEE

NOTICE: Meeting of all interested people in the process who are affected by or fighting against the Proposition 13 cutbacks—THURSDAY, JULY 6, 7:30 P.M., 1317 COLE STREET, SAN FRANCISCO. This is a continuation of a series of meetings, begun out of the schools study group, to discuss (from a communist perspective) the cuts themselves, the developing fightback, and the development of a ML analysis of what it all means and how we

as independent communists can most effectively work. The last meeting stressed the need for all of us to fight, in any groups or coalitions where we work, for basic demands of "No Cuts" and "Tax the Banks and Corporations". The meeting also agreed to urge people to get involved in the California Federation of Labor petition campaign to exempt the corporations from Prop. 13 tax breaks. We also felt that it was important to use our influence to urge all groups fighting the cuts to get together to develop united actions. Lastly, we set up a small research/writing group to begin the task of making an in-depth communist analysis of the situation.

A RESEARCH PAPER ON THE JARVIS-GANN ISSUE

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Jarvis-Gann cutbacks from our process decided that we need to understand the issues behind Jarvis-Gann a little better in order to be able to do mass work around the issue. A sub-committee of Joe, Steve Hyatt, Ken and Sharon got together to plan the outline.

The completed paper will be about ten pages long. It is intended for people who need to answer questions about the issues raised by Jarvis Gann. Anyone who would like to work on the paper, please call: Joe (566-9844), Ken (655-1353), Steve (566-4439) or Sharon (647-1792). Here's the outline:

- A. Housing Speculation
 1. What is the role of housing speculation in the tax crisis?
 2. What is the case of housing speculation?
 - a. Manhattanization?
 - b. Foreign corporations?
 - c. Other causes?
 3. Who owns property in California? In San Francisco? In Oakland?
 4. Should all landlords rebate their tax savings from Jarvis-Gann to tenants?
- B. Taxes
 1. Why is housing (property) taxed rather than the landlord's income derived from rents?
 2. What does "paying your fair share of taxes" mean?
 - a. Income tax.
 - b. Sales tax.
 - c. Capital gains tax.
 - d. Abatement tax.
 - e. Should commuter employees be taxed?
 4. Where do our taxes go in California?
 - a. How much to welfare?
 - b. How much to education?
 - c. How much to health services?
 5. Is Jarvis-Gann related to the new tax rebate for private education?
- C. State Centralization and Subcontracting to Private Business
 1. If Major educational and social services are transferred from local to state government control, who will profit?
 2. If sectors of educational and social services are subcontracted out to private businesses, how will public sector workers and unions be affected?
 3. Under centralization and subcontracting, how will political struggles in the public sector be waged?
 4. What effect will centralization and subcontracting have on educational and social services?
 5. How will centralization and subcontracting affect community based social agencies (many in minority communities) which are a product of the struggles of the 1960s?
- D. Class Forces and Ideologies in the Jarvis-Gann Issue
 1. The Pro-Jarvis-Gann forces.
 - a. What is the history of the Jarvis-Gann issue?
 - b. What are the roles and contradictions of big business in Jarvis-Gann? State, local and national?
 - c. What are the roles of state politicians (especially Brown) and the state apparatus?
 - d. What are the class forces within the pro-Jarvis-Gann active coalition?
 - e. What relationships are there between the pro-Jarvis-Gann coalitions and other right wing coalitions, such as around the death penalty, anti-abortion, Briggs initiative, Bakke case, etc.?
 - f. Ideologies
 - 1) What ideological views are being put forward by politicians and state administrators?
 - 2) What ideological views molded the pro-Jarvis-Gann coalition forces?
 - 3) What views apparently motivated the pro-Jarvis-Gann voters?
 2. The Anti-Jarvis-Gann Forces

- a. What were the class forces involved in organizing against the Jarvis-Cann initiative?
 - b. What ideological views did they express?
 - c. What has become of the pre-election coalition and why has it broken up?
 - d. What are the potential coalition forces in the Jarvis-Cann fightback?
 - e. What are the ideologies of these coalition forces?
3. What other left groups are involved in the fightback and what are they saying and doing?
- E. What's happening with Jarvis-Cann now?
1. Prospects for immediate future (next year).
 2. Long-range prospects.
- F. What should our mass line and approach be?
1. What demands should we raise?
 2. Who should we work with?
 3. What activities should we be involved in?
 4. How much energy should we put into Jarvis-Cann work?

OTHER GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

HILARY WILL BE PRESENTING a summary of her recent trip back East where she met with folks in "For the People" and Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee. The second of these political presentations will be at her house, 3617 25th Street, Monday, July 3, at 7:00 p.m.

THE CRITIQUE OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE prepared by six ex-NCA people in this process, part of which was presented at Forum I, will be available at the next general meeting. An appendix written by one individual summarizing recent developments on the left in party building questions and extending the analysis of the NCA experience is also available.

PEOPLE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN being part of a Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism study group should call Kathy (564-2074). This is open to both people in the process and people becoming interested in ML politics.

THERE WILL BE AN INITIAL MEETING of people interested in setting up a socialist fiction lending library on Sunday, July 2, 7:00 p.m., at Robin's, 561 Rhode Island.

MONEY IS NEEDED TO KEEP this process going. Please make your donations. And if you found yourself just skimming the newsletter, not too interested, please send us a note and we'll take your name off the mailing list.

SPEAKING OF NAMES, bring your favorite one to the next meeting. So far we could be: One Hundred Flowers, Bay Area Socialist Organizing Committee, Bay Area Socialist Organization, Bay Area Socialist Interim Committee, Bay Area Workers Unity League.

SHARON IS WRITING A PAPER which raises questions on the assumptions and methods of studying the proposed party building questions. She raises alternative perspectives of how party building questions can be studied in relation to the questions raised by mass practice. The completed paper will be available at the next general meeting, and people wishing to discuss these ideas can call Sharon at 647-1792.

LEIBEL BERGMAN, FORMER RCP LEADER and leader of the recent split from RCP, will be meeting with us to discuss their criticism of RCP and their own (Revolutionary Workers Headquarters) perspective. Their split involved over 40% of the RCP. Their people were in town recently and had a friendly discussion with a few of us. They have developed more of a criticism of RCP's left sectarianism since splitting initially over the China issue. There are clearly differences between them and us, but they seem interested in maintaining friendly contact. The meeting will be Thursday night, July 6, 7:30, Peoples Cultural Center, 721 Valencia Street.