

12/19/79

Comrades of the OCIC,

This paper was read at the Dec 2nd meeting of the MPLS local center. It was written as a response to the questions: What is the party building strategy of the OCIC? Is that strategy correct? It was ~~written~~ written for the purpose of addressing problems within our local center but may be useful nationally. It has been reworked because some parts were not written clearly enough but the main point has not been changed. In the third to the last paragraph, I did change "seriousness of racism" to "seriousness of liberalism". This does change the meaning of the paragraph and I do so with a self-criticism that I over simplified the problem in the first draft. I thank comrades in Milwaukee for pointing this out to me. I also tried, in the same paragraph, to further develop the effects that liberalism can have on the OCIC's ability to combat opportunism. I welcome all responses to this paper.

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The tendency as a whole has not adopted a party building strategy and so what I am actually describing is the OCIC's strategy of how to arrive at a strategy for building the US vanguard party.

The first step in this strategy was the actual establishment of the OCIC. This of course involved drawing up the 18 points of unity and publishing the founding statement. The 18 points define the tendency, and serve as a starting demarcation between ourselves and revisionism on the one hand and ourselves and left opportunism on the other. This was the first major step in bringing together the many small groups from around the country that identified themselves as part of the anti-left opportunist, anti-revisionist tendency.

The second step was for the OCIC to develop a draft plan for the development of an ideological center, which will include as much of ~~xxxxxxx~~ the tendency as possible. This in fact is the sole purpose of the OCIC. One of the main points of the draft plan is that it calls for conscious movement wide debate.

The third step is the actual ideological struggle, and theoretical work which will win the tendency to one or another party building strategy... the strategy which is developed will answer such questions as what were the main errors of the previous party building efforts? What is the relationship between independent elaboration and joining of communists with the class struggle? Until a party building strategy is adopted, theoretical tasks remain primary within the OCIC, but whether or not theory remains primary after a strategy is adopted depends on the party building strategy which is adopted.

As with any plan, however, things have not gone smoothly. We all know of the long battle over pt 18, the major point demarcating us from left opportunism. Indeed this problem is of particular interest to us since the only forces within the OCIC which oppose pt 18 as a line of demarcation are part of our local center. This problem was supposedly resolved at the labor day conference.

The second problem is in uniting the tendency around a single strategy to develop a strategy. To date the Guardian, El Comite, and the Clubs remain outside the OCIC and refuse, for various reasons, to unite behind the draft plan in forming a single ideological center. Unting the tendency continues to pose an important question before

OCIC members: in the event that the struggle to include these forces fails, can the OCIC establish a leading ideological center without them and still come up with a correct party building strategy? This problem is not resolved.

Let us turn our attention to what the OCIC and its successor, the IC cannot be. And that is a debating society. There are some forces among us who don't seem to understand this. What then is the difference between debating societies and a communist ideological center? Debating societies do not believe in drawing lines of demarcation: they discuss and explore issues for the sake of philosophy or for personal enrichment. A communist IC, however, studies and debates issues for a specific reason, to arrive at a conclusion. We explore the interrelations of the problems before us so that ~~theoretical~~ theoretical problems standing in the way of our practice can be resolved. Therefore, it should be apparent to all communists that those who oppose lines of demarcation on fundamental issues and advocate that members should not try to develop their positions "too much" are making an opportunist error. No communist organization can exist for long without firm line of demarcation, especially on the most vital questions before us. This then is possibly the most important part of the OCIC strategy on how to form a party building strategy: we will not take up the questions before us with just anyone. We must maintain firm lines of demarcation between ourselves and class collaboration. We will not discuss questions endlessly for philosophical enrichment, and we must not say that no question is ever laid to rest. For this is certainly the perfect description of a debating society. We must discuss questions on the basis of careful study for one reason: to take a firm position that can guide our practice.

Is the OCIC's strategy of how to arrive at a party building strategy correct? Yes, fundamentally, it is. The struggle over pt 18 has proven that open movement wide debate works. It doesn't lead to the lowest common denominator winning out as some claim, but it does educate and unify the vast majority of our forces. The SC has been especially strong in sticking to this point in the face of those who believe that political debate should take place behind closed doors without the participation of the rank and file. However, the SC has made what I consider to be important errors. Today, I would like to focus on the one that I think most affects our local center, ~~and this is the~~

we should accept those who believe in the content of pt 1, but don't think it should be a line of demarcation. We should accept those who ask us to ally with such as Jane Fonda and Co. Comrade Newlin is overlooking something that should be obvious: it is impossible to believe that the masses must be armed and yet want to build a party with those who call for disarming the masses. It is impossible to believe that Trotskyism is a viewpoint which objectively coincides with the interests of the bourgeoisie, and at the same time want to build a party with Trotskyites, it is impossible to believe that socialism is our only solution and yet want to build a party with those who seek solutions within the capitalist system. And by the same token, it is impossible to believe that US imperialism is the main enemy of the world's people and at the same time want to build a party with collaborators of us imperialism. The SC is letting these opportunists pull the wool over his eyes in the name of being non-sectarian. They are actually saying that NS's upholding the theory of pt 18 is more important than if they uphold the practice of pt 18. It is a dangerous precedent for the OCIC to set.

Comrades, we are building a party with a grave task before it, the overthrow of the most powerful bourgeoisie in the world. This will certainly not be a tea party. The Vietnamese people, the Chilean people, the Angolan people, and many, many other third world peoples already know that fighting US imperialism is not a tea party. Liberalism on our part simply will not do. Not believing in the content of pt 18 is only half a hair away from not believing in pt 18 as a line of demarcation. Indeed, I maintain that it is impossible for a ML to uphold the content of pt 18 without upholding pt 18 as a line of demarcation. Only someone who lives in the ivory towers of philosophy, unaffected by the struggles of the world's people, ~~can say~~ ~~xxxx~~ can hold such a contradictory line. Everywhere that people are fighting for the cause of socialism, you will find them dying by the thousands because of US imperialism; thirty thousand people in Chile, one hundred thousand people in Iran, too many to count in Korea, and in Indochina, Mozambique, Angola, Cuba, Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge; Zimbabwe, and now the Iranian masses, because of their just demand for the return of the Shah, are facing US military threats. All of this suffered at the hands of US imperialism. Yet,

we are told that those who would have us allie ourselves with the collaborators of US imperialism are themselves ML simply because they pay verbal homage to pt 18. As internationalists, we must take up the liberation struggles of oppressed peoples as if they were our own. We must understand that the peoples of the third world are on the front lines of our struggle. The opportunists in NS do not grasp this. They think on the one hand, they can support the liberation struggles, but on the other hand they can build a party with those who collaborate with the main antagonist to those struggles. The sham internationalists in NS have made a serious deviation from ML; they have embraced an opportunist practice of internationalism which must speak louder to us then their verbal support for pt 18. Comrades, it is not sectarian to root opportunists out of a communist organization. Our solidarity with the struggles of the world's oppressed peoples compels us to.

If we understand that NS's position not to demarcate on the basis of international line is a deviation from ML and is in fact a serious opportunist error, then we should ask ourselves why the OCIC has made the error of allowing these opportunists to stay within our ranks. I believe that the root of this error is an over-reaction to the sectarian practices of the 'lefts'. But the SC's position on the ^{importance} of upholding the practice of international line is also the reflection of the seriousness of libralism within the OCIC. Why is this? It is becuse we must be more then just a none national chavanist oX none racist organization, we must be an organization capable of recognizing and combating national chauvanism and racism (or any other type of opportunism). The precedent which the SC has set for the 18 pts denies this. Obviously NS is incapable of recognizing class colaborators and supporters of apartied's policies, so they can't be expected to be capable of combating these types of opportunism. By allowing those who are incapable of fighting opportunism into our organization we seriously weaken the ~~entire~~ OCIC's ability to combat opportunism. Specifically, if the SC's position is applied to points 11 and 12 then we must see that a precedent has been set which could allow our organization to be liberal with those who cannot recognize or combat racism. Therefore, being liberal with those who cannot see the need to demarcate on the basis of international line is an error with serious implications for the OCIC's ability to combat

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opportunism. I call on the ML within our organization to recognize that we made a serious error in allowing these sham internationalists to remain in our organization; and as a part of analyzing this error we must take up the issue of the OCIC's ability to combat opportunism particularly national chauvanism and racism.

We must also realize that we made a racist error in our local center in first wanting to jump into discussing Ultra-leftism. Although I am in unity with pt 15, I do not agree that this is the pt that we should study next. I think the fact that we are an all white body indicates a problem that we should deal with immediately. Is it because we have taken a weak stand against opportunism, such as the ~~one~~ on international line? We must analyze every thing we do and every position that we take from the perspective of how it affects national minorities. I am not advocating liberal breast-beating, but I am saying that we can make a sober analysis of this problem and propose a course of rectification. A strong stand against opportunism, (~~that is~~ ^{that is} who we advocate demarcating with as well as what we say we uphold in content), particularly on the issues of national chauvanism and racism, will win minority ML to join the ~~OCIC~~ LC, if we make the effort to present our stand to them. This must be our immediate task. It is crucial if our objective is building a multinational local center that we address the centrality of racism before we address major ideological questions. Pt 15 is just such a major question. To launch into a discussion of ultra-leftism without even showing the least bit of concern for whether or not we have the input of minority ML's on this major question is objectively racist.

In summation, I call on the Marxist Linninists in the local center to rectify the error that we made in allowing opportunists to remain within our ranks. We must realize the racist implications of taking a weak stand on international line, and we must, as our immediate task, address the centrality of racism within our local center.