

## POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

## A Starting Point

We are a growing number of more than several dozen independent Marxist-Leninists in the Bay Area who have been meeting regularly since September 1977, with the aim of increasing our political unity and organizational ties. Among us are former members and sympathizers of groups such as PLP, RU, OL, but many have moved towards Marxism-Leninism independently through our involvement in the mass movements of the 60's--civil rights, student, women's and anti-war movements. Some of us are presently members of independent collectives and organizations.

The following summarizes the common outlook we have arrived at through our varied involvement with revolutionary work:

1. We are Marxist-Leninist and anti-revisionist. Our philosophical viewpoint is dialectical and historical materialism. Our political outlook recognizes the class nature of the state, and the necessity of socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Some of us received our political education on these questions in the struggle that was waged in the 60's by the Chinese Communist Party and the Albanian Party of Labor against the political line of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
2. Our involvement on the left and in mass struggles has confirmed our commitment to the above ideas. In addition, it has taught us further lessons. In recent years, the twin problems of dogmatism and sectarianism have been the main obstacles to the fusion of the communist movement with the working class, and to the development of a genuine communist party.

We are anti-dogmatic. We attempt to carry out serious theoretical work. We are not satisfied with generalizing the assumed lessons of previous revolutions without studying history and analyzing present conditions.

We are anti-sectarian. We put the interest of the people's movement as a whole above those of our organization. We do not scorn the reform movement. On the contrary, we give assistance and, where possible, direction to all forms of class and political struggles. We attempt to imbue them with communist class consciousness. We can only do this by learning to integrate ourselves with the masses. Defeating sectarianism and developing an earnest approach to mass struggles is probably our main task in this period. Until sectarian thinking and methods of work are defeated, it is wishful thinking to imagine that a correct political line or a communist party can develop.

3. We are anti-racist. The fight against national oppression is of prime importance for the revolutionary movement. We will not, under the phony guise of a "class" line, downplay the black liberation movement and other third world struggles for democratic rights. To do so would reflect a failure to understand the revolutionary significance of third world struggle and its relationship to the working class.

We believe working class unity can only be built on the recognition of the needs of national minorities; that black and other third world workers are among the most politically advanced leaders of the class; that anti-racist movements should be led by revolutionary third world workers and intellectuals. (We do not have a position yet as to the existence of a Black nation.)

4. We are anti-sexist. It is imperative that the revolutionary movement give serious support to the movement against women's oppression and struggle against all manifestations of sexism within its ranks. We will not relegate the fight against women's oppression to the background by counterposing it to other class and political struggles.

- 5. We are anti-imperialist. Our main internationalist responsibility is solidarity with and support for oppressed people in their fight against U.S. imperialism. While we agree that the Soviet Union is not the genuine friend of the world's people it claims to be, we will not use this as an excuse to waver in our principled commitment to all the liberation struggles that are aimed at our own ruling class.
- 6. We oppose bureaucratic centralism. While we want to work towards a democratic centralist party, we are aware that at this stage on the left there is not political leadership that has been adequately tested and developed in revolutionary work. To build a healthy movement, it is imperative that we show respect for each other and guarantee full democratic debate on all important questions facing our organizations.

These ideas are not the last word. Many important issues are not even addressed by this document. It is merely a starting point, a framework for further study and discussion. We feel there are many independent communists who will generally agree with our perspective. We welcome them in our ranks.

In addition we have no fantasies of being the pre-party formation. We are interested in making contact with any Marxist-Leninist groups or individuals who consider themselves part of the anti-sectarian/anti-dogmatist trend.

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The following are the minutes of the Continuations Committee meeting of January 7, 1978. It was proposed that the two major presentations at that meeting be given here in their entirety, but both Steve and Ernie decided that that would be unnecessary since the minutes are so comprehensive and the main points of both presentations are given. Also, there is a question of security, and the minutes may seem a little awkward given the editing of some of the names, except those that we have express permission to use.

The meeting started with 26 people in attendance; probably 6-8 people came in late. This number included at least one person visiting from out of town and at least two people checking out the group for the first time.

We started off with a comrade singing a song she wrote called "One, Two, Three, Four Parties of the New Type".

The Facilitator summed up the purpose of the meeting: to discuss what type of organization we wanted to see come out of this process. To facilitate discussion three members had been asked by the Organizational Committee to prepare 10 minute presentations on this subject.

Steve's Presentation

Many people in this process are guarded or even pessimistic about what may come out of it. The core of people who are taking more responsibility are more optimistic. We are getting to know each other; the trend of the group is to grow; the study groups are off the ground. The preparation for the study groups wasn't great, but they are working well because the "democratic side is taking over"--people are taking responsibility and participating well.

While there is a certain amount of agreement among us, there is a major contradiction over organizational form between broadness and cohesion. There are two errors we must be aware of. The left error means first, to assume we need completely developed political unity before we do any common work. Secondly, the left error means to follow too rigidly ideas of what a Leninist party should be. To take a left sectarian and idealist attitude on this question is a common error in the movement around us. Right errors are not as common, but a potential for



right errors exists in this group. This error means tending to follow revisionists on a theoretical critique of the M-L party. This error says little political analysis is necessary and we should never exclude people on principle.

An M-L organization must have some analysis and some basic unity. Otherwise there is no direction, no ability to guide work, and no summing up of experience. It is impossible to get past the individual proclivities [strong inclinations - ed.] of the people participating. For us to build a base in the working class, we must have the ability to struggle to improve our class perspective and our style of work. In fact, the liberal "broad" organization makes it impossible to really broaden the organization and it becomes a circle of M-L intellectuals. It can't build class-based forms of struggle.

This is very different from an ad hoc [for a particular application without necessarily broader implications - ed.], Bakke-type group. A group trying to do all-round communist work must have the ability to struggle for unity.

On the other hand, the left error flows from a mystified view of what party and correct line means. There is a fear of too many new ideas developing while there is still no coherent leadership. This shows lack of confidence in ourselves and our ability to grapple with a whole range of questions.

### Ernie's Presentation

(Ernie started off by reading a poem praising the Russian revolution.)

It is time for us to leave our childish past and embark on maturity. Part of this will be to develop a positive attitude towards people, towards the revolutionary movement and its contributions. We need to develop a positive attitude towards the Russian revolution. Part of our being anti-revisionist is that anti is our main style of work and outlook towards people. The masses of people, and us too, need something positive. The anti-dogmatist movement shows that people are ready to leave this negative attitude behind. The mural-movement is another indication of a growing positive attitude.

We need to learn from the people more. In SNCC and SDS we were open to people who had done a lot of work but were not M-L. We have to remember that Marx and Engels were humanists. We call the "counter-culture" all kinds of names; but the ecology movement, the psychology movement, wholistic health, spirituality, sexuality, raise issues as broad as revolution. While these movements are sometimes anti-working class, they are not always. While we may not know much about all these topics, we can bring people in who do know about them. Sometimes we are very economist. I was at a meeting where a Muni worker stood up and started asking questions about health in the USSR and divorce courts in China. Suppose we met a group of health workers who were excited about health care in China. Should we lecture them about anti-revisionism?

Some people think to be a pre-party grouping we should be small. But all the best M-L work I have been involved in (CP in SNCC, Kaiser newsletter, S.F. State strike) has been in a mass situation. People can become interested in communism, but we have to get out of our tight-knit group and go out to other people. There are also lots of people out there who have something to offer us. We should encourage people's initiative.

Work groups should come out of the study groups in 1-1 1/2 years.

Third Presentation A third person laid out for ten minutes in highly technical language the "deep structural crisis in international finance monopoly capital". The other members of the meeting, and the chairperson, interrupted him several times to ask him to connect what he was saying to the purpose of the meeting, but he refused to do so. At the end of ten minutes his report was cut off.



Discussion

[Each new speaker will be designated by their first few words typed in SOLID CAPITAL LETTERS - ed.]

A LOOSE ORGANIZATION MAY NOT BE the best for bringing forward people's initiative. Just saying "yes" to a project is just as bad as just saying "no". The organization has to be involved and help. We need to learn to work in broad coalitions. We need a broad M-L organization, fused with the mass movement. We need to work in broad coalitions. But we also need an organization with some political unity heading towards revolution. In Europe the anti-nuke movement is strong--a demonstration of 100,000 ended with 10,000 occupying a plant for a year--those involved were mainly farmers, peasants. We have to be open to this type of an issue seen in new ways, but within the struggles like this we need an M-L force.

THE REASONS ERNIE GAVE for a loose organization could fit into an M-L organization.

I'M A MARXIST-LENINIST BECAUSE in 150 years this has been the only movement that was a match for the bourgeoisie. Others have been unsuccessful. M-L'ism is a match for the bourgeoisie, but it doesn't work as well as we would like in the USSR or China. We must beware of dogmatism. What we should learn from Lenin is that an organization should suit our needs and change as the situation changes. The main error now is a left error. Not much is to be lost by having a loose organization. We should be tighter than we are now, but we should stay open to new people joining. There should be no tests for line or life-style, etc. We should operate as various collectives autonomous within a general agreement. When problems arise, like one of the collectives joins the KKK, then we can deal with it. The study groups should move towards work groups and work on theory and fusion in our practical work. We need internal debate, a newsletter, and an elected leadership.

IT'S CORRECT TO REACT AGAINST LEFT ERRORS and not to isolate ourselves. But I was in the NCA, an organization similar to what was just proposed. We do have something to lose: time and energy spent doing reformist work. We need strategic unity about the next few steps. We need unity around party-building as a guide for trade union work. We need to recruit, develop links with the working class, and build a base. Without these steps laid out, we do vague, reformist, trade union work.

WE SHOULD STUDY THE MOVEMENT IN EUROPE. We are inexperienced, but millions of people are struggling with these questions. In Germany there is a federation of communist collectives, in Italy A Luta Continua. We need a communist united front like this as a forum for the ideological defeat that can lead to the formation of a new party.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT LENINISM TOO ORGANIZATIONALLY. We need a criterion for our organization. The majority of us think we need to apply democratic centralism. But this must relate to objective and subjective conditions. We need the tightest, most efficient organization that we have a realistic basis for. Can democratic-centralism be applied to any local group?

EVERYONE WANTS TO DO THE OPPOSITE of what they've done before. Those who were in loose organizations want tight ones and vice versa. We should also learn about the good points of these organizations. We should have forums about the experiences people have had in past organizations.

WE WANTED TO HAVE a study group on the national question, but nobody wanted to do it. What if we have an organization, and no one wants to spend their main time on anti-racist work? We need a way to plan and direct work.



WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND monopoly capitalism.

I READ SOMETHING WHICH ARGUED that the "main contradiction in the anti-revisionist, anti-dogmatist trend" was between stressing theoretical unity (the Guardian) and practical fusion (PWOC). It's terrible to think we already have battle lines drawn in this tiny trend. We should approach Guardian clubs and PWOC clubs and propose a joint May-Day activity. [This suggestions to be discussed later.]

NO ONE SEEMS TO BE REJECTING democratic centralism as a principle. The question is, what next? How much tightness and how much looseness do we want in regard to: 1) political line, and 2) guidance of practical work. I am for a structure similar to SDS which would accept a range of views about what Marxism is, but united in trying to "propagate Marxism". It's good to have an organization with centralism for practical work.

IT'S HARD TO TALK ABOUT what kind of organization we need when I don't even know how big this group is or what political views people have.

THERE ARE 6 STUDY GROUPS: Party-building in two sections with 25-30 members; Trade Unions in in two sections with 30-35 members; Cultural Questions is recruiting; Fundamentals of M-L'ism with 8 members; Black Liberation and Capital, Vol. III, with smaller membership. The mailing list is 120-130.

THERE ARE 6-7 ORGANIZATIONS IN THE EAST trying to set up a federation of anti-dogmatist groups. There are also loose affiliates in LA and Tucson, maybe more. They need someone in the Bay Area. We need to have forums, elect a leadership, have work groups, move towards tightness.

I'M VISITING FROM BOSTON. I was part of a group which split from PL with 70-80 people. We had another organization which functioned for three years. We abandoned Leninism, because leadership keeps people from developing and thinking things out for themselves. Calling yourself Leninists may exclude some people unnecessarily.

WHY IS THIS ORGANIZATION predominantly white?

WE TALKED ABOUT THAT AT THE last CC meeting. We decided that pushing minority recruitment now would be a guilty, amateurish approach. While we should certainly invite and welcome participation from minority collectives or individuals we may know, the solution to this weakness will come from good participation in the mass movement.

WE ALSO APPOINTED AN Outreach Committee. Has it met?

IT HAS MET ONCE AND hasn't done much. We plan to meet again soon.

IN THE NEXT MONTHS AFTER THE study groups we should have a series of debates and forums and discussion on Party-building, trade union, and anti-racist work. If we get some unity on these points, we can form an organization and get unity on other topics later. This is in opposition to those who want an immediate transition to independent collectives.

IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO THRASH THIS STUFF OUT more after the study groups. One-half of the people on the mailing list are not involved in a study group. We need a newsletter and a name.

[RESPONSE TO BOSTONS VISITOR]We shouldn't judge democratic-centralism (DC) from the experience in PL. That was a farce, a travesty of what DC should be. Bolshevik and Chinese communist parties grew because of DC not in spite of it. We should use our points of unity as they are now as a political line, and develop a cohesive practice based on it. We need to bring people into the organization through our practice so that we can learn from the people and the further



development of our line can be based on reality, not just a few people's ideas.

THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE not involved in this process who have basic agreement with it. If we move too quickly we won't involve these people. We can have a large organization, and we need a large organization to make our presence felt in the working class. We should experiment with a number of forms, submitting positions papers and so forth. Forums should be directed towards developing unity. We didn't get into fundamental points enough today; we dealt with Leninism too organizationally. We need systematic planning and approach to revolutionary strategy. We need conscious political leadership to break sectarianism, develop roots in the working class, and develop a correct approach on the questions facing the masses.

THE NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE THE VEHICLE for clarifying what political unity we have. A name for the organization should be decided by submitting suggestions and a mail-out ballot.

WE NEED TO HAVE DUES.

I HAVE DOWN 7-8 SUGGESTIONS which have been made. People who made them should write something up about them and circulate it. These suggestions should be discussed further at the next CC meeting.

### Proposals

1. Examine European experience.
2. Link up with groups in East around PWOC.
3. Do something with Guardian and PWOC for Mayday.
4. Set up collectives around study or practice after study groups, elect leadership.
5. We need unity on questions of party-building, trade unions, anti-racist work.
6. Newsletter.
7. Name.
8. Centralized practice around major areas, keep present points of unity.
9. Dues.

### Amendments to Points of Unity [All decided unanimously.]

1. Anti-sexism should be its own point with more discussion added.
2. "Becoming immersed in mass struggles", change to "Developing a correct approach to mass struggles".
3. Paragraph 1, "moved towards M-L independently", add "through our involvement in the mass movements of the 60's--the civil rights, student, women's and anti-war movements.
4. Point 3, put in both racism and national oppression and explain that we haven't taken this question up yet.
5. Point 1, change "many of us" to "some of us."
6. Change first sentence to say that we are more than several dozen, and growing.
7. Point 5, change "While most of us" to "While we want to".

[Criticism/self-criticism is being omitted from the newsletter.]

THE NEXT CONTINUATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING will be held on Saturday, February 4, at 1:00 p.m., at 3384 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland. For more information, call Fernando (863-0328) or Steve (567-9609)

### AGENDA FOR THE NEXT CONTINUATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

1. Report on minutes and feedback.
2. The question of an elected Organizational Committee.
3. The status of the Continuations Committee--should it be tighter; who should



- vote; should it stay open.
4. What activities we want to take up that would develop the question around where we want to go politically--question of forums; possible participation in Mayday.
  5. Any other proposals that came out of the last CC meeting--dues; security; name of organization.

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REPORTS AND READING LISTS FROM THE STUDY GROUPS

MARXIST-LENINIST FUNDAMENTALS: [Fernando 863-0328] Nine members. Meets every other thursday. Will meet for 13 sessions (6 mos.). Has met five times (as of Thursday, January 19). Readings so far have been:

- Lenin - Three Component Parts of Marxism.
- Marx - Communist Manifesto.
- Marx - Wage, Labor & Capital.
- Marx - Wage, Price & Profit.

Supplementary readings include: 1) Ruiz, Marx for Beginners and comic book version of Communist Manifesto; 2) Grasping Revolutionary Theory: A Guide for ML Study - the Guardian; 3) B. Traven - Treasure of the Sierra Madre.

Future readings will include Mao's "On Contradiction" in a session on the Marxist dialectics, and Lenin's "State & Revolution", and others to be worked out by the study group.

TRADE UNION: [Hillary - 821-7656, Kitty - 655-1353, Joe - 566-9844] The group is about 30 people in two sections. The sessions held so far have been: 1) Organizational; 2) Dialectics (Mao's "On Contradiction"); 3) Discussion of outline of study; 4) General labor history overview using Foster's American Trade Unionism, chapters on "Great Steel Strike" and "Business Unionism", and Linder's Flint Sitdown Strike (pamphlet); 5) Basis of apparent lack of class consciousness in U.S. using Aptheker's "Class Consciousness in U.S." and Russell's "Marxist Class Analysis" (pamphlets), and Gold's "Consolidations of Capitalist State--the Process of Consolidation and its Contradictions, from an unpublished thesis titled "Historical Analysis of Divisions in the U.S. Working Class"; 6) Marxist theory on trade unions, using Marx and Trade Unions, ch. 1 & 7, by Lusofsky, and Lenin's Left Wing Communism - An Infantile Disorder, Ch. 6.

Anyone who wishes to follow the readings should call a member of the group who can give you a copy of all materials to be reproduced and returned. Future sessions will deal with how revolutionaries have functioned in U.S. trade unions, a closer look at sexual and racial/national divisions and problems of organizing encountered in particular areas of work. We will also later critically examine the trade union work of the post-CP communist movement.

PARTY BUILDING: [Steve - 567-9609] The party building study group has about 25-30 members. It meets in two sections, 4-7 p.m. and 7-10 p.m., every other Sunday. We have a Program Committee of about 7 volunteers researching and choosing materials for study. The group has had five sessions so far: 1) Mao "On Contradiction" for review and deepening of our understanding of dialectical materialism; 2) History of the CPSU, Ch. 1 & 2 and conclusion, Lenin's Tasks of Russian Social-Democrats; 3) Lenin's What is to be Done?, Ch. 4, Preface to Twelve Years (Lenin, CW Vol. 13, p. 94), Reorganization of the Party (Lenin, CW, Vol. 10, p. 29), The Congress Summed Up (Lenin, CW, Vol 10, p. 376; 4) Leninist Theory of Organization, E. Mandel, Preface to the Second Edition of Tasks of Russian Social-Democrats (Lenin, CW, Vol. 6, p. 209), How the Bolshevik Party was built and Lessons for the U.S.



Tentative topics for future sessions: Parties of the Second International, U.S. Socialist Party, Comintern, Chinese Communist Party, CPUSA. We plan a joint meeting to sum up our look at party building history. We will then study some current groups and questions. Possible topics: Eurocommunism, Fusion, CP (ML), RCP, PWOC, the anti-dogmaticist, anti-revisionist trend.

CULTURAL STUDY GROUP: [Eli - 647-5041] The curriculum of this group was planned by a core of six people who had been meeting since May, 1977. While most of the original six consider themselves Marxist-Leninists, it was decided to open the group to anyone expressing interest, with no political requirements. Also, while most of the members are engaged in cultural work, non-artists as well were recruited to participate. In its relationship to the other study groups, it was decided to affiliate, but at the same time maintain autonomy.

The focus of the group is on the theoretical aspects of Marxist writings on culture, both historical and contemporary, but illustrating theory using concrete works of art.

There are 17 members of the group which will be meeting weekly until the middle of June. Because of the unwieldy nature of large groups, we have closed the group. The following is the schedule of study.

- 1) Jan. 10, Music - examination of contemporary popular music focusing on the corporate structure, racism, and sexism. Readings: a) "Relative Absolutes" by Roland Young from Overtones; b) "Sociology of the Musician", and "Eye, Ear, and the function of Music" by Bisler and Adorno from Composing for the Film (also in Maynard Solomon's Marxism and Art); c) Two chapters from Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music by Frank Kofsky; d) Two chapters from Rock and Roll is Here to Pay by Chaple and Garofalo.
- 2) Jan. 17, Music - 'Progressive' jazz, rock and folk. Readings: a) Kofsky (see above); b) "Punk Rock Reactionary", an article from The Worker - CPL 12/28/77.
- 3) Jan. 24, The origin and function of Art, dialectical materialism, the labor process, and imitation. Readings: a) Chapter 1 of The Human Essence by George Thomson; b) Chapter 2 of The Necessity of Art by Ernst Fisher.
- 4) Jan. 31, Visual Art, analysis of social-historical forces determining production and consumption of art in the era of oil painting, 1500-1900. Reading: Chapters 1 and 5 of Ways of Seeing by John Berger.
- 5) Feb. 7, Same as (4) dealing with modern forms. Readings to be announced.
- 6) Feb. 14, Problem of Realism I, Critical realism: from ballads to Balzac, realism of the stereotype, the ripoff of third world culture. Reading: The Overcoat, a short story by Nikolai Gogol.
- 7) Feb. 21, Brecht, Benjamin, and the Children of the Scientific Age, the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, and epic theatre - an attempted response to new demands. Reading: a) "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", by Walter Benjamin, from Illuminations (also in Marxism and Art, edited by Berel and Lang); b) "Short Organon of the Theatre", by B. Brecht in Brecht on Theatre, edited by Joan Willett.
- 8) Feb. 28, Artists and Politics/Art and the Left, class position of artists. How should they relate to the left? How should the left relate to them? Readings: a) "Yenan talks on Literature and Art", by Mao, in Marxism and Art; b) "Party Organization and Party Literature", by Lenin, in Marxism and Art; c) "CPUSA 1948 Cultural Workers Conference"; d) Chapter 7 from Literature and Revolution, by Trotsky.
- 9) Mar. 7, Agitation and Propaganda, amateurism and jargon in the left's



newspapers--mirrors of strengths and weaknesses in the movement. How and to what extent can they be improved? Reading: current and historical journals of the left.

10) Mar. 14, Agitational Propaganda in the 30s and 60s, its uses and limitations. Readings to be announced.

11) Mar. 21, Easter Vacation, an examination of post-Draconian rituals of holiday.

12) Mar. 28, Problem of Realism II, Gorky and the Dworkys--socialist realism as a vision on the roads to revolution/socialist realism as profound myopia down alleys of idiocy. The friends of Gorky and forgotten U.S. writers. Readings: a) One of two short stories by Meridel LeSueur - They Follow Us Girls or Well Make Your Bed, in collection Harvest; b) Bright and Morning Star by Richard Wright--a short story in the collection Uncle Tom's Children; c) "The Popular and the Realistic", an essay from Brecht on Theatre; d) Short essays by Mike Gold; e) "Socialist Realism: Albatross of the Left", by Eli Shul.

13) & 14) Apr. 4 & 11, The Mother, a critical examination of different forms of realism through comparison of varied treatments given this popular story. Readings: a) The Mother, a novel by Gorky; b) The Mother, a play adapted from the novel by Brecht. 15) Apr. 18, The Mother, dramaturgy as a necessary step in the production of critical realist drama/dramaturgy in the directing process. Readings: a) Brecht's letter to the NY Theatre Union on their production of "The Mother"; b) Lee Blaxandall's criticism of the SF Mime Troupe's production of "The Mother".

16) Apr. 25, Problem of Realism III, the third world explosion. Readings: a) The Apprentice by Toni Cade Bambara; b) Strike and Fade by Henry Dumas; c) The Hands of the Blacks by Luis Bernardo Honwana,

17) May 2, Film, film analysis and criticism. Readings: a) "Young Mr. Lincoln" from Cahiers Du Cinema; b) "Marked Woman" by Charles Eckert.

18) May 9, Film, Marxist filmmakers and revolutionary cinema. Third world filmmakers--Sembene, Rocha, Solanas, Gettino. European filmmakers--Godard, Makavejev, Pasolini, Bertolucci, Wertmuller. Readings: a) Toward a Third Cinema by Solanas and Gettino; b) excerpts from "Film and Revolution" by J. R. BacBean.

19) May 16, Television, to be announced.

20) May 23, Imperialism and Culture, to be announced. Reading: Gods Bits of Wood by Sembene.

SCHOOLS--EDUCATION GROUP: [Irva - 542-3311, Joe - 566-5844] Group has met twice and is 8-12 people, either parents or teachers or both. We plan to research what has been done by Marxists on education theory, U.S. schools in society, the struggles that have occurred and the content of education. As a start, we are compiling an annotated reading list of all relevant material that there is that the group knows about. (Call a participant for a copy.) We are beginning our present work by reading Schools in Capitalist America by Bowler and Gintz who attempt a Marxist analysis.

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CONTACTS MADE WITH VARIOUS GROUPS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Occasionally people visit from other areas who are members of independent collectives and who have contact with one or more members of our group. There were several such visits over the holidays and also some of our members visited independent collectives in other areas while vacationing. Because our group is as yet not very defined politically and organizationally, those who have made



contacts have made it clear that they are speaking only for themselves in describing our "network" of study groups and where they see it going.

Sacramento and Davis: This is actually an inter-organizational report. Members from the bay area met at Davis recently with some of the people relating to our group from Davis and Sacramento. The work in both areas (theirs and the Bay Area) was discussed and the comrades there were filled in on what progress has been made in the Bay Area through the study group network.

Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC): [Garrett's report] I visited Philadelphia for about 10 days over the New Year, staying with two friends who are just beginning to work with PWOC and also met with two men from PWOC and talked for about 10 hours total with one or the other. PWOC is certainly excited about what's happening here with us, and they were floored when I told them how many people were involved. I gave out copies of the unrevised Principles of Unity. Mostly, I was impressed by the two men I talked to, of their sincerity, sensitivity and straightforwardness. In all the time we talked, I understood everything they were saying along very scientific M-L lines, but there was a minimum of rhetoric; I don't think I ever even heard the word "contradiction" used once. A particularly interesting aspect of my visit was that one of the men I talked to is the only gay person in the organization (although the friends I stayed with are both gay women and are interested in joining). This man joined PWOC as part of a married couple about five years ago and then three years later "came out", which blew away a lot of people. PWOC is not anti-gay, but they also don't have a very developed line on the question yet. It was also interesting that a majority of members, and most of the leadership, is women; and most of the members are in couples. I thought of a thousand questions after I left Philly, but I got mostly general impressions of the group, all of which I liked immensely.

Also, Steve wrote a letter to Clay Newlin, one of the leaders of PWOC, describing the development of our group to this point. (He had also done so a few months previous and received a friendly response encouraging us to visit Philadelphia when we could.) Steve inquired as to whether PWOC would encourage us to establish a more formal relationship with the "trend", possibly be represented at their occasional conferences of independent organizations, if our group so decided and if we were to agree with their 18 points of unity. There is a question as to whether such a loosely defined organization as ours could be represented at this stage.

Boston: A person close to the Boston Party Building Collective (BPBC) visited and had talks with one of our people. They and other independent collectives in Boston are closely allied with the Proletarian Unity League (PUL) which is in New York and Boston (probably has more roots in Boston which seems to be a strong area for independents and independent collectives). This group is a participant in the "trend" (the PWOC initiated loose alliances of individual collectives) but critically so because the PUL and the other Boston collectives have been excluded for taking a "two superpowers" position on international affairs. This group has written and circulated a position paper within the trend criticizing manifestations of sectarianism within the Trend. They feel that there should be allowed looser unity initially around certain questions, that if this was the case, 1) Guardian, 2) PUL, 3) El Comite (New York Puerto Rican group), need not have such an estranged relationship to the Trend.

Baltimore: A member of the Socialist Union of Baltimore (an organization in the Trend) recently visited and had discussions with some of us. They seem to have some roots in industrial struggles in their area. They were influential in the Sadlowski campaign in Baltimore, a heavy steel concentration.

Washington, D.C.: A couple of months ago a member of the Potomac Socialist Union (another collective in the Trend) visited here and had discussion with several people. There is regular contact with this person.

Tucson: [Report by Joe] Over the holidays I visited with one of the members of



the Tucson Marxist-Leninist Collective. (They are the group that is now putting out a journal called Theoretical Review.) They are in general part of that wing of the "anti-dogmatist, anti-revisionist trend" that believes theory is very much primary at the present time. However, because their theoretical papers are available to read, I was more concerned with their practice and how they relate it. They are a small group and have made some headway in union work (miners), school desegregation and other community work, the Bakke movement and anti-sexist health work. They can be written to at TMLC, c/o Zapata Books, P.O. Box 3524, Tucson, AZ 85722. They are interested in our progress and would like to be on our mailing list and have placed me on theirs. They invite pre-arranged visitors to contact them in Tucson. If anyone wants more information on my 3 hour conversation, or if anyone would like to meet with them, please call Joe (566-9844).

San Diego: Two people visited from an independent collective in San Diego called Committee for a Proletarian Party. They previously had made periodic contacts with members of our group. Since their collective has adopted a pro-Albania position, they are emphasizing seeking unity with other groups with a similar international perspective. Those they found in the Bay Area included ML Collective, Pacific Collective (ML), Revolutionary Workers Collective (formerly Fruitvale Law Collective), and J-(Japan)-Town Collective. They are also considering ML Organizaing Committee and RCP because of some sympathy with their international perspective, although most of the people they talked to in the Bay Area struggled with them against allying with either of those organizations.

Los Angeles: Three people in our group attended a conference organized by an independent L.A. collective over Thanksgiving. (Again a long-standing contact with some people in this group.) This is a small collective of white and Asian members who have done work in China Friendship, the Chinese community, and trade union work. Also attending were the L.A. Work Group (ML), other L.A. independents, Bay Area Communist Union (BACU ), and an Asian collective from the Bay Area. The conference was dominated by debates between the host group and BACU. This group is basically pro-China which tends to impel it towards relations with groups like BACU but tends to be less sectarian than BACU has become.

Orange County: A member of the Socialist Organizing Committee of Orange County visited also a couple of months ago, had discussions with a couple of our members and sat in on a party building class.

Members of the Proletarian Unity League visited (New York-Boston based group), but were unable to establish contact because so many of our people were out of town over Christmas.

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OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

NAME: It was decided at the last CC meeting that we have to have a name in the near future. The issue will be taken up at the next meeting. People should bring suggestions or contact someone about it if they have suggestions.

MONEY: Whatever the outcome of a possible discussion on dues at the next CC meeting, we are going to be needing more money (for one thing, this is a B-I-G newsletter and it's gonna cost to get it printed and mailed). So let's come up with some substantial donations to further the work.

SOCIAL EVENT: Kind of following the last note, the fundraising party was a success and we are open to more of them. If you have ideas, call a member of the Organizational Committee [for example, Garrett (626-5883), or Fernando (863-0328)].

NEXT STUDY GROUP LEADERS MEETING: Sunday, February 12, 7:00 p.m., 351 Church Street.