

11/30/78

Report on meeting with Irwin Silber, Nov. 24, 1978 - in N.Y.C.

→ To discuss recent split in the Guardian - and the development of the clubs.

When asked what the 2-line struggle is within the Guardian, Silber said there were not 2 clearly defined lines - both positions are still undeveloped, and that Jack Smith & the majority of the staff's position is so opportunist that he wouldn't characterize it as "left." He said the Guardian's idea that they have either the internal forces and/or the external base with which to consolidate and lead a left tendency is completely opportunist and will be impossible to put into practice.

The clubs are all moving in Silber's direction. They are all exchanging documents directly with each other instead of sending them via N.Y. Even the floundering Chicago "club" is supposedly pulling together and trying to get involved. The Bay area club (with its KOP leadership) is playing a leading influential role at this point. Although we can't see their document (all club documents are internal) Irwin said that their main points are that theory is primary, that leadership is not self-appointed but arises out of the struggle to build a new organization (combatting the Guardian's opportunist and top-down position) and that what the party-building movement needs most right now is to undergo a vast rectification movement. We asked what they meant by rectification, and that it seemed to us that the main struggles will be around the purpose and actual practice of rectification, (judging from what we have seen in the Boston club alone in terms of varying understandings and opinions of what theory is). But Silber thinks that the first step will be the struggle within the ADARCM to

combat the Guardian's incorrect line, and to ^{especially have the cc} accept and understand the concept of rectification. And this struggle alone will be a great advance for the party-building movement.

As for the question of theory, he again was vague, but said that in addition to struggle in the clubs there would be special attention given to important theoretical questions. Non-club members could hopefully work with the clubs on these theoretical attempts.

As for key theoretical questions, he mentioned the study of revisionism & particularly the Soviet Union, the nation question, & a U.S. class analysis.

Concerning the actual development of the clubs, Silber said they are finally in the process of consolidating into a national network, and that there are two possible paths for them to take.

- 1) The clubs would still be connected to the Guardian, doing Guardian support work which would be centralised in N.Y., although they would have a far greater degree of political autonomy than before (is this called relative autonomy?!)
- 2) The clubs would become completely autonomous - although they may choose to do Guardian support work as a side activity.

He thinks the latter is a strong possibility.

All the clubs are opposing the new Guardian line, with the exception of the Boston club. Silber said that this is due to Boston's clubs history of Guardian lackeyism (actually - he said loyalism). Since they have also been so uncritical of the Guardian, & they are now forced for the first time to think politically on their own, they are being cautious - but it seems pretty clear that they will also join the boat against the Guardian line.

When asked about the TMLC & the TR, he did not have much to say - other than ^{thats} he hopes that the TMLC will help out in struggling for the rectification line within

the O.C. He skirted the question of what he thought about the TR by saying that the clubs will soon have a theoretical journal and hopes that many more spring up. (That's nice, we said, but what do we do in the meantime). We told him to think about writing for the TR but he wasn't overly enthusiastic.

In general, he is very optimistic about the recent turn of events, is obviously pleased that the clubs are supporting him against the Guardian and sees great hope for the future. But the future he portrays seems as vague as ever.

To conclude, it looks like the clubs are in a potential position to improve - they are finally having some struggle + are no longer slaves to the Guardian.

But the same crisis of lack of leadership still persists. They are consolidating around what they are against, but not what they are for, and it looks like it will be a while before they figure it out. Thus, at this point we feel that we should observe, gather more information, and begin formulating an analysis of the ongoing developments. We don't think we should write anything now - it is too premature + we have to be cautious because the changing club formation is still our ^{one of our} closest potential allies. It just seems like they are always lagging about 2 yrs. behind us - but if we criticize them they call us ultra-left. That's what people thought of us in the club - they (+ Irwin told us this too) think that we raised struggles prematurely (regardless of the fact that we have been proved correct since then). We'll keep you posted on the latest.

Irene - TR(B)