

A Key Weakness in "The OC's First Year"

The Cincinnati Comrades

First of all, we'd like to say that we see much progress in the first year of the OC in terms of accomplishments. And we're optimistic about what will come out of the OC in the future. However, it is because of our optimism that we feel that we need to be very realistic in looking at the weaknesses and shortcomings of the OC. It is only by concrete and critical analysis that we can see our mistakes and begin to rectify and correct them.

A mistake was made, we feel, in the sum-up of the OC's first year. This mistake was liberalism. Unproportionately more time and space was taken up analyzing the accomplishments than was given to self-criticism and what analysis was made of the mistakes and weaknesses of the OC was shallow. The reasons behind the mistakes and ways of rectifying them were not dealt with adequately.

This liberalism was especially incorrect in the analysis of the weakness of the OC on the recognition of the centrality of the struggle against racism. In the sum-up, while many pages are spent emphasizing the accomplishments against the leftist threat to our trend, only one paragraph mentions any positive accomplishments on the struggle against racism and this mainly in terms of our giving support to the national minorities conference. (We have some criticisms on this topic which will be dealt with later.) This is because no other positive accomplishments could be found on this question. In fact while it is put out that "the main force retarding the pace of anti-left development is the incomplete break with ultra-leftism", it is not even analyzed that racism is a ^{major} main force retarding our progress. We put forward that in fact racism is a ^{major} main force retarding our anti-left development.

Only one paragraph of criticism on the OC's failure to pursue internal consolidation in relation to the struggle against racism was put forward in "The Soft Spots in the OC's Work". No further analysis was done on this crucial weakness, which is more than just a "soft spot". Another apparent weakness in the sum-up was the setting of priorities for the OC. The struggle against racism was mentioned only third to the consolidation of the anti-left tendency around a plan for a process conducive to forging a single ideological center and to taking up the theoretical task of summing up the nature of modern left-wing communism.

There are other examples of the lack of the OC taking up the struggle against racism throughout this past year. One example is the lack of clarity of the relationship of the OC to the national minority conference. Many OC and non-OC people were very confused about the relationship between the two. Although monetary and verbal support was given by the OC to the national minority comrades we feel that more concrete and solid steps should have been taken in support of this conference. There was a lack of publicity and communication within the OC about the conference and its goals, etc. There was a lack of trying to encourage OC groups to take up the question, to do active support around the conference or to participate in the conference itself.

There is no well developed line on the centrality of the struggle against racism in the OC as a body. It was very clear in the analysis of OC forces from the short questionnaires that this is an important weakness throughout the OC. The majority white make-up of our organizations shows clearly the lack of having taken up this struggle. In our own organization we are only now beginning to uncover and rectify a number of racist errors from the past. We are certain that other organizations and individuals as well suffer from this same shallow understanding of the centrality of the struggle against racism.

Another demonstration of this weakness is the lack of analysis around the role of the local centers as an important place to include national minority cadre, cadre who because of racism in our organizations are independent at this time. This is an essential aspect to the local center and has not been addressed clearly either in the national communications about local centers or in the sum-up of the So. California Local Center work. It is the local center which can bring in national minority cadre, which has a set up place for the basic work of the OC-IC, the organization and consolidation of theoretical discussions and political line.

In the debate around Point 18 there was little criticism made of the ultra-left groups around the national chauvinism and objective racism of their stands on the struggles in developing countries. Marxist-Leninists in the heart of the leading oppressor nation of the world must break with all forms of national chauvinism. The defense of Point 18 was a concrete step forward for the OC on this score. But in the summation of the Point 18 struggle, it was not sufficiently pointed out that the ultra-leftists and the centrists were taking an objectively national chauvinist and racist line on the international situation. This aspect of the Point 18 struggle needs to be understood and deepened by the entire OC.

In addition, there has been too little criticism of the "rectification line" in terms of its prospects for building multinational unity. We believe the "rectification line" to be seriously flawed and its critical weakness is nowhere more apparent than in its implications for developing a correct line for defeating racism and uniting Communists and the class. Yet this has not developed into a major feature of the OC's criticism of the NNMLC.

In the paper "A Brief Statement on the Struggle Against Racism", the last paragraph states many correct goals in terms of "grasping the reality of national oppression and the correct method to combat it". It is emphasized that the SC must develop a programmatic approach to deepening the knowledge and practice of the OC in the struggle against racism. This was laid out in August, 1978, and in this past year, the only thing which has been done is the initiation of the national minority conference. We feel that the SC specifically and the OC in general needs to be self-critical on this question.

We see the struggle against racism as central and primary in our movement. Our understanding of this concept includes the absolute necessity of examining every phenomenon in terms of its effect on the struggle against racism. Without taking up this struggle immediately we are not only hurting our moving forward to become a multi-national movement but our work of consolidating our line, our working in outreach, in mass work, and in trade unions will be held back. Racism is the main contradiction in the working class today. Failure to take up the struggle against racism, failure to develop an OC-wide theoretical struggle around racism and to develop a real political line on this, and racist errors of OC cadre and organizations held the OC back. In fact this remains as a major contradiction in the formation and consolidation of the OC. We are critically weak in our theory and practice on this struggle.

As a concrete proposal to further this struggle we move that:

- 1) In the OC's study and further consolidation around the 18 points Points 11 and 12 be taken up first and studied thoroughly, looking at our weaknesses in theory and practice around these points.

- 2) The new SC develop a detailed and thorough study plan for deepening our understanding of the centrality of the struggle against racism and that, further, the SC implement any special means necessary to analyse and give guidance to all facets of the struggle against racism within the OC.