

November 11, 1975

REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER No. 1

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I. MINUTES - STATEMENT ON PERSPECTIVES

Minutes: Internationalist Tendency Organizing Committee Meeting, Baltimore, October 25, 26, 1975

10/25 meeting convened 11:30 AM

Agenda proposed: 1. Membership; 2. Organization of conference (a. Registration report; b. election of conference SC); 3. Local reports; 4. Perspectives; 5. Tasks (a. organization of discussion; b. plans for conference; c. national campaigns and activities); 6. International report; 7. Organizational conclusions. Motion on agenda; unanimous

1. Membership; motion to recruit BMG, SU, RMC into the IT on the basis of general agreement with the documents of the Xth World Congress, BRPCA, and the IMT positions on Portugal. Unanimous.

2. a. Registration report: 7 delegates were present representing 48 members. A representative of the IMT was present. Comrades other than the delegates also participated. It was noted that the scope of the organization was probably somewhat larger than 48.

b. Election of conference SC: Motion to elect S., J, G, E, and G. Unanimous

3. Local reports: motion for a 10 minuted voluntary guideline. Unanimous. Reports were given from NY, DC, Balto, Buffalo, Chicago, Houston, LA.

4. Perspectives: Motion for 1 hour time limit. Unanimous. Discussion on "Where do we go from here," (NL #6). Motion to appoint committee of J, M, J, and E to draw up an outline of perspectives for adoption. Unanimous.

5. Tasks: motion for 2 hour limit. Unanimous.

a. Organization of pre-conference discussion: Motion to begin pre-conference discussion on US immediately after organizing committee meeting. Carried.

b. Plans for conference: Discussion. No motions were presented.

c. National Campaigns and activities: Motion to increase sales of Inprecor as a priority. Carried. Motion to refer to SC the implementation of sales campaign. Carried. Motion to grant NY permission to give contact phone numbers of IT to organizers of support demo in NY for Louisville. Unanimous.

Motion to conduct national campaign around Portugal, Spain, and Angola. Unanimous. Amendment to explore possibilities of national tour of Portuguese speaker, hopefully from the LCI. Unanimous. Amendment to sponsor tour in conjunction with RMG/GMR. Unanimous.

Motion that antiracist work is a priority in every locality. Unanimous.

Motion to designate a committee to discuss collaboration with Marxist Education Collective (NY). Unanimous.

Motion to reconvene at 10 AM Sunday. Unanimous. Session ends 9 PM.

10/26. Session begins at 10:40 AM

Motion to revive agenda for today as follows: 1. Perspectives proposal; 2. Finances; International report; Organizational conclusions. Carried.

1. Perspectives proposal (see attached) presented by J. Unanimous

2. Financial report. Unanimous.

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3. Proposal for communication to SWP regarding collective reintegration (see attached). Unanimous.
International report by IMT rep (approximately 2 hours, 15 mins)
Motion to allow 1 hour of discussion for Europe and 1 hour for internal situation in FI. Unanimous.

4. Organizational conclusions: Proposal by BMG for following agenda:
a. Name; b. Basis; c. Perspectives; d. Center; e. Coordinating committee;
Amendments to add the following; f. Structure; g. Press; h. Finances.

a. Name: After a series of motions, the name Revolutionary Marxist Organizing Committee was carried by a majority vote.

b. Basis: Motion that basis was established under point one on membership. Unanimous.

c. Perspectives: motion to refer to perspectives statement. Unanimous.

d. Center: Motion that LA continue to operate as center. Unanimous.

Motion to refer to SC the delegation of other responsibilities. Unanimous.

e. Coordinating committee: Motion to add San Francisco and Chicago to areas requiring representation and to delete Washington. Unanimous.

Motion to delegate areas to choose CC alternates. Unanimous. CC to be composed of 2 from LA, 1 from Balto, 1 from Houston, 1 from NY, 1 from Chicago, 1 from San Francisco. It is charged with: a. maintaining close contact about happenings concerning the grouping; b. carrying out the decisions of the conference.

f. Structure: motion to strongly urge groups and individuals to carry out decisions of organizing committee meeting. Carried.

g. Press: motion to establish a public press. Defeated. Motion to refer to CC the feasibility of a press. Carried.

h. Finances: Motion to make dues \$5/month plus \$3 to 'support interna-
tional activities. Carried.

Motion to send communication to IMT (see attached). Unanimous.

Meeting ajourned at 8:30 PM.

* Of the \$8. per month per member, \$5. will go toward national needs, and \$3. will be sent to international.

STATEMENT ON PERSPECTIVES

A group of supporters of the Fourth International, meeting in Baltimore on October 25, 26, adopted the following decisions on perspectives:

1. To build an ideological tendency based on general agreement with the documents of the Xth World Congress, BRPCA, and the IMT positions on Portugal, particularly "In Defense of the Portuguese Revolution."
2. To direct its major efforts in the initial stage toward propaganda activity:
 - a. to circulate the literature of the FI.
 - b. to hold forums, classes, etc. directed toward politicized elements.
 - c. to conduct solidarity and propaganda campaigns around the events in Portugal, Spain, and Angola.
3. To initiate a discussion on the development of the class struggle in the United States.
4. Within the framework of this orientation, to attempt to penetrate important sectors of the mass movement, paying special attention to anti-racist work.

II. LETTER TO IMT

10/28/75

Dear Comrades:

On October 25, 26, a group of 7 delegates representing 48 US supporters of the FI and the positions of the IMT met in Baltimore. A representative of the IMT was present. The meeting was convened by the Internationalist Tendency Organizing Committee. After recruiting the members of the Socialist Union (Los Angeles), the Baltimore Marxist Group, and the Revolutionary Marxist Collective (San Francisco), to the IT, the committee decided to reconstitute itself as the Revolutionary Marxist Organizing Committee (RMOC). The committee was constituted on the basis of general agreement with the documents of the 10th World Congress, the BRPCA of the IT, and the IMT positions on Portugal, especially "In Defense of the Portuguese Revolution."

We want to reaffirm our agreement with the IMT positions as expressed at the last World Congress. We think that the events since that date, especially those in Indochina, Argentina, and Portugal, have confirmed those positions. As far as our limited forces have allowed, we have been striving to inform the American left of them. Recently, our component groups have been particularly active around the Portuguese situation. We have initiated and participated in demonstrations and forums on Portugal. We have tried to counter the massive anti-communist propaganda campaign of the US press and media, to expose the role of US imperialism, and to stress the need for international solidarity against the right wing offensive. We have sought to make known the approach of the FI and the activities of the LCI through forums as well as by reproducing and distributing pertinent material. We have also done work around Angola and Spain.

Where we seem to disagree with the IMT is around the question of how to conduct the struggle to unite Trotskyist forces in the US. Well over a year has passed since the expulsion of the IT from the SWP, and the party so far has shown no signs of being in any hurry to reintegrate collectively the IT. Quite the contrary. In fact, the question of the IT was not even on the agenda of the recent SWP convention. On the other hand, the party has proposed a formula of individual, selective reintegration involving a probationary period of "collaboration." We are unwilling to accept this formula. Therefore,

we have reiterated to the SWP our continuing desire to realize a principled unification of Trotskyist forces in the US. (See enclosed)

We regard the April 5, 6 conference as an important defeat for the IT, since at that time the forces of the tendency were split in two. The ensuing period has been one of confusion and demoralization. We hope that this present conference will reverse that trend. We are anxious to carry on the most effective revolutionary activity possible, and for us that means building the FI (although we recognize that the Voorhiss Act prevents us from being members). We hope that the SWP will react favorably to our oft-repeated application for admission/readmission to the party on a collective, principled basis, but in the absence of such a positive reaction, we plan to proceed with independent political activity. We want to have the closest possible relations with the FI and the IMT. In this regard, we think access to International Internal Discussion Bulletins is especially important. We also request that we be allowed representation at IMT Bureau meetings, the IEC, and the 11th World Congress.

We would like to thank you for sending a comrade to our meeting; his participation was of great benefit to us. Finally, we request that you review the enclosed documents from the meeting.

Comradely, RMOC

III. LETTER TO SWP (National Hqrts. New York)

10/27/75

Dear Comrades:

On October 25, 26 representatives of the IT and of the BMG, SU and RMC met in Baltimore. On the basis of general agreement with the documents of the Tenth World Congress, the Building a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America of the IT, and the IMT positions on Portugal, particularly "In Defense of the Portuguese Revolution," the IT decided to recruit members of the SU, BMG, and RMC, and to adopt the name Revolutionary Marxist Organizing Committee, (RMOC).

It is the opinion of the RMOC that all trotskyist forces in the US sympathetic to the Fourth International should be in a single organization. We therefore request collective admission into the SWP.

If accepted, we would, of course, abide by party discipline. We would also exercise the full rights and responsibilities of an organized tendency or faction.

We are prepared to discuss these matters with you.

Comradely, The Revolutionary Marxist Organizing Committee

IV. LETTER FROM SAN FRANCISCO

Dear Comrades:

Due to unforeseen circumstances we are not able to send a delegate to this weekends conference. This should in no way be interpreted as a change of heart with regard to the project we are collectively engaged in. We wish the conference delegates the greatest success and look forward to receiving a report of its deliberations and decisions. In order to make at least a minimal contribution to the conferences work we are enclosing checks to pay for 2/3 of our assessment - as our third member is now in Iberia - hopefully he will represent us all at Senhor Franco's funeral - his assesment will have to remain as forthcoming. In addition to this financial support we have taken advantage of the proposed Agenda from the BMG - with which we are in substantial agreement - to at least make some minimal response to the conference. We hope this is of some use to the delegates.

1. Our "group" is composed of three members. We are the survivors of the struggle for the IMT in the Bay area. To our knowledge the comrades who either went with P. C. majority or failed to respond to the call for a regroupment outside the SWP are by and large cut off from political activity and perspective. Those of us that remain active are

involved in two kinds of work. First, we are responsible for publishing the pamphlet on Portugal that most of you have either seen or sold. While the initial rationale for putting out the pamphlet was exposure of the ideas of the FI on the revolutionary struggle, we also saw this as part of a much more long range project that we are becoming involved in. In the Bay Area there are substantial numbers of independent revolutionaries who have not been assimilated by any of the Maoist or Trot regroupments. Recognizing the dead end of individual or small scale collectivism they have begun to come together in something known as the process of forming a mass socialist organization. Though the use of the term mass is quite incorrect on their parts what the initiators of this process have in mind is the building of a multi tendency organization that is more or less centralized around its practice and certain basic principles of socialism. The final form this process will take will not be clear, but certain features of it are already discernable. Of the most important are the recognition that the principle form that the capitalist crisis is taking in the U.S. today involves a concerted many front assault on the social gains of the sixties - ranging from the struggle for black rights, the growth of public service unionism and militancy, the crisis of the state precipitated by the antiwar movement (Watergate, CIA, etc.). It is probable then that the principle activity of this grouping will be directed at developing a defense of those strata of society that are most immediately effected by those cuts. Our work during the next period will be to integrate ourselves into this organization and while becoming its militants begin to develop a tendency based on certain of the politics of revolutionary Marxism. We do not see this as a short term entryist perspective, the purpose of which is an arithmetical augmentation of our miniscule forces. Our opposition to forming an independent organization of the FI at this time does not derive fundamentally from our sense of our numerical weakness, but from our political weakness, some of which are objective and others of which relate to our formation as either internal stepchildren of the SWP or external orphans of a melange of forces that we confronted outside the Barnes womb.

Though we propose no shortcut to get out of our isolation from the rest of the US left we agree completely with the concept that what we must do in the period ahead is the stabilization of a national tendency that can integrate itself into some layer, strata, or political grouping in order to crystallize a revolutionary marxist tendency within it. We hope that the discussion that will be initiated at the Baltimore conference will concentrate on this central problem. Our own experience in the Bay Area suggests the following questions to be included in the discussion.

- a. What is the nature of the current crisis of capitalism (a generalized crisis or a temporary dislocation).
- b. How has the crisis manifested itself in the US. What strata have been most effected; what are the conflicting strategies of the different sectors of the bourgeoisie; what importance should be attached to the absence of resistance by the industrial working class; what is the nature and source of the militancy of public workers; what does the last years tell us about the strategy of the class struggle left and what other approaches are indicated for work in the trade unions.
- c. We should seek to compile as complete an account as possible as to the nature of the workers movement; national and racial minorities; students and the left.
- d. Because we believe that the coalescing of the independent left into multi tendency social democratic groups is not limited to NAM and the grouping in S.F., and may provide an organizational form for some of the better educated strata of public workers, we would suggest that part of the discussion focus on what are the potentialities for such a grouping developing on a national scale and how the FI could work within it to develop a revolutionary marxist tendency.

(By revolutionary marxist we do not mean a group consciously in solidarity with the FI, but a tendency that develops a political line that is consistent with the key orientations of the FI.)

2. On the question of Portugal and Spain, (we would add solidarity with the European revolution as a whole), we believe we have a special function to play in the immediate period. We suggest that a discussion be held at the conference on the specifics of new literature that our tendency would produce; The possibility of a small national tour; approaching IS and YAWF on a national scale to propose a joint solidarity campaign inclusive where possible of the CP and the groups of independent leftists. In addition, we should initiate a fund drive for the Iberian comrades of the FI. We believe that this kind of activity is not only an elementary duty of solidarity, but is also a means by which we can demonstrate the real meaning of the politics of the FI in the present period of revolutionary upsurge.

Comrades, we are sorry that we cannot be represented at this conference. We continue to look forward to marching down this often tortuous road that leads to the building of the US section of the FI and the North American workers revolution.

Forward to the Revolutionary International!

V. BALTIMORE CONFERENCE

The Baltimore conference was an unqualified success from every point of view; participation, accomplishments, and spirit. It achieved all that could have been expected of it, and more than some of us thought possible. An atmosphere of harmony and good will prevailed throughout, and the general mood at the conclusion was one of sober optimism.

The participation of a representative of the IMT contributed significantly to the success of the conference.

However, we are all aware that credit for this modest success belonged first of all to the Portuguese workers. It was the eruption of the Portuguese revolution that provided the spur and political basis for regroupment. It illuminated the depth of our differences with the SWP and the urgent need for a fighting Trotskyist tendency. It also generated renewed vitality among our cadres and increased interest in our ideas within the left.

The actual decisions of the conference are incorporated in the minutes which are attached.

The significance of the conference lies in the fact that the voice of the FI, the voice of authentic Trotskyism will once again be heard in the US.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the successful consolidation of a viable tendency has by no means been achieved. We have taken only the first tentative, preparatory step. It remains to be demonstrated that we have the necessary commitment, energy and political capacity.

Next Step:

1. All groups should promptly take the indicated elementary organizational steps:
 - a. register into the RMOC all who accept its political basis and perspective as established by the conference, and are prepared to meet minimum organizational and financial requirements.
 - b. select local coordinator, a national coordinating committee member (where applicable), a financial secretary, a literature director, and a corresponding secretary, who will communicate regularly with the center. Obviously, in some cases these functions will be combined.
 - c. plan participation in national political discussion. Contributions should be typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, preferably with plastic ribbon, 1 1/2" margins, single spaced and sent to: John Shaffer, 5104 Plum St., Houston, Texas 77017.
 - d. plan expansion of Inprecor sales. Every group - and even members at large - should get as large a bundle as it can handle. Sales should be planned at radical meetings, on campuses, through radical book stores, and to individual contacts. Advantage should be taken of the 3 month trial sub being offered.

e. plans should be made for at least one public forum on Portugal (possibly combined with Angola).

f. possibilities of initiating - or joining - a local Iberian Solidarity Committee should be considered. These should be developed on as broad a basis as possible.

g. within the limits of these priorities and available forces, consideration should be given to participation in anti-racist activities, union work, and/or other mass work.

Organization of Center:

The following national assignments were distributed:

1. Coordinator - Milt Z.
2. Financial secretary - Sue W.
3. Literature director - Ron W.

These comrades plus several others will constitute an administrative committee.

All information should be reported immediately to the center; list of registered members, (including occupation, union affiliation, etc.), distribution of functions, and minutes or summary of reports, decisions and plans.

Each group is responsible for remitting to center each month \$8. times the number of registered members, beginning 11/1/75. Checks should be made out to RMOC. All communications should be addressed to RMOC, c/o S. U., P.O. Box 27783, Los Angeles, Calif. 90027.

Newsletters will hereafter be sent in bundles to one address per area. Please notify us as to quantity required and to whom they should be addressed. During the internal re-groupment period, Newsletters and Bulletins should be made available to all IMT supporters, (whether members of RMOC or not).

On "Reintegration Work":

A discussion on this question was held by the New York comrades. They concluded that although individual applications to the SWP would not be withdrawn, it was understood that no comrade would consider individual reintegration, nor engage in individual "collaboration". Any activity engaged in with the SWP would be discussed and acted upon collectively. We consider this policy to be a correct application of the decisions of the conference and should be followed in all localities. It should be remembered that all members of RMOC are included in a collective application being sent to the SWP.

VI. LITERATURE:

All areas who are receiving bundles of Inprecor are (1) receiving them directly from Brussels, (2) being billed from Chicago, and (3) remitting payments to Chicago.

The RMOC has requested that bundles continue to be sent to local areas, however, that all billing be transferred from Chicago to Los Angeles. All new orders of Inprecor, and/or increases in bundle size, should be made directly to Brussels. Copies of these orders must be sent to L. A. If this procedure is adopted, all payments will be made directly to L. A. upon receipt of billing. Comrades will be notified when this will take effect. Meanwhile, all areas should designate a literature director who should contact the national literature director immediately with the following information: (1) name and address of literature director, (2) name and address where bundle is to be sent, and (3) size of bundle.

The above information should be sent to: Ron Warren (nat'l. literature director)
13107 Margate St., Van Nuys, CA 91401.