

April 11, 1977

Dear Comrades,

The Socialist Union of Baltimore (SUB) and the Potomac Socialist Organization (PSO) invite you to a two-day conference, June 11-12, in Baltimore on the concrete tasks of party-building. We think the principal problem facing the Communist party-building movement today is the separation of Communism and the workers' movement (that is, the principal contradiction in the party-building movement is the Communist movement vs. the workers' movement.) Therefore, the primary strategy for Communists today in building for a party is to begin fusing these two movements.

The purpose of this conference is to share theory and practice as to how to achieve this fusion of Communism and the workers' movement. (Whether or not organizations see this fusion as the primary task or strategy will not be debated at this conference, since it was discussed at a previous party-building forum. The emphasis of this conference will be on exchanging strategy, tactics, and concrete lessons learned. Enclosed is an agenda for the conference. This agenda covers what we consider the primary tasks to achieve this fusion: 1) recruiting advanced workers to Communism; 2) building a Communist current in the working class; and 3) developing a revolutionary theory for the US working class from applying Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the US. (#3 is included in a section on organization development, where there are also many lessons to be shared.

Though SUB and PSO are putting on this conference, five independent M-L organizations -- PWOC, El Comite, DMLO, and ourselves are sponsoring a series of these conference and forums. As you know, these 5 organizations agree that dogmatism is the main danger in the party-building movement and the US is the main enemy of the people's of the world, as well as the other 16 principles of unity we sent out to various independent M-L organizations. Some of you have participated in other conferences that these 5 organizations have had--on the trade union struggle, the struggle against racism, the party-building questions, and the international question. The purpose of these conferences has been to develop political unity among us and other independent M-Lists where possible, clarify disagreements, and share lessons from our experiences. We have invited you because we think you could both benefit from and contribute to this discussion of how to concretely build for a party by fusing Communism and the workers' movement.

However, in this conference we want to try to correct some of the errors we've made in previous conferences. At times comrades, especially from invited organizations, have raised questions, comments that were tangential to the main topic or focus of the conference. We want all comrades, including ourselves, to make a concerted effort to focus our questions and comments after the presentations and in workshops to the subject of fusion of Communism and the workers' movement, particularly the 3 tasks we've outline within that - recruiting advanced workers, building a Communist current, organizational development. We realize this means not all questions comrades have around party-building and other subjects will be answered by the presentations or workshops. People should make use of breaktimes, lunchtimes, evenings to discuss other questions, and make contact with organizations for future communications around various subjects. If people do bring up peripheral questions, the moderator of the conference, of chair of the workshops will defer your questions.

At some of the conferences and forums there has been a problem in focusing whole group discussions after presentations. To help improve this, we are going to have people write down their questions during the break after presentations, give to the moderator. The moderator, in conjunction with representatives from other 4 organizations will choose the key questions that best focus the discussion. After they're discussed, there will be open discussion on additional questions.

Another weakness of some previous conferences is that organizations, particularly the 5 of us, have not come well enough prepared for participation in workshops. To help improve this, we are writing up specific questions for each workshop discussion. We want all organizations, especially the 5 of us, to prepare answers to these, and have an organizational representative be prepared to give a verbal presentation on them in the workshop. (We realize some organizations coming will not have enough people to send to all workshops; nor from their experience will they be able to answer, prepare on all questions. Therefore, people should prepare what they can for which workshops they could send someone to.) We will send these questions out shortly, no later than 6 weeks prior to June 11th, i.e. April 30th.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you'll be able to come to the conference, and about how many people will be coming. The deadline for letting us know approximately how many from your organizations will be coming, including kids ^{and their ag's} (childcare will be provided) is May 1st. We are asking that each organization bring no more than 5 comrades to the conference due to logistical problems of housing everyone. The deadline for letting us know exactly how many are coming and when is two weeks before the conference - May 28th. People are welcome to come Friday night, just let us know beforehand. Organizations should send the names of who is coming - people won't be admitted unless we have their names ahead of time. Each organization is asked

to pay a small fee, ^{about} \$10, for each member participating in conference to help cover expenses.

Organizations should be encouraged to send out written materials about party-building tasks to other organizations beforehand. For example, comrades from Los Angeles have written paper on the use of propaganda at the workplace that could be circulated beforehand. Organizations that want to do this should let us know and we'll send them addresses of organizations to be sent to.

Hope to see you June 11-12th.

Toni Vlasits for SUB

Toni Vlasits

Paul Pinsky for PSO

Paul Pinsky

Please send all correspondence to:

Toni Vlasits

c/o Rudy Vlasits

1515 Pentridge Rd.

Balto. Md. 21219, 301-435-8621

P.S. Please save this letter and reread carefully in preparation for the conference. We'll send maps or directions along with other last minute details in a later mailing.

AGENDA for Conference on
Concrete Tasks of Party-building

June 11-12th - Baltimore

Registration: 9:00 am.

Saturday morning: Recruiting advanced workers to Communism:

9:30-10:30 am -- Presentations by PWOC and El Comite on their overall strategy or approach of recruiting advanced workers to Communism. This should include the following: how the organization sees this as a key aspect of party-building, fusing Communism and workers' movement; a definition of advanced worker; and how propaganda and the class struggle are used by the organization in recruiting advanced workers to Marxism-Leninism.

10:30-11:00: Coffeebreak

11:00-11:45: Discussion by the whole group. Should be restricted to questions of clarification, brief presentations by other organizations as to their overall strategy if different; and some discussion around points of unity and disunity on the strategy of recruiting advanced workers.

11:45-1:30: Workshops on particular aspects and tactics of recruiting advanced workers to Communism.

1. Who is an advanced worker and how do we use the class struggle in recruiting advanced workers.
2. How to use propaganda in developing advanced workers.
3. Study circles and candidate programs.
4. How do we recruit workers so that we develop a multi-national organization.

1:30-3:00: Lunch and informal discussion

Saturday afternoon: Organizational development

3:00-4:00 - Presentations by SUB and El Comite on the process of how their organization has developed, covering most of the subjects of the workshops. The emphasis should be on lessons learned in different areas of organizational development

4:00-4:15 - Coffeebreak

4:15-6:15 - Workshops on different aspects of organizational development

1. Developing and using cadre (including their theoretical and practical development, their proletarianization, their leadership.)
2. Developing revolutionary theory for the US working class--by applying M-L to concrete US conditions (how each organization does this.)
3. Organizational structure: that prepares for participation in a Communist party. This included questions around democratic-centralism, cell structure, leadership--how to develop these forms; and how committees and factions function and relate to the whole organization.
4. Recruitment and organizational mobilization and integration of tasks. (This includes recruiting movement people, mobilizing whole organization around specific task like a conference, and how you integrate different areas of organization work, like trade union work with mass work outside the point of production.)

6:15-7:30 - Dinner

7:30 on - Party and informal discussion.

Sunday morning: Building Communist current in the working class:
(Where a significant number of workers are open to the viewpoint of Communists on a number of different issues--where they both respect and are willing to follow the leadership of Communists.)

9:15-10:15 - Presentations by SUB and PSO on overall approach to this--what building a Communist current means, why it is an important aspect of fusing Communism and workers' movement, and how you go about it.

10:15-10:30 - Coffeebreak

10:30-12:30 - Discussion groups to deal in more depth with how to build a Communist current. Most of the questions cannot be discussed in isolation (like how to maintain independence and initiative within united front work; when and how to become open Communists) so that separate workshops aren't appropriate. But we will break down into smaller groups to facilitate discussion. These will be 2 discussion groups on building Communist current in trade unions, 2 on building this current in mass work outside the point of production. The discussion will cover both theoretical questions and tactical considerations.

12:30- Closing remarks

12:45 - Lunch for those who want to stay.