

COG response to criticisms raised at OC national conference

1. It would appear that some COG members perceptions of the dangers present in the neighborhood around the meeting site were exaggerated by an essentially racist response to the presence of numbers of national minority people on the street. In some cases these exaggerated fears were passed on in the content and frequency of warnings.
2. COG members in general did not take into consideration the potential effects of these warnings in reinforcing racist fears and ideas in comrades attending the conference nor did we consider how these warnings would appear to national minority delegates. There was never any group discussion within COG about these potential effects.
3. COG members in general and COG as an organization generally failed to look at potential difficulties from the viewpoint of national minority delegates. For example we did not in general consider the problem black comrades might face in predominantly white neighborhoods nor the problems of Latino comrades from immigration authorities.

4. We disagree that any warnings or mention of problems for visiting comrades are inherently racist and to be avoided. Several COG members are aware of incidents in which out of town visitors attending left meetings got into serious trouble because of ignorance of local conditions. These incidents included problems for national minority visitors. That most delegates to the conference recognized that dangers did exist was obvious from the many who said "you don't have to warn us, we know about these dangers."

The question of danger in the area under discussion stems from the social-economic situation of marginalization which is one source of crime in the U.S. today. Crime is a reality in the United States. Its causes are complex. Undoubtedly bourgeois ideology sensationalizes it for its own purposes of domination. But a Marxist-Leninist organization which wants to develop a program based upon concrete, objective socio-economic conditions in the United States must come to grips analytically and programatically with marginalization and crime.

However, the dangers of racist errors in this area is also real. Therefore we feel that in all cases of such warnings or cautions we must be certain that:

- a. our assesments of the problems are accurate and not influenced by racist perceptions
- b. we be careful not to exaggerate any problems
- c. we look at all potential problems from the viewpoints of all comrades, national minorities as well as whites
- d. consideration must be given in the wording of all warnings, written or verbal, to counteracting any possibility that the communication will build or reinforce bourgeois ideology regardless of the intent of the warning.

5. We are very critical of the initial response of COG to the criticism. This is especially true of two of the COG delegates. Their defensiveness and subjectivism in the conference meeting made any balanced discussion of the criticism difficult. Other COG members did know of the criticism and yet no one that knew attempted to get COG to deal with it seriously.

We do not feel that the interruptions of Comrade Malachi by COG delegates were instances of racism. They were clearly incorrect, defensive, subjective and individualistic and showed a lack of respect for Comrade Malachi, but we feel that these delegates would have responded as they did regardless of who was speaking.



We recognize that Comrade Malachi could perceive these interruptions to be racist since he was the only delegate during the whole conference to be interrupted, and at that twice. However, the statement that Malachi alluded to was one in which a member of COG had attempted to make the point that if the conference had been held in another neighborhood (at a YMCA on the north side of downtown--a transient neighborhood primarily in a white area) security precautions would still have been necessary. Comrade Malachi characterized that statement as: similar precautions would not have been necessary.

6. We feel that both COG and the OCIC generally should share the serious criticism of not giving proper consideration to the relationship between the conference and participants on the one hand and the staff and guests at the hotel on the other. Having a communist conference in their midst should have been a positive experience for guests and staff alike. It is unlikely that such was the result.