

SECOND NATIONAL OCIC CONFERENCE

September 1 - 3, 1979

Conference Transcripts and Resolutions

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OC's First Year

(Tape begins in the middle of CN's presentation on the OC's First Year)

As things develop one of the weaknesses that has been pointed out in relationship to the Steering Committee and its work in the last year is that it has not provided a systematic enough overview of developments in the party building movement, developments in the OCIC, and developments in the communist movement in general. Part of providing a systematic overview is taking account of these tactical shifts (of the NNMLC), of new developments of new forces emerging, and certainly, we hope on the Steering Committee to do a much better job of presenting our views and organizing systematic discussion in the tendency around those views.

I think in particular, also, in relation to the NNMLC and our struggle with them. Comrades are familiar I am sure that that struggle has been very sharp. I want to urge us to be cautious in relationship to that struggle in regard to two points:

1. I would like to urge that we be very careful that we continue to conduct ourselves in a thoroughly principled fashion to the best of our ability in this struggle. That we continue to be open and above board, that we continue to express our point of view in public, that we avoid any intrigues or any manipulation or any devious behind the scenes maneuvering. It does not serve the interest of the party building movement for this kind of activity to go on. I don't think that the OC has fallen into this kind of activity but in the context of sharp struggle in the party building movement the pressure is there to resort to these kinds of tactics. We must guard against them. They don't serve to clarify issues. They don't serve to clarify the goals and aims of the movement and the OC's position. And we must be very careful that we do not fall into any sectarianism or any kind of maneuvering, any kind of opportunist tactics in this struggle. Certainly we must present our views. We must struggle for them sharply, but we must do so to the best of our ability in a thoroughly principled manner.
2. I also think that we have to guard against allowing ourselves to be diverted from our essential tasks by this struggle. It is an important struggle. It has an important political point. The point definitely needs to be made that we must break with the narrow circle mentality. That the narrow circle mentality only benefits ultra-leftism in our tendency. That point must be made sharply. We must put it before the movement. But by no means is that the sole task of ourselves as an OC, of the SC, and the forces in our organization. We cannot allow ourselves to be diverted from the more important tasks on our agenda - providing leadership around developing a Draft Plan, the summation of ultra-leftism, and many of the other things that have been outlined in the OC's First Year.

The struggle must certainly be taken up, but it must be taken up in a balanced perspective. We can't reduce the total program of the OC to a struggle against the National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs. And I urge people not to fall into that error. On the other hand, I also urge, particularly in areas where there is no NNMLC presence, people to seriously investigate and study this struggle, because the political points are not just in relationship to the NNMLC; they have profound impact on the whole future of the tendency. If this line is not broken with, the splittism

not put behind us, there is no question, but that we will not succeed in developing a viable revolutionary party in this country. So that we must guard against the over-reaction particularly in those areas where there is a direct confrontation with the NNMLC forces, and, on the other hand, in those areas where there is no NNMLC presence, we must not underestimate the political lessons of this struggle. It's not just a struggle with the NNMLC; it's a struggle for a correct political perspective on how to build unity, how to unite the tendency, how to advance it, and what it is that is in the best interest of the tendency as a whole, as opposed to one narrow group within the tendency.

My final point that I would like to make is, I would like to respond briefly to some of the criticisms that have been raised in the use of the term, "soft-spots" by the Steering Committee.

This term seems to have attracted a great deal of criticism and we would like to make clear that by no means is the use of the term which was a heading of a certain section of the report an attempt to in any way underestimate and downplay our weaknesses as a Steering Committee. We think that the general practice of the SC shows that the SC has been able to confront its weaknesses and be self-critical where it has made errors, and it has made many.

But the term "soft spots", we maintain, is a generally correct characterization of our weaknesses. And the reason that we say that is that we think those weaknesses have to be seen as weaknesses in the context of a fundamentally and generally correct leadership. We are not saying that there have not been significant weaknesses in that leadership. We are not saying that there are not many things that we have to do to develop more strength on the SC. There are many things that we could have done that we should have done and did not do because of weaknesses on the SC. But what we are saying by the characterization, "soft spots", we think gives the sense that these are weaknesses within the context of a basically positive, leading role by the SC and we will defend that position before you. If you disagree with that, put your criticisms on the table, and let's struggle this out and reach an objective assessment. But the term, "soft spots", I emphasize, is in no way an attempt on our part to mitigate or undermine or in any way not draw out the real and important criticisms that many forces have raised of the Steering Committee.

Finally, I just want to draw attention, because it was not sent out in advance, and I think this is an error on the part of the Steering Committee, but in any case it was not done, this resolution on a national OCIC Discussion Bulletin. Now this has been raised by a number of forces. We are presenting it to you, and we would like to see it incorporated into the summation of the OC's First Year. We strongly support it and we hope that discussion that develops in this period of the agenda will not slight the importance of developing such a bulletin which could really serve to centralize ideological struggle, not only within the OC but also to draw on contributions from without the OC.

Saying those words, those are the main points I wanted to make. I hope we can turn to this discussion and engage in principled and comradely exchange, open and candid debate, and collectively reach a summation and consolidate that summation of the OC's First Year.

Chair: In front of us are two resolutions - the OC's First Year and the OCIC Discussion Bulletin.

Discussion on OC's First Year:

Paul, PSO I am unsure of why we are adopting this (resolution) and not the sum up itself other than the fact it is longer. And there is a question of understanding why the errors were made. The smaller document does not include an analysis of why errors were made, so I'm unclear.

CN, SC: The question is in two parts: one, why we were adopting a resolution on the OC's First Year and not the sum up as a whole, and the second question was why the resolution did not incorporate a full analysis of the factors underlying errors. The answer to the first question was that we felt that it would better focus discussion for the body to try to hone the report down into the most concentrated expression of the content. Now these formulations made in here carry an explanation, and more development in many cases, in the OC's First Year document. We did not feel that it would be correct to allow the discussion to focus on particular characterizations or particular formulations or particular elaboration of certain points because there's room for disagreement on those points, but rather we wanted to identify the most important points for unity on the part of the OC. We think that the content of the resolution, while it doesn't identify in as explicit a form as it might, the roots of these errors, and certainly people are free to amend the document if they think there is an important thing that has been missed in OC's First Year in any way in the resolution, but that the document basically speaks to our assessment and the identification of the errors that have been made and why they were made to the best of our ability. We hope that this process will deepen in the course of the discussion. When it comes to publishing this document, this resolution, what we will do is publish the original political report as the Steering Committee's report and the resolution so that we clearly express the unity of this body and its main points of view, and so people can clearly identify what is the basis of unity of the OC that was hammered out at the conference. Now obviously there will be majority and minority points of view. And they can exist on some of these formulations and on some of these points. We are not establishing democratic-centralism that you have to unite with certain perspectives. But I do think we are trying to say what is the majority viewpoint, what are its most essential aspects to set before the movement.

Bob, Cincinnati: I appreciate Clay's remarks and in encouraging criticism/self-criticism within the OC and a thorough and out front criticism of the weaknesses in the OC's summation of the First Year. It is within that context that I would like to put forward a couple of criticisms. First of all I think our organization feels that

the dominant error is in terms of liberalism in general in terms of its evaluation of errors. The term "soft spot", I don't want to quibble over that necessarily, it's just a sub-heading, but if the errors were made more clear and more explicit and the importance of those errors were drawn out to a greater degree, the term "soft-spots" itself would not have had such significance. The real key is the error in the rest of the document in terms of liberalism.

In particular, an error of liberalism is an error around the centrality of the struggle against racism. This is key within the OC and the document doesn't draw out and focus on. I think what we have to ask ourselves is what is the centrality of the struggle against racism, what does that mean, and how do we understand it. I think that in general we have had a narrow and rather superficial understanding of that struggle in the OC as a whole. It's been superficial and narrow, narrow to the extent that we haven't drawn out problems in this area in every situation where we could have. And one glaring example, I think, was the struggle around Point 18. There was an exceptionally chauvinist error within that argument. That wasn't drawn out adequately. And even in the summation of the Point 18 struggle, that error should have been drawn out it seems to me. It seems to me that the struggle against racism, the centrality of that struggle means that we have to take every single opportunity, we have to observe and analyse every phenomena in terms of its implications for the struggle against racism and that's one area where it was sorely lacking.

Not only that, but in the OC in general we tend to see the struggle against racism simply in terms of the struggle against racism in the OC and we tend draw out theoretical implications of our weaknesses. For example, the national question. I think there is a danger in liquidating the national question, liquidating a modern, non-dogmatist appraisal of the question of national minorities in this country today. I think we need to focus in on that.

The document was superficial, I think, also in terms of the struggle against racism in its analysis (30 second warning)...the struggle around the election of delegates, for example, at the founding conference. It is good that the SC drew out those weaknesses. But, as the SC has already observed, it wasn't drawn out enough. That needs to be deepened. Everyone in the OC needs to understand what the problem there was.

The relationship to the National Minorities Conference. I expect more criticism to come out of the SC around that. That should definitely be done.

The shallowness in seeing the Local Centers, I think, so far as a means for increasing the multi-nationality.

I would like to make a couple of friendly resolutions, friendly amendments, at this point.

(Chair asks for more general discussion. Specific amendments to be taken up later on the agenda point.)

what

BOC (?)

I agree with the thrust of/the two comrades before us have said. It is part of the SC's stated perspective that as far as the struggle against racism within the OC goes, the primary thing is consolidating our own understanding of that and the struggle to put it into practice. The secondary factor is outreach to national minority Marxist-Leninists. But, in fact, the only real concrete step in the struggle against racism of any major importance is in terms of support given to the National Minorities Conference which means to actually invert the priorities that the SC sets for itself. So I feel that drawing these criticisms and self criticisms out in a sharper way and highlighting more from that point of view is appropriate.

Sharon,
PSO

I would like to support also the remarks of the comrade from Cincinnati and would urge people to read the paper that they submitted, if you haven't already. I would like to add, rhetorically, partially rhetorically, what does it mean to strengthen the leadership of the SC? What does strengthen mean? You mean strengthen politically? You mean strengthen by putting the most advanced comrades on the SC? Do you mean strengthen geographically? Do you mean strengthen according to minority representation, or sexual representation? What do you mean by that? I think we have to look at how we are going to put political struggle in command of the OC and I would suggest that by strengthen what we want to mean is strengthen politically the SC, so that the weaknesses that we are pinpointing can be overcome. We have never been told whether or not in any instance whether there was two line struggle in the SC on any point. Now there may not have emerged a two-line struggle given the low level of development of political struggle in the OC. We basically struggled alot around organizational questions and I guess that's natural and can be expected in a young formation such as ours but I would suggest that there better be in future two-line struggle to emerge in the SC and that those ought to be clarified and the ramifications of them within the whole OC and that should be one of the major tasks of the SC itself.

CN, SC:

I just want to respond to that very briefly. In so far as this document is concerned we think that the OC's SC leadership needs to be strengthened in all of the areas that you mentioned. I don't want to pre-judge discussion that is going to come up under the SC evaluation where I think the SC put out very clearly its perspective on how to balance the various factors. If you disagree with that you have a right to raise that, but I think it is premature to go into what do we mean by strengthen the SC when we have the opportunity in the SC's self-evaluation discussion and election process to be very clear and define more based on the documents already presented to the body by the SC and a fuller elaboration of the SC's criticisms and self-criticisms.

DW of
SCALC:

Suggests that people identify themselves before speaking.

COG:

Some confusion. One of the points in the resolution talks about

consolidating and deepening the OCIC's unity around the 18 Points. It seems to me to be kind of vague and I think it has to be brought out. In examining the summation of the OC's First Year and the Draft Plan for an Ideological Center, the DP calls on one of the two main national theoretical questions to be discussed and summed up nationally as the party building question. In the OC's First Year document the party building question is not mentioned, at all. So, it is not clear to me what or where the SC puts that in its priority list of topics to be discussed nationally. I'm just not clear on what is being proposed.

PF, SC: What the SC is saying is that in the period between now and the establishment of the IC, we will be taking up the question of ultra-leftism in a real thorough way. Once the IC is established, the national center is established, then one of the key items we will be addressing ourselves to is the question of party building strategy.

CN, SC: Basically, the difference between the Draft Plan and the OC's First Year summation and the plan it lays out is one its scope and length. The Draft Plan is an attempt to set before the movement a general perspective on our tasks, much longer term than a year from now. The SC's OC's First Year summation is an attempt to present what we would like to see accomplished within the next year. Now the reason for the shift in priorities, or what would seem to be priorities, between party building line as a secondary task, in general, and the struggle against racism within the OC as a secondary task in the next year, and come to theoretical consolidation, is that we did not envisage in the next year in the OC taking up the full question of line on the various national questions and the struggle against racism. What we did feel that was fundamentally important was that it was necessary to take a very sharp approach to the struggle against racism within the OC to create the conditions whereby multi-national composition can develop. That is was very important to consolidate everyone's basic understanding of what racism is in our society, its centrality, and its relationship to the history of the struggles of national minority peoples in this country, in the next year. We could have just subsumed this within the 18 Points because there is a strong point around racism, but we felt that would not be correct because we felt that the question had been of particular importance, both in terms of weaknesses on the part of the SC's work and in terms of weaknesses of the OC. It needs to be targeted as a particular question that should be taken up independently of the consolidation of the unity, the basic unity in order to take up these deeper questions. And that's what the struggle against racism, and our approach to it is meant to do. It is not meant to define and develop a political line, fully elaborated political line on the struggle against racism. The party building line discussion is very definitely meant to elaborate and develop a full party building line.

Mark, FTP:

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What I wanted to speak to was some of the weaknesses we see in the OC's First Year. In particular, we agreed with the SC's assessment that the main weakness was lack of internal consolidation of the OC. What we thought... (unclear) What were the particular areas where there was not internal consolidation, like around the struggle against racism, around the 18 Points, etc. These are all priorities, but what we wanted to stress was what we felt there was a lack of attention to making whatever materials came out understandable and in a way which could consolidate the entire OC. There are a couple of aspects to this problem. One is the aspect of whether all of the organizations in the OC are actually taking up these questions on the part of their entire organization. And that hasn't actually been addressed in the sum up. As we understand it there are a number of organizations who have not taken up these questions thoroughly throughout their organizations, but mainly at the leadership level. We ourselves have been struggling over the past year to bring these questions to the entire organization. And this leads us to the second problem which is whether the kind of materials which has come out of the SC have been the kind of materials that the vast majority of cadre in the OC can readily understand. And we felt that the papers that have been circulated prior to the conference have been weak in that area. Politically we felt that they were very good and pushed forward struggle but in terms of being able to understand them, there are many good concepts presented around the leading ideological center, around a number of other questions without really adequate explanation. The style of writing made it very difficult for people to understand. As a result was two things. First, we think there should be more attention paid to the way these kinds of documents are written and we have elaborated some of our ideas in writing to be circulated. We think that it is not a question of scientific terminology but it is question of using large words, big words, complicated sentence structures that have nothing to do with scientific terminology which are understandable to people with a college education but does not describe the bulk of the rank and file in the movement. If we are really talking about creating a movement wide process, we have to put some attention into this. Secondly, it is a question of the study plans. Right now it has been left up to, for instance, the documents that have been sent out, like the Draft Plan, here's the Draft Plan which presents a number of very new ideas with no study plan to go along with it. And it has been left up to local organizations or Local Centers, and as we understand it, a number of people have tried to do that on the local level, but there has been no national consolidation on that and as a result whatever efforts that have been made have been on a local level, right? And there is no (3 minutes are up). There's been no attempt to put out what kind of study plans or explanatory materials or background readings, prioritized readings, not a listing like we did for the February conference, a list of several books on party building. We think it would be useful, and they are all good selections but the question is to prioritize, and not leave it up to local organizations to do it, and many of whom wont. So we think there really should be some discussion about that and felt that the resolution around the OC Bulletin in terms of point A trying to get at more ways in which...but we think there must

be a more thorough going approach and more thorough going discussion about this weakness and we are going to present a resolution later on that will request that there be somebody in charge on the SC of national study programs to develop around every major OC issue and that attention should be paid to the ways in which these documents are written and explanatory materials to be developed. And finally, that there be a national coordination effort and not left up to local organizations where it's unclear whether it will actually happen.

TV, SC:

I want to respond to a few of the criticisms Mark made. I think the first one is really accurate in the sense that OC forces really didn't involve all of their memberships in the discussions of all OC struggles and that is a criticism. The sum up of the first year doesn't go into some of the criticisms of the base like we did sum up in the SC minutes, where there wasn't enough initiative as a whole from the base, but that is partially a criticism of the base. I think that your suggestion in terms of one way to really facilitate concretely dealing with the lack of consolidation by having alot more attention paid to what goes out to the OC in terms of preparation. We would agree with that and probably that it would be good to assign someone to really develop that in terms of educating. I think there are some questions about the style criticisms you made in that it doesn't really get at the essence of what the problem is. I think it really relates more to the education criticism that you are raising. I think the main problem and the way the writing could be done simpler, I think that the key thing is that we need to work more on, as Dennis used the expression, being didactic. To really explain the content and draw out so that everyone understands it. I think the problem is not so much the style thing of the words, but it's that we might have at times assumed too high a level of understanding and that what we have to do more is really teaching the concepts and making sure that those are understood.

Chair:

Focuses discussion on the political points made in the resolution. Questions of implementation should follow.

Phil, DMLO:

I think the chair's suggestion is good. For myself, I think the characterization of the anti-revisionist movement is correct. But I have real problems with the characterization of the tendency. Particularly, I don't think the characterization of the Club Network is accurate. I think that the characterization of the Club Network and its leadership as being the headquarters of an attempt in our tendency to split that tendency is incorrect and really does not go into deeply enough the questions that are involved in this and it is much deeper, I think, than just looking out for their own careers. Secondly, and related to that I think there is a problem on the same page when we talk about contributions that the OC has made to the movement, one of the things that is mentioned is support for the National Minority Conference and it seems to me that...there needs to be a complete sum up of the political problems of not only the process of that meeting but also what came out of it. As we can all see from the documents that have flown back and forth within the tendency there is lots of disagreement about that. And I think we need to be clear on how we see that and need to go through a process of discussion so that we can unite around the characterization of it.

Chair: Defers question of the National Minority M-L Conference to the conference agenda point which speaks more specifically to it.

Mickey, MSU: I would like to respond briefly to some of the comments Phil made about the Clubs. And I'm glad you made them because I think that, although I have unity with the statement in the resolution, it is a pretty sharp criticism of the whole line of the Clubs and I was surprised that nothing was coming out in discussion on this. What I want to address my remarks to is my agreement with the thrust of the resolution. I think that the debate between the OC and the Clubs is still in its developmental stages. And I think that just as in the Point 18 process, as we proceed we see more the essence of the different lines. I think that it is evident to everyone that there are real differences between the party building lines that are developing the OC, within our whole tendency. And I don't think that the statement on the Clubs in the resolution in any sense is trying to ... by saying it is just a problem of sectarianism or it is just a problem of splittism. I think that the question is how do we arrive at unity and how do we build and develop political line within our tendency - what types of processes or organizational forms should we adopt to carry that struggle out. And I think that when we read the proposals for joint work that the Clubs have put forward to the OC, I think a little more of the essence will come out. The reason why I say this is the Clubs, as I understand it, is now stressing the fact that unity is primary, that differences are secondary between themselves and the OC, they are stressing the need for joint work, the summation of practice, joint work in ideological struggle, joint work on theoretical work, they want to have conferences such as Point 18 on the question of party building line, they want to organize exchange of papers - all of the things the OC would do, yet they don't want to join the OC. What they are saying is we don't want to be members of the OC, but want to set up a special relationship with the OC. I think it's outrageous, actually. I think that if the MSU put something like that forward, people would laugh. I think that kind of thing gets at the essence.

Marty,
Detroit: I have political agreement with the resolution, particularly on the characterization of the Clubs. It is accurate from all that I have seen so far, and if there is a change in their position, I would like to see that and I would like to see some self-criticism on their part. As it is right now I support this resolution.

Minn: I assume that part of the agenda, the first point refers to building an ideological center and if that's true then point number two dictates the first question you raise in an ideological center. That's my assumption. If that's true, then, I am opposed to point two being included in this resolution; it should be debated around the Draft Plan. And if we are going to include it here, I think that it is important that we discuss this intensely because there was a tremendous amount of disagreement in Minneapolis around what the first question of the ideological center should be.

- CN, SC: Point of clarification. It is not the intent of the SC to hold the process around consolidating an all-sided summation of ultra-leftism until after the ideological center has been forged. What we are saying is that the process and development of the all-sided summation and consolidation is part of laying the foundation for a genuine national center to emerge. We are saying that that is a prerequisite to the process.
- Tom, Boston: I would like to strongly support what the comrade from Milwaukee said about the Clubs. I think it is symptomatic of that that only now, yesterday morning, did the Clubs give any kind of communication, formal communication to the SC, for joint work. Yet their founding conference was five months ago. At the founding conference, in the documents published immediately after that, they made a big defense of their not joining the OC, which was basically their elaboration of the two, three many centers. But now that their line is not going over in the movement, and alot of independents who aren't even in the OC are saying 'where do you get off with this?' Now they are starting to try to tone it down and moderate it, but I think we will see in examining their specific proposals that what they are trying to do is to propose forms for joint work so they can appear to be seeking unity and still carry out their aim to split the tendency around fusion/unity or fusion/rectification.
- Phil, DMLO: (tape changes over and picks up after speaker begins)...objectively sectarian. That's not the kind of characterization we should be making and it seems to me that we do a disservice to our own struggle and also to those comrades to begin our polemics with them, I mean begin, because our chairman gave a speech really close on the heels of their founding convention which began the struggle characterizing them as opportunists and sectarians and all this. That seems to me to be a problem, and a real problem, so I guess that's as specific as I can get. I don't agree with their position, I think their strategy has a real problem with it, I just don't agree with how we are going about waging the struggle.
- CN, SC: I just want to correct a point of fact. I really strongly disagree that the struggle with the Clubs began in April of this year. If anyone who knows the history knows that the struggle with these same people goes way back to 1975. It is a struggle with considerable history and development and we would not have begun the struggle with the characterization that essentially, insofar as the Clubs are concerned, that this is a struggle for their organizational hegemony over the tendency. This is something that has been demonstrated by a long history of practice which we had the opportunity to arrive at. I would be glad to go through step by step the different polemics and critiques and how that process emerged. But I really object to saying that it began this year. Any real study of the tendency will show that this is not the case. Also, I think it is important not to allow that characterization to emerge because the NNMLC is trying to put across that somehow it is a new formation without political continuity, ideologically, ^{and} in terms of its role in the tendency. And that is definitely contrary to fact. The same line has been pursued right from the beginning. There has been a different change in personnel

leadership but fundamentally no change in line, whatsoever.

Laura, NSSO: Along the same lines as Phil I guess I have more questions. I don't really have a lot of interaction with the Clubs but it seems that what confuses me is trying to understand what level of unity we need around party building line to be part of the same kind of formation. In my opinion reading these documents the Club Network is putting forth another party building line saying we don't share the same strategy and I hear people saying, well there's something more behind it that they are not dealing with, organizational hegemony among other things. But what I am trying to say, and I think Phil is trying to bring out, let's get to the political differences on party building and really bring them out. I'm not clear what kind of tolerance this group is going to have in the future around different party building lines. I don't yet know that but I do agree with the essence of trying to bring people in to have struggle around it. So in that sense I agree with it, but I also have a lot of questions of what that means for the future.

Dave, BAWOC: I am in basic agreement with the resolution as it is put forward on the Clubs. In the Bay Area we have had the opportunity to have more contact with the Clubs and I think that in order for the OCIC to make a correct political evaluation of whether the Clubs are sectarian or not, we have to evaluate what's their political rationale for staying outside the OCIC. And I think that if we look at that political rationale and we study it, the logic of it goes something like this: The OCIC is based on the fusion party building position primarily because the PWOC is one of the leading forces in it. They don't agree with fusion; they have a rectification line on party building. Therefore, they cannot participate in the OCIC. Now, the question we have to ask is that a correct political characterization of the OCIC? I think all of us know that the OCIC is not based on a fusion line on party building. We have comrades here who hold other positions on party building. So, what we have to ask ourselves is why isn't the Network putting forward a critique of the actual OCIC process. Why isn't it evaluating the basic proposition that we are putting forward - building a single tendency wide process to critique ultra-leftism and to critique revisionism and to develop an independent elaboration. If they had done that and put forward that they couldn't work with that and put forward their reasons, then I think we could say that it isn't fundamentally sectarianism that is at play here. But the fact is that this is not what they have done. They first of all distorted fusion saying that it is fundamentally practice. Then they say that fusion guides the OCIC, and then they say we can't work in the OCIC for that reason. So I am going to support this resolution until the Clubs can really put forward a principled critique of their political differences with the OCIC process, and not with the PWOC.

(There was loud clapping after this speaker. CN admonished participants not to clap because "it doesn't contribute to the kind of atmosphere that the OCIC is trying to create of open ideological struggle in which people are not intimidated in presenting their political points of view. When we reach unity, then that is the time to clap.")

Greg, MSC: In Minneapolis we don't have the National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs. We are not as familiar as other people here who live side by side with these folks; however, if indeed what the NNMLC is trying to do is to split the tendency on an artificial basis, then as long as we are aware of that, as long as we are aware of what perhaps the leadership is trying to do, or maybe the membership as a whole, or whatever, we can still work with them, I believe, on that basis. And the way we should work with them is to attempt to unite with the left wing of the NNMLC, win over the center and isolate and smash the right wing.

Margo,
Bay Area:

I have some general problems with the methodology that was used in the evaluation which affect my ability to engage in discussion on this point. I want to try to explain what I see as the errors. I think that the style is overly polemical and overly like self-congratulatory. I think it is weak in the areas of frank self-criticism. I think to me that there was a lot of more or less general assertions on strengths and weaknesses as opposed to like a real concrete and objective assessment of the different issues. I think that a better approach would be to have looked at the two questions of, in general, the OCIC's role in consolidating the OC, ideologically, politically and organizationally. And secondly, the OC's role in respect to the tendency as a whole. And I think that in terms of evaluating those two things we should have looked at what have been the main initiatives that the OC has taken internally and externally and then try to sum them up. Those initiatives for example like the Point 18 conference, building Local Centers, the National Minority Conference, the struggle with the Network, and the Draft Plan. I had my particular views of the strengths and weaknesses of those different initiatives, but I think that the problem of developing a summation without more concretely trying to summarize our progress on those initiatives. I want to focus on this whole question of the party spirit, because there's really strong statements made in the summation that says (here the OC's First Year is quoted: "The source of the OC's leading role is the line it has pursued in both its political and organizational work. The OC has not adopted a narrow circled approach to its tasks, devoting its attention to consolidating its own limited following, winning new recruits and contending for hegemony with other anti-"left" forces. Instead it has focused on the consolidation of the tendency as a whole, the organization of as many of its political currents as possible and contention with the ultra-lefts. In short, the OC has consistently determined its intervention on the basis of the general interests of the party-building movement." (p. 8 of OC's First Year) The problem with the discussion is that alot of people have been focusing on the role of the Network, whether they are sectarian, and what our attitude is toward them and I think we have to look at ourselves, what has been the role we played. That is basically what I wanted to say and I think that at the meeting today we are summing up Local Center, Point 18 Conference, and the National Minority Conference but(unclear)....I think we need to focus on ourselves at this point instead of focusing so much on the Network.

MINN:

I have a difference with the assessment of a single, anti-revisionist movement. The organization of the OC, in fact, in practice a demonstration that this is a new movement. In other words, in this meeting, within the OC, you don't have representatives of RCP, you don't have representatives of the OL, or the CPML. There has been a separation. This separation came before around Angola. That was a very specific break within, in the politics of the anti-revisionist, anti-dogmatist movement, as an example, like the Guardian, or like the Clubs... (unclear sentence follows). But I think that within the anti-revisionist, anti-dogmatist movement, anti-'left' movement, has to separate themselves from the politics of dogmatism. In no way are we going to be doing work with the RCP, in no way is there an inclusion of the RCP, or the CPML... (unclear) The second is the reasons that they say, or they have given in the First Year and other documents that there alternatives. That in fact the OC is the alternative. Secondly, even if we don't accept that we can't differentiate a new movement, an anti-revisionist, anti-dogmatist movement, until we have an alternative. If we go back to the first world war and the national communists' attempt to rely on their own national bourgeois then you didn't have a serious alternative, did not have a socialist alternative to the Third International until five years later. And in fact made a very clear break in 1914 in that movement to separate themselves from the national chauvinists. The same thing is here; we have to make a break with the revisionists, just like we have to make a break with the revisionists, we have make a break with the dogmatists.

Chair:

Before we have discussion of this, are there any other political questions that have come from the document.

?

(Question of clarification is asked of the previous speaker)
I have a question of the comrades from Minneapolis as to whether there is disagreement with the point that developing and consolidating an all-sided summation of modern left-wing communism is the primary theoretical task of the OC at this time.

MINN:

We think that the primary thing that the tendency has to do now is build an ideological center, that to me it makes little difference whose included in the tendency as a whole, so whether you include M-L Club Network. The only thing that we can see is that from ideological struggle we will have some sort of theoretical/ideological unity and so we see that as primary, we see that as the most important thing, and then here it says that we are going to have this all-sided summation, that it is important to have an analysis of ultra leftism, yes, but in that process we are in fact, the essence of that is, just like the Point 18 essence of that was, we are ^{an} ideological center, we are having ideological struggle. So if we are going to have this included in the summation of the first year, fine, let's debate what the first topic is going to be or whatever. Or maybe we should cancel that out and discuss it tomorrow around the Draft Plan.

Chair:

(Clarifies the political issues involved in the OC's First Year which have come to the floor thus far.)

TS, SC:

I'm not sure that all of these questions are separate. This question of the Network is tied up with the question of: are we a single anti-revisionist movement? And the question of the centrality of the struggle against racism is a question we have to seriously take up here today, separate and apart from this discussion. I think the SC is clear that it made errors in not carrying out the struggle against racism so that while we can whip ourselves now, we can whip ourselves later anyway. So that, that ain't the question that I want to try to get at right now. Specifically, the question of and we go back to the Clubs, and whether we are a single tendency or not. If folks will remember, the Clubs who worked on the Guardian newspaper at some point, and has gone on to other things, started out by saying that we broke with the ultra lefts around Angola. But Irwin Silbur wrote some articles in the Guardian around Angola and many of us agree that this was the watershed but if we look at the anti-revisionist movement that's making a break with ultra-leftism, we will see that all of them broke with the ultra-leftism of their predecessors except the PL; and the first one that broke with the CP. They broke with revisionism. Now everyone else turned around and criticised their predecessor for being ultra-left and broke with them, and then before they knew it they were ultra-left. In fact, the OL's critique of the RCP was of ultra-leftism, now the OL is in fact the RCP in the context of ultra-leftism. So that, now we are saying that we are not a single movement anymore, we, in fact, broke with it. But now the Clubs in their latest document says to us that we agree there should be a critique of ultra-leftism. They say that. They were saying a few months ago that you all wasted a whole year around Point 18, that that was a waste of time. We've already broken with the ultra-lefts; we broke with them around Angola. Now they have changed their tactics. They don't give us the criticism that we were wrong. They have changed their tactics; they say, look we want to do joint work with you, and the result of that, we think it's important to critique ultra leftism. However, they go on in their latest proposal and lay out in fact the struggle around party building line is what is principal. Which is what they were saying 6 months ago when they were saying that we had broken with ultra-leftism already. So that, I think we tend to overestimate ourselves. Some of us in here are ready to build an IC, but who are we? In general, we are all-white, primarily we are between the ages of 20 and 35 or 40. We all have the same view of the world, generally speaking, from the same class background, but we are prepared to answer the questions. Comrades, this is erroneous. That's the errors of our predecessors and if we fall into this we are headed down the same road that they headed down. I mean, I'll talk about it some other time, when I've got some time.

Jessie,
Philadel.:

I hear people saying, about the Clubs. I support the position in the document and I just wanted to say why beyond what's in the document. And some of it relates to what Tyree was saying. I have been working with a lot of people from the Clubs around the Weber work for the last six months. What we see happening is as early as last Saturday in a summation that a member of the Clubs in the Weber work, is this

line that we have enough unity despite our differences to work together. Now in this very same meeting where this line was put forward about our unity toward the end of the meeting there was a decision made that we were not going to continue political discussion around questions like the centrality of the struggle against racism, what were the best ways to take up anti-racist work as Marxist-Leninists in the next period. Now the reason that we weren't going to do that is because all these people were going to go to the NCOBD conference to discuss the formation of a national anti-racist, anti-capitalist organization in October. I think that that reflects a couple of things. I think it reflects a lack of sincerity of really wanting to take up the issues and unite w/people. Instead it shows that they just want to go over and set up their own game over here, and if you agree with them, like the NCOBD people, when they came around with their proposal, then you'll go to that conference and you'll discuss it. If you are one of the people that they would admit to help lead the work around Weber, well they'r not going to talk about it with you anymore. So that's one thing. And I think in reference to the proposal so as to not create confusion, the proposal comes out of the National Committee to Overturn the Bakke Decision, some of the leading members of the Clubs are also the people who wrote the proposal and the people that wrote the proposal say they uphold the line on rectification, the Clubs' line. One other point that I would like to make around this is that I feel that the Clubs line on not joining the OC and also the Weber work and the formation of their organization reeks of volunteerism. They say we need a national anti-racist organization so we will go form one. They didn't do an adequate summation of the Bakke work or the Weber work, but will just go form one. That fits into what Tyree's saying because we saw the CPML- we need a party, they form a party. We saw the RCP - we need a party, they form a party. And I think we represent a decisive break from that. And if they are serious in critiquing ultra-leftism and taking up work with Marxist-Leninists around the struggle against racism, then they would have a different approach then what they are taking.

Malachi:
Philadel:

I would like to speak to this point about whether the Clubs should be characterized as the headquarters of opportunism and try to give a couple of examples of why that is a correct characterization. One is in regards to the struggle against federationism at the founding conference in February of 1978. There was a struggle against federationism and the whole mentality that suggests in terms of localism. And there were leading members of the Clubs that were there, and, in fact, did not say one word in that struggle. Yet, four months later there was a document that came out and accused the organizations of the OC as one of its major weaknesses, of which I agree, of federationism. There has yet to be a self-criticism from them about their lack of participation in that struggle at that meeting. It's not like they didn't speak to other issues in that meeting. And that they didn't struggle for a line in that meeting. But as far as I'm concerned what it was was an attempt to try to feed us into federationism so that they could set up that straw man. On the one hand, they characterize

some people as an innocuous group of individuals that kind of got together to start a study thing. That is what many people thought of the Soviet Union study team. On the other hand, some people are told that the Network has this project that is going on and that this group is in it and that group is in it, yet most people had never had that conception of it. The other thing I wanted to mention around the Network's opportunism is the practice around the National Minority Marxist-Leninist Conference. There are a range of things to go into. I refer people to read the exchange of letters, and a third letter has come out from a representative of the National Network that has yet to be responded to, but one is that consistently throughout the exchange with them everyone was told that the conference was independent of the OC. Read the correspondence and you will see that in terms of its objective anti-communism, the assumption that because it was an all national minority planning committee that, in fact, we were "dupped", that, in fact, there are people now who are suggesting that one member of the planning committee who was never a member of the OC almost through the entire process, people have been saying that she was a "secret" member of the OC throughout the process. (Timekeeper stops the speaker)

Karen, LA:

I want to talk about the characterization of the Network because we too have had alot of experiences in LA. We all know the west coast is the center of their strength, the Bay Area is the key point. There have been some events lately which I think everyone needs to know about. In particular, I want to draw attention to a forum held with the Clubs several months ago in which Max Elbaum came down ^{from} the Bay Area to give a speech which was in essence a summarization of the document called "The Subjective Factor," put out by the Clubs which was a statement of their primary critique of the OCIC's line. What was interesting about their forum was a number of things. First of all, the forum was set up with very little notice, and the distribution of the document which were going to be critiqued in the forum. I got the document, "The Subjective Factor", about five days before the forum. The forum was set up not as a forum to explain their position on the question of how to build unity in the communist movement and to answer questions about that position but rather it was set up as a forum primarily to critique and jam the OCIC. What they wanted to happen under the guise of encouraging non-sectarian discussion, what they wanted was people in the OCIC who were there to stand up and give summarizations of what the OCIC was in relation to their critique, in essence, so that they then could jam us about it. One of the interesting things that happened during that time is that in reading the "Subjective Factor" document, isolates the key questions about ultra-leftism which I thought represents some real differences us and the Network. Now I think we have to deal with the question of why doing theoretical work on the nature, the roots, the manifestations and the history on ultra-leftism, is really key now. I think one of the fundamental political differences between us and the Network is not on the question of party building line in general, but how do we see the history of the communist movement in the last period of time, to what extent ultra-leftism is the main danger and in what areas it extends into. I raised a series of seven questions about ultra-leftism, not one of these questions was addressed in the discussion at all. They said these questions were not really the subject of the forum. What we want you to do is defend the OCIC's

fusion line. I think it is very interesting that instead of critiquing the reality of the OCIC process, they do something entirely different. I think if you read the document very closely, the only conclusion that I can come up with is that the only form of ultra-leftism they see as important in the communist movement is on the international question, period. That's why in their proposal for joint work, the part entitled, "joint work on ultra-leftism", ^{on left opportunism,} the only question they talk about is the international question. I think what gets down to is some very fundamental differences, from what I can tell from their documents, they in essence see the main danger comes (next few words are unclear).. and a critique of revisionism. So the question is not the main danger of ultra-leftism but rather errors coming from the right.

Reggie,
Red Boston
Study Group:

I think that it is not well known that the Red Boston Study Group Theoretical Review has made known its disagreement with the Clubs ~~not~~ joining the OC and struggling from within. However, I think alot of the struggle since then between the OC and the Club Network has taken on a sectarian tone on both sides. As well, what's happening here is that we are impugning alot of motives, the lack of sincerity to their line, and although there may be objective conditions or consequences from what they are doing such as creating splits and things like that, I think the main issue should not just be characterizing and impugning motives but to actually critique the line that is being put forward. We are not going to raise the political level of unity in this organization by damning another organization just for not joining us. That's one issue of it. But one of the issues is to build political unity and advance the in terms of political understanding. That means that we have to take the Rectification line on in terms of a critique and begin to struggle within this organization and against the Clubs on what the nature of that political line is on party building. That is, we have to deal substantively with what they are putting forth and not just their organizational measures as we have done so far.

Pam,
Milwaukee:

I wanted to address a little bit why it is important to make a sharp line of demarcation with the Clubs. One of the things that came out of the Point 18 struggle is that in the period of time when ultra-leftism has hegemony it is very important to make real sharp lines of demarcation with it. I think that is what we learned over the struggle in Point 18. And I think that is why it is really important to make sharp lines of differentiation between us and the Clubs, because their line is basically a repetition of the same kind of methodology that has been used by the ultra lefts in the past, and I think in a couple of different ways. One, in terms of their sectarianism, in terms of what comrades pointed out about their fundamental agreement for the need for an ideological center but their refusal to join it. And second, elevating secondary differences to the status of primary differences at this time, which is their insistence that we have to have unity on fusion or whether or not fusion is the guiding line of the OC. That, in fact, is not the question we should be taking up immediately, it has to be taken up in the long term, and for those reasons that because of the whole situation of ultra-

for us

still holding sway, it is not wrong/to be very clear about what's wrong, because if we go down the same path, use the same methodology that they are laying out, we are not going to be successful in breaking the 20 years of ultra leftism and that's really the task before us.

Lonnie,

New Orleans: I am a little bit confused by this whole debate. It seems to me on the one hand we're accusing, let me start by saying that basically I do, though I haven't studied it sufficiently, I do disagree with the Clubs on party building positions. It seems to me on the one hand we're accusing them of being ultra leftist. In the last issue of the Guardian, or the Organizer, people put out that they have an ultra leftism analysis like the Worker's Viewpoint Organization. And on the other hand, we are saying that we want them to join with us in building an anti-leftist trend anyway, and we are accusing them of being ultra-left by not joining with us. It seems to be a little bit confusing to me. It sounds like we are saying we ought to make a sharp line of demarcation with them. I mean does that mean we don't them in the OC at all? Ok, there's another point. I'd like to unite with what the comrade from Boston is saying impugning motives. If what, I can agree with what they are doing being objectively sectarian but that doesn't clearly mean that consciously they are trying to be sectarian. I think they are acting according to principles that they ... (unclear)... like the letters of the struggle he is writing. He has, it seems like he had one view point/with regards to this National Minority Conference, though I might have to read them over, different viewpoint. But I don't think they consciously unprincipled as far as I can tell.

Kae,

Detroit:

What does the chair do when she wants to speak? Does she say, call on the chairperson. Alright, I'll call on myself. I think that one of the things that we have to distinguish between is what objective and subjective phenomena is. And I remember talking about this before. It doesn't matter what somebody thinks they are doing. The question is what is the effect of what they are doing or what they are not doing. I think that objectively the Network position and positive development is sectarian. I think that what we are looking at though, is the sectarianism comes in a misassessment of what period we are in right now (unclear next few words). That at this point in time we have about as much ideological consolidation within this anti-revisionist, anti-left opportunist movement as a two hens in a bear wood. That consolidation process really hasn't taken place, so then it's a period in which you need to have alot of wide reaching internal struggle, open debate, open struggle. I think that where the sectarianism flows from is refusing to recognize that process. The fact that we are going through a time where we are trying to assess who our leadership is, what the leading ideas are, what the leading practice is, in the very, very beginning stages. The question is is that going to follow the old practice of being behind the scenes and volunteerist in practice, or is it going to be open and above board where we all grow and we develop, and our leading members, in fact, emerge through that process of struggle, not in a sneaky kind of way.

I think that the main question is, if all the basic principles of an ideological center and centralized struggle are agreed to by the Network, then I don't know why when everybody in the OCIC says no we are not consolidated around fusion, why that isn't brought within the framework of the centralized body or struggle. That's the basis of the criticism and I think it's a pretty fundamental one. It does get to some differences on party building, but they are only the beginning debates. I think the Network has to answer that.

Phil,
Detroit:

Again, it is kind of difficult, because at the beginning of what you said, Kae, you said that it's more important objectively what is the result of what people say rather than how they see it, which, in some ways I agree with. But in the end of what you said, you said it is more important how the OC characterizes this process than it is how the Club Network sees that as objectively _____. I guess my main thing is that I disagree that ⁱⁿ the situation that we are talking about that the objective assessment of the forces in our tendency is the only criteria. It seems to me that how we assess that, how we assess whether people are objectively moving us ahead as a tendency or objectively holding us back is really important, because that determines how we struggle with those comrades. That determines for us how we, if we see them as opportunists, or we see them as mistaken comrades who can be won over. And, it seems to me that Tyree began to really localize what I see as an error of the Club Network, and didn't have time to finish and it seems to me that trying to push forward that question a little bit, the misassessment those comrades make around what period we are in, that is, when they say that the break the Guardian made with ultra-leftism, it's right there, now that is the fundamental problem, because then they say the struggle within our tendency is over party building line, ok, rather than continuing & deepening an all-sided summation of ultra leftism. That's my disagreement with them, but I don't agree with going from that to a whole framework of that this is the center of splittism, these people are opportunists.

Kwazi,
BALtimore:

I do have some questions about whether there is a single, anti-revisionist movement. Whether ultra-leftism is the correct characterization of the dogmatist tendency. I believe that in order to have a clear analysis of what that tendency which this movement split off from represents that we have to have an historical perspective on contradictions within the communist movement in the US, historically. Most of my experience in coming in contact with Marxism came in the late 1960s when I was active in the nationalist movement. At that time I saw nationalism as the only form in which the problems of black people would be resolved, basically through themselves. And as I came in contact with Marxism and Marxist tendency at that time I went back to examine the question of how they are related to the struggle against racism. What I found from the historical perspective was a consistent underlying contradiction with Marxism in this country was the problem of opportunism on the struggle against racism. And I think that when we examine the understanding of the centrality of the struggle against racism to the class struggle in this country over all, that has to _____ to some overall historical confusion about contradictions in the communist

movement in this country historically, in a general sense. So, I think we have to examine every thing in that context. But, I did have one comment about the Network of Marxist Leninists Clubs, and that was to a comment of a comrade from Philadelphia, Mike, made. The paper here does not characterize the Clubs as opportunists. It characterizes them as sectarian. I agree with this comrade. They should be characterized as opportunists. This does mean, that we want to throw out the rank and file of that movement, because there are some genuine people in that tendency, but I think we can look both historically, and look at the history that was mentioned earlier of the leadership of that tendency in the communist movement, of the new communist movement, and clearly I think we can characterize their whole activity as opportunists, and I think that we can trace that down to a very important thing that relates not only to party building but one of the general Marxist principles of organization, that is that we strive toward democratic centralism. Democratic centralism is a fundamental principle that we strive to develop TAPE ENDS HERE.

TAPE PICKS UP WITH CN SPEAKING TO ERRORS OF THE ULTRA-LEFTS IN REGARD TO THE REFORM STRUGGLE AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM.

CN, SC:

"..important reform struggles and the real struggles for proletarian revolution, and let's not mess around with getting a few more crumbs for black people, let's take power" - and that has been the basic argument that has been put forward by the ultra left forces. Their liquidation of the struggle against racism has been a left one, and not a right one. The right one is saying "well, we can't raise it too heavily because it will cause splits in the working class movement, it will lead to undermining our ability to reach a broad forces, and we can't make a principle of the struggle against racism" - that's a right liquidation. And that has not been, generally speaking, the characterization of the dominant line. Both forms have existed, but the dominant one has been the left line. On this question of a single anti-revisionist movement, I think this is very important for us to grasp what we are dealing with here, because there are objective important consequences of our discussion here. If we assume a full and thorough going break has been made with ultra leftism, if we assume that an alternative generally exist and the OC is this alternative, I think we are grossly exaggerating our level of development, we are grossly exaggerating the attempt that has been made by our forces to really test out who in the ultra-left trend is a consolidated opportunist and who is an honest, but misled, Marxist-Leninist. And, by way of parallel, the struggle against economism in the Russian Social Democratic Movement was waged for a period of three years. Lenin was very sharp on that struggle, very sharp in polemicizing against the economist line, but did not hold that there were two consolidated trends and that the Russian Social Democratic Movement was not a single, social democratic movement. Not until 1912 did those two trends break into two different trends in the working class movement.

Frank,
Philadel:

On this question about whether or not we are a single, anti-

revisionist movement or not, I think that the question of trends and why we characterize ourselves as a tendency has a lot to do with why we see ourselves as a single, anti-revisionist movement. It's not, and so we can bring the tendency as a whole and develop that into what we would consider a trend as really encompassing a system of politics, as the paper says, and develop that into what we call a trend. I think that the implication of that was spoken to in the paper in terms of who is being written out of the Marxist-Leninist movement and ... (unclear next few words) what we would see as a premature consolidation. But, I think one other point is what's holding us back from consolidating, what is one of the main things holding us back in terms of consolidating our tendency into a trend, and I think we go back to the discussion around the Club Network and part, and I have a perspective on that and which I would agree with in the summary, is that the small circle mentality and the circle warfare and inability to centralize the discussion within the tendency is holding us back more than what we would consider a bankrupt and opportunist party building line that has been put forward. And so seeing that as primary is the struggle against that being primary over those other weaknesses would lead more toward our consolidation as a trend.

TS, SC:

I agree with the general thrust of what folks are saying at this point around whether or not we represent a new tendency or whether we are still a part of a single anti-revisionist movement) but I think in addition to the whole question of just being able to do a thorough analysis and make a break with ultra-leftism is that we are not only an anti-something, but also pro something. And what we are pro is not very clear at this point. That's not developed and that, this afternoon or tomorrow we are going to talk more about it in the context of the Draft Plan, but we don't have at this point a system of ideas or a set of ideas that represent a system or political overview of that can answer particular questions that face our movement, or face the working class in this country. So that until we not only, I mean so that our responsibility and what we are trying to do in this process with an ideological center is headed for in the first place, in the final analysis is to develop that system of politics and in the process of developing that system of politics that we look at each time when we talk about the centrality of the question of racism, and so when we look at it each time, at the history of the ultra-lefts on those same questions, so that when Clay talked a minute ago about how we look at each time what the left did around the rights of national minorities for food, and say, no, we need the whole steak. If we say that is a left error, now what are we going to do around that question. This is the development of politics on the rights of national minorities. At the same time, ... So the discussion we had today, I hope we are clear, is within the context of developing a system of politics, not just this question of breaking with left opportunism.

Irene,
So CAL:

I agree with the resolution on a single, anti-revisionist movement and I think there are some important statements that have been made in relationship to how we have not made the break sufficiently with

ultra-leftism in relationship to the Network, and I think also important comments have been made here in relationship to the importance of putting forward a positive program. I wanted to speak to the comrade here who raised earlier about his problems with being a single, anti-revisionist movement. They seem to be implying that we need to make that break, and by ^{not}saying that we are two movements we haven't made that break. I think it is precisely to understand that we are a single, anti-revisionist movement that we need to make a break ideologically, and until we take it on ideologically that break won't be sufficient.

?

I think the question is a very _____ question in the sense that if in fact there is an anti-revisionist, anti-dogmatist movement, that is separate from the RCP, Workers Viewpoint, CPML, that means there are new tasks we have to take up. To me it means that within the Organizing Committee, the OCIC, I don't see the main danger coming from the left. Within, and again: this gets into the characterization of the Guardian and the Clubs, ... I would characterize them as left. I think later we'll take up that question if they are in fact left, I think for us, the Organizing Committee, the question is a political question, is the main danger within the OC as that of leftism. And I think there should have been a consolidation of that point on Point 18 (little unclear here). One other thing I wanted to bring up about politics is on page 3 in the last sentence of the first paragraph where it says: "Effectively, many forces who could be won to Marxism-Leninism would be read out of the communist movement, and consequently ignored." I think in the characterization of an anti-revisionist, anti-dogmatist movement, it does mean we ignore those honest forces within the anti-revisionist movement as a whole. I am sure there are honest forces within that, but at the same time that we say well, there's honest forces within the CPUSA or within revisionism, or whatever, and are we excluding them because we say we are an anti-revisionist movement. Of course, we don't. The problem is that if politics can be advanced, we have to be very clear that it's the politics, it's not on the basis of whether there is honest forces on the right or left, but the comrade who just spoke a couple of minutes ago, we have to bring out positive politics, and this has to be in opposition to dogmatism and revisionism, and this very clearly has to be, we have to understand what the tasks are and a clear understanding that we have made a break with the RCP and the OL, and that we are not going to be having any kinds of joint ventures with them.

?

(A speaker asks for clarification of the last speaker and asks why the speaker disagrees that there is not a single, anti-revisionist movement.)

Reply:

Because the politics of the Organizing Committee in no way, in other words, the political errors of the OC, the anti-revisionist, anti-dogmatist movement, the Guardian and the Clubs, there political direction is not to unite with the RCP. If you are saying that the political direction is to unite with them, I would agree that there is a single, anti-revisionist movement. It is very clear that by our politics, by our 18 points, by the struggle around Point 18, we

made a break, we made a break organizationally and we made a break ideologically. And I agree that we have to consolidate that struggle against leftism, just like we have to carry out the struggle against rightism. But we have to make a break to understand what the specific tasks are.

Paul,
Washington:

I think that's an error from that comrade. I think that you (unclear words here)... but I don't think we have made the break ideologically. Because we have not developed that body of politics around the key questions at all. You talk about Point 18, but what about on the national question, what about on racism and sexism, regarding developing revolution in the country, and I think that, in fact, that hasn't been done and what was said earlier is that it is one movement and it is our goal to, in fact, make that break. And that is what we are trying to do. Organizations shouldn't put organizational development of politics... the RCP is over there, OL is over there, etc. but are we really clear on ... their political perspectives and the underlying ideology and the errors, this just hasn't been done yet. The Draft Plan, in fact, speaks to developing a Marxist-Leninist perspective on the key questions and deeply developing ideological understanding (next couple of sentences are unclear). The other point is that we have to look at the objective situation. We have the the Headquarters. They are in motion, right now we feel the Headquarters are in a very untenable situation. They cannot stay where they are. They are either going to split, some join the OC, and some will split and go toward the CPML, etc, etc. But, in fact, ...they have moved to the center position, whether we want to call them bold faced or shame faced, the objective reality is one they moved, and partly ... in that struggle with the ultra-lefts, and in fact, that struggle is not over yet. And, in fact, that untenable position does not exist anymore (rest of this last sentence is unclear.)

Bob,
Buffalo:

I just have questions about the formulation of their being a single, anti-revisionist movement in that I feel from our perspective that statement assumes that there is, that people are ^{as} consolidated in opposition to revisionism, and I just don't think that that's clear. I mean, I think it lends itself to rightist errors and assumes that we don't have a lot of work to do in understanding our criticism of revisionism. I'm not sure that at this time it might not be correct for us to distinguish our selves ideologically from the ultra-lefts but I have trouble with it in its assumption that everybody is clear why they are anti-revisionist, not why they disagree with particular aspects of the revisionist line. This is our perspective. I think alot of people have been turned off by the ultra-lefts on some of its practices, just as they have been turned off by revisionists, but I don't think that's really converted into a real theoretical understanding.

Phil,
Detroit:

I agree with Comrade Paul from Washington about why it is necessary to speak to all the specifics and manifestations of the ultra-left line and to do that within the context of seeing all of us within a single, anti-revisionist movement. We ... all put ourselves back into history, what is the force, what is the error that has for 20 years frustrated our movement's attempts to overcome revisionism, it's ultra-leftism. Various forms and in various degrees and all of us, within our tendency, to one extent or another have made, in our political swings back and forth, left errors, right errors. The dominant flow of that past 20 years has been ultra-leftism that has frustrated us in overcoming revisionism. If we can't speak to that in all the areas, in all the manifestations, and get to the roots of it, we are going to be frustrated continually as history moves ahead.

?

I think that there's not a single, anti-revisionist movement in the sense that we are defining it on the terms of the alternative system of politics which is certainly something that we all have to develop, I mean, that seems to be this entire body and the entire anti-dogmatist, anti-revisionist movement is about. Supporting what the comrade from Buffalo said, what is the entire system of politics which we have as an alternative to revisionism. If we are going to define it in such an absolute sense, then we certainly have to put in that document, how we feel that break has been made under those very same criteria with revisionism. Now our history, if we are going to call ourselves one movement and we are going to locate ourselves in history, our history as well goes back to the CP, locates back to revisionism, just as well as it locates back to dogmatism and ultra-leftism. So, therefore, we have to begin to develop some way of evaluating the nature of this movement or what it needs to be a tendency and not a movement. Now to say that there are two movements does not at all liquidate or lessen the struggle against ultra-leftism. Ultra-leftism will always be something we have to struggle against in our movement, just as revisionism is something we have to always struggle against in our movement. Of course, we have to determine at certain points, which is the primary struggle. But to simply assert one movement, and therefore ultra-leftism, certainly lays the basis for what's the nature of the revisionist tendency within this organization and within our movement which helps us describe as anti-revisionist.

CN, SC:

I just want to speak to some of the points that have come out, because I think they have of historical precedent. I just want to briefly to call to the attention of the comrades present the historical precedent of this discussion. This same discussion has gone on historically throughout the communist movement, and it has been precisely the inability to focus clearly on the principal deviation from Marxism-Leninism in each period which has led to the inability of our movement to rectify itself. I think that in the case of anti-revisionism, the Chinese comrades elaborated a fairly developed and systematic critique of revisionism. Now I know the Tuscon comrades and the comrades associated with the Theoretical Review disagree with that critique in some significant respects. That is fine. But I think that in itself is a manifestation of their own ultra-leftism, and that historically has been a problem. What I think we need to focus on is we need to identify what has been the principal deviation

from Marxism-Leninism that has degraded and debased the anti-revisionist movement. And if we don't recognize that ultra-leftism, that it has been ultra-leftism, fundamentally, and that this ultra-leftism has to be broken with systematically, we will never develop any anti-revisionism. We have seen that the CP-ML, that the RCP, Workers Viewpoint, and you could go on for half an hour, have done nothing to advance the critique of revisionism. Not a thing. What they have done is, in practice, is advance revisionism. Help revisionism gain hegemony in the communist, among revolutionary forces, help revisionism along. From the stand point of ultra-leftism, you cannot critique revisionism. So we must begin by identifying the principal deviation, and we can't just assert demarcation at the political level. Because if we haven't broken ideologically with ultra-leftism, with the underpinnings which causes all these ultra-left lines to emerge, we are going to make the same errors. I think we can see, and that's the irony, if you talk about rectification of the Network's line, they don't see the need to rectify ultra-leftism. They give that secondary priority to the task of rectifying ultra-leftism. And similarly with Tuscon. And in every single case, the liquidation of the single, anti-revisionist movement is, I think, underlying that is an attempt to divert the focus of our tendency from the critical task of rectifying ultr-leftism and consolidating our break with ultra-leftism, not just at the political level, not just on this or that manifestation, but on the system of politics and the thinking that underlies that system of politics in the ultra left line.

Paul,
Tuscon:

I would like to speak to points Comrade Clay made. I think his points were very good that the leftists and the dogmatists do not break with revisionism. And yet the position that has been put forward here is that there is a qualitative break between revisionism and the anti-revisionist movement, that the dogmatists have made a qualitative break with revisionism. And as Clay clearly showed they have not at all. And so, what is the character of what we are saying here, that there is indeed a separate anti-revisionist movement from the revisionist movement, and yet a major part, in fact, a major _____ part of the revisionist movement hasn't broken with revisionism. This to me is a contradiction that I haven't seen explained yet here. I think what we have to see very clearly is that the leftists or the dogmatists, for instance in the theory of the three worlds, have fundamentally revised Leninist theory of class struggle, nationally and internationally, have fundamentally revised proletarian internationalism. And that this is revisionism. To claim that the dogmatists have made a qualitative break with revisionism but that we have not made a qualitative break with leftism to me seems entirely out of character, and entirely unable to explain the significance of the _____ revisionist development in the leftist and dogmatist theory in the last couple of years. And unless we get clear on the qualitative character of the relationship between the leftists and the dogmatists on the one hand and the revisionists on the other, we are going to continue to make these confusions, we are going to continue to think, yes, indeed we consolidated the break with revisionism, and yet the leftists who are part of our movement who consolidated that break are continuing the revisionist tradition. I

think that the whole issue has been muddled because we haven't spoken to the contradiction or the relationship rather than Marxists traditionally objective and subjective. Everyone here has said, there is no thorough going, complete break with leftism. That is not the issue of the comrades like myself who are speaking to the question of one or two movements. What we are saying is that objectively, the objective character of the politics of leftists and the objective character of the politics of anti-left groups are qualitatively different. What's key to us, as well as everyone here, is the best way to subjectively continue the struggle, continue to deepen that objective break so that not just leftism in its revisionist aspects, but traditional revisionism itself. And that I think is the issue, not that we think everything has been consolidated.

Chair: (Ends debate on this issue and outlines remaining questions.)

Dennis, LA: I am going to vote for the resolution as it stands but I am really disappointed in the characterization of the weaknesses at the present. Just on the face of it, the fact that there are approximately, well, in the original document, summing up the First Year, four pages on the strengths and one page on the weakness... in any cadre organization I have ever been in that would be unacceptable. I think that, I don't know if I want to put forward a resolution ^{that} at some point it be deepened, but what it doesn't speak to is, I think it has been raised before, some of the roots of these errors. And I am sure that although ^{all} the comrades on the Steering Committee have their own thoughts on what the roots of some of the errors are, but I think they should have struggled, in some more depth to put them out to the body as a whole. Again, the analysis of the various SC people that has been done, but that is not reflected in the document summing up the first year. How these various weaknesses of the leading comrades had an effect on work, particularly from my perspective, I feel that there were probably more federationist and localist obstacles to the SC taking up its work a reflected in the summation. I think that, particularly... the question of how much consolidation, for example, on the 18 Points, and various other questions, were able to get accomplished in the first year. I think that one of the reasons why it is important to bring that out is so that the comrades who are struggling with localism and federationism and racism see that the, some of the SC members or leading members who are also having the same problems. It reflects some of the weak beginnings, I think, that some of the federationist and localist beginnings that we had that I think we are fast running out of, but I think it would have been much more helpful if that were gone into in more depth and I think if it's at all possible to do that, the out-going SC or the in-coming SC should go into the roots of that; it is very important to deepen that so that we are not here next year saying that we had problems with consolidation of what was the roots of that, so I'm going to vote for it but I'm not very happy with it.

Bob, DSC: I just want to say that I'm going to basically unite with the criticism of the fact that some of the more thoroughgoing roots of the criticisms "soft spots" weren't elaborated in the document, but I think that from my perspective, I want to put that into the perspective of that being

secondary to the fact that I unite with the general way the document was written with respect to the emphasis on the positive achievements that the OCIC and the SC has had in this year. I just thought it was interesting the way the comrade began the discussion by saying that this would never go down in a cadre organization. In terms of the superficiality of the criticism I think that's correct, however, sometimes we feel a tendency to in some ways want to whip ourselves hard and if we haven't whipped ourselves hard enough or really criticizing ourselves harder, that some how it isn't good. I want to say that generally the document is in the right perspective, and, in fact, I relate to the secondary criticism that the soft spots critique be deepened ideologically, and I hope that that's going to happen.

Carla from
Philadel:

I just wanted to say that the question needs to be whether or not the weaknesses are correctly identified or not and if people feel that they need to be deepened, I think that's a separate point. I kind of hear this analysis coming out that this many pages or that many pages, and I don't think that that's really the point. _____ on what the key weaknesses were or not, we need further elaboration or not, not a matter of pages. The one question that I, I should say I endorse the weaknesses, I think that they are the key weaknesses. The one question I would have is that my understanding of how to approach the summation does have a direct relationship to what your previous plan of work was. And I heard comrades today speaking to like differences between the summation and maybe what was reflected in the initial plan of work and I do think that it would have been helpful for the SC to make very explicit what _____ and what the basis for them.

CN, SC:

I just want to speak to that point. Unfortunately, and I think this is part of the weakness in the work of the SC, there was no identified and developed plan of work. What we had was a proposal to establish the OC which identified some long range tasks and try to get a sense of balance. But in no sense was that something that we had intended to complete in the first year. If you look at it you will see how far along we've gone. It was not our intention to complete it. And one of the weaknesses of our work was that we failed to really develop that kind of plan. That's why the document has tried to stress that, raise that, put that before the body in order that we can have, coming out of this conference, a concrete plan a perspective on what are the main tasks, what are our secondary tasks in the next year, not just in general.

Mickey,
Milwaukee:

I just wanted to say we really support the whole thrust of the resolution and in particular the balance between the strengths and weaknesses. I think we would like to see it moved. Our problems that we have with it don't go into whether or not these weaknesses are correctly identified. I think they all are, but more the question of how are they going to be deepened, and how the rectification of them is going to be implemented. I think that looking at that question what comes out most centrally is the role of the SC and the role of leadership in carrying out these tasks. And, that where we have a number of resolutions and a number of recommendations

and a lot of discussion we want to put into it, we feel that in the whole first year, perhaps the weak area has been the question of the leadership of the overall process of the OC, the amount of confusion and disorientation and the unrelatedness to a lot of the different tasks that were going on - Local Centers, _____, whatever. I would stress that we hold those things to the evaluation of the SC and that that is a good point to go into more deeply, how are we going to develop a leadership body that can enable us to carry out these tasks. We move at this point that we adopt this resolution because it does identify the different areas and I think it does put them into their proper context in terms of strengths and weaknesses.

Paul,
PSO, Wash:

I want to get into some of the content. I agree with the basic thrust but under the second important weakness is that we ought to provide the kind of leadership to develop Local Centers, etcetera, etcetera. Well, I think this is inadequate, clearly inadequate. I think it goes further. I think that there is a serious underestimation of political questions of the Local Center and an overestimation of the organizational questions. Specifically, the understanding of the role of the Local Center has not been developed in the way it will lead the OC. But what's happened in the past year, year and a half, is a reaction to or reliance on the situation in Southern California as the model. I think really that there has been a tendency toward empiricism. The reaction and the developing understanding of the Local Center are reactions to the particularities of Southern California. I think, that in fact there are, if you read the document, some particularities to what has developed in Southern California and that the Steering Committee has not _____ theoretical structure or construct to lead our understanding of Local Centers, and has in fact played into federationism among other things. I don't think it's just a matter of a failure to lead, although I think things are developing in the right direction, correct direction, in fact we in Washington have made some real errors which we are trying to correct, but I think we should pinpoint real clear and I think that there were mistakes around emphasizing organization, _____ at the empirical approach to the whole question, and continuing to react to this one example, ok, and now it has become the model. And I think we should deepen that understanding later on in the resolution to deepen our understanding, but once again, as comrades said, we think the thrust of the whole document is correct, but we can't be cheerleaders, we have to pull out the errors, and deepen our understanding of that, and (last five words are unclear).

TS, SC:

I think that in a way that, well pages were mentioned, and I think that was an error, but it didn't talk about the root causes of the errors. I don't think we need to have four or five _____ sum up of the Centers in terms of the weakness. We can have 25 pages on the strengths if in fact it's true. Doesn't matter about the length. I think it is correct in terms of us that the SC is struggling around what were the roots of those problems. I think that had we done that we would have in fact brought out the points you raised around the Local Centers. This afternoon, or tomorrow, when Pat talks about the Local Centers, I think it's going to be clear that we started out very unclear on the Local Centers. In some ways, Local Centers was a

reaction, the Local Center concept and the fact that we hadn't formulated that. In some ways, we were very unclear, and as a result of the Southern California experience, experiences oftentimes _____ can make things a lot clearer, so that I think if we look back in February of 1977, (78), Local Centers were in fact a tactic of the OCIC, but now I think we can unite around the fact they are in fact part of our overall strategy. The only form to carry out ideological struggle on a local level. But we didn't start out with this view. Some folks might have, but I clearly didn't. I don't think most of us started with this view. But that's part of the error, we didn't talk about the roots but at least the error themselves.

Chair: (Clarifies the main issues in which amendments will be offered:

1. single, anti-revisionist movement
2. centrality of the struggle against racism
3. the position on the Network OCIC line
4. characterization of OCIC strengths and weaknesses

CN clarifies for the body that some of the amendments may be friendly and that the SC (CN) will speak to whether or not they are friendly before discussion.)

think

Mark, FTP: I/we raised the point earlier about the importance of education and consolidation. I think _____; I don't think we view it as just a matter of implementation. It is _____ what is seen as the main weakness of the OC so far - the whole area of political consolidation. We feel that there is an aspect of that that is not recognized and the need to take up certain questions in a serious way and an aspect of that the way by which study and materials are taken up, the kind of material that has come out, and the extent to which different people have been seriously involved in study. And I think that's a key part of the analysis of weaknesses. Coming out of that would be a key thrust in _____ shouldn't be reduced to simply implementation. We have specific things like should we have an education director on the Steering Committee as my recommendation. Recognition has been a serious problem. One of the obstacles to involving the whole tendency around these questions, not only not identifying the questions, but also not carrying out a real good education process around them. Not building the necessary resources that the political questions should be included as one of the points prior to the _____ (this last sentence drops off and is very unclear.)

Anna,
Philadel:

I just want to ask a question. I don't think I understand the thrust of what he is saying, because to me that's what it says when it is stated that one of the most important weakness of the OC is it's inadequate attention to internal consolidation. And that, what you you are talking about is some specific ways of, that it could have been done better, but in fact, I guess I just don't understand what you are saying.

Chair: (Puts an end to discussion on this point in order to move to a 15 minute break so that comrades can formulate amendments.)

Chair: (Calls for amendments to the floor to the OC's First Year resolution.)

Tim from
KC:

Motion to table: by Tim Clemmons, individual member of OCIC, The Red Boston Study Group, Tuscon Marxist-Leninist Collective, and the Minneapolis Socialist Committee:

We propose that the decision on the character of a single movement present in the OC's summation of its first year be stricken from the document and tabled until such time as a thoroughgoing discussion can be organized in the OC, so that this important decision will not be made in unnecessary haste with lack of sufficient political attention.

CN: Not viewed as a friendly amendment.

?

Speaker for the resolution: There are a number of points we wanted to make in regards to the proposal. One was the tendency, and I think only tendency, I think that has been the main character of the discussion, but a tendency of guilt by association. Because the Club Network has what appears to be a similar position to this, and we oppose the Club Network, therefore we should oppose this position. I think that's not a correct way to pose the question. Second point I want to make is again the point that was made before in the discussion that the question that has been posed we are a separate and distinct movement from the revisionists and yet there is a real question in many people's minds about how thoroughgoing, how complete, how developed are the theory, the politics and the ideology of anti-revisionism, not some general theory produced in China in the early 60s but one contemporary and immediate for the practice and theory of revisionism in the United States today. The second point I want to talk about is a question that was raised in the resolution that there are two dangers which can come if we think that we are two separate movements. The first danger is the idea that we would be ideologically complacent or secure if we think that we are a separate movement from the leftists. And I think we want to argue that, indeed, there is an ideological complacency in regard to struggle against revisionism, in the general tendency of which we are a part, and, yet, that is not a cause by which we make the decision of a single or double movement. That is a question of the process by which we go forward and consolidate the struggle against revisionism, left and right. And leftism as we target it as the main danger. The other point raised in the resolution is the idea that if we don't, or if we do think we are two movements sectarian, the dogmatists or the leftists, and we would like to point out, although we don't know of the experience of comrades in other areas, but every one knows that there is a sharp break between us and the social democrats. And, yet at the same time, correct practice requires that we don't treat these people in a sectarian at all, and we treat them in a way appropriate manner when dealing with people that can be possibly won over. So neither of these eventualities necessarily flow from the decision that there are two movements. And the very fact that that

resolution gives as the two main arguments against the double movement theory shows the need for further discussion and debate on this question in an all-sided way throughout the OC with the leadership on the SC and the input of other forces. And that's why the proposal is being presented here.

TS, SC:

Speaker against the resolution: I think that comrades, the resolution speaks to your inability to look at the real world. The inability to look at the real world, that the resolution shows in fact the lack of understanding in terms of what exists in the communist movement. In fact the resolution talks about a much deeper difference that we have. You're not just saying that we are more than one movement. What you are saying is revisionism is something altogether different. If we say that on the one hand that the CPUSA has fallen into revisionism then there is the rest of us who came into being as a reaction to revisionism. And that's what is called the anti-revisionist movement at least in the last few years, that's what we have called ourselves. And that movement has made some errors that have been characterized as ultra-left. Now we're the OCIC calling ourselves the anti-revisionist, anti-dogmatist movement, or anti-left opportunist movement. That's what we call ourselves. This resolution here now says no it's not the case at all. This resolution says no let's break with all the rest into something altogether different. But the resolution ignores the real world, it ignores the real world. It doesn't say what, in fact, that is. What it says is we don't know who we are, but we do know that there is a CPUSA. We have agreed that the CPUSA is a consolidated revisionist party. But now, we didn't come into being _____ because the Network in fact themselves says there are two movements. We don't act as if we are one movement. That's a complete mischaracterization of how we say we want to move. We say we want to move because nothing distinguishes us with everybody else at this point, except that we say we are anti-revisionist. I just want to end this to say that the resolution doesn't speak to the real world, in no way does it speak to the real world.

Minn Soc
Coll:

Speaker in favor of the amendment: On behalf of the Minneapolis Socialist Committee and I am speaking in favor of the resolution. I think in the real world you take a situation like in Viet Nam and the Chinese invaded Viet Nam just recently. We have to take a side in that battle and the Theory of the Three Worlds _____. That's their ideological justification for this attack on Viet Nam. If we are _____ we would be on the other side of the barricades. We would be at gunpoint with the Chinese. If we oppose the Theory of the Three Worlds. In the real world we are actually, we have split with these people already.

Hope, New
York City:

Speaker against the amendment: Also, in the real world, I think we ought to admit that there is a centrist current going on right now. That centrist current would not exist if that _____ break had been made. It hasn't been made. There are still forces, honest forces, who are kind of seduced into believing they you can make a break with part of ultra-leftism and not with other parts. And as long as there

are significant forces who believe that then we clearly have not gone all the way in making the break with ultra-leftism. We haven't made the decisive break, we've got to make it, we have to continue that because in the real world that decisive break has not been made and that's what we have to go on to do.

MOTION IS RESTATED INTO MICROPHONE. VOTE TAKEN.

Chair clarifies that the motion is to delete and not to table.

Tally: FOR - 11 OPPOSED - 69 ABSTENTIONS - 1

Malachi: On point of order: (Asks if voting cards can be replaced if they are lost. Chair replies affirmatively.)

? On point of order: (Criticism was raised of snide remarks that were made in the back off the cuff about tearing cards in half to get more votes. Criticism that these kind of remarks, no matter how much in jest, serves to undercut the democratic process.)

Margo,
Bay Area: Motion on the Club Network: (speaker first clarifies that the resolution is being put forward by herself as an individual and other individuals informally; it does not represent an organizational position)

This is not a fully developed alternative resolution but a different approach on how to characterize the Club Network in this document.

Although we don't have a thorough analysis of a party building perspective of the Club Network that the rectification party building perspective has important elements of ultra-leftism and also aspects of sectarianism. But that also in the interests of carrying out a principled struggle for unity in the tendency that our struggle with the Network at this time should focus more on clarifying and beginning the struggle over different political perspectives on our party building tasks. And should focus not so much on the question of organizational chauvinism and small circle mentality. That carrying out the struggle in this way would provide a better basis to understand both our differences but also the potential for working together on specific questions and specific areas of work.

CN: This is not a friendly amendment.

Phil,
Detroit: Speaker in favor of resolution: Our characterization of the Network will determine to a large extent how we carry out that struggle. Personally, I think that the struggle up until now has not been that productive, as far as clarification of what exactly is in the Club Network's views that does contain what we would describe as the important elements of ultra-leftism. We think that the best way to carry that out is to step back a little bit from the question of narrow circle, that that be our dominant way of characterization, and that the outlook of the leadership of the Club Network as representing, I don't think the SC calls them opportunists, but talks

about being based primarily on a determination to split the tendency. We think that, I think that there are elements within the Club Network's views that represent a misassessment of where we are as a tendency. Those need to be defeated. But the way in which we are going to defeat those I think in the long run run best interests of our tendency is in an atmosphere of moving toward clarification rather than what seems to me to be an atmosphere of setting up walls. In other words, I do not think the SCs characterization will be helpful.

Speaker against the resolution:

Chris:

I think the resolution makes absolutely no sense at all. There are two points. First that the first point in the proposal says that we should not talk about small circle mentality and that we should drop that, and this makes absolutely no sense because concretely that's exactly what they are doing so why not talk about it. It makes no sense to me. The second point is that the proposal opens with discussion about rectification by saying that rectification has certain things wrong with it. I can't remember exactly how it went, but that doesn't make any sense either because we haven't even discussed rectification yet, so why even begin a think like this with a criticism.

Phil,
Detroit:

Speaker in favor of the resolution: In response to what the comrade said, I think many of us have taken on the responsibility of trying to study and analyze the Club members' views, including members of the Steering Committee. This proposal that came from the SC represents an assessment of those views. I don't happen to share that, I mean I share most of the assessment; I do not share the view of the SC, that the SC makes on how to overcome those errors. Let's be clear about what we are talking about. Secondly, I think comrade, that I think it is a real to problem to talk about how we are going to characterize those views unless we want to get into an internal discussion within the OC around the sum total of the content of those views. We haven't done that as an OC but I think that that would be a real unnecessary thing to do right now and I think we are fairly well united on at least a certain level of understanding of those views that we don't agree with. That's not what we are arguing about.

TV, SC:

Speaker against the resolution: I want to really speak strongly against that. When you see the essence of opportunism, the essence of the circle spirit you have to call it that, a spade is a spade. We have to very clear that the essence of the Network's views is the circle spirit. There is no doubt about it. I have known those folks way back in the Committee of Five days and they have given so many different reasons at different times why they, unprincipled reasons, why they don't want to be part of this process. They were not principled differences and I feel like that at different times they will create any different reason to maintain their own circle, and that's really been clear. And I think we are saying that we're willing to talk about any differences but we have this unity, they agree with

the 18 points, they agree with a single, ideological center, they should be a part of this process. If they want to debate about like how they differ with the Draft Plan, concretely, that's fine. We're going from the shallower to the deeper. We are not starting with the overall strategy about party building. In essence they are afraid and they have been afraid for a long time to be a part of this process. We say they have no principled differences because they are afraid to subject their views and lose and that's underlying that circle mentality and they have got to maintain it.

MOTION IS RESTATED INTO THE MICROPHONE. VOTE TAKEN.

Tally: FOR - 13 OPPOSED - 67 ABSTENTIONS - 2

Phil,
Detroit:

(Because there was a one vote difference from the first resolution, Phil questions the accuracy of the vote.) There was a one vote difference.

Steve,
Cincin:

Friendly amendment: I want to say that first of all I think that what we are seeing in this resolution is political clarity and to me this whole characterizatin of the National Network as opportunists is really the clearest characterization, I think, that exists to describe them, and in particularly their practice which is where you have to look if you really define and come to understand opportunism. Because it is in the practice of the National Network that their opportunism really comes out. I think the clearest example of that, and I hope that it is an example that we are going to come back to this afternoon, is in relation to the National Minorities Conference and the practice of the National Network in relation to that conference. It is crystal clear if you look at their practice in relation to that conference that what their principal error is opportunism. I think that needs to be stated, specifically and directly.

CN:

Not a friendly amendment. No, I really don't and I would like to speak to why. I don't view it as friendly even though I think the intent is friendly from the standpoint that I feel that the characterization of opportunism is a general term. There are many forms of opportunism and manifestations of opportunism, and what I think our characterization that underlies their whole intervention in the tendency is the circle spirit is a sharper, more precise characterization. It connects our struggle with the Network with the struggle that happened after the second congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party, the struggle against the Mensheviks that One Step Forward, Two Steps Back speaks to. It connects it with a whole historical tradition. It is more precise, more clear and more refined. Opportunism is general. I agree that there have been opportunist tactics that have been used in relationship to the National Minority Conference but I think we have to be more precise than opportunism, we have to say what form of opportunism we are talking about and I think in this case, the concentrated expression of their role in the tendency has been the circle spirit.

Steve,
Cincin.: Withdraws his friendly amendment.

Kwazi,
Baltimore: Amendment by addition (friendly amendment). Add to the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 2 of the OC's First Year document:

This narrow circle mentality not only fosters unnecessary organizational exclusiveness and splits in our tendency, but also serves to shield the survival of leftist and opportunist thinking in our ranks. Within the anti-left tendency, the circle spirit is headquartered in and around the leadership of the National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs. The present leadership, rather than the NNMLC as a whole, has consistently refused to subordinate its own narrow designs to the common interest of our tendency and the communist movement as a whole. It has refused to commit itself not only in word but in deed to the struggle for a single leading center in our tendency. In so doing it has undermined the drive to generate a party spirit within the anti-left tendency. Fundamentally, the leadership of the Clubs has displayed a consistent disdain for the communist principles of collectively and centralized effort. This is reflected not only in the practice of the Network in relation to the OCIC but in the NNMLC's own internal views on its internal organization. (And then go to the last sentence of that paragraph.)

CN: Reply: Basically I don't have any problem with incorporating it. I think that that fleshes out and deepens some of the things we are saying. I think it is important not to limit our critique to the identified leadership of the NNMLC. We are saying it is headquartered in and around that. As long as we have that component I consider that basically the thrust of that as friendly and we can work it in.

LUNCH BREAK AND ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE

Robin,
Cincin: Resolution,
Amendment by addition: On Page 3 of the OC's First Year./under the third point, we would like to add that "in the process Points 11 and 12 should be taken up first, studied and summed up, looking at our weaknesses in theory and in practice around these points." And under #4 we would like to add after the sentence that is there: "The new SC should develop a detailed and thorough study plan for deepening our understanding of the centrality of the struggle against racism. This study plan should include an investigation of the historical weaknesses of the communist movement in relation to the struggle of national minorities. Further the SC should implement any special means necessary to analyze and give guidance to all facets of the struggle against racism in the OC."

CN: Basically I view it as a friendly amendment. I don't have any problems with incorporating it into the process. What I am concerned about it taking up 11 and 12 first before the rest of the 18 points. We planned to have an independent process that would take up the consolidation around the 18 Points and stress those points and also an independent process on racism in the communist movement. Do you feel that it is inadequate? That you have to have 11 and 12 taken up first? Before the other points? Or can it be taken up in the context as long as we have an independent approach to the struggle against racism? That would be my only concern. Otherwise I think it is entirely friendly and should be incorporated.

Robin,
Cincin: Reply: I feel that this would be a real good way in starting out in doing that and incorporating that into the fact that we will be moving on our study of the 18 points and in doing that we can incorporate the necessity of making up for our lack of struggle around racism by starting out with points 11 and 12 and beginning that whole process. That was our thinking behind it.

CN: I just don't know that it will work when it becomes planned out because some of those other points really are preliminary to points 11 and 12, like some of the basic founding points. And, in terms of the process of consolidation, those things will need to be studied in order to lay the foundation for a thorough discussion of points 11 and 12. I am willing to highlight them and insure that they get special attention, along with the conferences that we planned to organize which deal with racism in the communist movement and speak to the other aspects as well as consolidating people's understanding of the history of the Black liberation struggle and the struggle of other minorities.

Bob,
Cincin: Our concern was to highlight those points and if an independent process is started and that's what is planned, then that would be fine and we leave it to the SC to plan it.

Mickey,
Milwaukee: (Asks a question about how much time can be spent studying each of the 18 Points - tape is a little unclear at this point.)

CN: It really hasn't all been worked out, how they should be taken up, but what I think we should do is we should try to group the points according to areas. Some of the points I agree there's not that much consolidation that needs to be done. Other points, like the points around racism really need to be stressed, so we didn't intend nor do I think it would be correct to have an even process which takes up each point independently and spends the same amount of time. We are going to try to do it based on our assumptions and our knowledge of contradictions which exist within the OC and within the movement as a whole, and stress the ones that have been most critical in the past in developing a foundation of Marxism-Leninism, and give secondary emphasis on other things. Obviously, there might be disagreement on that, but that can really

only be spoken to in the context of a concrete plan developed on how those things are going to be taken up and in what form and what's the appropriate way to do it, which really the SC has not discussed and developed.

Sharon,
PSO:

The experience of the PSO in, on the question of building Local Center in our area shows the great weakness that we think also exists in other places in the OC about understanding the role Local Centers can play in overcoming the division in the communist movement, the objective racism of the OC at this point. And our self criticism has been that we grossly underestimated that and in fact did not even understand that point and we were struggled with by the SC to change that perspective to look at the possibility of building a Local Center as a way of reaching out to minority comrades on a level that would be appropriate for developing unity. That is, we could not expect to be able to recruit minority comrades directly into our organization without first having struggle on the level of unity of the 18 Points around racism and also having a lot more practice in our area before we can overcome the lack of trust that was manifest from black and other minority Marxist-Leninists of white people who call themselves Marxist-Leninists. And, in that spirit I think we should strengthen the resolve to develop Local Centers in such a way that we would raise the primary role in helping to overcome our racism and I would like to propose the following wording:

Amendment by addition: On point #8 of the Resolution on OC's First Year:

Develop Local Centers, paying particular attention to the way in which Local Centers can lead in raising the level of struggle against racism and can be a vehicle for overcoming the objective racism of the OCIC.

Pam,
Milwaukee:

I have a question about the terming of it as the "objective racism of the OC". In that, usually when I have heard of something being "objectively racist", it's a practice that is going on, and I'm not sure that we, that it is correct to characterize a situation that we are overcoming as being objectively our racism. See what I mean?

Sharon,
PSO:

Yes, and I do think it is correct to use that term. I think it is correct to use the term, "objective racism", because the OC has been characterized as predominantly white, and over the past several years has not paid enough attention to the struggle against racism, and I believe that whenever that situation happens in practice, that that is objectively racist. We are in the process of trying to correct that but as was pointed out, we resolved awhile back that we would correct that, and not enough has been done.

CN: I don't have any problems incorporating that as a friendly amendment. I did feel that some of the characterizations that were made in proposing the amendments aren't ones that I really felt comfortable with, and I'd like to hold that discussion for the Local Centers discussion because I don't think it really (tape ends here.)

Paul,
PSO: Amendment by addition on bottom of page 2, next to the last paragraph of the OC's First Year Resolution, 4th line from the bottom excluding #1, after "guidance": add: "guidance. And further the SC underestimated the political significance of the Local Centers in party building and overestimated the organizational aspect of it, particularly in regard to the narrow and particular experience of California."

Paul,
PSO: Speaker in favor of the resolution: Basically, I raised this earlier, as of now the weakness just says a failure to provide systematic leadership in the development of Local Centers. That covers a multitude of things and I think it very important to make it clear. As comrade Tyree said earlier well, we didn't have a consolidated understanding a year and a half ago, which I agree with, and I think we have a much better understanding now, a year and a half later, but I think that in the course of that year and a half a sharper and clearer and earlier understanding of the role of Local Centers was, in fact, held back because of the emphasis on organizational questions, above political questions, and that happened concretely in reaction to the narrow experience of Southern California.

Phil,
Detroit: I'm sorry, I still didn't understand the political content of your criticism. What are you trying to correct with your resolution?

Paul,
PSO: The error that the SC did not look at the politics, the political level but keyed in on the organizational level which I think tended to hold back our political and theoretical understanding of what role Local Centers should have in the OC, and why, and correcting that, and following through on developing Local Centers.

CN: I don't know how to take the amendment. I mean, I tend to view it as unfriendly, but I still don't, I mean, what we have is a repetition of, in the explanation of the amendment. I still don't understand. You have to be more concrete. If it's a question of what was the SC's view, what were the mistakes around Local Centers, I think it would be better to hold that for the Local Center discussion so that we can have a more elaborate formulation on that. I just don't understand the terms of the amendment, and I don't understand what concretely you mean by the SC underestimating the political content of the Local Center in favor of organization, you have to be more concrete.

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Paul,
PSO:

Well, first of all, we can talk about/around Local Centers and what role they have played, and I think we should, and I think there might be a great deal of unity, but I think we should acknowledge or we feel that what could have happened over the past year and a half did not happen and did not develop. It took us a year and a half to get clear on the question and it shouldn't have taken a year and a half, and there were some political errors of seeing the role of the Local Center and that did not happen because people did not set up a theoretical construct of the role of Local Centers and kept reacting to a particular situation which keyed on organization and on outreach, on outreach, rather than say as having a role of helping move the OC forward on the theoretical level.

TV:

I really think we should come back to this tomorrow. There have been weaknesses and errors. It is a very complicated situation but I don't think we should take this up right now and find a way to come back to it tomorrow when we have the Local Center discussion. It is a very complicated process; it involves some weaknesses and we think they are being corrected, but there's no way, I think, that this body can unite around a perspective until we really have had an in-depth discussion, and that's for tomorrow.

PF:

A lot of this discussion will be drawn out tomorrow around the presentation of the Local Center, but what I would like to see re-emphasized is what I thought was a real good contribution that Anna said around not carrying through and not summing up the struggle in February of 1978 when we did in fact make the connection between federationism and racism. We didn't carry that through into the organizational expression of the work of the OCIC, which in part was the Local Center. We didn't push that out and I think that is the major content of what you are saying as well.

Chair:

Ends discussion on this point and defers main content of it until the Local Center discussion tomorrow.

Carla:

Following up on the point that Anna made (this comment was missed in these transcripts because of change of tape time), I think that my understanding of it that we had a whole lot of discussion earlier about the Network and about a single, anti-revisionist movement, about all these different things, and yet around the question of the centrality of racism, we have a couple of concrete resolutions and no real discussion and I guess I feel like there's nobody in this room where people would be hard pressed to disagree with those resolutions. I don't think it's a matter of debate over, I think everybody here agrees around the centrality of the struggle against racism, we need to deepen it, but I don't think that we are really serving that purpose unless we have some discussion around it, and I don't think it's a question of whether the SC sees it's a friendly amendment or not, but rather that if you supported that as a friendly amendment, well, then why, what's your understanding of it.

Chair:

It seems to me that a summary report from the National Minorities Conference would re-open that in a more in-depth way.

CN: I think that while the intent is good that the call for a general discussion on that is really misplaced. I think that there are a number of opportunities that the SC has tried to develop to try to draw out this discussion. The resolution around the National Minority Conference make a number of specific criticisms of the OC and weaknesses around the way it dealt with the question of racism in its ranks. It calls for a number of concrete tasks around that. The discussion on Local Centers is going to draw out very heavily the role of racism in preventing the development and consolidation of Local Centers. And I think concrete discussion in relationship to those criticisms and those specific proposals would be much more beneficial than a general discussion on the centrality of racism at this point in the process.

Karen,
LA:

My major objection to the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in the last period of time is that I think that the fundamental essence of some of the strengths are brought out in the sum up, but the weaknesses are only named. I think that there is a serious underestimation on the part of the SC of the manifestations and the results of those weaknesses in terms of the confusion that it caused in the base of the OCIC during the last period of time. In particular, I think there is one weakness that is fairly serious that isn't even mentioned under the most important weaknesses as an example of internal consolidation. And that is that it took 17 months after the founding of the OCIC to get a Draft Plan for building an ideological center to come out of the Steering Committee and I think that it's not just a question of how long it took, and why it took that long, but what are the consequences of having existed for that long a time without a document which centralized a basic approach to the central thing that the Organizing Committee was organized to do, which was to build an ideological center. So, I think that the most important weakness section should be strengthened to list delay on the Draft Plan for and Ideological Center as one of the most concrete weaknesses that existed during that period of time. I think it had implications both internally and externally. Some of the comments I made earlier about the struggle with the Network. I think that had we had a Draft Plan earlier that linked both the plan for an ideological center and a strategic plan for the development of the OCIC in the last year, which the SC has said it didn't have, that I think we would have found the struggle with the Network Club would have occurred more on our terms than theirs, and we would have forced them to deal with their view of our Draft Plan for an Ideological Center, instead of it happening more the other way around.

CN: Just in terms of the Draft Plan. It's my opinion that the Draft Plan could not have been developed prior to some of the rich experience in trying to establish these local centers. On the other hand, I agree that some of its conceptions, and some of the perspectives developed in the Draft Plan could have been disseminated earlier and in a more clear form, particularly in relationship to the Local Center question, and I think that is identified in the document, and would be fleshed out as these criticisms were fleshed out as people have called for. But I think it is wrong to focus on the Draft Plan itself,

because what I think people are raising, what the confusion is, some of the thinking underlying the OC process, centralization of ideological struggle, and some of those movement-wide, open struggle, those kinds of questions, could have been set forth in more limited, short documents, and were part of the SC's thinking and part of its leadership, and I think that relates to the failure to systematically disseminate and elaborate on our own point of view and approach to development in the OC.

Chair: Asks for concrete amendments on strengths and weaknesses section of the document and resolution.

**Mickey,
Milwaukee:** I have a procedural suggestion, hoping that it might move this along more quickly. We have a whole part of the conference dedicated to the evaluation of the SC, and I think we have another whole part on Local Centers, and I think that we can take those concrete resolutions dealing with the SC, Local Centers, that we do have parts of the conference set aside, deal with it there. Because really, the First Year could go into everything we have done for the last year.

Chair: Would like to get to some of the things FTP was raising. After some clarification, the chair calls for discussion on the motion to table discussion of items pertaining to the SC.

Boston: I would like to speak against that. I think the sense of that is good. As a sweeping resolution, I oppose that, because just as everything under the discussion of the OC's First Year could encompass everything we've done so a discussion of the role of the SC could encompass the vast majority of things that has gone on in the OC, because in the absence of functioning Local Centers and work teams, for all practical purposes, for most practical purposes, the SC has been the OC, certainly as far as most initiatives go. And I think that the kinds of things about education and the various kinds of concerns FTP are raising are important to discuss in terms of the goals of the OC and its main tasks in the next year. So I think we should vote this proposal down.

**Pam,
Milwaukee:** Speaker in favor of the motion: I think that a lot of the stuff has to get fleshed out a little further and a lot will get fleshed out during the discussion of the Local Centers and on the SC's role and I know people from Milwaukee looked real carefully at the proposals of For the People and put some effort into it of our own and I think we are just going to get caught up in getting half way into discussions that we haven't been through thoroughly to go through it here. I really think that it is going to be much more efficient to go through those discussions about the role of the SC and the role of the Local Centers before we get into it.

Chair: This is a motion to table discussion around implementation until we have been able to have discussion around Local Centers and evaluation of the SC.

Mickey,
MSU:

Withdraws motion.

FTP,
Mark:

What we are trying to talk about here is to draw the entire movement into the OC process of building a single center for the movement. We think in trying to do that we have to have analysis of where the membership of the OC is at right now, and what kind of approach needs to be taken to draw them into that process. I think primarily the weakness has been in that the approach, it's been an attempt to consolidate the OC but it hasn't looked at where the bulk of the members of the OCIC are at, in fact, has tended to come out with documents that would primarily be restricted to more experienced cadre or people _____ in particular areas. Now, of course, we are not saying that there are not uneven development and that there needs to be an approach taken at different levels of membership in the OC, but that primarily we are talking about a process of trying to draw in broad ranks and to do that we need to develop the kind of materials and have the kind of approach that is going to allow us to do that. That means to us a couple of things:

1. First is that the approach of the SC be educative. It has been mentioned before that when documents are put out, for example, the Draft Plan for an IC that involved new concepts that hadn't been discussed in the past or whatever, that an attempt be made to supply explanatory materials, study programs to back that up and footnotes, things of that nature, right, to be able to move people to a place where they can really understand the Draft Plan, really participate in the development of that process.
2. Second, in relation to that, is that we must insure that all the cadre in the movement are actually taking up these questions. And from our knowledge in the last year, that has not really been the case, at least in certain organizations, discussions have primarily been at the leadership level or more informally among members of the organization, but it hasn't actually been a process of drawing in all the cadre. I would think that probably tomorrow in the discussion of the Local Centers is going to talk about the role of Local Centers in drawing in the cadre in the area, which I think would be appropriate, but this is the kind of context we want to set for the actual motion we want to make, which is the following:

On page 2, the paragraph: "The most important weakness in the OC's work has been its inadequate attention to internal consolidation." Which we would agree with and want to strengthen that because we feel that as it is presently stated _____ target certain areas that were neglected which we agree with that, certainly important areas, so the way we want to change that was to after that first sentence (stated above) change the rest (of the paragraph) to say:

"This failing was expressed:

- A. (entire rest of this paragraph)
- B. the failure on all OCIC questions to make sure that the whole OC membership was drawn into the OC process;
- C. the failure to develop clear and politically focused documents,

materials and study guides to make possible a good educational process for all the cadre."

CN: I have two objections to the amendment and depending on how these objections are dealt with we could regard it as friendly or unfriendly. My first and principal objection is that I think it is politically incorrect and would be a profound error to lump the failure of the SC to pursue the study curriculum, the inattention to the struggle against racism and the neglect of insuring theoretical consolidation on the dangers posed by federationism and localism and place them on a par with the failure to develop clear and focused documents. That's politically unbalanced. And by ranking a, b, and c and lumping all of those into a, the effect of it is to place those a, b, and c as equal in political import. And that I can't support. That blurs the political responsibility and doesn't really draw out and in fact undermines the thrust of the paragraph in its political clarity. So, I couldn't support that. Secondly, I think that the SC, and I'll be quite frank on this, has gone to fairly significant lengths to try to draw in all the OC organizations into the process of discussion. I think the principle reason why that hasn't occurred is because of the survivals of federationism and localism. And, I think that the SC can accept some responsibility about not waging a more focused and sharper struggle against those weaknesses, but I don't think the SC should accept the responsibility for the existence of those deviations and those backward ideas in the ranks of the OC. The tendency of part b is to place the entire onus for the failure to develop a more active OC process on the SC, and I think the SC certainly has to take a major, shoulder a major portion of the blame, but I don't think it's correct to imply that there also isn't a problem in terms of local, initiative of local organizations and the responsibility of local organizations to engage in the process, politically.

Mark: Reply: We would agree in terms of the first objection, that the way it was expressed, the a, b, and c is not politically correct, mainly had to do with the rush, so we would agree with basically what he is saying that in stead it should be reworded within the context of Clay's remarks. We didn't mean to try to discuss this a in relation to b or c. The second point, as far, also we didn't mean to, in fact, the way it tries to state this is not to place the blame on the SC because we would agree that it is mainly in relation to federationism, and that's why we saw the importance of the question in the first place. I probably should have spoken to it earlier. In overcoming federationist danger and developing that kind of process, so I don't know if _____ but the actual statement was that there was a failure to (voice drifts off the last several words of this last sentence.)

CN: I don't have any problem incorporating if we don't have to deal with those two things, but I also think that, I'm not sure that I unite with you, and I don't know that we have to discuss this of whether it is just a question of hurried formulation, because I think a, b, c does carry some weight, it's a reflection of a certain kind of thinking. I think that needs to be thought about, in relationship

to those criticisms. But I would be willing to incorporate those two points, b and c, in the content of additional sentences in the paragraph.

BOC:

I can't right this instant formulate this as a sharp resolution, but I disagree with the thrust of Clay's last remarks on the question of the SC responsibility. I would agree that there has been a serious problem, lack of initiative from the base, but there was very specific criticisms that were made of the SCs work, that it draws up documents, it takes certain positions and sends them out, with no guidance to the organizations as to how to take these up. Now there have been some exceptions to that, like more recently around the struggle with the Club Network, but generally there hasn't been set deadlines for accomplishing study, there hasn't been prioritization among different things that have been sent out, there haven't been study guides sent out. It is true that this is mainly not something the SC created, like with federationism, but the initiative for overcoming that has to come nationally and centrally. It can't come from the local organization. It's all to the good to say the Boston Organizing Committee decides to write it's own study guide on the Draft Plan, but that _____ and that would be a local initiative and a positive thing, and would be good also for them to criticize the SC for not putting out a study guide or some questions trying to focus on the most essential aspects of the Draft Plan with it. That would also be local initiative and it would be local initiative pointing to a certain national failing on the part of the SC. That was part of the reason I supported some of the concrete proposals that were made by For the People and it kind of got lost here, but I don't know how to present that as a resolution right now.

FTP:

Amendment by addition to OC's First Year Resolution: To add #9 under OC's Immediate Tasks:

"That on all major OC issues that we would develop an educational program and insure that all of the cadre in the OC were taking it up."

TV:

I think the same point applies that Clay was saying earlier. I think that to make that nine puts it on the same political level as all these other points, and I don't think it is. I think it is an organizational line that applies to all of these. In the context of doing a number of these things, we should be conscious of doing that - carrying out the education, but it is not on the same political level as the other points.

Pat,
Seattle:

Question: Would it be possible to not to treat it as a number 9 but to have it as a paragraph or a sentence at the end of that paragraph, taking up all of these issues above, it is important that we take them up in these ways with a major educational program to insure that this is truly a democratic process?

CN:

It just seems to me that in the spirit of the amendment that was accepted as friendly to the SC that people could have some faith that the SC is going to make real efforts to try to develop these educational programs and insure a more active process. I don't see the necessity of adding an additional point to the basic tasks given that amendment incorporation and adoption of that sentence.

Norma,
So Cal:

I think there is a little bit lack of confidence and that is why. There wouldn't be any struggle over this if there weren't a feeling of a little bit of a lack of confidence that the criticism is grasped and I think that's what the problem is. The actual way in which it is put in is not all that important. What's important and I think why people pushed the discussion is that there's a little bit of separation between what's felt at the base about the way in which documents are written and the way in which the message and the political issues that are raised in the OC and the way that's perceived at the top. As long as there is assurance that the fact that many people are raising the same point in different ways is significant. As long as it's grasped, I think it's perfectly ok to put it in as a sentence at the end, but I really hope that people are listening to what's being said about that because it seems to be fairly wide spread.

Chair:

Tries to entertain a motion to vote on the entire resolution as amended.

?

Question from the floor about whether it is possible to vote on the resolution if the body has even discussed all the tasks and their interrelationships and whether the tasks can be accomplished in the next year, etc.

CN:

Replies: I just think that if people have questions about it, or if they want to make an amendment, to deepen that content they should make their remarks in the form of an amendment, otherwise this process is clearly bogging down and being stretched out, unnecessarily, I think. Other people may not think so. If you have a point, make an amendment, formulate your point of view in the form of an amendment to strengthen the document to insure that the document reflects what you want to see be the summation of this body. Otherwise I think we don't have to have unnecessary discussion if there is general agreement on this.

COG:

(A question is raised about regional centers not being part of the tasks. In response to this the word local centers is changed to OCIC centers to cover both regional and local centers.)

VOTE TAKEN ON OC'S FIRST YEAR RESOLUTION AS AMENDED.

Tally: FOR - 70 OPPOSED - 1 ABSTENTIONS - 5

(Tape ends at this point. What is missed is the following: Phil of DMLO speaks to why he voted against OC's First Year Resolution.

VOTE TAKEN ON OCIC DISCUSSION BULLETIN RESOLUTION - UNANIMOUS TALLY

National Minority Marxist-Leninist Conference Resolution

(Before the presentation began by the National Steering Committee (TS), a motion was put forward that members of the Planning Committee of the National Minority M-L Conference who may not be delegates at the OCIC Conference, be able to fully participate in the discussion of this agenda item. Motion was seconded. Question called without discussion. Unanimous vote affirmative.)

TS, SC:

The reason why we made that amendment is so that the other members of this committee can help take the heat for this. If it's just left up to me, then I would take all the heat, but now you all can talk and help take the heat. What I am going to try to do is to give a summation process of the National Conference of Minority Marxist-Leninists that is being developed. That summation in full will come out and will be available to the people who attended the conference as well as members of this body and all the groups that stand outside of the OCIC. Today, what I am going to try to do is to trace the history of the conference from its beginning right through to the content of the conference itself and finally the perspective, the future task of the Planning Committee of the conference, and, in fact, the folks who were won to the perspective of the Planning Committee during the course of the conference. The last thing I will talk about, in terms of the future tasks of the folks who were won to the perspective of the Planning Committee, is embodied in the resolution that is before you today.

The way we approached the conference in the first place and I have to say that while I might take a lot of time on the _____ this time that I'm not going to pull Marx, Engels, Lenin, but we approached the conference itself from how we viewed the real world. Hopefully, we use the science of Marx, Engels, Lenin, etc., in our approach, but we clearly approach it in our view of the world and how we view the concrete conditions that exist in our movement today. That, in fact, this is why the conference was held. Why did we have a conference of National Minority Marxist-Leninists? Marxism-Leninism, in fact, talks about unity of the class, and here we are having a conference of only national minorities. Why is that? So this is one of the first questions that got posed and, in fact, there was a failure to unify every body around that perspective. But the idea of the conference itself didn't start with folks who made up the Planning Committee. The idea of the conference, itself, in fact, did not start with the OCIC. It started with its predecessor, the Committee of Five. There is where the first discussions went on, around the fact that national minority Marxist-Leninists in this country needed to come together to discuss the question of party building. But, for whatever reasons, in terms of the failure, the conference was never held under the auspices or with the support of the Committee of Five. Later on, after the OCIC had developed, there was discussion among some of the members of the SC around the question of having the conference. At the time we weren't very clear on the approach to the conference itself. The only thing we were clear on was how we saw it in the real world. And, in fact, what we said was that our movement, in fact, did not have any national minority Marxist-Leninists, or to any extent, involved in its ranks, and more often than not, clearly not in its leadership,

but not in its ranks as well. That is how we viewed the approach to the question of having the conference. So we were talking about having it in the context of the OCIC. And, then, we realized that, in our opinion anyway, if we had it in the context of the OCIC, many groups in the OCIC were not very good on the question of the struggle against racism. That many folks viewed it just as, well, if we get together these national minorities, we get them to join our organization, and they can take up the struggle against racism and recruit more national minorities to our organization. So, we thought, folks were not very clear on the question of racism, and to try to have it under the leadership of the OCIC would, in fact, impair the process, the deeper process, or, in fact, folks who often times distribute various racist kinds of approaches to the question of national minorities, in fact, being in charge of their process. So, we decided that the conference shouldn't be held under the auspices of the OCIC, but that those of us on the committee who supported that idea, in fact, the committee united around it, and agreed to give support to that kind of process, at that point, I took a part in the Planning Committee and one other individual who is in the OCIC started looking around for other independent national minority Marxist-Leninists who agree with the 18 Points of Unity and who agree around the whole idea that we need a single ideological center. Those folks that we found and united with, then became the Planning Committee to plan the conference of National Minority Marxist-Leninists. And, I might say here, that we were very unclear at that point of what, in fact, we were going to take up, what our tasks were. We knew that we needed to bring in and involve folks in the party building movement, who were national minorities, who were not attached to other kinds of formations that were clearly dogmatist groups, who were not in the CPUSA, but beyond that we were not really clear on our tasks. So, again, we had to have a look at the real world and see what was out there. When we started out, we didn't know what we were talking about - 500 people or were we talking about 50 people. We never thought that there were not national minority Marxist-Leninists in this country, but that they were not in our movement. We were always clear that they were in this country. Unlike what we think a lot of people view is that oftentimes folks who have a perspective on Marxism-Leninism get relegated to mass work, relegated to working in the national minority communities and those folks are not viewed as folks who can take up M-L theory so we approached those folks, and that was one of the problems we thought existed and got confirmed later on during the process of planning in the OCIC itself. That people didn't believe that a lot of folks are capable of taking up the tasks of communist theory. So, on that basis we didn't overestimate ourselves and underestimate other national minority Marxist-Leninists in this country. And, in fact, we've seen a lot of that. We thought that was going to be the case had we gone forward in the context of the OCIC. In other words, overestimating - and I'm going to talk about it later on in the context of the National Network of M-L Clubs - and their intervention in the process and how they view these kinds of conferences taking place - but while on the one hand they played a major role in attempting to impede this process and in many ways pushed it to center stage in our movement, I think it is important that we recognize the political content of the conference, where folks were moved to on the Planning Committee right

on through to the participants in the conference itself. And we look at it, in the final analysis, that that was successfully accomplished. That we also raised, we think, some important theoretical questions in the process of developing the conference. But, I don't think that we would center our attention on what those points were, some of those points I don't think we are going to want the OCIC to unite around because there is not sufficient enough theory worked out on it, so we are not going to ask you to unite with it, but we think they are questions that have been put before our movement.

We got a letter the other day from Bruce Occena who was one of the people who was prominent in the attempt to intervene in the conference and the first page of his letter, he starts out by talking about the disunity in the conference, but it's ironic that he says that we have created more divisions than unity in the wake of the conference, but he talks about how we made the call for the conference. A lot of people in the OCIC were critical of us because we never made a call for a national minority Marxist-Leninist conference. We organized a conference of folks who we were able to pull together on the basis of their history, on the basis of their current work, and on the basis of our Planning Committee's knowledge of that. We pulled those folks together and had a conference, but we never put a call out for national minority Marxist-Leninists unite and let's have a conference. We didn't do that. We didn't do that because we didn't think that our unity was based on our skin color. We thought our unity was, like folks in this room, based on our politics. So that we got severely criticized and called sectarian for that posture that we took. That folks said that El-Comite played the same role in that conference that we should play in it, but we say that we have a particular perspective, a perspective of a single center and the 18 Principles of Unity. So we united around those points and El-Comite did not unite on those points. Nobody called Clay Newline sectarian, or nobody called Toni or Pat sectarian, when the OCIC did not invite El-Comite as a participant in the Point 18 Conference. But we were called sectarian for not inviting Victor and the rest of the folks in El-Comite to a national minorities conference, even though the points of unity were the same. But our unity was supposed to have been based on our skin color. But we'll get to that some more later on. But that was one of the major points of our opposition.

A lot of folks thought that the conference itself was intended to be the answer to the question of national minorities and the question of racism. But when we talk about the content of the conference, we want to be clear that we didn't say that the task of National Minority M-L was to struggle against racism in the communist movement. That did not come out as a particular task of ours, something that we put as the first thing on our agenda. In fact, we did not put that down as one of our tasks at all. So we didn't view the conference as a way to struggle against racism in the communist movement, in and of itself. We viewed the conference as a way to involve National Minority Marxist-Leninists in the party building movement. And I don't know if I made that clear at first, but I want to go back over and say that again, because that is a very important point, that comrades should leave this conference with, at least clear on that point, that

we didn't go to the conference with the view that by having the conference, then therefore, National Minority Marxist-Leninists would resolve the question of racism in the movement. We had the conference in an attempt to draw in National Minority Marxist-Leninists into the party building movement. We think that based on the objective conditions in this country, based on the oppression of national minority people, based on the advanced nature of oppressed national minority struggles, that objectively the national minority M-Ls bring a particularly advanced character to the communist movement. So that our view, then, is that the struggle against racism is the task of Marxist-Leninists which we are, but it is also the task of white Marxist-Leninists, and not just of national minority Marxist-Leninists. So that we never went into the process with an attempt to ghettoize, making the error of ghettoizing our tasks in an attempt to organize the conference. So that was our approach in terms of organizing the conference.

In terms of how we viewed the conference, we viewed it as a success in that there was a great deal of unity reached at the conference around four specific points which I want to go over. People who attended the conference, the overwhelming amount of folks who attended the conference came from working class backgrounds, and in fact alot of those folks had jobs in industry, a majority of the folks there had jobs in industry so that while that wasn't the criteria, that's how it worked out. The conference united around the centrality of party building during this period and the OCIC as the correct process for doing that. There was a speech at the opening of the conference around the question of party building because many folks there didn't come with a perspective on party building at all. Many of the folks there were engaged in struggles in their local areas that were important only to their local areas, in their view. Alot of folks didn't leave there with a clear grasp of what party building meant, but it made sense to folks. It made sense to folks that it was not in conflict with the way they were carrying on their struggles at home, and, in fact, it was their shortcomings of their struggles at home that it had no national character. Often times, they were in a struggle with Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company who was attempting to close them out in one particular place and increase production someplace else without any problem. People united around the fact that was the case and that we needed some kind of national formation to alleviate that problem. So that in terms of the OCIC, people united generally around the fact that there was a Draft Plan that just came out and that we circulated it and they had an opportunity to take part in the discussion of how that Draft Plan developed, how the OC carried out the struggle. People united around that. In contrast, to the other side of the coin, the National Network of M-L Clubs, where their plan is complete, in fact, the draft plan came off the board complete in terms of party building line. But folks clearly saw the difference in that situation. Folks who don't always call themselves M-L, but again we didn't overestimate ourselves and underestimate who those folks who get characterized only as advanced workers were.

The conference also identified that in the context of party building, theory is primary during this period. The main impediment to our moving forward is left opportunism. I might also say that while, of all the folks there, and there were about 42-44 people voting at the conference, less than 10 of those folks came from OCIC groups. I meant to mention that earlier when I was talking about the make up of the conference itself.

The conference identified four particular tasks of National Minority Marxist-Leninists during this period, and I want to stress that while we recognize that there are more fundamental tasks for National Minority Marxist-Leninists than there are for white Marxist-Leninists, but because of the particular conditions that we face during this period and where national minority Marxist-Leninists find themselves in this period and because of racism in this country, because of narrow nationalism in this country, etc., that we do face particular tasks during this period as minority communists. Those four tasks are:

1. uniting of oppressed nationalities' movements with the working class movement;
2. winning the advanced National Minorities to communism;
3. building unity between the movement of oppressed nationalities;
4. fighting against narrow nationalism among national minority workers.

If you will notice, none of those take up the struggle against racism in the party building movement.

Let me give an example of the first point. I come from Seattle, and alot of us grew up in a mass worker organization called the United Construction Workers Association. We were fighting to get into the Building Trades. So, that an untrained eye would say that we are part of the labor movement, but we would say though that we are part of the oppressed nationalities movement. This is an organization of black workers trying to get in to the building trades. But while getting into the building trades is part of the labor movement, on the other hand, because we are an organization of oppressed workers, oppressed nationality workers, then that means it's a movement of oppressed nationalities. We represented, objectively, the most advanced element in our trade unions once we integrated the building trade unions. However, there is one serious difference between us - we didn't like white workers and they didn't like black workers. So the most advanced sector couldn't lead the more backward sector. So that, we think a merging of those two movements would bring a more advanced character to the working class movement. So that, we think where there are national minority Marxist-Leninists in the context of those struggles, then it is important to unite those movements.

The second point (above) is pretty self-explanatory.

The third one is building unity between the movements of oppressed nationalities. Probably the best example of that - there is a woman here from Seattle who is a Chicana and had been involved in the

movement in Seattle for at least 10 years that I have known her. But I don't know what she does, by and large, from month to month. In fact, the organization that I come out of - we say that it is a multi-racial organization, but to many of us multi-racial means black and white folks, Puerto Ricans and white folks, Chicano and white folks, or Phillipino and white folks, but by and large, it never means black folks, Chicano folks, and white folks; Puerto Ricans, Black folks and white folks. So that, ~~the~~ advanced nature of oppressed nationality movements and the militant character of a united movement of Chicanos, Asians, and Blacks, for example, in a city with as small a national minority population as Seattle, would have a very serious kind of meaning. In the state of Texas it would mean that they would represent the overwhelming majority. Blacks and Chicanos make up the overwhelming majority of the population of Texas, but you wouldn't believe there were Chicanos there, based on who represents the stat of Texas in the Senate, or Congress in this country.

And finally, we believe that as National Minority M-Ls we can best take up the struggle against narrow nationalism. In our movement, oftentimes we react to racism. The other side of the negative aspect is narrow nationalism. We can best carry that struggle out and talk about the need for class unity better than white M-Ls can. So we think that this is another particular task of National Minority Marxist-Leninists during this period.

In addition to this, and this is separate from what we see as our particular tasks, we also tried to identify what we saw as as the principal contradiction that existed amongst us, the national minority M-Ls, during this particular period. Then we tried to situate it in the context of the real world, how do we find ourselves? And the majority of us find ourselves in doing work in mass organizations, the majority of us find ourselves operating as independents in the context of communist formations. So that as independents standing outside of the broader communist movement - and we didn't look at the contradiction we think exists in terms of the communist movement - but it was what were the contradictions between us as national minority Marxist-Leninists. We identified that contradiction as sexism. And, that you can believe that just like the question of racism - everybody gets silent on it - in these gatherings everybody got silent on it at the conference in Detroit as well (on the question of sexism). There was opposition. There was a vote that came down; I believe one person voted against it and one abstention. And probably for alot of others there, they had a position contrary to it but like white folks won't take up the question of racism, minority men just like white men, won't take up the struggle, oftentimes, around the question of sexism. So, we are not sure that we had a full rounded debate around that question. The only thing we got over because of liberalism on some folks part, but there was at least one person that raised an objection to that whole formulation, and his objection was that that ain't how you develop theory. Where is all the evidence in the documents? Where is all the information that says that that is the principal contradiction that exists amongst us in a particular period? What we said was that that theory at this point is embodied in the context of what we know about our day to day lives, looking at

the real world, on the other hand, we tried to bring it out in our presentation around the question of sexism. But we place that question before our movement and that theory now has to be deepened. And, in fact, if it is proven wrong, we got some theory, because we know what is right, if it is proven wrong. But we say that is the way to develop theory.

Racism was identified as the central obstacle to multi-national unity in the party building movement by the participants at the conference. An example of that was that of those four points that we identified there was a great deal of unity around, and there was a lot of enthusiasm in taking up theoretical questions around the four points that we talked about. Many of the people who took part in the Planning Committee itself, while we started out with independent Marxist-Leninists we were accused on the other hand by our detractors of having these folks who were technically in the OC all the time, and in fact, one person was supposedly a clandestine OCIC member and we lied about her membership in the OC. In fact, all of these folks had united around the perspective and since joined the OCIC during the course of the process of development. The resolution asked that folks read speeches, particularly certain questions as it related to the question of racism, but I should mention that the folks who gave the speeches started out by saying that they couldn't do them, but in fact took it up and did them. These folks are speaking here today to questions that are being raised with as sufficient an amount of clarity as anyone else in this room. Part of this is the result of the way the Planning Committee approached the question of organizing the Planning Committee and the conference itself. But we made a lot of errors in the process. All of which detracted from the conference itself. In fact there are folks who would have been at the conference ^{but} because we didn't do our work properly in the beginning and we started out unclear, weren't. And I think while we made other errors, the primary error was a lack of clarity on our part on how to approach the conference. One thing that we were figuring on was that we intended to put forward our perspective in terms of a single center and the 18 Principles of Unity, from the beginning. And I just want to go into that in just a minute, but there was a lack of clarity and a lack of confidence on the part of the members of the Planning Committee at the onset of the planning for the conference. We were very sloppy in our approach to folks who attended the conference. And, in fact, we were very sloppy in our approach in how we dealt with folks in the National Network of Marxist-Leninists Clubs. In fact, it cost us some ground - the way we related to that. The sloppiness resulted in some folks not coming to the conference, folks in Hawaii who wanted to come but just because they weren't dealt with on a systematic way, didn't come. The divisions of labor was handed out in an ad hoc way from meeting to meeting. The fact that there was no follow through, there was not criticism, people were not responsible to each other. The Planning Committee folks were not in the OCIC, were not in the same communist cadre organization, so that if you did it, cool, but if you didn't do it, cool. Folks got busy at home with local stuff and that's what was primary until you got back to another meeting. Everytime we got to a meeting we got fired up and then we

got home, we got fired up about that. And things were not getting done. But halfway down the pipe, and, in fact, a couple of folks who didn't see themselves as leadership started being critical of folks who saw themselves as leadership. And at that point we started to move. We suffered because of that, but overall in the main we think the conference was overwhelmingly successful and could have been better because of errors of ours. We know of at least four people who would have come - one person from Hawaii, one person from San Antonio, Texas, and one person from San Francisco, California who would have been at the conference but didn't come because of our sloppiness. And again, I'll say we made the same kinds of errors in terms of Chicago. Someone who is here who I've been trying to dodge all day today, who also would have come to the conference except for our sloppiness and our sectarianism as well. That while we made the errors early in the process, we got alot better toward the end.

In terms of the Clubs, we had a meeting with folks who made proposals around the conference, and I just wanted to talk about just the main points in the proposal. The main points in their proposal was, one, that we open up the conference for all perspectives in the party building movement to be put forward. Our position was that we were going to invite El-Comite and the NNMLC, or whatever they were at the time, I guess the Guardian Clubs, to come to the conference as observers because of a lack of unity around the approach of building a single center. Their position then was that if that was our perspective then we should change it, and drop the question of party building altogether, and take up the question of racism and narrow nationalism. We said that that was, in fact, ghettoizing our tasks, and I already talked about how we saw our tasks. Those comrades then wrote us a letter later on, after we responded to them, then they wrote us a letter. They took the initiative, and in fact, they accused us of all the things I just talked about - ghettoizing the process, of letting the white folks lead us, etc., etc. And they asked us to unite on the basis of race. You've seen our response to that and now they've got a response. I haven't had a chance to read that response, but folks will have to make a judgement on the basis of now looking at it historically - look at the NNMLC's proposal on the question of racism - of building a national anti-racist organization. What it does, in fact, is ghettoize the tasks - it places the whole question of racism on national minority folks, and we have so much to gain from it. They don't speak to what the white working class has to gain from the struggle against racism at all in their proposal. So, history will show now that they are the ones who were attempting to ghettoize the whole question of the tasks of national minority Marxist-Leninists.

(The tape ends here. The last few minutes of the presentation was missed. The last part of the presentation focused on racist errors on the part of the OCIC in relationship to the conference. For example, several OCIC groups wanted their national minority cadre to be on the Planning Committee. This happened in a couple of instances.

Also, another organization put forward that 2nd generation Portugese immigrants should be able to attend the conference. In other cases, OCIC groups tried to use the conference as a way to win national minority comrades to their organizations. Also a tendency on the part of OCIC members to view the conference as the way to solve the question of racism in the OCIC. The National Steering Committee errored in failing to take up these criticisms vigorously.)

(About two hours of tape time was missed from this point to well into the discussion of the resolution on the National Minority M-L Conference. Just as discussion of the resolution began, Phil from Detroit put forward a motion to allow the observers from El-Comite and the NNMLC to speak on this agenda item. CN of the SC, in response to this motion, criticised Phil for racist paternalism and liberalism for wanting the observers from NNMLC and El-Comite, both national minority comrades, to speak only on this agenda item and asked why Phil did not raise this issue earlier in the day when the question of the Network party building perspective was being discussed. Motion was not seconded.)

CN:

I just think that one point that should be made in relationship to raising the question of Portugese immigrants. Objectively, raising that question puts them in a position of relative equality with oppressed national minorities in the United States. This shows the failure to grasp the centrality of racism. I think that while many minorities in the US, whether they be Black, Puerto Rican, Asian, Italian, Jewish people, suffer from forms of national discrimination, there is only a certain set of minorities that suffer from racism. That is, a systematic oppression that has prevented their assimilation into the life of US society, on the basis of being non-white. And, I think to raise and to suggest that Portugese immigrants who are another immigrant people who may very well suffer distinct oppression as a nationality - to put them on a par with the oppressed minorities in this country - the Native American peoples, the Black people, the Puerto Rican people, the Chicano people shows a failure to grasp the role of racism and the color bar that has been established historically in this country. So that you will see the strongest democratic struggles have been raised, not by immigrants who suffer national discrimination, but the minority peoples who have been denied the right to assimilate into the life of U.S. society, because of the color bar that has prevented assimilation. And I think we could talk about 100 other different examples, and the failure to recognize the qualitative distinction between the oppression of non-white peoples, oppressed national minorities, and other nationalities that do suffer forms of discrimination and oppression is a profound error. And, I think that's why it is correct to identify that as objective under-estimation of the centrality of racism and the failure to grasp the role of racism in US society.

TS, SC:

I think in all fairness to the comrade from New Bedford, based on what's been said, neither Clay nor Michael, I mean, if I thought it was true and I got the report from Michael in Washington, then as far as what Mark is raising, it's not true, then the criticism is not a valid

criticism. Mark did not know the conference was a conference of national minorities. My assumption was that he struggled with Michael and did not immediately accept the fact that there was a difference in the kind of oppression of national minorities versus first generation immigrants. That's what the criticism was. So that if he didn't know that, then the criticism is not a valid criticism.

Chair: (moves on to Point #4 of the resolution for discussion)

CN: I would just like to add that it was an oversight not to incorporate the Planning Committee summation when it is available and circulation of documents as well as the exchange of letters with the Network forces.

? I think, by and large, the entire document is on a very sound basis. Many of the people that went to the National Minorities Conference as a first step in the OC process trying to smash racism within the organization and within the workers movement. But, I think this Point 4 is extremely weak. It talks about the National Minorities Conference and it doesn't speak to the necessity of us to grapple with the paternalism and the racism in trying to understand how racism fits into the society. I think that because of that we need to add an addition to this paragraph. And I also have one, I think like the first sentence needs to be stressed even more about we understand the necessity for multi-national party in the party building process but I have some disagreement or some - its an uneasy feeling on the part, on the second half of that sentence where it states: "racism in our movement will necessitate exclusively minority forms in some circumstances." I don't understand what that means exactly but I see today this description about how it would be impossible for us now to have exclusively minority forms because in order to build a national minority conference in a better way more white people should have been involved. That says to me that that can't have that form yet and maybe we should never have it, and maybe, in fact, that's racist.

to not

Paul, PSO: Just to speak to that, / understand that throughout history that independent forms by minority people are needed does not understand the integrity of those movements and the period we are in, and white chauvinism. And that we should understand that in the party building movement and in the trade unions, there will be black caucuses, there will be forms for minority groups to meet, and, in fact, it is in fact correct for those people to do it. _____ in a society that's racist and white chauvinist. Ideally that shouldn't have to be, but were not dealing with the ideal, and that we are trying to build a multi-national party, but we should understand that in the process, that those forms will exist, should exist if they are needed, and that it is not our role at this particular point to say, no you can't have a black caucus or a minority conference, or this or that.

Leslie,
Detroit:

I was on the Planning Committee. Some of my comrades from the Planning Committee have been saying, 'Why have you been so quiet, why haven't you spoken up?' And this is the time that I feel I should around the question of all-minority forms. Clearly, within the context of Marxism-Leninism, we want to build multi-national unity. In fact, that is the only way that we can build a party and have a revolution in the United States. It has to be multi-national. But we also have to recognize the fact that racism is a reality in this country and that there are situations that necessitate all-minority forms. We addressed that at the conference as a matter of fact, and as soon as the speeches are distributed you will see a section in there dealing directly with that. The fact that in some situations, and we see this in a lot of areas like labor and education, housing, many different situations, where the white people in that situation either refuse to recognize that racism exists or refuse to struggle against it, or sit back and be quiet, or promote it on some level. And those are the situations where we would see it being necessary for all minority forms to struggle against racism. In other words, it is not possible at that point for a multi-national form to struggle against racism. There's lots of historical examples of that. I think Tyree spoke to one of them in terms of the construction industry. But we also have to be clear as communists to understand when narrow nationalism is operating and when in fact that's a real necessity, and it can get real touchy in analyzing the situation but it's real important to be clear when it is in fact narrow nationalism. I think what we identified is that when people are raising that as a principle that all-minority forms are correct all the time and in all situations and when it is a tactic. So that's what we put forward at the conference.

Mickey,
MSU:

I was just thinking about the phrase that Tyree kept on thinking about - the question of things in the real world, and what's going on in the real world. And I think that we shouldn't try to concern ourselves with _____ . I think we have to look at the process of building multi-national party building kinds of things. In Tyree's talk, he criticized the perspective put out by the Network, of a conference based on minority unity regardless of political line, and I think we can all see how the way the conference was organized and the points of unity it had, pushed forward the struggle for a multi-national party building process. In contrast to that, I think that just reflecting on the kind of discussion that would have gone on here today about the question of building a multi-national party building process if this conference had not happened; it would have been at least qualitatively different, if that had happened at all. And I think just looking at that alone should be enough to point out the importance of these kind of forms.

Malachi:

Not to not in any way disagree with what people are saying in terms of the circumstances in which national forms may be necessary. I think in terms of this resolution, the key to me is the question of the first few words on the second line, 'racism in our movement'. I think in that context we can talk about why it is that we had to have

a national minority conference in the first place? Why is it that we had it separated out from the OCIC? I think that while we can deal with the kind of reality that led to the United Construction Workers in Seattle, or the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit, and a range of other examples, that why is it that communists have to do that too? I think that we cannot just sum this up as the comrade from Washington did, not that I disagreed with him but that it was limited to racism inside (the trade unions?). It is on the mark and in the ballpark but it deflects our responsibility of not just getting white workers to take up the struggle against racism, but getting white communists to take it up. In the final analysis, and we said it at the conference over and over and over again, we are not trying to form a national minority organization. We said that at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. We were very clear. That was not our purpose. At the same time, we recognize that there are various OC groups that some of us in good conscious could even suggest, could not even suggest that they go work with them. I know I personally wouldn't based on what I know about their practice in the struggle against racism. Or from the aspect of racism in our movement, going back to the point I made earlier, in terms of what we talk about with comrades around the country. Many people who are opposed to all national forms on the one hand, and people in this room that I have talked to over a period of one, two, three years in the communist movement, I have never once had a political discussion with them that was not about racism and national minority folks; no one has asked me about party building line or trade union position. They ask the white folks that but we got this black person over here and we got this black person over here, and a black person there, yeah, and I say, let's deal with that too, but yet when it comes to the question of forms and national forms, then that raises a whole other struggle, like 'well, you can't do this, or you can't do that..' So in the context of our movement, I just think that it is important to put this point forward in the context of racism in our movement.

CN, SC:

I just want to connect the remark questioning all minority forms with a historic line that developed in the communist movement, and a very dangerous line. And I think it was a line that was associated with historically with the Progressive Labor Party. And that was a line which objectively equated nationalism and racism as equal dangers in the working class movement and placed them on a par with one another. And so distorted the relationship between racism and narrow nationalism as to make those forces who had that line incapable of intervening actively in the struggle against racism. Because if you don't understand that nationalism is principally a reaction to racism in the movement, that the principal problem, the principal block to multi-nationality is not narrow nationalism or is not nationalism and racism on an equal basis but rather is racism. And that what flows from that is that the principal task is winning white workers to the struggle against racism and white communists to the struggle against racism, we will never be able to build multi-national unity. And I think it is very important to connect this line of equating nationalism and racism as equal dangers to the working class movement, generally speaking, with ultra-leftism, because I think it is one manifestation of the way in which ultra-leftism has led in liquidating the fundamental

role of the struggle against racism in our society, downgrading the democratic tasks and downgrading the oppression of minorities in not perceiving its full expression in the working class movement by liquidating, essentially liquidating the struggle against racism and the democratic demands, and support for the democratic struggles of minority people.

Linda,
Philadel.:

I just want to pick up on that for a moment. I think it is real important to see that we can stand here and talk about the centrality of the struggle against racism, but if I say that to you and go back to Philadelphia and don't talk to white workers about not supporting Frank Rizzo because of his racism, then I don't understand it. If I go to my union and I talk to white workers about Weber in relationship to the trade union question and I talk to black workers about Weber in relationship to racism, then I don't understand the centrality of the struggle against racism. And I think that one of the reasons I bring some of those things is because we are really weak on that. And we don't understand what it means to take up racism and what it means to really winning white workers as well as white communists over. And I think when we speak to these weaknesses that's really what we are doing. We are underestimating and we are not saying that we can really take the struggle against racism to white workers, as well as among ourselves. And I think that's a really important thing to think about in relationship to the whole discussion around the National Minority Conference.

Phil,
Detroit:

Just to push it a little more what a comrade from Philadelphia said about racism, when he talked about it in terms of our movement, maybe the comrade will understand if we make it real concrete in terms of DMLO. DMLO at this point is an all-white organization. At one point, it was not. The summation of that process, what we come up with is the objective racism of our level of understanding of that question in relation to white comrades and black comrades. One form that that took was not understanding the necessity for an internal framework that could, that would reflect the special needs of black comrades within our organization to insure that the organization is not just _____ but objectively _____. That never developed, and the end result of that was that eventually all black comrades that were in that organization, left. And the larger objective result was to set back our movement.

Sylvia,
Planning
Committee:

I want to raise this at the end, and I want to speak also, since it is my last chance to speak at the conference, and I won't be long, I know everyone is real hot and tired, but what I want to raise, I have two points mainly. They are in the context of the struggle with the National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs. The first point is something important, that Tyree didn't strongly state in his summation of the conference and that's that in the process of the conference, those of us on the Planning Committee were really thrust into the forefront of the struggle with the Clubs. And in the course of the

conference itself, what was taken up was a lot of the political content of the opportunism, of the incorrectness of line, and this all came out in the struggle around who creates theory, what is the relationship between theory and practice. I think a lot of what Phil (Detroit) was speaking to was what the focus of our struggle with the Clubs should be around, the political content of it. We took up the struggle with the content of the line of the Clubs and we took it up pretty sharply at a pretty high level and as the struggle progressed, people clearly were unified in seeing the incorrectness of the line. And who this was clarified to was not the so-called heavies, the leaders, or the most theoretically developed Marxist-Leninists in our movement, but the people who came to the conference which Tyree spoke to was largely advanced workers and largely people who have not had a real long experience in Marxism-Leninism. So I think that is one important point that Tyree left out was that those of us who came to the conference and those of us involved in the planning of the conference were really thrust into the front ranks of this struggle with the Clubs around the political content. Another thing I wanted to raise and it's not really connected to the resolution, itself, but it's directed to Phil and Pat asked Phil to speak the whole question of subjective racism. But there is also something I want to have spoken to others who held a minority position around the Clubs. And it's really a reiteration of what Beverly was saying, and I think it's really important and I was trying to whisper to Tyree earlier in the whole Club discussion about I hope it gets summed up in the course of conference. I hope it doesn't just lie, that there was a minority position, and whether the people who hold the minority position were ever won to the majority position or whether they were moved to it. I don't think people can go away from this conference holding that they are still confused around it, I think there are good points and bad points of the Clubs and the OCIC. I think we have to identify where that is coming from. I think it comes from a conciliationist position, a liberalism around wanting to keep good relationships. So I just hope that in the conference process that by the end of it, this all is summed up, and that we can also not just sum up where people were moved to, but sum up where the errors of that position were, because I think it is really important.

Chair: (Entertains a motion to accept the resolution on the National Minority Marxist-Leninist Conference.)

VOTE TAKEN.

Tally: FOR - 73 OPPOSED - 1 ABSTENTION - 2

Kwazi: My opposition is based on the first again of the second point. And also, another point which I raised in relation to that which I listened and never heard any discussion on it so apparently I am the only one who holds that position. I believe that it is objectively racist, objectively racist to make that determination without previous preparation and documentation, and I also think there was a comment about all the _____ being _____. And I don't think that that's accurate. I think that it is possible for a grouping

like this to make a determination of supporting a high level of unity based on reports that are given to people who took part in the conference, but I don't think that it is politically possible for people to make objective, qualitative assessments without having documents. The question of how well the concrete tasks and development in the party building movement without having any documentation, even though I hold that position.

Phil,
Detroit:

Just a clarification to Kwazi's vote against it, based on what just came down. I thought that there was a clarification to what we were saying by this paragraph was that it really represented an advance...

Chair: (interrupts, calling Phil out of order)

Phil,
Detroit: No, I'm not trying to get into a debate, I'm just saying that if the comrade misunderstood what was the intent, maybe he didn't have to vote against it.

Chair: I think maybe he didn't agree. (Again, calls Phil out of order. Then calls for explanations of abstentions on the vote.)

? I abstained, not because I disagree with the body of the discussion, but because I feel that I need to deepen my own understanding of it. Is that clear?

Margo,
Bay Area:

I abstained because on the first point I have some major questions. I think some disagreements and I raised my hand at the end of the discussion but wasn't recognized, so (last few words are unclear).

Chair: I would like to make a self-criticism of the chair. I think I did a dynamite job this morning; I feel like I fell apart in the afternoon. And I think that basically what was happening was that I was deferring to people that I knew and not really listening alot. And so I think I made some errors, both in recognizing points that weren't valid and allowing discussion to continue. So, tomorrow, I will be alert the whole day.

Phil,
Detroit:

As far as I understood Clay's criticism, his view was that the essence of what my proposal, the essence of my resolution was to take a paternalist view of the comrades from El-Comite and the Club Network saying that 'well, these comrades should be able to speak around this question, because it has to do with national minorities.' Where that resolution was coming from was sort of the inverse. I mean, it seemed to me that earlier this morning if the SC would have taken the position that they took now about the Planning Committee being able to speak, it would have really helped, I know me, and maybe other people here, about understanding more about the Club Network and the relationship of the OC to that organization. So what we are talking about is not a summation of a national minority conference in the sense that here is an isolated question and national minority people

should deal with it, but what we are talking about is how one particular aspect of the struggle against racism should be dealt with in our overall move toward the Party, ok? Where the resolution was coming from was saying that these comrades on the Planning Committee, which someone spoke to, were in the forefront of the forces around the OC and in the OC struggling against the Club Network on real, concrete manifestations of what our differences were, and yet the SC didn't see fit to let those folks speak this morning. And I thought that since that was happening this afternoon which I thought was a good thing that we should also allow comrades from the national minority observor organizations so that in no way could we leave out of here saying 'well, I didn't hear all of the facts, or I didn't understand it, or it wasn't clear.'

Allen,
Boston:

I don't understand what he said, whether he still thinks that or _____. It seems very clear to me that the basis on which the comrades of the Planning Committee spoke was that while they are not members of the OC formally, the process that _____ is one that's basically sympathetic to and contributing toward the whole process of the OC. Where as the relationship of the comrades from the observor organizations is entirely different. They are groups that are not in the OC, because of sharp political differences and we know (the last two or three sentences drop off so that it is barely audible on tape).

Bob,
Detroit:

From my perspective, Phil, that that is a deflection of the criticism. First of all, you didn't say this morning that everyone should be able to participate. So, in fact, you haven't answered the basic charge that has been put out. You may not be able to do that right now, it may take some more thought, but I think that the charge of objective racism still stands. To merely say that everybody should be able to take part, you didn't get up and put that forward this morning, it's really a deflection of the criticism.

Kwazi:

I agree with what Bobby said, and I also feel that, something was said earlier about conciliatory tendencies toward the Network Clubs and I feel like it hadn't been drawn out clearly and that criticism has been raised above board and I think the same thing just happened. And I think that what should happen is that the folks who took that position need to clarify their views more and try to raise those struggles more sharply and in a more principled fashion.

Phil,
Detroit:

Actually I am really surprised that the comrade raised what he just raised. I mean, that in the times that I have spoken today, it ought to be clear to people what my view of the Club Network's party building strategy, their assessment of our tendency, their assessment of our period, generally, is - I think it's wrong. My direction is to make sure that the struggle comes down in a clear way. It was not until the comment from Tyree about a half an hour ago that I found out that from the beginning people were invited to the National Minority Conference on the basis of a clear understanding of the 18 Points and a unitary center. I didn't know that, with all the effort that I

have tried to do, which I feel is substantial, in all the discussions that have happened, that that happened that early in the process. Maybe there were other people.

Principle of Unity 18 Summation

(Tape missed all of Clay Newlin's presentation of the political summation of Principle of Unity 18. Tape begins below with the presentation of the first of three resolutions submitted to the conference in relation to Principle of Unity 18.)

Presentation of Resolution on "Line of Demarcation with 'Left' Opportunism Introduced at the Point 18 Conferences" (see appendix for full text)

(Resolution came to a vote without discussion. No opposition was voiced from the floor.)

VOTE TALLY: FOR - 71 OPPOSED - 2 ABSTENTIONS - 0

Chair: (Asks if the people who opposed the resolution would like to speak to why.)

Laura,
NSSO:

We still uphold that it should not be a line of demarcation. Not to get into it, because as the vote shows this is an already concluded struggle, and I think that it is right not to have a lot of discussion of it, but one thing in regard to resolution of the struggle around Point 18, the thing we cannot agree with and _____ is point four of that resolution. I don't have any idea how many people here have really taken up this stuff and really studied this question. The line in four that (the next couple of sentences is unclear and the audience asks the speaker to speak louder). I am explaining why I can't support it as a line of demarcation because I think this point is very much connected to the resolution and it has to do with the rejection of the Theory of the Three Worlds, the need to re-examine Mao Zedong Thought and the thesis of the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, and the recognition that the CPC is the center of an ultra-left trend in the international communist movement. I think these are very intricate questions. Through the course of the struggle people identified questions like this, and I feel like we can't consolidate around this... (unclear) until we take up the study of the Three Worlds, understanding the role of the CPC in the world internationally... The thing that's peculiar about us, contrary to the other groups that have left the OCIC around this question is that we do confirm the _____ and we also agree with the way that resolution is said.... (last sentence cannot be heard on the tape.)

Boston: I would like to hear from the comrades from Minneapolis explained whether there is anything in the resolution that they actually voted on they disagree with. All they spoke to is that they disagree with another resolution that we have to yet vote on, so I don't feel that they really addressed the question of why they voted against this resolution.

Chair: (The speaker from Boston was ruled out of order by the Chair and

the speaker from Boston appealed the decision of the chair. The appeal comes to a vote by the body. Tally: For - 32 Opposed - 36
Abstentions - 2

(The ruling of the chair to move on holds.)

Presentation of the Steering Committee Resolution on "OCIC Membership As It Relates to the Question of Point 18" (see appendix for full text)

Mickey,
MSU:

I have a problem with part b. on here. I think I could support it if I felt confident that the doubts that forces have on it as a line of demarcation flow around their lack of study or doubts on it as it, in terms of party building questions. But I think our whole struggle on Point 18 was not so much over content but specifically over party building aspects of it. Also, I feel that whereas we can say forces that truly had unity with the content eventually came around to the line of demarcation. I think it is just equally, and in my immediate memory of the situation there were actually more forces who covered their disunity with the content over the question of a line of demarcation. And from my conversation with the comrades of North Star I have to assume that they don't have unity as a line of demarcation. And I think the comments they just made now in terms of the CPC, the Theory of the Three Worlds, I don't see how you can uphold US Imperialism as the main enemy and have doubts about the Theory of the Three Worlds. I think it is a contradictory position and I would say that, I would like to see this resolution changed, I would like to see us uphold it as a firm line of demarcation, but at the least, if people don't want to go that far, the least, I think, we should ask the forces that fall into that category, at this point in particular the comrades from North Star, to write a detailed paper on their views to the content of Point 18, because I think we have to be absolutely sure where their doubts lie there, if we are going to take this sort of action.

Lowen,
Chicago:

I am also concerned with point b. but from a somewhat different perspective. First of all, I _____ of clarification. As I understand it, _____ all of the 18 Principles are required as a line of, required for membership in the OCIC, and that anyone who allow their disagreements with the fact that those ought to be lines of demarcation obstruct the work of the OCIC would also be open for removal. So, I don't see any special about this, this seems to be simply a reaffirmation of the fact that we have the right to do it. And in that regard I don't oppose it; I think it is correct, but I don't think it is any different in this regard than in any other. My fear is that we confuse the political principle of having lines of demarcation with having no political agreement with the leadership of the OCIC. I think that for this organization, this group, to really have wide ranging, wide open political debate and discussion, people must not be afraid to express their reservations. I fear that if we are not clear that what we want is agreement with the points of unity, but if you also have some questions about something else, maybe someday the SC is going to

come down on you, then it will hold down the opportunity for the most wide ranging debate. Even yesterday when I thought that Clay was, first of all, demanding abstentions be explained and lecturing people about how they have a right to abstain, I mean, it makes it very difficult for people to take a minority position, because they feel they really _____ and that's not in keeping with the principle of broad and democratic discussion. I absolutely agree with the content of Point 18 and _____ a line of demarcation, but it's the content of Point 18 that should be the line of demarcation, not whether or not people agree with certain aspects of Mao Zedong Thought. If that's what's a line of demarcation, then that should be a 19th Principle of Unity and we should have a full discussion.

Paul, PSO:

I support the resolution and I take issue with something that I think was said. He said discussion around Point 18 was around party building perspectives and not around content, and I disagree. I think that is one thing we learned was that behind that that party building was, in fact, a cover and the content all along was the key question. And those of BPO, etc., eventually came around to bring forth the real feeling of that content - the Three World Theory. So I don't think that you should be caught by that. Party building, in fact, was not the key question, and that it was a cover for the content. Which brings us to the situation where we should, in fact, look at the objective reality of what has happened, now Clay put forth that in the past year those people who really agreed that US is the main danger have been won over and united after a period of struggle with the idea that it should be a line of demarcation. Now comrades said, they in fact do agree that the US is the main danger, but I think you should understand that in the context of what happened, that one, the content question, and, two, the history of the struggle and what has happened and what has been the result of that. Now the comrade said he agreed with, but maybe another point he raised, and have a little history with it to really see in writing whether people really agree with that. Now I don't know if he happened to _____ in writing, but we should take in the spirit of the comment that he clearly agrees, we should understand that and support the resolution.

David,
Baltimore:

It seems to me the two views against this resolution are coming from different directions so I want to address both of them. I'll start with the first one in terms of the extreme position that was put out. It seems to me that it is basically a sectarian position, not to uphold this resolution, in that if people do have unity with Point 18, then I think the experience that shows is that there is a basis for them to be won over. It would be incorrect to obstruct, to exclude them from this process. I think that this would be a good basis to _____ to eventually be won over and weren't obstructing the rest of the process of the OC. I also sympathize, though, to make sure that the content of this resolution is true, that, in fact, people do have unity with it. I think the other position was a liberal position, that I think there has been a lot of struggle over the need for this as a line of demarcation and that, connected to the essential task of the OC, carrying out its work, and I think it would be a liberal position not

to uphold that people need to direct that as a line of demarcation.

Beverly,
Seattle:

In a sense I think I am opposed. I'm having real problems with b. also. I found in talking with people who are against, who say they half way unite with Point 18, but at the same time don't see it as a line of demarcation, usually also are open to the idea of capitalist restoration and all the rest of the, in terms of the Communist Party of China. So, what I want to know, I mean I am having trouble understanding how the implementation of part b. would affect us. IN other words, I am having trouble understanding how those who don't want to uphold it as a line of demarcation can be allowed into the process and objectively hinder it. I need some clarification on that. And the part I am talking about is where it says "if they allow their disagreement with the resolution to obstruct". I can't see how they wouldn't, and so I just want clarification.

CN; SC:

In this particular case we are talking about the rights of a minority. I think that we have to establish the kind of practice where a minority disagrees with a point of view of the majority of the organization that two views can coexist within the OC and at the same time not obstruct the implementation of the majority's point of view in regard to policies and practices. And that's basically what we are talking about. We are basically trying to identify how to deal with a situation where we have 18 defined points of unity, that's the basis of unity of the OC, you cannot be in the OC without agreeing with that basis of unity. Now the OC has taken a very strong position that Point 18 is a line of demarcation between ultra-leftism and Marxism-Leninism. There are still some forces who disagree with that. They have a minority position in the organization and we are trying to work out a process whereby we can proceed to implement the overwhelming majority's point of view and yet at the same time allow the minority to continue the process of struggle around this point in a way that does not obstruct our work.

Anna,
Philadel:

I'd like to ask a question. I would not count my question as opposed. I have a question about how we implement it also. For one thing, the confusion around point b, and that is _____ in very concrete terms, we recently had a May Day demonstration where there was a fair amount of controversy as to just what would be the basis of unity for that and we were very, very firm that agreement around Point 18 was absolutely critical to be able to put forward our position around international line. And what I am confused about is if we have people in the OC, and I would expect anyone in the OC, anywhere in the country to take the same position, of pointing to Point 18 as a basis of unity for a May Day demonstration. This is just an example. Now somebody who has agreement with Point 18 but not agreement with it being a line of demarcation I can see them going to say the Headquarters (RWH) or some of the other kind of vacillating forces around some other points of unity, well we didn't unite around the fact the very specific issue of what they were saying you had to unite around...and not to establish Point 18 as the basis of unity of that demonstration, and I would be opposed to people in the OC not fighting for that kind of unity and that's what confuses me about whether or not I am in favor of this resolution. To me the

ramifications of that is exactly is that someone could go and develop and not fight for unity around Point 18. _____ people who didn't fight for unity around it on a very specific situation like a May Day demonstration to struggle with the Headquarters and some of other folks, then I'm not so sure I'm in favor of this resolution.

CN, SC:

This is not going to be so much a clarification as an argument, because really what we are talking about is not clarification, we are talking about politics and what you are identifying is that this line that Point 18 is correct but we shouldn't have it as a demarcation is a conciliationist line and it is. There is no question about that. I'm opposed and the SC and many other people are opposed to this conciliationism, but we think we can win these politically to understanding the damage of the conciliation. We think that as developments occur in the world and within the party building movement it will become more and more clear that it is an untenable position to agree with the content and not uphold it as a line of demarcation.

Mark,

New Bedford:

This also is not a very strong opposition. I feel I couldn't go along with it right now without clarification because I think the experience has been that as it has been said the folks who opposed this resolution (on demarcation) will obstruct the process every step along the way, and my question is why isn't it better to have these people leave the OC at this point and to continue to struggle with them outside of the OC and win them over on a political basis before bringing them in. It seems to me that to pass this resolution the way it is laid out might also put us in the position, and I know in the Boston area which I am close to, where, I mean, I would have trouble just trying to recruit people into the regional center on this basis. I think it would be preferable to develop a political struggle with them as a main task because there are a lot of forces in the Boston area who I think fall into this category, to develop a kind of struggle with them while they are outside of the OC and attempt to win them over _____ basis of our whole approach, including the party building line, and have them in on that basis. I think it would be wrong to just defeat this and write those people off; we have to struggle with them because I think there are a lot of people who have'nt fully discussed this but at the same time to really ... (voice drops off in this last sentence.)

TV, SC:

I don't think you are totally looking at what the resolution says in terms of it clearly says that if anyone does obstruct the process, then they're going to be put out, and that can be brought to the SC and the SC at any time can evaluate that and put someone out. I think you should look at some forces that are just coming into the OC, like in the south, there was a national minority woman at the National Minorities Conference, I spent some time talking to, who didn't agree with this, in terms of the line of demarcation issue, but I think she's the kind of person that we hope to really winning over and consolidating her, but it would be important for her to be in the OC and struggle with her in that context.

Karen,
So CAL:

I think that the key to this is when we demarcate on principles of unity, it seems to me that it is not only the responsibility to not disagree with the majority in the way that it carries out its views but rather that when we adopt a line of demarcation which means that you are a member of the OC that you have the responsibility to uphold that principle of unity in your relationships with everybody inside the OC and outside the OC, so I would like to add an amendment. A point c (of the resolution):

"It is the responsibility of all members of the OCIC to uphold, explain, and convince people of the correctness of Principle of Unity 18 both within and without the tendency."

My main question is if you adopt a line of demarcation it is your responsibility to uphold that line of demarcation to everyone who may have questions about it.

CN, SC: Are you saying people have to argue for the content of Point 18? I would say that is understood in the 18 Points. I don't have any objections incorporating it.

Karen: Uphold and aggressively propagandize around that. In other words, they can't allow their questions about its function as a line of demarcation being the primary way that they relate to the OC. You have a responsibility as a minority to aggressively convince other people of the content of Point 18.

CN, SC: That is a friendly amendment.

? I see that as democratic-centralism in the OC. In other words, I think it is a political question that the comrade brought up that I also think that what it is saying^{is} that that's having democratic-centralism in the OC. And, if that is a fact, then we should have that as a full discussion (the last sentence drops off and cannot be understood on the tape.)

CN, SC: Point of order. I don't think the comrade understood the resolution. The resolution with the additional amendment was not that the organizations who did not agree with it as a line of demarcation would have to defend it as a line of demarcation. What they would have to defend is their agreement with the content of Point 18. And that is not democratic centralism. That's the basis of unity in this organization, and if you don't defend its basis of unity, you don't belong in it.

? Actually I support the majority, but I am opposed to the Steering Committee having the power to expel from the organization. I think that should be up to the body as a whole. I propose that the amendment say by substitution: (in part b of the resolution - instead of "at the decision of the SC" it should read "at the decision of the body"

(The amendment was not discussed due to lack of a second.)

Seattle:

(Speaker is not speaking loud enough for the tape to pick up the voice for the first few sentences.) I would want to know why or what would be bad about people who don't agree with the line of demarcation being outside of the OC as some of the other comrades here have suggested before, being outside of the OC and winning them over to join the OC on the basis of it being a line of demarcation. Why would that be bad?

Mark,

New Bedford:

Point of order. I don't want to be put in the position of voting against the entire resolution, so I think the main objection put forward in the form of an amendment that that be deleted, I would be willing to vote in favor of it. So, my amendment is to change point b (of the resolution) to say:

"Forces who unite with Principle 18 but not with the Resolution on a Line of Demarcation with "Left" Opportunism shall be dropped from membership in the OCIC. The SC shall undertake the responsibility for struggle with forces to win them over to the OC."

CN, SC:

I don't think it's an amendment at all.

Chair:

Not a friendly amendment. (Mark appeals decision of the chair not to have the amendment discussed.)

CN:

In essence, we see that the main controversy is over point b (of the resolution). There is no controversy over point a and c. If that's all we were doing, we would be restating what we already decided. So, to raise it as an amendment to point b. is the same thing as voting against the resolution in the eyes of the SC. So we might as well vote on the resolution as a whole.

Chair:

Vote taken on the appeal to the chair. The decision of the chair is upheld. Chair now moves body to a vote on the entire resolution as amendment. Before the vote, however, the chair entertains further points of information and clarification due to the fact that a couple of comrades asked for a few more minutes for further discussion before the vote.

?

Could the SC clarify how it's going to carry out discussions with groups who are in the OC like North Star about consolidating their understading of the question of a line of demarcation and how... (last part of this sentence drops off.)

CN, SC:

This particular case is a good example, I think, of what a general approach should be to this problem. Number one, I must express that I have some questions about the actuality of the North Star comrades' agreement with the content of point 18, which I certainly think ought to be investigated. I take them at their word that they agree, and until we find otherwise, I think that they should be allowed to participate. In order to follow that out, I think a SC representative should be given a distinct list of questions to search out the views of these comrades around the content of Point 18 to make sure that

there is real developed and consolidated unity with that content. Beyond that I think that the kind of thrust that should go on is a call for these comrades investigate and take up their questions, their problems, their areas where that they feel they haven't studied sufficiently, to provide them with documents from the perspective of the Steering Committee and with resources in order to help them with that process. I don't think that the SC should make it a major task to win over North Star Socialist Organization. That's not a major point on our agenda, but what we can do is to encourage them to take up their questions and resolve it, one way or another.

Mickey,
MSU:

What I see going on here - I don't feel like the minority position was presented well and I held back and felt like I was in a minority of one on this question. Then I hear we are going into points of information, and in essence what it comes down to is Clay speaking in favor of the motion. I don't think it was intended that way but _____, so I would like one more chance to present my point of view.

Chair: After points of information.

Joe, Philadel: I guess the point I am still confused about is how long can an organization go on without coming to accepting Point 18 as a line of demarcation. (Tape ends on this side at this point. Mickey from MSU speaks after Joe, but it is missed from the tape.)

(The chair now entertained a motion to come to a vote on the resolution. Body votes, but the count is too close to tell on the first count. Chair calls for a recount, but before that is done, a motion is put forward and seconded to extend discussion for two more speakers opposed and for the resolution, due to the closeness of the vote. Motion is approved, and discussion is extended.)

Bob,
Cincinnati:

I think we need to understand that to not uphold this resolution is objectively sectarian. I think its improper to think that we can have the same kind of relationship with forces outside of the OC and the same possibility of winning them over to our position and our perspective than we can with forces inside the OC. I think it is incorrect to put the North Star Organization, if they were outside of the OC, on the same par as people inside and we need to struggle to win them over. We won't be winning over the RCP, CPM-L, and other forces who we don't have a chance to struggle with internal and by the same token we would really hurt in our efforts to win these people over if they were outside of the OC. I think that it is not detrimental to the OC process to accept the resolution as it now stands.

Sara,
Philadel:

My understanding after quite alot of confusion about is that it seems to me that the resolution goes against the sense of what the SC put forward to us as the introduction to this discussion, which is that the whole discussion that we had _____ around Principle 18 was that to back away from understanding this as a line of demarcation in our movement serves as a cover for ultra-leftism in a general kind

of a sense on a number of different questions including the question on the international situation and it seems to me that the resolution goes against the grain of the lessons drawn in terms of like the Milwaukee Alliance, and that the process of struggle around this should, indeed, take place outside of the internal process of the OC and as a part of consolidate and win people to the OC and not to allow it within our ranks. It seems to me that the SC resolution makes it some kind of more subjective analysis of what whether this group needs to be just won over or whether that group is actually using it as a cover.

Dennis,
So Calif:

I would like to strongly support comments made by Bob about the sectarianism here. Some people seem to think that now they got this down pat on ultra-leftism and left opportunism everybody else have to be where they are now, rather than to where they were a year ago. And everybody thinks that the organization is a little tired of this, but alot of individuals we want to attract to the OCIC, like individuals Toni mentioned before from the south, don't have this understanding of this question of a line of demarcation yet. For somebody who works in a local center unlike _____ who is confused about this question of a line of demarcation which alot of us were a year ago, never heard of the question, so I'd like to say that a person in a Local Center who isn't consolidated on this question of line of demarcation, it is much better to win them over if they were in a Local Center, then if they were on the fringes of a Local Center and no one who has spoken against this has said, well, the Milwaukee Alliance _____ really hindered the OCIC, or North Star is really going to hinder the OCIC, as if this is a real problem that we have. I don't think it is a real problem we have. I think we are fairly consolidated so to me I think it is more or less sectarian, I mean sectarian thinking that where you are everybody else should be at. No one, anyone speaking against this resolution should speak to how in actual reality this will hurt the process of us pursuing our work around Point 18 and our practice.

Mark,
New York Cty:

I don't see how this could possibly be sectarian to have the OC consolidate around the struggle we have been carrying on within the OC for the last two years...I don't see how we can continue to remain open to forces that still have questions about Point 18 as a line of demarcation when we carried it out in a very principled, very public, and very open struggle with both the ultra-left and centrist forces around that question. I think that the questions of groups such as the Milwaukee Alliance is that they didn't heed that struggle, they represented a legitimate position. It was then resolved by the OC that it would impede the progress of the OC to continue to tolerate the same questions and the same doubts and to continue to have to re-raise those struggles. The other thing is the whole essence of that struggle was around the correctness of point 18 as a line of demarcation and we have got to be prepared to go into the tendency and struggle that out with the centrist forces and particularly with individuals, particularly in underdeveloped regions of the country where the OC isn't strong. But I feel that the way to do that the

most strong and most powerful way is if we have a strong internal consolidation; that is the only way we can really meet that struggle. So, I think it is really important for us to consolidate around these principles right now and move forward.

VOTE ON RESOLUTION AS AMENDED:

FOR - 47 OPPOSED - 29 ABSTENTIONS - 1

Mike,

Sas., Canada: I just wanted to point out that this kind of debate and this kind of vote brings into fairly bold relief the ambiguity and its relationship to a Canadian group relating to the OC, in that whenever we may learn mutually coming together, and I can assure you that many of these debates that have occurred here have been occurring and are translated into terms in Canada that are relevant, that, nonetheless, for example, we would be on pretty thin ice to presume that we could vote on a measure that demarcates, for example, who should be members and not members of the OC, and things like that, so it is fairly clear that whatever personal views that any delegates or any organizational views....(unclear). And I'd like to say that participation in this meeting and the Point 18 meeting that it has made clearer to us how we would like to relate and I think we will have some suggestions for the SC about clearing away that ambiguity. I just wanted the opportunity to put that out.

Chair: (Moves body to take up the third Point 18 resolution. On procedure the chair indicates that the resolution is open for general discussion.)

Marty,
Detroit:

I have a lot of agreement with this resolution, except for a couple of formulations in point 4 (of the resolution). What I take to be the meaning of "Underlying the centrists' adherence to 'left' internationalism is flunkeyism." I certainly agree that flunkeyism is a key component of left internationalism; I don't think I would be willing to say at this point that the roots of left internationalism as opposed to petit-bourgeois semi-anarchism being the root and flunkeyism being the thing that makes _____. Second, on the CPC as the center of the ultra-left trend in the international communist movement, I certainly agree that the CPC has accumulated a number of ultra-left sects around itself in the international communist movement, I'm not really at this point going to identify the CPC itself as ultra-left. I think that the current CPC, while the Three Worlds Theory was developed over a period, the current CPC is rightist. And, I think this _____ the question of what is the nature of the CPC at the present time. This also implies that the CPC was ultra-left(sentence is difficult to understand.)

CN, SC:

I think in regard to the first point, underlying the centrists' adherence to 'left' internationalism is flunkeyism toward the CPC and Mao Zedong, I think the use of the term flunkeyism, is unfortunate there in that it does make precisely the question you're raising. What was the intent of the resolution, and I think we could amend it, was that underlying it is an uncritical attitude or unwillingness to break with the CPC and Mao Zedong Thought. Because it is not an attempt to say that flunkeyism is the basis of 'left' internationalism. That's a view that is put forward by a number of forces in the anti-'left' tendency and I think it is wrong. As far as your second point of concern, this is not meant to be a summation of the totality of this line of the Chinese Communist Party, nor is it meant to be a summation of very recent, relatively recent developments in that Party. Rather it is meant to tie in historically the role of the CPC with the development of ultra-leftism in this country and identify it as the center of an international ultra-left trend. Now those politics are certainly in a state of flux and it does appear that, at least, shifting rightward, if shifting to a right opportunist position, that is unclear to me. But we are not attempting to pre-judge that kind of discussion.

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Just on that first point of the OC Bulletin, one of the major emphasis was on the over reaction to revisionism being a major aspect of that line, in addition to the points _____ in the Point 18 conferences. I think _____ bring that out _____ a combination of ... (drifts off, cannot understand last sentence here.)

CN, SC:

I think it's friendly to the general resolution but not to this particular point, because I think it dulls the sharpness of what we are trying to get at in the point.

Lowen,
Chicago:

I think during the other discussion, listening to what Clay had to say about the question of the CPC, I think that _____ that the CPC today is the center of the headquarters of ultra-leftism in the world, then it should be stricken from the resolution; I mean this resolution is going to be published, _____ organizations enforce it as possible to the OC are going to pick up on things and use them to perhaps wrongly characterize the position in the OC and _____ we haven't had a good discussion of it, it's not our position and we shouldn't be sloppy about it, and we ought to remove it.

Kwazi,
Baltimore:

I have had similar questions about _____ evolving right now in terms of the essence of the Chinese line, but I unite with what Clay put forth in terms of formulation. I think it would be good, in amending this, to add on what you said about the situation being in flux and what we have to stay on top of in order to make a concrete analysis of the situation as it evolves.

CN, SC:

I accept that as a friendly amendment.

Minn Soc Coll Probably due to a theoretical lack, I don't know much about the Chinese Party or Mao Zedong Thought, and the last sentence says: "at the same time we recognize the historical contributions which the CPC and Mao Zedong have made in the struggle against revisionism". I was wondering if anyone here could outline what those were, I really don't know.

Phil,
Detroit:

The comrade raised an honest question and I think we should deal with it in an honest way and by that I mean explain to the comrade without holding up _____ why _____, identify the positive contributions of the Communist Party of China in the struggle against revisionism. And without going into a whole _____ was led by the Communist Party of China in the struggle against _____ . I just think we should not deal with the comrades question in that manner.

Chair:

The criticism was well taken.

TV, SC:

I'm not an expert on this but a couple of things that I know about - the whole, Mao's whole emphasis that you have to maintain the struggle against the influence of bourgeois ideology and I think they took that too far obviously, because they _____, it just wasn't the influence of actual class struggle that was the material force. Also, I think their critique of some of the things in terms of the USSR, the whole critique, the original critique of the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the whole critique about the way the USSR was not carrying out Lenin's conception of peaceful co-existence and taking it to another level. Those kinds of criticisms of the USSR and revisionism was a positive contribution. Also, I think the USSR's views on the transition to socialism from capitalism to socialism, they put out the critique of this.

Tim Clemmons,
Kansas City:

On the question of Mao Zedong, I think I agree with that last sentence in part 4 and it creates objections to the previous sentence on "the need to re-examine Mao Zedong Thought". To me that means anything that Mao said is Mao Zedong Thought and I disagree with that. To me Mao made significant contributions to the world communist movement. I would like to amend (speaker is stopped here by the chair. Speaker is ruled out of order at this time because body was still on the point of speaking to the contributions of Mao Zedong.)

Kwazi,
Baltimore:

One of the most important contributions of Mao is the primacy of political factors. One of the most important basis of political _____ is his critique of Soviet economics. That goes back to a number of other basic writings such as On Practice, and On Contradiction, and also some of the military writings, that have very important political consequences, in terms of the primacy of political factors over economics versus economic determinism and economism. So I think you have to understand it, you have to study it, make use of materials from the Steering Committee, some of the writings.

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On the previous sentence where it says, "the need to re-examine Mao Zedong Thought." And the question that that brings up is the need to examine the vulgarization of Mao Zedong as opposed to saying here what Mao Zedong wrote, Mao Zedong Thought. In other words, I think within the CPC now or within the ultra-leftist or dogmatist movement, they vulgarize the significant contributions of Mao and I think that ought to be changed to "vulgarization of Mao".

Keith,
Detroit SC:

I support the resolution as it stands. Mao Zedong and Mao Zedong Thought are two different things. We can look back and look at the errors and the contributions that Mao Zedong made and make an objective assessment of that, but right now, there is a political line and a view of the world that I think that the _____ ultra-leftists friends in this country and around the world, and the guiding line is Mao Zedong Thought which I believe the folks in the CPC have a _____ in its most reactionary international implications. And I think we have to be clear about being willing to break with that and to not identify that whole political idea that evolve around the Three World Thesis as what it is - Mao Zedong Thought is going to confuse the matter and that represents a sharp break. If we always get into a thing of always raising, well, what part of Mao Zedong do we agree with and what part don't we agree with, where that whole view of the world is summed up by the people who advocate that view in like four words - Mao Zedong Thought. I think it is very good, I think it should remain as it is.

Paul,
Washington:

In that sentence it talks of the rejection of the Three Worlds Theory separately, so I'm not sure where that comes from. I would like some clarification from the Steering Committee what is meant by the _____, Mao Zedong Thought.

CN, SC:

When we talk about Mao Zedong Thought we are not just talking about Mao's writings or Mao's contribution to Marxism-Leninism. Because we are talking about a perspective on what does Mao's thinking represent to the working class struggle at this point in time. Now the Chinese, and I think you can see that at the end of the Bulletin Number One, the formulation put forward by the Minority around Point 18 was that Mao Zedong Thought is the Marxism-Leninism of the epoch of proletarian revolution and its reversal. Now I think that formulation is unfortunate and I don't think they would want to stand on it, but what I think that we have to realize is that there has been an attempt to codify Mao's thinking into the kind of advance, the level of advance that was represented to Lenin's contributions to Marxism - Leninism is the Marxism of the age of imperialism. It is an attempt to establish a new epoch in which Mao's thought is the correct application of Marxism-Leninism and I think that in this sense we are talking about the Three Worlds Theory, certainly, but we are talking about more than that. We are talking about a certain perspective that was developed on the question of restoration of capitalism, for example, or class struggle under socialism - the idea that revisionism in state power means the

the bourgeoisie in state power. The ideas associated with Bettelheim who has tried to take Mao's thought and apply it to the Soviet Union and come up with what I think is a very counter revolutionary thesis. And we are not saying that we are taking a position one way or another now on this thinking, but rather we are taking a perspective that this needs to be re-examined, that the Three Worlds Theory is bound up with a certain perspective on the class struggle under socialism, which I think is an idealist perspective. Now the amendment, I think, has the effect of trying to deflect the struggle against idealism. Mao Zedong Thought has strong components of idealism that needs to be re-examined and broken with. And that was brought out in the process of struggle around Point 18. Because we saw clearly that the argument put forward by the minority were based on a certain kind of thinking, a certain kind of methodology of dealing with questions of the relationship of politics and economics, and this amendment deflects us from re-examining what underlies their approach, their methodology, a bankrupt, idealist methodology.

Sara,
Philadel:

I agree with the Steering Committee. What this means to me is that to say that we not only are willing but we see a critical need to re-examine Mao Zedong Thought is a statement that, when we've made it before, in the process of the Point 18 struggle or individuals, organizations, it is held up as like heresy. 'How can..this is just proof of revisionism', that these group ings are willing to take a critical look at the Chinese Communist Party's line and Mao Zedong Thought and I think that we should be proud to be able to say that (we should) take this critical stand and examine the role of Mao Zedong Thought in the real world and that to me to be willing to put that forward as a formulation draws a line between dogmatism and flunkeyism on the one hand, and dialectical materialism on the other hand. And I see a need to really want to put that forward in the way that it is stated.

Tim Clemmons:

In rejecting the Theory of the Three Worlds, I feel that that is an important thing that has to be kept, and the thesis of the restoration of capitalism - I have no objection to that and if my amendment if speaking against that, I think misses the point. The point is that Marx, Lenin, Mao - all had significant influence in our movement - and in the communist movement historically in the sense that the social democrats vulgarize Marx, the dogmatists vulgarize well, just about everybody, but the question is that we can say the same thing - we need to re-examine Mao ⁱⁿ all the works and not take it in a dogmatic sense, but the question is then that everything, the question is not necessarily the work of Mao in the sense of how it has been vulgarized by the dogmatists, how has it been vulgarized by the CPC to carry out its ultra-left policies, not to speak to not being critical of the Three World Theory, or not being critical of the other dogmatic formations, but only to signify that Mao Zedong had significant influence in this movement, historically.

- PF, SC: I had similar problems with this too when it was first raised and discussed in the Steering Committee. And I think that the SC is critical of itself for not bringing this out clearly enough as we discussed this in all of the conferences around Point 18, that this was an underlying implication of the critical question of Point 18. What I want to say though is that without looking at Mao Zedong Thought as a whole we leave out the whole interrelatedness of the particularities, and I think that would be missing, if we didn't say Mao Zedong Thought.
- Chair: (Motion put forward by Tim Clemmons of Kansas City restates the amendment. That is to delete: "the need to re-examine Mao Zedong Thought" and Add: "the need to re-examine the vulgarization of the significant contributions of Mao Zedong." More discussion on the amendment follows.)
- ? I am opposed to the amendment because I don't think it is _____. The amendment says, "the need to re-examine the vulgarization of Mao Zedong". Now it seems to me that in this, in section number 4 it says: "need to re-examine Mao Zedong Thought." I don't understand then what the comrade is getting at. Is he trying to deflect an examination of Mao Zedong Thought? To me that's the implication of that. If it's not, please enlighten me.
- Chair: (Question is moved.)
- VOTE ON THE AMENDMENT (ABOVE):
- Tally: (Overwhelming majority votes against the amendment. No vote was counted.) (Tape ends here and picks up within a couple of minutes and returns to discussion of the resolution. Tape begins on next side in the middle of a statement by Phil of Detroit.)
- Phil,
Detroit: ...ultra-leftism rather than to submit it as a general sort of _____. I mean I don't think we have to change the resolution, but some fleshing out about how we are going to do this.
- CN, SC: I think that it has a profound relevance to the deepening critique of ultra-leftism, because I think that underlying the Theory of the Three Worlds and what has been presented to us as Mao Zedong Thought and much of Mao's thinking is a strong tendency to dogmatize Marxism, a strong tendency towards idealism, a strong tendency to violate the principles of dialectical materialism, and one of the things that we have to do in the process of deepening our understanding of the ultra-left line is go to the ideological foundation of ultra-leftism and within Mao's thought there is a certain perspective on all these questions, including questions of what is internationalism, questions of how one conducts the struggle against idealism. So, very much a part of the process of developing an all-sided summation of ultra-leftism is drawing out precisely to what extent is idealism operating

in ultra-leftism, is dogmatism operating in ultra-leftism and connect this with the views that have been put forward by Mao Zedong that have led to an incorrect international position and an incorrect position on the struggle against revisionism in socialist countries, so it is very much connected with that whole process of a critique and this lays a very good foundation for moving from the concrete to a more abstract analysis and investigation of the ideological foundations of ultra-leftism on international line and on other aspects of political line.

Laura,
NSSO:

I just want to raise that I think that there is some very heavy implications of the point that somehow are not being raised through the course of _____. I want to take this thing around Mao Zedong Thought and the thesis of restoration of capitalism in the USSR. Well, what I have heard a few comrades today put forward is the line that implicates in particular our understanding around the nature of the Soviet Union, now I always felt, and I thought this ^{was} something I learned from the Point 18 struggle that there was^a relationship between Point 18 and a position on the role of the Soviet Union in the world, and I think this has become more clarified during the course of the discussion today that there is that correlation between lines more and more. And I guess that's one of the questions I had around Point 18, about the Soviet Union and where do you put it in the world. And I guess that in this discussion it is more clear that people are talking about _____ (end of this sentence drifts off). I guess I have a question; I don't understand how people have arrived at that view within this body.

?

I think that what we are voting on here is not _____ whether the Soviet Union is socialist or any particular view on all of these questions in any way. What was meant is saying that there is a certain line of argument that has been predominant in the party building movement and has been dominated by the ultra-lefts. We are saying that the conclusion of it is totally opportunist and reject it. Now we reject the conclusions, but it doesn't show necessarily that everything in their argument is wrong, but it does suggest that we should look back and see how much of it is _____ of the ultra-left conclusion. So I don't think we should smuggle in a higher level of unity around the nature of the Soviet Union, but it does tell us to set the agenda for, as Clay was saying, the summation of ultra-leftism and deepening that summation of ultra-leftism.

Malachi:
Philadel:

In terms of point 5 of the resolution. I would like the SC to explain the consistency of point 5 to point b of the previous resolution, and is it stated more firmly because I cannot understand how point 5 can be in this resolution in light of the whole question of the vacillation, as far as I am concerned, around this line of demarcation.

CN, SC:

I think that point 5 is trying to consolidate politically within the majority the lessons of the struggle against conciliationism.

In fact, I think it is totally consistent with the previous resolution because in the previous resolution the majority decided that we did not need a Point 19; we did not need to add another point to our points of unity, that the 18 Points were sufficient to carry out the struggle against ultra-leftism and be a basis of unity of the OC. And with this perspective on the line of demarcation question, that that was a sufficient basis in order to move forward. And what we are saying here is that at the same time as we allow this minority to co-exist, by no means are we willing to give anyone any illusions that we think that there has been a strong conciliationist current both within and without the OC, which exists beyond the particular organization that we are talking about. I think that conciliationism of the left internationalism has also been manifested in other forces outside of the OC in regard to international developments and that those forces have a conciliationist perspective, so what we are trying to do is consolidate our political understanding, to draw out this point, to identify this conciliationism, and make sure we are consolidate while at the same time denying the minority view on the question of line of demarcation and the right to participate in the OC process.

Carla,
Philadel:

I guess I don't think that really answers it. I guess what I hear us saying is that point 5 is our political line that we must demarcate on and then we are making the other resolution an organizational resolution, and then says, 'but, this is our line, but this is what we are going to do'. And it seems to me, that my understanding is that your line dictates your organizational practice and it just seems inconsistent. (last sentence is unclear)

Kwazi,
Baltimore:

The problem that was raised by the brother from LA during the struggle around the question of demarcation line, was one that really _____ me over to a position supporting the resolution on the organizational question. And I think that, I mean we really haven't gotten into the discussion about the Local Centers yet, but what he was saying made a lot of sense to me and made very concrete some of the discussion yesterday about understanding ultra-leftism still being the main danger in this movement and also within the OC process and I'm not really sure, a 100% sure, in terms of being able to draw people into the Local Center process of the OCIC who have some questions about consolidation and need to be struggled with, and I think that that was a correct position.

Anna,
Philadel:

Clarification along the lines that she raised (Carla) in terms of the, I'm not trying to obstruct, I just really want to try to understand what I see as a very, very clear contradiction, and what I don't understand, to me the implications of the last part of point 5 would have led one to vote against the last resolution. Now given that the SC has presented us with this and does not feel that this is the case, I would like some more explanation as to what the, what should have been done if in fact the need to demarcate was not sufficiently related to the concrete task, and what that doesn't mean to the SC is that we should make that line of demarcation, then what does that mean to the SC, that's what I would like to know.

PF, SC:

The way I understand it, is that if we had come to unity around what we just talked about, point number 4 here, point 5 wouldn't make sense, the whole thing around membership would't make sense. But we do have unity that we are going to go ahead and re-examine Mao Zedong Thought, and re-examine the implications of that, and we have a firm basis now to do that, where we didn't before. We didn't before because we would have had people that had totally different views on for instance, capitalist restoration, sitting down at the same table with people that, with two different views on that question and would have been impossible to really coming to an understanding of it. So, for me, that's what was really important about it, that we do have unity and that we are going to move ahead and examine these questions, and therefore it wouldn't obstruct the work of the OCIC.

CN, SC:

I'm not going to speak to the question of supposed inconsistency but I do want to identify these errors that were made by the SC and the process in regard to this whole struggle around Point 18. And just recall them for people, because I think it is very important that we recognize the role of centrism politically, in relationship to a struggle like this. Number one, the Committee of Five made a profound error by not organizing the struggle over this line of demarcation question before the founding of the OC. It put the OC in a very difficult and contradictory position in its first year of life. At the February conference we could not have made the decision because we hadn't prepared it in the Committee of Five, but the Committee of Five underestimated the hold of ultra-leftism. We did not anticipate in the Committee of Five the strength of ultra-leftism on international line and on any number of other lines. And thus, did not prepare systematically to expose the ultra-leftism underlying the opposition to the content of point 18. That was one error. Another error was within the SC to a certain extent and certainly within the ranks of the OC, there was an unwillingness and a reluctance to polarize politically the discussion between those in favor of Point 18 and those against Point 18 as a line of demarcation. Some people tried to establish and felt that we should deal and take the Milwaukee Alliance's position as a legitimate third position and not lump the minority together and not force them to bring a common stand, and thus, objectively wanted to conciliate the Milwaukee Alliance and give them ground that they should not have been allowed to get as we have seen in the conclusion, so I think that there is another example of conciliation and the summation makes very strong the need to distinguish in terms of tactics between the shamefaced and barefaced position, but at the same time to draw out the essential unity of centrism and ultra-leftism in this period. And I think that is a very important point, I just wanted to clarify those errors.

Lowen,
Chicago:

I hate to take time, but I think it's really important that people come to understand the political process. The idea that somehow you are going to exorcise ultra-leftism from the organization by kicking out folks, excluding a few, is simply incorrect. On every position from this point forward in the development of the OC, there is going to be minority and majority, hopefully the majority

will be right in most cases. There is going to be ultra-left thinking. There is going to be rightist thinking. The fact that the majority has a clear understanding does not mean that a minority cannot exist in the organization and on every single issue this is going to continue to happen. And, to imagine that there is going to be purity, that somehow by getting rid of those folks, us folks will be able to avoid all future errors, is simply incorrect. The problem is understanding errors.

Bob,
Cincinnati:

Basically I support and strongly uphold the resolution and in terms of point 5 it laid an error. I'd like to lay out another error and offer what I hope will be a friendly amendment to this resolution. It seems to me that there was a key weakness in the whole process around the Point 18 struggle and that weakness was a failure to draw out and identify the element of national chauvinism that I think was inherent in the ultra-left argument and in the centrist argument. The OC Bulletin number one, the SC's position in that bulletin, touched on the subject in reference to questioning the ability of Third World leaders to actually make a real accurate assessment of world forces and their friends and enemies, but it never really drew out the essence of that which I think was national chauvinism, but I think it is important for us to understand that. There was a weakness also in the midwest conference around Point 18 and I don't know if it was a weakness that was in the other conferences, too, but again in the conference that point wasn't really brought out, clarified as it might have been. And now, I think we see it again a weakness in the document, the Struggle Over Principle 18 Summed Up. No where in that document is the element of national chauvinism within the centrist argument ever mentioned and I think it is rather incredible, actually that it is not even touched upon and it should be dealt with in some respect. We wrote a paper for the Point 18 struggle in which we identified chauvinism as an error on the subject and in the centrist argument and at the Regional Coordinating Committee meeting (midwest region) just recently I raised again the weakness in the Point 18 Struggle Summed Up, so I'd like to offer the following friendly, I hope, amendment: (and I would suggest that, if accepted, it be made Point 6 under Point 5 (of the resolution) as another error:

"Another error was the failure to clearly identify the chauvinist character of the centrist position, by claiming that national liberation forces around the world are incorrect in targeting the U.S. as the main enemy, and by presuming to warn these movements of the Soviet threat, the centrists objectively dismiss the experience of those liberation forces. Marxist-Leninists must consistently expose and break with all forms of national chauvinism."

TV, SC: I think it is definitely a friendly amendment, but I think it should be shortened in terms of bringing out the racism.

CN, SC: I regard the thrust of the amendment as friendly but I think it undercuts its own point if it's incorporated in another point and if it just restricts its attention to the centrists, because I think the ultra left line in the international situation is both profoundly

national chauvinist and profoundly racist and that's what should be incorporated as a separate, distinct point, the wording which could be worked out later.

Chair: (Entertains a motion to adopt the resolution as amended.)

VOTE:

Tally: FOR - 83 OPPOSED - 0 ABSTENTIONS - 1

Roger,
NSSO:

I think that the main reason for abstaining is that again, on the same basis that we talked about our opposition to this as a line of demarcation in this period. We voted as an abstention because in theory I don't have any disagreements with the international line ultimately. Perhaps after more thorough study and struggle should be a line of demarcation, but I am expressing the same thoughts that we have already brought out in our opposition to adopting it as a line of demarcation.

Chair: (A comrade from the conference requested time to speak to an issue which is not on the conference agenda. Chair asks the body to take a few minutes out of the agenda for it.)

Criticism of Racism at the Conference

Linda,
Philadel:

Maybe I should have raised this last night, it would have been a better context but, nevertheless, I did think it would be really important to raise now. It has to do with a criticism of the Chicago folks as well as, and probably more importantly, a criticism of all of us white comrades in the OCIC. And just to put it into a context for a moment. I don't want this at all to be taken as any kind of criticism around the work that the Chicago comrades have done to put this conference together, and, in fact, I think they really need to be commended for that. My point is around the characterization of the neighborhood that we are in. I found that in many instances when we first arrived here, that people were told that this is a bad and dangerous neighborhood. And I don't know if everyone heard that but I know it was put forward in many cases to folks coming to the conference, and that, in fact, in many of the leaflets that we received around the party and various other things, people were told to walk quickly through the neighborhood, not to walk alone, to use common sense and various other things of that nature. And I think if we really think about it, we will really kind of see where this is coming from. What in fact is a bad neighborhood? What is a dangerous neighborhood? In reality, if you look at this neighborhood, I think we are talking about the black community. If you look historically at the whole notion of a bad neighborhood, I think that that's what we are really talking about. What does a bad neighborhood mean? Who's bad? And who are they bad to? What is the basis of that? And I think those are really important questions for us to answer. I think the black people coming into this neighborhood, is not a bad neighborhood. That for black people going into white neighborhoods presents a very dangerous situation. And that to me when I really thought about it,

it really seemed as if we were trying to protect the white people of this conference and we have to recognize that this is a largely white conference. The important thing that I want to raise is that we didn't speak to it. I don't know how many people really analyzed it when we were first presented with it. I don't know how many people really spoke to it. I think when we talk about taking up the struggle against racism, that's one of the things we really need to speak to, and that really need to raise with comrades. And I'm not sure that that was really done. Now there was some discussion with some people about it, I think that we need to take not a whole lot of time right now, although I think we need to spend a whole lot of time thinking about it, I think we need to take a little bit of time to really evaluate our response to that and to really take a look at what this means for all of us. And I would like to hear some discussion around it, although I do think that the chair should set some kind of limit on this discussion.'

Cindy,
Chicago:

Yes, this was raised yesterday with the Chicago people and I think we thought about it and tried to review what the process was that we went through in terms of _____. If I thought that what we had been putting forward had an element of unconscious racism in it, then I would make a self-criticism. I would like to bring out how I really feel. I don't feel that that was true. First of all, when people came in, almost all day, up to about 9:00 or 10:00 we were telling people to go to the jazz festival, to walk around, to be very free, and it wasn't until 10:00 that we realized that that was a very liberal thing for us to have said, anyway, without thinking. Anybody who lives in a city knows that that's not what people should do in a city. But, the second point that I'd like to make, this is not the black community, that's just not the case. This is a transient community, this community is being leveled by urban renewal, and the question is not, I think, this is a black community and therefore that there is subjective racism here. In the transient community there is a lot of crime that takes place and that I don't think is a racial matter and so, I think that what we wrote up about the party, that the person that wrote up the statement saying stay together when you walk around, I know that the person who wrote the statement went through many changes, he was very conscious of the fact of putting forward a racist conception of that, and really made an effort not to do that, so for those reasons, I think that what the people here are raising, I would say, at the most is true, except when we put forward these kinds of things, I think you have to be very careful because it does lend itself to racism, but I question in this particular case what they are saying is borne out.

Lowen,
Chicago:

I'd also like to respond to this. I think in a sense some of the criticism is coming from an objectively racist place, because I think the point is that no one ever talked about the black neighborhood. In fact, this is not a black neighborhood, the place where the party is, is not a black neighborhood. The neighborhoods you would walk through to go to a restaurant is not a black neigh-

borhood. What I had written which got edited but I think presents the thinking I had, when we originally _____, one point was walking around the city. The contradictions of capitalism are very severe in a place like Chicago. Basically, it's a nice, working class town filled with decent folks, but craziness and crimes do exist. Don't be paranoid and use common sense walking around at night. Now these are for instances. I don't know if everybody is from cities. People might assume, for example, that riding public transportation late at night is perfectly safe. This is just not the case in Chicago. It's got nothing to do with race. Walking out to Grant Park, which is a big public park in the middle of _____, is in no way connected to the black community is not necessarily safe. The number of rapes that have happened in the city of Chicago in the area like Grant Park over the summer has been a major scandal in the city. Not a racial incident. Now obviously the _____ of _____ violence comes down heavier and victimizes heavier on people in national minority communities, but to simply talk about having a little sense when they may not be familiar with the problems that they come up against in the city, it not, I think, racist. That to assume that it is an attack on black people is assuming that violence and craziness is something that is part of the black community, instead of all of the working class community under capitalism.

Malachi:
Philadel:

We have seen who hangs outside this hotel, saw it last night, and we've seen it the night before, and some of us have been here before in this neighborhood. And in the context of the objective reality of what you will see tonight outside that to just pass it off as this is a white neighborhood, we understand that reality. Plus, some of us were told had this been at the "other Y", which I assume is the Y on the North side, I don't know, but had it been at the other Y, that this wouldn't have happened, and...(speaker is cut off here by Cindy from Chicago and she shouts out, "it would have been equally as dangerous". Words are exchanged back and forth between Malakai and Cindy which are not understandable on the tape, then Malakai says, "Why is it I can't speak?" Cindy replies, "I'm sorry, you mischaracterized." Malakai says, "I didn't quote you." Malakai then continues his original statement.) that, was told, that had it been at another Y, which I assume was the Y on the North side, that, in fact, we might not have said that formulation. The question that I raised, though, is what is a safe neighborhood in Chicago? What is the criteria for a safe neighborhood in Chicago, and safe for who? (Malikai is again interrupted by Cindy and she says, "we make no distinctions." Chair rules Cindy out of order.) Why is it all day long people have been struggling hard for the last day and a half and I can't talk? I don't want to talk no more.

Mickey;
Milwaukee:

I think all they are really saying is that common sense should be taken when walking around the city which I would hope that _____. The only thing I feel bad about is that myself personally and other people will be bringing it up, I've been in Chicago alot of other times, and I've never been warned by the people in Chicago about walking around in the streets, and I think the only thing you can really talk about is just some common sense, on the other side, that is in the area of

racism. I think it comes out most clearly if this conference would have been held in a small town, a predominantly white community, what kind of caution would the body as a whole been willing to take.

TV, SC:

I agree with that brother, too. And I think one of the things, an aspect of racism, not a conscious thing, like you were really thinking about that, but an aspect of racism, in my understanding, is when you say things and do things and don't take into consideration their effect on national minorities. And, I think that's clear, I haven't been outside alot...I used to live in Chicago, but I am disoriented to where I am, but the people here were black people that were in the hotel, so people were not going to say to draw out those kind of things, what kind of effect it would have in terms of how they would be interpreted and that is objectively racist, not a conscious thing on our part.

CN, SC:

I think one of the problems with it was the response of the Chicago comrades. I am sure that their intentions were precisely what they said. But I think one of the problems with the response is that they negate the role of bourgeois ideology. They negate the role of racism among white people in this country and among people in this room. Everyone has heard the slogan, I am sure, that the city is the Black man's land. Everyone has heard and seen in the press, talk about Detroit, Crime City; there's no need to let people know that the city is a place of high crime and dangerous conditions in a certain sense, but to put that out in a situation like this, and to raise it and to tell people to walk quickly through the neighborhood, is to play on those fears that have been propagated by the bourgeoisie and to just argue that, well, this is not a black neighborhood, or that these kinds of things were not our intent, just negates the pervasiveness of racist ideology in our society and the effect on the consciousness of people who are coming to the conference. It immediately brought into mind the propaganda that is put in the press about crime, about the "inner-city" areas, and all the myths that have been propagated by the ruling class in this country about that and who's responsible. And it really plays into racist ideology. I think that's the criticism that's being made. It's not the effect that it has on national minority people, it's the effect of that on whites, and the consciousness it raises in their minds and the reactions that it causes.

Chicago:

I think to a certain extent I have to take criticism that I think all the white people here, if they got on the L late at night, and three black men walked up to the train, you would feel a lot differently then if three whites walked up to the train and you were by yourself on the train. That we all have elements of racism within ourselves. We really have to struggle. And to that extent I accept the criticism. I wasn't conscious of underlying things. I really think it is important though, that we as communists have to take up the issue of violent crimes in the city and it is a difficult question, we don't want to say...it is a very easy thing to do, to say that its the blacks or Latinos...This is a pervasive attitude in the city and we have to be conscious of that. I mean, people know that just recently that lots of people have been killed in hold ups

and the real tragedy is someone was killed, we have to deal with the issue of crime in Chicago and any city. At the same time, all whites, and especially white communists, have to have that underlying view of racism and I hope that when I get on the L train late at night and there is nobody else on the car and a black walks on the car I immediately cringe a little, and I think all of us do that,...(last few words drift off here.)

Philadel: I think that last comrade's comments continue to obfuscate the point that was being raised by continuing to put it in a context of studying crime and violence in the city. Maybe that's one of our tasks, we can study racism right now in the room. I also just want to make a point that I think some people feel that they are covered if they are saying that they made the same comment to black women, or they think they are covered if they raise the issue of rape. To me that extends the problem even further by not even talking about ^{how} further racist ideology accompanies both of those errors.

**Keith,
Detroit:** I think the discussion should be continued. I think a lot of people made a lot of good points. There is one thing I have to say, because I had a gut reaction to it and that's, I didn't appreciate brother Malakai being cut off. It was like an uproar when he was trying to make his points. The discussion around the objective racism you can deal with on an intellectual plane, kind of think it through, but I had a gut reaction to that, and that was blatantly obvious. I think that he should be allowed to finish saying what he was saying because I think he was driving home some points.

Malachi: One point I wanted to make that was not made was, because of the rudeness of my comrade, was that the criticism, as far as I'm concerned, secondarily, criticism from the body at large, was that, the first time I heard it, I had to think what is a good neighborhood? Who in this society has to be told to be careful in a big city, that's like saying you got to eat, once in a while. I think that ..
(tape ends here.)

**Anna,
Philadel:** (tape picks up in the middle of Anna's point) I want to say a couple of things about the issue itself, though. I was one of the people who were warned and while it initially it made, I sort of stopped short because I was alone with the baby, and we all come from a big city and so you sort of feel vulnerable as a woman with a baby but what really struck me is that what I was told was that one block makes a big difference. I walked from the Hilton to here and what makes the big difference was the racial composition of that block and that's what made the big difference, and I think that if we think that none of us come from the country, we are not organizing in the country, every single one of us comes from a big city. We all know that women alone, no matter where they travel, may have problems. So why is there a need for that kind of a warning. I think it brings up one point I want to raise about it-in Philadelphia we had a struggle with some sections of the women's movement around the slogan, "Take back the

night." Now that slogan is geared around the question of an anti-rape movement, but what people failed to understand was the implications behind it - a predominantly white movement making a slogan "Take back the night", is essentially saying that Philadelphia is unsafe for white people, because of racism. That's what led to that kind of slogan. And we have to understand that. Because otherwise we are going to make these errors over and over again. There is no city where people, Lowen said somebody was shot around here, well, I'm sure that's true, people are killed in this society, in Philadelphia, and black people are beat up in front of hundreds of bystanders, now who would tell somebody that society ___ is dangerous.

Leslie,
Detroit:

Just briefly, I'd like to speak in support of the criticism, both of the outline for what to do around the party as well as what happened a little while ago with Malakai. And also to say that it became clear to me that the comrades from Chicago didn't understand it, when he was talking about rape over the past summer and that it didn't take on a racial tone. Rape always has, rape is always a racial issue, always. That's a historical development and it is a racial issue.

?

I think the attitude that white folks here just pointed out about the conference and the party _____ and about the OCIC. I think people tend to think that it is a white movement, it is a white organization and we are also trying to recruit some national minority people, and I think it comes out in one of the comrade's responses to the criticism when the person said "and we would all feel that when we got on the L-train at night". We wouldn't all feel that way, all the white people may feel that way. So I think the discussions are really good, and it's obvious that we have a lot of problems in overcoming this, and I think people have to start looking at themselves and how bourgeois ideology is affecting us.

Sara,
Philadel:

I just want to make some more general points coming off of this discussion about some of our formulations about racism. I thought about it yesterday and I couldn't really draw lines where people said objective racism and other people said subjective racism. I think that something that Anna said about "Take back the night," as a racist slogan. Some people might say, well, they didn't mean it to be racist, they meant it to be anti-rape, and not understanding the issue of rape, as Leslie said, as a racist issue in this society, they didn't realize that it would be racist and that it would be objectively racist. That's racism. That's not understanding the context, not understanding the history of national oppression in the society as a whole and _____. I think we have to be careful when we say well, subjectively racist in terms of letting ourselves off the hook. It racist, but we didn't mean it to be racist, and I think when we say 'objectively racist' we have to be careful about what we are saying there and how we are using that.

TS, SC:

Comrades, I don't intend to speak to the question of racism. Yesterday I presented the National Minorities Conference summation, but that ain't my job. I'm not in charge of the national minority aspect of the OCIC, so that I don't intend to speak to the racism question being raised here; I'm going to leave that to the white comrades today to speak to that question. I'm going to leave here and I think other national minority comrades are going to leave here clear that racism still exists in this OCIC. Just like some women, at least in Seattle, recognize that sexism still exists among many of the leading comrades who are males in Seattle, and they are willing to struggle with us to root it out, but in the meanwhile they are going to, they are clear that we are sexist, so we are going to be clear, many of us when we leave here today, that racism is still a major problem in here. I don't mean to speak to that. However, there's another deviation that was made in this paper (party leaflet) - a very clear error to me and I'd like to see people defend that one too. Because I think it's really bullshit and poor, the way folks are dealing with criticism. In the second paragraph it says, in the directions to the party in the second paragraph, and I don't know what color the bus drivers are. I assume they are white. It says: 'Despite appearances, CTA drivers can be quite friendly and helpful if treated politely.' What does that mean? That people who drive buses, that seems to me to be an anti-worker perspective that is being put forward there. People should speak to that too.

Sharon,
PSO:

A couple of points that I was going to make have been made by the other comrades. I would like to address the question of the defensiveness around what kind of neighborhood this really is, it's really not a black neighborhood. You describe this neighborhood as a transient neighborhood, one which is being torn apart by urban renewal. And I maintain that this neighborhood is objectively a part of the black community, no matter what color, without having to count how many people of different colors there are out there, that it is in fact the black community of the cities of this country that are being torn apart by that kind of thing. And it is essential that we understand that and that we understand the racism of that, and that we fight against it, that we preserve the quality of the black communities of this country and the political power base that exists and that is being specifically and consciously eroded by the ruling class. It is interesting that we called our, the euphemism for this, the Organizing Committee for Neighborhoods. I had a conversation with a guy at the desk when I came in: 'what are you guys doing?' So, I made it up as I went along, and I got over to discussing how neighborhoods are changing and being destroyed by speculation and other things, and people being pushed out of the cities and stuff, and he said, 'oh, that's right, but we can't do anything about that, that's the way it is and it is happening right around here.' And then we went into a whole discussion about whether we could do anything about it or not. And he ended up saying, 'well, I guess you're right, we can organize a little bit, if we are really strong and we really have a base, but we have to remember that we are going up against the power structure and we have to be really strong, and

we are never going to be really strong unless we get of racism.'

Pam,
Milwaukee:

What I am responding to is the general situatin and not so much the particular criticism around racism, because I was going through my own thinking. After coming out of the February conference last year and the whole struggle around racism at that conference and I learned alot through that struggle, and yesterday I was remarking after the presentation of the discussion on the National Minority Conference report, 'boy, we really made advances; the difference between that conference and this conference is like the difference between night and day, and we really dealt with the question of racism well.' And then this whole thing came up, again. It made me realize that my own understanding of how well we dealt with it is pretty superficial, and that our understanding of it is not very thorough, and that when it comes too close to home, then we back into the same kind of stuff we had before, we get all upset, we think, oh that's not true, and we don't want to deal with it, and I think it behooves us not to _____ and for white people here especially not to totally view the thing- 'this is a mistake these people in Chicago made and we all get up and criticize it', because really when I first heard the criticism, I thought, oh, well, people are getting too hyper about this stuff, it's not that big of a deal, and, I think, some of my feelings yesterday about feeling things were really deepened..show that while I didn't make the error, my understanding of it isn't that deep and I think we should be really careful in the way we raise it not to orient it toward particular white comrades in the organization, because really any of us could have made that mistake pretty easily. Sometimes some of us keep our mouths shut because we don't want to make a mistake and we don't want to get called on it. That's just withdrawing from the struggle.

Lowen,
Chicago:

First of all, to comrade Malakai, I sincerely apologize. That was completely uncalled for and I accept the criticism. In general, I think, there are some correct criticisms being made - the problem is sorting it all out. Because I don't think on the other hand it is correct everytime someone accuses a white person of being racist, for them to say yes, yes I was racist. You have to really decide whether it's true or not. One of the problems is that alot of different people said things. Now if anybody ever said something about this is a bad neighborhood, then they were wrong. That I think has a racist connotation. I didn't say that. Other people from Chicago might have. People talked about safe and unsafe neighborhoods, then that was wrong. I think there was probably a misunderstanding on our part about how much people understood about what's it like living in Chicago, maybe because whenever we tell anybody we're from Chicago, they say, 'oh, boy' you, know, 'that must be something real special'. I mean, the fact of the matter is I drove a cab in Chicago nights for 4 years. I do have a sense that there is violence and crime in Chicago and when I wrote the thing that I wrote which never quite got printed, I very consciously considered the issue of racism and whether it was racist to even raise this issue. I still maintain that to warn people from

out of town to be a little careful because they don't necessarily know what is going on in the city. I just heard about 30 people speak, you know, I'd really like a chance to respond. I don't think that in itself purely as a warning to folks is racist. The question is how it is done, what is said. I think there have been some misassertions about what in fact was said. Now like I say, I'm not sure what everybody said, but to simply say be careful to folks who might not be familiar with an area, is not in itself racist. We were not talking, I was not talking about this neighborhood around this hotel. I was making a general comment to folks who I thought might be sightseeing and wandering around the city after the conference at night. I had, in my own mind, no intention to referring to any particular area of the city. It was just a general comment about the city. I just want to really say that I'm listening carefully to what people are saying, I'm trying to see where things are, in fact racist, and come from a racist understanding, but it is important not to simply accept everything as being racist, because no one wants to be racist. I would really ask folks to speak to the question of whether, in essence, to warn people from out of town about potential dangers in the city of crime and violence, no matter how it is done, is, in essence, racist.

Kae,
Detroit:

I want to share the concerns of the comrade from Chicago in terms of not wanting to be racist because I share that concern too. And it is very simple for me to talk about other people's racism, but what is much more difficult for me to deal with in the last few months is my own. And what that meant, then, is that I did get defensive, like 'who me? my god, I would never be racist, right?'. And it took comrades on the Planning Committee to point that out to me and in the process, and I really want to explain this, in the process of being objective about it, what happened is that I grew alot. White people because of the racist society we live in are racist. Now the question is are we consciously struggling against that. And it's not a flagulating thing, and it's not a 'I got to beat my back' kind of thing, but it is objectively what _____, what you do, and how you internalize bourgeois ideology and for me the concern is not that we are going to avoid racist errors, because we are going to, we grew up in this society, but are we really willing to struggle around it. And one of the things I want to point out is that I spent some time in Chicago in the late 60s around up town and I think around the 1968 convention, you know who scares me in Chicago that I worry about - the cops. They scare me to death, because they were mean and they hurt us. The neighborhoods didn't hurt us. And the last thing I want to say, I know when we were walking out of the dinner place last night, we saw a guy being pretty much man handled by the police. I don't know what happened, but the treatment that the guy got was out of order in terms of 3 guys and 2 guys against this one short guy who wasn't doing anything that I could see. The last thing I want to say is that the struggle against racism is going to become important only in so far as we figure out how we are going to be able to convince people that, white people, the struggle against racism is in their interests and that we internalize _____ struggle against that as an example and as a model as communists.

Pat,
Seattle:

I'd like to bring out one more example of things that have happened in the last day or so to drive this home a little bit more. And I also want to recognize that when I first read those comments about Chicago and so on, I didn't feel comfortable with the formulation but I didn't let myself think about it. I mean I just looked over it and didn't really think about it, didn't let myself think about it, and to reflect in myself about what are the things that I am uncomfortable about with these statements. I think that we all have to obviously fight against that, that overwhelming ideology that is in all of us. But last night after the meeting broke up and we were going to go to dinner, my roommate and I went up to the room and she is a Chicana woman from Seattle, and it took her about 10 minutes piling through all of her belongings, I mean she wasn't going to let this, you know, not happen. The fact is that she had to pile through all of her belongings, look through all of her suitcases, her purse, all of her papers and everything to find her drivers license. And the reason is because she said, 'Chicanas don't go out without identification, especially not in the city of Chicago.' And even then I didn't listen, you know, I should have been one of the people like the comrade who first brought it up to bring this forward, but I just wasn't listening. Anyway, I think that there is another, obviously the most important and the primary aspect of this is racism, but I think there is also an element of paternalism in terms of sexism that the women here can't think for themselves, that they need to be protected, that they have to _____ in order to prevent themselves from being raped.

Cindy,
Chicago:

One thing I'd like to say about Chicago, and that is that this is our first all OCIC meeting, and I think we probably could have benefited alot had we been in the OC and had we participated and been able to be involved in the last struggle around racism. And that becomes clear to me through this discussion. The one real strength of the OC, particularly its leadership, and I'd say I see manifested especially from the people from Philadelphia, is their ability to target opportunism, and I think this is various things, but I think racism is one of the key issues. I've also seen it around international line. But that is very important and I think that the ability to target those kind of things are very important. I want to apologize to brother Malakai. I was the one that interrupted him and the reason I did was because he mischaracterized one thing that was said. The only thing I would say is that people should not try to exaggerate or mischaracterize what people say in order to prove their point; however, I was reacting on that point and that was out of defensiveness and I wasn't responding to the real question because the real question is the more general question and I believe that the way in which it was stated by Clay that this particular formulation isn't put forward in the context of bourgeois ideology and the way in which people that we, in particular, we who are white look at a particular issue. I would accept the criticism.

Dennis,
LA:

Maybe we need to reflect ^{on} this a little bit more because it doesn't really matter whether brother Malakai was distorting what she said or

not, that is really irrelevant to cutting him off. That is a secondary question. I think you need to reflect on some of the comments that have been made a little further. I'm going to speak to probably a little bit of exaggeration here on this whole question of Chicago, also. The comments that people made before about _____ we need to reflect on also. One of the things that is pointed out by the discussion here and yesterday and my knowledge of the history of the Communist Party is that the struggles we are going through are continually necessary in order to strengthen our ranks. Anytime that we are not going through it just weakens our ranks, so I really do want to support the comments that everyone has raised and I think it is going to strengthen us all and anytime we fail to do this type of thing and take time out of a regular agenda for it, I think we will be that much weaker for it. I think we _____, even if necessary, to go beyond the lunch hour. The comment that Tyree made about the CTA bus drivers, I think it both relates to racism and to certain anti-working class attitudes. I really can't quite understand where the hell this statement is coming from. It is quite apparent that CTA drivers can be quite friendly and helpful if treated politely. I would like to see more, someone try to explain this statement because on the face of it, makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. I don't know what the hell appearances is supposed to mean about CTA drivers. It's mindboggling to just read the statement.

Lowen,
Chicago

I don't think any of us who are here from Chicago know where its from. (Someone shouts out that it is on the directions to the party.) I'm sorry I didn't see it.

Carla,
Philadel:

I think we've got to look at something even broader and to try and first of all , I accept the self-criticism because when I read it I was uncomfortable it, but I wasn't the comrade from Philadelphia who raised it. And I think even she accepts a self criticism. There are a couple of points. One is that to take it out on just Chicago I think my self-criticism for all of us to look at it, and I hope you don't mind me using you as an example, but I'm going to. In the elevator yesterday, when the black service worker elevator operator started saying where's the passes which is just a pain in the ass, you know - you got real like kind of rammy about it. And like when we got off my other comrade here said, 'well, wasn't that guy a little bid weird to that guy, what do you think the dynamics going on there?' So I think comrade Tyree raised the question about bus drivers and workers which in fact if you want to look at the main _____ in terms of service workers and if you want to look at the racial composition of service workers in this society you will see that they are overwhelmingly black. I think everybody can think about what has their relationship been to the elevator operator. What has your relationship been to the people standing behind the other side of the counter in the cafeteria. Have you been just barking orders? Have you been just getting along calling out your number, being irritated after for asking it and doing their job or have you seen them as your equals and as members of the working class? I think that's one thing. The other thing is that I think

that for white people when they are being criticised for racism the first thing they raised today, well, you wouldn't want me to just accept it if I disagree with it and to just go on about the danger of just accepting criticism blindly. It's just a furthering of the racism. It's just like, you know, trying to get out from under. Nobody here is asking people from Chicago or anybody else to just get up and beat their breasts and say, 'oh, my god, I was racist.' We are trying to get down on what racism really is, how all of us can improve our understanding and forge ahead in unity, and I really think we've got to get off of that kind of a level. And finally, and I don't want to conclude further discussion, but I think a summation of this discussion in the form of a motion that would give us a show of how many people feel that _____ the criticism has been _____.

Anna,
Philadel:

(clarifies what the motion is put forward by Carla) I think what the motion is that the OC as a body go on record in support of the criticism and self-criticism for racism in the characterization of the neighborhood and also for the nature of the discussion which itself shows clear racism.

CN, SC:

I just want to make very brief points. I support the motion. I think that comrade Cindy from Chicago did not really, in some ways tried to get off by saying that the comrade (Malakai) was distorting her position, because comrade Malakai did not say that you had said that, did not say that you had distorted that question, but you assumed that he was talking to you when he said people told me that you told. And I think that just shows the defensiveness and the extent of defensiveness around racism. One other point that I want to make - people have said we're all from cities here, right? The implication being that people from the country are less aware and less prone to racist attitudes toward the city. I think that's the kind of mentality that is dangerous from a number of standpoints. First of all, it profoundly underestimates racism. Secondly, it plays into the kind of conception, the bourgeois conception that racism stems from contact with minority peoples, right? So, I think we have to guard how we talk about this. People who come from the country, I am sure you have no reason to acquaint them with the so-called dangers of the city.

Bobby,
Detroit:

I want to really support the resolution, and I also feel that the resolution is aimed at all the white comrades here but to me, I would like to offer a friendly amendment, if it is friendly, because I don't think it goes quite deep enough. I don't know if this is appropriate, but one of the things I was really impressed with when I visited Cuba last year was the way they dealt with similar kinds of problems in terms of contradictions among the people, and what really impressed me was that this kind of discussion would be the first stage of talking about these kinds of problems, and then the deepening process began. And as a friendly amendment, and again I'm not just targeting the folks from Chicago, but my feeling is that this has not been really well internalized, and there are still alot

of questions is that, number one, a very thorough discussion be held internally within the collective and that the results of that be brought to the SC and that, in a form of a written evaluation of what happened and that it be made a part of the entire conference proceedings. As the second step, the deepening of this whole process. I don't feel comfortable with just leaving it to a resolution and I don't know if that is friendly.

Carla: If it could be modified that all groups should go back and take this up.

Malachi: This may have just been said just now, but I just want to say that there is no doubt in my mind, and I would argue in terms of the overwhelming majority of the national minority people here, that had this never occurred, that it is still going to happen. And I'm not trying to be cute with words, but I just want for people to be clear that had this never occurred, it still will happen. People can't tell me that they can just walk outside that hotel last night when the meeting was over and not have _____ things in mind that Chicago comrades are taking the majority of the heat for. I don't think that their error, as far as I'm concerned, was primary. I think what was primary was the error of this body. I think the error was secondary _____. So I would hope that, however the resolution is worded, that it reflects, not the Chicago comrades separated out from this entire body, but the fact that it speaks to and some comments have already said, a profound problem. Just one other thing is that when, the exaggerations about Chicago, they are just blowing my mind, I just never heard that, when I talk about Chicago and Philadelphia, and when I talk about Cicero, I talk about the Chicago police. I know what Theresa was talking about, I.D. in this country, if you are national minority. So that when we talk about these things I think we can deepen the fact that what white people talk about when they go to the city and what national minority people talk about _____ and it ain't the concern of getting raped.

Carla: (Suggests that the Steering Committee should draft the resolution to be presented later.)

Irene,
LA: I want to support the thrust of all groups and individuals going back to their locale and bringing this discussion back. I think that we need to spend some time in this discussion to further clarify the essential issues that have come out. I think Malakai just brought up a really good point. We need to deal more with the essential issues. (Speaker in in back of room and cannot get last couple of sentences on the tape.)

Mark,
New Bedford: This is not absolutely essential but I think it is important and that is the relationship of this discussion to the work that organizations or individuals have done in their localities. I think what's unclear to me and other comrades here from For the People is that we made racist errors in relationship to the issue of neighborhoods and housing deterioration in dealing with that issue without bringing out

the issue of racism in relation to that, so I think that if there is going to be some discussion or resolution that there should also be some way that comrades are going to analyze their work in this area outside of this conference and try to deepen their understanding of racism in relation to that. I don't know if that is absolutely essential.

?

I'm sorry if you don't think this is essential but there is something that a couple of speakers commented on and the whole question of women, and rape, and racism, we commented on the slogan "Take Back the Night" and I have to say that when I first heard that and people started criticizing, my immediate reaction was well what about women and then I realized the _____ that people and particularly women, even if they are not from the city, particularly if they're not from the city, they come to a city and the first thing they say, 'what's dangerous, what's safe to do? They immediately say and think for themselves what precautions to take to avoid being raped, and so I would also like to agree with the comment that this was also paternalistic.

Linda,
Philadel:

I guess probably because I was frustrated because I couldn't get to speak again, but it may have been a weakness in the original way that I put it forward, I just want to raise the point that I don't want the Chicago people, though I think they have a lot of work to do to really deal with this criticism, I don't want them to take the heat that initially, my response to the whole thing was a self-criticism and a criticism of the body, and when we take it back to our organizations, that is how we have to view it. The question is, do we take up the struggle against racism. If we don't take it up here with our comrades, what about in general taking up the struggle against racism. If we don't think we can do it here, what does that say about whether or not we can do it with white workers. I think that we need to really deal with that.

Kwazi:

Just one thing. I think it is really important to understand that these errors in taking up the struggle against racism, that our entire tendency is going to really have to deepen its theoretical grasp of the problem of racism, and not merely its manifestations in practice, and this is one of the more significant things that came out in the resolutions of the National Minorities Conference, was the need to deepen the theoretical understanding of racism. In this particular case it shows itself very concretely and yesterday in the discussion about the National Minorities Conference and brother Lowen here from Chicago got up at one point and expounded the theoretical advances that came out of the conference, even though he had not seen the documents. And yet he was concretely able to say that he did not understand where the racism came to play in this situation today, and while folks didn't agree with me, didn't understand the certain essence of why I was opposed to the affirmation of the vote yesterday on significant and successful a conference we had. I think this kind of illustrates to me, and I hope this will be taken up as part of our resolution yesterday.

Draft Plan for an Ideological Center

(The first part of Tyree's presentation on the Draft Plan was missed from the tape.)

TS: We think that's how leadership will be able to assert itself in the context of how this draft plan is being put forward now. Finally, the opportunity for us to rid ourselves of 'leftism' in the final analysis is not going to be done except in the context of an ideological center. The thing about 'leftism' that while we are breaking with 'leftism' in a lot of ways, some folks talked earlier about it not just a matter of declaring it, and drawing a line of demarcation and it's out, I thought folks were discussing Mao Zedong and Mao Zedong Thought, and I looked around and I see T-shirts with Karl Marx on them, and T-shirts that say 'Right On for the Sandinistas', etc., etc., etc. And I talked about how on the one hand folks from Chicago said send in these other names, folks are saying 'check in over here, sleep over here' and we come with a red flag. So that those folks think this is humorous, after the experience in 1927 and the Chinese Communist Party was defeated and they slashed off those red bandanas and the Kuomintang came and got them anyway because they all had sun burns and their necks were red. So that when Mao says we should be like fish in the sea, it grew out of concrete experience. So we still got some leftist tendencies but come around with our red flags on. In the process of building an ideological center, we are going to rid ourselves of those tendencies, the serious ones, as well as the ones I was just talking about, that are going to become serious when we become a serious threat to the bourgeoisie. But the Ideological Center itself will be the only way we will clearly come to understand our leftism. In every situation we are going to have to criticize ultra-leftism, not just in the context of the left internationalism, but when we talk about the question of racism, when we finally do come up with a position on that question, we are going to have to look at that question. It ain't like we can just all take up ultra-leftism now and be finished with it. We have drawn the line, we just spent three years on it, build an ideological center and ultra leftism is gone, when we take up the question of racism, we are also going to look at what is the ultra-leftist view on the question of racism. What was the position of the ultra lefts on sexism? On every question we are going to critique the position of the ultra left on the question. That can only be done in the context of an Ideological Center. So I don't know that if Clay had made this presentation I am sure you would have started someplace else, but I hope folks can understand how some of us other folks see it in the context of the real world. I think he would have talked about it in the context of the real world, but the SC criticized him for starting out with the assumption that folks are at a different place. And I don't make that error. I'm clear that most of us are on page two. So that I hope the discussion don't go to page 20 in a day. What we are supposed to do today is start on page one comrades.

- Chair:** (Clarifies that what we want to focus on in the discussion is anything that needs to be changed or added in order to begin circulation in the tendency, or things that are unclear about it.)
- Louisville:** Our proposal speaks to a very basic aspect of the Ideological Center. Our whole thing has to do with during the period of the IC we want to insure that the theory that we are developing has a means for being tested thoroughly in our movement. We don't feel that the Draft Plan at this point allows for the testing of that theory in enough of a way, so it's not like a separate question. We feel that the DP as it now stands doesn't speak to the testing of our theory and practice enough to make it a viable document drawing in enough people to the IC.
- Karen, LA:** I have a question about the direction given to the discussion. I understand that we are not going to have a thorough discussion or move to adopt the proposal, but in the directions given on how to discuss it there is a phrase that we should consider the proposal in the light of whether it is adequate for protracted ideological struggle and outreach, and I don't understand that differentiation and I don't understand what it means to have the kind of discussion we are supposed to have around the Draft Plan. In particular, I don't understand whether that means that we see the Draft Plan internal to the OCIC, external to the tendency, I don't understand the role of the Draft Plan in moving people closer to the OCIC. It's not clear to me the separation between ideological struggle and outreach.
- TV, SC:** I think it was a confusing formulation. I think the intent is that it is for use for full discussion throughout the whole tendency. The main thing is to carry out the struggle over differences around it and hopefully together try to reach some common agreement about how we see this ideological center. I mean, I think indirectly, a byproduct of that, obviously in terms of relating to new forces, it is something we would show them in terms of how we see and how we are discussing this whole idea of an IC and help move people forward, but it is different from the kind of document, say like what we would use in the south, in terms of trying to reach out at the first level in terms of what the OC is about. But I think it is interrelated and there is an aspect of that that we would use for outreach.
- PF, SC:** It is also seen as a document to use in the next period, not so much to consolidate internally around it, as it is to develop it and refine it, because what would be missing if we were to move to consolidation around it at this point, we would be missing the idea that we have to take this plan out to the tendency as a whole and for that reason this is going to be a whole process of developing it.
- Irene, LA:** I still don't understand, the Draft Plan as it stands is _____ for the body to decide whether or not in this form it gets used with the broader tendency in ideological struggle....(few words unclear here). I think what Tyree was bringing out in his presentation is the essential

problem is that we didn't begin on page one. It has to go through the stages.....(unclear) so it is still a little unclear to me are we trying to develop this proposal so that it will be adequate to use in educational work, ideological struggle in the broader tendency?

TS, SC:

Remember the process that went on when the Committee of Five sent out those four or five questions? This is the first time, now, that an all-tendency wide process can come again, so that I think, yes, in the final analysis, we want that kind of document, the kind of document that we can take and say this is what leads to an IC, these are the concrete steps that are in the beginning stage and this is how we can do it along the way, and really try to win folks to the OCIC. Some people think that this is a sufficient document now to do that; those folks in the local areas and in the local center might want to start on the basis of that. Other folks think that it has major shortcomings, let's say. Those folks ought be in fact writing papers, polemics, talking about differences. Any attempt at us in trying to develop that today is an error, so that the process now is to take it on tendency wide ... (last few words are unclear).

(Another question in the same vein is asked which can barely be heard on the tape.)

TS, SC:

Let me just answer this. The document is primarily not an outreach document. That's not the primary purpose of the document. The primary purpose of the document is so that the OC can unite around, in effect, how you build an ideological center. That's the primary purpose of the document.

CN, SC:

I think what we were trying to do with this document bound up with our conception of the process of forging an ideological center. And that is that it's not going to be the people in this room, necessarily, who are going to forge this IC. We want to engage as much of the tendency as possible, and how does one go about doing that? What we wanted to do was we wanted to prepare an initial document, not a document that we would demand consolidated unity around in this form and would be come the position of the OC, because in these wider struggles and discussions that we want to generate there may be positions and perspectives and criticisms that are raised of the document that we can unite with and incorporate into the document and in the perspective. So that the purpose is to come up with a document which the body assembled here feel is a suitable basis to begin that process of generating discussion and struggle. Alright? And in that sense it is primarily one to raise the points, and to consolidate as much as possible ideologically the tendency around the perspective of the single center, but it also has an aspect of trying to popularize these ideas. So that the question of style and its ability to communicate and establish the conceptions and deal with the question of where people are at are real questions that should be raised. Criticism along those lines should be directed toward the document. But ^{what} people need to point out is do you have fundamental disagreement, or do you think there is some-

thing fundamentally wrong with what is said? Do you think that there is a major question that should be addressed that is not addressed in the document and do you think that there are some fundamental changes that will enhance the ability of this document to serve as a foundation for this discussion? And it is bound up with our conception that it is a tendency wide process, it's not the OC that's going to establish itself as the leading center of this process without broadening and engaging the tendency as a whole in the discussion.

Phil,
Detroit:

I hope this isn't a clarification...(few words unclear). It seems to me that within the document there are a number of general formulations which _____ make sense you decide, but generally whether these formulations are correct or generally correct or not, and within the process decide how we should specify that, but also in the document are a number of specific formulations which would seem helpful to me if the SC were to identify what they would understand as the kinds of things that we should see as general formulations, the point being to decide whether or not we have agreement generally or not agreement generally with those formulations _____, then identify what are things that we don't, that the SC would not see us as _____, very specific kinds of formulations that we enter into struggle around that.

TS, SC:

Let's take one example. The one I raised in the presentation. Earlier there was this concept, where it came from, I don't know, but the first Draft Plan, that came out, said that, kind of characterized development in terms of steps. The first one is the Organizing Committee and then we form this Ideological Center, then a leading Ideological Center, and in time a Communist Party. It kind of went from here to there. The pre-party and then the Party. This one has made a major break from that. Some folks in here might unite around that other one. This one here says that never will any pre-party formation that develops along side, and develop in the context of the anti-revisionist movement, never will any of those pre-party formations supplant the OCIC. That rather than, as Irwin would say, organization become a fetter on ideological struggle, that them folks cannot come to the OC with their local and national organizations leading, all of them come as individuals, and never supplant the OCIC. Now that's a major break from the old Draft Plan. Now some folks in here might say, no, that's incorrect. We think that we in this room and other folks should become after this the leading Ideological Center, then a pre-party formation, and then the Party. People who have that opinion should raise it now as a fundamental difference and be prepared to carry out ideological struggle in the next period around that question. That's what it seems to me that the SC meant when we talked about the document and whether major differences should be raised here. So, and of course, points of clarification. We've had the opportunity to discuss it in terms of clarification and struggle around it. The OC hasn't had that opportunity; that should get raised.

Greg,
Minneapolis:

This is just a short thing on the presentation of the Draft Plan, it says plenary discussion and vote (on the conference agenda). I am

confused on exactly where the OCIC is going to start, what question is it going to start on. Within Minneapolis there was a question around this and we put out, the Minneapolis Socialist Committee, put out a paper about, trying to figure out where is it going to start. Is it going to start about the argument about the basis of ultra-leftism, or dogmatism versus semi-_____. Are we going to talk about different political lines on ultra-leftism. Are we going to talk about party building and different party building lines. So what exactly is that going to be? One other point, there is a position on the first page of the (document) on the consolidation of revisionism in 1957 and I know a lot of people that agree with that, but that's not a consolidated position in the OC, yet, so that perhaps would be _____.

CN, SC:

It's a question of political conception, not a question of clarification. And, the question where the ideological center is going to start - the answer to that is in some ways it has already begun and I think that what we are trying to develop a conception of is the process through which a leading ideological core of Marxist-Leninists will emerge with the capability of addressing and solving the major problems that are raised by the US revolution. And the Draft Plan is an attempt to establish and identify what's necessary for a foundation for that process and what is the framework, what are the kinds of principles that will develop through struggle and on what kinds of questions do we need to focus in order to allow that to come about. But the OC has taken steps in that direction, and certain forces have played a leading role, and in a certain sense very prematurely, I don't want to glorify, the process has already begun. But it will mature, there will be realignments, there will be forces that are presently in leadership who will fall to the rear of the ranks, and there will be other forces who will emerge in leadership through this process. There are certain conceptions about how that process is going to develop. On the question of ultra-leftism and how we see taking that up, I think that really is a discussion that is more appropriate to the OC's First Year conception, because it talks about immediate tasks. In so far as the Draft Plan is concerned what we are saying is that the critique of ultra-leftism is a very necessary part of the foundation of the emergence of such a process, and that what we are talking about is an all-sided critique, we are not just talking about furthering the critique in one particular area, limiting it to a critique of ultra-leftism around international line, nor are we talking about just dealing with party building line, we are talking about identifying the major deviations in ultra-leftism on questions of political line and identifying the common ideological roots and also the material basis of ultra-leftism in the communist movement. And that's part of laying the foundation for maturing this process.

Irene,

LA:

I'd like to identify a crucial element in the document that really merits discussion by the body. Probably one of the things we are trying to talk about is, we are not trying to reach unity on the formulations in the document, except that which is something

that we can continue to struggle over within the broad tendency as a whole. The OCIC members, as I understand it, don't have to be consolidated on all the issues, but what we have to have an understanding of it as a basis in the tendency as a whole. The conception of the break, how we originally understood the development of an ideological center and how that has developed in the last period is crucial. I know that through the _____ of documents that there (what is missing) is that new formulation. I would like to ask, first, for a clarification of the SC's position on that.... (unclear words here)... around what are the stages leading to a leading ideological center. I think that the OC evaluation of the first year made clear what our immediate tasks are and this body voted to adopt that. Then, as I understood, what I have some confusion on is the development of a national center. Does the national center move to an ideological center that moves to a leading ideological center, or is the conception of the national center synonymous with an ideological center? Or is this formulation trying to figure out what the difference _____? I hadn't heard this conception of a national center before.... so I have to think about it. I think it would be good if it were clarified what the position is before we talk about differences.

TV, SC:

I think part of understanding this document is there's no basis now for a leading ideological center, in many ways because there is not a leading core to lead that process forward. That kind of core is not emerged yet. My understanding of the national center, the national center will form after the tendency as a whole is consolidated around a plan of how to build this ideological center. And at that stage there is a national center formed which will provide a mechanism in terms of carrying out the theoretical struggle and ideological struggle for a leading core to emerge, and then the ideological center.

Irene:

Is there a difference between a national center and an ideological center and a leading ideological center?

TS, SC:

Clay said a few minutes ago that something has already begun. So this Organizing Committee is in a sense represents a national center. When it takes on more consistent ways to carry out ideological struggle, when people are _____ from Miami, to Seattle, to New York, to San Diego, and all points in between, then it is more of an ideological center, but it doesn't mean anything until it has asserted itself. I mean at this point I think Irwin Silbur is correct in saying that they don't see an ideological center. We could change our name tomorrow and say we are an ideological center, but neither one of them would be a leading ideological center. At the point that we assert ourselves in terms of coming up with some theory that can answer some questions raised by the American revolution, then we become a leading ideological center. Does that answer your question?

CN, SC:

Basically what Tyree said, I think, is correct. What I want to do is try to identify what I think interferes with people understanding this, and that is because of a kind of mechanistic way of approaching questions, people tend to, when they think of center, they think of

a physical center, in the sense of an office somewhere. And they see national center, ideological center, leading ideological center as if there are clearly defined stages, you know, you go from this office to this office, a little bigger, and a little more forces involved to a real big office. That's not what we are talking about. What we are talking about is making a transition where there is no leading ideological core for a party, in other words, the elements to forge a central committee for a revolutionary party is something that has not emerged. Right? So the question is then we have a lot of people who have a lot of positive strengths, we are all isolated in various localities with a lot of political differences. And how do we move from there, from here to there? So, then the first step we have to make is that we have to establish some process on a national basis where these forces can come together and exchange their views and at the earliest stages it has more of a character of a center without the ideological leading character to it. As that process matures it becomes more and more ideological, it has more and more a defined point of view, more clarity on general ideological questions, more and more it becomes the focal point for ideological struggle in the movement as the process moves out of the local organization and the regional situation, moves toward centralizing on a national basis, and begins, if it correctly solves the problems that are posed in that process, to take on a leading character. What we are trying to say by saying a national center first is that we don't want people to be misled by what we think we are at this point. We are not asserting ourselves as the future central committee of the US communist party. That's the Network. Our line is to allow the process to gradually emerge to set the framework to establish the process where this leading character can grow and can emerge so that it will be identified by the bulk of communists in the movement and will show its leading character. It's not getting a little group of people off in a room and hammer out the line, and then to try to put it over.

Emily,
New Bedford:

I am still confused about whether you were saying that there are two phases, a national center, and then a leading ideological center, or whether there are three phases - a national center, an ideological center and then a leading ideological center. I understand a national center, while it is not a leading ideological center it is ideological, so we thought you were talking about two phases.

TS, SC:

I said earlier that we start out, we are at this point, in some sense we are a center, but we are an organizing committee primarily. This center will make a transition into an ideological center, that's another step, and finally, we'll have to answer some questions that are posed by the American revolution, then we will become a leading ideological center.

Emily:

I think it is very unclear in this document and I guess I understand what you are saying now. I understand what you are saying but I think it ought to be clarified in this document,

CN, SC:

I think what's blocking people from grasping the process is a

mechanistic way of approaching the question, right? And it is bound up with the whole view of stages and how a communist movement develops, and I think that what we have to grasp is not so much the difference between a national center, an ideological center, a leading ideological center, but the contradictions in the process that will emerge and how those contradictions are going to work themselves out. We are talking about a process here, something that grows up, that has a guiding theme, our goal is to develop a leading ideological center, this character will more and more emerge. But at the lowest level it is going to have a very embryonic character; it's going to, like at the level we are at now. And I think it is important to grasp the dialectics of the process of what we are trying to do, because a mechanistic viewpoint, if you get locked into a mechanistic way of approaching the question, then there's only two choices, right? Either to assert yourself as a leading ideological center like the Network does, right? Or you lock yourself into localism, for instance. But we've got to grasp this process here that we are talking about and the context and framework in which this process is going to evolve. There is no way to anticipate a lot of development that will occur, I mean, there could be a huge split a year from now and a break into two fundamentally different trends in our tendency from within the OC, who knows? And we can't anticipate those developments. But what we want to try to do is grasp the process and the principles around which this process will emerge and develop and fulfill itself.

Dave,
BAWOC:

First of all I want to say that I think it is a real improvement; it's a good proposal. I like the idea about the national center first, so it's not a difference in basic conception but it is a question I have around which has been talked about which is basically what's the basic principle involved in the center of building unity, that in order for the center to become a leading it seems that we have to carry out ideological struggle, we have to come to some unity around line and those become leading lines. Right now we don't have many lines, we have the 18 points and I think the document is good in laying out that our first task is the critique of ultra-leftism, then it goes on to say party building, then elaborates all the other line questions that we need to develop. That's good. What I'm unclear about and I need more understanding of is what's the process of building unity through the ideological center so that, for example, when we take up the struggle around ultra-leftism or, I think, even more importantly, party building, how do we define how much unity we are trying to achieve and when there are differences, how do we define whether those differences, in fact, mean that then there are two processes that have emerged, or that we continue together in a single center. It may be one of those questions that you can't answer now but I think it's not really spelled out in the document, that's what I am unclear about.

TS, SC:

I think that, again, to go back to the statement about it has already begun. In this situation, the Point 18 division. The whole struggle around Point 18. Oftentimes, folks will be won to the perspective.

Oftentimes a Point 18 situation will develop. At the same time we are popularizing our ideas and winning over folks, other folks are going to split on the basis of they can't develop any unity, so that the way unity develops, that is one good example - the Point 18 process. It has shown us concretely how to centralize and carry out ideological struggle.

Louisville:

We have a document that I hope people got to see beforehand entitled, "National Preparty Organizations and the IC Period". That's just to say that people can take that document and read it. Will be available later on. My name is Jan and I am from the Louisville Workers Collective. I and the other delegates from Louisville have a proposal concerning this one aspect of the Draft Plan and we will have other questions to talk about, so we understand that there will have to be a time limit for this discussion. We do want to present the proposal and at least have a beginning discussion of some of these ideas. In our opinion, the Draft Plan as it now stands does not provide enough of a means for testing our theory in practice during the process of ideological debate in the IC. There is a funny little Marxist truth that the correctness of any theory is determined not by subjective wishes or desires but by objective results in the class struggle. If we are to actually develop the program, strategy and tactics of the US revolution, through the process of theoretical debate in the IC, we must test our theoretical conceptions in the class struggle. The RCP, the CPML, etc. all declared themselves to be the vanguard party of the US working class without adequately testing their theory. These groups have remained small sects, isolated from the working class movement. If we are to avoid their errors, we must test our theory in the most thorough, systematic way possible. We think that national pre-party organizations will help us in this testing process during the period of the IC. Our basic proposal is to recommend to the SC that the Draft Plan include a more positive statement about the role of the national pre-party organizations can play in the IC period. The plan should encourage the development of national pre-party organizations, state the reasons they are needed, and show the positive contributions they can make during this period. I'd just like to say now that what our preference would be is that this change could be made before we take it to the tendency as a whole for fuller discussion. Before we go into the reasons why we feel national pre-party organizations are needed, we want to clearly state that we agree with the PWOC and the Draft Plan that any national organization form would have to at all times put the interests of the IC and the tendency as a whole above the interests of its own organization. All members of such organizations will be responsible for aiding the development of the IC. The organization would need to commit cadre, money and other resources to the IC. The organizations would need to struggle against, would need to educate cadre about and wage a continual struggle against all manifestations of the circle spirit and sectarianism in their work and in relationship to the IC. From the beginning the IC would have to take care to see that no one organization establish hegemony that would stifle tendency wide ideological debate in the IC. The reasons that we think national pre-party organizations are needed in the IC period can be grouped

into three areas. They include, number one, they would contribute to the theoretical struggle, they would win over people to the IC process, and three, they would enable us to provide some embryonic communist leadership in the class struggle prior to declaring the formation of the vanguard party for the US revolution. The first and most important reason is the need to test our theory in the class struggle. A local organization can only test its theory in one city or area. This is not a sufficient test of the theory being developed over the whole U.S. (tape ends here)

(a couple of minutes are missed, and then picks up with the same speaker)

A secondary reason we see a need for national pre-party organization which is related to the first reason, is that there are many advanced workers, national minority people, independent leftists, who will be won over to the IC primarily on the basis of the practice of IC forces. Our ability to develop good communist practice depends primarily on our ability to test our theory in our practical work. As we say that we feel that national pre-party organizations can test our theory more effectively and therefore develop good communist practice more successfully than any loose grouping of forces working together after an IC national conference. There are many national minority progressives and Marxist-Leninists who are being and will continue to be won over to the IC primarily on the basis of the recognition of the importance of the ideological struggle. But given the history of the racist practice, a significant part of the left movement _____, many national minority communists and progressives are likely to stay away from the IC until IC forces have shown their ability to take seriously the practical work, the struggle against racism. By taking up the task of winning over white workers to that struggle. A national pre-party organization would be most able to develop such systematic anti-racist work. The fact that racism is the main division in the US working class movement, makes a correct anti-racist program thus _____ the current strategies for each area of mass work. The participation of national minority Marxist-Leninists in this task and in developing the overall program, strategy and tactics for the US revolution is absolutely essential. We also want to draw in as many advanced workers as possible into the IC to participate in the theoretical struggle and we feel that a national pre-party organization is the way to do that. Our third reason which is in the document, we were unclear about that reason as to how much of the fusion strategy it incorporated and while providing some leadership in the class struggle before the party is formed, and we said we were willing to leave that out of our proposal if it feels that that goes beyond the unity of the OC. The first two reasons would be sufficient. The only thing to say is that we were not going to suggest any specific wording to the, to be adopted today, but rather that this body recommend to the Steering Committee that the Draft Plan include a more positive and clear statement about these organizations and the role that they can play because we feel the SC is better able to say it in a way consistent with the level of unity in the OC.

Keith,
SOC:

I'd like to strongly support this proposal... (unclear)... It does not address the relationship of pre-party organizations to this whole

process of the IC. If it doesn't specifically address... (unclear) There are three places where it comes up. On page 8 it says that the IC "must proceed from the point of view that the maturing of communist practice is not incidental but essential to the advancement of the theoretical struggle." It never elaborates what the maturing of communist practice is. And I think this is.... I see the Draft Plan, if anything, giving more the impression of refuting the importance of organizations in the coming period. Concretely, the only other statement in here, I think, tends to give this impression, is on page 11 where it says that "each organization must consciously subordinate its own progress to the forging of a leading core on a national level." It is not clear what that means. And I think that in practice we see a lot of times that this can lead to an artificial separation of theory and practice. Even though I don't think it is intended. I think this point is going to have to be really elaborated on. I think that this artificial separation, whether consciously or not, to objectively take up this line of 'unite Marxist-Leninists first, and then build your ties later'. I think this is something that we really have to focus on.

Minneapolis
Soc Coll:

Would the people from Louisville clarify what you mean by national pre-party formation.

Louisville:

What we mean by national preparty organization is a national organization, well, I think it was in the PWOC article around defining that takes up the task of party building in an all-rounded way in all of their work, to try to make sure that all of their practical work and study and everything is tied in to a party building strategy. We see it as a national organization participating in developing the theory and testing out the theory and contributing to the process of the IC. I don't know if that answers your question or not.

MSC:

Not completely.

Louisville:

We see it as an all-round organization, not just one area of mass work but an organization that would be active in trade union, electoral, anti-imperialist work, etc. An organization whose task would be, primarily, of building a communist party in this country. I guess it would be helpful to give examples of the past, like OL, and RU, two examples of what we mean by national pre-party organization.

?

What would be the basis of unity of this national pre-party organization?

Louisville:

The basis of unity of a national pre-party organization is not something that we would work out here. It's just to suggest that a process that would begin among the forces in the OC and in the tendency, to see if there is a common basis to develop a highest level of political unity to do common party building work, and we don't see this as something that can happen tomorrow or even in a month, we see it as a process taking a long time to, for organizations to develop the ability to form a national pre-party organization, but given that the process of the IC leading to the formation of the party extended over a period of time, we see the need to say from the beginning the role that we see these organizations playing.

Bob,
Detroit
Socialist C:

One of the responses that I have to the paper is that I haven't had a chance to read it thoroughly, but it seems to me that in some ways the presentation of this concept at this point in time in some way reflects the fact that the whole question of the role of local communist organizations in the pre-party period really hasn't been adequately addressed with respect to the development of the Draft Plan. In some ways it seems to me that, I am self-critical because I think that part of the responsibility would be on me. We've had this discussion before to bring in a plan that maybe would be similar to the one the people from Louisville brought in with respect to what I see the role of local organizations, local communist collectives, is in the pre-party period. However, it seems to me that it is possible for the SC to flesh that out a little bit more fully and that in fact is really what we need in this period, in addition to a lot of the concurrent areas of practice that is developing throughout the tendency. Now it seems to me that that's really what we need to speak to and not in fact at this point in time the formation of a national pre-party organization.

I think the sentiment in this proposal is good, and I understand where they are coming from but I think they are a little pre-mature. I don't know quite how to put it, but it was only last July that ^{I heard that} there were other OC people working in my union, and begin to work on a national level in my union. We don't just declare unity, you forge it. So far we don't have very many results and they are not reliable...so I don't think it's quite right for us to say, ok, let's have a pre-party organization...so I don't think you can begin to direct it, let alone nationally direct it, we're only beginning to see what we are doing in different organizations. It's a protracted thing, like I say, debating the question of pre-party organization is premature.

TS, SC:

When the comrade first started to talk I thought how much unity I have with what she was saying. I thought it sounded like a friendly amendment, but the problem, first thing, and the comrade from Minneapolis raised it earlier, it presupposes a level of unity of a communist cadre organization which is much higher than the level of unity in this room. There is even the presumption that the level of unity in this room is that high. On the one hand the Network folks say that the... I mean the folks from the Tuscon Marxist-Leninist Collective would be excluded from this process given the position that is being put forward here, and raises the level of unity amongst us, on the one hand, . On the other hand, I can unite with what the comrade back here has been saying about the whole question of how we at such an early stage, and I assume that we have so much information that can just go forward, but I think many of us in here share the sentiment and in fact encourage the development of local and/or national organizations, but that's not the role of an ideological center to develop those. So, on the one hand, to say that we encourage you to do that is one thing, but it doesn't call for anything to happen unless other folks unite with that and are in fact going to go off and do that. The question is going to come up at some point in time in the context of

an ideological center - the role of pre-party formations. It will and it should. At that point, some guidance and leadership will, in fact, come from the IC on that process.

Anna,
Philadel:

I have a little trouble responding directly to the proposal by the Louisville group just because I haven't, quite honestly, had a chance to read the paper and so I am not completely sure I understand thoroughly what you are putting forward. I do think that for all of us there has been a real movement in our understanding over the past year about the relationship between the OCIC and what, in fact, are pre-party organizations and what role, what the different roles are. In relationship to that I am not quite sure I understand, Tyree, why you are saying that if we adopt an inclusion into the Draft Plan of an encouragement of pre-party organizations, why that would say that the Tuscon group would have to leave, because it seems to me that the OCIC does not itself form national pre-party organizations, and that that's one of the things that I have begun to understand as a matter of fact through this past year and through our own self-criticism of our understanding. On the other hand, national pre-party organizations within the OCIC are very, very important development because it is precisely through those organizations that different lines are going to be tested out, for instance, around party building and that we are going to begin to be able to reach some kind of conclusion around that. That's my understanding, for instance, of our argument that the Network should be, in fact, within the OCIC and should be testing out their concept of what party building is and in the same way the Tuscon organization if it were to become a national pre-party formation would be testing out its line that those of us who have a clear conception of the fusion perspective of party building, were we to form that kind of organization, would be testing out that line and so that's where that's where the relationship between the theory and the practice would come in. It does seem to me in conclusion that there is a real need for a document that begins to explain what the relationship those organizations have to the OCIC and how, or what the role of pre-party organizations are and how they get to the party. Now I am not convinced that belongs in the Draft Plan for the IC. The Draft Plan for an Ideological Center is just that. It is not an explanation for a lot of other things. So while I think there is a real need and the confusion here shows that there is a real need for straightening that confusion out, I am not convinced it belongs in the Draft Plan.

Mickey,
MSU:

I feel also ambivalent about it. As I was listening to it, I felt there were two ways the Louisville proposal could be taken. On the one hand, it does say on the 11th page of the Draft Plan that "the maturing of communist organizations on local, regional, and national levels should be seen as positive and therefore encouraged." Now in a certain sense I don't see the Louisville proposal going much beyond that. I think they calling for the need for clarification why that should be encouraged and why that should be seen as positive. I think that's a good thing. Although, I also think that they may be calling for something more than that in calling for a specific organization or the OC endorsing a particular formation or trying to

bring about something like that. In that sense I think it would be wrong, I think it would be not taking into account why we are forming an ideological center first, and what the whole process is and what the limitations of the period we are in. So I think that if the Louisville people are calling for something more than is here, they should make more clear what it is exactly they are calling for.

Louisville:

We are not calling for the formation of a national pre-party organization now in this period. In other words, we are not calling for it next month, a year from now. We don't really have any idea when that would come about. But to come about we thought there has to be much more ideological struggle carried on so that there can be greater political unity around line so that there can be the formation of a national pre-party organization. So its going to be a long, drawn out process. One reason why we think it should be included in the document right now is that we don't want to appear to people in the tendency as a bunch of armchair revolutionaries which is I think the conception, almost the document could give some people, because we have to be clear when we talk to these people in the tendency that we are going to be testing our theory in practice, and we are going to be trying to test it in a very thorough manner and if we don't give people the conception that we are going to be doing that and they thing we are going to be testing our theory in the absence of advanced movements, and therefore that our theory is not going to be valid. Does that answer your question? We just want a more positive statement in the Draft Plan as to the role of national preparty organizations that can play in the testing of the theory that we are going to be developing.

We are not saying that there will be one national pre-party organization amongst OC forces, that the SC would initiate and pull together. We are just saying that we should say in the Draft Plan now that we see such organizations that arise as long as they are committed to an ideological center as being helpful to the process, maybe one, two, we don't know, but we are not suggesting the SC go about and organize a national pre-party organization.

TV, SC:

I wanted to respond to your comment that the Draft Plan doesn't take up in any way the question of testing out practice. I does talk about carrying out political struggle, encouraging minority positions to carry out the majority. It does consistently state in the course of ideological struggle that after there has been that struggle, that we would encourage the majority to carry out that line, and also encourage the minority, but there is no enforcement, we are not a democratic-centralist process where people would be obligated. People would have a right not to do so. But I would like to go back I think more specifically because I agree with the thrust of what Anna said. I agree very much with the role and importance of national organizations. But I don't know if you are just asking for a few sentences to be elaborated in this paragraph. I mean if you were saying that a few sentences should elaborate on the role of local and national organization, national ones in particular, I don't see a real problem with that, but I don't know if youre asking for a very extensive thing that would

demand a much higher level of unity at this point.

Louisville: We decided not to compose specific wording for a number of reasons. One is that we felt the SC would be better able to do that because they are more aware of the level of unity that exists within the OC at this time and plus there could be implied from some of the things we want to emphasize as to why national pre-party organizations are important in this period, particularly the thing about the fact that we could begin to provide a minimal level of communist leadership in class struggle and some people could imply that we are further endorsing the fusion strategy and we would be willing to leave that part out. We think the SC would be best able to decide whether or not that should be mentioned or not. But I think what we are asking for is probably maybe a few paragraphs to clarify the important role that national pre-party organizations can play in the testing of our theory.

CN, SC: In the absence of concrete language it is very difficult to tell whether it is a friendly amendment or an unfriendly amendment. My sense is that it is meant as friendly to the general thrust of the Draft resolution but on the other hand I am apprehensive because I think that there are some aspects of the perspective which I don't see as friendly to the Draft resolution. One of the things I think we have to grasp and people have reacted I think to what they see as a one-sided discussion in the favor of the ideological center and the local centers as opposed to local organizations and national organizations. I think that the general stress in the Draft Plan on the limitations of local organizations and national organizations is correct. And that has to be the starting point. If people disagree that that's the principle stress that must be made in this period, then we have an argument, and a struggle and its not a friendly amendment. If what's being called for on the other hand, though, is a strengthening in the context of our discussion that we should encourage the development of higher forms of communist organization, I have no problems with that. But what I do have problems with is endorsing the concept of the national pre-party organization or the OC endorsing the concept, because it seems to me that it implies that the OC process is one designed in some way to foster that kind of development. I think that's something we need to steer clear of. It's not that we oppose it; we think the higher forms for centralizing the direction of practice on a national basis is a good thing. The question is it is not the task of the ideological center to take on centralizing that practice and centralizing communist organization. We can hold conferences where people sum up the lessons of building organizations; conferences where people sum up the lessons of practice, but we must not forget that the conditions do not exist for the formation of any form that is really capable of meeting the needs of all-sided guidance to communist activity in the working class movement in the United States. And part of maintaining that clarity is maintaining the separation between an ideological center and the directing centers for practice. Now the directing centers for practice already exist in almost every locality around the country. And that's a good thing. But those directing centers

must be clear on the limitations of their ability to answer the questions and to resolve the questions and must see that they cannot become the center of theoretical struggle, and that separation must be maintained so I think it is really incumbent on those who are making this suggestion for them to put it into words and be much more specific and concrete and also speak to whether they support the principal stress of the document which is on the limitation of the directing centers of practice.

Louisville: The thrust is in unity. We tried to state that both in the written presentation and verbally.

Chair: Is it a friendly amendment to the SC?

CN, SC: I can't say it is friendly until I see it in writing.

Chair: Louisville should write up wording later and submit it to the SC for their consideration.

TS, SC: Point of order for this discussion. The decision that we reached and came to could have been reached in writing three months from now. The process to amend the document is going to go on. What we just did was a little bit of that just now. We could spend the rest of the day doing a little bit of that or we can grasp what needs to be done with this and go on to something else. Comrades, the idea is not to do what we just did, I hope we recognize that now.

Chair: Tries to focus the rest of the discussion along the lines that TS raised in the point of order.

Anna,

Philadelp:

I just wanted to make sure I understand what Tyree is saying about the rest of the discussion, because my sense of the discussion that just happened is that while I respect the comrades from Louisville in terms of their amendment, the thrust of what I think most of us for discussion - I'm not so concerned about the Louisville and the SC in reaching agreement. Because I agree that goes on later. What I am concerned about is that, and what I was trying to say, and what I think some other people were trying to say is that there is a need for what I would identify as a weakness that I see either in the Plan itself or else there should be an additional document - but there is a lot of confusion in this room and even more confusion outside of this room as to the relationship between the ideological center and the process of building a party in terms of pre-party organizations and so on. I'm not so concerned about whether or not Louisville and the SC can come to unity because frankly I'm not that concerned about that. What I'm concerned about is we resolve that the SC is going to address that question because I don't think it's addressed in the Draft Plan.

CN, SC:

I think on this question that if what people are calling for is an elaboration of perspective on that question, we can certainly do that and incorporate it into this document. That may not be, or not everybody may unite with that elaboration of the question and that's

why I am hesitant about endorsing the amendment or the proposal that has been suggested. But if it's a question of elaborating on that point of the relationship to and the implications of the basic principal that we've outlined on the relationship of the ideological center to a directing center, for practice means for the formation of communist organizations, ^{in this period} I think we can do that in the context of this document because I think that would be helpful.

Karen,

Los Angeles: On page 12 in the last paragraph, the section that is headed, "An Important Step Forward", and that's the first place the discussion of the national center is laid out. On page 13 in the third paragraph is a list of questions that come after the deepening analysis of ultra-leftism and party building strategy. What I'm not clear on is are we proposing this agenda of questions to the national center at this time or at least as the next step forward, and what's the relationship between forging an ideological core and the ability of a center to actually take up those questions and develop theory around them?

CN, SC:

I think the question is whether we are setting in the Draft Plan a specific theoretical agenda and how does one go about setting such an agenda. What we have said by way of an agenda for theoretical work is to particularly identify the need to resolve the question of ultra-leftism and sum that up. Beyond that I think that it is very difficult to set a theoretical agenda because it is very difficult to anticipate what questions will emerge in our movement which will become central to resolving our contradictions and advancing our process toward the party. I think that there are some questions that are clearly going to have real political significance that we can anticipate will have to be resolved at some stage in the process. Such questions as party building line, the various national questions of minority peoples, the women question, question of what kind of strategy for revolution, the question of our general approach to the bourgeois democratic tradition and forms in this country, but to say that we could establish an order right now, I think would be an error. I think it would be a mistake because what we would tend to do is to give credence to the assumption that the ranking of those questions comes from some logic of the questions themselves. So that you can rank this question from an abstract standpoint rather than ranking the question from the logic of the struggle in the communist movement and the communist movement's tasks. And that's what we need to, and the Draft Plan tries to give some guidance on that. That what questions we will take up will be in large part determined by what questions are being posed, what contradictions emerge in the communist movement and how do they have to be resolved. And that's the only correct way, I think, to approach these questions. The other way is slipshod and scattered. And we can see that, for example, in the proposals, the theoretical initiatives of the Network. Ultra-leftism is put by the sideline and the initiatives are based on what will advance their position in the movement, not necessarily what the movement needs. We have to have centralized struggle on that.

TS, SC: I'll pick up where Clay left off. I talked about in the presentation that we have learned from the experiences of other folks as well. During this period, the experience of the Network was, they've got a position on what the questions are - the race/national question, Southern Africa, anti-racist work, and party building line. Those are the questions that have been raised in terms of how they see ideological questions need to be answered in this period, and they start now doing that. The question that we are raising, what has identified those questions as the pressing questions, what is it in our practice that raises those questions as the questions? Looks like a shopping list - since everybody is doing Southern Africa work, let's us do it and take it over. I saw one document that came out of the Bay Area, the folks in the APA signed the document and they say we've got to go into this Southern Africa committee and take it over. That's how they see taking up the ideological struggle and answer questions, one particular form. It seems to me that our practice in these all-sided groups, these small groupings, raise those questions for us, and we shouldn't just start out by saying that we already got them, that we know what they are, so let's just set up a committee on the national question, one on the racism question, one on women - it seems to me that our practice will raise those questions.

Greg I would like to see added in point 4 in the summation of the 18 Points. Last year we adopted a position on ... Basically the question of Mao Zedong Thought and a questioning of the capitalist nature of the Soviet Union...The summation of Point 18...should be included in the Draft Plan.

CN, SC: Certainly the spirit of the amendment of trying to get at these questions and pursue work on them is friendly. I don't think it's appropriate to incorporate them in the Draft Plan because what we are trying to do we are trying to give people a general sense of the process and what we see on the very immediate agenda and those questions will come up - the question of when they come up and how they come up, again, will depend on the contradictions in our movement. Certainly we plan to pursue those questions, but I don't think the way to incorporate them, if you feel there is a need, would be in the context of the OC's First Year document because that's our concrete plan in the next year. That's what we are going to try to get to.

Greg: Would like to put it in the form of a motion because I think there is a lot of politics in the document. The resolution is:

The SC incorporate point number four on the importance of deepening Mao Zedong Thought and the thesis of capitalist restoration - that this be incorporated in the Draft Plan.

Chair: The resolution is that point 4 of the sum up of the 18 Point resolution be included in the Draft Plan and particularly Mao Zedong Thought.

Greg: and in particular the class nature of the Soviet Union.

Motion was seconded.

? I want to oppose it because I think that included in the discussion of this amendment there are I think about 90 similar kind of amendments and I really think that it is very, very clear that the discussion that ... (the rest of this statement is unclear because the voice is too soft and too much noise in the room around recorder.)

QUESTION IS CALLED.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT BY ADDITION:

FOR - 3 OPPOSED - 69 ABSTENTIONS - 0

(Tape ends as Lowen presents a paper suggesting that certain items in the Draft Plan be reformulated - for clarity, I believe, ed. Tape picks up on the other side as CN begins to reply for the SC.)

CN, SC: My sense of the suggestion - I haven't gone over each concrete one - but, it is not to agree with it. On page 3 of the document there is a characterization of ultra-leftism and the ultra-left line - I think it is fairly scientific. Now it has a polemical aspect to it, but Marxism is polemical in nature. I don't know how you can do away with that. If you feel that it is unscientific, its wrong, then I suggest you pose an amendment, a concrete amendment or concrete ways to change it which we can consider, but I don't, I think it's a little, I guess I don't really understand the reason for the point.

Lowen, COG: I would just like the SC to take them under consideration.

CN, SC: We'll certainly do that.

Bill,
Minneapolis: Due to the fact that the tendency as a whole and probably even in this room does not have agreement on the specific date that the consolidation of revisionism took place in the CPUSA I suggest that we delete that line in the Draft Plan. It's on the first page, ... (unclear) something that we should discuss and we may not discuss it for a year or so.

Chair: Comrades, I would really like to remind you that you should only be raising things that you feel you cannot circulate the document if it is not changed. Is that the way you feel about that?

Bill,
Minneapolis: What I am saying is quite clearly that if we are going to bring people into the tendency to build an ideological center we can't go on the Draft Plan, I just can't use this.

? (Someone in the back of the room briefly speaks in opposition, but it is barely audible on the tape.)

Cindy, COG: My opinion is, although we haven't done any detailed study and summed up the lessons of the CPUSA, that I think ... that more development and understanding has to be, well, I think that it should be stricken until there can be more discussion on the point.

Karen, LA: Well, I'm unclear on this objection. I mean do people object to the fact that revisionism was consolidated after 1957 or is the objection that it happened before, or that it wasn't consolidated until after, or only part of it was consolidated. I don't understand, it seems to me that what it says was it was consolidated in 1957. It doesn't say that part of it didn't happen before.

Bill,
Minn: The question isn't when it happened, the question is that we can't say when it did happen because we don't know. And to say that would be presumptuous. It is something we don't have unity on and certainly the tendency, people outside of this group, don't have unity on it. There are... I'm not saying when it happened, I'm just saying let's not say this now.

Keith,
Detroit: I disagree with the proposal. In my opinion, if we decide in this meeting today that we would support the Klu Klux Klan, then for the rest of history, people could say that at this meeting today our tendency capitulated to racism. You can go back and look at the session of the AFL at the turn of the century to commitment to fight racism. You can pinpoint the changes at those bodies of delegates that made decisions for the entire organization. Now that's what this proposal does. It doesn't say like it just dropped from the sky. It points to the historical development of that, was part of the consolidation and reflection of the consolidation in terms of leadership body and the delegates that were unwilling to defend a revolutionary Marxist standpoint. It does that, and I think it's kind of petty, myself.

Chair: Is there opposition to calling the question? (No opposition was stated.)

Bill,
Minn: (Restates the motion.)

VOTE: FOR - 9 OPPOSED - 72 ABSTENTIONS - 4

I'm not raising this as a amendment but I would like to hear the SC respond to this as a question. I hesitate to raise it, but I'm not sure exactly what is being put forward in the Draft Plan, and I'd like to hear an explanation of the the relationship between forging a leading core and building unity among Marxist-Leninists and the anti-'left' tendency as a whole. I think that taken by itself the discussion on forging an ideological core is developed, that taken by itself I unite with, ... it is important to identify the questions, struggling around ... in our movement, being able to move that forward. That through that process our ability to define our leadership occurs. The thing that I don't understand is when that is put into the context of the IC itself, what precedence that takes in terms of the goals of the Ideological Center. It seems to me that it is almost like a by-product of the IC, a very necessary one. I read from the document an indication that the goal of the IC is for Marxist-Leninists to be able to identify ... the leadership of our movement and that was my understanding

of the main goal of the Ideological Center.

- TV, SC:** It seems like we are looking at it in a stagist thing, that's why I don't totally understand. There's that process in terms of the ideological core emerging and through that process the ideological center develops. As an ideological center moves forward it ultimately develops that core more and there might be some changes.
- CN, SC:** I think that the problem you are having is a wrong conception of what the goal is of the process. Because in a certain organizational sense the emergence of the leading ideological core is developed, but in a political sense that is not at all the goal. In fact, the leading ideological core will emerge as a by-product of some thing that is more important. What is key is the theoretical struggle for program and strategy for the US revolution. What we want to emerge is a program and strategy for revolution in this country and that is the goal of the ideological center proposal and everything connected with it. It is to see that happen. Now there is a certain kind of process that we are setting up so that the forces that play a leading role in the process will tend to concentrate themselves at the center of the process, will tend to emerge in a public and open way and will be identified based on their contribution to clarify those points of view. So that the forging of an ideological core is a by-product of that theoretical struggle for program and strategy.
- FTP:** I don't think this is very controversial, probably, but in any case, there is n't much of a mention in the Plan about the strategic role of Local Centers... and it is tied into the whole plan, the concepts are extremely important in the struggle against localism and federationism, the whole emphasis on drawing in national minority Marxist-Leninists... (last part of sentence falls off).
- CN, SC:** Basically I think we could strengthen it by developing the local centers concept. I don't know how you can say that the struggle against federationism isn't identified. (Speaker clarifies that he was talking about the connection between federationism and racism and that that wasn't brought out in the Draft Plan. CN agrees.) I think that would be a useful addition too.
- Margo, LA:** This is on the theoretical questions that are being raised and I realize ...but there is something important that I thought was left out. When we are talking about that we need to develop program and strategy and the main question to highlight and what was left out is the development of a class analysis of US society in this period. And understanding the balance of class forces in this period of US imperialism. The main reason that I think it is important is that I think that ... I think we have to take them up in the context of our understanding of the current political situation. So I feel that it should at least be brought up in a general way, the importance of that, and a question that relates to all the others.
- Chair:** Is that friendly?
- CN, SC:** Yes, basically, although I don't think it ranks with the other questions

that are identified.

- Laura, NSSO:** Well, this has to do with the order of the two specific theoretical questions - the critique of left opportunism and party building line. And the thing that leans me toward party building questions has to do with how we describe it in the document. It says the essence of party building, whether it is primary or secondary... What I would propose is that I think it is an important question... What I would hope in this study of ultra-leftism is that we focus on party building...
- Chair:** (tries to clarify for the body) It seems to me that you are proposing two things. One it that the first question that we take up not be ultra-leftism but party building or two, that if we do take up ultra-leftism that the emphasis be on party building. I think you need to clarify which one you want to propose.
- Laura:** Well, I don't think we really have the time to really get into both those two questions, which is why I am sort of deferring that... Then I was unclear about what the essence of ultra-leftism...
- CN, SC:** I just think we can hardly avoid summing up the ultra-left party building line and in fact I think the process of the struggle with the Club Network has begun the process of developing a critique of the ultra-left line on party building. So certainly part of the summation of ultra-leftism would be to critique the ultra left line on the question of party building. The other question of transposition of party building and ultra-leftism, I think is a bad methodology and an incorrect approach and I think is objectively would lead to a premature split. We have to consolidate the break with ultra-left thinking before we can elaborate an alternative to the ultra-left line.
- ?** There is a question - on page 13, paragraph 3, the question of the theoretical agenda. From the way the sentences are arranged I can't tell whether you are saying that party building is on the agenda as the next thing after the study of ultra-leftism or is it just in there with all the other things to be set in priority at that time. If it is being said along with all those others, I don't know how (sentence drops off and can't be understood).
- TS, SC:** I think it's in there with the others. I don't think it is identified... (unclear last couple of words).
- Phil, Detroit:** If I'm understanding the SC position, I do have a disagreement in how we characterize the tasks. Clay's thing was that we couldn't help but analyze party building strategy. Tyree's thing was that this will be taken up with other questions. It seems to me that we need to, as we go along, specify. We've begun to deal with ultra-left error in the realm of international line. We've made some real progress. We need to be saying to the rest of the tendency that we need to continue to deepen that, or is that sufficient basis to move to another question, which is which question?

- TV, SC: I think that the thrust of it is that I think that developing an approach on party building is very, very good. That guides all of our thinking, but where the two of their opinions come together, the fact that we think it is important to be flexible about it. At this point in history we would put that out as the next thing to take up, but we have to have the flexibility to, like Tyree said earlier, our practice might pose certain questions that might demand that we take up something else in the space of that time. So, the idea is not to look at this rigidly.
- Chair: Is this a sufficient explanation?
- Phil: It seems to me that it's sufficient, but I disagree. It seems to me that, well, a comrade raised a resolution around specifying Mao Zedong Thought. I was opposed to that resolution because I think that is real rigid in a non-helpful sort of sense. It seems to me that if we are talking about taking responsibility toward moving toward a leading ideological center, part of that responsibility is identifying our period and identifying our tasks for the whole tendency.
- Chair: (Asks for a specific motion.)
- Phil: On page 13... I guess I'm agreeing with what is written in here. But I am disagreeing about characterizing of it by the SC.
- CN, SC: I think what, the way it is characterized in here is a view that we have been trying to present. And our general view is that following upon the all-sided summation of ultra-leftism, the key question that would come to the fore would be party building strategy.
- Phil: Again comrade, how can you talk about an all-sided summation if you are not going to say what composes all those sides, which of those sides leads, etc. We can't just say we are going to study ultra-leftism.
- CN, SC: I mean I don't understand the confusion that you have. It seems to me what you want to do is restrict us to ultra-leftism in one sphere. There's an ultra-left line that has emerged in four areas, politically, on party building line, on the relationship of reform to revolution, and the relationship of democracy to socialism, and international line. What we are going to try to do is we are going to try to sum up and in the process of that summation identify the principal errors in each area and draw out the common underlying foundation of those views.
- Chair: (Again requests for a specific motion if there is a disagreement.)
- Phil: My resolution would be that where we say that the primary theoretical question we want to take up is the nature of ultra-leftism, I would say the initial task in that all-sided summation is a continuing deepening of the ultra-left error on international line; second, following the summation of this is the deepening of our understanding of the ultra-left error in party building.

TS, SC: I thought for a minute that I had confusion, and I think I did, but I'm going to speak to it. In opposition to the amendment. The errors of ultra-leftism on international line really is not the only error of ultra-leftism. Like we say in the other areas where ultra-leftism shows its face. This morning I wasn't joking when I was talking about ^{with} the shirts we find ourselves wearing, bluejeans that we are wearing the red stars on them. That's a left error also, I mean that sounded like a joke, but the critique of ultra-leftism continues throughout this entire process. The question of party building goes on to the development of party building line and is deepened all the time. When we take up the line on party building we don't dodge the question of ultra-leftism in this process, so that I think I added to the confusion earlier, but I think the error in here is ... and we haven't already begun that process.

Laura: Well, I think the Draft Plan correctly identifies a method for waging a struggle against ultra-leftism. The first part is to understand the critique of the ultra-left line and the other is to elaborate a Marxist-Leninist line. And I agree with that concept. The thing that I don't really understand is that I think that we have begun to develop ... I would favor beginning a critique of international line, continuing that, but I do think the essence of the proposal is to try to zero in to begin the process of articulating line, I think is correct.

Chair: Is there objection to a call of the question?

VOTE: FOR - 6 OPPOSED - 65 ABSTENTIONS - 1

Paul: (Asks a question of clarity) "Are we clear on that after... (cannot understand the question)

CN, SC: It is written in the document. That is our intention to take that up next.

VOTE ON THE DRAFT PLAN AS AN ADEQUATE BASIS FOR CIRCULATION IN THE TENDENCY (as amended):

FOR - 75 OPPOSED - 1 ABSTENTIONS - 2

Dennis, LA: (Explains his abstention) My understanding of the agenda was that a number of comrades raised questions which the SC considered friendly because...the question of the readability and style of the document. So I abstained in order to bring that question up. I didn't know how to do it. We haven't considered that question yet and I think we should.

Tim Clemmons,
Kansas City: The question of a single, anti-revisionist movement yesterday I disagree with. The second part was on the characterization and assessment of the movement and the assessment of the Communist Party USA and its historical role. I have a lot of agreement with the tasks that this document sets out and the Discussion Bulletin yesterday which I think is very positive. I have serious objections to the assessment of the movement and objections to the assessment of the role of the CPUSA.

Dennis, LA: (Put forward a motion to amend OCIC Principle of Unity #11 deleting reference to the "pre-party". Motion was adopted without discussion.)

OCIC Centers - Local and Regional

(PF presented the conception and role of Local and Regional Centers of the OCIC for the Steering Committee. This presentation was followed by another on the specific history of development of the Local Center in Southern California by Irene McGinty. Both of these presentations are found in the attached conference documents.)

Chair: (Begins to introduce PF to lead discussion on the role of OCIC Centers. Before she comes to the microphone, Keith from the Southern Cal Local Center speaks.)

Keith,

So. Cal: I'm from the Southern California Local Center and I'm outraged. I can't believe this is happening. Let me say in the introduction that I uphold the 18 Points, I uphold Point 18 as a line of demarcation. Many of those people starting Local Centers now, I do not oppose Local Centers, I also uphold the Draft Plan that we worked on today, and I also worked and it is the position of all of us, the centrality of the struggle against racism. I just want to say that I uphold that. Secondly, I want to also say something I also believe and I hold very dearly is called the Marxist method of systematic investigation of intense struggles. Now in the OCIC in Southern California it is divided. It's not divided into a small minority - it's divided pretty nearly in half. What we just heard was the analysis of the Local Center Steering Committee of Southern California, and that analysis is incomplete, is one-sided, all the documents you've gotten to this point have been from more or less the same viewpoint. A lot of Irene's talk was a polemic against someone who left our organization, has left the Local Center and characterized the minority, characterizations before any basis of knowledge ... Now I ask you is this systematic struggle. I'm sorry if I am a little sort of erratic on this, but I was told by people, I remember when we joined the OCIC, and I was told by people how wonderful it was that democracy, the federation, the all-sided approach to things, the struggle, the principled method of struggle, and then all our comrades came back invigorated and it is one of the things that has really held us into this process. And now here I come (interrupted by a point of order)

CN, SC: Point of order. I am really very interested in hearing your perspective. I know you are responding to something that you didn't have to review in advance. I think that it is in the interests of all of us that we allow you the time to get your thoughts together and develop your presentation and your response. I think it is obvious that you are nervous and want to get it out. I would suggest that we take a recess so that you have time to prepare remarks and respond.

Keith,

So. Cal: Can I respond to that? What I was getting around to by saying, I'm sorry for the long introduction, is that what Irene said is true -

we are not a consolidated opposition. The first time we met as an opposition, or as a minority, or whatever it is characterized as, was a week and a half ago. And we first started formalizing our viewpoint. And that is due to a whole lot of historical conditions. I cannot address to you and it should not be asked of me to come up with a counter argument to everything Irene said or... The struggle is in process. Let me also relay one thing that happened... There are three representatives here from SOC (Keith is interrupted by Anna)

Anna,

Philadel: The only reason I'm interrupting is that I would really like to be able to understand as best I can the dynamic going on, and I would like to support the suggestion made by Clay. I don't think you should be expected to answer everything that was put forward, because what I think that what is happening is that after the break we are going to want,...I know there is a minority position because I've read it. So what I would like to see is that if you all could put something forward, take a little time and put something forward that we can then struggle around... (last few words are unclear)

Keith,
So. Cal.:

Can I make a counter proposal which is what I was leading to? My counter proposal is that we take up the struggle in a systematic way. We stop all specific talk about the Southern California Local Center. We are in preparation of a minority statement that we just began working on. It should be out in a month. And I think that we should get a packet together and then we can have a real investigation. We also would like to propose that, what Irene proposed, of having a National SC person come out and participate in the struggle, because I'm telling you this is a very intense struggle. And so that's what I think is a Marxist method of taking up an intense struggle.

CN, SC:

I would like to make my suggestion in the form of a motion. I move that we have a recess for dinner and during that period that we request Keith to prepare his remarks on those questions*and any other questions that he wants to put before us and that that be first item on the agenda when we come back. I'll be glad to explain my reasoning.

?

I'd like to support the motion because I think that the other alternatives are untenable.

Richard,
So. Cal:

I'd like to oppose the motion. I agree with Keith that we are not prepared at this point to take up the whole question. We were not involved in the Local Center experience as deeply and consistently

*The questions referred to are those that were outlined by Irene and Pat for discussion: The role of localism, federationism, racism, organizational hegemonism in relationship to the strategic role of local and regional OCIC centers.

as Irene and the rest of the representatives here from the Southern California Local Center (last few sentences cannot be heard on the tape)

Kwazi: (first couple of sentences cannot be heard on the tape) Frankly, I don't think that we can postpone some type of discussion whether you agree with it or not. I think we have to have some discussion on the Centers.

? I think that what we are talking about here is the democratic process. A minority position should be put forward. This is a democratic organization. They did not know about this. That's what I heard. Now, I speak against the motion, we don't have to discuss the specific situation there, and in fact violate democratic rights, the democratic rights of the minority to put forward their position.

Irene: I thought I put it forward the clarification is just a fact that can't be denied that we had four open local center meetings and discussions in preparation for this discussion, for the conference. On two of those discussions, specifically on the question of the Local Center, both generally and particularly our history in Southern California. The SC notified us in advance that I would be giving a presentation. At the beginning of that process it was made very clear to the entire membership in our locale. It was put forward and voted on by a large majority. I think two people voted against it - that I come to the conference and not only as a speaker but as a representative of the Local Center and within that try to sum up both the majority and the minority viewpoint from our locale. Keith I know you missed a couple of those meetings and so you may not be really well prepared as other members are. I think Richard missed one also. But what is important to understand that is within that the minority position itself put forward how important it was for me to try to sum up these differences and in the discussions I kept a record of what the majority and the minority positions were on different issues. It was a conscientious process, and so it is a matter of fact and this body should know that.

Keith: I want to make a point of clarification. On the history of the process. It's not going to be a debate. If people lay out facts and make them sound like facts, I can lay out facts, ok? Now all I'm going to say is this - that we knew that the Local Centers ^{was} going to be a primary part of the agenda a little over a month ago, ok? The Local Center meetings had been over a month and a half.

Irene: Keith, the first meeting...(chair interrupts)

Malachi: I speak for the motion even though I cannot imagine this is happening. I think that whoever is responsible, the Steering Committee or whoever, needs to deal with that in terms of a criticism. The thing that concerns me though in terms of speaking for the motion is that even if the Southern California experience had never happened, I still say we've got to talk about the Local Centers...I'm just concerned that speaking for the motion, that we not try to resolve that contradiction.

- Dennis:** I just want to say that as far as I know how the process of delegations was decided, I was a little bit upset that what I considered to be the more advanced comrades in SOC did not come here and they specifically did not come here with the understanding that they wouldn't be able to present the minority viewpoint well, therefore, they chose people who could present the minority viewpoint and told those people specifically you are going to that conference with the obligation and responsibility to present your viewpoint as best as you can. I think that's an obligation on these comrades. If they are not well prepared, I think that's a self-criticism, it's something they have to take responsibility for. Nevertheless, as best they can, this is their responsibility.
- (There is a point of order from the floor. Someone is confused about what the motion is. Chair asks that Clay restate the motion.)
- CN, SC:** The motion is that this body take a recess of an hour or so in order to allow the comrades representing the minority point of view to assemble their thoughts and address us as to what they disagreed with or what their thoughts are, in what ways they think the Southern California experience is exceptional, or whatever. Whatever of their choice - that they be allowed the opportunity to make a substantial presentation of their viewpoint on the basis of some preparation.
- Chair:** Calls for the question.
- VOTE:** (Hand vote is taken and motion clearly passes.)
- Kwazi:** There is something that I don't think we should discuss right now, but it is the issue of childcare. There was some people who were supposed to work around child care and they did not show up. I think that is a basic political question and it relates to the whole question of racism and sexism.
- (Tape picks up shortly after the discussion on the democratic process begins after the dinner recess.)
- TV, SC:** I have some questions about that, just the whole process of how the two-line struggle, I mean I think it is clear that there is a two-line struggle here, developed. I learned alot through this last year, the process of the struggle in my local organization and I think that at the beginning stages of ideological struggle things are not always clarified, but there are indications, what I read, there were communications quite some time ago that could have been put out and I think that the point Clay was trying to bring out is that the whole purpose of what we are all about in terms of ideological struggle and building an ideological center is the role the national can play in even trying to solicit and develop those initial papers, because people can look at what was said and draw out what some of the lines are, even before sometimes things are totally clarified. So, I felt like in a way you were saying that that was a reason that was not brought out earlier...(last few words are unclear.)

Irene:

I think that the Local Center Steering Committee should do a self-criticism. Today, I make it as an individual because I haven't discussed it with them. I think that we bowed to localism in not insisting that the issues be put forward to the national before. I do want to clarify something to Clay, though, - the request was in June that you made. I think it is significant self-criticism. I think the other self-criticism that I tried to make clear in my presentation that made it difficult to put those lines forward was that again because we bowed to right errors, the SC (locally) stayed internal for a great deal of time, that a federationist line that those members who were in cadre organizations should not participate in the Local Center at large - made it unclear what many of the minority viewpoints were.

Anna,
Philadel:

I want to support both of the self-criticisms that Irene put forward and also, I mean I feel that clearly it would have been preferable and I think under the circumstances more correct had it been planned from the beginning for the minority position to put forward formally in this body and if there was resistance on the party of the minority, and I don't know if this was the case, but if there was resistance because of a feeling of lack of consolidation, I think it was the responsibility of the leadership of both the local and the national Steering Committees to insist that the minority put forward at least their doubts or whatever. So in that sense I think there should have been time from the beginning allotted, but beyond that I am very disturbed and I don't know if this was the thrust of what you were raising, Clay, but in terms of opening this discussion, I'm very disturbed by what happened before we broke up, because it seems to me that although clearly the democratic aspect of this two line struggle could have been prepared better, personally I feel like even had the comrades only had five minutes this instead of two _____ that it is in the interests of democracy and it is in the interests of all of our development, ideologically, for all of us to be at all times prepared to put forward as best we can what our questions are, what our doubts are, what our reservations are, and to feel that it is an act of, that it is an attempt to put people on the spot, or to squelch democracy or anything else to try to correct the situation by giving people time, and to use that as an excuse lack of consolidation, I have a hard time seeing that in a very positive way. To me that is an attempt to squelch democracy because it is an attempt to, well, objectively, it refuses to give up the necessary information, however unprepared it is, that it is an attempt to refuse to give us the necessary information to make a decent evaluation. So that, while I feel critical of the way in which this process was developed to begin with, I am very concerned and I guess critical of the way in which the comrades responded when we attempted to deal with that situation.

Keith:

OK, there are a couple of things I want to say. First, I want to address what Clay originally raised, and I don't feel like I want to be liberal on this. I feel there was an attempt, there was a line that the minority position was going to be defeated at this conference. Now you may say that's really _____, that no one would consciously

want to do that, but someone verbalized that to me before I left by someone in the majority position - that one of the reasons that I should go to this conference and we should go to this conference was so that our line would be resolutely defeated. So I just want to address that to Clay, that I do believe that objectively people had some sort of feeling that we would come here and I don't know - this body would sit in judgement or something and that our perspective on things which isn't even coherent really that coherent yet. Now in answer to Anna, I really appreciate your feeling, except I think they tend to be a little idealistic in that this struggle is very deep - it's very deep and it's occurring on so many levels that it is very, very confusing and it's not coherent to me at all. And if I was to stand up here and ask me to lay out the struggle in a coherent way I feel I would have great difficulty doing that in such a way that people would get a sense of what was going on. All of us tend to be real confused.

Karen: I'd like to say something further because I agree with the comments that Anna made. I think I have a criticism of the Steering Committee for not having intervened in the last ^{few} weeks, specifically to send instructions to the locale to have the minority come prepared to present their view. But I think the question is why does the minority feel unprepared to present their view? That's the key question. It's not how does it respond to the presentation but what are its views on the question of building local centers based on some of their experience in Southern California. And I think the reluctance comes from a feeling that people who are here from that minority view cannot express the unity of the substantial block of people in the Local Center locally. The question is can they put forward their view as individuals in that process on the question of Local Centers and the experience in Southern California. If they could at least do that, there are some substantial questions that I think that are questions of principle on the Local Center, then we could move the process forward, and I would like to suggest that the question is not whether the body passes judgement on the experience of Southern California, but that the body discuss certain questions and I would like to suggest a couple of them - that people should keep in mind, because I think they are questions that are both general and local.

CN, SC: Point of order. I think that you have strayed beyond this discussion and that you begin to get into that discussion.

Malachi: I would like to emphasize a point that was just made. I think that the SC had an obligation to solicit and to insure that the minority point of view had or at least it be made very clear that people in this body can present its point of view forward. I do think it is on the national SC, I hesitate to state this firmly but I think that I suspect that there was enough information nationally around the fact that there was in fact a struggle going on in the Southern California area. I think that that attempt should have been made. At the same time, though, that frankly you can't write a four page statement and tell me that the reason why you don't want to put your point of view forward is because you don't have a consolidated position. I think that you think that the reason why you are not putting it forward is because people think they are going to lose, but let me go one step further and say

that to the extent that the Southern California experience is important to me; it is important to me for it to sharpen my own understanding of the Local Center and we can go one other step further and say that even if the majority point of view The only _____ I make that point in this discussion is because I do not want us to try to deal with local centers solely in that context.

CN, SC:

I want to speak to two things, or a number of points. First of all, I think that if somebody made that remark to you that what this conference was going to be is that you were going to come here and your line would be defeated, I have to feel profoundly critical of that remark. That's an incorrect remark to make; it's inappropriate for the OC; it certainly cuts against the grain of the kind of spirit that we are trying to develop here, a comradesly struggle of openness to the other point of view, whatever it is, minority or majority. It cuts against the grain of the spirit of full discussion and elaboration of points of view and resolution of that discussion collectively. That's not our attitude and I really sincerely feel that, however, to go beyond that and attribute that intent to the SC or the the Local Center SC as a collective intent is really going beyond the bounds of that remark. I would like to see further elaboration if you feel that that is the case. The principal error made by the SC, I think, is not so much the question of the - well, it relates to democracy, but not quite in the way in which I think comrade Malachi raised and I think that what we did and the mistake that I think, I'll speak for myself, that at least I made in regard to this situation was to capitulate to the hope that this question would be resolved on the local level and there would come to this body unity from the locality. It's not that we didn't want to see the discussion develop democratically and in any sense we didn't want the minority to be able to present its view. Had we known that there was a sharp minority and majority that couldn't be resolved locally we would have certainly set that situation up here to discuss it. And I think what the capitulation is - is a capitulation to a federationist mentality, and I'm not speaking here now of a particular organization. I'm speaking here of the local center and its process and its approach to this question. And the national SC should have taken the initiative a long time ago to make sure this process was raised to the national level. I also want to speak to a remark that was made by a comrade that we were violating the rights of the minority by demanding that the minority present its views. Comrades, I don't think that a right of the minority in this organization is to remain silent. That is not a right of a minority. The right of the minority is to have its views considered seriously, respected and discussed, and the right to continue those views after the discussion. It is not the right of the minority not to present its point of view.

TS, SC:

I think something happened. Pat started making the summation of the history of what happened. It is my understanding that and I didn't think folks had united around and consolidated, nor did I think the SC was going to solve the problem... of the local center there. Up until this discussion was over with, I thought that at least folks united with what was presented. And then when I heard the comrades in the back of the room get up and say that that's not our position, I said, oh wow, there was a real screw up. And then I hear another position that there

was some attempt to come to unity around this and folks did participate, and part of the minority did participate in it and had unity on what should be presented. Another part of the minority didn't take part in it, and I don't know if that is true or not, but I think Pat was trying to sum that up and somehow or another that is being obscured now. I would like to know just what did happen in terms of folks trying to unite around what was put forward here at this conference. Are we suggesting in the resolution that nothing should be said about the experience in Southern California. That's the other side of the coin. It seems to me that either the majority position gets put forward, or the minority and majority put their positions forward the best way they can in terms of objectively, or we say 'no - we've got no unity so we put nothing forward'. I think that to put nothing forward is an error, so that I think we should find out just what did happen in the context - who united around what was put forward and who didn't unite around it, what was the process for uniting around it or not uniting around it?

Carla,
Philadel:

I just want to say that in terms of my understanding of the process and the way that I felt the discussion getting laid out, although obviously some particulars were pointed to, but I don't hear anyone asking us to debate here tonight who said what, who did what, which individual is right, which individual is wrong, or which grouping. What I hear being asked is let's discuss the importance of the struggle against federationism. Let's discuss the relationship between federationism and racism. Everyone else has a list too. I think we do have not only a right but a responsibility to discuss these issues, both in their fully developed form as well as in their embryonic character. And what the comrades who constitute the minority should focus on is to what extent we have positions they should argue for them. I don't think anybody is here to label anybody good or bad, minority or majority. The importance is what are the issues, how does it pertain to our tasks as a whole OC, how they pertain to the local situation is secondary. But I think that is what we have to focus on, and if people can look at that and stop looking at who said what, when, and all like that maybe we can get on to some more substantive discussion.

Kwazi:

Also, I mean personally, I felt very affronted by remarks from the brothers from Southern California, particularly to the extent that they thought there should be no discussion on this because they didn't have their shit together when they came here. I've been in many a position where I had one or two days to get prepared to present my viewpoint in a national meeting and I thought it was very significant and I think that all of us at some point or another are going to be faced with a similar situation. That we are not always in, there are going to be alot of cases where you see things that you have problems with going on and you don't have a full theoretical and analytical approach to dealing with it. You may not be theoretically able to have the root problem analyzed, but if you are witnessing a process going on and you can put out a generally coherent explanation of what it is, people can make determinations if there is something valid in what you are saying. I really feel like the attitude that it was the

responsibility of this body to defer its entire agenda of business due to the fact that you don't have your shit together and you had two weeks to get at least something minimal together was extremely disrespectful.

Paul,
PSO:

I wanted to support something comrade Carla said a minute ago. If we can get on to the discussion of the three key points on a political level...If these comrades from Southern California put their perspective on the role of federationism and how it holds us back and show how Local Centers play in that, and a position that people feel is incorrect, they can struggle with them. Irene puts out a perspective on that question and they on a political level, the same thing shows itself. And you shouldn't get stuck right now on the summation and in that light I would move that we go to the questions that Irene put forth and then, still, if necessary, come back to the understanding of democracy, but I think we should get into the political content and illuminate the problems in order to move the struggle forward.

CN, SC:

Point of order. I'm prepared to do that but I want it to be clear that these rumblings and criticisms about subverting democracy and undemocratic procedure have had a full opportunity to air themselves. I don't want to go forward in the political discussion without an opportunity afforded the whole body - anybody who thinks it was an undemocratic procedure or squashing of dissent or squashing of the minority - there is an opportunity to stand up and say your point of view.

Anna,
Philadel:

In terms of what Clay was just raising, we received the document that is called a "Beginning Analysis from the Minority Perspective." Now I am confused. Because what I've heard is that there is no minority perspective from folks who disagree with Irene. Now I want to know - the reason I am asking this now is when we get into the discussion, I mean I've read this carefully and I have some points which I feel that we need to discuss and I want to know whether there is anybody in this room that stands behind it and if in fact this is a document that you all participated in and represent.

Richard,
So. Cal.:

We do stand behind that document and we will try to get more copies of it for those people who haven't been able to get one here at this conference. I want to make clear one point that was brought up by a comrade over here about our preparation for the conference and I think the definite questions that are involved here is what's really the problem. There are questions over characterizations, particular characterizations of points of view, whether this was federationism, or not federationism, whether this was this or that, that we have not assessed yet in total. What our document tries to do is to spell out what we think that Local Centers should try to do - the process of building an OCIC.

Chair:

(Attempts to bring the body to a vote on the motion that discussion of the democratic process be suspended until after discussion of the political issues related to the question of building Local Centers. TS and CN call a point of order.)

- TS, SC: There were two hands that went up after Clay raised the... (Chair interrupts to call for a vote of the body)
- CN, SC: Can the body at least be informed as to whether those two speakers wanted to speak to the question of undemocratic procedure? The two hands that were raised when I made my remarks.
- Chair: (Calls for discussion on the motion only.)
- CN, SC: I think it's an incorrect approach to this question, because I think that as long as there are feelings or may be feelings in this body that in some way this process and discussion was prepared in an undemocratic manner, a manner biased in favor of one position or another, it's going to interfere with people's ability to identify the key points of view and take those points of view on the basis of their political merit. It will be an undercurrent in our discussion. It will interfere with the process of political discussion. It is a profound mistake to move ahead into that political discussion without giving the body the opportunity to air any criticisms they may have around undemocratic procedure.
- Malachi: Yes, I agree with Clay and just to take it one step further. I think that there are some things that have to be gotten at again - a 4 page paper - again raises the question of the lack of democracy and people putting forward their point of view. And again, by people raising this point about democracy - the people from Southern California, as well as people in the body who supported that, thatlike, I want to hear more discussion on a document that is 4 pages signed by these five people, and why it is that they can't sum that up. Because I think there is a line in that document, and I think that should be put forward by the people unless in fact they feel that their rights have been suppressed. I just want to underscore the point around the right of the minority to be silent, because I also agree that that is no right at all.
- Phil,
Detroit: I'm not sure I am speaking for the motion. It is very difficult when comrades are referring to a paper that many of us do not have, and yet much of the discussion seems to hinge on one side, comrades are saying 'well, we didn't have a chance to prepare' and yet it is still evident that there was some preparation, and the weird thing about it is that some problems or mistake that they made led to some problems in how this was handled for the conference and I think that that's legitimate enough, and that it shouldn't be some kind of thing of folks not really sure whether the folks who were raising questions about democracy are looking above and beyond what's happened.
- Frank,
Philadel: I don't think it's only a question of the paper that was prepared because when the position was put forward by Irene around the summation of the Local Center there was a very strong opposition made at that time around how that sum-up was characterized and ran through a number of points that he felt was not accurate. So, just on that basis, to then say, 'well, I don't think we should continue any discussion on

this, because we don't have a fully formulated position'. There's enough of a formulated position to come out with that kind of a response to a summation as it was presented, and I agree with the brother over here that raised the point about it was their responsibility to come to this meeting prepared for that discussion.

Mickey:

I want to speak against the proposal. I think that the question that has come up is, in terms of the views of the minority being presented, the essence of what we are trying to do in building an ideological center and talking about national ideological struggle being primary. I think we can point to all kinds of errors the SC has made in _____ with problems in this struggle. What we heard before we went to lunch was, and I think aspects of it when we came back, was the hesitancy on the part of the minority to put out their view for what seems to me, I hope I am corrected if I am wrong, not _____ consideration, consideration that this line would lose, that this line would be defeated if it were put out there. I think that that's what we have to clear up. Although, I think that a number of speakers have spoken to that, I think that now what we have to do is put that to the people that have already made that - either they should get up and say what they have to say about it, or else _____. And then that question is going to have to be dealt with through the leadership of the Steering Committee after this meeting adjourns. I think that we should, therefore, bring to the floor those folks who have raised that criticism, see if there is anything to say, if there is - pursue it. If not, we have to move on.

(Question is called on the motion to end discussion on democratic procedure.)

VOTE: Motion fails by a hand vote.

TS, SC:

I could have voted for that motion, except there were two hands up at the point where he made the motion. I would like to know if those two hands think that the process was undemocratic.

Minn

Soc Coll:

I think that at first I thought it seemed incorrect that Irene present the minority position. But when it was explained that that was the decision of Southern California as a whole, then after that my criticism became mute. However, I think, and this comes out of my own experience - I used to be a member of Progressive Labor Party - so I got very used to having minority positions fought, smashed, people literally _____ of the organization. So, I am very sensitive to when somebody stands up and gives a minority position, and then makes comments about that minority position, I think what that leads to is that leads to feelings on behalf of the whole particular view that they are going to lose. See, because you set up the preconditions in people's minds that they got no chance of going anywhere with their position. It's sectarian. I mean, to me real democracy, you know, real democracy that's a good word (meant sarcastically, ed) - a democratic way of dealing with it is if you put forward what your feeling is - if you put forward a minority position and then afterwards in the discussion you raise what you feel are criticisms or inaccuracies or inability to

correctly analyze what is going on, but you don't do it the minority's position. I think that that is totally unprincipled. And that's why I raised my hand, and that's what my objections were.

Beverly,
Seattle:

Well, I had wanted to just underline some of what Clay was saying. When the outburst came before we adjourned earlier this evening, I had a very subjective reaction to it which isn't necessarily the best reaction. But you know people were pissed and I got pissed right back. But, also it's because of my own feelings toward the OCIC. I really see it as, you know, me being a part of it, and trying to represent it locally, and I think we should all have that certain kind of feeling like it's our own, so that he is raising a really deep criticism, I mean a really significant one - he's questioning our very integrity and I think we have to understand that and try to get him to have unity with us that we were sincere in our errors, even. I mean you can be sincere and make errors. So that he's thinking that we had a conscious intention to undermine struggle here and he is basing it on some statement that some individual made. But Clay has said it pretty clear. I also want to react to the whole idea of the motion earlier. I just want to say that when someone becomes very subjective in struggle, you don't end struggle in order to deal with that subjectivity. You don't try to divert it and say 'hey, let's get to the general, more objective kind of stuff and get around that subjectivity.' We didn't do that when we were talking about racism earlier today. People didn't stop struggling because folks became defensive or subjective. And I think some of that motion is a reaction to the subjectivity on the part of this comrade. Because it's like, 'hey, we're not going to arrive at any objective good reaction or conclusion, so let's get on to the larger political questions.' But you can't always deal with those specific problems in the larger general kind of thing, so I think we have to deal with it head on, rather try to divert it.

?

I just think that, I'm not, I hope I can express myself, anyway, sometimes in an organization like ours there is even and uneven development - we all recognize that. When someone says that they have an undeveloped position and someone else is putting out a contrary but very developed position forward. And they say they can't respond and can't put forward their position as fully developed, in other words, one seems easily to erode the other. And I thought, and I don't know about this 5 page document, but it seems like what they were saying to me and all of us is that they have not a fully developed position and that the majority did, and because of that, we were going to decide or rule or vote or whatever...that their position would be defeated because they have not developed it. Now that goes through everything - we all have uneven development along all political issues, and if a person gets up in a very political way contradicts what you are saying and you are unsure and you are not totally developed, you sit down and you shut up. And that defeats democracy. That was my point earlier. If someone has an undeveloped position and doesn't really want to get into it.... (this sentence falls off). That's what I wanted to say before and I hope...(last couple of words fall off).

Linda,
Philadel:

I think this is really important, and I am really glad that we are having this discussion, because I think that it certainly taught me a lot about ideological struggle and what the role of the SC is, and what the role of an ideological center is in fact. And, like I just saw this document, too, and in some ways it sort of changes my feelings about whether this is or isn't a consolidated and well planned out view on the part of the minority. But I think that even if this document didn't exist, that I think that there is a basis for us to be able to judge a view that may not be fully consolidated. We are not here representing a consolidated view or this organization or that organization, and I think that we have tried to say that in a number of ways. I think that the other thing is that we do represent uneven development. That's clear. But that in this process we are going to further all of our development. I think it is very possible that some comrades here today have offered a tremendous amount to our discussion who may not be as developed as some of the people, say in our leadership body, and yet some of those other people have been able to offer us something. And I think that's the process of emerging leadership, and that's one of the things we want to do, and I think that's a really important thing to think about.

Pat,
Seattle:

I wanted to agree basically with the woman who just spoke, and disagree with a comrade who spoke earlier from the back of the room. I don't want to make any grand generalizations about what is a personal experience, and I want to put forward that obviously what we want to do is to strive to be the most prepared that we can, because of the responsibility that we have in what we are trying to do obviously. But there are always going to be times when we can't be as prepared as we want to be and my experience and the experience of many others is that when you put forward what you think, even if it is at a very low level, that pushes things forward, rather than retards them. And I think that there's a bourgeois or petty-bourgeois attitude perhaps behind that which is perfectionistic that says 'I don't want to embarrass myself by showing people how underdeveloped I am, I'm not going to put anything forward until it's really clean and it's going to win.' And I think that that's putting yourself before what we are trying to do which is to develop clarity on questions and to learn things. And people from Seattle and people from all around the country have a real down to earth need to develop some clarity around the Local Centers because that is what we are trying to do - I know in Seattle we are just beginning that process, and the more we can learn during these meetings, the more this process is going to push us forward and we are not going to be creating the wheel all over again in each city.

Tom,
Boston:

I think there are two basic points that are being addressed here. I'm going to address one first, and then the other. I think first, it would be a good idea if comrades who feel that any leading body set this up in an undemocratic way - either the Local Center SC in Southern California or the national SC. If anybody has that point of view, then that is the most pressing for us to address. There is also some very sharp criticisms of the comrades from Southern California around

subjectivism and the idea that they should not have a point of view because they have not developed ... (voice drops off here). That I think is an important point that they should be able to make a response to...so I would ask the body to address the first point as to whether the procedure was undemocratic...(can't understand last few words here).

Phil,
Detroit:

Just in line with what the comrade just raised, I think along with whatever we analyze the situation and the errors made in the situation, we have to look at not only what people intended but the objective results of actions taken. So we have to not only analyze, well, did anybody set out to subvert the democratic process, but we also have to say 'were actions taken by the SC or not at the level of national or local? Did the results of those actions or inactions tend to subvert the democratic process?'

Tom,
Boston:

Point of procedure. In the interests of moving this forward - it's 20 minutes after 9:00(PM) now. I would like to hear from the comrades from the minority in Southern California how they sum up this process so far... I think we are getting bogged down. I think we sum up where we are at right now...(last sentence drops off).

CN, SC:

I think we can do that. I just want to address a point which I think is part of an approach to ideological struggle. The comrade in the back made a remark that ^{it} was incorrect for Irene to have characterized what she thought were the underlying errors in the minority position, to have characterized what she felt the minority position stems from, that what she just should have done is set forward the majority position and set forth the minority position, and not state what her views on the minority position were. (CN is interrupted by the speaker who had made the remarks about which CN was speaking to) Go ahead, I don't want to misrepresent you.

Minn:

You are right in the sense that what I said was that you present the majority position, then you present the minority position, and in discussion you raise all those same points.

CN:

OK, alright, that doesn't change anything as far as I'm concerned. It seems to me that part of the ideological struggle and the responsibility of the advanced forces in the struggle and part of deepening and sharpening struggle is to draw out what underlies a position. People don't always state their point of view. In fact, alot of their thinking is not really clear to them. Now the question is, is that drawn out in a principled way or is it drawn out in an unprincipled way. If somebody attempts to caricature a position, if somebody attempts to call names, if somebody attempts to slander another person - that's unprincipled. But if someone is attempting to draw out underlying thinking which may not be conscious in the thinking of the other point of view but objectively underlies that, that sets a better tone for discussion. It deepens the content of discussion. People don't like that. You don't like to have your position characterized other than the way in which you express it. But it is important, nevertheless, to have that kind of process. I don't think that anything that Irene said or did was

unprincipled. The minority has a full right to set forward their point of view and characterize what they think underlies her point of view. And that is not undemocratic. Rather it makes for deeper more principled and sharper struggle. We have to learn to have sharp disagreement amongst comrades and still yet unite. I don't think that kind of struggle, sharp struggle, putting forward and identifying underlying errors, is the kind of struggle that was conducted in the Progressive Labor Party.

Lowen,
Chicago:

I think the question is what was Irene instructed to do by the Southern California Local Center. If she was instructed to objectively present the two positions, then that was her assigned task, then I think she should have done it and then as the comrade here says, later on whatever criticisms and analysis of the minority view she felt, if she was simply trying to give the minority view of the minority view, then that's appropriate, but if she was in a sense given the trust by the minority comrades of the Southern California SC to present their viewpoint as objectively as possible, I think the comrade is saying he's not sure she did. I don't know because I don't know what their viewpoint is, but I think she had the responsibility to objectively present it if that was the task assigned.

Irene,
So Cal:

I don't believe that the question is what is what you put forward. But I want to clarify what the instructions were. In fact, what the request was, was a letter from the national SC to the co-chairs of the Local Center SC requesting that one or both of those co-chairs deliver a presentation summing up the experience and drawing the lessons to the best of their ability to the body of this conference. I think that because we had advanced to a point in our locale where we had gone beyond the SC in that process and had opened it up to the Local Center itself, we were able to put the question before the membership at large and decide on a procedure. In terms of clarifying what the decisions of the Local Center at large was, was that I do my presentation, that I present majority and minority positions, that the SC have set up four large discussions among the body to get out those views. That they be responsibly reported, that they do not represent one whole body consolidated, but different points of view amongst the minority. I think it is incumbent upon me, and I made it very clear and it was decided upon in our locale, that it was not just my responsibility to put forward the majority and minority viewpoint but it's my responsibility as an individual in the OCIC, not just a representative of my locale, to put forward my opinion on the majority and minority positions.

Mike,
Ontario:

I think that it is quite clear from the information that we haven't had both from the comrades of the minority and from what Irene just said that one thing is certain, and that is that the national SC can not be charged with anti-democratic practices in the sense that Irene has stated, and the other comrades agree that there was not an articulated and cohesive minority position put forward in the Southern California Center. That what occurred was that there was an evolving majority position clearly consistent with the whole process that is

envisioned by the OC, and that there was a level of concern ... that was not that well articulated, and indeed, Irene stated as a preface to her summarizing that view that she's not stating what they said but rather to try to presume what was behind their concerns. So given that rather nebulous situation, I think that we are asking a great deal of the Steering Committee to anticipate that, indeed, that there should be built into this discussion the opportunity for what must have appeared to them to have been a very ill-defined opposition, if indeed it is worthy of the word opposition. I think that, in fact, the facts show us that they are ... to the question of democracy, the fact that in this case making it a much bigger issue than it seems to have been.

Keith,
So. Cal:

I don't think the facts are clear. First of all, I am self-critical of myself. I guess I was upset before the break and I got the wrong impression from what Clay proposed. I thought that the proposal was for us to address Irene's criticisms that go beyond the paper that we wrote and that's why I raised hesitations because I didn't want to go beyond that paper. We will defend that paper. We wrote that paper and I'll discuss any aspect of it and I would have come up here & read it if I felt that that's what people had meant, or summarized it. Now, the reason I was hesitant about going beyond that thing was because we were divorced from the Local Center experience for quite a while. Even Irene mentioned that the membership was somewhat divided at the base. And I go by the, it's not a question of my underdevelopment - that's up for anyone's criticism or my self-criticism, but I think there is a basis to make that statement. The reason is that I uphold the principle of no investigation, no right to speak. And I don't think that I both the processes beyond that paper that I would have to investigate. Just like this body will have to investigate before. That's why what we did write up was to show you the direction our investigation was taking. Now I have a few questions to address to Clay and people that I don't have the answers to. I was told, I thought I was told by people on the Local Center SC, that Al's, that Clay, you had Al's paper, the initial document which questioned some of the things brought up in the Local Center. That wasn't distributed although several papers directly refer to them, like Dennis' paper, was distributed. I don't understand that. Also, I know that Clay talked to the person that left the SC and left the Local Center, and I would have thought that perhaps, I mean I wouldn't know what he got out of those conversations... (unclear words here)... I want to clear up something else which, I want to put the discrepancies of facts on the floor. I didn't vote for Irene to go. I thought she was the best representative from the Local Center. It was part of our view of belonging to the Local Center. I didn't know the content of her speech. I don't think the majority of the membership of the Local Center knew what the content of her speech was, and also, it was not the view of the minority that they wanted their positions characterized because the minority feels that it is about a concept that minority positions can be put forward in an objective fashion by some other (interruption outside of the conference hall at this point.)

CN: I was sent Al's paper two or three weeks ago, and was told not to circ- (tape ends on this side.)

(The last part of the discussion of the democratic process did not get recorded. There were five more speakers and then the body came to a vote on the following motion: DEMOCRACY WAS NOT VIOLATED IN THE PROCESS OF DISCUSSING THE STEERING COMMITTEE LOCAL CENTER PROCESS. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.)

SC Resolution on Racism at the OCIC Conference

(TV presented the SC Resolution which can be found in the attached documents. Chair calls for a vote on the Resolution without discussion.

VOTE: FOR - 66 OPPOSED - 0 ABSTENTIONS - 0

Steve,
Cincin:

What I wanted to say is in regard to this resolution. I supported the resolution with some hesitation because I think that the resolution as it is stated, doesn't go deep enough. The way it comes off is sort of moralistic in tone and doesn't really begin to address what the root problem is in terms of why these racist keep coming up in the OC. I think the political essence of the errors that we made is that we constantly have and make statements seeing a kind of 'them and us' attitude about the struggle against racism. We constantly see the Black Liberation movement and the movements of other national minorities as their struggle and not really have much to do with us. I think that error was made in relation to our discussion of the National Minorities Conference. It sounded like a lot of people took the attitude 'well, that's their conference, we are going to be nice and listen about it, but it really doesn't have very much to do with us.' I think that what we have to do is assume the attitude, given the circumstance that the movement of national minorities is, in fact, our struggle, and we have a vital stake in furthering those struggles and seeing it through to their final conclusion. I think that that perspective is really lacking in the OC, and really lacking in the kind of materials that are being published and I think that that is an error that we really want to deepen and really want to attach alot of priority to.

Carla,
Phila:

I don't mean this by way of discussion and I know we are all supposed to take up discussion of the resolution, but I feel like there was one other particular criticism made that wasn't resolved and that was to Phil, and I would really like to see that criticism specifically taken up in your organization and reported back to the OC.

CN, SC:

There also was a criticism around the anti-working class comment in the leaflet which I, I don't think we need to formulate a resolution now, but I think that we should have a sense of the body that that comment was anti-working class and should be rejected and that also should be discussed, because while I think the racism is primary, and I wouldn't want to incorporate that comment into the racism resolution, although I think there was probably, and I don't know the composition of the bus drivers in Chicago, but I would imagine given

what I know about Philadelphia and other places, that they are probably predominantly black, that there was a racist aspect too, but I think that needs to be discussed and summed up as well. Therefore, I would like to make a resolution:

"We also reject the anti-working class comment that was in the directions to the party, and that this also be discussed within all OCIC centers, organizations, and groups."

Lowen,
Chicago:

I voted for the resolution because I think in general the main thrust of it is correct. There are a couple of things in it that I didn't agree with (Chair calls Lowen out of order).

?

Regarding Clay's motion I think we should also (speaker is in the back of the room and can't be heard.)

(Chair calls the question.)

VOTE: (Vote was unanimous in favor, no opposition, no abstentions.)

Lowen:

I want to finish what I was saying. The essential thing I want to say was that I think there was some important criticisms of racist errors made here that were not in the resolution and I trust this body to write these up.

National Steering Committee Evaluation and Elections

TV, SC:

I must say I got a little nervous two days ago when everytime something came up about the OC SC everybody said 'well, there's going to be a time to deal with it.' But, I'm not going to go into everything. What I want to do is focus on the main weakness on the SC. I'm not going to focus on the strengths of the SC because basically we stand by the strengths that clearly came out in the leadership we gave in terms of whole OC, and that was really presented in terms of the OC's First Year Sum Up, in terms of everything from the struggle against left opportunism to developing an approach to carrying out ideological struggle. There is one thing that I think in particular about that which is important to note is that the SC had a very good understanding of the relationship between theory and practice in the sense that we tried to seriously address the questions that were raised by the practice of our movement and tried to develop theory around it. And there is one other thing under strengths that I wanted to briefly mention because it has been raised as a question. The comrade criticized, indirectly, the SC for not being self-critical and in thinking alot about that, I don't think that's accurate, and I think a strength of the SC has been our process of criticism and self-criticism in relationship to the OC at large. I think it important to mention this also in the context of a real improvement over the Committee of Five days, even though it is a different process. When people raise, we encourage people first off to write up their criticisms in a serious way and I think we then looked at those criticisms seriously and gave our response. And many times we

were self-critical in terms of what we didn't do. Other times where we were pointed that out. I think also we struggled with different forces and were not liberal. Like in terms of the south or in terms of the initial sum up of the MSU comrades made. I think in this context I would also like to note that a real strength that hasn't been brought out in terms of the whole OC is some of the criticisms and positive contributions the base made. I think that different criticisms were raised, many of them really moved our whole work forward. I'm not sure, and definitely not all things have we transformed, and nor have we always carried through on criticism, like some of the criticisms around racism. But overall, I think we basically have established a good process in terms of responding to criticism. In a sense I am addressing one aspect of the mass line in the sense that I think we have listened to the masses within this tendency. I think the weakest link was going back to you all, not around specific criticisms but in terms of this whole thing of not explaining explicitly what our perspective and thinking was. But, I'm not going to go into that criticism that has already been made because I think we acknowledge that and the whole idea of the OC Internal Bulletin addressed that and the whole thing of popularizing it.

Now, what I would like to do with the main weakness is try to deepen it, talk about its roots, how it manifested itself, some of the improvements and how we see rectifying it. And the weakness that we are referring to is the failure to pay enough attention to the consolidation and development of the OC and the SC. A secondary weakness I want to address is within this context and it is interrelated, is the failure of the SC to be conscious and systematic enough in terms of carrying out our perspectives, and carrying out our tasks. I'm not going to deal so much with the consolidation of the OC at large, but what I would like to focus more on is the failure to consolidate enough in terms of the SC. Because I think that draws out some of the weaknesses. I'd like to mention just a couple of things about the weakness of not consolidating politically the whole OC, and that is it is really clear, I think one of the papers from LA helped me see this, that this failure occurred on all levels. The OC's First Year goes into how it occurred in the OC at large in terms of racism and the 18 Points, and our failure to deepen people's understanding there. But it is clear from the presentation of the LA situation that they also made that error and it's clear that in our understanding of regional centers originally that we didn't even have _____ of internal consolidation, if people will remember that. And like in the south in particular, I'm most familiar with that - last fall that wasn't understood as an important thing, not even in the spring, it only became clear to me not that long ago, that there needed to be a lot more emphasis in terms of consolidating people's understanding of what we are all about. Now, I think to get at the heart of this is in reality was capitulating to spontaneity. If we look at what underlies that we haven't had a full discussion, we just had some initial thinking about it, but one factor is an overestimation of the ideological and theoretical consolidation on the different levels. That is clearly shown in the south. I didn't have any understanding, really, of where people's understanding of party building really was. I think that happened on the SC. Clay made that error in terms of ourselves, the rest of us in terms of not fully grasping it.

And generally it is reflective of just the level of development of our whole tendency and the OC. There's one other factor I think that played into this was in terms of the SC the reality that the SC members didn't put the sufficient energy in to the SC and the OC that was called for to do the consolidation. One thing about the over-estimation in terms of like where people were at - I think that also contributed to the error of not explicitly putting out our understanding and popularizing it. So I'd like to go on to the three or four manifestations of insufficient attention to internal consolidation within the SC.

The first is that we really didn't have or paid enough attention to having a strategic political overview of our tasks as a SC. Really in the sum up of the first year it states that we didn't put it out to you all, but we didn't really always have it, or not all of us had it, and that was part of the error. And it really wasn't until we started to sum up the first year of the OC that we really got a clear shared understanding of where we've been and that we had correctly focused the struggle and our energies on the struggle against left opportunism. Also, that given that, given that focus and the necessity of that, given the development of our thinking and resource problems there were real reasons why we didn't get to the Draft Plan earlier but obviously if we had that we could have shared that more with people. We had that understanding earlier which would have created a lot less confusion on people's part. I think the MSU people, the LA people and all the people that were kind of wondering where in the world we were really forced us to grapple with that and it was very positive in terms of the initiative from the base.

What we should have done is that when the SC first met we should have really sat down, summed up what came out of the OC conference, to try to develop more of a strategic and political understanding of our tasks. Now, it's not like we didn't have any overview, there was the overview in terms of the primary and secondary tasks, but we didn't really develop a lot of the particular political perspectives around that and where some of our energy was going to clearly have to go. I think that if we had done that we could have consolidated the whole SC more understanding in terms of the necessity of ^{the} focus against left opportunism and defining our relationship to the rest of the tendency at large. There was no way we could have predicted the degree of the some of the deviations of the Clubs for instance. A concrete example of how it would have really helped us if we had summed up that conference - one of the clear things that came out of that was the weakness of federationism. It cropped up. And if we had evaluated the OC conference and looked at what were some of the key problems that we saw emerging, we could have established that somebody in the OC do some more work on that and the SC then take up a study of this and consolidate around it and bring that struggle to the whole OC. If we had done that we could have had much more of a strategic, if we had consolidated our understanding around federationism earlier we would have a better handle on its strategic significance for Local Centers and given more guidance in that respect.

One of the things that also comes in here as a secondary criticism we wanted to raise around not being conscious and systematic enough in our methods of work because after really trying to consolidate a strategic political overview of our tasks what we should have done is develop a work plan. We never really did that. We never really tried to figure out, well, exactly what tasks were going to be accomplished by when. Our failure to do this opened the door to idealism on our part, in that, well, like this example of the struggle around Point 18, understanding that that was going to be more of a protracted struggle and that therefore we wouldn't get to some of the other things. If we had put that out, that would have been really helpful. We wouldn't have gotten so frustrated. Why weren't we doing this, or why weren't we doing that. Also, what came into play here is that we didn't sufficiently develop a stronger division of labor in terms of like who was going to carry out different tasks. And, that obviously, as people know, created real problems in terms of the reality of carrying out things. Like For The People and other people raised the whole mess around this study of the 18 Principles. We didn't really clearly assign someone to carry that through, develop everything from study questions to giving some more guidance on where to find these things. A lot of people raised to me, next time we do this, I get so many calls about where is this document, where is that document. We didn't have enough division of labor all along the way; it's not like we didn't have any or that we didn't improve like in the spring in terms of having more division of labor around the region and so forth. But, one of the criticisms here is that there wasn't enough initiative from everyone other than the chair in terms of taking up tasks. There was a tendency to leave too much on Clay and sometimes on John. This, in different respects, contributed to spontaneity. We didn't just have spontaneity in our overview, but we had spontaneity in terms of carrying out particular tasks. An example of this is, as everyone is well of this whole process around the SC evaluation and elections. Now clearly if I had taken more initiative earlier in terms of saying 'well, look, this is an area I could really work on and develop some thinking around, and then we all discuss it', but instead it wasn't assigned to anybody and left to the last minute and the process, as people know, has been problematic, in not getting this evaluation out to you until now.

The next thing in terms of methods of work that played in here is that there wasn't a plan to have a periodic sum up. And I'm not even sure we had the understanding in the beginning that we were going to have a sum up at the end of the year. Other people may have but ^{we} weren't consciously thinking that. But even in between times, after six months the next OC meeting was going to take place, that was really idealistic. That would have been an appropriate time to sit back and not do a full, in-depth sum up but kind of check out where we were politically and where we were going. And if we had done that at that time I think we would have reached some of the conclusions that we reached later in March and would have been able to share those with people which would have been helpful. Going back to this whole problem of having a political and strategic overview, is not just something that needed to be done initially, but it is something that needed to be done throughout the whole process of the SC. There wasn't enough of that

and here again I think there were criticisms in the sense that as a collective we didn't always assume a collective responsibility about developing our perspectives and developing our thinking on lines and to have an overview. And there was a tendency often to leave that to the chair, it's not to deny that the chair has the primary responsibility, but it's everybody responsibility. It's everybody's responsibility to be conscious in terms of the overview of the struggle against racism. It's not a matter of leaving it to just one person. There has been some real improvement in terms of consolidating the SC. In March we really took some steps forward in terms of a lot of things - the process to sum up, different criticisms, and the whole understanding of an ideological center developed more by that time. But since March we put alot more emphasis within the SC in terms of really taking out the time to fully discuss our lines and perspectives - the Draft Plan, the Local Centers, the Clubs sothere was a shared conception of it by everyone, then all of us could go out and provide leadership. And that was a problem in many ways in terms of our failures in leadership, because we couldn't really expect individual members to provide leadership to the problems of-for instance the Local Centers-we all hadn't developed our understanding - it wasn't Irene's fault- it was us that hadn't developed the necessary understanding so that we could give leadership to Irene. That's not to say that there weren't before March times that we did develop perspectives on different things, like the Clubs, and so forth, but it wasn't as strong as it could have been, and that also wasn't shared.

This brings me to the second main manifestation of not developing and consolidating the SC and that was not developing individual members within it and not having a conscious approach to development. Clearly, the whole process of spending more time collectively, discussing things has been the most essential element, not only moving us collectively forward, but in moving individuals within that forward so that we can be a stronger collective unit. But, the problem is that as everyone is aware from the last couple of days that there is obviously uneven development in the SC and it's not surprising, given the racism and sexism in this society, that some of theoretical skills which is not the sum total of what is to be on the SC, some of those theoretical skills national minority and women on the SC were not as strong, and that there needed to be and was not a conscious approach to developing particularly the two women and the national minority person. And that was racist and that was sexist. It was a spontaneous kind of thing and was left up to the individuals. What there wasn't - there should have been a work plan for development of individuals, particularly of independent study plan around particular areas of theoretical weaknesses. The reason that that plan is so important is, I remember asking Clay right when the SC started 'what should I do in terms of having a much better understanding of party building historically?' and Clay told me 'well, there's that list that went out with the five questions' and as everybody knows there were about 8 books and a number of volumes of Lenin, right? So the reality is that without being more focused and prioritized and deadlines and a way to check up to see how I was coming along, it didn't get done. It's just the reality of all the other tasks facing us. It really wasn't until SUB took it up and worked out a plan for myself. One other thing in

terms of individual SC members that there wasn't a conscious approach to is the whole thing of SC members making the OC and SC their primary area of work. There wasn't a conscious collective discussion of this problem and how to really address it sufficiently early in the situation. What happened is that individual SC members were left to fend for themselves with their individual organizations and struggling. There wasn't a mechanism for really figuring out how to deal with that. There was no collective discussion. We made some improvement on that in March when we talked about it but we didn't implement it totally. The idea of having work plans and evaluating them, the problems people are having with getting work done and trying to address that.

The third thing in terms of an area of consolidating the SC as a collective unit was in our process of criticism and self-criticism internal to the SC which was weak. There were times when good criticisms were raised, particularly around the National Minority M-L Conference. For instance, my racism in terms of liberalism and paternalism in terms of a national minority comrade in Baltimore; Pat's errors around that. We collectively discussed that and tried to get a better handle on racism, not only to correct our errors, but in general that wasn't done sufficiently in the sense that often when criticisms were made, it was after a SC meeting and it was n't during the process and wouldn't be discussed collectively. There was some criticisms around paternalism and there was liberalism on Pat and my part for not raising it at the time, and also there should have been a collective discussion around it, so we all would have had a better understanding of it. Overall, that wasn't the key in terms of the criticism of the SC - the key was the sum-up in terms of our collective work, and that's the most important thing which we did and that 's the main way to criticize the SC as a collective unit.

The last thing I wanted to say in terms of dealing just a little bit in terms of this consolidation was not paying enough attention to the SC around consolidating our understanding of racism and sexism and the way it came out in the SC. Originally I was going to spend alot more time with racism, but I think it is clear from alot of what has gone on over the weekend that the SC needs to be alot stronger in that area. We haven't paid enough attention to it to really strengthen our understanding so we can play more of a leading role or else I didn't pick up the racist implications of the neighborhood thing, and Pat didn't. So, that has to be addressed a lot more. In terms of Tyree and his contributions and the special contributions that Tyree was talking about in his presentation of national minorities to the whole party building process, and errors ofunderestimating national minority comrades. Even in our process there was liberalism as a whole in relationship to Tyree which is a form in which racism comes out from white comrades. Not struggling early in the game with him around discipline in terms of preparation and follow-through, and really trying to get to the root of that. And obviously the thing that was mentioned earlier in not having a more conscious approach to developing him. The racism was most primary. Secondarily, in terms of sexism, I'll deal with that a little, because that really hasn't been addressed much at this conference. Besides not having a more

conscious approach to developing the women on the SC, we needed to have a more collectively shared understanding of how sexism holds women back in terms of the SC and in terms of the whole problem of lack of self-confidence, and then what should we do in terms of that. Like the importance of giving very clear feedback in terms of particular areas of work is important. Clay really moved alot from the Committee of Five days, I would say interms of really doing this, but because we really didnt have a collective discussion, there were weaknesses in terms of the other members. That's the biggest thing. There were some errors at times, like at one point, in terms of paternalism - an instance where the women were talked down to in terms of things they already knew about. Of ten it was the women that asked the most questions when we weren't really clear, which is valid that people addressed the questions. There were other problems with the men not taking seriously enough some of the questions women were raising.

So, in summary I would just like to say, there was really some progress. A number of things started to really move forward around March so there has been alot of progress. It doesn't mean that there aren't a number of other things that still need to be done, and I think it is important to point out the reason we are focusing in on the consolidation of the SC is because it has a direct relationship to why we didn't provide stronger leadership in the OC at large. There was a secondary thing that was a problem and I 'm not going to go into it too much because it was secondary, but the whole problem of discipline in terms of the SC members, of not putting enough energy into the SC process. Not getting out written preparation for agendas sufficiently ahead of time. I remember the weekend we talked about the OC Sum up, that was in Philadelphia, and that's when we got the written preparation and there was a party and things in Philadelphia which obviously (laughter).. I mean, everytime, I mean it is a real strength - everytime we go there there's a political event (more laughter). Anyway, that obviously has to be improved because there isn't the time to critically evaluate something and it really hurst the process of what we come up with. But before we go on to the concrete things that need to be done I just want to remind people that the whole idea of deepening criticism is what I have presented here, but we don't want people to go away thinking that we think that this was dominant in terms of the SC. We really stand by what we said yesterday - our strengths are really dominant.

Overall, in terms of rectifying this situation in terms of some of our weaknesses, clearly we have to be more conscious of ourselves as a collective leadership body - more conscious in terms of consolidating our political unity, constantly taking a political overview to our tasks, developing individual members and systematically carrying out our perspective. This involves waging a struggle against spontaneity. Specifically, I will go down these:

1. The whole SC individually and collectively has to strive to constantly take up a strategic political overview to our tasks, and not leave it to just the chair. There has to be much more initiative from all of us.

2. In terms of the composition and size of the SC. Clearly the SC needs to have more people, and especially people who can take up a political and strategic overview of our tasks.
3. The SC has to insure that people who are on the SC are able to make the OC their primary area of work. Work plans have to be developed for SC members that can be evaluated periodically, so there can be a conscious approach to rectifying the situation if there is not sufficient attention being paid to carrying out a particular task of the OC.
4. There has to be some collective study and discussion as a SC around the key questions where lines are developing. We started to do this around the Clubs, reading their pamphlets, and studying them in order to develop our line and perspective. And the particular thing to note here is, particularly our understanding of racism and sexism.
5. These aren't in order of priority - Developing a more conscious work plans to develop individual members, independent study to address particular theoretical things, particularly in order to develop the women and national minority comrades.
6. That there be a work plan. The OC's First Year and sum up is not a work plan and that is one of the first things we have to do in terms of figuring out different tasks and prioritization.
7. In terms of summing up, obviously at the end of any SC term there should definitely be a written sum up, but half way through there should be a discussion of where we are - an evaluation.
8. We have to be more disciplined and less liberal in the process of criticism and self-criticism, and here again to be especially conscious of the struggle against racism and sexism.
9. Clearer division of labor, like the suggestion a number of people made around someone developing educational materials and that there be more initiative by the SC as a whole, and also more struggle from people probably more able to take on certain tasks to have others take on tasks, for instance, our plans to develop that whole thing around racism - well, I should have taken initiative to do that, even though I am sure Clay could do a better job at it. So, Clay could have struggled to say 'look, somebody else can do this' and the result was that it never got done.
10. In terms of the discipline on the SC, it not only relates to the SC putting their primary focus more on the SC, but also more discipline in getting out materials and agendas on time and meeting deadlines. We also need to be consistent in meeting every two months. That's generally what we tried to do but there were some lapses.

Chair: I think what we should do is go over the general evaluation (TV's presentation) and secondly, people from Louisville had some questions they wanted to raise around criteria for the election of SC members. So that should be a second discussion. And thirdly, would be the specific recommendations and individual criticisms of SC members.

(Due to a mechanical failure of the tape recorder the taped portion of the conference ends here. What was missing was the discussion of the Presentation by TV, the individual criticisms of each of the SC members as well as those that were being recommended by the SC for the next term. At the end of discussion of TV's presentation, a vote was taken and the body adopted the report unanimously. After discussion of each individual, chair entertained other nominations from the floor. None came forward. Vote was unanimous on the slate put forward by the SC.)

Conference adjourned with the singing of the Internationale.

Appendix

2nd National OCIC Conference Agenda

Resolution on the OC's First Year

Resolution on the OCIC Discussion Bulletin

National Minority M-L Conference Resolution

SC Resolution on OCIC Membership and Point 18

Resolution on the Line of Demarcation on Point 18

Resolution on the Struggle Over Principle 18

Presentation by SC - History and Conception of OCIC Centers

Presentation by So Cal LC - Presentation on Southern California Local
Center Experience by IM

SC Resolution on Racism at the Conference

NATIONAL OCIC CONFERENCE

September 1-2, 1979

Agenda

Saturday, September 1, 1979

- 8:00 - 9:00 AM Registration (Activities Room, 2nd Floor)
- 9:00 - 9:15 Opening Remarks by Conference Chair
- 9:15 - 9:30 Presentation on OC's First Year
Submission of resolution to the floor
- 9:30 - 1:00 PM Plenary discussion
- 1:00 - 2:00 Lunch (Cafeteria)
- 2:00 - 2:30 Presentation on Summation of the National
Minority M-L Conference
Submission of resolution to the floor
- 2:30 - 3:30 Plenary discussion
- 3:30 - 4:00 Presentation on Point 18 Summation
Submission of resolutions to the floor
- 4:00 - 5:30 Plenary discussion

Sunday, September 2, 1979

- 9:00 - 9:30 AM Presentation on the Draft Plan for an
Ideological Center
- 9:30 - 12:00 NOON Plenary discussion and Vote
- 12:00 - 1:00 PM Lunch (Cafeteria)
- 1:00 - 1:30 Presentation on OCIC Centers - Local & Regional
- 1:30 - 2:30 Presentation on Southern California Local
Center Experience
- 2:30 - 4:30 Plenary discussion
- 4:30 - 5:00 Presentation on National Steering Committee
Evaluation and Recommendations
- 5:00 - 6:00 Discussion of Nominations and Slate
- 6:00 - 6:30 National Steering Committee Elections by
closed ballot
- 6:30 Conference Adjournment

Agenda continued

Monday, September 3, 1979 (locations of meetings to be announced)

- 9:00 - 12:00 NOON Regional meetings
 National Steering Committee meeting
- 12:00 - 1:00 PM Lunch
- 1:00 - 3:00 Other special meetings

CONFERENCE RULES

1. Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.
2. Delegates should not be bound by organizational positions.
3. Proxy votes are permitted. They should reflect majority and minority positions of an organization.
4. Observers do not have speaking or voting privileges.
5. Remarks will be limited to 3 minutes.

RESOLUTION ON THE OC'S FIRST YEAR

In the U.S. today there is a single anti-revisionist movement, united in its rejection of revisionism ideologically, politically and organizationally. That movement is presently divided into two main forces contending for ideological influence over the bulk of communists - an ultra-left trend and a Marxist-Leninist tendency. A minor centrist current has also developed.

Currently, the ultra-left trend exercises ideological hegemony. This trend is marked by its systematic political viewpoint on the major questions facing the U.S. revolution, its relatively large number of adherents and its relatively well-developed organization. Its politics are characterized by "left" opportunism manifest principally on party-building line, the role of communists in the reform struggle, the relation of democracy to socialism and on international line. Despite their ideological dominance, the ultra-lefts have begun to stagnate - disoriented by the new and complex problems posed by the class struggle, suffering acute isolation from the broader left and the masses, facing diminishing opportunities for cadre recruitment. This tendency towards stagnation has served to accelerate the process of consolidation around the CPML.

Between the ultra-left trend and the Marxist-Leninist tendency, a centrist current has emerged. This current is distinguished by its desire to declare itself in opposition to ultra-leftism on the one hand but its inability to make a decisive break with the key manifestation of "left" opportunism, "left" internationalism, on the other. As the CPML-sponsored "unity" trip to China demonstrates, the logic of the centrist political views inevitably drive them towards a merger with the ultra-lefts.

By definitely rejecting "left" internationalism the Marxist-Leninist tendency has made a genuine break with ultra-leftism. Nevertheless, its break is only an initial one. The break has neither been extended to other primary expressions of "left" opportunism on political line nor has it been deepened through the identification of the primary ideological errors of the ultra-lefts. In addition, the Marxist-Leninist tendency has only begun the process of elaborating an alternative system of politics to that of the ultra-lefts. As a result, this tendency is more appropriately called anti-"left" than Marxist-Leninist.

Despite a widening gulf between itself and the ultra-lefts, the anti-"left" tendency still suffers mainly from its inadequate rectification of ultra-leftism. Its inadequate separation from "left-wing" communism is apparent in two main areas. First, there is still a tendency to conciliate with ultra-leftism by being unwilling to consistently uphold the line of demarcation with "left" internationalism. Some comrades are still reluctant to vigorously promote a separation with the "Three Worlds Theory" throughout the communist movement. As a result, our tendency has not progressed as far as it might have in exposing the flunkeyism, the irrational fear of revisionism, and the dogmatism underlying unity with this counter-revolutionary theory.

The second, and in fact even more stubborn, manifestation of ultra-leftism retarding the development of the anti-"lefts" is the circle spirit. The circle spirit consists of the failure to subordinate one's own narrow circle of comrades to the interests of the anti-"left" tendency as a whole. This narrow mentality not only fosters unnecessary organizational exclusiveness and splits in our tendency, but also serves to shield the survivals of "leftist" thinking in our ranks.

Within the anti-"left" tendency the circle spirit is headquartered in and around the leadership of the National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs (NNMLC). The present leadership, rather than the NNMLC as a whole, has consistently refused to subordinate its own narrow designs to the common interests of our tendency and the communist movement as a whole. It has refused to commit itself not only in words but in deeds to the struggle for a single leading center in our tendency. In so doing it has undermined the drive to generate a party spirit among the anti-"lefts". Fundamentally, the leadership of the Clubs has displayed a consistent disdain for the communist principles of collectivity and centralized effort. This is reflected not only in the practice of the Network in relation to the OC but in the NNMLC's own views on its internal organization. In essence, the NNMLC has abandoned the struggle for a common party-building strategy in the anti-"left" tendency as a whole.

It is the OC which has played the leading role in developing the anti-"left" tendency. The OC has led the struggle against "left" opportunism generally and in particular the fight for firm lines of demarcation with it. It has been the primary exponent of the need to struggle for a single leading center, the first line of the fight against a narrow circle approach to party-building, and, in deeds, the advance guard of the battle against localism and federationism. Organizationally, the OC has been in the forefront of evolving methods for conducting principled ideological struggle and of developing a broad, movement-wide process open to the varied political views in - and the various organizational expressions of - the developing Marxist-Leninist trend.

Along with the contributions listed above, the OC has made a number of other positive advances. It has established a functioning national Steering Committee, initiated a couple of local centers for ideological struggle, and given support to the National Minority Conference. In addition, it has developed considerable outreach, conducted a survey of the state of the communist movement, and established beginning regional structures.

The most important weakness in the OC's work has been its inadequate attention to internal consolidation. This failing was expressed particularly in the failure to pursue the study curriculum around the 18 points of unity, the inattention given to strengthening the struggle against racism within the OC's ranks, and its neglect of ensuring theoretical consolidation on the dangers posed by federationism and localism. And it was also revealed in the SC's failure to develop clear and politically focused documents, materials and study guides, making possible a good educational process for all OC members.

A second important weakness was the inadequate attention given to its tasks by the Steering Committee (SC). The SC did not pay sufficient attention to elaborating and disseminating the thinking underlying its various initiatives. It failed to provide systematic leadership to the development of local centers - forcing comrades to solve the difficult problems encountered in attempting to build them with minimal guidance. And the SC also did not give enough energy to developing regional structures and following up on local initiatives.

On the basis of this summation of the OC, the following tasks are on its immediate agenda:

- 1) Consolidate as much of the anti-"left" tendency as possible around a plan to forge a single leading center.
- 2) Develop and consolidate an all-sided summation of modern "left-wing" communism - identifying both its principal manifestations, its ideological roots and material basis.
- 3) Consolidate and deepen the OC's unity around the 18 points.
- 4) Strengthen the OC's grasp of the centrality of racism, particularly in relation to the forms in which racism expresses itself in the communist movement. (The SC should develop a detailed and thorough study plan which includes a review of the historical weaknesses of the communist movement in relation to the struggle against racism. And further, the SC should implement any special means necessary to analyze and give guidance to all facets of the struggle against white chauvinism in the OC.)
- 5) Consolidate the OC's opposition to federationism.
- 6) Strengthen the role of the SC.
- 7) Continue outreach, particularly to national minority Marxist-Leninists.
- 8) Develop OCIC centers, particularly local centers.

Based on the discussions at the national conference, a concrete and specific plan on how each of these tasks is to be taken up should be developed and circulated by the incoming OC Steering Committee.

Resolution on an OCIC Discussion Bulletin

Whereas, The SC has made substantial advances over the past year in developing the party-building strategy of the OC but these advances have not been broadly consolidated throughout the OC;

Whereas, The SC has not succeeded in consistently engaging the broad OC forces in the process of development of the OC; and

Whereas, The SC has failed to follow through on the decision of its founding meeting that the OC "take preliminary steps toward the actual centralization of the ideological struggle by publishing an internal discussion bulletin regularly";

Therefore, the Second National Conference of the OCIC resolves that the SC appoint one of its members to edit a regular internal discussion bulletin which shall have the interrelated goals of:

- a) explaining and popularizing the activities and policies of the OCIC, particularly its leadership; and
- b) drawing the broad OC forces into the ideological struggle to build a common center for the anti-"left" anti-revisionist tendency.

National Minority Conference Resolution

I. The OC endorses the National Minority Conference held in June of this year. Given the lack of development around the question of racism in the anti-revisionist movement, the development of an independent planning committee for this conference was correct. The planning committee correctly identified the OC's 18 points and commitment to the development of a single center for the anti-"left" tendency as the proper basis of unity for the conference. It was also correct for the conference planning committee to select participants on the basis of its knowledge of the historic and current work of individual national minority Marxist-Leninists; an open conference would have posed difficult problems of logistics, security and finance. Finally, we reject the charge that it was sectarian to demand genuine commitment to a single center on the part of all participants.

II. The conference represented a real success in carrying concrete developments in the U.S. party-building movement to national minority Marxist-Leninists. The conference agenda centered around four important points: (1) the centrality of party-building -- identifying the primacy of the theoretical struggle in party-building, the retarding role of "left opportunism and the OC as the correct form during this period; (2) the special tasks of national minority Marxist-Leninists in party-building; (3) racism as the central obstacle to multi-national unity in the communist movement; and (4) the role of sexism in undermining the contributions of national minority women. The OC strongly supports the high level of unity reached by the conference participants on these important points.

III. The conference process also served to expose important weaknesses in the struggle against racism within the OC's ranks. It showed that many OC groups seriously underestimate the capacity of national minority comrades to grasp communist theory leading to a tendency to restrict the role of minority Marxist-Leninists to participation in mass struggles and organizing the minority communities. It also showed a failure on the part of OC groups to assume their political responsibilities with national minority Marxist-Leninists; many groups assumed that the sole obligation for introducing the OC, its goals and development, rested on the planning committee. In addition, many OC organizations tended towards the view that recruitment was the primary way to resolve their lack of multinational composition; this view severely understates the importance of building political unity with advanced minority comrades. Finally, the SC failed both to provide an overview on OC responsibilities around the conference and to follow up on several important criticisms of racist errors in relation to the conference.

IV. While the OC is generally in favor of a multinational process, racism in our movement will continue to necessitate exclusively minority forms in some circumstances. In order to undermine these present conditions of racism, the OC should utilize the gains of the national minority conference to the fullest degree possible. This means participating in the organization of local and regional forums reporting on the discussions at the conference. It also means circulating, studying and discussing the speeches delivered to the conference, particularly focussing on each presentation's discussion of the role of racism in the communist movement.

----August 31, 1979

Submitted by the Steering Committee---

SC Resolution on OCIC Membership (as it relates to the question of Point 18):

- a) Unity with Principle 18 is required for membership in the OCIC.
- b) Forces who unite with Principle 18 but not with the Resolution on a Line of Demarcation with "Left" Opportunism shall be dropped from membership in the OCIC, at the decision of the SC, if they allow their disagreement with the resolution to obstruct the OCIC's aggressive pursuit of its work based on that resolution.
- c) It is the responsibility of all members of the OCIC to uphold, explain and convince people of the correctness of Principle 18 both within and without the tendency.

* * * * *

Resolution on a Line of Demarcation with "Left" Opportunism introduced at the Point 18 Conferences:

Whereas no viable revolutionary current can make a practice of collaborating with its own ruling class; and

Whereas all the advocates of "left" internationalism have developed a practice based on collaboration with U.S. imperialism to one degree or another; and

Whereas "left" internationalism shares with other major aspects of the ultra-left line an absurdly "left" approach to the struggle against right opportunism generally and revisionism in particular; and

Whereas the break with "left" internationalism formed the watershed of the ultra-left line in the party building movement; and

Whereas the formulation "U.S. imperialism is the main enemy of the peoples of the world" separates the advocates of "left" internationalism from the adherents of proletarian internationalism:

Be it resolved that it is correct to uphold the identification of U.S. imperialism as the main enemy of the world's peoples as a correct line of demarcation for building a trend in opposition to ultra-leftism.

Resolution on the Struggle over Principle 18

- 1) We reject the argument that unity on the nature of the ultra-left line is a prerequisite to demarcation with specific features of the ultra-left line. This argument is based in dogmatism and is advanced in order to avoid the concrete analysis of concrete conditions by retreating to the abstract. On the contrary, demarcation with "left" internationalism is essential in order to establish the preconditions for common work towards deepening the criticism of ultra-leftism and our unity on the nature of the ultra-left line.
- 2) The concrete work of forging an anti-"left" trend centers on the interpenetrating tasks of deepening the criticism of ultra-leftism; and elaborating a Marxist-Leninist program, strategy, and tactics for the U.S. revolution. Attempts to sever the indissoluble connection between these tasks leads to abstractness in the critique of ultra-leftism which plays into the hands of dogmatism and must be combatted.
- 3) The question of program, strategy, and tactics is inseparable from the question of common practice; and is most clearly brought out in connection with the question of common practice. It is therefore essential to raise the question of unity in practice in relation to the unity needed to take up the task of forging a Marxist-Leninist trend. In this regard, we hold that the practice of proletarian internationalism, at even the most rudimentary level, is not possible on the basis of "left" internationalism.
- 4) Underlying the centrists' adherence to "left" internationalism is an uncritical attitude toward the CPC and Mao Zedong. We reject this flunkyism and accept the implications of identifying "left" internationalism as a central component of the ultra-left line -- the rejection of the Theory of the Three Worlds, the need to reexamine Mao Zedong Thought and the thesis of restoration of capitalism in the USSR, and the recognition that the CPC is the center of an ultra-left trend in the international communist movement. At the same time, we recognize the historical contributions which the CPC and Mao Zedong have made to the struggle against revisionism and the importance of extracting the positive aspects of this contribution for our own anti-revisionism. And we also recognize that the CPC's line is presently shifting rightward and thus calls for renewed analysis by Marxist-Leninists.
- 5) Errors were committed in the struggle against centrism and conciliation with centrism within the OCIC. Primarily, an underestimation of the influence of "left" internationalism within the anti-"left" tendency caused the struggle to be overly drawn out and the OCIC to be launched before the struggle was concluded. Secondly, the need to demarcate with "left" internationalism was not sufficiently related to the concrete tasks necessary in building a Marxist-Leninist trend. This played into the hands of abstract appeals for conciliation.
- 6) Another error committed was our failure to draw out the racism and national chauvinism implicit in the line of the "left" internationalists and their conciliators. The "lefts'" tendency to chauvinistically scoff at both the experience of national liberation movements and the statements of the leaders of these movements (particularly at the experience and

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statements of African freedom fighters), their willingness to make common cause with such virulently white chauvinist regimes as that of South Africa, and their objective unity with the most chauvinistic and racist sectors of U.S. capital should all have been sharply exposed. As a result of this error, we missed an excellent opportunity to deepen the exposure of both national and white chauvinism.

7) The conduct of the struggle provides strong confirmation of some of the basic thrusts of the OCIC's approach to ideological struggle. First, the value of centralized tendency-wide struggle was demonstrated. It ensured that the struggle focused on essential issues; lessons and insights gained locally were raised to the national level; and the consolidation produced was thorough and broadly shared. Second, the basic rule that local organizational boundaries must be subordinated to the ideological struggle nationally was confirmed. Both the representation of minority viewpoints within local organizations and the prohibition on local organizational discipline on participants in the national struggle encouraged the full involvement of the tendency in the struggle and therefore advanced the ideological struggle which was produced.

The following is a presentation delivered by the Steering Committee at the second national conference of the OCIC held September 1 - 3, 1979.

THE HISTORY AND CONCEPTION OF OCIC CENTERS

The task of building local and regional OCIC Centers over the past period has been a very significant development within the OCIC. It has, in practice, brought to our attention major aspects of a non-sectarian party building approach. What was not so clear in February of 1978 at the founding conference of the OCIC is now abundantly clear - the building and development of OCIC Centers at the local and regional level is an integral strategic part of our overall party building approach. In large measure, the extent to which we are successful in building these centers correctly, we will also be implementing correctly a party building approach which has never before been seen in the U.S. anti-revisionist movement.

History of the Conception of OCIC Centers

In February of 1978 at the founding conference of the OCIC, we voted on a proposal outlining primary and secondary tasks for the next period. The only mention of carrying out tasks at the local level was a proposal by amendment in response to concerns of El-Comite that national work would be carried out at the expense of our local work. We, therefore, mandated to the Steering Committee that they decide on a mechanism in order that "the national center could facilitate local development and figure out what we can take up nationally in terms of theoretical and practical work." In other words, the development of work at the local level was seen as a tactical way to prevent isolation of national tasks from the base and to do joint practical work.

Based on this perspective, then, the Steering Committee issued a call for all OC members to build Local Centers. We saw the basic purpose at that time as "bringing together members of the OCIC for joint discussions, study of questions taken up at the national level and to serve as information centers and contact points for the OC at the local level." The initial call of the SC received a limited response.

However, comrades in Southern California did take up the call in a very energetic way. It was through their practice that the SC began to develop more clearly the correct approach to building local centers. The Steering Committee's weakness in perspective initially were in two areas:

- 1) we did not have a fully formed conception of an overall, non-sectarian party building approach, and
- 2) we underestimated the role of federationism, localism and racism in our ranks - how these errors were presenting themselves as obstacles to the ideological struggle.

These two weaknesses revealed themselves most sharply over the last year through the practice of building local centers. In particular, the experience

in Southern California. What has unfolded is a very dynamic process in which the concrete practice posed questions which, in turn, refined and developed into what the Steering Committee now understands to be a correct approach to Local Centers.

What I would like to do now is to briefly sum up the key aspects of the Steering Committee's conception of OCIC Centers. We have already discussed in some detail the key party building features of the proposed approach to the ideological struggle in our discussion of the Draft Plan for an IC earlier today. However, it is important to emphasize how much of this is interrelated with our approach to what a local or regional center is. Let me summarize them in concise form:

- 1.. Our key party building task in this period is theoretical. This means the struggle for program, strategy, and tactics for the US revolution is on the immediate agenda for our tendency. Local and regional centers will become important arenas for conducting the ideological struggle. They will become the local arm of the national center in taking up our theoretical work.
2. The ideological center cannot direct practice. The direction and guidance of practical work requires the development and centralization of political line. It requires the organizational discipline and accountability of cadre. If our party building movement were at this stage, we wouldn't need an ideological center. However, it is important to emphasize that a component part of our theoretical work is the organized summation of advanced practice. Local and regional centers will become an important vehicle for summing up our practice as well as facilitating areas of joint work. Our (SC) initial understanding of this was weak. We had not yet identified the inherent errors in demanding political unity around practical work before the necessary ideological struggle took place. This leads us to our third point.
3. The struggle for the political line of our tendency must be movement-wide. It must fully mobilize the base under the direction of its leadership nationally. The struggle must be open, above-board, and subject to rigorous ideological struggle. It cannot be stressed enough that we must strive to unite as many of the tendency's comrades on a principled basis, as possible. Our ability to carry out this task will depend in large part on the success of the Local Center and Regional Center to organize and encourage the fullest participation in the ideological struggle by all in our movement. Our political unity are the 18 Principles of Unity and the need to build a single, national center. The purpose of the Center, therefore, is not to just unite the forces which already exist in the OCIC, but to unite with forces who are yet outside. This is not simply a matter of tactical concern, but is of strategic importance.

This understanding is very different from the Network "rectification" line. They see recruitment to an already formed political

line and an already formed political leadership as the key strategic party building approach for us now. On the contrary, the OCIC is saying that our task now is to unite with the broad forces of the anti-left tendency around a common plan for taking up political line and through this process the emergence of the ideological leadership of our movement. By the end of this presentation, I think we will see, not only how opportunist the "rectification" line is on how political line is formed, but also how racist and chauvinist it is as well.

In summation, then, the primary tasks for the ideological center is the same as that for the local or regional arm: to elaborate a program, strategy and tactics for the US revolution; and to unite the tendency on a principled, non-sectarian basis around the necessity of a national center.

The Struggle Against Federationism

Federationism with the tasks of the ideological center, and, therefore, of the local and regional centers because:

1. if the ideological struggle remains within the confines of our small circles, our theoretical tasks will not advance. The national center will be merely a trading post for political line.
2. it will interfere with our ability to unite the anti-left tendency. In other words, if the ideological struggle does not advance beyond our small circles, the Local Center will degenerate into a recruiting ground for the various circles within it.

We can overcome this form of opportunism by building a mechanism in which all anti-ultra lefts are in a position to intervene as individuals in the ideological struggle and be in a position to emerge as ideological leadership before the movement as a whole. The Local or Regional Center will be precisely the mechanism needed and will a most important arena for combatting this federationism in practice.

There have been raised many questions about this struggle against federationism in regards to the concrete workings of an OCIC center, especially in regards to what the role of organizations are within the OCIC. The SC's view is that:

1. we encourage the development and growth of communist organization and practice. This is in no way antagonistic to the advancement of the party building movement nationally.
2. since the summation of advanced practice will be very important in advancing our political line, organizations which sum up their practical activity in way which verifies or doesn't verify theory will be undoubtedly important in the pre-party period. (However, cadre organizations may not necessarily be

the only form for advancing this kind of theoretical work.)

At this stage in our movement, however, the dominant errors within our ranks have been on the side of overplaying the role of organizations. It is more important that organizations in the OCIC have a firm grasp on the state of the party building movement and the state of the anti-ultra left tendency, and that local organizations carry out their tasks accordingly.

I would like to illustrate this by way of relating to you our experience in Detroit over the last six weeks. I and others in Detroit have been involved in leading discussions around the conception of the ideological center and the local center in two different groups of comrades in Detroit. One group were people in my own organization, DMLO which is an all-white cadre organization, and the other group were of independent Marxist-Leninists, most of whom are independent of a cadre organization because of a history of racism particular to both cadre organizations in Detroit. Most of the comrades in the second group have long been involved in the Black national movement of the 60s and 70s. In these discussions, there were two distinct reactions to the conception of the IC and Local Centers. In DMLO much of the discussion centered around dispelling fears that the SC was calling for the dissolution of the organization. Questions were raised like this: why have we spent so much energy in developing our theoretical work is we seemingly are throwing it all out the window now? why have a democratic-centralist organization if we are not subject to discipline outside of it in a Local Center? the Local Center should be subordinate to cadre organizations!

In the other group of predominantly national minority Marxist-Leninists, the story was much different. There was an immediately positive response and an immediate understanding of the significance of this party building approach. What accounted for the different reactions? For both groups of people, the history of the ultra-lefts bore heavily on their present day situations. But for those in DMLO, in an organization, there was already a way in which to participate and be involved in the struggle for the political line of our future Party. For the other group of individuals, there had been no way to intervene in this process. For the comrades in DMLO, therefore, we can see how the negative reaction was coming from a narrow and racist view of the party building movement, and the tasks before us. Can you see how clearly related to federationism is the question of racism in our movement today, given the predominantly white character of the organizations in the OCIC?

More on the Struggle Against Racism

One of the more glaring conclusions made in summing up the National Minorities Marxist-Leninist Conference held in June was that most organizations in the OCIC have effectively cut themselves off from the most advanced comrades in our movement. Many of the participants at this national minority conference had politically distant relationships with OCIC organizations, even in the same city. Most participants at the conference still would have known little about the OCIC had not this conference taken place. We only bring this out here to underscore the importance of building local centers in relationship to the task of building the multi-nationality of the OCIC and in taking up the struggle

against racism in our movement.

To conclude this section of the presentation, then, we can see how local and regional OCIC centers, if undertaken correctly, will go along way in dismantling the federationism in our tendency and the racism which has historically been a central contradiction, not just in the working class movement, but in the communist movement as well. If we do not grasp the importance of this, we will not be able to move forward on building local centers.

Organizational Tasks of the OCIC Center

We have outlined so far the overall political tasks of the OCIC Center. Now to the organizational tasks - the how to do it part. On the one hand, the local or regional center must internally consolidate current forces in the OCIC around its party building perspective and the importance of the 18 Principles of Unity, and at the same time do outreach to the broad tendency's forces. In each period of development of the center, one or the other will be primary, though the secondary task must be followed through with as well. Let me illustrate once again by using Detroit as an example.

I think in many ways our situation in Detroit is most like other areas of the country. There are two OCIC organizations in the city. There are a good number of Marxist-Leninists which are not part of the OCIC at present. Many of these comrades, as I stated earlier, are independent Marxist-Leninists who have been activists in the black national movement for some time. Proceeding from this situation, then, our task is to move to unite politically with the most advanced comrades in Detroit around the need for a single national center. The goal is to build a core group that will be the leading body in a local center in Detroit. (A few months ago, we approached the building of a local center in a different way which proved to be wholly incorrect. That is, we saw as the leadership body comrades from both organizations, DMLO and DSC. This approach had more the effect of recruiting rather than uniting with the advanced forces in the area, so that they themselves would form the leading core of a center.)

Once the leadership is established, and once this leadership body has consolidated its unity around the OCIC's perspective on a single national center, a membership structure can be built and outreach to the broad tendency's forces undertaken in the area. Once this membership structure is established, all members of the two organizations in the city will belong to the center as individuals. The local center will become each organization's primary place for ideological struggle. Each individual will be judged by their contributions to the party building movement, not by membership in a cadre organization. Members of organizations will carry no more weight than independent comrades. Eventually, what should happen is that delegates to conferences at the regional or national level will be chosen on the basis of the political line struggle within the Local Center and not from the organizations within it.

Up-Date Report on Local and Regional Centers - In Brief

Southern California has played a leading role in moving forward the conception of OCIC Centers, especially in the area of the relationship of organizations to the process. We will be hearing a fuller report from the leadership of teh Center in just a moment.

Local Centers are beginning to take shape in a number of areas, but still without a structured form. These areas are in Detroit, Seattle, Eugene, Washington, D.C. Regional Centers are beginning to emerge in the Boston-New England area and in the south.

It is clear that the Steering Committee's inability to clearly conceive of its party building approach when it first issued a call to build local centers has held back this work. It should be clear to all of us now that the building of these centers is an important strategic implementation of a non-sectarian approach to party building. In the future, the Steering Committee will be taking up more rigorously summations of practice of all local and regional centers around the country, and will see that these summations are shared.

The Steering Committee wishes to commend the comrades in Southern California for playing an exemplary role in advancing this important work. Also, the comrades in Washington, D.C., through an important struggle (which they will talk about in our discussion period) helped to clarify the SC's conception of the role of federationism and racism in building OCIC centers.

We have come some considerable distance since February of 1978. In this next year we should see the fuller development of local centers in a number of areas of the country.

Presentation on Southern California Local Center Experience
National OCIC Conference. September 2, 1979, by I.M.

There's a good saying from the Chinese experience about summarizing experience. It says, "Only with the whole situation in mind, and typical examples in hands can we have the initiative in leading the movement." I think Pat has done a good job of laying out the 'whole' on local centers. Now it's my job to try to sum up some lessons from our specific experience in Southern California. I'm not so sure how "typical" our example is, how applicable it will be to other locales. It will be up to OC members at large and the NSC to assess the lessons we've learned and determine which ones are universal to the OCIC as a whole. I do know that the questions raised in developing a local center take on the larger political questions of the struggle to build an ideological center itself. Because of the nature of a local center as a non-sectarian form where organizations, groupings, and individuals can actively participate in a process of developing an ideological center on the basis of political struggle and unity and not on the basis of organizational affiliation----the local center challenges ^errors in past party building efforts. It challenges us to embrace the party spirit and to put the whole of the movement before our individual part. It challenges us to put ideological struggle and unification before organizational consolidation.

I know a lot of us in the local center have squirmed uncomfortably when the national has pointed to So. California as an advanced experience because of all the problems we've had, and the errors we've made. But if advanced experience means being on the "front lines" of developing local centers---that's where we've been: And perhaps we have most to teach from the contradictions we've confronted and the weaknesses we've had in dealing with them.

I want to do two things today: Deepen the "Working Evaluation" of May, and Update you on developments in our local center since it was written.

The local center work in So. Calif. began in the form of a steering committee composed of representatives from an organization and two small groupings. Because both of these groupings had primarily centered their work on the developments of the OCIC in the previous period and not on the direction and consolidation of practice, their members' need to relate to each other within their small groups dissolved, and they became individuals in the local center process. The local center steering committee (lcsc) tried to develop our work in the context of minimal national guidance. From the NSC, we had no understanding of the strategic nature of local centers in the party building process of building an IC. We had no continuous guidance regarding our concrete local conditions. And most importantly we lacked a leading line for our work---a Draft Plan for an IC. This was particularly serious in light of the fact that our task was to consolidate our own forces around, and draw the broader tendency into the process of forging an IC.

Within this context, the lcsc made its primary error---of not unifying ideologically around the role of the local center and the role of the ideological center in our party building efforts. The plan we were given by the NSC tended to center around the internal structure of the steering committee itself, and not on the political issues involved in developing the local center at large and the IC. We in turn applied the plan mechanically; primarily dealing with the organizational aspect of setting up the steering committee, instead of dealing with essential political questions involved in developing our work. It was this error of not studying, struggling, and unifying around fundamental ideological issues that led to other serious errors in our work.

Without this ideological consolidation, the majority of lcsc members were unable to identify and combat the right errors of a lcsc participant in a timely conscious way. Our failure to combat this incorrect line allowed the obstruction of the development of the local center at large. Our failure to develop and wage an open two-line struggle on the roles of the IC, OC, and LC allowed political divisions in the OCIC as a whole in our locale to brew without ideological struggle and education, and produced unneeded polarization. Part of the difficulty in indentifying and combatting the line early on was the way in which it was put forward. Because of the lack of respect for ideological work in general and the local center in particular inherent in the line itself, this lcsc member did not pay much attention to the local center process in the first period. He attended meetings inconsistently, came poorly prepared, and didn't make fundamental differences clear. The member effectively obstructed the process in a sectarian manner without taking timely responsibility to put forward a minority position.

His line was put forward, and we combatted it piece meal. During the discussion of a plan for our work, he rejected the notion of the need for any plan. Underlying this rejection was a resistance to national leadership of a local process. The member proposed that the local center be an administrative body of a coalition of organizations; denying the role of individuals in the process and the primacy of political struggle and unity over organizational strength. The member objected to the notion of organizational representatives not receiving binding instructions from the organization. This was particularly ironic since the member himself did not seek guidance from his organization on the local center process through out this period. He proposed that the lcsc take up responsibility for a chapter of a mass work committee in L.A. that his organization participated in in Orange Co. As it became clear that the local center should not direct practice, it became clearer to this member that there was no real role for the local center.

He resisted ideological study and discussion internal to the lcsc. He saw no relationship between our outreach work and ideological unification. His line was join now, study and struggle later. He rejected the notion of the local center being an educational forum

for all OCIC members. He insisted that SOC have total autonomy from the local center process. That SOC be exclusively responsible for education of its members on all OCIC issues. The irony here was that SOC members were not being educated internal to the organization on OCIC issues during this period, with the exception of good preparation for the point 18 conference. Although this member was the direct link between the lcsc and the leadership body of SOC, he did not keep SOC informed on the local center process and developing contradictions. Differences began to develop between the two SOC representatives on the lcsc. On the one hand, the member holding the minority line would insist that whatever ^{the other representative} put forward was the position of SOC because she was the primary representative from SOC and the co-chair of the l.c. On the other hand whenever she disagreed with him, she was characterized as being disloyal to SOC.

As differences between the two SOC representatives intensified, the minority view finally put out his position in a paper. This was a significant and helpful development because it opened up the two line struggle within the lcsc clearly and politically; and revealed the ideological differences underlying his position. The paper maintained that the primary task of the communist movement in this period is building the mass movement. There is no significant national work except coordinated practice in the class. An example would be PWOC's sponsorship of the health workers conference. National leadership of a local center is premature. Leadership of the local center should come from the local cadre organization which is the only qualified source of leadership. Any attempt for the local center to educate SOC members on OCIC issues is premature centralism. SOC delegates are elected by SOC, and can therefore be recalled by SOC at any time. Recruitment to the local cadre organization should be an important feature of the local center.

Off of this paper, the lcsc began to deepen its analysis of the two-line struggle, and its criticisms of this members participation. The deepening differences between its representatives on the lcsc became clearer to SOC leadership body, and they put out a self-criticism about not keeping on top of the process of the local center and not giving their representatives sufficient guidance. Another SOC representative began attending meetings and united with ^{the} majority perspective on the role of the local center and the O.C. in developing an IC. The lcsc conducted a principaled political struggle session with the lcsc member holding the minority viewpoint. The participant accepted no criticisms, and unfortunately interpreted political struggle as a personal attack on his integrity. He resigned from the lcsc and subsequently resigned from SOC itself. All OC members in our locale consider that a real loss to the process of ideological struggle and unification in our locale.

Let me quickly clarify something about the role of SOC before going on. Although federationist tendencies have come out of SOC, SOC as an organization has never acted as a block in a federationist manner. Both within the lcsc in the early period, and now within the local center at large, SOC members have presented their political differences to the body as a whole.

There is still a low understanding in our locale of the inter-relationship between the primary right error that the lcsc made of not unifying ideologically on OC/LC issues and our primary left error of staying internal so long without opening up the local center to the OC membership at large. It's my understanding that left errors often follow right ones. Because we weren't unified ideologically we were unable to combat right errors which insisted that SOC membership be autonomous from the local center process. We allowed ourselves to be cut off from the majority of OC members in our locale by this line and proceeded to consolidate ourselves too far ahead of the base of the local center.

In the last period the damage done by staying internal so long has become clearer by the minute through the kinds of political divisions that exist among our OCIC membership.

One of the real problems during this struggle has been the lack of consistent theoretical leadership from the NSC on the nature of federationism, organizational hegemony, and localism. We are encouraged by the NSC's self-criticism in this area and their commitment to dealing with it in the future. Combined with a lack of theoretical education on the nature and roots of these errors, and how they have manifested themselves in past party building efforts, there's been a lack of analysis of our own conditions and how they connect to these errors. The objective base of the OCIC as it stands now is overwhelmingly organizations. The NSC must look at where we're at now and how we move from here in the struggle against federationism. It must show how OC forces can move from the shallower to the deeper in the battle against the small circle spirit. How we can use our strengths to overcome our weaknesses. It must deal with the difficult questions of how an organization's entire membership are represented and participate in the party building effort. It must acknowledge the special contributions that all-sided organizations can make to ideological centralization through their ability to unite theory with practice and serve as arenas for the development, summation and testing of advanced experiences. The NSC must show how the battle against federationism and the building of an IC will push forward cadre organizations work. It must point out the special role that individuals can play in combatting federationism.

I want to move on now to update you on significant developments in the work of our local center since the sum up was written in May.

The most significant thing that's happened is that we've broken out of the lcsc and opened up the local center to the entire OC membership of Southern California. I can't stress enough how important it is to move to a stage where all OC members, whether in an organization or not, are local center members. The local center provides a forum for people to present their ideas on OC issues and struggle them out with different views in the tendency. This summer we've had four local center forums internal to OC members. We've had two meetings evaluating the local center, a meeting on the OC evaluation and one on the draft plan in order to prepare for the conference.

Our first forum on the local center evaluation signalled to us the need to shift the priority of tasks in the local center from outreach being primary in the immediate period to consolidation of OC members. The discussion revealed that there was a lack of knowledge and real differences among the membership at large on the role of local centers and our particular history. The lcsc realized that these problems also pointed to a shallow understanding and differences among our membership on the general OC perspective of building the IC and its role in party building. The right errors that had manifested themselves in the early lcsc period had a real grip on some members at large. The lcsc decided to have the discussion on the OC evaluation and the draft plan in between the two discussions on the local center in order to put our local situation in a national perspective.

I'd like to try to put forward the minority position in our locale. It's not easy to get a handle on. Because of some of the weaknesses in the position itself---stemming from belittling ideological work and localism---it is not well consolidated. There is no one position or voice, and the viewpoint remains largely unarticulated. A small minority state differences with the general conception of the OC and the IC. A larger minority say they unite with the general conception/ but that their differences revolve around our specific local center history. All maintain that we do not have political line differences, but merely tactical differences. Although I'll try to put forward the diversity of views among the minority position, its incumbent upon those who hold these views to develop their position, and articulate it for the OC.

The small minority's differences regarding general conception:

1. Primacy of practice in the class and mass movements in this period of party building. It belittles the leading role of ideological work in this stage of party building.
2. Mistrust of the implementation of the principle "from the center out" and the "national must lead the local". Consider these principles applicable at some point, but premature in this period.
3. Primacy of cadre organizations as the building blocks of the IC. The local center is a premature form which threatens the primary role of cadre organizations in building the IC.
4. The present demarcation of the tendency through the 18 points may be incorrect. For example, point 18 may not be as crucial a line of demarcation as the position on fusion. We should unite with those who we can do trade union practice with.
5. Delegates to the lcsc and to national conferences should be bound by the instructions of their organizations, although both majority and minority positions should be presented. Delegates should vote representationally according to the number of people who hold each position within the organization.

A larger minority has differences with the particular history of the local center steering committee. All are in agreement with the strengths, but they differ on the weaknesses.

1. There was never a two-line struggle within the lcsc---only tactical differences.
2. Although federationism is a danger in general, there were no manifestations of it in the locale. To identify errors in the lcsc as federationist, is dogmatic.
3. One person maintains that all errors in the lcsc came primarily from the left instead of the right. For example, while the lcsc maintains that we applied the plan mechanically, putting organizational aspects before political ones; she maintains that we applied it dogmatically.
4. Another person disagrees that the national gave too little leadership. She maintains that they gave too much. That the national over-extended their authority in the So. Calif. local center.
5. This person disagrees that the lcsc should ideologically consolidate itself before developing the local center at large.
6. Another puts forward that lcsc should have been elected by the body at large. (This position neither allows that the lcsc was selected representationally in the beginning by SOC and two groupings, nor does it recognize that the minority viewpoint in the lcsc insisted that the life of the local center be exclusive of OC membership at large. Now that the local center is the whole OCIC membership, selection of the lcsc and the chair should be elected from the body as whole.)

We're still dealing with these contradictions in the locale. We think it's time to open up the process to the OC as a whole. We also request that a member of the NSC come to our locale within the next few months to lend their perspective to the process.

Although this has been a painful process in light of the political divisions in our locale, opening up ideological education and struggle in our locale has been very productive----a good thing! Preparing for the conference has marked a real leap forward for us. The discussions initiated the beginning of a division of labor in the local center at large where different members could put their talents to use. The discussions were planned by committees which represented both people on the steering committee and off/ both SOC cadre and L.A. individuals. The primary purpose of the forums was for people to put forward their respective positions on the documents/ not at this stage to struggle out unity. The secondary purpose was to provide feedback to the national. We succeeded at both.

Opening up the local center to the entire membership shows the importance of developing a division of labor in our work. It means assessing the valuable contributions that different participants can

make in different areas----and providing opportunities to put their talents to work.

1. For example, the preparation for the conference showed the potential for developing committees on educational work for OC members, and the broader tendency.

2. Also, in the recent period, it's become clearer that the local center can become a vehicle through committee work for collective theoretical work to contribute to the national process. I think there's particular potential and resources in our area to contribute to the work on the nature of ultra-leftism in the party building movement. Because of our need in the immediate period to unify our forces around the general perspective of the OC and the strategic necessity of drawing all forces in the tendency into an active effort to develop a plan for the IC, these tasks would be primary over deeper theoretical work in the present period. The secondary nature of this work in the present period does not downplay its importance, potential or our commitment to put it into practice.

3. Another area that members could make contributions to the work of the center would be the summation of practical work for local center forums; providing the tendency at large with lessons from advanced experience.

4. Also cadre involved in different areas of mass work could identify and contact people who might be interested in the effort to build an IC and begin to develop propaganda relationships with them.

The value of this division of labor for outreach work is that it would provide avenues of participation for incoming members.

Another important development since our sum up has been a significant increase in the quality and quantity of national guidance. The NSC has developed a strategic sense of local centers in building the IC. It has deepened its consciousness of the need to address the dangers of federationism and localism in the context of our concrete conditions. And most importantly the NSC has put forward a leading line for our work, through the OC evaluation and the Draft Plan.

The OC evaluation lays out the tasks for the OC in the next period. This clarifies the work of the local center, and the contributions we can make to our locale and the national process. The tasks of further developing the draft plan and consolidating the tendency around it, of summing up the nature of ultra-leftism, of educating and uniting our forces more deeply around the 18 points, of deepening our understanding of the struggle against racism are all tasks which will clearly push forward the ideological struggle and unification of current OCIC forces, and the broader tendency.

The most important national development in relationship to local centers is the initial draft plan for an IC. The draft plan is crucial to both internal consolidation and outreach work of the

local center. It's the heart of our work. We must develop a solid, clear, readable draft plan for all members of the tendency.

Another significant development in the recent period of the local center has been a deepening of our understanding of outreach work as we launched our first introduction discussions. I won't try to sum up the introduction classes today because of time. Four of five sessions have been completed. We'll distribute a sum up soon. Instead I'd like to share some general lessons from our outreach work.

1. The importance of ideological education and struggle in unifying forces around the IC and LC. We must concentrate on the ideological issues involved in forging these processes, and not on the organizational aspects. This lesson calls for an understanding that outreach with many in the broader tendency will be a protracted process in order to unify politically instead of organizationally.

Most of the individuals attracted to the OC in our locale have been turned off by ultra leftism of past party building efforts. They concentrate their efforts in mass practice---primarily in anti-racist and anti-imperialist struggles. They operate on the periphery of the party building movement. Their commitment to party building as the central task facing Marxist-Leninists is still tenuous. Bringing these people into the life of the local center will require special education on the centrality of party building and the role of the IC within it.

Understanding the importance of ideological work requires not only a recognition that the process will be protracted, but also that it will require creating different forms for different people. Some may need one on one discussions before entering introductory discussions, etc.

2. Our understanding of the role of practice in building ideological unity with others has deepened. The lcsc has always been clear that the local center itself should not and effectively can not guide or direct practice. Pat laid out why well in her opening presentation. Nor has the lcsc been under the illusion that being involved in mass practice with forces would be the primary ingredient in drawing them into an active effort to build an IC.

But what we have found is that participation of OC forces in mass practice and in the summation of that practice is key for many in developing relationships where ideological education and struggle can take place. We have found that this connection between our theory and our practice is particularly key in developing relationships with Minority Marxist-Leninists.

Both in our relationships with a primarily third world, multi-racial

study group, and with a Black cadre organization; people have made it clear to us how important they understand the involvement of white communists in anti-racist work as a means of overcoming racism in the party building movement itself. In a recent meeting with several Black M-L's we talked about initiating some discussions on party building perspective. The cadre agreed and said they wanted to make it clear that they entered into these ideological discussions with us because they had seen us apply theory to practice and therefore trusted our ideological bearings. That ideological discussions would deepen in the context of ongoing practice and summation of practice.

This discussion brings me to another crucial point we've learned through outreach work....

3. The necessity to seriously take up the questions of the centrality of the struggle against racism among our own forces and with the broader tendency. That means strong consistent leadership from the national on the nature of racism, the history of racism in past party building efforts, how it manifests itself within our own ranks, and how we can effectively combat it. It also demands that every OC member commit themselves to a serious study of racism and a dedicated application of that study to all areas of our communist work.

In Southern California, OC forces are currently all white. Like many OC members we are generally unconsolidated around the centrality of the struggle against racism in the communist movement. An indication of this is the immature understanding of the connection between racism and federationism.

In all of our contact with Minority M-L's in the last period, the importance of taking up the issue of racism among white communists in order to engage in ideological struggle and unification has been put straight out on the table. Recently in a discussion with members of a black cadre organization, a leading member requested that we begin our political discussions together with what local OC forces mean by "the centrality of the struggle against racism". He said in his experience with white communists in the past, they did one of two things. They either were involved in anti-racist struggles and saw the struggle against racism totally outside of themselves; or they only took up the struggle against racism internally in a moralistic, self-defeating way. He wanted to know how we understood the connection and particularly how we took up the struggle against racism among ourselves.

Clearly, seriously taking up the question of racism in all its aspects both internally and with the broader tendency will be key in implementing the conception of local centers.

4. Another important lesson we've learned in conducting ideological education and struggle with forces in the broader tendency is the importance of deepening the critique of ultra-leftism.

This has been learned most dramatically in our recent struggles with the rectification forces in our locale, where it's become very clear the grip that ultra-leftism has on forces within the anti-left tendency itself.

We need to sum up our discussion with them on party building perspective, the experience of several OC members in the Soviet Union study project, and our struggle with them over the National Minorities Conference (which I mentioned yesterday has already been summed up) and analyze these experiences in light of what we have learned about the dangers of the small circle spirit. We need to demonstrate for OCIC members how these experiences point to the crucial importance of ideologically consolidating ourselves and the tendency as a whole around the nature of ultra-leftism.

5. Another lesson that we've learned through our outreach work is the fundamental importance that drawing a firm line of demarcation on Principle 18 has played in attracting forces to the politics and efforts of the OCIC.

6. Recently cadre from PWOC and FTP came to our area, and gave presentations at local center public forums. This taught us the final lesson I want to tell you about----The positive role that having visitors from other locales in the OCIC speak at open forums can play in our work---Both for establishing a public presence for the OCIC in our locale, and for deepening the understanding of our membership on OCIC issues as well as the practice and deeper basis of unity of different OC forces.

I'll wrap it up there. Now we'll open up the subject of local centers for discussion. Pat and I thought we could begin by getting a sense of the understanding of the body on

1. The importance of the struggle against federationism, organizational hegemony and localism in developing ideological struggle and unity in the tendency
2. The role local centers can play in combatting these errors
3. The relationship between federationism and racism.

Then we can get into a discussion of particular questions and issues that people want to raise.

The following is the Steering Committee's Resolution addressing a specific struggle around racism which emerged at the national OCIC Conference, September 1 - 3, 1979.

1. The OCIC strongly commends the comrade who raised to the whole conference the criticism of racism around the characterization of this neighborhood.
2. The characterization of the neighborhood surrounding the hotel as "bad", the suggestion that conference participants "walk quickly" within two blocks of the hotel, and the suggestion that participants travel in packs could only serve to enhance racist fears. The bourgeoisie has given great attention to spreading racist paranoia concerning the crime and violence stemming from the oppression of minority communities. By arousing concerns for personal safety among the primarily white conference participants, the above characterization dovetailed with this ideology.
3. All white comrades are self-critical for not seriously identifying the racist implications of this characterization of the neighborhood which was both verbally and in writing transmitted to conference participants. This reveals how weak is our understanding of racism.
4. All white comrades had a responsibility for taking up the struggle against racism with other white comrades. The failure to do so by most white comrades was racist.
5. We have to openly confront the racism in our movement. The defensiveness displayed by some comrades around this criticism of racism reflects the continued influence of bourgeois ideology in our ranks. This seriously retarded the process of criticism and the ability of comrades to understand the essence of the criticism. Such defensiveness holds back the struggle against racism in that it makes all comrades hesitant to raise criticisms of racism.
6. Clear racism was displayed by some white comrades' behavior towards a Black comrade. The lack of respect shown towards this national minority comrade - in both repeatedly interrupting him and in characterizing his criticism as a distortion - was racist.
7. All OC members, individuals and organizations, have the responsibility of to take back this criticism of racism to their respective OC Centers, organizations, and groups. There should be a full discussion of the roots of these racist errors and their implications for all aspects of our practice.
8. The Steering Committee of the OCIC has the responsibility of deepening and summing up this criticism and its relationship to our work. Their summation will be circulated for broad discussion within the OC.

9. This incident confirms the necessity of the whole OC seriously taking up a deeper study of the centrality of the struggle against racism and the continuing summation of our practice. Part of this effort is the need to popularize instances of racism that occurs in the OC.
10. It was correct that the criticism was raised and an initial discussion carried out at the OC conference. It was positive in that it was another step forward in furthering our understanding of racism. Yet we recognize that we have not taken our criticism and rectification deep enough. The process has only begun.