



LINE OF MARCH

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Call to Conferences on the State of the Anti-Revisionist, Anti-"Left" Opportunist Trend

The anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend in the U.S. communist movement today stands at an important juncture in its development.

We have come a long way since 1976 when the blatant class collaborationist line of much of the New Communist Movement around the question of Angola provoked a number of relatively scattered organizations and individuals to see themselves as a new trend in the communist movement. Most obvious, perhaps, have been the organizational changes that have taken place within the trend. Most of the local communist organizations that were present at the trend's birth and went on to form the Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center (OCIC) no longer exist. The OCIC itself has undergone a near-total disintegration, and exists as a mere remnant of what was once the largest party building formation in the trend. Other groups which, at one time or another, played important roles in the trend's development - such as the Guardian, MINP-El Comite, and Theoretical Review - have moved to the periphery of trend life. At the same time, the network of rectification forces gathered around Line of March has grown substantially and become the dominant party building force in the trend.

These dramatic organizational changes are, however, only the most conspicuous reflection of the trend's underlying political and ideological development over the last six years. In that development, two features are most significant: First, the substantial deepening of the lines of demarcation which initially identified and defined the anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend, particularly the explicit designation of the deviation to our "left" as Maoism. Second, the demonstrated failure of the once-dominant fusion party building line to mature the trend, and its replacement by the rectification line as the driving force behind our trend's party building work.

Whatever one's view of these developments, it is undoubtedly an appropriate time for this trend to take stock of itself.

Consequently, the Editorial Board of Line of March has called a series of regional conferences so that our trend can collectively discuss its history and strive for a common assessment of the trend's present state and the tasks before us. These conferences will be held in the San Francisco Bay Area and Boston on the weekend of June 4-6, New York and Chicago on June 18-20, and Los Angeles and Washington D.C. on June 25-27. A conference will also be planned for Seattle in the fall of 1982.

These conferences are organized on the following basis:

- 1) They are trend-wide; that is, all trend forces are welcome to participate and to freely and openly advance their views.
- 2) Line of March takes responsibility for organizing the conferences and for advancing its own views as a pole for discussion and debate.

3) Those holding opposing views in whole or in part are encouraged to advance those views; written documents will be circulated in advance; agenda time will be organized so as to permit maximum exchange and debate.

Clearly, our trend has much to consider as it gathers in these conferences. And we take up this collective assessment at a time when many veteran trend activists have become demoralized, largely as a result of the collapse of the OCIC. Some are questioning whether there really is a trend, whether party building is its central task, indeed whether a Leninist party is really needed in the U.S. at all. Unfortunately, many of these people have been lost to the communist movement, at least temporarily. But there can be no escape from one overwhelming reality: The objective politics of the class struggle and the political crisis of the communist movement which gave rise to this trend in the first place have not qualitatively altered. If anything, the twists and turns of the class struggle (and their reflection in the communist movement) serve to reaffirm that initial healthy impulse which brought this trend into being. Consequently, for Marxist-Leninists who continue to share the basic critique of revisionism and "left" opportunism which brought our trend into existence, there is no place else to go - other than historical irrelevance.

But our trend exists in more than the political urgencies which gave it birth. It exists today on the basis of a body of theoretical work and political views which give us a definition that goes far beyond the initial primitive formulations by which we first identified one another as a trend. Our trend likewise exists in a body of literature and institutions through which much of the active life of the trend is conducted. And our trend exists in its cadre, a constantly growing corps of communists, many of whom have been part of this trend since its inception, many more of whom have been brought into its active life as the trend has matured.

As a result of these gains, our trend has moved forward qualitatively since its birth. In essence, this trend is no longer defined mainly by what it is against, by what it stands for. It has matured from an anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend into an emerging Marxist-Leninist trend. Indeed, it is beginning to realize its inherent potential to become the center of gravity for the revitalization of Marxism-Leninism as a material force in U.S. political life.

The differences that have emerged within our trend concerning this view of its history and maturation revolve around two central questions. The first is the question of the precise political demarcations that define the trend; the second concerns the exact nature of the trend's task of party building. To focus struggle and forge unity around these questions, the June conferences will be organized to take them up in systematic fashion. Thus, the conference agenda (see enclosed) will include plenary sessions on (1) the trend's break with "left" opportunism; (2) the trend's demarcation with revisionism; and (3) the nature of the trend's party building task.

To facilitate discussion and debate on these topics, Line of March has prepared three brief position papers, one for each of the main plenary sessions at the conferences (these papers are enclosed with this call). The purpose of these papers is to put forward in the sharpest possible fashion an advanced line on each topic addressed in order to focus the line struggle. Trend forces who have differences with all or part of the formulations advanced by Line of March are encouraged to draft responses, which will be circulated in advance to conference participants. As well, we hope to organize the conferences so that the three main plenaries will each begin with a panel where

comrades who have well developed and differing views on the topic at hand can present their positions.

At the closing plenary session, Line of March will put forward for discussion and debate its views on the general direction and road forward for our trend.

To help comrades prepare for the conferences, Line of March Local Boards will also take responsibility for conducting a series of three preparatory workshops during May and June. Study questions for the first two workshops, on the class nature of the Soviet Union and the final degeneration of Maoism, are enclosed with this call. The third preparatory workshop, on the relationship between deepening the trend's lines of demarcation and party building, will be based on a working paper on the history and present state of the trend which will be available from Line of March in mid-May. This working paper will also serve as the basis for a workshop at the conferences themselves on the history of the anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend. Study questions for these last two workshops will accompany the working paper when it is published.

Specific details concerning these preparatory workshops, as well as further information on the conferences themselves, such as registration fees, logistical and childcare arrangements, etc., are available from the Line of March Local Board in your area.

As we said in opening this call, our trend now stands at an important juncture in its development. The international class struggle is sharpening, there is increased political motion in the U.S. working class, and each day new forces are stepping forward from the spontaneous movement. With each passing day, the need of the U.S. working class for advanced revolutionary leadership becomes more apparant. Only a Marxist-Leninist trend has the potential to effectively provide such leadership, and, though our trend has registered substantial gains in its six-year history, the question of whether it will mature into a political force which realizes this potential is still unsettled. In this context, it is crucial for our trend to collectively take stock of its past and the new challenges before it. This is why we have taken the initiative to organize these conferences. We urge all trend forces to utilize them as a way to formulate their opinions on the state of the trend, advance their opinions for political struggle, and re-commit themselves to our party building task.

Conference Agenda

Friday Evening

7:30 p.m. - Registration

8:30-10:30 p.m. - Orientation: The Trend at a Crucial Juncture in its Development

Saturday

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - Workshop: History of the Trend

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. - Lunch

1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - Plenary: The Trend's Break with "Left" Opportunism

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. - Dinner

7:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m. - Plenary: The Struggle Against Revisionism

Sunday

9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. - Plenary: The Trend's Party Building Task

1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. - Lunch

2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. - Closing Plenary: The Road Forward for the Trend

4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. - Summation of the Conference