

Proposed Revision of the Draft Plan on the Question of the Relationship of Theory and Practice in this Period and the Role of National Pre-Party Organization

At the Labor Day National Conference we, the Louisville delegates, made a proposal for revising the Draft Plan on the question of the relationship of our theoretical and practical work, and specifically on the role of national pre-party organizations in the party-building period. At the conference it was decided that the S.C. would revise the Draft Plan to speak more clearly to these questions. After the conference we sent in specific suggested wording to the S.C. along the lines of our proposal. We then received from the S.C. the revised Draft Plan written February 1980.

The S.C.'s revision (pages 12 and 13) does include one paragraph on the positive role of local, regional, and national organizations. It states that they can help to advance our theoretical work by developing and testing our theory; that they can develop experience as to the organizational forms most appropriate to communist work; and that they can train, develop, and steel revolutionaries. These points are true and it is good that the S.C. included them in the Plan. Immediately after this paragraph are four paragraphs on the limitations of organizations for directing practice in this period. We agree with all the limitations mentioned.

However, the S.C. revision leaves out some very important points. There is no real substance given to the Draft Plan's statement (page 9) that "the maturing of communist practice is not just incidental but essential to the advancement of the theoretical struggle" or to the following statement that we must refine our theory by subjecting it to the test of practice. If the OC is committed to serious testing of our theory, then we must speak much more clearly to this important question. (We are not suggesting that the OC should direct practice, so read on, please--we suggest specific wording below.)

Secondly, the Draft Plan does not speak to the need to win over people who are not yet Marxist-Leninists during the pre-party period. The OC is quite capable of winning over Marxist-Leninists (national-minority and white) who see the importance of the ideological struggle to develop our program, strategy, and tactics for the U.S. revolution and who see the need for a single center to guide this struggle. However, if we are to correctly develop and seriously test our theory in the pre-party period, we need the participation of people who are not presently Marxist-Leninists--advanced workers and fighters of the oppressed nationalities. Their input into the theoretical struggle and their participation in the testing of our theory will help to insure that our theory can

provide real leadership to actual struggles of the working class and oppressed nationalities in this country. In our view most advanced workers and fighters of the oppressed nationalities who are not presently Marxist-Leninists will be won over to Marxism-Leninism and to participation in the development and testing of our theory primarily on the basis of seeing the leading role that Marxist-Leninists play in the class struggle.

We think that the way that we in the OC can be concrete in our commitment to encourage the testing of our theory in the pre-party period is for us to say clearly in the Draft Plan that we see national pre-party organizations as positive organizational forms for the party-building period and to explain why. Likewise the OC can help in the process of winning over advanced workers and fighters of the oppressed nationalities to Marxism-Leninism and to participation in the development and testing of our theory by talking about the role of national pre-party organizations in this period.

We suggest the following revision of the Draft Plan (to go on page 12 after the next to last paragraph and before the last paragraph--we include here the paragraph from the Plan that our addition would follow):

For a genuine leading center to emerge, it is also necessary to grasp the proper relationship between the ideological center process and the various existing local and regional communist organizations. Given the prominence of a few specific organizations and the large number of local groups, this is a particularly important point. These organizations function primarily as directing centers for practice: that is, they exist to guide the intervention of their members in the mass movement. As such, they are positive organizational forms and can make significant contributions to the party-building process. They can advance our theoretical work both through developing theory and testing it in practice. They can develop a body of experience as to the organizational forms most appropriate for communist work. And they can help to train, develop and steel revolutionaries. Because of this positive potential, they are forms that should be generally encouraged on a local, regional and national basis.

(Beginning of addition) In particular national pre-party organizations can play an important role in the party-building period. National pre-party organizations are national democratic-centralist organizations that conduct all-sided communist activity to further the party-building process. (There are no such organizations in our tendency at the present time, but there may be at some point in the pre-party period.) These organizations can test theory more thoroughly and systematically than

local organizations. They can maintain a high level of coordination of the testing process in different parts of the country; they have disciplined cadre united in carrying out a common strategy and tactics; and they can systematically set goals, evaluate the success or failure of a theory, and sum up the lessons learned.

National pre-party organizations can also play an important role in winning over advanced workers and fighters of the oppressed nationalities who are not presently Marxist-Leninists. Those who become Marxist-Leninists and participate in the theoretical struggle and in the testing of our theory in the party-building period can help to insure that our theory can guide and move forward the actual struggles of the working class and oppressed nationalities in this country. Advanced workers and fighters of the oppressed nationalities who are not presently Marxist-Leninists will join the communist movement primarily on the basis of seeing the leading role that Marxist-Leninists play in the class struggle. National pre-party organizations can guide their cadre in playing a leading role in the class struggle due to their ability to apply theory to guiding practical work in a coordinated and systematic way throughout the country.

(back to the Draft Plan to the paragraph that begins: At the same time the directing centers have important limitations.)