

CRITICISMS OF THE MINORITY PLATFORM

I, Introduction - In order for a minority platform to be effective in uniting people with differing lines on building a party in this period, the platform should be limited and concrete in the political unity required to endorse it. The platform should begin with a statement of unity with the effort to organize and centralize open, democratic, non-sectarian, thoroughgoing, and clear political discussion and debate on the major political questions faced by the tendency. It should be made clear that the purpose of the platform is to criticize and rectify errors that have already been made within the OC and not to lay out a complete plan for the direction political discussion should take in the next period. Such a complete plan would more appropriately be developed as a criticism of the Draft Plan and would require a higher level of political unity to endorse.

Wherever possible in the platform we must anticipate the response to the criticism that the SC is likely to offer and to include counter-arguments in advance if possible. We may save a lot of polemicizing and counter-polemicizing if we can be clear enough in anticipating these criticisms. Where possible, we should identify our main political points and back them up adequately with historical examples.

II. Placing organization over politics.

The problem with this criticism is that it is too vague and does not recognize that the OC does have a "leading line" that is the political basis for its practices. That line has the following articulated elements: 1) left opportunism is the main danger to the tendency; 2) left opportunism has two major expressions in our movement: the four "ultra-left" political lines (on internationalism, on reformism, on the Party, on the trade unions) and "small circle mentality; 3) left opportunism must be "broken with" before we can begin to take up discussion of any other political questions, and 4) the principle of the "shallower to the deeper" must guide us in all our work.

Now the only aspect of these four elements of the leading line of the OC that we are all supposed to have unity with based on the 18 points is that ultraleftism constitutes the main danger to the movement. While the other three aspects of this line lead directly to the particular organizational practices of the OC and to the agenda and methods of struggle within the OC, none of these aspects has been opened up for debate. Neither has the nature of this ultraleft danger been taken up in any detail.

The problem, then, is not strictly one of organization over politics, but of the implementation of a particular line on party-building, and all the agendas and organizational developments associated with that, without opening up that line to discussion beforehand. In that sense the implementation of this line has been bureaucratic, centralist and sectarian. This line, in fact, supposedly provided political justification for not discussing political questions. For example, we attack the NNMLC for their small-circle spirit because that is an aspect of left-opportunism (the main danger) and demarcating with and breaking with left opportunism is the only political question on the agenda now.

In the minority platform our main demand should be to open up the line of the SC to debate now. In that way we may unite forces that may have some agreement with that line but be honest enough to recognize that it is being implemented in a bureaucratic fashion. We should be prepared to develop our criticisms of the line itself, but these should be more fully expressed in a criticism of the Draft Plan.

III. Movement -wide ideological discussion

This criticism is really an expansion on the first criticism, but raises one other important question: the question of cadre development in the OC. This would be a good place to make a general assessment of the level of development of most forces in the OC and to discuss what is meant by adequate preparation. We must also make a self-criticism about the role of minorities who have failed to demand a place on the agenda, to thoroughly develop their views, take the lead in educating comrades about their positions, and fighting for their lines. We must expose the SC view that the kind of

discussion that has gone on in the OC to date is the way that good cadre will be developed. If we believe in the concept of the shallower to the deeper the way Newlin applies it, then political struggle without much preparation, based only on our current view of the "real world" is exactly the model for struggle we should strive to develop in the OC. We should sharply criticize this view of political struggle and point out its dangers.

IV. Leadership

Again, we must do more than criticize the leadership as narrow. We must criticize the political justification that has been offered for this kind of leadership. The SC would say that leaders emerge in the course of the struggles in the OC for their clarity and ability to unite people, but if that struggle is all ready beauracratc and thoruhgly inadequate, how can we say that genuine leadership will come out of it? We should unite, then, with the general view that leadership proved and chosen through struggle is the best leadership, but we should propose that until we can put ideological struggle on a firm footing, we must combat a tendency towards premature centralization by making room for definite developed minority views on the SC.

V. Sectarianism

The first sentence is too broad and general of an accusation that will not help to move forward the discussion. The main point that should be made here is the same one made in the first criticism: the SC cannot develop principled relations with other groups until it articulates the line that is guiding the OC and opens it up to discussion..

VI. Rectifications

1. Politics in command - This is the key rectification that we are demanding: that the SC and the OC articulate the line that is actually guiding it and open it up to discussion within the OC and within the tendency. We must also make it clear that the Draft Plan does not really do the job, and we should develop a set of questions to guide the SC in summing up the politics behind their practice to date. Some suggestions

for that set of questions are at the end of this paper.

2. Ideological discussion a priority- We should address more concretely here the mechanisms for getting out minority views and the criteria that should be used to decide whether a discussion has been complete. We should add that it is crucial for minorities to take responsibility for getting out their own views. We should suggest that development of a theoretical journal with an editorial board that is broad and representative should be a priority.

3. Broaden the leadership -, This is fairly clear, but should be made more concrete. What constitutes a "minority" and how should they be represented? Should factions be allowed in the OC to promote the election of their representatives? etc.

4. Sectarianism - This is a good but not very concrete criticism that deals more with methods of struggle. I am not sure it should be included since there are obviously different interpretations of what it's meant by "political in character and comradely in tone."

VII. Some suggested questions for an investigation of the line of the SC.

1. What is meant by the concept "the shallower to the deeper? How has that concept been applied in charting the direction of the OC?

2. Why is it necessary to "break with ultraleftism" before taking up other political questions in the OC? Do you believe there is unity within the OC about how this break with ultraleftism should be achieved?

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