

REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER #5

February 28, 1976

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1. Angola

The civil war in Angola appears to be heading very rapidly toward a military victory for the MPLA forces (although a confrontation with South Africa is still possible). Due to the decentralized state of our group and the lack of person hours available at the center, the projected pamphlet dragged on until the draft is now somewhat outdated. Some sections are still timely and we hop to be able to revise the draft to make it more applicable to the new problems - and struggles - that will now develop. We were glad to see that some local groups filled in with reprints from Inprecor, and in the case of Baltimore, with a good, although brief, pamphlet of its own.

The potential for large scale demonstrations against US intervention would not seem to be in the offing given the virtual reconciliation of the US government to complete military defeat. Interest in the issue will be more limited to the left radical milieu, and actions in the nature of victory celebrations and of solidarity with the Angolan liberation fighters would seem to be more appropriate. With the approach of the end to the military struggle, a critical evaluation of the nature of the MPLA will find greater interest, especially as the MPLA regime forms and is compelled to reveal its social character more sharply. The report of the Houston teach-in is instructive in that regard, and in a local Pasadena coalition centering around Black militants, the last meeting turned into a debate over the class character of the MPLA. Thus, while the potential for mass action fades, the opportunity for political clarification will improve.

2. International Socialists

The continued drift of the IS toward crude a-political workerism politically, and toward a tough monolithism organizationally is causing tremors in the ranks. A number of expulsions and resignations have already taken place. In Los Angeles, seven members - one-third of the branch - have resigned in the past month, an expulsion and several resignations have occurred in San Francisco and we hear of similar developments elsewhere. We have had a discussion with several of these comrades in LA, and are planning more. One is attending our class regularly. We are planning a trip to San Francisco to meet with some former ISers and independents there.

While there are, of course, serious political disagreements, we find that these people are not arrogant or overly confident of the IS basic politics and are not averse to discussion. We urge all groups to explore this situation and report their findings.

3. Maoists

China's foreign policy as manifested in Chile, Portugal, Angola and in its alignment with the most aggressive and reactionary imperialist forces climaxed by the Nixon visit is finally making waves in Maoist circles, especially among the many independents. Thanks to the existence of a non-partisan left center in Los Angeles, comrade MZ will participate in a debate with a leading Maoist "theoretician" and the county coordinator of NAM on the subject of "Chinas foreign policy" on March 12. Comrade Z is billed as National Coordinator of RMOC "presenting the view of the Fourth International". We plan a follow up public RMOC meeting, in the same hall, to persue the question further with all who are interested.

Comrades everywhere should attempt to promote such debates, or more informal discussions.

4. The Balance Sheet on Reintegration

The tortuous "reintegration" process has evidently run its course with the readmission of several more and the rejection of others. The basis for selection appears to be totally arbitrary and capricious. Thus, Barzman, Ann Marie, Ted S., were reintegrated, while Pat Q., Jeff B., and Mark L., were rejected.

Although we do not pretend to fully comprehend the twisted mentality that lies behind this entire process, the general outline is clear enough, and has been from the start. It was determined by the following aims: 1) prevent at all costs the reconstitution of the entire united tendency inside the party - with or without guarantees 2) fracture and demoralize the opposition, to prevent the formation of a viable group outside the party 3) make some token show of complying with the agreement to reintegrate for the sake of appearance. The latter was of least importance, and a desire to resolve the problem on the basis of principled unity and Leninist norms of party democracy certainly did not even occur to the LTF leadership. The tactic was simple enough for those who held all the power and who are masters of unprincipled factional warfare. They simply let the opposition "twist slowly in the wind", holding out the possibility of selective reintegration, while guaranteeing nothing. The only possible response to this super-clever scheme was to maintain complete solidarity in the tendency, demand nothing less than collective integration with tendency rights, and prepare for the inevitable. This would have at least frustrated aims two and three, and given us a fighting chance to launch a national group with a press, etc.

Unfortunately, those determining policy for the tendency (with the best of intentions) cooperated fully with the LTFers, with the result that its plans were were successful beyond their fondest hopes. They "reintegrated" a handful (15?, 20?) carefully selected on both political and geographical grounds to reduce the impact of the chastened returnees to zero, while leaving the remaining NFers totally adrift and demoralized.

The only development that prevented total success in the aim of obliterating the pro FI tendency in the US was the formation of the RMOC. Although we are all aware of its extreme limitations and fragility, at least the voice of the FI is being heard in the land at debates, forums and teach-ins, and the circulation of Inprecor which was approaching zero has been significantly expanded, stabilized, and is growing.

Every effort should be made to enlist the rejected NFers in our effort. Surely some of them can be persuaded that working with us to advance the ideas of the 4th in an organized manner is superior to drifting in purgatory, waiting, hoping, and praying that some day the pearly gates will be opened to them. The coming meeting of the IEC will review the results of "reintegration", and presumably will arrive at some decision regarding the status of the non-reintegrated comrades. Since the RMOC applied for integration, this should be included in the discussion and resolution of the entire question. We await the outcome with interest.

5. NCC meeting

The NCC voted, after discussion in the branches, to postpone a representative, political conference until the fall, and to hold a meeting of the NCC in the spring following the meeting of the IEC. There remain two questions of implementation:

a) Comrade Brode proposes that the cost of the national meeting be met by an assessment rather than by depleting the national treasury. This would probably entail an assessment of about \$20 per member.

b) The Houston local introduced the following motion: "to be decided by polling the entire membership; Proposed that the NCC be based on the following criteria, each local to select one member for each five paid up members and one member for a major fraction of five. If any locality does not have a membership of a major fraction of five it is proposed that this locality select a consultative member of the NCC. Also, it is proposed that the described criteria be put into effect before the next plenum, and that it be applied only as long as the RMOC is an organizing committee."

These matters should be discussed and results conveyed to us without delay.

The NCC has voted unanimously to add a member from Iowa City.

6. Membership

Of 53 members currently registered in RMOC, 40 are former IT members (of whom seven are also former NF members).

7. Local Reports

a) Excerpts of a letter from Houston

At the end of January, Tony Thomas came to Houston and propounded the SWP position on Angola. He spoke at 2 meetings, a small one at University of Houston and a large one, 120 people at TSU. There was general resistance to his line, especially from the African students. At this meeting Stu S. called for a planning meeting to organize a demonstration. This meeting we all attended. The African students were conspicuous by their absence, with the exception of the Eritreans. They and Iranian Nationalists fronted for WW in opposing the SWP. We intervened with the position that all groups present should attend the demonstration with their own banners and their own leaflets. The demo came off Feb. 6. The papers gave it 20 people and WW with their big banner "Support the MPLA" had their picture in the paper. WW announced a demo on 28 of Feb.

b) Report to RMOC center on Houston teach-in JS

A teach-in around the political questions raised by the continuing class struggles in Portugal and the civil war in Angola was held on Wed., Feb. 11., in the University center of the University of Houston. The teach-in was sponsored by International Press Correspondence, a University of Houston campus student group. 65 persons were in attendance.

The speakers were Stu Singer of the SWP, Alex Rodrigues of YAWF, and Fred Brode from the RMOC. A liberal independent, as well as representatives of various Maoist groups, did not show. (There is no CP group in Houston.) As far as we know this is the first time the SWP has sent a speaker to an event connected with the RMOC. About half in attendance were members of the three organizations who provided speakers. The rest were from the two Trotskyist currents in the Iranian Students Organization, the Eritrean student group on campus-heavily influenced by YAWF-and various students with no political affiliations, plus members of the 'new faction'.

Singer, after some laudatory remarks on the early history of FNLA, based his neutral position on what he said was a struggle for 'self-determination' on the part of

the people led by FNLA and UNITA. He said the MPLA would not recognize this democratic right for the people involved--would not even grant them Angolan citizenship. (He had appropriate quotes from the bourgeois press.) The struggle for democratic rights is central in Angola, he said. Why the American revolution was fought for democratic rights (this would have surprised the thousands of Tories who fled to Canada to escape democracy.) Having abandoned the material base for human endeavor he attacked MPLA for its dealings with Gulf Oil, --this to prove that MPLA was not leading any struggle against imperialism, but that it was equally guilty of dealing with imperialism.

Alex, in his intervention, read from the statement that appears in the late issue of Workers World. He attacked the position of the CCP and the position of the SWP, which he did not name. His support of MPLA was political and total.

Comrade Fred began with an attack on the theories of 'social imperialism', and theory of the 'super powers'. (These are the views most prevalent on the left in Houston). He then gave a lecture on why revolutionaries support anti-imperialist struggles and how they go about it. His arguments ranged from revolutionaries supporting the Spanish Republican government against Franco, to Marx critically supporting Bismark against the French in 1870. He effectively coupled his attack on the neutrality of the SWP with an attack on the YAWF position of complete political support to MPLA. He pointed out,--for the benefit of the SWP, the differences that exist in this country as to the Angolan situation and the situation that existed with regard to Viet-Nam. (The SWP sees only similarities.) His explanation of how it is incumbent on revolutionaries to give all material support to the struggle of the MPLA against imperialism, even when you have no political confidence in the leadership of MPLA, was well received. There is undoubtedly at least some unrest in the ranks of the SWP over their line, as some of them expressed deep interest--in private, of course, in Freds remarks.

The discussion that followed was heated and complete. One Black independent told Singer that he had been confused by the different factions in Angola, much the way Singer seemed to be confused, until he saw that Mobutu, Kaunda, and Kissinger were setting down around the coffee table. From that time on he lost all doubt and supported MPLA even tho he had no political confidence in its leadership. Another young man disputed Singers history of the various factions in Angola, said the Portuguese bourgeoisie did not favor MPLA, did not use the Portuguese troops to drive FNLA out of Luanda or out of Cabinda, and stated that Singer had a peculiar notion as to what had been going on in Angola as well as in Portugal. When Singer disputed his knowledge of the facts Comrade Roy,--who was in the chair, asked where the man was from. It was learned he was from Portugal and had spent considerable time in Angola, and that he had close friends who had been in the Portuguese army in Angola. All in all, it was a bad night for comrade Singer. The discussion had to be ended only because of university time limits.

We feel that the teach-in,--the first initiative in the name of the RMOC, has placed the RMOC in a viable and correct position within the left in the Houston area. As a test of our ability to take initiatives and to act on important political matters we feel the teach-in was a success and that the Houston RMOC acquitted itself very well, altho some administrative and technical problems still remain. More important the left in Houston has been exposed to the line of the 4L.....

c) Report from Iowa City

This is the activity report for the Iowa RMOC group. I have recently returned to Iowa from Chicago, where I had left the ITNF and had joined the Chicago RMOC. The Iowa City comrades elected me local coordinator, hence most future communications between ourselves and the center will be through me.

Our present membership is four. Three comrades are in Iowa city and I am in

Grinnell; about an hour from Iowa City. The Iowa City comrades are active in local trade unions (two in the Teamsters, one in AFSCME), I am a student. After the disintegration of the New Faction in Iowa City many of our comrades had applied for membership in opponent organizations, notably NAM. This has ended and all comrades have withdrawn from these groups. Currently we are meeting twice a month.

We have two main focuses of activity for the present. One activity is around Angola, Spain, and Portugal. Last night one of our comrades participated in a panel discussion on Angola sponsored by the Foreign Students Committee in Iowa City. Secondly, our comrades in Trade Unions are active in a Labor Committee organized and then abandoned by NAM. Nothing concrete has yet to emerge from this committee however, it has put us in contact with numerous independent Marxists in the trade unions. Naturally we are pushing Inprecor.

Our major opponent group is the CP which is quite influential in the unions. The CP here has strongly backed Fred Harris and thus is reluctant to get involved in Iberian or Angolan support work. Hopefully this will change soon and we can propose joint forums with them. NAM in Iowa City is near collapse. RSB is unusually quiet. Partly because RCP removed their most active people from Iowa City, but most importantly because of the absurdity of their politics.

This letter is brief, but I think it gives you a pretty accurate size up of the situation here. I should be getting another off at the end of next week.

Fraternally, s/ Bill B.

PS: SWP/YSA no longer shows any signs of activity in Iowa.

d) Report from Washington

Six former members of the IT have regrouped under the name, Washington Marxist Group, and would like to register with the center. The Fairfax, Virginia address will continue to receive your communications.

We have set up monthly meetings with the BMG and meet ourselves weekly. Activity will center around the Labor Alliance in D.C. which works with the Post strikers and the unemployed mainly. And AMUSA (Anti-apartheid Movement USA), which is doing Angolan support work presently. It is co-sponsoring a forum at Maryland University with the YSA and we will be leafletting it and raising interesting questions and reading enlightening quotes from the Militant.

By the way the Labor Alliance rejected a request to self-destruct into Fight Back recoiling from the Two Super-powers out of Angola slogan.

s/ Washington Marxist Group

8. Literature & Sub-drive

The final results of the sub-drive are listed below. All the comrades of the RMOC can certainly look with pride to what we have accomplished in this our first project. Of the goal of 50 subscribers we reached a total of 46. Well done! The last two intro subs received, came in as a result of a mailing done by the Chicago comrades to former subscribers in their area (copy enclosed).

Our next goal will be to increase the size of our bundles and get our payments regular. We will go into this further in future communications.

Comrades should report to us good places and means of increasing the readership of Inprecor. If we have good experiences, let's share them with the others, such as comrade EdM. in Los Angeles: Ed has been visiting the UCLA campus regularly now for the past few months, concentrating on the History, Economics, Philosophy, depts. etc., and has built up quite a following for Inprecor among the faculty and students. He has been able to sell between 10 and 20 copies per issue in this way.

Let us know if you have any experiences such as this.

Final results of the sub-drive are as follows:

Area	Goal	Total subs	1 year	6 months	Intro	% goal
Houston	8	9	2	0	7	113
Los Angeles	15	17	6	4	7	113
New York	10	0				0
Chicago	5	7	0	0	7	140
Baltimore-Wash	10	10	0	0	10	100
San Francisco	5	0				0
Iowa City	3	3	0	0	3	100
At large	4	0				0
Total	60	46	8	4	34	77%

If we take a percentage of our national goal of 50 we come to 92%.

Inprecor Bundles Thru issue #44

Area	Bundle size	Amount Owed	Very old #42 & before
Houston	15	19.50	
Los Angeles	60	39.00	
New York	25	78.75	46.25
Chicago	20	13.00	
Baltimore	25	32.50	
Washington	5		
San Francisco	25	71.25	41.75
Iowa City	10	13.00	
Minn.-St. Paul	suspended	51.00	38.00
MEC-NY	10	19.00	9.25
Boston, Sympathizer	5		
Total	200	337.00	135.25

Locals must clear up their back debts.

PORTUGAL, ANGOLA AND THE WORLD REVOLUTION

WASHINGTON SQUARE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
133 West Fourth Street

Friday, February 6th, 8:00 P.M.

CARL FEINGOLD: Recently Returned from Portugal
Representative of the
Portugal Information Center

STEPHAN KASS: Coordinator of
The Marxist Education Collective

ERNEST LIANE: Representative of the RMOC
Activist of the Chilean Left
In Chile during and after the
Allende Regime

\$1.00 CONTRIBUTION

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Dear Friend,

Your subscription to International Press Correspondence has lapsed or will soon do so. If you have been reading INPRECOR lately, you know about its first-class coverage of revolutionary events in Portugal. This has included interviews with leftist soldiers from the rank and file organization Soldiers United Will Win as well as statements by the LCI, Portuguese organization of the Fourth International. Other issues have covered the work of Spanish revolutionary Marxists in preparing for the revolutionary general strike.

In depth analysis by INPRECOR has examined the conflicting class interests in Angola and why progressive people defend the MPLA-led Peoples' Republic of Angola.

The current double issue features an article by Ernest Mandel on the prospects for a recovery in the international capitalist economy. A future issue of INPRECOR will contain an interview with a Chilean Trotskyist who with other militants are participating in the growing working class opposition to the bloody dictatorship of Pinochet. And much more so..... SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

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