

# **DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS**

**BOX 9 OF 16**

**FOLDER 15**

**BWC CRITICISM BY THE MCLL  
1972**

The Motor City Labor League considers the actions of the Black Workers Congress, concerning MCLL as per the letter of March 4 to be unprincipled and uncomradely. We wish therefore, to clarify what we mean by unprincipled and uncomradely and to set forward a basis on which relations between the groups might be redefined.

First, the communique which we have received suspending BWC participation in CCC and MCLL participation in the China trip and proposing an "investigation," is an instance of "first the sentence, then the trial." What is the exact nature of the "ambiguity and contradictions which exist between the two organizations" that requires either investigation or action?

There is nothing ambiguous about cancellation of BWC participation in CCC or MCLL participation in the China trip. Both actions create difficulties for MCLL.

We conclude that only one of two things can be the case. Either there are long standing criticisms of MCLL, or recent events around CCC and internal developments within the BWC are the basis for your actions. In neither case have we ever been informed of any criticisms. Explicitly, we believe that one principled organization does not take actions based on alleged "ambiguities and contradictions" without specifying or having specified what they are.

In failing to offer criticisms to us, your actions are subject to only two possible interpretations. Your actions are either liberal and anti-struggle or you do not and never have viewed us organizationally as comrades but rather as servants unworthy of receiving anything but commands--delivered tactfully and tactually or otherwise.

Neither attitude is the basis for a political relationship. Indeed, in the absence of any specific communication from you, what has happened so far only lends itself to suggest that anytime a member of MCLL who has had sexual relations with a BWC member leaves our organization or the converse happens that BWC will cease participation in the programs in which either was involved.

Because we have never received substantive verbal or written communications, we are put in the difficult position of having nothing to evaluate but your actions. This leaves us with the following questions:

--Do you or do you not agree in substance with the allegations made in JoAnn Castle's internal MCLL paper?

--What, other than your actions, is your response to our paper submitted to the DBWC Organizing Commission in response to JoAnn's Castle's CCC paper?

--Do you or do you not believe that MCLL is a "trotskyist" organization and if so what is the evidence for such an allegation?

--Do you or do you not believe that MCLL is "anti-China" and if so, what is the evidence for such an allegation?

--Do you or do you not believe that because there are personal relationships between some MCLL members and some (suspended) BWC members that MCLL's organizational behavior will therefore inevitably follow the personal relationships and that therefore we are incapable of assessing the questions facing the two organizations in a politically responsible, objective Marxist-Leninist fashion? If you believe that personal relationships define MCLL politics, is that because we are white and some of us are women?

What is uncomradely and unprincipled? It is uncomradely to assume that comrades cannot or will not change when their errors pointed out or are not worthy or capable of struggle when incorrect criticisms are levelled. It is uncomradely to assume that personal (including sexual) relationships are stronger than political conviction. It is uncomradely to assume that when personal and political assessment and loyalty are in conflict that people will automatically choose the personal.

In this case the uncomradely and the unprincipled cannot be separated. The uncomradely causes the unprincipled. More importantly, neither can be separated from the very difficult but crucial issues of race, class, and sex which are involved in any relations between black and white Marxist-Leninist organizations in the U.S.

There is little if any precedent for correct relationships between black and white Marxist-Leninist organizations. Such relationships will not grow and develop without considerable difficulty on both sides. But if there are to be Marxist-Leninist groups relating to each other, that process must be carried out. Neither BWC nor MCLL benefits when at the first sign of trouble one organization or the other takes flight. Nor is it any longer sufficient to resolve organizational difficulties, piece by piece, program by program and individual by individual.

We are aware that in addition to the lack of precedents for healthy, comradely black-white, Marxist-Leninist relationships, the problems facing BWC and MCLL are particularly difficult because of the tangled web of personal and political relationships stretching over many years which continue to exist. In the final analysis, however, we believe those relationships are potentially a strength and not a weakness--they make more rather than less likely that a new level of mutually respectful and mutually understood and most importantly, politically advanced relationships can be defined.

And while we do not have precedents for correct and healthy relationships there is much to inform us about incorrect ones.

We know that the greatest, single obstacle is racism. We believe that sycophancy is a form of racism. Should you expect

MCLL's relationship to BWC to be sycophantic, as events of recent weeks suggest, we wish to make clear in this paper and by our actions that we reject sycophancy as a basis for relationships between the two organizations.

That we need further discussions about the meaning of Black vanguard, our acceptance of it and its relationship to growing black organizations is self-evident. That racism in the white left will not disappear over-night anymore than will cultural nationalism is also self-evident. The process of depersonalizing and politicizing the relationships between individuals in MCLL and BWC must continue. It cannot, however if BWC really only wants sycophants and not Marxist-Leninist comrades or if BWC believes that whites are not really capable of achieving class consciousness and hence "eligibility" for "comradeship" or if BWC which has witnessed the growth and development of MCLL since its inception has concluded that MCLL has reached a point where it will grow and develop no further.

Like adventurism and right opportunism, we believe that sycophancy and racism are but two sides of the same bourgeois coin. Sycophancy is yet another form of contempt for people based on their skin color. It may be political, directed at an organization such as the Black Panther Party, or personal directed and one or two individuals or both. Sycophants may be whites who support cultural nationalism or whites who uncritically and slavishly support other black organizations. Whether based on color or other qualities, sycophancy is in the final analysis

helpful to neither side. The Communist Party U.S.A.'s sycophantic relationship to the Soviet Union has helped neither the CPUSA nor the Soviet Union. The sycophants who uncritically supported the Black Panther Party, were quick to desert when the BPP floundered. Power built on sycophants is unpredictable and unreliable.

Sycophancy is not only a form of racism, it is also a form of liberalism. It is anti-struggle and passive hence undialectical. It is either self-contemptuous or contemptuous of blacks or both. Sycophancy is individualism, basically directed at meeting the personal/psychological needs of the sycophant and not the political needs of an organization or a class.

Sycophancy is anti-Marxism-Leninism. Inherent in Marxism-Leninism is the view that oppressed, exploited whites as well as blacks are rendered passive in the face of the bourgeoisie by a lack of self-respect, dignity, a sense of the legitimacy of the struggle for power against the bourgeoisie. In short, class consciousness.

We believe that the BWC are serious Marxist-Leninists. Indeed, BWC and before it the League have played an exemplary role in helping significant sections of the white left including some MCLL members, away from white support for cultural nationalism, left adventurism and ultra-feminism in favor of Marxism-Leninism.

We believe that BWC believes that racism can be successfully combatted in whites before, during and after state power; that class consciousness can come to replace reactionary race consciousness in blacks and whites. We had thought that BWC believed that MCLL was engaged in such a struggle at many levels. We have certainly never been told that BWC thought otherwise. We certainly are aware of BWC's own struggle against both black and white racism.

We are further aware that considerable racism has gone down in the name of ant-sycophancy--frequently in the form of "...not being hung up any more on white guilt." We know that churches, the National Student Association and others have used this trick to renege on commitments they had previously made to black struggle. We think however, this only proves another quality of sycophancy--the speed with which under the slightest difficulty or pressure it can convert itself into more conventional forms of racism. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR REVOLUTIONARY CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS. It is the basis for unity. We believe that the development of MCLL has been toward acquiring more not less, class consciousness, more, not less, awareness of the roots of racism in the white community and how to fight it and more not less whites with whom we are engaged daily in political work. We are confident that our growth will continue along these lines. Inevitably we will develop a greater sense of our own perspective and resource commitments as a result. The question therefore for BWC is not merely what does/can MCLL do to advance revolutionary class consciousness and organization within its own ranks and within the white proletariat.

MCLL therefore rejects sycophancy as a basis for the relationship between BWC and MCLL. If the BWC does consider us as Marxist-Leninist comrades we propose the formulation of new understandings between the groups. If you do not so view us then an "investigation" of "ambiguities and contradictions" by you is merely sentimental liberalism and not worth the time of either organization. We oppose an "investigation" if that term implies a one-sided, one-way, judgmental and unprincipled relationship. Instead, we propose a meeting with the DBWC Organizing Commission and if you so desire members of the Investigating Commission for full and open discussion of this paper and our response to DBWC regarding JoAnn Castle's CCC paper.

We look forward to the opportunity to create a breakthrough for the left in establishing principled Marxist-Leninist relations.

The Motor City Labor League considers the actions of the Black Workers Congress, <sup>in regard to MCLL</sup> taken as per the letter of 3/1/72, to be unprincipled and uncomradely for reasons which will follow.

*Out* [If the proposed investigation is to take place with the same assumptions and in the same manner in which relations have been carried out in recent weeks it would serve us no purpose and the BWC the purpose only of creating "evidence" for conclusions and actions on which it has already decided.]

We wish therefore to clarify what we mean by unprincipled and uncomradely and to set forward a basis on which relations between the groups might be established.

---The communique which we have received is one of first the sentence, then the trial. [What is the exact nature of the ambiguity and contradictions which exist between the two organizations that require either investigation or action?]

*Refusal to sum.*

There is nothing ambiguous about cancellation of BWC participation in CCC or MCLL Participation in the China trip. Both actions create difficulties for MCLL. What therefore are the errors alleged to have been committed by MCLL?

7 || ---Only one of two things can be the case, either there are long-standing criticisms of MCLL, or recent events around CCC and internal developments within the BWC are the basis for your actions. In neither case have we ever been informed of any criticisms or any alternative actions we might consider taking to correct the situation. [Your actions are the arbitrary and capricious actions of a powerful organization toward a less powerful one which you obviously hold in contempt.]

*Insert #1*

---~~The~~ failing to offer criticisms to us, your actions are subject to only two possible interpretations. Your actions are either liberal and anti-struggle or you do not and never have viewed us organizationally as comrades but rather as servants unworthy of receiving but commands.

In the absence of any specific communication  
only leads itself to

Neither attitude <sup>the</sup> <sup>political</sup>  
~~If the latter is your attitude, there is no basis for a re-~~  
lationship. What has happened so far ~~would only~~ <sup>suggest</sup> indicate that  
anytime a member of MCLL who has had sexual relations with a  
BWC member leaves the organization or the converse happens that  
BWC will cease participation in the programs in which either  
was involved.

~~His~~ Your actions to date provide prima facie evidence that your  
real intentions are to promote the splintering and dissolution of  
MCLL as an organization. We could not participate in an "inves-  
tigation" which actually had the destruction of our organization  
as an objective.

We are <sup>put</sup> in a difficult position. We have nothing to evaluate  
but your actions, never having received written or verbal com-  
munication ~~(except through rumor and innuendo)~~ of any more  
substance. This leaves us with the following questions:

---Do you or do you not agree in substance with the allegations  
made in JoAnn Castle's <sup>internal MCLL paper?</sup> ~~long paper sent to MCLL?~~

---What, other than your actions is your response to our  
paper submitted to the DBWC organizing commission in response to  
JoAnn's <sup>cc</sup> paper?

---Do you or do you not believe that the Motor City Labor  
League is a Trotskyist organization and if so, what is the evi-  
dence for such an allegation? ~~and what qualifies as evidence to~~  
~~be the contrary?~~

---Do you or do you not believe that MCLL is "anti-China" and if so, what is the evidence for such an allegation? Is your position analagous to that of the C.P. on the Soviet Union in which any criticism or question raised about China is considered non-revolutionary?

---Do you or do you not believe that because there are personal relationships between some MCLL members and some (suspended) BWC members that MCLL's organizational behavior will therefore inevitably follow the personal relationships and that therefore we are incapable of assessing the questions facing the two organizations in a politically responsible, objective Marxist-Leninist fashion? If so, do you believe that to be the case because we are white and some of us are women?

~~---Do you believe that MCLL is a monolithic organization with no internal dialectical struggle or development?~~

What is uncomradely? It is uncomradely to assume that comrades can not or will not change when their errors are pointed out or are not worthy <sup>or capable</sup> of struggle if incorrect criticisms are leveled. It is uncomradely to assume that personal (including sexual) relationships are stronger than political conviction. It is uncomradely to assume that when personal and political assement and loyalty are in conflict that people will automatically chose the personal.

In this case the uncomradely and the unprincipled cannot be separated. The uncomradely causes the unprincipled. More importantly, neither can be separated from the very difficult but crucial issues of race, class and sex which are involved in any relations between Black and white Marxist-Leninist organizations.

There is little if any precedent for correct relationships between Black and white Marxist-Leninist organizations. Such relationships will not grow and develop without considerable difficulty and struggle from both sides. But if there are to be Marxist-Lenirist groups relating to each other that process must

be carried out. Neither, BWC nor MCLL profits when at the first sign of trouble one organization or the other takes flight.

We are aware that in addition to the lack of precedents for healthy, comradely Black-White, Marxist-Leninist relationships the problems facing BWC and MCLL are particularly difficult because of the tangled web of personal and political relationships, stretching over many years which have and continue to exist. In the final analysis however, we believe that those relationships are potentially a strength not a weakness--they make more rather than less likely that a new level of mutually respectful and mutually understood and most importantly, politically advanced relationships can be defined.

And while we do not have precedent for correct and healthy relationships there is much to inform us about incorrect ones.

We are aware that the greatest obstacle in general facing such relationships is racism. However, in our particular situation, involving events in recent weeks, the form of racism which is most applicable is that of sycophancy.

Like adventurism and right opportunism, we believe that sycophancy and racism are but two sides of the same bourgeois coin. Sycophancy is yet another form of contempt for people based on their skin color. Whether based on color or other qualities it is in the final analysis helpful to neither side. (Did the C.P. sycophancy of the Soviet Union help either the Soviet Union or the CPUSA? We think not.)

Sycophancy is not only a form of racism, it is also a form of liberalism. It is anti-struggle, passive, uncritical and either self-contemptuous or contemptuous of Blacks or both. Sycophancy is individualism, frequently related in fact to only one or two people and basically directed at meeting the personal/psychological needs of the sycophant.

We believe that the BWC are serious Marxist-Leninists; indeed BWC people helped many of us away from white support for cultural nationalism, left adventurism, ultra-feminism and other deviations in favor of Marxism-Leninism. We believe that BWC believes that racism can be successfully struggled with in whites before, during and after state power; that class consciousness can come to replace race consciousness among Blacks and whites. We had thought that BWC believed that MCLL was engaged in such a struggle at many levels. We have certainly never been told the BWC thought otherwise. We are certainly aware of BWC's own struggle against both Black and white racism.

Inherent, however, in the concept of Marxism-Leninism is the notion that whites as well as Blacks are rendered passive in the face of the bourgeoisie in part by a lack of self-respect, dignity and sense of the legitimacy of the struggle for power against the bourgeoisie.

We are aware that considerable racism has gone down in the name of anti-sycophancy--frequently in the name of "not being hung up any more on white guilt"--we are aware that the churches and NSA and others have used this trick to renege on commitments they had previously made to black struggle. We think however, that this only proves another quality of sycophancy which is its unreliability--the speed with which it can convert itself into more conventional forms of racism, THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS. (If BWC believes that MCLL has been insufficiently anti-racist in its practice given our development to date--or for that matter insufficiently class conscious then it should say so because we think our development has been along contrary lines and we are confident that it will continue to be so.)

We believe that the uncomradeliness displayed by BWC is directly related to this problem. You have misassessed our development, according to your own criteria. We are admittedly less subservient, less oriented toward providing simple services for BWC than has been the case for many of us in the past. That is because we are acquiring more not less class consciousness; more not less awareness of the roots of racism and what must be done to combat it among whites so as to create a revolutionary base. The question for BWC is not merely what does/can MCLL do for BWC but what does/can MCLL do to advance class consciousness and organization within its own ranks and within the working class.

That we need further discussions about the meaning of the Black vanguard and its relationship to growing Black organizations is self-evident. That racism in the left will not disappear overnight any more than will cultural nationalism is also self-evident. That the process of depersonalizing and politicizing the relationships between individuals in the MCLL and individuals in the BWC must continue. It cannot however, if BWC really only wants sycophants and not Marxist-Leninist comrades or if BWC believes that whites are really not capable of achieving class consciousness and hence "eligibility" for "comradeship" or if BWC which has witnessed the growth and development of MCLL since its inception has concluded that MCLL has reached a point where it will grow and develop no further. If the latter is the case your own "investigation," is really sentimental liberalism and you really shouldn't waste either our or your own time. If that is not the case then we fail to see how the "investigation" could proceed if we are unaware of what "ambiguities" and "contradictions" are alleged or for that matter why it should be called an investigation which implies a one-sided/one-way judgemental and again unprincipled and uncomradely relationship.

We hope that the latter is not the case; that you have not written us off because we are whites with growing class consciousness and that instead we can discuss the relationships past, present and future in a principled, Marxist-Leninist fashion with a view toward creating a breakthrough for the left in the U.S.

The Motor City Labor League considers the actions of the Black Workers Congress, concerning MCLL as per the letter of March 4 to be unprincipled and uncomradely for reasons ~~xxxxxxx~~ which will follow.

We wish therefore, to clarify what we mean by unprincipled and uncomradely and to set forward a basis on which relations between the groups might be redefined.

First, the communique which we have received ~~is~~ suspended BWC participation in CCC and MCLL participation in the China trip and proposed ~~ed~~ an "investigation", is an instance of "first the sentence, then the trial".

What ~~xxx~~ ~~ex~~ is the exact nature of the "ambiguity and contradictions which exist between the two organizations that require ~~either~~ investigation or action?"

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out specifying or having specified what they are.

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Your actions to date provide prima facie evidence that your real ~~expectation~~ expectation is to promote the splintering and dissolution of MCLL as an organization. We could not participate in an "investigation" which actually had the destruction of our organization as an objective.

Because we have never received <sup>b</sup> substantive verbal or written communications, we ~~have~~ are put in the difficult position of having nothing to evaluate but your actions. This leaves us with the following questions:

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--Do you or do you not agree in substance with the allegations made in JoAnn Castle's internal ~~paper~~ MCLL paper?

--What, other than your actions, is your response to our paper submitted to the DBWC Organizing Commission in response to JoAnn's CCC paper?

--Do you or do you not believe that ~~xxxxxxx~~MCLL is a "trotskyist" organization and if so what is the evidence for such an allegation?

--Do you or do you not believe that MCLL is anti-China and if so, what is the evidence for such an allegation?

--Do you or do you not believe that because there are personal relationships between some MCLL members and some (suspended) BWC members that MCLL's organizational behavior will therefore inevitably follow the personal relationships and that therefore we are incapable of assessing the questions facing the two organizations in a politically responsible, objective Marxist-Leninist fashion? If you believe that personal relationships define MCLL politics, is that because we are white and some of us are women?  
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There is little if any precendent for correct relationships between black and white Marxist-Leninist organizations. Such relationships will not grow and develop without considerable difficulty on both sides. But if there are to be Marxist-Leninist groups relating to each other, that process must be carried out. Neither BWC nor MCLL benefits when at the first sign of trouble one organization or the other takes flight. Nor is it any longer sufficient to resolve ~~politi-~~ organizational difficulties, piece by piece, program by program and individual by individual,

We are aware that in addition to the lack of precedents for healthy, comradely black-white, Marxist-Leninist relationships, the problems facing BWC and MCLL are particulalry difficult becuase of the tangled web of personal and political relationships stretching

over many years which ~~XXXXXXXX~~ continue to exist. In the final analysis, however, we believe those relationships <sup>are</sup> potentially a strength and not a weakness-- they make more rather than less likely that a new level of mutually respectful and mutually understood and most importantly, politically advanced relationship can be defined.

And while we ~~xxxx~~ do not have precedents for correct and healthy relationships there is much to inform us about incorrect ones.

We know that the greatest, single obstacle ~~is~~ is racism. However, in our particular situations, involving events in recent weeks, the form of racism which is most applicable is that of sycophancy.

*We reject the form of racism exemplified as sycophancy.*

That we need further discussions about the meaning of Black vanguard, our acceptance of it and its relationship to growing black organizations is self-evident.

That racism in the white left will not disappear overnight any more than will cultural nationalism is also self-evident. The process of depersonalizing and politicizing the relationships between individuals in MCLL and BWC must continue. It cannot, however if BWC really only wants sycophants and not Marxist-Leninist comrades or if BWC believes that whites are not really capable of achieving class consciousness and hence "eligibility" for "comradeship" or if BWC which has witnessed the growth and development of MCLL since

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its inception has concluded that MCLL has reached a ~~point~~ <sup>point</sup> where it will grow and develop no further.

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Sycophancy is anti-Marxism-Leninism. Inherent in Marxism-Leninism is the view that whites as well as blacks are rendered passive in the face of the bourgeoisie by a lack of self-respect, dignity, a sense of the legitimacy of the struggle for power against the bourgeoisie. In short, class consciousness.

We believe that the BWC ~~xxxx~~ are serious Marxist-Leninists. Indeed, BWC and before it the League have played an exemplary role in helping significant sections, *of the White Left,* including ~~many~~ <sup>some</sup> MCLL members, away from white support for cultural nationalism, left adventurism, ultra-feminism in favor of Marxism-Leninism. We believe that BWC believes that racism can be successfully combatted in whites before, during and after state power; that class consciousness can come to replace reactionary race consciousness in blacks and whites. We had thought that BWC believed that MCLL was engaged in such a struggle at many levels. We have certainly never been told that BWC thought otherwise. We certainly are aware of BWC's own struggle against both black and white racism.

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black struggle. We think however this only proves another quality of sychophancy--the speed with which under the slightest difficulty or pressure it can convert itself into more conventional forms of racism.

~~THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR REVOLUTIONARY CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS~~

~~IF BWC BELIEVES THAT MCLL IS INSUFFICIENTLY ANTI-RACIST~~

~~IN ITS PRACTICE, GIVEN OUR DEVELOPMENT TO DATE--OR~~ THERE IS NO

SUBSTITUTE FOR REVOLUTIONARY CLASS CONSCIOUS. [If BWC

believes that MCLL has been insufficiently anti-racist

in its practice, given our development to date--or

for that matter, insufficiently class conscious then it

should say so.] We think our development has been along

anti-racist/class conscious lines and are confident

that it will continue to be so.

We believe that the uncomradeliness displayed recently by BWC is directly related to the problem of sychophancy.

You have <sup>apparently</sup> misassessed our development according to your own Marxist-Leninist criteria. We are admittedly less

subservient, less oriented toward simply providing

services for BWC than has been the case for many of

us in the past. That is because we are acquiring more

not less class-consciousness; more not less awareness

of the roots of racism and what must be done about

and more not less, whites with whom we are in political

contact. The question for BWC is not merely what does/can

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change language

revolutionary class consciousness and organization within its own ranks and within the white ~~working~~ proletariat.

MCLL therefore rejects sychophancy as a basis for the relationship between BWC and MCLL. ~~And~~ If the BWC does consider us as Marxist-Lenist comrades ~~th~~ we propose ~~a~~ the formulation of new understandings between the groups. ~~And "investigation" is a very bad word~~ If you do not so view us then ~~a~~ an "investigation" of ~~us~~ by you <sup>"ambiguities and cntrad</sup> is merely sentimental liberalism and not worth the time of either organization. We oppose an "investigation" if that ~~investigation~~ term implies ~~as it usually does,~~ a one-sided, one way, judgemental and ~~un-~~principled relationship. ~~Instead,~~ we propose a meeting for full and open discussion of this ~~and~~ paper and our response ~~to~~ you to Jo Anne's CCC paper.

We look forward to the opportunity to create a breakthrough <sup>for the left</sup> /in establishing principled Marxist-Leninist relations.