

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 11 OF 16

FOLDER 1

CCC PROGRAM

SOME NOTES ON THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF CCC AND THE CURRENT TASKS OF
ITS PLANNING GROUP

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When CCC began in 1970 the organizations which developed the form were not what they are today. The major differences are as follows:

1) Ad-Hoc was designed to bring together on a crisis basis liberal/left whites to protest the injustices of the system. Those responsible for the development and functioning of Ad-Hoc pressed a general political line that the problems which confronted people in their daily lives could not be corrected without fundamental social transformations. Inevitably -- given the character of crisis organizing -- a critical turning point was reached, one having two elements: first, the request often repeated by Ad-Hoc members for some over all political education to help folks make sense out of what's out there, and second, the necessity of making a decision regarding the direction and indeed the continued existence of Ad-Hoc. The results? CCC was formulated with a major role being played by the LRBW and Ad-Hoc being gradually discarded as MCLL began to cohere and emerge. It is important to note that Ad-Hoc could not by its nature be a continuing political form capable of floating a CCC. Thus the LRBW played the major ideological role in CCC. This had (has) both good and bad aspects. The positive is obvious -- the anti-imperialist line of the League provided the correct political direction for CCC. But whatever the character of the Black participation in CCC, it was inevitable that certain aspects of the predominant liberal white attitude toward Blacks (e.g., sychophancy) would emerge and be problematic. This dynamic requires our continuing attention.

2) This particular problem brings us to our more current history. The split in the League and the emergence of BWC -- a national organization with chapters in 22 cities and its national headquarters in Detroit -- and the emergence of the Motor City Labor League as a white revolutionary organization has set up a new set of dynamics and realities in CCC. Late in the summer of 1971 a meeting was held between MCLL leadership and BWC leadership on CCC 1971-72. It was agreed that since the large majority of CCC membership was white and that there was a white organization (MCLL) capable and responsible for the organization of white people, the relationship to CCC would be redefined to place major political and practical responsibility where it properly belonged -- on MCLL, and that the BWC would play a supportive political role in the maintenance of CCC.

Clearly this puts great political responsibility on the Planning Group: to exert real leadership in the GS and the membership, to take initiative, to generate organizing within CCC. On our agenda:

- 1) What kind of organizing is possible in an educational forum?
- 2) How should PAC develop?
- 3) How do we monitor the political growth of the membership?
- 4) What are the practical -- and not so practical -- problems

which exist because of the composition of the Planning Group, i.e.e., 4 MCLL cadre, 4 "independents", and 2 BWC cadre.

5) How should -- or should? -- CCC III be projected.

Alliance Section Reoprt

The Alliance now has about 100 active members. Active membership is defined as participation in a task force, general membership meetings, the food coop, or in a few cases consistent participation in Alliance sponsored activities.

The membership background is largely professional and semi professional service workers: teachers, social service, and church. There is a minority of men involved as low level management at various auto corporations. There is a small percentage of college students, and a small percentage of houseworkers.

The Alliance functions as a center of political development both ideologically and practically. The COR (co-ordinating body), the food coop, and the childrens workshop task force are all involved self-counciously in organizing. There are interconnections with PPT and CCC

The goup as a whole is about to engage in a series of general membership meetings about organizing where people work. The Childrens workshop is about to begin again, expanding to include kids from working class and black and latin backgrounds. The org is in the process of designing and fundraising for a large conference in the spring "The Church and Revolution" --a marxist perspective on the church. The conference is seen both for its national impact on the "christian community" and its local organizing potential.

The food coop now involves 250 buying units...representing somewhere between 500-1000 persons. There is almost no systematic information on membership. Concentration to date has been on the mechanical functions necessary to service a rapidly growing membership. The coop was responsible for work arouns the woodcuters strike, and got a good response on all levels. There is however, at this point no real strategy for organizing either the present membership or the 6 Mile- John R community in which the store is located. The section is begining to attempt to define such workk. There are areas in which it is possible for the FC and MIC to learn and develop together.

This section has no real strategy. Its personel are , if not already overextended, then at their maximum load at this time.

We need to do research and thinking about the methods, viability, and purpose of organizing white colar workers. We need an evaluation of our work to date, projections for the Alliance as a specific oranzation. From that we may or may not need additional personel.

CCC II - Reactions and Analysis

by Margaret Borys, MCLL, CCC Coordinator

A conscious and critical examination of the overall successes and failures of the second year of Control, Conflict and Change's mass educational program will reveal that the credit or fault is directly related to the level of practice of the General Staff, the Coordinator, the Planning Committee, and its Membership.

In the General Staff, we have often been unprepared to make full use of the Tuesday evening seminar: specifically not reading the book, not coming to the Monday preparatory sessions, not reading the previous month's transcript and a general mental state of disinterest and even boredom, i.e., wandering around the room during the seminar, not listening to the speaker, leaving early, and not helping to clean up. We know that there are many sound reasons why we as GS functioned poorly at times. These reasons are not necessarily our own fault but can be identified as lack of training, lack of clear direction as to our role, limitations of existing political forms through which political activity could be channeled, changing Membership at tables, etc.

In CCC II, the GS did accomplish fine work. Some tables meet regularly for continuing political discussion. The Practical Action Committee has developed as a result of GS and PC impetus. People in the Membership have politically advanced, and some members have committed themselves to ongoing political activity such as People's Peace Treaty demonstrations, anti-STEPCO precinct work, becoming members of CCC's General Staff, and generally supporting the activities surrounding the educational form of CCC and taking more political responsibility.

We must also examine the practice of other CCC internal units. The then-Coordinator, Joann Castle, did not or could not function and provide direction in the most effective and efficient manner. The economic state of CCC was worsened by administrative mismanagement of funds and personal abuse of her relationships with the publishing houses, i.e., ordering large numbers of books for non-CCC use not previously authorized by the Planning Committee. Her political relationships with individual GS members was tenuous or too often emphasized personality rather than politics. That is not to say that we fail to recognize the extent to which Joann's family responsibilities and pressures hampered her work.

The Planning Committee should have provided more leadership to the overall functioning of CCC so that the effects of situations like General Staff drop-outs and ineffective speakers and/or

books could have been lessened. We know that there are limitations to gauge the effectiveness of books and speakers when planning for a particular seminar occurring 6 months later. We also must recognize that Joann failed to present her concerns to the Planning Committee. The changes in the composition of the PC from the 1970-71 program year and also during the midst of the 1971-72 year also did not help to facilitate overall planning.

A major factor creating unnecessary disruption in CCC this past year was the dropping of sponsorship by the Black Workers Congress. Even though the BWC's agreed-upon role was to be more supportive rather than substantive, their abrupt actions hampered the smooth functioning in many areas of CCC's internal structure. This does not mean that beneficial results did not accrue, for example, we were forced to re-examine our own commitment to CCC and the basis for that commitment, i.e., sycophancy to black people personified in the BWC as opposed to an independent, conscious analysis of how and why we should relate to CCC.

Lastly, the CCC Membership are themselves to a degree also responsible for the positive or negative results of the program. Because they are "members" who attend to broaden their own political awareness and education, complete responsibility for their own development does not rest with them alone. To be sure many people are lazy and want superficial intellectual stimulation but just as many are eager to change and be active politically.

Overall, Control, Conflict and Change is an innovative political education program that presents more often than not, a Marxist-Leninist perspective on contemporary problems by teaching us how to analyze them, and what people can do to become "involved" in changing these wretched objective conditions under which we are forced to live and work.

What faces us now as the contradictions in capitalist America rapidly increase is to recognize our mistakes and why we made them and then to move on. We must utilize the gains we have made and escalate the process of political education for ourselves and for the members through a conscious understanding of how critical each of our roles is to the continuation and expansion of CCC and the building of a serious, mass revolutionary movement in Detroit.

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Sense of Dist.
 Communist Party
 Angela Davis Comm.

Dear CCC member:

The realities of Control, Conflict, and Change have come directly to the book club. As you know from having received two letters sent to all CCC members, the CCC program and the leadership of MCLL, one of the sponsors of the program, are under attack.

First and foremost, CCC III will go forward. With the likely partially successful impending resolution of the war in Indo-China (see the article in the forthcoming Journey), nothing could be more appropriate than the November 14, 1972, session on the anti-imperialist liberation struggle in Southern Africa.

A new CCC office with facilities for a small book store has been opened at 17404 John R. in the State Fair area of Detroit. The telephone number will be available shortly from "new number service". In the interim, information concerning any aspect of CCC is available by calling Sharon Glotta or Babs Belvitch at 883-1599 or Peggy Case at 863-8233.

Explain

Those of you who have been CCC members for some time are aware that a previous political struggle in which MCLL was involved produced the withdrawal of the Black Workers Congress from CCC and the decision, now under review, that it become an essentially "white" program. At the time of that rupture, the BWC chose not to attack the CCC program or its leadership. The issue of the conflict remained essentially within the Planning Committee and General staff with a brief explanation to the general membership. As the blue letter you have received indicates, the group calling itself "Changeover" and ten members of the General Staff have chosen to act otherwise.

We the undersigned do not oppose that decision per se. We favor healthy political debate and struggle as essential to the clarification and development of the political strategy and organization which will allow us to defeat the class which exploits us all. The explanation at the last session was as brief as it was because of the length and importance of the session itself, and more importantly because the General Staff had at that time agreed to take more time for a further exploration of the implications of the MCLL split and the decision of the October 3, 1972, General Staff meeting.

What if any group to start a pol. program.

We take strong exception, however, to the method of "struggle" implicit in the distortions, half-truths, and innuendos particularly in the second, longer letter you have received. It is precisely the kind of polemic which further exacerbates a most unfortunate situation which its signers falsely claim they wish to avoid. (Some who signed the first letter were not aware that it would accompany and by its design appear to be an integral part of the second letter). We see three central issues as being raised by the letter. First, what is the value of the CCC III Program itself. Second how should CCC be organized and third is MCLL's leadership, irresponsible, unprincipled, advenuristic, etc.

It is one thing to conclude that a new program for socialist or radical education in Detroit is necessary either to advance the interests of a new organization in this case "Changeover", or because present programs are inadequate, improperly organized, politically wrong or whatever. When MCLL began CCC in the first place, we obviously did not think the Friday night forums of the SWP to be adequate on any of the above counts. It may well be that political struggle in Detroit has moved to the point where an additional program is necessary and desirable, that even more people can be reached as a result. It is quite another matter, however, to send a letter to members of an existing program in which one group has lost influence or control attacking the leadership of the group without explaining the defects in the program or the substance of the alternative. Indeed, it is characteristic, and one of the major causes of the split, as we understand within MCLL itself, to engage in personal attacks on individuals and groups and propose that "political differences" will be explained later. Should people in Detroit listen to Staughton Lynd speaking on Len De Caux's book next February or not? The blue letter never says. We think, indeed, that the session as well as the others will be important and a contribution to the development of socialist consciousness in Detroit. Indeed, the signers of the letter in many cases played a more central role in the selection of books and speakers for the present program than did we. Do they repudiate it or not? If an alternative is needed, how can we evaluate

it without knowing its substance? Will the new program meet at the same time as CCC or not?

As for the organization of the program we do disagree with the new group. We believe that CCC should serve the interest of its sponsors in this case MCLL and the Alliance as well as its members. The dichotomy is a false one. The sponsors must retain control and responsibility for this program because we do have a political perspective to project. We are not a disembodied education for the sake of education program. Both sponsors are about the building of radical organizations and power in the Detroit area. We would be irresponsible to ourselves and to the membership if we practiced an ultrademocratic method of organizing the program itself. ^{MCLL} Our proposal at the October 3, 1972, General Staff meeting called for the additional representation on the Planning Committee of non-aligned general staff members. We stand by that and intend implementation of that structural proposal. "Changeovers" original coalition proposal did not include any such provision. We do not believe that either "independents" should control the program or that they should numerically predominate to provide a facade of "control" which is actually held politically and administratively by the sponsoring group. In this regard we disagree with the structure which will apparently be followed by the new book club.

In a similar vein, we take exception to the description of the process by which the decision to retain the co-sponsorship of MCLL was made. It is one thing to take a principled stand that a process is undemocratic and refuse to participate in it. It is quite another to participate in that "undemocratic process" and attempt to win and then denounce it after you lose. We are reminded of Hubert Humphrey's response to the California primary after his defeat by George McGovern.

The entire process requires some elaboration. The original "coalition" proposal of "Changeover" proposed circumventing the independents and Alliance members about whom they are now so concerned altogether. It said that after the fact that "some explanation will be necessary in the Planning Committee and the General Staff". Following the events of Sunday September 24, 1972, and Monday, September 25, 1972, "Changeover" took the position in a six-hour meeting with the non-MCLL members of the Planning Committee that no coalition with MCLL was possible and that the matter should be decided not by the General Staff of CCC but within the co-sponsoring group, the Alliance. First, that position would have totally excluded CCC from in any way making the decision about a possible change in its own political sponsorship (what kind of "democracy" was that and what kind of "respect" does it show for the Independents). Second, it would have forced the Alliance, an independent and uninvolved organization, to judge the very issues which "Changeover" had refused to discuss inside MCLL. And yet, "Changeover" and their cohorts now accuse MCLL of "inflicting" the MCLL split on CCC.

At the coalition meeting seen at the end

In a meeting the following Thursday, MCLL disagreed and the Alliance representatives concurred that the matter should come to the General Staff of CCC on October 3, 1972. Considerable preparation went into the meeting. Anticipating that the meeting would be decisive, Changeover relinquished the CCC checkbook, mailing list, publisher's contacts, brochures and other material which it had removed from the CCC office; and MCLL turned over the mimeo, books, and other CCC materials which it had later removed from the office to non-aligned members of the Planning Committee. Much effort went into the selection of a chairperson, Kathy Schultz, a parliamentarian, Jesse Christman, and format for the meeting.

with the proposal to circulate in CCC

At the outset of the meeting, which lasted seven hours, "Changeover" proposed disenfranchising itself with ten of its members present and MCLL who had 23 members present and leaving the decision up to Alliance and "independent" members. MCLL opposed the proposal on the following grounds ---MCLL did not wish to be prevented from exerting its proper and legitimate power in making a decision crucial to MCLL and crucial to CCC. ---MCLL did not wish to support any proposal, be it bloc voting or total disenfranchisement for some that would make it possible in "electoral college" fashion for the position of less than a majority of the General Staff to prevail, believing that such a situation would be undemocratic.

--- MCLL did not believe that it should be "handicapped" or penalized for the fact that in the split the majority of members chose to remain in the organization and hence MCLL did indeed enjoy a numerical superiority over "Changeover" on the General Staff. To "equalize" or to eliminate altogether ~~the resultant voting strength~~ the resultant voting strength would be worse than Hubert Humphrey's attempt to change the rules of the California primary after he lost.

--- To leave the matter entirely in the hands of the Alliance and "independents" seemed an irresponsible attempt to force in the worst way the consequences of the MCLL split entirely onto third parties.

The General Staff, including a majority of the independents and Alliance members, by a vote of 42-25 voted to accept the method of one person one vote.

"Changeover" remained in the meeting and fought, through the distribution of a 40 page paper, their presentation and response to questions to win co-sponsorship and remove MCLL. MCLL through its ^{oral} presentation and response to questions fought to continue co-sponsorship and remove "Changeover". Ed Pinzuk made a presentation on behalf of his view of the position of the "independents" and proposed a "cease fire" and coalition. Time was allotted for caucuses. Two proposals were then placed before the body. One from "Changeover" for an interim coalition including a majority of representatives from the Alliance and independents and one representative each from MCLL and "Changeover". MCLL formally proposed its continued co-sponsorship. By a vote of 36-31, the MCLL proposal prevailed.

In its paper on the split, MCLL has set forth its reasons for opposing the interim proposal and we include them here:

--- ^[Changeover's] "The nature of ~~their~~ presentation (confirmed by their presentation at the Alliance meeting three days later) and the nature of their position that politics were not the basis of the split, precluded a clarification of the political issues no matter how much more discussion were to take place. It seemed to us irresponsible and anti-political to put the General Staff in the position of acting as a "jury" in a prolonged trial of various incidents and the presence or absence of "criminal intent" on the part of anyone.

--- "The proposal did not seem likely to bring the best results in doing the work necessary to prepare in one week for the next session of CCC.

--- "Choosing to continue with MCLL as the co-sponsor precluded neither further discussion of the issues nor the right of the General Staff to change its position at a later time should it wish to do so.

--- "MCLL did not know for certain that its ~~xx~~ proposal would pass even ~~it~~ with its numerical superiority. We were, of course, prepared to abide by the will of the body had it lost and we did not and do not consider those who voted for the "Changeover" interim proposal to have necessarily voted against MCLL. We saw no reason to refrain from using our legitimate numbers however in support of our proposal for continued co-sponsorship and cannot imagine that had the numbers been reversed that "Changeover" would have acted any differently".

Not all of us voted for the MCLL proposal. We do, however believe that the process by which the decision was made was a legitimate one which "Changeover" understood and participated in with full knowledge of its possible outcomes. We do not agree with the characterization by Sheila Murphy, stated prior to their walkout from the meeting, although absent from the blue letter, that the process was a "railroad" or a "mockery of democracy". We continue to believe in the value of the CCC program, and its leadership and will continue to work with it.

The letter you have received is only a part of a strategy being pursued by the Changeover group which is not directed at the creation of healthy political struggle around contending political approaches but rather at the destruction of CCC and MCLL itself. The letter is an example of sectarianism, perpetrated by a group which would apparently rather destroy a program which has attracted more than 340 members rather than accept the fact that they no longer control it.

The Planning Committee and General Staff of CCC do not accept the characterization of MCLL in the letter initiated by the "Changeover" group, nor do we accept as fact the interpretation of the LDC incident given by it.

We do believe the CCC should continue. We will, this week, be making an effort to call members to answer your questions. We look forward to seeing you on November 14th.

In the struggle