

6/10/79

Comrades,

As a result of recent discussions within our organization, we decided to write you this letter in order to relay some of our concerns about the upcoming conference of the OCIC scheduled for Sept. 1-2, 1979.

It is our understanding that a national OCIC conference is planned for the first weekend in September 1979 in order to discuss the Draft Plan for an Ideological Center. Thus far we have received no concrete agenda as to the exact nature and purpose of this meeting. Nor have we received any particular preparation materials. We would like to know more specifically the nature and purpose of this meeting in order that we may prepare adequately and thoroughly.

This request for more information regarding the upcoming conference is based on our concerns about it, and also on some of our observations about the OCIC process thus far. Our participation in the OCIC has been an overwhelmingly positive experience and we have gained much through our involvement. The contact we have had with other comrades in the OCIC traveling through the San Francisco Bay Area has provided us with opportunities to discuss and exchange information which has been valuable to our development. The debate that took place at the February 1978 conference also raised important questions around party building which forced us to address the question in a critical manner. Likewise, the study and preparation for the Western Regional Point 18 Conference, particularly since it was held here in Oakland, pushed forward our own group's development on the question of international line and the struggle against class collaborationism.

At the same time, we are concerned somewhat with what we see in the OCIC process vis a vis the participation of our forces. We thought it important to share these concerns with you in order to see if they correspond to an actual situation or are the result of an incorrect summation on our part. It appears to us that there have been weaknesses in the level of active participation of many of the OCIC forces in the development of the OCIC itself. This has come to our attention through two situations: (1) It is unclear to us the how active comrades in the OCIC have participated in the exchange of correspondence between the Steering Committee and the OCIC adherents. Our concern is that ^{many} have played a passive role, have not critically addressed the correspondence and responded to the proposals put forward; (2) Through our experience in the Pt. 18 conference, it became clear to us that there was a concrete uneven level of participation among OCIC adherents.

While we are not in a position to all-sidedly sum-up the reasons for these things, we would like to offer three possible ones: (1) The general low level of ideological and theoretical development of our forces, particularly on the key question of party building. We think all comrades would agree that many forces in the OCIC have not studied the question very thoroughly--a question which poses many complex theoretical, strategic, and tactical considerations; (2) The constant pressure/"contradiction" between addressing the paramount theoretical questions of party building on a national level vs. the pressing tasks (both theoretical and practical) posed by the work in each locality. This would include the task of consolidating new OCIC organizations; (3) The lack of concrete preparation materials,

study plans, etc. from the Steering Committee to prepare for OCIC activities. Concretely, the Steering Committee did not delineate any particular preparation for the Pt. 18 conferences, leaving each local OCIC member responsible for determining their own process. We in BAWOC developed a limited study plan for ourselves as a result.

It is the second point above which we would like to elaborate on. As a result of taking up the debate for the February 1978 conference and the recent Point 18 regional conference, we realize that our local work has necessarily suffered somewhat. We in BAWOC feel pressure between our national and local tasks, particularly given the fact we are a very young organization with a low division of labor. We would go so far as to speculate that, in fact, this may be a "contradiction" for many other OCIC forces and may account for some of the passivity. We also recognize that the passivity may be due to a weakness around seeing the importance of taking up the national work. But, many comrades may be slighting the national work in order to address their own local work.

All this leads us to the main point we would like to raise in this letter. We understand the critical importance of the question on the agenda for the proposed September conference, particularly in light of the recent developments of the National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs. And because the question is so important, we do not think the OCIC can afford to take up the issue in anything less than a rigorous fashion. Given that it is already June and we have received no concrete preparatory materials, study plans, etc. from the Steering Committee, we are concerned that the conference may be happening too soon. Addressing the questions raised by the Draft Plan is no small task and we in BAWOC place a great deal of importance on consolidating our membership on such matters. It would be almost impossible for us at this time to come up with preparation study materials and the like in order to adequately prepare for the conference. It is based on these concerns that we would like to know more the exact nature of the proposed conference and what is expected of OCIC adherents. We are very concerned with the quality of the conference and want to ensure that it be a success.

We hope this letter is taken in a spirit of comradeship and that we have made our concerns clear to you. We anxiously await a response from you and hope that some of the ideas raised in this letter will help push forward the OCIC in the future.

In struggle,

The Executive Committee
of the Bay Area
Workers' Organizing
Committee