

Southern Regional Center Report to the OC  
July/79

I. Present membership of Southern OC regional center: an individual from Tampa; and individual from Miami; a very small group in Atlanta (AOC); and very small group in New Orleans (NOWC); a young M-List organization in Louisville (LWC); and M-List organization in D.C. (PSO); and the SC person from Baltimore.

II. Objectives of the Southern OC regional center (SORC):

The Southern regional center, as all OC regional and local centers , will focus on 2 main objectives:

- 1) internal consolidation of OCIC members,
- 2) outreach to broader tendency forces, in an effort to bring them into the OC.

In addition, given particularities of the South, there will be an additional, secondary objective:

- 3) facilitating the consolidation of Southern forces into local organizations (in addition to local centers) thru the help of OC forces both in and out of the South.

In general the SC believes that local organizations do have a role to play in the OC, but in other regions we do not propose that one of the focuses of regional OC work be the consolidation of local organizations, even a secondary one-- although , of course, regional OC work will promote the development of local organizations indirectly by promoting the ideological consolidation of the tendency and helping break down isolation of our forces. In general, the SC thinks that the development of centers to guide practice, i.e. local organizations, should proceed parallel to the development of OC centers and independent of them, rather than being considered directly the work of the OC centers. Our experience has led us to conclude that if the processes are confounded, the work of drawing the tendency as a whole into the OC process is inevitably sacrificed on the altar of organizational consolidation.

However, the extremely low level of organization of tendency forces in the Southern region demands a modification of this approach. The OC will not progress in the Southern region without the development of some local organizations which can serve to help organize the OC in this region. Besides providing leadership



and resources to building the OC regionally, Southern OC local organizations, if they developed good practice, could be very instrumental in winning over some tendency forces to the OC. This is because, given the stage of development of many tendency forces in the South, they're very practice-oriented and very skeptical about how the OC, or groups within it, will make any difference to their practice. Others are very skeptical about how the OC, or forces within it, will be any different from the ultra-lefts-- particularly the practice of the ultra-lefts which has had a devastating affect on the South.

A key to winning over a number of these forces to the OC is for them to see the difference in the practice of a number of OC groups and the practice of the ultra-lefts. (Even though the OC as the OC does not and will not have a common practice, i.e. the IC will not be an organizational center to guide practice.) That's why it's important that there be some local organizations in the South that can show a practice different from the ultra-lefts. (That's why it's also important that tendency Southern forces be exposed to more practice of OC forces nationally. But more on that later.)

In summary, the above explains why the Southern regional is placing a secondary emphasis on the consolidation of local organizations-- which would be misplaced in other parts of the country.

However, at the same time, the regional center must combat federationism and work to develop local centers in every Southern city. The local center is the local arm of the OC and thus primary as the form for carrying out ideological struggle on the local level. In other words, every local organization in the South must be subordinate to the local and regional centers. This means that bringing the widest possible forces into the OC process must take precedence over building any particular local organization in the South, or anywhere. Southern forces will probably have to struggle even harder against the tendency to identify building the OC process with building one's own local organization. There are in the South, as well as everywhere, individuals who are a part of the anti-'left' tendency and important to bring into the OC, who do not want to join the local organization. So facilitating the consolidation of local organizations in the South must be done in such a way that it in no way interferes with building the OC, our primary aim.

One last point about this 3rd objective. Help given to Southern OC forces on how to consolidate a local organization, which includes helping them develop their theory and practice, will be given by individuals and groups within the OC, not the



OC proper, since it will involve going beyond the present level of unity of the OC.

## II. Special mechanisms for achieving these objectives of SORC:

The SC and Southern OC members have united around the fact that it will take special effort and mechanisms to ensure that the above objectives are carried out. Although the South is obviously of growing strategic importance and has had a strong history of popular and revolutionary struggles, The U.S. Communist movement has made the historic error of underestimating the importance of developing revolutionary work in the South. This has contributed to a real uneven development that exists between Southern Communist forces and the rest of the country. We want to correct that error.

Just to carry out the 2 main objectives of the Southern OC regional center will take a lot more time, energy, and money. Obviously, given the lower level of development theoretically, particularly around party-building, of many Southern OC forces, it will take more effort to consolidate Southern forces around the OC, its key struggles, etc. Furthermore, given the very few numbers of present Southern OC members--and literally no national minority members and very few women members-- the task of outreach will involve quite a bit of time and money. There are a number of strong potential people with that rich history, mentioned above. And, finally, there is the additional, though secondary objective, of facilitating local consolidation which will take additional time and effort.

Therefore, the SC and Southern OC regional members have united around the following proposed mechanisms for ensuring that the objectives of the regional center are carried out:

### 1.) A part-time coordinator for at least 6 mo:

This coordinator will be responsible for overseeing the carrying out of the objectives of the Southern regional center. This is to make sure that the work of SORC gets professional, systematic attention. For at least 6 mo., this person will devote 20hrs/wk to Southern OC regional work. It will involve everything from sending materials, preparing for how to develop the OC in the South--like how to develop local centers--, to travel. Clearly, it will be a main focus, if not the main focus, of that person's political work. The SC will decide who should be the coordinator. It can either be someone on the SC or not on the SC, though obviously if the latter, a special communication link with the SC should be established. For the time being, the SC has asked TV to be the coordinator.

2) The OC at large will be taxed a special assessment to pay for the expenses of all travel in the South for the purpose



of outreach. It is the responsibility of the whole OC to help develop the OC in the South.

3) The regional center will meet frequently, every 3 mo. in the South, to carry out the regional's objectives. It is important to have this time together to further the internal consolidation of Southern OCIC members, sum-up and plan outreach, and, in general, break down the isolation of Southern OC forces. As many Southern OCIC members as possible will be encouraged to participate in the meetings of the regional center.

The SC and Southern OC regional members ask that the whole OC unite with this perspective on the importance of developing the OC in the South and the mechanisms for ensuring it gets done.

### III. Some concrete plans for carrying out the SORC's objectives:

#### A. Internal consolidation of OCIC Southern members:

There are two positive developments here:

1) Most all of the Southern OC members have either studied the 18 principles (LWC), or are beginning a study of the 18 principles (Miami, Tampa individuals), or plan to study them in the near future (NOWC, AOC) This is very important to making sure forces have basic, solid unity with the 18 principles.

2) There has been an initial emphasis on the importance of consolidating Southern OC forces around the centrality of the struggle against racism. For even though many Southern forces have historically been involved in anti-racist struggles and are presently engaged in anti-racist practice, there is still a weakness, as among most of us OC members, in fully grasping the centrality of racism in all its aspects. This is evident by the fact that all Southern OC formations are all-white at this time. It is critical for Southern OC forces to take up the study, discussion and analysis of racism so that we can effectively take up the struggle against racism and win white workers to taking it up. If not, we will never be able to attract national minorities in the South to the OC.

In order to further this process, a packet was developed for each Southern OC force that contains all of the materials from OC groups on the struggle against racism and the national question. This has to be followed up to make sure these materials are used and at some point soon all Southern OC forces take up further study of the struggle against racism. In addition, there should be fuller discussion in the regional center about the struggle against racism, and perhaps there should be a conference around it or anti-racist work. Obviously, all this should be done in conjunction with the OC's plans to give special attention to strengthening the whole OC's grasp of the centrality of the struggle against racism.

In general, however, there has not been enough emphasis put on internal consolidation of OCIC members at the 2 Southern regional



meetings so far. This has been a weakness of our beginning regional center, although in part it was because we had to spend a great deal of time trying to struggle out and reach unity on a plan for how to proceed in developing the OC in the South. Nevertheless, it was not even seen as an objective of the regional center, which was clearly an error.

This has been to a much stronger aspect of our regional center meetings given; 1) the lower level of understanding of the OC and party-building of some Southern OC forces (which is not to fault them); 2) the isolation of Southern OC forces from each other and OC forces in general so that they have fewer opportunities to really get together and discuss major OC issues to deepen their understanding; 3) the lack of organizational forms in many Southern Cities to discuss OC issues; and 4) in order to do good outreach, it's important that folks really understand the OC.

To further the internal consolidation of Southern OCIC members it's important that the following is done:

1) there is regular discussion of current OC developments at every regional center meetings. For instance, there needs to be discussion around the Draft Plan for an IC, local centers, the NNMLC, etc.

2) The part-time coordinator make sure that Southern OCIC members get good preparation materials--readings, questions--around important OC issues. And both the coordinator and the regional center should make sure, check up on, all Southern OC members to make sure they're allotting time to take up study and discussion of the OC issues in their locality.

### B. Outreach:

This has been the main focus of the regional center so far. And over the summer there will be a lot of focus on outreach. A whole division of labor has been worked out whereby different OC members from the South, including the part-time coordinator and a developed member of PSO, have responsibility for outreach to different areas of the South. (It's not necessary to lay out all the complicated details.)

So far, initial outreach has been done in Knoxville, Tenn. and Lexington, Ky. These contacts will be followed-up again in the summer. In addition, there will be initial outreach to forces in N.C., Nashville, Tenn, Macon, Ge, Birmingham or Fairfield, Ala, and W.V. (By outreach, we mean personal visits.) In most of these cities, we're talking to individuals, not groups. In the Southern cities where there are presently few OC members, like Atlanta, N.C., Miami, and Tampa, the focus on outreach over the summer will be on tendency forces in that city, trying to draw them close to the OC.

At the end of the summer, this initial outreach will be summed up and an evaluation made of the next step. At this point we're projecting a speaking tour of some key cities with potential OC members to take place in the late Fall. Further down the road, a Southern OC conference is projected.



In addition, since a key aspect of outreach and bringing Southern forces closer to the OC is thru showing the strenght of some of the practice of OC forces, and how it differs from the ultra-lefts--the regional center is doing 2 other things:

- 1) exposing Southern tendency forces to a lot of the practice of different OC groups by,
  - a) sharing literature of OC groups- pamphlets, newspapers, internal sum-ups that relate to practice, etc.
  - b) making a special effort to see that tendency forces close to the OC get to participate in national conferences of tendency forces, like this upcoming health conference for tendency people called by the PWOC.
- and 2) thinking about having a Southern conference around an area of practice that both <sup>Southern</sup>OC and tendency forces are very much involved in, e.g. anti-racist work, trade union work, etc.

Note: In order to help us in our outreach, it is important that any OC member who knows of a potential OC member in the South should send us their name, address, and a brief description of their political development. Even if you're not sure where they're at, if they would relate to the OC, send us her/his name with the questions you have about them.

C. Facilitating the consolidation of Southern OCIC forces into local organizations in addition to local centers thru the help of OC forces from the South and outside the South :

The main way this is presently being done is by the part-time coordinator of SC person and this developed member of the OC from D.C. visiting key cities of Southern OC members, helping them consolidate local organizations and/or local centers. The primary focus is on Atlanta and Louisville, secondarily on N.O. For instance, the SC person spent a week in Atlanta doing this. This assistance is offered from their perspective as individual M-List OC members, which goes beyond the level of unity of the OC.

Also, a "half-day, mini-conference" was held as part of the June regional meeting on "how to consolidate a local organization." The part-time coordinator is responsible for seeing to it that Southern OC forces continue to get help on consolidation of local organizations and local centers. As said earlier, since help with local organizational development involves some discussion of developing theoretical and practical work, the conference around a common area of practice and an <sup>information</sup> aspect of the speaking tour might also speak to this.

In closing, we welcome any and all responses, criticisms, or suggestions to the work of the Southern OC regional center from members of the OC.

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