

5/12/80

WESTERN REGIONAL CENTER PROPOSAL

I. PURPOSE

A. A Strategic Part of the OCIC Process

The Western Regional Center is a strategic part of the OC's overall plan of developing a single center on a national scale for systematically carrying out ideological struggle and theoretical work. Our goal is to carry out this struggle in order to unify around the most advanced positions possible. The questions we ask are those key ones which, once answered correctly, will move the party building process forward.

*haha*  
The OC process functions on the concept of "from the center out". During this period of legality, e.g., none of the tendency's leading comrades are in exile or underground, the base of the OC at our National Conference has selected a national leadership. Further, it has, through its resolutions, mandated a program. The NSC has taken up that mandate and elaborated a corresponding national work plan.

*Key*  
The NSC also has the responsibility of putting forward theses on the issues which the National Conference identified as key. In turn each Local Center has the role of taking up a study and debate of each question. This must be an open debate in which opposing/minority views are encouraged to be clarified and developed. *struggle to* Those holding minority positions have the responsibility to win over the majority with the most developed arguments they can elaborate. The struggle at the local level is basic to the OC, nonetheless, it has significant limitations. For the most part local minority and majority positions will lack the sharpness and depth needed for decision-making at the National Conference level. At this time the situation is further aggravated by the federation-ist conditions still existing in our region. That is, the majority of locales in the West still relate to the OC through their local circles/organizations, rather than through Local Centers. *Key*

*wa*  
Consequently, the Regional Center, and its most important form, the Regional Conference, are an essential element in the OC process. The Regional Center is the intermediate level of struggle. At this level the most developed of majority and minority positions from the locales are presented, and the struggle is further advanced. The greater diversity of ideological development and theoretical knowledge at the regional level enhances the debate. This process prepares us to go on to the National Conference level, where positions can be further refined. As a result, resolutions passed at the National Conference will be based on a thorough-going, OC (and to the degree possible, tendency)-wide elaboration of the most developed positions.

Without the Regional Center, the debate at the national level would be bound to the limitations of Local Centers, and the ability of the OC to elaborate correct positions

would be greatly weakened.

B. Regional Coordination of the National Work Plan

In general, the Regional Center is the point from which the national work plan is coordinated for and adapted to the Western Region.

C. Specific Secondary Purposes

The Regional Center plays a leading role in the development and consolidation of Local Centers throughout the region. With only two functioning LCs in the West, our ability to contribute to the national process is seriously limited. Our Regional Center must also take leadership in general, in broadening the forces participating in the single center process.

Furthermore, the RC gives special attention to promoting the theoretical and ideological development of OC members in the region.

Finally, the presence of a RC facilitates communication and the exchange of experiences within the region, hence combatting the isolation of each locale.

II. STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

A. Regional Steering Committee (RSC)

1. Composition: In general the RSC should in its composition reflect the conditions and needs of the region. At this time the RSC shall be composed of three persons, the chair person and two other members. All three are regionally elected. In addition, the NSC member in charge of the Western Region shall sit on the RSC in an advisory capacity. As the body which coordinates and gives leadership to the national work plan in our region, the RSC requires the direct input of the NSC's perspective and leadership. However, to place the NSC member on the RSC as its chair or even as a full member would objectively weaken the national process, diverting that individual from national tasks.

Regional leadership has to be developed to carry out regional tasks, just as local leadership functions at the local level.

2. Role of the RSC:

a. To provide leadership in the process of carrying out centralized ideological struggle and theoretical work at the regional level.

b. To develop a specific work plan for adapting the OCIC's national work plan to the Western Region. To lead the region in carrying out the work plan.

c. To oversee Regional Conferences, Task Forces, Regional Meetings, and other regional OC forms. To appoint chairpersons and members to Regional Task Forces; to appoint Ad Hoc Committees as needed.

d. To promote the creation and development of local centers in the West, and to promote communications and the exchange of experiences and resources within the region. As stated in Section I-A, the RSC must give special attention, particularly during its initial term, to the creation and development of local centers in the West. Each local center represents a step away from federationism and localism, and is a step toward our goal of centralized ideological struggle.

e. To maintain close communications with and make trimesterly reports to the NSC.

f. The RSC will meet trimesterly or more often as needed.

3. Cooption of RSC Members: In the RSC nomination and election process all efforts should be made toward selecting the best possible leadership. However, we recognize that at this time in our movement there are real limitations in availability of leadership, especially as relates to national minorities, women and working class comrades. In addition conditions in the region may change such that a three member RSC is too small to do the job. Consequently, if over the period of its term the RSC identifies comrades who can rectify imbalances in the RSC and can play a leading role, the RSC may coopt them by its unanimous vote.

4. Term: The RSC shall serve until after the next national OCIC conference. We will then be able to select leadership who can best carry out the mandate of the national organization.

5. Role of the Regional Chairperson:

a. Together with other RSC members, chair shall provide political leadership to the region; the chair is ultimately responsible for fulfilling the overall goals of the Regional Center and its work plan.

b. Specifically, the chair shall maintain close communications with the NSC via the NSC's Western Regional "responsible".

c. Shall call Regional Conferences, Regional Meetings, RSC meetings; maintain communications between the RSC and the LCs and locales between regional meetings and conferences; propose agendas, and chair RSC and Regional Meetings; maintain communications between RSC members between meetings.

6. RSC Selection Process:

a. The names of nominees (nominated by OCIC individuals, or preferably by locales or Local Centers) are to be received in writing to the P.C. by June 1, 1980. (See address below.) LCs and locales have the responsibility to strive to meet this deadline so that information on nominees' strengths and weaknesses can be circulated in advance, thus rectifying a past error in the OC process. The nominating party must inform the nominee of his/her nomination.

b. They must also instruct the nominee to write a sum-up of his/her strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the leadership criteria (see #7), and the proposed role of the RSC (see #2). This sum-up must be mailed out by the nominee to all Western Regional OCIC LCs and locales by June 1. That gives locales and LCs 1 month to consider nominees.

c. The RSC nominees will have an opportunity to speak to their strengths and weaknesses at the Regional Conference. Statements and questions from the floor will follow. The three positions will be elected by a majority vote of the delegates present.

7. Criteria for Leadership of the Region:

The RSC is the body charged with leading the region in carrying out the national plan and line mandated by the Labor Day Conference. Consequently, the region should elect those comrades to the RSC who can best lead us in consolidation around the 18 Points of Unity, the struggle against racism, the struggle against federationism and localism, debate and development of the Draft Plan for a L.I.C., deepening the demarcation with ultra-leftism, etc.

In addition nominees' strengths and weaknesses should be viewed as they relate to the following criteria put forward by and for the NSC at the Second National OCIC Conference:

Primary Criteria:

- 1) Level of consolidation around the 18 Points.

Of particular importance is the understanding of the struggle against racism and sexism.

- 2) Ability to take a strategic overview of the OC

as a whole, identify key problems, contradictions, get at their essence.

- 3) Overall theoretical development, meaning one's

grasp of M-Lism (beyond the 18 Points) and ability to creatively apply it to the concrete conditions of the U.S.

in developing a correct approach for addressing our problems, and moving the OCIC forward. (One aspect of the ability to

apply M-Lism is having experience in mass movements.)

Obviously this includes a good understanding of the concrete conditions of the U.S., especially the party build-

ing movement and the movement of oppressed nationalities.

- 4) Ability to lead and unite forces within the OC

around a perspective on how to move forward once that perspective has been developed. Clearly, this involves an

ability to represent the line of the SC and the OCIC.

- 5) Ability to carry out ideological struggle.

This includes:

(a.) an ability to detect opportunism, understanding the essence of what's going on in a struggle, e.g., with the NNMLC.

(b) an ability to effectively wage struggle against that opportunism, both verbally and in writing.

6) Party spirit: the ability to put the interests of the party building movement above the interests of any particular circle.

7) Grasp of communist organizational principles and ability to apply them to the party building movement. (Note: to have the above qualities, a SC<sup>member</sup> obviously has to have a strong, independent sense of bearings, and self-confidence.)

8) Discipline: includes not just consistency around preparation, follow-up with tasks, and basic organizational skills, but also initiative in proposing, pushing things forward in the OC.

9) Criticism/self-criticism: this includes both the ability and lack of liberalism in raising criticisms within the OC, and the ability to look at the SC, the OC as a whole, and one's role within it, objectively, i.e., without defensiveness. Leadership has to be able to openly and honestly look at our errors and weaknesses in order to be able to correct and overcome them.

b. Secondary Criteria:

1) Composition by nationality, sex, and class:  
Due primarily to racism (within our movement and in the OCIC itself) many national minority M-Ls stand outside our ranks: the OC is primarily white with many comrades coming from petit bourgeois backgrounds. Within our organization frequently the leadership of national minority comrades is not recognized and/or not systematically developed. National minority comrades also have to fight against internalized effects of racism. To the degree that our conditions permit we should, through the RSC, develop the leadership of national minority M-Ls. Although second to racism, sexism also seriously divides the working class; historically it has driven some women comrades out of the communist movement, and has prevented women from moving forward and taking on leadership roles. Similarly, working class comrades have been affected by both the blatant and the hidden injuries of class. In considering RSC nominees we should look to developing the leadership abilities of worker intellectuals, as well as women comrades.

2) Geography: In this formative period of the Regional Center when the development of LCs is an important task, there should be no more than one RSC member elected from a given locale.

B. Regional Conferences

1. Purpose: To carry out ideological struggle on national questions, at the regional level. On a given question the Regional Conference shall serve to deepen and sharpen the process begun in the local centers.

2. The Regional Conferencés shall be held every 4 months, and shall deal with national questions in accordance with regional and national work plan.

3. Delegates shall be Western Regional OCIC members

a. One delegate shall attend for every five OC members from a LC or locale. Where there are less than 5 persons in a locale, 1 delegate shall be sent.

C.. Regional Task Forces

The RSC shall name task forces in the region to take up various tasks in carrying out the National Conference mandates.

D. Regional Meetings

These are secondary meetings and do not replace the RSC meetings or Regional Conferences. They are meetings of individuals from locales and LCs which take up various aspects of regional work. They are called by the RSC as needed.

By Terry McDonald for the Planning Committee. (July 4th Conf.)