

# National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs 7

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Steering Committee  
Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center

Dear comrades,

The Club Network has received and studied your January 17 response to our proposal of last August for joint OCIC-NNMLC work over the coming period.

The essence of your response is quite clear. The Steering Committee of the OCIC has rejected our various proposals and offered no alternative proposals for joint OCIC-NNMLC work.

In our view, this decision is an unfortunate one that will hold back rather than advance the struggle for unity in the anti-revisionist, anti"left" opportunist trend.

Certainly joint work alone will not defeat sectarianism in our trend or forge the unity of Marxist-Leninists. However, joint work between the major contending forces in our movement would set a much more favorable context for the struggle for unity to take place. It is the responsibility of all Marxist-Leninists, especially those in leadership of the major contending forces, to take advantage of every possible tool that could set more favorable conditions to promote unity. The OCIC Steering Committee's decision to reject joint work indicates either that you feel joint work contributes nothing to the struggle for unity or that you have abandoned that struggle altogether.

Undoubtedly, this rejection of joint work with the NNMLC is based upon your conception of the OCIC as the "single center" for our trend, the only legitimate vehicle for party building work. In your view, the OCIC process is the equivalent of a non-sectarian common effort at party building, and disagreement with the OCIC inherently represents a sectarian approach to the communist movement.

This position is not only theoretically flawed, it is increasingly untenable as a description of the practical realities of our trend.

Theoretically, your view places organization above politics. You substitute building an organizational form for the necessary political line struggle that is required to build communist unity. For Marxist-Leninists, organizational unity is based upon political unity, not the other way around. Yet the OCIC leadership labels as "circle warfare" any approach which focuses on the struggle over political line. Such a position can never build the kind of unity required for a communist party that must function as the advanced detachment of the working class.

Practically, your view is blinding the OCIC to the actual realities of the trend. Comrades, a host of forces pursue their work outside the OCIC for a variety of reasons. The OCIC Steering Committee has even begun to expel formations from the OCIC (such as the Socialist Organizing Committee in Orange County), a somewhat ironic action for an organization that claims to be a "single center" for the entire movement. Under the circumstances, to maintain the view that the OCIC is (or is becoming) a "single center" for the whole trend is to maintain a fiction. The realities of the movement alone, even aside from the dubiousness of your theoretical position, should demand a re-evaluation of your stand.

Given the present realities of the trend, how is the OCIC going to relate to forces outside its ranks?

Are you going to pursue a policy of joint work and ongoing line struggle, attempting to win others to the correctness of your views and remaining open to changing them if other lines prove more advanced? Or are you going to reject joint work, attack all forces outside the OCIC as proponents of the "circle spirit" in one or another form (careerism, localism, etc.), and close yourselves off from movement-wide struggle and debate?

The OCIC Steering Committee's response to our proposal unfortunately indicates that you are choosing the latter course.

The specific objections you raise to our proposals have no more validity than your general position.

The OCIC Steering Committee rejects a full-blown debate over party building line as "abstract". You do not wish to enter into discussions concerning such questions as the "nature of a leading center" or the "particularities of the pre-party period", but instead want to narrow party building line discussion to an interrogation about what immediate differences preclude groups from joining the OCIC. Comrades, this is a pragmatic position separating party building line from its immediate programmatic application in the most mechanical way. We are most straightforward about the fact that our line on the various "abstract" conceptions about party building shapes the concrete initiatives launched by the rectification line. The OCIC, on the other hand, does not identify openly what it sees as the essential nature of the party building process and determine its work and priorities from this vantage point. In fact, you postpone a debate and struggle over the essential nature of party building until a later time, arguing that such a debate today would be disruptive, abstract, etc. This approach can only obscure crucial line differences and mistrain the cadre in your ranks as to the nature of political line struggle and its relationship to building organizations.

You reject joint work to deepen the critique of the "left" opportunist international line through an examination of events in Southeast Asia, arguing that emphasis should be placed instead on a general re-examination of Mao Zedong Thought, the thesis of capitalist restoration in the USSR, etc. Yet these tasks should

not be posed in contradiction to one another. Again, your view is a mechanical separation of communist theoretical tasks that ignores the realities of the class struggle.

The theoretical agenda of communists cannot be determined solely by our own wills and desires. Communists have a responsibility to take up and solve the burning questions posed by the class struggle even while they probe for the underlying roots of various deviations. It would be a shallow critique of ultra-leftism that demanded that we wait "until we have progressed further in settling accounts with ultra-leftism" before we took up the critique of ultra-leftism as it actually manifests itself in the class struggle. Consequently, the examination of events in Southeast Asia or, more recently, Afghanistan, is a crucial part of the theoretical work of Marxist-Leninists in this period.

Further, your call for a serious re-examination of Mao Zedong's thought or the capitalist restoration thesis has a hollow ring when it is recalled that the OCIC Steering Committee is actively discouraging OCIC members from participating in the national Soviet Union Study Project where the most advanced work in our trend on these questions is being taken up. It would be more straightforward of you comrades to simply state that since you see the OCIC as the main vehicle to fight ultra-leftism, your theoretical priorities are based on whatever work will at present build the OCIC.

Finally, the OCIC Steering Committee refuses to make any general statement of policy toward joint work with the NNMLC. You argue that proposals for joint theoretical projects will be taken up on a case-by-case basis and the the OCIC Steering Committee bears no responsibility for the mass work initiatives of its member groups (for example, the national trade union fractions in health, education, etc.).

Your arguments here rest on technicalities rather than substance. Decisions by the OCIC or its member groups on particular proposals are clearly shaped by the OCIC's general orientation toward joint work. In determining that orientation, the OCIC Steering Committee plays the leading role. Our experience indicates that the OCIC leadership objectively does have an orientation toward joint work - namely, to discourage it. This policy was most clearly exhibited in regard to the Conference of Minority Marxist-Leninists last June, an activity which should have been trend-wide and in fact was promoted by the OCIC as such, but was actually conducted more narrowly as a vehicle to build the OCIC. Since then, the orientation to discourage joint work has also affected such areas as the national Soviet Union Study Project and your response to our proposal of last August. Unless this orientation is faced squarely and consciously reversed, it will undoubtedly affect all areas of communist work facing our trend. Under

these circumstances, the Steering Committee's statement that it will articulate no general policy concerning joint work objectively amounts to sanctioning and promoting and anti-joint work orientation.

For our part, forces holding the rectification line have placed before the movement a critique of the line guiding the OCIC and have mapped out an alternative set of initiatives to conduct party building work. Almost all of these initiatives are open to all Marxist-Leninists, whatever their views on party building or their organizational affiliation. We encourage and actively seek to build broad participation in these initiatives. In practice, such participation is a reality, as numbers of Marxist-Leninists who are not united with the rectification line are active in the Marxist-Leninist Education Project (MLEP), the national study projects around the Soviet Union and the race/national question, and a number of trend-wide forms linked to specific areas of mass work. At the same time, we participate in all projects initiated by the OCIC or other forces which push forward party building and in which we are allowed to participate. This policy and practice flows from our general perspective encouraging and actively promoting joint work in the trend.

It is unfortunate that your general orientation is to discourage rather than encourage joint work.

It appears that the time is now past when drawing up further proposals for concrete joint work will bear fruit. Our present proposals stand before you. In addition, the various initiatives launched by the rectification line are consistently making attempts to contact and involve OCIC members in their work. If the OCIC leadership would ever like to meet and take up our proposals again, discuss the conscious integration of OCIC forces into one or more than one rectification initiative, the integration of rectification forces into particular initiatives launched by the OCIC, or advance alternative proposals for joint work, we would be glad to hold such a meeting. Or, we could arrange a meeting between yourselves and the Line of March editorial board which has emerged as the leading center for the rectification party building line. We hope that the OCIC will reconsider its present policy toward joint work, and that such reconsideration will push forward the unity of the anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend.

Comradely,  
National Executive Committee  
National Network of  
Marxist-Leninist Clubs

cc: Party Building movement