

4/24/80

310 Franklin St., #365
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Comrades of the BPC,

The Regional Steering Committee has received your letter of 4/1/80, in which you offer the resignation of several members of the OCIC. We cannot accept these resignations, for a number of reasons.

The most important reason is that your letter gives no political reasons for wanting to resign. OC members within the BPC are referred to as "members of the OC for historical reasons" (emphasis added). Were there no political reasons involved? The OC cannot possibly accept a letter of resignation that does not state any political differences with the OCIC.

When someone joins the OCIC, they do so on the basis of agreement with its 18 points of unity and with its strategy of building a single center for the ideological struggle in our tendency. If an OC member no longer agrees with the OC's basis of unity, then the principled thing for them to do is resign. But if they still have political unity with the OC, if they do not believe that it is essentially an opportunist formation, then there is no principled basis for a resignation.

You say that you cannot continue with some of the BPC's members in the OC, while others aren't. But why not? Presumably the BPC members who have joined the OC did so because they have political unity with it. Presumably those who have not joined the OC are the ones with differences or unresolved questions about it. The fact that you all belong to the same collective says nothing about anyone's unity or disunity with the OC. This is because the BPC as a whole has no stated political differences with the OC's basis of unity. So how can there be a principled basis for saying that no BPC members can belong to the OC?

In fact, your letter is a naked expression of the circle spirit: a local collective tells its members that none of them can belong to tendency-wide form. You imply that there is some contradiction between belonging to the OC and belonging to the BPC-- yet there is no political contradiction involved at all. What does this mean, if not "our circle first, the OC last"? You are saying that the development of your party-building line will be hurt if some members take part in discussions within the OC. You are saying that you want to consolidate the politics of your circle in isolation from the broader process of struggle within the OC. The sectarianism of this view is very clear.

This circle spirit approach is highlighted by the fact that the BPC not only wants to resign on behalf of its predecessor group, the RBSG. The BPC also wants to resign for LB, an individual member of the OC. It would be completely unprincipled for the OC to accept this "resignation". LB joined the OC as an individual. If she no longer has political unity with the OC, then she must resign as an individual. If she still has unity with the OC, she should not resign-- and the BPC should not tell her to do so.

In addition to all this, these resignations would hurt the BPC's ability to make a collective decision about its view of the OC. One of the criticisms some BPC members have of the OC is the claim that it has not generated a democratic process of struggle. We on the RSC

strongly disagree. But what better way to investigate this question than to take part in the OC, and struggle for your line? The OC majority has repeatedly urged you to do just that, to seriously take up the struggle within the OC-- but instead you've hung back. The participation of TR forces in the OC hasn't amounted to much so far. TR forces made no attempt to circulate their views in writing before or during the OC's national conference last September (in contrast to at least seven other groups). Delegates from the TR walked out of the conference before it was half over, without raising any of their criticisms to the body. The TMLC has refused to take part in West Coast Regional activity on the grounds that they are too busy. Members of the RBSG have opposed the idea that all RBSG members should participate in the New England Regional Center. And now you folks want to resign from the OC.

We think it's interesting that your offer of resignation came in response to a request that RBSG members either suggest or write up papers representing your views for use in struggle within the New England Regional Center. After the OC's national conference, the RBSG complained that the conference had been undemocratic because the National Steering Committee had not solicited their views in advance, for circulation within the OC. Now the RBSG's views are solicited-- and your response is that you want to resign!

How can we look at this except as flight from struggle? And we know from the example of the ultra-lefts that avoiding struggle doesn't resolve differences-- it only solidifies them.

This flight from struggle is reflected in other ways in your letter. The letter is obviously a letter of resignation-- yet you never use the word "resign"! Instead, you only say that certain folks "can no longer be considered" members of the OC. This sounds a little strange. We think that you avoided the word "resign" (consciously or not) because this would have put more pressure on you to explain the political basis for your stand. You never argue any political basis for your resignations, so that we could organize discussion and struggle around the issue. This is especially ironic, considering that TR forces have complained that the OC downplays struggle over politics.

A final reason why we can't accept these resignations is that we don't have the power to do so. If you do wish to resign, you should write directly to the National Steering Committee and explain your differences with the OC's basis of unity.

The RSC doesn't think that there is a principled political basis for these resignations. We think that the way you have proposed them is an expression of the small circle mentality, and represents a flight from struggle. Since you have not expressed any splitting differences with the OCIC, we must continue to consider you as members. We therefore expect RBSG folks and LB to participate in the Boston Local Center. We also repeat our request that RBSG people provide the RSC with documents reflecting your views on certain issues that will come up in regional discussions. We want to meet with the RBSG's members as a group as soon as possible to discuss these letters. We think it is important that this happen before the RSC's next meeting, and therefore propose the following possible times: 7 pm on Wed., Apr. 30, Thurs., May 1, or Saturday, May 3; or 1 pm on Sat. May 3, or Sun. May 4.

Comradely,

the New England RSC