

Proposal for Building A Regional Center in the West:
And For a Conference on Building Local Centers:

Regional OCIC centers exist in the Midwest, New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Southern Regions. Our regional held a meeting after the Point 18 Conference in March, and met informally at the Labor Day Conference. But we have not developed a consistent form of regional work, nor a clear conception of the importance of regional centers. We need to develop a strategic perspective on how our region should develop and a concrete plan for developing a regional center and regional leadership.

Importance of Regional Centers:

The focus of discussion in the OCIC has been around building local centers. There has been little theoretical work done on the particular role of the region within the OCIC and partybuilding process.

I think that the development of regional centers and leaderships are important for a number of reasons. First, the OCIC will not be able to meet very often at a national level. National conferences are difficult and expensive, and take much preparation. Therefore the bulk of the OC's work between national conferences takes place in the localities. The only link between the localities and the national SC between conferences is through the minutes and documents of the NSC, or the occasional visit of a national person. The regional structure provides a more consistent link between the local and national.

Secondly, developing a plan of work for the region such as holding periodic conferences on OC issues, insures that the localities prioritize their work in a generally consistent manner. For example, a regional center may plan 4 conferences this year on building local centers, the struggle against racism, the draft plan, and on our perspective towards the NNMLC/Rectification forces. By planning such conferences each locality will generally need to take up similar study and preparation, thereby avoiding each locality doing its own thing.

Thirdly, the regional center can be a place where each locality learns from the experiences of other localities. By socializing lessons at a regional level much duplication and error can be avoided.

Fourthly, the regional center will need to establish a regional Steering Committee. The development of a regional leadership will be important for three reasons:

- 1) A collective regional leadership will be responsible for overseeing the development of regional conferences.
- 2) A collective leadership could greatly aid the NSC person in charge the Western region by sharing the responsibilities of guiding the region.
- 3) A regional SC would be an excellent place to develop new people in their leadership. Working at the regional level will surely broaden the number of people gaining national leadership skills, which is key in the development of our ideological center.

Organizational Questions:

Having discussed briefly the role and importance of regional centers, a few points on their organizational aspects. The Regional center would function on a similar basis to the local centers. All OCIC members of the Western region would be members of the regional center. Similar to the point 18 conferences, members would attend without binding instructions.

We will need to develop some clear criteria for choosing our regional leadership. In general our criteria would be similar to those we used to choose our national SC and our local center SC's. In particular, we would need to develop leadership criteria based on the key tasks which the regional will be taking up. For example, our regional SC should be composed of persons who can lead in developing the regional conferences.

Finally, we will have to develop a clear organizational policy on the incorporation of non-OCIC forces into regional activities. This means developing a policy on observers who are close to the OCIC or are part of the broader tendency.

First Step In Creation of A Regional Center: Conference on Local Centers:

In order to begin the process of forging a regional center, I would propose that the region plan its first conference on Building Local Centers. The region could hold conferences on any number of topics including: the Draft Plan, Racism, etc. But I think at this time the most important regional meeting would be on local centers. Everyone is involved, at some level, in building such structures. In addition, there was not time at the recent Labor Day conference to really discuss the strategic conception of local centers, or the issues of federationism raised by the SC-LC experience.

The regional conference could address the following topics on both the political conception and organizational implementation of local centers:

- 1) The strategic conceptions of OC local center and their relationship to the Draft Plan.
- 2) The struggle against Federationism and the lessons from the SC-LC experience.
- 3) How to Build Local Centers (possibly workshops)
 - A. Making a Plan of Work
 - B. Electing and developing Leadership
 - C. Taking up 18 Points Study, Draft plan, Racism etc.

All localities could study and discuss key documents in preparation for the conference including:

- 1) Labor Day Conference speeches on Local centers
- 2) LA Minority perspective
- 3) NSC report on visit to Southern California
- 4) Forging the Party Spirit Paper
- 5) Specific documents from various local centers.

We would need to establish a regional Planning Committee for the conference. This would be made up of comrades who have some of the most advanced experience in local center building. They would set the agenda for the conference, assign various presentations to be made, develop a preparation packet, and set the schedule for the meeting.

Implementation of Regional Center and Local center Conference Proposal:

Each locality should take this proposal back for discussion. Responses for the Proposal should address the following points:

1. Do You agree with general need and conception of regional centers?
2. Do you think it is possible to work towards the implementation of such a proposal at this time?
3. What suggestions, criticisms or elaboration would you make?
4. Do you agree with the specific plan for a regional conference on Local Centers?

Localities should communicate their answers to these questions in January, and a second regional meeting should be held probably in Feb. to discuss the possibility of establishing a regional center and the conference on local centers.