

January 21, 1979

To the National Steering Committee of the OCIC,

During a discussion of the Southern California Local Center Steering Committee, we developed a criticism and self-criticism of the process of the OCIC around the Point 18 as a line of demarcation struggle. At a recent regional preparation meeting for the Point 18 conference we presented our thinking. Representatives from the Bay Area CB and the Seattle WG discussed it, agreed with it and expanded it. They recommend that I write it up as a common understanding of the three locales in the western region to the National Steering Committee.

We support the decision developed at the February 1978 Conference to deal with the contradiction of Point 18 as a line of demarcation within the OCIC. We are united that Point 18 is a necessary line of demarcation; and that in order for the OCIC to move forward, its forces must be united on the importance of this principle. We think that the decision to organize a discussion on its necessity was correct because it 1. reflected an accurate assessment of uneven development within the trend on the question 2. it attempted to avoid the error of sectarianism by not cutting off discussion of the question prematurely 3. and it grasped that a small minority would have undue weight within the OCIC if the contradiction was not openly resolved.

We are critical of the process around the issue in the last year because we think it has been too drawn out with too little return. We think it was a mistake to allow BPO to control the pace by holding up their paper for so long. The minority view should not have been allowed to determine the process like this. We think that the National Steering Committee should have continued doing propaganda on the struggle; and the role that proletarian internationalism must play in our party building strategy through out the last period. (Perhaps the theses statement could have been developed and deepened, and when the "Dogmatism and Left Opportunism" was distributed the role of the document and how it could be used could have been clarified.) The lack of a discussion nationally on the question was a particular problem for us on the West Coast who historically were primarily removed from the political consolidation taking place in the north east before the organization of the OCIC, and who are still isolated from much of the exchange and discussion taking place on the East Coast. This problem will be addressed again later in the letter.

We are self-critical for playing such a passive role in the process. 1. When we learned that the process was being delayed because BPO would not complete their paper when they agreed to, we should have written a criticism to the national steering committee. You could then respond by either accepting the criticism or by explaining why the process was correct within a national perspective.

2. When we found out that materials would be delayed, we should have initiated stronger study and discussion locally, relying on the resources that we had available. Through summing up our developing thinking and sharing it, we could have both deepened our own grasp of the importance of point 18 as a line of demarcation and helped push the struggle further ahead-nationally.

3. We didn't realize the implications of being out on the West Coast and not having been integrated into much of the process on the East Coast before the OCIC. We've stood outside of a lot of political struggle and education on key issues that has taken place in the eastern region. (In this case, missing the conference on the international situation was a setback). We need to take more initiative in the western region for pushing our practical and theoretical work forward.

We think that the national steering committee needs to make a stronger assessment of the needs of the Western Region and the contributions it can make. We think that the region should be more strongly represented in the national steering committee. We understand that strengthening this representation will depend on our ability to build regional ties, as well as the initiative of the national steering committee.

We support and commend the efforts of the national steering committee in building the OCIC.

Comradely,

Irene from So. Calif. Local Center
for the Western Region