

Draft:

Call for Trend-Wide Conferences to Summarize the Demise of the  
Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center

The anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend in the U.S. communist movement came into being in 1975-76 following the break with the class collaborationist line of the Communist Party of China that crystallized over the question of support for the Angolan revolution led by the MPLA. At the time of the trend's birth, its most active and self-conscious forces correctly grasped that the central task facing the trend was that of party building. For a considerable period of time in the trend's history since its inception, the bulk of the trend's active party building forces regarded the Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center as the most appropriate vehicle through which to take up this central task.

The OCIC was founded in February 1978 after two years of preparatory work by forces all around the country. It declared itself united around 18 points of unity which demarcated Marxism-Leninism from various forms of opportunism, and stated that its main purpose was to build a single leading ideological center for the emerging anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend. The OCIC's formation caused considerable excitement and optimism among many trend forces that a process was underway which could successfully lead to a genuine Marxist-Leninist party being forged in the U.S.

In the last eighteen months, however, the OCIC has undergone a profound crisis. The most concentrated expression of that crisis was the OCIC's ill-fated Campaign Against White Chauvinism, which grossly mishandled the crucially important struggle against racism within the communist ranks. As a result of this crisis, the OCIC's membership declined rapidly and its prestige within the trend and on the broader left plummeted to almost zero. Today it is no exaggeration to state that the OCIC is a hopelessly isolated sect exerting no influence on the direction and progress of the party building movement.

The demise of the OCIC has had a significant impact upon the anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend. On the positive side, many comrades are re-examining with a new seriousness and vigor their party building views, rejecting the sectarian legacy which became characteristic of the OCIC as it developed, and re-committing themselves to the task of transforming the trend into a genuine Marxist-Leninist party. On the other hand, some comrades have responded to the OCIC's dramatic decline by questioning the existence of the emerging Marxist-Leninist trend or the revolutionary character of Marxism-Leninism, and are stepping back from party building work. And because the trend's summation of the OCIC's demise has thus far proceeded in relatively fragmented fashion, the ability to struggle through these differences and win comrades back to party building has been highly circumscribed.

In our view, these negative effects must be checked and reversed. We believe that party building remains the central task before US Marxist-Leninists, and that the developing anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend remains the entity which continues the legacy of Marxism-Leninism in the U.S. today. It is from this standpoint that we believe an organized process of summarizing the underlying reasons for the OCIC's failure must be taken up, precisely to reconfirm the political integrity of the trend and rebuild its commitment to party building.

Clearly, this summation will be a process of struggle. Different views concerning the reasons for the OCIC's failure exist in the trend, and probably will continue to exist for some time. But the first step forward in resolving these differences must be an organized process where they are aired and debated before the entire trend.

We have constituted this committee to take the lead in organizing such a process of summation and struggle, concretely embodied in a series of regional conferences this January and February. We believe such conferences



must provide a forum to air all opinions in the concerning the OCIC's demise. At the same time, our experience convinces us that the debate is most productive if it is focused on the most developed, coherent, and comprehensive lines. At present, at least two such developed lines concerning the OCIC's demise exist and have influence in the trend: that the OCIC failed because of the fusion party building line, and that the OCIC failed because of a continuation of the ultra-leftism characteristic of the new communist movement. Other lines which may also develop as major contending lines include the views ~~of the~~ that the OCIC's failure to break with the "Stalinian deviation" was the root of the problem, or that the formation of a national center itself was premature. While not excluding other views from receiving a hearing, we would intend to organize the conferences around these major viewpoints, or other positions of similar depth, ~~and~~ <sup>and influence</sup> comprehensiveness that may come forward.

The summation of the OCIC's decline would constitute the centerpiece of the conference agendas, and we would anticipate presentations, workshops, and plenary debate on this topic. At the same time, since our underlying purpose is to rebuild the coherence of the trend and move its party building work forward, we would also allow time for two closely related panel discussions: What Road forward for the Trend? and The State of the Trend and other Trends on the left.

We anticipate the conferences to consist of two days of workshops and plenary sessions, opening on Saturday morning and ending Sunday in the late afternoon. Given geographical and time considerations, we are planning for conferences in the following cities on the following dates:

SF Bay Area, January 23-24, 1982; Chicago, January 30-31;

Boston, February 6-7; Washington DC, February 13-14.

Preparatory meetings would be organized in cities where the trend is active to conduct initial discussions of the conference topic. Written materials to frame the conference debates would be distributed to assist comrades preparation. Attendance at the conferences would be open to all trend forces, including those still within the OCIC.

The signers of this call have constituted ourselves as the initial cores of a national planning committee and regional planning committees to organize these conferences. We hold differences among us as to the underlying reasons for the OCIC's decline, but have initiated this effort because we feel that it is crucial to regroup the trend after its experience with the OCIC, and that ~~success~~ this is impossible without an organized and active debate concerning the reasons for the OCIC's demise.

We believe that these conferences, if successful, can mark an important turning point in the development of the anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend. They are an opportunity to put the period of sectarianism in the trend behind us, identify clearly the unities and differences on party building strategy that still exist in the trend, and recommit ourselves to our party building task. For these reasons, we urge all trend activists to participate in these conferences and exert every effort to make them a success.

Signed: national and regional committees in formation